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Divisive identities, divided foreign policy?

**Policy makers' discourses on Russia
in Germany, Poland and Finland**

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Declaration of originality

This is to certify that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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Abstract

Numerous academics and foreign policy practitioners have argued that relations with Russia are one of the most divisive issues within the European Union (cf. Leonard and Popescu 2007, Mandelson 2007). Mainstream explanations highlight that this is due to the different interests and security concerns of EU member states (David et al. 2011). This dissertation proposes an alternative understanding that focuses on national identity construction and Russia's role therein. Germany, Poland and Finland, three EU member states that traditionally have different stances towards Russia, are selected for in-depth analysis. The key argument is that divergent national discourses on Russia are due to the different ways in which the country was constructed in national identity.

In order to show this, the thesis elaborates on social constructivist scholarship studying the relationship between identity and foreign policy. It argues that constructivist models theorising a causal link between identity and foreign policy (eg Wendt 1999, Katzenstein 1996) are insufficient to fully explain the complexity of this relationship. Drawing on the work of scholars such as Ted Hopf (2002), Richard Ned Lebow (2008, 2008a) and Ole Wæver (2002), this thesis develops an interpretive theoretical framework in which national identity and foreign policy are conceptualised as mutually constitutive and studied at the level of discourses. Dominant identity and foreign policy narratives are examined in a *longue durée* perspective, which allows for an exploration of their deep historical roots.

The research conducted through this model highlights the relevance of long-standing narratives on Russia to current foreign policy discourses. However, the thesis also shows that national identity is malleable and top national officials can reformulate dominant discourses in order to achieve particular foreign policy goals. This is illustrated in the case studies, which focus on official narratives concerning the building of the Nord Stream pipeline, the Russian-Georgian war of August 2008 and the mass demonstrations in Russian cities in the winter of 2011-2012. The empirical analysis shows that gradual convergence took place across national discourses as national constructions of Russia were reformulated in order to pursue a pragmatic foreign policy towards Moscow. Finally, through the comparison of national discourses in the EU discursive arena, the dissertation assesses the prospects for the emergence of shared EU foreign policy narratives on Russia.

Chapter 1: Identity, memory and Russia as Europe's Other: an introduction

Rationale for the dissertation

This dissertation explores the relationship between national identities and foreign policy discourses concerning Russia within the European Union. It originated from a broad interest in the development of several sub-disciplines and theories in the field of International Relations. An increasingly large body of European Studies literature has explored the emergence of a shared European identity (cf. Bayley and Williams 2012, Checkel and Katzenstein 2009, Herrmann et al. 2004, Risse 2010). These works generally argue that European identity is, at best, still developing next to national identities. Following Willfried Spohn's (2005: 2) categorisation, three main perspectives can be identified in the literature. The first sees European identity as a weak addendum to strong national identities. The second one assumes that European identity will unfold in the long run and restructure national identities through the gradual Europeanisation of the latter. The third one hypothesises the future emergence of a variable mix of European and national identities. All three perspectives agree on the current dominance of national identities over a still weak European identity.

As these initial observations suggest, national identities play an important role in Europe and may provide a key to understanding European politics. Scholars studying nationalism have argued that we are unlikely to see the transcendence of national identities by a strong European identity during our lifetime (Smith 1996: 363). Their colleagues working on memory politics, a domain that is very close to and partly overlaps with identity studies, have come to similar conclusions in their assessments of the prospects for a common European memory: national discourses are pervasive in collective memory and can hardly be reconciled into a shared European discourse (Bell 2006: 16, Jarausch and Lindenberger 2007: 1). This is not surprising, as nation-states have a much longer history than European institutions. Linguistic, historical

and cultural differences contribute to the endurance of national identities and of political constructions that draw their legitimacy from national communities.

The focus on the national level in this dissertation should not lead to the assumption that the concept of European identity can simply be dismissed. A feeling of attachment to Europe and to the political structures of the European Union is observable both among European elites and citizens, however weak and inconsistent it might be.¹ The creation of a common European market, the removal of barriers to the free movement of citizens and numerous transnational schemes have contributed to its emergence. However, as most of the relevant scholarly literature argues, in Europe national identities and memories are still stronger than transnational ones. Studying national identities is thus a fundamental precondition to understand both the dilemmas surrounding European identity and, most importantly, current European politics.

Social constructivist literature has highlighted the strong relationship between national identity and foreign policy discourses.² The dissertation applies a social constructivist theoretical model to examine this relationship in three European states (Germany, Poland and Finland) and, through a comparative analysis, assesses the prospects for a shared European foreign policy discourse concerning Russia. Relations with Russia have been chosen as a litmus test for a shared European foreign policy discourse because they have proven to be one of the most dividing issues among European Union countries. In 2007, former EU trade commissioner Peter Mandelson stated that “no other country reveals our differences as does Russia” (cited in Kagan 2008: 14).

Russia is the EU’s largest neighbour, a key energy supplier and an essential, though often very controversial partner in the European security architecture. As highlighted by the profound crisis that erupted in Ukraine in the fall of 2013, the European Union and its member states cannot guarantee the stability of their Eastern neighbourhood without taking into account Russia as a geopolitical factor. Furthermore, the political

¹ Cf. Standard Eurobarometer 77 (Spring 2012), QD5, p. 173.

² For a detailed discussion, see chapter 2.

system built by post-Soviet Russian leaders challenges some of the European Union's founding values, particularly in the field of democracy and human rights (cf. Treaty on European Union Art. 2, Shiraev 2013).³

Hence, the main research question is:

To what extent and how do national identities in EU member states influence foreign policy leaders' discourses on Russia?

Key sub-questions are:

Are historically constructed images of Russia influential in current foreign policy discourses and, if yes, how?

Can different national foreign policy narratives on Russia be reconciled in the EU discursive arena?

As can be inferred from the research questions, the thesis is primarily an analysis of official discourses. Dominant themes, linguistic and discursive strategies constitute the "evidence" on which arguments are based in the dissertation. The key argument is that divergent national foreign policy approaches to Russia are due to the different ways in which the country was constructed in national identity. However, the thesis also shows that national identity is malleable and a country's leaders can reformulate dominant narratives in order to achieve particular foreign policy goals. Hence, it is argued that national discourses on Russia can be reconciled if divisive identity narratives are marginalised and common foreign policy goals are pursued.

The focus of the empirical analysis is restricted to key foreign policy leaders (heads of state or government and foreign ministers) for reasons of feasibility and relevance. Covering thoroughly three national discursive arenas, each having thousands of participants, would not be possible within the scope of this dissertation. Foreign policy making today is the result of complex interactions between politicians, expert and interest groups and public opinion. However, in countries such as those under analysis, key foreign policy decisions are ultimately made by a restricted group of

³ All references to the Treaty on European Union in the dissertation concern the treaty version as amended by the Treaty of Lisbon. Cf. also the European Commission's Country Strategy Paper for the Russian Federation, 2007-2013, available at http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/russia/docs/2007-2013_en.pdf (accessed 12/11/2012).

leaders who received a mandate from a parliamentary majority or a majority of electors. These leaders also represent the country internationally and, thanks to their political prominence, they have the discursive power to steer the country's main foreign policy debates. Most importantly for this analysis, their behaviours and decisions are influenced by the national identities in which they are embedded.⁴

As argued in this chapter and in the theoretical section, national identity is a very useful concept to understand the domestic construction of international politics because it encompasses and is forged by the defining cultural, historical and political constituents of a state. Its relationship with foreign policy discourses is complex. It is mutually constitutive, because national identity and foreign policy discourses influence each other. It is also malleable, because the two concepts are in constant flux and change over time. For some scholars, the notion of national identity might be elusive (cf. Malesevic 2011). However, it is exactly the complexity of the concept and its changing and multifaceted nature that make it a fascinating research topic. National identities are not the only element in the complex scenario of international politics, but certainly one that scholars cannot ignore in a comprehensive analysis.

Theoretical and empirical contribution

Relations with Russia are a test for the very idea of a united EU foreign policy because they have traditionally been based on a bilateral, national dimension. The most frequent explanations for this bilateralism refer to the different economic interests and security concerns of EU member states, as well as to Russia's preference for dealing with European countries separately (David et al. 2011: 183-184). This dissertation proposes an alternative understanding of the EU's and its member states' relations with Russia that is based on national identity. The focus on national identity is innovative because, in contrast with predominant analyses focusing on power politics and economics, it seeks to explain relations with Russia through an investigation of historical and cultural factors.

⁴ See chapters 2 and 3.

The conceptualisation of identity as a key element in international relations provides a much-needed alternative to realist and liberal institutionalist models framed around the notions of anarchy, balance of power and institutional cooperation. The dissertation analyses international relations as a social construction, of which national identities are essential constituents. Drawing on constructivist literature, a theoretical model is developed highlighting the mutually constitutive relationship among national identity, interests and foreign policy discourses. In particular, the historical dimension of national identity formation is explored in order to examine its relevance in current foreign policy discourses. Hence, the thesis adopts a historicist approach, which assigns key importance to cultural and historical context.

Foreign policy discourses are studied through discourse-historical analysis, a variant of critical discourse analysis developed by Ruth Wodak (2002a). The discourse-historical approach was previously used by scholars to study debates about immigration and identity politics in the media, in EU institutions and among the wider public (Krzyzanowski 2010 and 2009, Oberhuber et al. 2005, Reisigl and Wodak 2001, Wodak 2009). This dissertation constitutes the first application of the methodology to the analysis of national foreign policy elites' public discourses. Most notably, it is the first study that uses discourse-historical analysis to investigate the relationship between national identity and the construction of narratives about a foreign country.

Empirically, the thesis also contributes to the understanding of the European Union's and its member states' current foreign policy towards the Eastern neighbourhood. It constitutes an attempt to strengthen the strand of research focusing on the role of nationalism, identity and memory politics in EU-Russia relations. The surge of nationalist sentiment and widespread political use of history during the 2013-2014 Ukrainian crisis has exposed that these are powerful factors in EU-Russia relations.⁵ The dissertation shows that national identity and memory politics played an

⁵ See Alec Luhn, "The Ukrainian nationalism at the heart of 'Euromaidan'", *The Nation*, 21 January 2014, <http://www.thenation.com/article/178013/ukrainian-nationalism-heart-euromaidan> (accessed 10/5/2014) and Marco Siddi, "The abuse of history in the Ukrainian crisis", *Open Democracy*, 5 May 2014, <http://opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/marco-siddi/abuse-of-history-in-ukrainian-crisis> (accessed 10/5/2014).

important role in this relationship well before the beginning of turmoil in Ukraine. The four empirical chapters highlight the significance of identity and memory politics in events that took place during the last decade in fields of extreme importance for the EU, such as energy security, the stability of the neighbourhood, Russia's democratisation and its role in the European security system. Through an interdisciplinary approach combining social constructivist theory, discourse theory and historical analysis, the dissertation sheds light on the deep identity and cultural roots of relevant foreign policy discourses.

Nations, national identity and collective memory

Constructivist scholars argue that grasping the relationship between national identity and foreign policy is essential in order to understand international relations. Before exploring why this might be so, it is fundamental to define and explore the concepts of nation and national identity. Due to their diverse uses and confusion with concepts such as nationalism, the terms are highly ambiguous and have generated a lively discussion among academics. The most relevant debates took place among historians and sociologists who, especially from the 1980s onwards, attempted to assess the role played by nations and nationalism in international politics during modern and contemporary times.

Prominent scholars such as Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson and Anthony D. Smith used different parameters to define nation and national identity, alternatively emphasizing concrete elements (for instance territory, economy), psychological and abstract factors (memories, myths) or both. Some considered the terms too ambiguous for a precise classification and adopted only working definitions (Hobsbawm 1990), others rejected them altogether as explanatory variables (Malesevic 2011). Most treated national identity as a corollary of the nation, a collective belief in belonging to a national community and to its defining elements. Although the relationship between nation and national identity is in fact more complex, a close link exists between the two concepts. To understand national

identity, we thus have to grasp the concept of nation first (cf. Guibernau 2004: 134, Smith 1991: 9).

One of the most widely debated definitions of nation is the one provided by Anthony D. Smith (1996: 359):

A named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and memories, a mass public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members.

Smith's definition provides an apparently easy way out of terminological issues: it includes both the concrete and the abstract factors highlighted in previous definitions of nations. However, Smith broadens the scope of the definition at the expense of clarity: does a nation need to satisfy all these characteristics to be classified as such? Which elements are more important? Furthermore, additional terminological problems arise: what is a "mass public culture" and what is meant by "historic territory"? Cannot diasporas constitute or be part of a nation because they do not share a historic territory?

Smith's definition reveals one of the main confusions that occur in debates on the nature of nations: by listing "common rights and duties for all members" as one of their key elements, it conflates the concepts of nation and state. As Montserrat Guibernau (2004: 127) argues, judicial functions pertain to the state and are not inherent in the nation. While most nations have their own states, and thus also their own judicial systems, some do not. Furthermore, due to immigration and globalization, many states are no longer nation-states: they include sizeable minorities that are bound by the same rights and duties and yet do not lose their distinctive identity. To avoid confusion, states and nations have to be classified differently. Borrowing from Max Weber's conceptual framework, a state can be defined on the basis of its coercive powers, namely as a body that successfully claims monopoly of legitimate force in a particular territory (cited in Miller 1997: 19-20). A

state has the means to enforce its rules and a legal system to discipline those who do not comply with them.

In contrast, a nation is defined more by feelings of attachment to both concrete and abstract elements, rather than in terms of powers and prerogatives. Ernest Gellner (1983: 7), a pioneer in the study of nationalism, identified two essential components of the nation, namely a shared culture – broadly meant as a system of ideas, signs, associations and ways of behaving and communicating – and its members' mutual recognition of belonging to the same nation. Gellner stressed that nations are human artefacts, social constructions deriving from people's convictions and loyalties. Benedict Anderson (1991: 6) also focused on the constructed nature of nations and defined them as "imagined political communities". According to him, nations are imagined because the members of even the smallest nations will never meet most of their fellow members, but the image of belonging to a single community lives in all their minds.

Anderson argued that nations are political communities because they emerged simultaneously to concepts such as popular sovereignty (namely the idea that political power rests in the hands of the people), at the time of the Enlightenment and of the French Revolution. The argument that nations originated with the advent of the modern age connects them closely with nationalism, namely the political principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent (Gellner 1983: 1). This connection generated a lively debate among academics. According to "modernists" such as Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Montserrat Guibernau and Benedict Anderson, nations emerged in modern times because they were the product of nationalism. Conversely, "ethno-symbolists" such as Anthony D. Smith and John Hutchinson argued that the constitutive elements of many nations, notably their foundation myths and their ethnic and cultural heritage, predated the French Revolution and the modern age (Guibernau et al. 2004, Smith 1996).

The academic dispute between modernists and ethno-symbolists was arguably the longest and liveliest ever in the field of nationalism studies. It is relevant to this analysis because it highlights different ways of conceptualising the nation and

national identity. Modernists claim that, from the early nineteenth century on, nationalists were successful in disseminating the concept of nation thanks to mass schooling and the standardisation of national languages (Hobsbawm 1990: 10). Nationalists carefully selected pre-existing cultural elements and branded them as defining components of the nation (Gellner 1983: 55). Hence, according to modernists, nations are constructed entities and national identity is a fabrication of the modern state, which attempts to gain the support of citizens by uniting them in a single national community (Guibernau 2004: 140).

Ethno-symbolists concur that creating national identities was one of the objectives of the nationalist movement during the nineteenth century. However, they maintain that collective memories, cultural heritage and traditions developed before the age of nationalism played the key role in nation formation. According to ethno-symbolists, modern nations are not simply political constructions or imagined communities, but are founded on concrete cultural elements and tend to have strong ties to pre-modern ethnic identities. Ethnic groups are considered as the precursors of nations, having “shared ancestry myths and memories or ‘ethno-history’, with a strong association [...] to a historic territory or homeland” (Smith 1994: 382).

The emphasis on ethnicity highlights the major weakness of the ethno-symbolist approach: in order to define the nation, it introduces other concepts that are equally ambiguous. The same criticism applies to modernist definitions, which refer to the complex phenomenon of nationalism to explain the emergence of nations and national identity. Although all these concepts are interrelated, cross-references in their classification are confusing. A clear and comprehensive definition of nation and national identity should take into account the most insightful observations of ethno-symbolists and modernists, without relying on equivocal terms.

David Miller’s (1997: 18, 22-27) definition of nation provides a good starting point. According to Miller, a nation is a community with shared beliefs and mutual commitment, extended in history and connected to a particular territory. It is marked off from other nations by a distinct public culture, including shared political principles (for instance, belief in democracy or the rule of law), social norms and

cultural ideals. Like Gellner, Miller argues that members' mutual commitment and recognition of one another as compatriots is an essential precondition for the emergence of a nation. This reciprocal sense of obligation is extended over time, in the past, present and future, and ensures the historical continuity of the nation. Collective memories play an important role in this respect, as they remind the members of a nation of their forebears' presumed achievements and cultural heritage.

Collective memories are instrumental to the formation of national identities. National identity can be defined as the psychological attachment of a collective to the nation and its defining elements. Shared memories and culture are the main sustaining factors of this attachment, as they constitute the core of narratives stimulating identification with the nation (Anderson 1991: 205). As Anthony D. Smith (1996a: 383) argues, "only by remembering the past can a collective identity come into being". Collective memories provide the "cognitive maps and mobilising moralities of nations as they struggle to win and maintain recognition" (Smith 1988: 14). According to Smith (1996a: 384-385), vital elements of the nation such as its drive for regeneration, the sense of national authenticity, collective mission and national destiny depend on collective memory. Similarly, Eric Hobsbawm and David Kertzer (1992: 3) argue that "nations without a past are contradictions in terms. What makes a nation *is* the past; what justifies one nation against others is the past".

Table 1. Definitions: nation and national identity

<p>Nation: a community with shared beliefs and mutual commitment, extended in history and connected to a particular territory. It is marked off from other nations by a distinct public culture, including shared political principles, social norms and cultural ideals.</p> <p>National identity: the psychological attachment of a collective to the nation and its defining elements.</p>

Source: own compilation

The politics of memory and national identity

While Hobsbawm and Smith are right to emphasise the importance of the past for national identity, the way in which a nation remembers its past is more complex and ambiguous than their statements may suggest. In fact, the collective memory and the past of a nation are fundamentally different concepts. The term “collective memory” refers to the shared memories held by a community about the past (Hunt 2010: 97), an image of the past constructed by a subjectivity in the present (Megill 2011: 196). Collective memory is a discourse about historical events and how to interpret them based on a community’s current social and historical necessities (Arnold-de Simine 2005: 10, Pakier and Stråth 2010: 7). It is neither a mere or accurate reflection of the past, nor the product of historical research. As Maurice Halbwachs (1992) argues, collective memories are socially framed: they form when people come together to remember and enter a domain that transcends individual memory. According to Andreas Huyssen (2003: 6), collective memory is also essential to imagine the future and give a strong temporal and spatial grounding to life.

The study of collective memory is of particular relevance at institutional level (Lebow 2006: 13-14). Political elites formulate or adopt selective discourses of past events in order to forge national identities that strengthen social cohesion. In particular, politicians try to forge national memories, a particular type of collective memory where the collective coincides with the nation (Gillis 1994: 7). National memory is disseminated primarily via political leaders’ official discourses and commemorations in realms of memory (*lieux de mémoire*), namely historical or pseudo-historical sites that are reminiscent of selected events in national memory (Nora 1992: 7). This does not preclude the role of other, unofficial actors in the forging of national memory. Individual or other group memories coexist side by side with official national memories and often influence them. However, political leaders play a decisive role in the construction and diffusion of national memory because they have easier access to mass media, which makes them highly influential. Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner and Claudio Fogu (2006) call the selection and dissemination of discourses on a country’s past “the politics of memory”. It involves

actors who use their public prominence to propagate narratives about the past which are functional to their political goals (Lebow 2006: 26-28).

Memory matters politically because it can be used by the political establishment as a source of legitimacy for its power. For instance, policy makers can make reference to events that play an important role in national memory and construct plausible historical analogies to obtain support for their policies (Bell 2006: 20, Gildea 2002: 59, Koczanowicz 1997: 260, König 2008: 27-34, Olick 2007: 122). The inherent ambiguity of collective memories, which are in constant flux, facilitates their manipulation and mobilisation in the service of national identity formation (Berger 2002: 81, Müller 2002: 21-22, Ray 2006: 144). As Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (1999: 6) have noted, political elites manipulated the past on a massive scale during the twentieth century. Manipulations of national history took place in particular after wars and regime changes, when states and new political elites attempted to restore social cohesion. Following major social dislocations, political elites tend to formulate and propagate official narratives that reflect their view of history and exclude all events and elements that do not fit therein (Hunt 2010: 110). Furthermore, they construct national histories as triumphant narratives, a selective retelling of the past based on accounts that stimulate strong identification with the nation (Eder 2005: 214-215).

Due to the constant influence of a multiplicity of political, historical and social factors, collective memories and identities are not fixed; they undergo a process of gradual change and adaptation. As Pierre Nora (1989: 8) argues, national memories are constantly constructed and reconstructed in a selective way; they are “in permanent evolution, a perpetually present phenomenon”. During the last 20-30 years, this process has been fuelled by a dramatic upsurge of public memory debates in North American and European societies (Huyssen 2003: 12-15). Politicians have attempted to intervene and guide these debates in a way that suited and served both their political aspirations and their conception of national identity (Gillis 1994: 3, Müller 2002: 23, Smith 2011: 235).

A widespread use of the politics of memory to forge national identities took place in almost all European countries immediately after the Second World War and again after 1989 in most East-Central European countries, following the collapse of the Soviet bloc (Assmann 2006: 260, Evans 2003: 5, Judt 1992: 96).⁶ Both in 1945 and 1989, the new political elites that emerged from the ordeal of war and from regime change needed founding myths to strengthen social cohesion at a time of economic dislocation and transformation from authoritarian to democratic forms of government (Müller 2002: 7-9). This political necessity led new leaders to search for a “usable past” in national history and reframe it in narratives that propped present political goals (Moeller 2003, Torbakov 2011: 215).

The national memories that were constructed or perpetuated in Western Europe after 1945 and in East-Central Europe after 1989 constitute the core of current national memory discourses in most European countries. This is due to the fact that many of the founding myths of today’s national political systems in Europe date back from these two historical moments. In countries such as the ones under analysis in this work, the images of Russia that crystallised in national memories during these periods, partly in continuity with pre-existing perceptions and partly based on new elements, influenced the process of national identity construction. Thus, particular perceptions of Russia as a foreign policy actor have become enshrined in national consciousness and still affect attitudes to Moscow.⁷

National memory can be conceptualised as an essential component and driving factor of national identity. Unsurprisingly, the two concepts share many of their essential features. Like national memories, national identities are multiple, malleable, contested and provide a powerful instrument for the political elites that have enough power to manipulate them. Their multiplicity derives from different conceptions of national identity across the large and diverse national community. However, states

⁶ Following the classification adopted by Konrad Jarausch (2010: 310-311), in this dissertation “East-Central Europe” includes EU member states that were located in the Soviet sphere of influence during the Cold War (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria) or were part of the Soviet Union (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia).

⁷ The analysis of different national perceptions of Russia is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, chapter 4 provides a thorough discussion of Russia’s role in German, Polish and Finnish collective memory and identity.

tend to propagate one particular narrative of national identity, which becomes dominant in official discourses. Individual and other group identities coexist and interact with officially endorsed versions of national identity, thereby creating alternative and competing variants that can become dominant within new historical and institutional contexts.⁸

National identities are malleable because they are influenced by domestic and external events and can change over time. Changes usually take place gradually; core constituents such as the nation's founding myths and cultural frameworks of reference (notably in literature, the arts and music) are relatively stable. However, sudden changes in national identity discourses may also occur, particularly when historical events force upon the nation a reconsideration of its values and interests.⁹

National identities are contested because they are subject to manipulations by social groups vying for dominance; they compete for people's allegiance with class, religious, local and supranational identities (Miller 1997: 45-46). Narratives of national identity also tend to be used as political instruments because they are generally formulated and propagated by the state in order to strengthen and legitimate the existing political system (Guibernau 2004: 140). States and political leaders are both the main advocates and key beneficiaries of national identity construction. National identity promotes homogeneity in a community because it cuts across class and local differences and transcends divisions of rank, descent, region and profession. It is therefore functional to the creation of a strong bond between political leaders and ordinary citizens, as well as among different sections of the population (Benner 2001: 162, Greenfield 1990: 550).

Since national identity provides a very useful tool for the unity and cohesiveness of a state, governments employ several strategies to favour its consolidation. They disseminate a specific image of the nation that usually relates to the dominant ethnic group. In addition, they confer citizenship and advance numerous symbols and rituals that serve the purpose of reinforcing the sense of community among citizens, as well

⁸ As shown in chapter 4, for instance, unofficial narratives of national identity in pre-1989 Poland became part of official discourses following the fall of communism.

⁹ Germany after the Second World War provides a good example in this respect.

as their loyalty towards the state. National identity is constructed also through the steering of public education and the mass media. This phenomenon is particularly marked in authoritarian states but also exists in democratic countries.

Furthermore, states often attempt to strengthen national identity by creating external enemies (Guibernau 2004: 140). For instance, France and Germany constructed each other as external threats for nearly a century (from the 1860s to the 1940s) and used the image of the menacing neighbour to foster national unity in moments of crisis. Past rivalries in Franco-German relations left a trace in national identity that influenced the political debate at a later stage, as shown by the French reservations about German reunification in 1989-1990 (Gildea 2002a). Similar patterns of national identity formation against an external Other, namely an actor that tends to be perceived as alien and antithetical, can be detected *inter alia* in Soviet-US, US-Chinese and Europe-Russia relations.¹⁰ This last case bears direct relevance to the subject of this study and will be analysed in more detail.

Russia as Europe's Other

As Iver Neumann (1998: 67-112) has shown, numerous primary sources suggest that Russia has played the role of Europe's Other for more than four centuries.¹¹ This is not to say that Russia was the only or the main Other for Europe throughout this long historical phase. Discourses on Russia were not homogeneous all over the continent and differed depending *inter alia* on the social milieu, political orientation and personal experiences of observers. Nevertheless, numerous and significant patterns consistently pointing at Russia as Europe's Other can be detected throughout this period. Studying these patterns is essential and of current relevance because Russia is

¹⁰ For a theoretical discussion of "othering" and of the construction of the Other see chapter 2.

¹¹ On the other hand, during this period Russian leaders never questioned their country's "Europeanness". The often quoted dispute between Russian "Westernisers" and "Slavophiles" concerned the question of whether Western Europe should serve as a role model for Russia or if Russia itself should become the leader of European (and world) civilisation. None of the sides in this controversy questioned Russia's European nature, even if some Slavophiles placed it within a broader Eurasian framework and attributed to it a global civilising mission (Tsygankov 2008: 766-770).

still central to national identity discourses and to the debate on European identity. Analysing dominant perceptions of Russia also helps to understand present political discussions, such as the one concerning the European security order (Webber 2009: 267-288).

European depictions of Russia show a tendency to portray it as a liminal case of European identity. Russians were often depicted as barbarous and deficient in terms of civility, form of government and religion (Poe 2003: 21). The first depictions of Russia as “the barbarian at the gates”, a recurrent theme in European discourses of the powerful Eastern neighbour, emerged in the descriptions of Russian soldiers during the Northern War against Sweden in the early eighteenth century. Around the same time, geographical handbooks argued that Russians were constructed as “body and nature”, whereas Europeans were constructed as “mind and civilization”. The metaphor of the Russian *ursa major*, which associated Russia with wild nature, originated in this context. Its endurance over time is demonstrated by the fact that it is still used today in modern variants, most notably the depiction of Russia as a threatening and irascible bear (Naarden 1992: 7-27, Neumann 1998: 67-80).

During the Napoleonic wars Russian soldiers advanced as far as Paris and, after Napoleon’s defeat, Russia was accepted as a legitimate player in the Concert of Europe. However, this acceptance was relativised by the enduring perception of Russia as “the barbarian at the gates”, a country that lacked the rationality which had become a defining element of European civilisation during the Enlightenment. European liberals, democrats and socialists were particularly keen on describing Russia as a socially and economically backward power. Conversely, conservative forces saw it as a bulwark of legitimism and of the European *ancien régime* (Neumann 1998: 66-93, 96-97). The Bolshevik revolution inverted radical and conservative views of Russia. The Bolsheviks’ radical political programme made the Soviet Union a threat to conservative political elites in the rest of Europe throughout the interwar period. The threat was substantiated by the fact that the Soviet Union could count on the extraterritorial presence of faithful allies, organised in European communist parties. On the other hand, numerous European radicals praised the USSR’s political and economic system, as well as the allegedly higher morality of

the Soviet model (Naarden 1992: 28-39, Neumann 1998: 99-102, Service 2007: 85-96).

During the Second World War, the idea of the Russians as a barbarous civilisation was pushed to the extreme by the Nazi racial discourse, which depicted them and all other Slavic peoples as sub-humans (*Untermenschen*). The idea that Russians should be excluded from humankind, and not just from Europe, was radically new (Müller and Ueberschär 2009: 209-252). However, there was continuity between some themes used by Nazi propaganda and pre-existing discourses about Russians, such as the claim that they were a barbarous and uncivilised Asiatic people. Some of these themes also characterised discourses about the Soviet Union in the post-war period; Konrad Adenauer's 1946 statement that "Asia stood on the Elbe" (cited in Rupnik 1994: 94) provides an excellent example in this respect. Adenauer referred to the presence of the Red Army in Eastern and Central Europe, which became one of the main determinants of European perceptions of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. While in the inter-war period the Soviet Union had been mostly perceived as a political threat, during the Cold War it primarily constituted a military threat in the mindsets of most Europeans. The perception of a political threat persisted in the immediate post-war period, but gradually decreased as communist parties in Western Europe lost their appeal or became critical of the Soviet Union (Neumann 1998: 99-100, Service 2007: 261-271, 379-390).

The Cold War played an important role in the construction of European perceptions of Russia also because it became the setting in which a distinct East-Central European narrative developed. This discourse, fiercely critical of both the Soviet Union and of its perceived Russian core, emerged in East-Central European countries that were located within the Soviet sphere of influence and was reflected in the writings of dissident intellectuals who were born there. Milan Kundera's (1984) article *The tragedy of Central Europe* is the most representative of these writings. Kundera, a Czech writer living in exile in France, argued that Central Europe (in which he included the nations of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and Poland) was a part of the West that had been "kidnapped, displaced and brainwashed [by the] totalitarian Russian civilisation". According to Kundera, Central Europe was the

cultural heart of Europe and its separation from Western Europe meant that the latter was losing its cultural identity. On the other hand, Central Europe kept defending its identity and “preserving its Westernness” despite Soviet domination.

The main difference between Central Europe and Russia, Kundera argued, was above all cultural, as demonstrated by the fact that the anti-Soviet revolts of 1956 and 1968 were led by local students and intellectuals. One of the key objectives in Kundera’s article was that of drawing the attention of the Western world towards the oppression of East-Central European countries under Soviet influence. In order to show that these countries culturally belonged to Europe while Soviet Russia did not, he described the former as the “vital centre of gravity of Western culture” and the latter as “the radical negation of the modern West”.

Kundera’s views on Russia were echoed by other intellectuals from East-Central Europe. Different epithets, such as “Second World”, “authoritarian” and “totalitarian” (as opposed to “First World”, “democratic” and “free”), were associated with Soviet Russia in order to differentiate it from Europe and the West. Some extreme voices in the intellectual world went as far as using quasi-racial arguments to criticise Russia. For instance, Hungarian philosopher Mihaly Vajda (1989: 170-173) argued that Russia had made the choice to become non-European and that Russians were “incapable of tolerating another civilization, another form of life”. Vajda also spoke of “the Russian beast” and Russian practices of “holocaust, imprisonment, banishment, exile”, forgetting that the Holocaust was actually a page of European history, rather than a Russian crime, and that its perpetrators had spoken of Russia in a way very similar to his own.

In 1989, when the communists were ousted from their posts and the Soviet Union left its satellites free to choose their political future, new East-Central European political leaders such as Vaclav Havel started to speak of a “return to Europe”.¹² However, it soon became clear that the Central Europe to which Kundera had referred to in his 1984 essay had not emerged from the Cold War as a united political or cultural

¹² Cited in Charles Powers, “Czech-Polish-Hungarian Accord Urged: Europe: Havel proposes 'spirit of solidarity' in aftermath of Soviet domination”, *Los Angeles Times*, 26 January 1990, http://articles.latimes.com/1990-01-26/news/mn-726_1_central-europe (accessed 1/6/2014).

entity. East-Central European countries had only managed to pass themselves off as a united entity vis-à-vis third parties by using the image of the Soviet Union as a common Other. After 1989, the new East-Central European leaders emphasised cultural differences between their countries and Russia, with the objective of creating a Self compatible with Western Europe and strenuously opposed to Russia. This strategy was meant to create the cultural preconditions, both at home and abroad, for the integration of East-Central European countries into the EU and NATO (Neumann 1998: 144, 158).

When East-Central European states joined the European Union, they brought along the legacy of four decades of resentment and confrontation with Soviet Russia. In some cases, notably those of Poland and the three Baltic States, anti-Russian feelings dated back from much earlier than the Cold War period. Anti-Russian discourses and attitudes in these countries did not vanish once the “return to Europe” had been accomplished. Historical conflicts, the enduring fear of a resurgent Russian military might and economic issues, aggravated by East-Central Europe’s energy dependence on Russia, continued to characterise the relations of the former Soviet satellites with Moscow. Furthermore, conflicts between the new East-Central European EU member states and Russia were transferred to the EU level and risked paralysing EU-Russia relations. Poland’s decision to veto negotiations on a new partnership agreement between the EU and Russia in 2006, following a quarrel over a Russian import ban on Polish meat, was the clearest manifestation of this.

Thesis structure

This introductory chapter presented the main research questions, highlighted the significance of the topic under analysis and the dissertation’s intended theoretical and empirical contribution. It defined key concepts in the dissertation, namely those of nation, national identity and collective memory. It also introduced the European context of the topic and showed that Russia was traditionally perceived as Other by the rest of Europe. Furthermore, the chapter argued for the necessity to explore

identities and discourses on Russia at the national level due to the fragmented nature of European history, politics and identity construction.

The next chapter examines in greater detail the significance of the Other in identity construction. It provides a survey of relevant debates in International Relations theory and a theoretical framework for this analysis. The focus is on social constructivist scholarship, which emphasises the importance of concepts such as identity, the construction of Others and collective memory to understand international relations. A distinction is drawn between conventional constructivist approaches, which tend to focus mostly on structural factors with a positivist epistemology, and interpretive constructivist analysis, which pays more attention to domestic factors (such as the domestic construction of national identity) and adopts a post-positivist epistemology. The theoretical framework of the dissertation is based on this latter approach.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology adopted in this study. Critical discourse analysis, notably its discourse-historical variant, offers a systematic approach to the investigation of discourses on Russia. After defining the concept of “discourse”, the chapter relates the main features and practical application of discourse-historical analysis. Subsequently, it explains and justifies the selection of case studies and of the sources for the analysis of discourses on Russia. Issues pertaining the generalisability and reliability of findings are also addressed

Chapter 4 examines national identity construction in Germany, Poland and Finland, with a special focus on Russia’s role as Other. It takes a *longue durée* perspective that follows the construction of national identity in the three countries approximately from the nineteenth century until the present. This perspective allows an investigation of how Russia was internalised in national identity starting from the emergence of modern national identities, with a focus on the historical events that mark key fractures in the selected countries’ process of identity formation and relations with Russia. The *longue durée* approach best fits the study of national identity construction, which took place slowly, over a long time span. Dominant themes in identity discourses and discourses on Russia over time are identified and

provide an interpretive key for the subsequent analysis of policy makers' discourses on Russia from 2005 to 2012.

Chapters 5 to 7 analyse policy makers' discourses on Russia in the selected countries in response to three major events in which Russia was a prominent actor: the controversies surrounding the construction of the Nord Stream pipeline, the 2008 Russian-Georgian war and the street protests that followed the December 2011 parliamentary elections in Russia. The analysis of the relationship between these discourses and national identity constitutes the thesis's main empirical contribution. It sheds light on how conceptions of Russia framed within national identity relate to contemporary foreign policy discourses, and how the latter in turn contribute to the consolidation or change of the images of Russia enshrined in national identity and memory.

Chapter 8 examines German, Polish and Finnish leaders' discourses on Russia during their countries' presidency of the European Union. This focus allows an investigation of how national priorities concerning Russia are transposed in the EU discursive arena. It also offers insights into the deeper, identity-based roots of European foreign policy discourse. Finally, the concluding chapter presents a comparative summary of the dissertation's findings concerning national discourses on Russia and discusses avenues for further research. Drawing on the comparative analysis, the final chapter also assesses the prospects for the emergence of a shared foreign policy discourse on Russia in the European Union.

Chapter 2: Theorising national identity and foreign policy

Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework of the dissertation. It argues that interpretive constructivism provides the best approach to study the relationship between national identity and foreign policy discourses. The main concepts introduced in the previous section, notably national identity and the relationship between Self and Other, are defined and analysed from a theoretical perspective. The key questions addressed are: which theoretical approach within the discipline of International Relations best explores the relationship between national identity and foreign policy discourses? How does constructivist research conceptualise national identity and the relationship between Self and Other? What is the main criticism of positivist constructivist theory? How can this criticism be integrated in a revised constructivist approach to study the relationship between national identity and foreign policy discourses?

The chapter first explores the conceptualisation of identity in the three main grand theories of International Relations, namely neorealism, neoliberalism and social constructivism. Due to its focus on identity as a factor in international politics, social constructivism is identified as the best theoretical approach to explore the relationship between national identity and foreign policy. Hence, constructivist theorisations of identity formation and of the relationship between Self and Other are examined. The investigation of constructivist literature starts from the works published by Alexander Wendt and other positivist scholars during the 1990s. As emerges from the analysis, these works argued that interest formation and policy formulation are a function of identity. Wendtian scholarship established a unidirectional causal link between identity on one side and both interests and policy making on the other.

Subsequently, the analysis presents the main criticism of the Wendtian approach. This criticism focuses primarily on Wendt's positivist epistemology, his neglect of material power as a constitutive element of international relations and his lack of attention to the relevance of the domestic level in identity formation. Positivist constructivist scholarship from the 1990s is critiqued also for styling the Other as an exclusively antithetical and negative factor in national identity construction. Drawing on this criticism, the chapter revises the Wendtian approach and proposes a new theoretical model that conceptualises the relationship between identity, interests and foreign policy discourses as mutually constitutive. This model provides the theoretical framework for the empirical chapters of the dissertation.

National identity and European foreign policy towards Russia: a constructivist perspective

As highlighted in the previous chapter, Russia is arguably the most divisive issue in European foreign policy. Divergent views often emerge when European Union member states are required to formulate a foreign policy response to a major event that sees Russia as a protagonist. Different opinions frequently result in the prevalence of bilateral approaches over a united EU position. The response of EU member states to the 2008 Russian-Georgian war, to Moscow's energy policies and to its concerns over NATO Eastern enlargement provide prime examples of diverging European approaches to Russia (David et al. 2013). Despite belonging to a single economic and defence community, EU member states perceive Russia differently, particularly with regard to their security interests. The reasons for these differences go beyond neoliberal and neorealist theorisations of institutional cooperation or interstate relations in an anarchic and hostile environment. They must be investigated at the domestic level, where national identities and interests are constructed and discourses on Russia are formulated.¹³

¹³ As Henry Nau (2002: 16) argues in his study of US foreign policy, national interests "begin with what kind of society the nation is, not just what its geopolitical circumstances are".

This dissertation adopts a theoretical approach that highlights the mutually constitutive relationship between national identity construction and European foreign policy towards Russia. The constructivist school of thought defines the politics of identity as one of the keys to understanding how a country's domestic dynamics interact with and affect global politics (Hopf 1998: 192). Constructivists treat identities and interests as endogenous to interaction, whereas neoliberals and neorealists consider them as exogenously given and constant. For neoliberals and neorealists, states have uncomplicated and unchanging identities and interests, which neither affect nor are influenced by agents and structures (Laffey and Weldes 1997: 193-237; cf. Waltz 1979).

Neoliberals investigated the significance of norms and ideas in international relations, but did not explain whether and how they play a role in identity construction. Neoliberal studies tend to consider ideas and norms only as intervening factors between states seeking self-help in the anarchic international system and their subsequent actions (Waever 2002: 21). They largely neglect the domestic level of analysis and the function that the domestic constituency plays in the formulation of foreign policy preferences. Hence, neoliberalism does not provide solid theoretical foundations to analyse the domestic construction of national identity and its interaction with international politics.

Neorealism also focuses on structures and treats states as monoliths, unproblematic units that follow the logic of self-help and power-balancing in an anarchical international environment (cf. Waltz 1979: 102-128). The neorealist approach to international relations does not attribute any role to domestic and social factors such as national identity in foreign policy making. Due to the lack of attention to these factors, neorealism offers a static view of international politics and is unable to explain change, particularly peaceful change (Ruggie 1998: 874-875). This deficiency is due also to the neorealists' inability to articulate a convincing framework to understand the formulation of state interests. State interests cannot be derived from the condition of anarchy, as neorealists claim, because anarchy is an ambiguous concept. In fact, neorealism handles interest formation by assumption (Ruggie 1998: 862-869).

Furthermore, neorealism oversimplifies the process of preference formation and decision making. Decision makers are not always rational, as neorealists tend to assume (Legro and Moravcsik 1999: 53).¹⁴ They may rely on heuristic, the logic of appropriateness (Müller 2004) and the logic of practice (Pouliot 2008), in which the decision making process is deeply influenced by the social embeddedness of actors, their identity and other cultural elements. Thus, decision making processes are best studied within a constructivist framework that endogenises and analyses the multifaceted, malleable and complex nature of identities, as well as their mutually constitutive relationship with agents and structures (Checkel 2008: 72). Table 2 below summarises the different conceptualisations of identity in the main approaches of International Relations theory and highlights its central role in social constructivism.

Table 2. Conceptualisation of identity in the main theories of International Relations

	Neorealism/neoliberalism	Social constructivism
Conceptualisation of identity	Exogenous to theory	Endogenous to theory
	Constant	Fluid, malleable
	Does not influence agents and structures	Shapes and constitutes agents and structures
	Does not affect state interests, which are derived from the anarchic international system	Shapes and constitutes state interests
	Has no influence on rational decision makers	It is a cognitive device that influences decision makers' motives, actions and understanding of the world

Source: own compilation

¹⁴ Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik (1999: 53) go as far as claiming that a generic commitment to this assumption is the only element that neorealists currently share. In all other respects, their work diverges due to their attempts to subsume the causal mechanisms of competing theories.

National identity tends to be constructed in relation to one or more significant Others, namely actors in the international environment that are perceived as different or antithetical by the nation (or Self). It operates as a cognitive device that provides a state with an understanding of other countries, their motives, interests, probable actions and attitudes (Hopf 2002: 5). Language and discourses play an essential role in the construction of national identity and its significant Others. Dominant identity discourses are the cognitive structures through which policy makers formulate national interests and take foreign policy decisions. A country's leaders, particularly its political and intellectual elites, are the primary agents and interpreters of national identity construction, as they both shape and are influenced by the dominant discourses of the national environments in which they are embedded (Checkel 2006: 63, Lebow 2008: 556-564).¹⁵

In this work, the construction of national identity and its relationship with foreign policy narratives concerning Russia are examined through an interpretive constructivist framework and discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is indispensable for the investigation and interpretation of policy makers' discourses, which accompany and shape foreign policy decisions. These narratives reflect the national identity in which policy makers are embedded and thus constitute an essential source to study the relationship between national identity and foreign policy. Furthermore, the comparison of national discourses on Russia across European countries allows investigating prospects for the emergence of a shared foreign policy stance towards the Kremlin within the EU. According to interpretive constructivists, diverging national discourses are often associated with conflicting interests and different foreign policy behaviours (Hopf 1998: 193, Lebow 2008: 563-564). We can therefore expect diverging national identity discourses to translate into different foreign policy attitudes towards Russia.

¹⁵ As Jeffrey Checkel (2006: 63) argues, agents are persuasive because they are authoritative, but also "because they are enabled and legitimated by the broader social discourse in which they are embedded".

The epistemological and ontological groundings of social constructivism offer an ideal theoretical model for this analysis. As Stefano Guzzini (2000: 147) argued, constructivist epistemology focuses on the social construction of knowledge, whereas its ontology is about the construction of social reality. Accordingly, this dissertation explores the social construction of narratives concerning national identity and Russia in the selected countries. Ontologically, it examines the mutually constitutive relationship between these narratives and national foreign policy towards Russia.

National identity, the Other and Wendtian constructivist research

The concept of identity has been discussed widely in constructivist scholarship. The term originates from social psychology, where it describes the individuality and distinctiveness of an actor (the Self) in its evolving relations with significant Others (Jepperson et al. 1996: 59). Alexander Wendt transposed the concept to international relations theory and argued that identities are relatively stable (albeit subject to change in the long run) role-specific understandings and expectations about an actor (the Self) that are constructed in interactions with other actors. The type of social structure that prevails in the international system depends on how actors construct their identity in relation to others. Relatively stable identities and expectations about each other develop as a result of continuous interaction (Wendt 1994: 384-396).

According to Wendt (1999), national identity formation happens at state level, but it is also influenced by international structures. In the international arena, countries define the boundaries of their Selves and those of their respective Others, so as to consolidate their distinctive national traits. National interests are rooted in national identity because an actor “cannot know what it wants until it knows who it is” (Wendt 1999: 231).¹⁶ In particular, national identity determines a state’s interests based on how other actors are perceived (Wendt 1999: 224-233; cf. Adler 1997: 337,

¹⁶ To emphasise the tight correlation between identity and interests, Wendt (1999: 231-232) also claims that “interests are needs or functional imperatives which must be fulfilled if an identity is to be reproduced”.

Hopf 1998: 175). Such perceptions are profoundly influenced by historical interaction between the state and its Others. An actor that has played the role of Other over a protracted historical period becomes internalised as such in a country's national memory (Barnett 1996: 446, Lebow 2006: 3, Smith 1992: 58). In the national memory of several European states, Russia has been internalised as a significant Other (Lebow 2008: 10, Neumann and Medvedev 2012: 13). Together with Turkey, Russia constituted the main Other against which identities were constructed in early modern and modern Europe (cf. Neumann 1998). The concept of otherness is thus fundamental to understand Russia's role in national identity construction in European states.

The antithesis between Self and Other is a central theme in modern philosophy, social anthropology, psychology and literary theory (Neumann 1996: 141-154). In the early nineteenth century, Hegel (1999: 15-20) argued that the citizens of a state develop a collective identity as a result of conflicts with other states. Hence, according to Hegel the formation of the Self occurs through interaction with the Other. In the second half of the century, Nietzsche elaborated on Hegel's thinking and stated that Self and Other are not fixed elements, but perceive each other from changing perspectives (cited in Neumann 1998: 148). Following the same line of argument, a century later Carl Schmitt (1976) claimed that political identities can best be formed in struggles against others.

During the last twenty years, the dichotomy between Self and Other became a pivotal topic in International Relations theory. David Campbell (1998: 191-205) attempted to explain US foreign policy as a continuous search for new collectives to treat as Others in order to consolidate national identity and rally domestic support. Campbell argued that, following the demise of the Soviet Union, Washington identified new Others in Saddam Hussein's Iraq and China. Writing a decade later, Richard Ned Lebow (2008: 11) asserted that American domestic and foreign policy after the

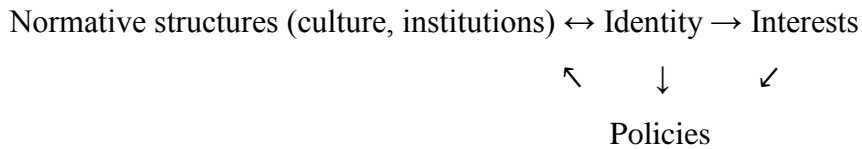
terrorist attacks of 9 September 2001 showed how easy it was for political leaders to exploit the fear of Others to create solidarity at home.¹⁷

Ole Waever (2002) analysed the relationship between Self and Other from an interpretive constructivist perspective that focuses on the role of discourses. According to Waever, a collective Self is predicated on some essential political ideas, such as what constitutes a state or a nation. The Self attempts to make these ideas the core of institutionalisation in political cooperation, which produces discursive clashes with the Other. Waever argued that these conflicts can be studied as the substance of world politics in an alternative, identity-based approach to foreign policy analysis. Further studies investigated specific aspects of the Self/Other dichotomy. Erik Ringmar (1996: 80) highlighted the active participation of the Other in an actor's identity construction. He claimed that Others are the main recipients of the Self's narratives and determine whether such narratives are a valid description of the Self through interaction. Jennifer Mitzen (2006: 341-370) studied the use of Others in the framework of ontological security, or security of the Self. She contended that states become dependent on security dilemmas¹⁸ due to their reliance on routines that help consolidate their identities in relation to significant Others.

Elaborating on Wendt's theoretical framework, the essays in Peter Katzenstein's (1996) edited volume *The culture of national security* further investigated the dichotomy between Self and Other. Most importantly, they offer crucial insights for the study of the relationship between identity and foreign policy. In an introductory essay, Katzenstein, Wendt and Ronald Jepperson argued that cultural and institutional elements of states' domestic and global environments shape national identity. Variations in national identity determine a state's security interests and policies and in turn affect normative structures, namely culture and institutions (Jepperson et al. 1996: 53-65). These relationships can be summarised in the following model:

¹⁷ The popularity of Samuel Huntington's (1997) work on "the clash of civilisations" showed that the dichotomy Self/Other has become a pervasive theme in public debates. Huntington's book in itself was evidence that "othering" could be used as a deliberate policy to strengthen national identities (cf. Neumann 1996: 168).

¹⁸ Security dilemmas refer to a condition in which one state's gain in security decreases the security of other actors (Jervis 1978: 169-170).



As the model shows, identity influences policies through the determination of interests. However, it can also shape policies directly as a result of a state's identity politics. The case studies in Katzenstein's volume provide convincing empirical evidence for the model. Among these, Thomas Berger's work (1996: 318) argued that, due to historical experiences and how these are interpreted by domestic political actors, Germany and Japan have developed national identities which make them reluctant to resort to the use of military force.¹⁹ Berger then showed that German and Japanese post-1945 identity politics, notably the decision to construct an antimilitaristic national identity, had a direct impact both on policy making and on the domestic institutional context where defence policy is formulated (cf. Bjola and Kornprobst 2007).

Robert Herman's (1996) essay on Soviet foreign policy in the late 1980s showed the interrelation between identity construction, the formation of interests and the formulation of foreign policy. Herman argued that the end of the Cold War was a consequence of Gorbachev's new thinking, which caused a radical reconceptualization of state interests. This redefinition was determined by the emergence of a new identity in some post-Brezhnev Soviet elites, who thought that Soviet interests could best be served by overcoming the East-West division and by cooperating with the United States to achieve peace and stability. The new Soviet thinking allowed progress in arms control, produced a peaceful response to the revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe and led to a democratic shift in Soviet political culture and institutions. Thus, Herman's work illustrated the effects that changes in identity can have on normative structures.

¹⁹ Events with enduring significance for a country, such as the Second World War for Germany and Japan, create dominant collective memories that allow the mobilization of national identities in particular directions (Liu and Hilton 2005: 545).

Also in Katzenstein's volume, Michael Barnett's analysis of alliances in the Middle East showed that often the politics of identity offers a better explanation than the realist logic of anarchy of the mechanisms that lead a state to identify partners and threats to its security. Most notably, Barnett (1996: 401) claimed that there is a correlation between an actor's identity and its strategic behaviour. Furthermore, Thomas Risse-Kappen's essay (1996: 397) argued that collective identities based on shared democratic values ensure the longevity of institutions and applied this logic to explain NATO's endurance after the end of the Cold War. According to Risse-Kappen, NATO's longevity could hardly be understood following the realist logic of balancing, as the fall of the Soviet Union meant the disappearance of the superpower which the Atlantic Alliance was supposed to balance.

Other scholars elaborated on the theoretical framework developed in Katzenstein's edited volume. Richard Ned Lebow (2008) showed that identity construction can explain events which have traditionally been analysed in terms of power and rational choice, such as the Cuban missile crisis (cf. Allison and Zelikow 1999). Lebow argued that individuals, armies and political elites are committed to asserting and maintaining their identities. To achieve this purpose, they use all available means and power, which Lebow conceived not simply as material power, but also as immaterial capabilities.²⁰ Lebow (2008: 552-557) also claimed that actors are reluctant to behave in ways and take decisions that do not conform to their identities, even when such behaviours and decisions appear more rational. Policies that are at odds with national identity create domestic conflict and weaken decision makers' legitimacy at home.

As Ted Hopf (2002) argued, decision makers are embedded in social cognitive structures that are shaped by national identity. National identity and political elites (the decision makers *par excellence*) are mutually constitutive: the latter are influenced by, contribute to create and act based on the former (cf. Jepperson et al. 1996: 51). Hence, determining dominant identity discourses is an essential component of national politics. At the domestic level, political elites vie for control

²⁰ For instance, the authority to determine the official discourses that constitute a state's identity and interests (cf. Adler 1997: 336).

over the discursive power that is necessary to produce meaning and acquire legitimacy in a national group. However, their behaviour is also influenced by supranational structures. In particular, their foreign policy decisions are constrained and empowered by prevailing social practices both at home and abroad (Checkel 1998: 343-344, Hopf 1998: 179-196).

As previously argued, interaction with Others in the international arena is fundamental for national identity construction. Political elites at the highest level (such as heads of state or government, ministers of defence, economy and foreign affairs) are the main agents in this interaction. Their discourses matter most because they are formulated in institutional settings that are authoritative and conducive to persuasion (Checkel 2004: 240). The analysis in the following chapters offers one possible way of examining and interpreting these discourses, focusing on their social and identity roots.

The complexity of identity construction: criticism of the Wendtian approach

In order to refine the theoretical model that will be applied to this investigation, the most relevant criticism of the Wendtian approach to the study of international relations will be examined and integrated in the model. This criticism concerns primarily Wendt's lack of attention to the domestic level, his positivist approach, the complexity of the use of Others in identity construction and the necessity to take into account material factors in an identity-based theoretical model developed by Katzenstein et al. (1996).

Maja Zehfuss (2001: 335-338) argued that Wendt's definition of identity is problematic because it lacks complexity and does not take into consideration domestic processes of articulation of state identity. According to Zehfuss, Wendt focused more on the boundaries of the Self than on its internal construction. He neglected identity construction at the domestic level to focus on social identities at

the systemic level (cf. Checkel 1998: 341).²¹ Zehfuss claimed that identity cannot be merely negotiated between states. Hence, the social construction of actors' identities must be studied at both the systemic and the domestic level. As Ted Hopf (1998: 196) argued, any state identity in world politics reflects the social practices that constitute identity at home. Identity politics in the domestic arena enable and constrain identity, interests and actions abroad.

Zehfuss also criticized Wendt's positivist approach. She claimed that the scientific identification of causal mechanisms cannot be applied to social sciences because identities are not logically bounded entities. They are continuously rearticulated and contested, they can be complex and multiple, which makes it difficult to use them as variables or as explanatory categories.²² Due to the nature and complexity of national identities, tracing direct causal links between them and foreign policy is not possible. The interaction and mutually constitutive relationship between national identities and foreign policy is best analysed as a fluid, multifaceted phenomenon, excluding rigid positivist methodological categorisations.

In Wendt's theory, epistemological issues are compounded by ontological oversimplifications, such as those regarding the essence and role of the Other in national identity construction. Conventional constructivists tend to exaggerate the significance of threatening Others. Their theorization of a highly conflictual relationship between Self and threatening Others has become a source of inspiration for some realists too. Alastair Iain Johnston (1999) integrated the identity variable in a model that seeks to explain countries' realpolitik behaviour. According to Johnston, a perceived threat to the legitimacy of the Self's cohesion, organisation and values leads to an increase in the intensity of its identity. As a result of this, the Self adopts a more competitive behaviour towards the Other and reacts to the threat in a realpolitik fashion. For instance, the Self becomes more sensitive and reactive to the

²¹ Wendt (1994: 387) hinted at the importance of the domestic level when he argued that states depend heavily on their society for political survival. However, he failed to follow up this argument with an in-depth analysis of the relevance of domestic politics.

²² As Fiona Adamson and Madeleine Demetriou (2007: 489-526) have shown, national identities can also acquire an extraterritorial dimension in the context of diasporas, with specific and distinct characteristics.

growth of the Others' relative material capabilities as the intensity of its identity increases.

Johnston applied this model to explain Chinese reactions to the June 1989 protests in China, which the country's leadership portrayed as an American-led attempt to overthrow socialism and "exterminate China" (1999: 295). Simultaneously to the increase in the intensity of Chinese identity discourses, Beijing raised its military expenditure and thus reacted in a *realpolitik* fashion to the perceived threat. Johnston's model offers an interesting perspective to explore the relationship between Chinese identity and foreign policy. However, it is marred by several fundamental weaknesses. It does not analyse identity in its complexity, but merely in terms of intensity. Furthermore, as Johnston acknowledged, there is no good indicator for the intensity of identity. He also conceded that Chinese *realpolitik* has deeper roots than the intensification of national identity after 1989. Furthermore, in his model identity construction is described exclusively as a process of "devaluing external others and portraying the external environment as conflictual" (1999: 295).

However, Richard Ned Lebow (2008) has shown that identity is not always constructed against or to exclude others. It can also form prior to the construction of the Other. In addition, the Other is not necessarily associated with negative stereotypes; positive interaction also occurs. As Ted Hopf (2002: 7) contended, identities are always relational (we understand them only by relating them to other identities) but only sometimes oppositional. Furthermore, Lebow (2008a: 473-492) convincingly argued that cultural and other differences can be overcome through assimilation and allegiance to a common humanity, which allows transcending the dichotomy between Self and Other. For instance, prominent German intellectuals such as Kant and Hegel constructed the German Self by incorporating crucial elements of the French Other (Lebow 2008: 12). Ancient Roman identity was also

built by assimilating numerous cultural elements from a different civilisation, namely ancient Greece.²³

Following Lebow's argument, Erik Gartzke and Kristian Gleditsch (2006) showed that culture and identity may influence international disputes in a way that runs counter to conventional beliefs. In a study on identity and conflict, they argued that conflict is more likely among states with closer cultural ties. Hopf (2002: 8) concurred with this argument and claimed that the most threatening Other is perhaps the closest Other, as it may be able to replace the Self more easily than any alternative. For instance, this consideration helps explain the Soviet Union's conflicts with communist China and Yugoslavia during the Cold War. Chinese and Yugoslav communists were condemned in Soviet discourses because they proposed a different way to the construction of state socialism, thereby challenging Moscow's primacy in the communist camp.

Lebow (2008a: 476-486) conceded that abundant historical evidence highlights the construction of a stereotyped and negative Other in conjunction with national identity formation. He also stated explicitly that Russia was mostly treated as a cultural and political Other in the construction of European society. However, his warning against assuming that the Other always has negative connotations remains valid. Empirical studies have shown that Russia's role as a negative Other for Europe has often been exaggerated. Iver Neumann (1998: 67-80) has documented that Russia was portrayed as a liminal case of European identity during the last century: at times, Europeans perceived it as a threatening Other, but occasionally it was considered as a full and valuable member of the European family of nations.

Both when Russia was constructed as a threatening Other and as part of the European Self, its considerable power in the international scene constituted an essential determinant of these constructions. Hence, as Ole Wæver (2002) argued, both ideational and material factors must be taken into account in the analysis of the Self/Other dichotomy. The relationship between ideas and material factors is

²³ Conversely, groups or elements considered at the core of a community's identity can lose their status and even become threatening Others. Shifting US colonists' perceptions of Britain during the eighteenth century provide a good example in this respect (Lebow 2008a: 487-488).

dialectical. Material power acquires significance only in particular discursive constructions that define it as, for instance, threatening or not. As Wæver (2002: 22) noted, Wendt neglected the material aspect, which turned his theoretical approach into a culturalist explanation for inertia and continuity. The Wendtian approach is therefore unable to explain material interests and the complexity of evolving foreign policy beyond historical narrative.

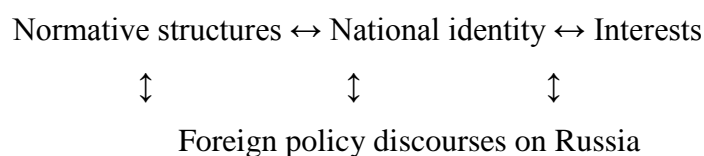
A model for analysis: discursive relations between identity and foreign policy

National foreign policy discourses can be studied through a theoretical framework that allows an investigation of how they mutually interact with national identity construction. Some recent research on this subject has relied on similar, constructivist models. In an edited volume on EU-Russia and German-Russian relations, Iver Neumann and Sergei Medvedev (2012: 13-18) argued that constructivist theory provides the missing link to bridge political practices with social identities. According to them, identity is a key precondition for foreign policy. The other essays in the volume focus on identity and cultural discourses, reciprocal historical perceptions and the implications of different national assessments of Russia for EU foreign policy (Krumm et al. 2012).

In a milestone study of interpretive constructivist research, Ted Hopf (2002) analysed the domestic construction of Soviet and Russian identities and their impact on foreign policy, focusing on the years 1955 and 1999. Hopf's work shows that domestic identities allow for the understanding and formulation of strategic and economic interests. Identity discourses shaped Soviet leaders' understandings of other states and influenced their foreign policy moves, which in turn had an impact on the development of Soviet identity. Thus, deconstructing the national identity in which Soviet leaders were embedded and studying their discursive practices constitute fundamental preconditions to understand their foreign policy decisions.

A focus on the domestic level is essential also to assess the nature of European identity. Jeffrey Checkel (2006) argued that European identity is shaped by numerous domestic elements, including deeply entrenched social discourses. Political and societal debates largely originate and take place in national discursive arenas. For common policies to be agreed at the European level, national discourses need to be coherent among each other, so that national elites and public opinions share similar viewpoints concerning common policies (cf. Liu and Hilton 2005: 542). A constructivist approach to the study of European identity and policies should therefore integrate the European and the national levels of analysis (Checkel 2006: 68-69). This work attempts to do this by assessing how national identity discourses interact and relate to each other in the European context.

An adjusted version of the model elaborated by Katzenstein, Wendt and Jepperson and discussed above can be applied to investigate the relationship between national identities and foreign policy discourses on Russia. This relationship is best studied as the interaction of discursive formations, rather than as a causal concatenation of variables. The association between national identity and foreign policy discourses is complex, dialectical and mutually constitutive (cf. Prizel 1998: 12-37). Describing it as a unidirectional cause-effect relationship, where national identity determines foreign policy, oversimplifies reality. Foreign policy discourses reflect and in turn constitute the essence of national identity. National identity provides the cultural context for national interest formation and for a country's behaviour in the international arena. It is in turn influenced by international structures and by the pursuit of national interests therein. Hence, an updated model for this analysis would look as follows:



The arrows in the model represent mutually constitutive discursive relationships. Numerous identity and foreign policy discourses exist in each national context. The dissertation focuses on dominant official discourses formulated by heads of state or government and foreign ministers, as these actors are the main decision makers in the realm of foreign policy. Dominant media discourses are occasionally referred to in order to contextualise policy makers' statements and reconstruct the main Russia-related themes in public debates. These debates influence the social cognitive structure in which policy makers are embedded and help understand the domestic roots of their discourses about Russia (cf. Hopf 2002: 20).

Decision makers' agency, namely their capacity to act and influence dominant discourses and policies, is central to the model adopted for this analysis. As argued, national identity guides and constrains decision makers' choices. However, national leaders can also make selective and instrumental use of particular identity discourses in order to achieve specific foreign policy goals. For instance, decision makers who intend to strengthen economic relations with Russia will emphasise narratives portraying it as a good and reliable partner. Conversely, politicians who oppose the partnership with Russia, or who attempt to strengthen domestic consensus by constructing negative external Others, will rather stress identity discourses portraying it as threatening and unreliable.

National identity and foreign policy narratives are studied both at the domestic level, in their process of national formation and contestation, and in their interaction with international structures. In this latter regard, the focus is on interaction with Russia and its construction as an Other in national identity. Russia is not considered *a priori* as a negative Other against which national identity is constructed. The investigation of national identities' historical construction shows that, occasionally, positive interaction between Russia and the three countries under analysis occurred in the past.²⁴ Furthermore, the boundaries between Self and Other are treated as blurred and not as sharply delimited. For instance, in spite of their historical rivalry, post-1945 Poland and Russia followed parallel paths of social and economic development, which are reflected in similar national identity discourses today (for example, those

²⁴ See chapter 4.

expressing a rejection of communism as a political model or emphasising the role of religion in society).

While Russia is a significant Other for the three countries under investigation, it is by no means the only one. For a long historical period, France and Sweden were at least equally important Others for Germany and Finland respectively. Today, due to its double role as Other in the international arena and as the country of origin for millions of immigrants, Turkey may be an even more critical Other for Germany. Furthermore, Polish identity construction was affected by interaction with several significant Others, including Germans, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Jews (Prizel 1998: 38-152). Hence, the analysis of Russia's role as Other in Polish identity and foreign policy discourses has to take into consideration this tangled web and the fact that additional Others may often influence and even feature more prominently in these discourses.

The theoretical model adopted in the dissertation investigates both the cultural and the material factors constituting national discourses on Russia within a constructivist framework. Material power acquires significance only within particular discursive constructions. For instance, Polish leaders may consider Russia's energy power both as a positive factor, as after the Polish-Russian agreement to build the Yamal-Europe pipeline in the early 1990s, and as a national threat, as shown by Warsaw's overt hostility to the German-Russian Nord Stream pipeline (cf. Prizel 1998: 132).²⁵ Polish national identity, notably the construction of the Russian and German Other therein, provides the key to understand radically different perceptions of the same material power.

²⁵ See also Stephen Castle, "Poles angry at pipeline pact", *The Independent*, 1 May 2006, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/poles-angry-at-pipeline-pact-476320.html> (accessed 4/2/2013).

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that social constructivism provides the best theoretical approach to examine the relationship between national identity and foreign policy discourses. Following constructivist theory, national identity reflects historical relations with Russia and influences current foreign policy narratives in the countries under analysis. Conversely, neorealist and neoliberal approaches largely ignore the importance of identity and interaction with the Other in the formulation of foreign policy discourses. Building on the insights of positivist constructivist scholarship from the 1990s and its subsequent criticism, the chapter developed an interpretive constructivist model for the ensuing empirical analysis.

In the model, identity is conceptualised as a multifaceted and fluctuating construct, hard to measure or quantify. Its relationship with foreign policy is best studied as the interaction of discourses, both at the domestic level (where foreign policy is formulated) and in the international arena. This relationship is complex and mutually constitutive. Concretely, this means that national identity narratives are both shaped by and influence discursive interaction with Russia.

The relationship between national identity and top national leaders, the primary agents in foreign policy making, is also mutually constitutive. The leaders of a country are embedded in social cognitive structures shaped by national identity. Hence, they are reluctant to enact policies that do not conform to it. However, as they are also the main agents in the construction of national identity, they sometimes develop new narratives that complement and further develop dominant identity discourses. This in turn contributes to explaining the malleability of national identity.

The focus on the discursive level allows for the inclusion of material factors and power in the model. These are analysed as important constituents of discursive constructions that have a dialectical relationship with ideational factors. For instance, this means that Russia's energy power can acquire different significance (as a threat or as a driver of trade with Moscow) depending on how Russia is constructed in national identity and in dominant discourses.

Most importantly, while interaction with the Other is considered an essential element in national identity formation, the Other is not defined *a priori* as antitetical to the Self. Positive interaction between Self and Other is possible, leading to the reciprocal assimilation of cultural practices. As the following chapters show, this is true also for relations between Russia and the countries under investigation. This theoretical approach therefore allows for a more nuanced study of Russia's role in national identity and foreign policy discourses in the countries under analysis.

Chapter 3: Applying discourse-historical analysis: methodology and research design

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology that was adopted to investigate the research questions and apply the theoretical framework presented in the previous sections. The main issues addressed are: what is critical discourse analysis and how can its discourse-historical variant be applied to the study of foreign policy discourses? How are case studies and national discursive arenas selected for this study? What are the main methodological issues in the selection of sources and case studies? Are the dissertation's findings reliable and generalisable?

The chapter begins by defining the concept of discourse and introducing the main aspects of critical discourse analysis. It then presents a detailed discussion of the discourse-historical approach and of its application to the study of foreign policy makers' discourses. Subsequently, the selection of three national discursive arenas and of three case studies for the investigation of official narratives concerning Russia is outlined and justified. The rationale behind the selection of sources and the timeframe of the study are also presented. The last sections of the chapter include a discussion on the reliability and generalisability of findings and address the main methodological issues encountered in this research.

Discourse analysis and the discourse-historical approach

Discourse analysis is the methodology used in this study to investigate German, Polish and Finnish discourses on Russia. "Discourse" is defined as a form of social practice, a specific type of language use in social interaction, both in speech and in writing. Discourses are socially constructed and have a mutually constitutive relationship with social structures. Discursive practices contribute to sustaining,

reproducing and transforming social structures. They reflect and affect power relations through their representation of the world. No discourse can be fully understood without taking into account the context in which it was produced; it is meaningful only in its cultural, historical and ideological embedding (Wodak 1996: 14-19).

Most important for the purpose of this study, a country's identity discourses and their relationship with external Others are of essential relevance to the formulation of foreign policy (Wæver 2005: 35). As Ruth Wodak (2002a: 66) has noted, a dialectical relationship exists between discursive practices and the field of action in which they are embedded. Accordingly, policy makers' discourses on Russia affect their country's foreign policy towards Russia. Discursive practices are constructed domestically in hegemonic struggles for political and moral-intellectual leadership. They are instrumental in perpetuating, justifying or transforming national identities. They also involve the formation of social antagonism, most notably the exclusion of threatening Others. Discourses about external Others - like all discourses - are fluid and should be studied as flexible, historically-bound constructs. Hegemonic discourses become dislocated when they prove unable to explain new events (de Cilla et al 1999: 157, Torfing 2005: 15-16).

Discourse analysis, particularly its discourse-historical approach, offers the best methodological framework to study national discourses on Russia and their relationship to foreign policy in their evolving, historical dimension. Discourse analysis is an interpretive and explanatory methodology that systematically reduces the number of possible readings of a text by identifying its cultural and historical embedding. It deconstructs texts and relates them to their social and ideological background (Wodak 1996: 19). Critical discourse analysis investigates social processes from which texts originate and within which social actors create meanings, with the aim of exposing power relations and changing discursive structures.

Three concepts are essential in critical discourse analysis: power, ideology and history (Wodak 2002: 3). In discourse theory, power is defined as "the political acts of inclusion and exclusion that shape social meanings and identities and condition

the construction of social antagonisms and political frontiers” (Torfing 2005: 23). Power rests in the hands of social groups that formulate dominant discourses and can thus demarcate the boundaries of identity. This means that power and identity discourse are intrinsically linked. As discourse is shaped by dominant social structures and groups, it reflects their ideology. The role of ideology, meant as the system of political and cultural beliefs of an actor, must therefore be recognised and deconstructed in discourse analysis (van Dijk 2002: 117, Wodak 2002: 3).

Critical discourse analysis has a contextual and historicist view of discourses. It seeks to place them against their historical background in order to understand how they evolve and to investigate political attempts at restructuring them (Torfing 2005: 14). The discourse-historical approach, which is the variant of critical discourse analysis adopted in this study, pays particular attention to the historical dimension of discourse. By integrating knowledge about the historical sources and the background in which discursive events are embedded, it provides a comprehensive interpretation. Accordingly, the analysis of Russia’s role in German, Polish and Finnish national identity formation in chapter 4 serves the purpose of delineating the historical framework of current discourses on Russia. Furthermore, discourse-historical analysis explores how discourses are subject to diachronic change. Hence, the historical background is studied as a factor affecting the development of discourses over time (Wodak 2002a: 65; cf. de Cilla et al. 156).

The discourse-historical approach is interdisciplinary, as it draws on the methods and thematic focus of both political science and history. It is problem-oriented, because it focuses on specific social themes (in this study, the role of Russia as Other in national identity and foreign policy discourses) and not exclusively on linguistic issues, as is the case with other discourse analytical approaches. It is applicable to different genres of text, including political speeches and newspaper interviews, which are the main primary sources for this dissertation. Texts and discourses are not studied in isolation; relationships with other texts (intertextuality) and discourses (interdiscursivity) are also investigated (Wodak 2002a: 69-70).

Most of the textual work involves tracing the development of a few key concepts and themes, including their historical origins and relationship to other subjects (cf. Waever 2005: 36). Key concepts and themes identify semantic macrostructures that play a fundamental role in communication and interaction. They reflect what a discourse is about globally speaking and exemplify its most important information (van Dijk 2002: 101-102). Identifying key concepts is crucial because they epitomise the gist of discourses, namely the essence that an audience retains from a discourse. Language users are unable to memorise and process all meanings in a discourse; they reorganise them into a few global meanings. Key themes are often explicit in titles, headlines or summaries of a text. Sometimes they are not observable directly, but can be inferred through a careful analysis of the text (van Dijk 2002: 102, Wodak 2002a: 66).

The process of identifying key themes in a text is affected by the subjectivity of the analyst and involves the risk that different analysts detect different themes in the same text. However, this risk can be minimised by examining a large number of texts and by using the background knowledge acquired from the investigation of relevant scholarly literature. Dominant themes should be clearly detectable in many texts, if they are indeed dominant. Furthermore, the texts chosen for analysis must be formulated by individuals with sufficient discursive and societal power to construct dominant discourses. For instance, they can be speeches of key policy makers or articles in mainstream newspapers with a broad readership.

Undoubtedly, there is no single reading of texts and diverging selections of key themes are possible also if the number of primary sources under analysis is large. However, the deconstruction of numerous and authoritative texts will at the very least offer sufficient data for a plausible interpretation of key themes. In this work, the plausibility of the interpretation is augmented by the fact that it is guided by and can be confronted with the findings of existing scholarly literature on national identity and discourses on Russia.

As Teun van Dijk has noted, no complete discourse analysis is possible, as a thorough examination of even a short passage may require months and hundreds of

pages of explanation. However, a satisfactory investigation of key themes in discourses can be performed if specific structures are selected for closer analysis, namely the ones that are most relevant for the study of the main research question (van Dijk 2002: 99). Accordingly, in this work the focus will be restricted to the textual extracts concerning descriptions and interpretations of Russia's domestic and foreign policy, with particular reference to the construction of the Nord Stream pipeline and Russia's international energy policy, the August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia and the post-electoral street demonstrations in the main Russian cities in 2011 and 2012.

Critical discourse analysis usually involves a normative dimension. It is often applied to study social problems and the role of discourse in producing power abuse or domination by scholars who are keen on unmasking and modifying existing power relations (van Dijk 2002: 96, Wodak 2002a: 70). The pragmatic potential of the methodology is one of its most interesting and useful aspects, but is not a *conditio sine qua non* for its application. In particular, discourse-historical analysis allows an exploration of the cultural and historical roots of dominant discourses, but does not necessarily require a normative approach aimed at changing dominance relations. Accordingly, this work focuses on the construction of discourses on Russia and their relationship with foreign policy making, without advising on how to change them. The main aim is that of exposing the different nature of discourses on Russia in European countries, as well as the deep identity and historical roots of such differences. Pragmatic and policy-oriented considerations are left to the subjective interpretation of readers.

Discourse-historical analysis in practice

The methodology adopted in the dissertation is based on Wodak (2002a). Its main features are summarised in the table below.

Table 3. The main features of discourse-historical analysis

The Discourse-Historical Approach
Based on interpretation/hermeneutics
Problem-oriented
Interdisciplinary
Historical context analysed and integrated into the interpretation of texts and discourses
Moves back and forth from theories to empirical data
Investigates intertextual and interdiscursive relationships
Focuses on multiple genres of text
Incorporates fieldwork and ethnography

Source: own compilation, based on Wodak (2002a)

Wodak starts from the observation that causal models do not match the complexity of the real world. In order to provide a thorough reading of multicausal and mutually constitutive phenomena, such as the relationship between national identity and foreign policy discourses, researchers have to rely on their knowledge and interpretive skills. As Wodak (2002a: 65) argues, the researcher “makes use of her or his background and contextual knowledge and embeds the communicative or interactional structures of a discursive event in a wider frame of social and political relations, processes and circumstances”.

Furthermore, Wodak states that only interdisciplinary research can make complex social relationships transparent. Following this approach, the dissertation combines International Relations theory with discourse theory and historical analysis to perform an in-depth investigation of national discourses concerning Russia. Social constructivist theory and historical analysis are applied throughout the empirical part

of the thesis in order to substantiate the interpretation of discourses. The historical dimension of discursive actions and the social and political background in which discursive events are embedded are integrated in the analysis.

Wodak also suggests incorporating fieldwork and ethnography, whenever possible, in order to explore the subject under investigation from a closer perspective. Due to the time constraints of this research, this was done only partially and with the sole purpose of acquiring background for the historical and textual analysis. Fieldwork included an investigation of how the German, Polish and Finnish nations, as well as their historical relationship with Russia, are portrayed in the main history museums in the respective national capitals. Table 4 below lists the museums where fieldwork took place.

Table 4. Museums where national identity construction was analysed

Location	Museum
Berlin, Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German Historical Museum (<i>Deutsches Historisches Museum</i>) • German-Russian Museum (<i>Deutsch-Russisches Museum</i>)
Warsaw, Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warsaw Uprising Museum (<i>Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego</i>) • Museum of Independence (<i>Muzeum Niepodległości</i>) • Museum of the Polish Army (<i>Muzeum Wojska Polskiego</i>)
Helsinki, Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Museum of Finland (<i>Suomen kansallismuseo</i>)

Source: own compilation

While the examination of narratives presented in these museums provided useful background material, the analysis of national identity construction and of historical discourses on Russia is based mostly on secondary literature. Relying on secondary sources could be methodologically problematic, as some of their findings may be debatable and require further research. However, a study of the construction of three national identities across centuries based entirely on primary sources is beyond the scope of this work. Furthermore, issues related to the reliability of secondary

literature can be tackled by including different conceptual histories and by verifying the quality of their primary analysis. This can be done through the examination of a few key primary texts to which secondary sources refer and a subsequent comparison of the researcher's reading with the one presented by the conceptual history (cf. Hansen 2006: 84).

The investigation of secondary literature serves the purpose of identifying dominant discourses on Russia over time, which helps situate current discourses within a broader historical framework. Most importantly, it provides in-depth background information and hence a solid foundation for the ensuing interpretive textual analysis. As Lene Hansen (2006: 83) argues

[...] the writing of good discourse analysis of primary texts requires knowledge of the case in question, and knowledge comes, in part, from reading standard works on the history, processes, events and debates constituting a foreign policy phenomenon.

Furthermore, the analysis of secondary literature complements the interpretive theoretical framework outlined in the previous chapter, which requires thorough historical and contextual grounding (cf. Hansen 2006: 10-11).

After examining the secondary literature, I set out to analyse primary sources, starting from the research sub-question: are historically constructed images of Russia influential in current national foreign policy discourses and, if yes, how? To address the question, I proceed as follows for each text under analysis. First, I sample information concerning the immediate context of the text: who is the author? When was the text produced? Which contemporary events does it make reference to? What is the target audience? Relevant political, historical and sociological background is incorporated in the analysis.

The text genre is also discussed, as it may provide important indications on how the text should be read. For instance, a speech delivered by a foreign minister in front of

an audience of diplomats is likely to be much more cautious in terms of wording and judgements expressed than a pre-election speech or a newspaper interview. Following Hansen (2006: 86), both highly formal texts and texts with more clear articulations of identity are included in the analysis, reflecting the broad spectrum of genres in foreign policy discourse.

Once this preliminary and background information on the text has been acquired, I identify dominant discourses. In order to detect dominant discourses, their essential constituents are traced in texts: recurrent arguments, the corresponding semantic structures (the use of specific verbs, nouns and adjectives to construct meaning) and the logical outcome of an argument in terms of policy making. For instance, in the case study on Nord Stream, recurrent claims about the importance of energy relations with Russia, its construction as a “reliable” and “indispensable” partner and frequent statements supporting the building of the pipeline clearly highlighted the dominant German discourse.²⁶ I also explore interdiscursivity and intertextuality. Based on the dominant discourses, I formulate research questions specific to the text and to its linguistic constructions. Questions generally asked are: how is Russia defined linguistically (with what adjectives, images, metaphors or other figures of speech)? What does Russia do in these discourses, that is, how is Russia presented as an actor? With texts that have a normative dimension, I ask: in the speaker’s opinion, how is Russia to be addressed?

The next step concerns the analysis of discursive strategies and of specific linguistic markers that constitute dominant themes and discourses (see also table 5 below). By discursive strategies I mean systematic ways of using the language, including argumentation strategies, in order to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim (Wodak 2002a: 73). Membership categorisations in order to construct in-groups and out-groups are examples of discursive strategies. For instance, peoples are categorised as Europeans and non-Europeans with cultural or geographic arguments, with the use of figures of speech such as metaphors (asserting that something is the same as an otherwise unrelated object) or synecdoches (when a term for a part of something is used to refer to the whole or vice versa; for instance,

²⁶ See chapter 5.

calling Russia “Asia”). Other discursive strategies such as predication (defining the action, state or quality of the subject) are used to label social actors in positive or negative terms. For instance, the previously mentioned category of non-Europeans can be labelled with stereotypical attributions of positive or negative traits. In the texts under analysis, for example, Russia was labelled alternatively as “strategic partner”, “a threat”, “a friendly neighbour” and “inherently imperialistic”.

Perspectivation, namely the ways speakers contextualise their perspectives and show their relevance to the interpretation of a fact, is another frequently used discursive strategy. It aims at expressing involvement and positioning the speaker's point of view through, for instance, the reporting of an event that the speaker witnessed and on which he or she claims to have inside knowledge. Out of all discursive strategies, argumentation is possibly the most fundamental. It is used to justify positive or negative attributions and to bolster the main message or purpose of a text. Argumentation can be studied through an analysis of *topoi*, namely content-related parts of the argumentation that connect the arguments with their logical conclusion (Wodak 2002a: 74).

For instance, in one of the texts analysed the speaker advocated engaging Russia (as opposed to marginalising it) and argued that his country (Finland) and Europe would obtain economic and security benefits out of cooperation.²⁷ He also claimed that engaging Russia would have positive effects for the preservation of the Baltic Sea and allow his country to fulfil its historical role of bridge builder between Europe and Russia. His conclusion was that adequate policies should be taken in order to make sure that cooperation takes place. The *topoi* connecting his arguments and conclusion are economic usefulness, security, environmentalism and history, namely all the semantic and argumentative fields leading to the conclusion that adequate policies should be taken to engage Russia.²⁸

²⁷ Ilkka Kanerva's speech at the Norwegian Nobel Institute, 22 January 2008, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=108314> (accessed 29/5/2014).

²⁸ For a selection of *topoi* frequently used in discourses, cf. Wodak (2002a: 74).

Table 5. Discursive strategies: objectives and devices

Strategy	Objectives	Devices
Nomination/ Categorisation	Construct in-groups (Self) and out-groups (Other)	Inclusive or exclusive metaphors and synecdoches
Predication	Label social actors in positive or negative terms	Stereotypical evaluations and attributions of negative or positive traits
Perspectivation	Expressing involvement and positioning the speaker's point of view	Personal and strongly subjective reporting of an event
Argumentation	Justify positive or negative attributions; bolster the main message in a text	<i>Topoi</i> connecting arguments to their logical conclusion

Source: own compilation, based on Wodak (2002a)

Once dominant discourses and themes, discursive strategies, linguistic markers and *topoi* have been identified, I interpret the meanings resulting from the analysis and, with reference to my theoretical model, I address the research questions. After comparing across texts and discourses, I make an extensive interpretation concerning the role of national identity and of historically constructed images of Russia in the text analysed, thereby assessing their relevance to current foreign policy discourses. The whole procedure is summarised in table 6 below.

Table 6. Steps in the application of the discourse-historical approach

Applying Discourse-Historical Analysis
1. Analysis of secondary literature and identification of dominant themes in national identity and historical discourses on Russia
2. Sampling of information on the immediate context of the text (author, target audience, events referred to), including its political, historical and sociological background
3. Analysis of text genre
4. Identification of dominant discourses and themes in the text
5. Analysis of interdiscursivity and intertextuality
6. Formulation of text-specific research questions, focussing on linguistic constructions
7. Analysis of discursive strategies and linguistic markers (<i>topoi</i>)
8. Interpretation of the meanings resulting from the analysis with reference to the theoretical model adopted in the dissertation
9. Based on the analysis of all texts, an extensive interpretation is made concerning the role of national identity and historically constructed images of Russia in foreign policy discourses

Source: own compilation, based on Wodak (2002a)

Which discourses? Selection of national discursive arenas and case studies

The selection of case studies for this analysis involves two aspects. Firstly, due to the impossibility of investigating national identity construction and discourses on Russia in all EU member states within the scope of this work, a few national discursive arenas have been selected for in-depth study. Secondly, specific policy areas and events have been chosen for the analysis and comparison of national discourses on Russia.

The discussion of distinct East-Central European narratives concerning Russia in chapter 1 highlighted the dangers of assuming the existence of a homogenous EU discursive arena. As Iver Neumann (1998) has shown, occasionally it is possible to identify similar discourses on Russia across European countries, particularly in intellectual circles, which constitute the main subject of Neumann's analysis. However, a thorough investigation must take into account the national level. The history of the European continent is profoundly divided along national lines and European countries had remarkably different relations with Russia, which presupposes different national discourses.

Geography and history, particularly the nature of political relations in the past, are the main discriminants when examining the interaction between European countries and Russia. These two factors are closely interlinked. States that are closer to Russia's borders also tend to have deeper and more complex historical relations with Russia than those that are located further away. There are exceptions to this observation: despite its considerable distance from Russia, Britain had intense and controversial relations with it from the early nineteenth century until the present, mostly due to the two countries' great power status and geopolitical competition (cf. Ewans 2004, Keith 2006, Siegel 2002). However, this exception does not apply to most other West and South European countries. Their historical involvement with Russia was much more limited than that of Central and East European states.

In order to explore the relationship between identity and foreign policy discourses on Russia, this work considers national case studies that both had deep historical interactions with Russia and are geographically close to it. This is likely to produce results that are more relevant analytically and that can be compared more easily. The dissertation does not systematically preselect the countries under analysis in order to show that national identity has a strong correlation with foreign policy discourses. A large body of constructivist literature has already shown that this correlation exists.²⁹ The central questions in the dissertation are more specific: how does this correlation manifest itself in selected European countries with regard to Russia? Can European foreign policy discourses thus constructed be reconciled at the European level?

²⁹ See chapter 2.

Since the focus is on the relationship between national identity and discourses on Russia, it is best to select countries where Russia is likely to have played a role in national identity construction, hence those geographically close to and with deep historical interactions with Russia. Furthermore, as we want to compare different foreign policy discourses within the European Union, it is fundamental to focus on member states which traditionally have a different foreign policy stance towards Russia. The analysis can thus explore how national identity constructions where Russia played a role are related to different national foreign policy discourses. Conversely, if the investigation focused on countries chosen for their geographical spread, it would risk coming to the tautological conclusion that national identity is an important factor in foreign policy discourses on Russia only or mostly in states that are closer to it. Geography, and not national identity, would likely be the main or the only motivational factor.

This explains why large and influential EU member states such as France, Italy or Spain were not included in the analysis. A preliminary consultation of secondary sources confirmed that Russia did not play an important role in their national identity construction (cf. Bedani and Haddock 2000, Boyd 1997, Gildea 2002 and 2002a, Isnenghi 2010, Kamen 2008, Nora 1992). Their cooperative, largely unproblematic relations with Moscow are mostly the result of commercial interests, rather than of deeply engrained identity narratives (cf. Leonard and Popescu 2007: 31-36). Investigating foreign policy discourses in one of these countries could be useful to highlight how, by contrast with EU member states that are closer and had deeper historical interactions with Russia, national identity and memory do not hamper current relations. However, this analysis is beyond the scope of the dissertation, which focuses on how different constructions of Russia in national identity influence foreign policy discourses. Furthermore, examining more than three national discursive arenas in some depth was not possible within the constraints of this work.

Germany, Poland and Finland have been selected as focus for this analysis because they best satisfy the analytical criteria outlined above. Tsarist and Soviet Russia was a neighbouring power for most of their modern history, which is still true of Poland and Finland today. Russia and Germany shared a border from 1871 (1815, if we

consider Prussia as Wilhelmine Germany's predecessor) until 1918 and again in 1939-1941. Although there was no shared border during the Cold War, the presence of Soviet troops and political advisors throughout East-Central Europe and in East Germany practically meant that Soviet Russia was for Germans both a neighbouring and an occupying power from 1945 until the early 1990s. The three countries under consideration had deep and controversial historical relations with Russia during their modern history, including several armed clashes and the occupation of part of their territory by Russian or Soviet troops.³⁰ We can thus assume that Russia played a role in national identity construction. This assumption is verified through a review of secondary literature in chapter 4.

Furthermore, the countries selected for analysis are particularly active in current relations with Russia, both at bilateral level and within the European Union. Their actorness vis-à-vis Russia contributes to making them interesting and relevant case studies. Within the EU, Germany has had a leading role in shaping energy policy towards Russia, which is the most significant commercial and security element of the EU-Russia relationship (cf. Högselius 2013). Poland has been one of the most active member states in advocating policies concerning the EU's and Russia's shared neighbourhood in Eastern Europe. For instance, it was one of the main supporters of the Eastern Partnership, a policy that aims to intensify the EU's relations with post-Soviet countries in Europe (excluding Russia). Finland has been the main promoter of the EU's Northern Dimension, a framework to address environmental and health issues in border areas between Russia and North European EU member states (Stewart 2012: 186-187; cf. Haukkala 2010: 152-156).

Although all countries under analysis had controversial relations with Russia in the past, their current foreign policy stance towards Moscow differs considerably. German foreign policy makers tend to be less critical and more positive about Russia, whereas Polish leaders often have overtly hostile overtones (cf. Krumm 2012a: 122-123, Reeves 2010). Within the European Union, Germany and Poland epitomise the member states' two main and contrasting approaches to Russia (Stewart 2012: 165). The German approach tends towards accommodating Russia

³⁰ See chapter 4.

and is followed by West and Central European member states such as France, Italy, Spain and Austria. The Polish approach is much more sceptical towards Russia and is generally followed by East-Central European member states (particularly the Baltic States), occasionally joined by Britain and Sweden. The Finnish position is somewhere in between and reflects an apparently neutral pragmatism (cf. Etzold and Haukkala 2011: 253-254, Stewart 2012: 187). These divergences may be due to dissimilar ways of internalising historical experiences in national identities or to the different nuances of past and current bilateral relations with Russia. Hence, a detailed analysis of Russia's role in national identity construction and of the broader picture of bilateral relations is a precondition for the study of current discourses on Russia.

In order to have a common basis for analysis, the dissertation focuses on national policy makers' discourses on Russia concerning three major international and domestic events in which the Kremlin was directly involved between 2005 and 2012. These include the construction of the Nord Stream pipeline (which was announced in September 2005), the 2008 Russian-Georgian war and the post-electoral street protests that took place in Russian cities from December 2011 until the late spring of 2012. This selection of events allows studying discourses on Russia in three areas that are of utmost relevance to the relationship between the European Union and Russia: the security of Russian energy supplies to the EU, the stability of the shared neighbourhood and the development of democratic institutions in Russia (cf. Haukkala 2010: 1).³¹

Arguably, other international events and Russian domestic developments may have provided interesting case studies. For instance, a focus on discourses about the US plan to deploy a ballistic missile defence system in East-Central Europe would allow to explore different German and Polish perceptions of Russia in the field of security.³² Nonetheless, this topic was not selected as a case study because it was not of direct relevance for Finland. In addition, national security debates concerning

³¹ These three policy fields are also emphasised in the EU's Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013 for the Russian Federation, under the heading "Objectives of EU cooperation with Russia", pp. 4-6; http://eeas.europa.eu/russia/docs/2007-2013_en.pdf (accessed 23/6/2013).

³² The plan was strongly opposed by Moscow and led to disagreement between the German and Polish governments; cf. "Europeans split over U.S. missile defence plans", *Arms Control Today*, April 2007, <http://www.armscontrol.org/print/2333> (accessed 2/10/2014).

Russia are examined also in the chapter on the Russian-Georgian war. Narratives about Dmitry Medvedev's modernisation agenda would offer further material to analyse the reception of key Russian domestic developments in the countries under investigation. However, by the time the empirical research for the dissertation began (late 2012), the modernisation agenda no longer seemed a priority for the Russian government.³³ The authoritarian shift following the Russian parliamentary elections of December 2011 appeared as a more topical domestic development; the relevant national debates were therefore selected for in-depth analysis.

The empirical chapters focus on narratives about events that took place in the European context. Discourses about Russia's involvement in non-European issues, such as the negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme and the Syrian civil war, could be analysed to assess how identities influence perceptions of Russia's role in the global arena. While this is a promising avenue for further research, the decision was made to focus on policy issues that are of immediate relevance to EU-Russia relations. The events under investigation were among the most controversial issues in EU-Russia relations since Vladimir Putin's rise to power in 1999. In the three countries selected for analysis, they sparked lively debates on the nature of Russia's domestic and foreign policies. These debates offer an ideal context to identify dominant national narratives concerning Russia's political system and international posture. If the theoretical model outlined in the previous chapter holds, dominant discourses will reflect the main national identity constituents and deep-rooted national perceptions of Russia.

In order to compare national narratives on Russia in the EU discursive arena, the dissertation also investigates German, Polish and Finnish leaders' discourses during their countries' most recent EU presidency. The presidency of the European Union constituted an opportunity for national leaders to advance their country's priorities in the EU foreign policy agenda. Consequently, speeches held by leaders of the rotating presidency are ideal sources to examine the transposition of national narratives on

³³ See chapter 7 and Stefan Meister, "The failure of managed modernisation", DGAP Standpunkt 14, 9 December 2011, <https://dgap.org/en/think-tank/publications/dgapviewpoint/failure-managed-modernization> (accessed 2/10/2014).

Russia in the EU discursive arena. The study of these texts also allows a comparison of national discourses within an EU institutional context.

Types of discourses and source selection

The dissertation analyses public texts, mostly speeches and interviews of top state officials (heads of state or government and foreign ministers) recorded in electronic archives of national foreign ministries and in prominent national newspapers. The choice of focusing on public texts, as opposed to private or internal documents, is motivated primarily by the theoretical foundations of the dissertation. The contestation among different national identity discourses and narratives on Russia takes place in the public sphere, where their advocates compete for dominance. Hence, the dissertation attempts to identify official discourses that are dominant there. Discourse analysis is the best methodology for this investigation because it focuses on public texts (Waever 2002).

Focusing on public texts and discourses is a key methodological advantage when studying foreign policy. In foreign policy making, a lot tends to be hidden and every interpretation of an actor's actions and speeches may be subject to questions such as: is this what the actor really thinks, or is it just the image that he or she intends to convey in public? Actors' thoughts, motives and secret intentions would be extremely difficult to determine without privileged access to a wide range of reliable private sources and people acquainted with the actors in question. As Ole Waever (2002: 26) convincingly argued,

If one sticks rigorously to the level of discourse, the logic of the argument remains much more clear – one works on public, open sources and uses them for what they are, not as indicators of something else.

Therefore, the main focus of research is not what actors really believe, but what arguments and linguistic codes they use in public and what discourses become widely shared or dominant in the public arena. These discourses have practical relevance, as they condition possible policies. Policy is strongly related to discursive structures because decision makers need to be able to justify policy choices in public and reconcile them with the state's self-image (Waeber 2002: 27).

Focusing exclusively on discourses of top state officials may result in an analysis that does not reflect all the complexities involved in identity construction and the formulation of foreign policy. Other actors at lower levels in the power chain or civil society also play a role in shaping identity and foreign policy discourses. Business and other advocacy groups (such as religious, environmental and pacifist organisations) lobby governments to take foreign policy decisions that conform with their economic or social objectives. Scholarly literature (cf. Adler 1992, Davis Cross 2013, Haas 1992 and 2004, Sebenius 1992, Zito 2001) has highlighted in particular the role of epistemic communities in influencing decision makers.

Epistemic communities are networks of professionals with recognised expertise and policy-relevant knowledge in a particular area. The members of an epistemic community share a set of normative and causal beliefs, which shape their analysis of possible policy actions and desired outcomes. Overarching agreement on policies is an essential prerequisite for a group of experts to be considered as part of the same epistemic community. Prominent think tanks, regulatory agencies or governmental policy research bodies provide ideal locations for members of an epistemic community to gain leverage over policy choices. Former political leaders, diplomats, judges, high-ranking military officials, bankers and international lawyers often become part of these expert groups and use their prestige and expertise to influence decision makers (Davis Cross 2013: 155-159, Haas 1992: 2-4).

Epistemic communities are more likely to be persuasive if decision makers are confronted with salient issues and are uncertain about future developments (for instance, in the wake of a crisis) or if they are unhappy about past policies and are trying to develop new ones. Access to top policy makers and the ability to influence

the initial terms of the debate (rather than only its final stages) contribute to the persuasiveness of an epistemic community (Davis Cross 2013: 144). According to Emanuel Adler (1992), US defence experts that argued for arms control in the 1960s and 1970s constitute an example of a successful and persuasive epistemic community. Their theorisations about international cooperation became the basis for Washington's negotiations with the Soviet Union and eventually led to the signature of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between the US and the USSR in 1972. Haas (2004) cites the network of economists spreading the ideas of Keynesianism as an instance of influential transnational epistemic community.

In the countries under investigation, prominent think tanks that work closely with national governments – such as the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, the Centre for Eastern Studies in Poland and the Finnish Institute of International Affairs – are likely to influence the decision-making process concerning relations with Russia. To cite only a few examples regarding Germany, former political leaders such as Gerhard Schröder, Joschka Fischer and Helmut Schmidt and national advocacy groups that have strong commercial interests in Russia (such as the *Ost-Ausschuss der deutschen Wirtschaft*) have been particularly vocal in the debate on German-Russian relations (cf. Meister 2014).

In order to have a more complete picture of all national identity and foreign policy narratives, the discourses of epistemic communities, advocacy groups and civil society organisations would have to be investigated. However, covering three whole national discursive spaces is practically impossible and a bias towards a selected category of actors is inevitable. Within these constraints, the choice of focusing on discourses of leading state officials is motivated by the fact that they are the main foreign policy actors. Furthermore, through their media and discursive power they steer relevant public debates and largely define the cognitive structures within which other people argue (Wæver 2002: 42).

The sources selected for this analysis are essentially excerpts of these public debates. They are policy makers' interviews targeted to a broad audience or transcripts of policy makers' speeches held in meetings with other state officials and with civil

society. All of them were publicly and freely accessible at the time when the empirical research for the dissertation was performed. They can be thought of as snapshots of dominant discursive constructions concerning national identity, foreign policy and relations with Russia.

The electronic archives of the Finnish, German and Polish foreign ministries proved essential to retrieve foreign ministers' speeches. Additional sources were investigated for transcripts of speeches and interviews given by other top state officials who were particularly active in foreign policy making in the case studies under consideration. For Finland, the Eilen Archive and Chronology of Finnish Foreign Policy (curated by the Finnish Institute of International Affairs) was used to retrieve speeches by Finnish prime ministers and presidents of the republic. For Germany and Poland, the official online archives of the speeches, interviews and press conferences held by the German federal chancellor, the Polish prime minister and the Polish president of the republic were consulted. For the analysis of the EU presidencies' discourses presented in chapter 8, the dissertation relied also on the online archives of the Finnish and German presidencies.³⁴ Furthermore, several interviews and statements made by top German, Polish and Finnish officials were retrieved from prominent European and North American mass media.

In order to identify relevant texts in large databases such as the online archives of the German and Finnish foreign ministries, the German federal chancellor, the Finnish EU presidency website and the Eilen Archive and Chronology of Finnish Foreign Policy, search functions on the websites were used. Texts (articles, interviews, speeches, press releases and travel reports) dating from the period 2005-2012 and including the terms "Russia", "Russian", "Nord Stream", "Georgia", "Putin" and "Medvedev" were preselected for further analysis. For smaller archives, such as those of the German EU presidency, the Polish prime minister, foreign minister and president of the republic, all available online texts concerning foreign policy between 2005 and 2012 were consulted and those concerning Russia were preselected.

³⁴ Unfortunately, the online archive of the Polish EU presidency was no longer available when the empirical research was performed.

This data collection procedure allowed retrieving material from similar databases (institutional websites) for the three countries under consideration. However, while numerous relevant texts could be retrieved from German and Finnish databases, fewer primary sources were available on Polish institutional websites. Hence, in order to gather a similar body of material for the analysis of Polish discourses, an additional search was carried out. Further texts were found on the international press (in English, German and French) by retrieving interviews of Polish foreign policy makers that were mentioned in the news section of Polish institutional websites. German and Finnish archives normally reported the full text of national leaders' interviews, whereas Polish archives did not. Therefore, retrieving interviews of Polish officials directly from the press compensated for this deficiency, while at the same time the scope of the sources under analysis was the same for the three countries. All texts thus preselected were analysed following the methodology detailed on pages 46-53.

Table 7. Sources for the analysis of foreign policy makers' discourses on Russia between 2005 and 2012

Germany	Poland	Finland
Foreign ministries' electronic archives		
Online archive of federal chancellor's speeches, press conferences and interviews	Online archives of prime minister's and president of the republic's speeches, press conferences and interviews	Eilen Archive and Chronology of Finnish Foreign Policy
Online archive of the 2007 German EU presidency		Online archive of the 2006 German presidency
Newspaper interviews and open letters		

Source: own compilation

As argued, the texts under investigation date from 2005 to 2012. More specifically, the analysis of texts concerning the Nord Stream project starts from 2005, the year when the building of the pipeline was agreed upon and started, and stretches until 2012, when construction works were completed. Between these dates numerous international controversies arose concerning the pipeline's political and economic significance, its security implications and environmental impact. The investigation of discourses regarding the August 2008 war in Georgia focuses primarily on texts dating from the summer of 2008 (the peak of the crisis), but a few later texts are also examined. The analysis of narratives concerning the street protests in Russia centres on the period between early December 2011, when the first post-electoral mass demonstrations took place, and December 2012. Although the demonstrations became smaller after May 2012 (following Vladimir Putin's third inauguration to the presidency of Russia), the relevant debate continued in some of the countries under analysis, mostly due to the repressive measures that Russia adopted in the summer and autumn of 2012.³⁵ The investigation of national leaders' discourses during their country's EU presidency is also included within the timeframe 2005-2012. The Finnish presidency under analysis took place from July to December to 2006, while the German and the Polish presidencies followed respectively in the semesters January-June 2007 and July-December 2011.

Undoubtedly, additional or other texts and sources could have been selected for analysis if this research had not been limited by time and logistic constraints, such as restricted access to the online archives of national newspapers. The researcher's lack of knowledge of the Finnish and Polish languages was an important limiting factor, which restricted the analysis to sources in English and German. However, the availability of numerous speeches and interviews of Finnish and Polish foreign policy leaders in English, both in national ministerial websites and in English language newspapers, allowed the linguistic hurdle to be overcome. Hence, the

³⁵ As Hansen (2006: 87) argues, the focus on periods of international or domestic crisis, and hence of increased political and media activity, is likely to make the selection of texts for discourse analysis more manageable. Moreover, it allows studying the evolution of discourse in the face of important developments on the ground.

selected texts are thought to be sufficiently authoritative and representative of official discourses to allow a plausible interpretation of dominant discourses.

Another methodological concern derived from the fact that some of the texts under investigation are translations or statements made by policy makers in a foreign language, which may have distorted some of the original linguistic codes and related meanings. In order to reduce the possibility of misinterpretation, an analysis of the political and social context in which texts originated was conducted. Furthermore, many of these texts were addressed to an international audience, which presupposes that speakers streamlined their key arguments in order to make them clear to a foreign public (cf. Hansen 2006: 83).

Reliability and generalisability of findings

From a traditionally positivist perspective, the methodology adopted in this study may raise issues concerning the reliability of findings. Positivist approaches to social sciences tend to stress the existence of a reality that can be disclosed objectively by researchers. They usually focus on the demonstration or refutation of falsifiable hypotheses that seek to establish causal links between social phenomena, usually framed in terms of “independent” and “dependent” variables. Quantitative data are often used to argue for the existence or absence of presumed causal concatenations (cf. Blaikie 2010: 97-98, Manheim et al. 2012: 24-25, 84-86).

Interpretive analyses such as the one presented in this work are based on a different epistemology. Advocates of interpretive approaches argue that reality is socially constructed and relationships between social phenomena are complex and mutually constitutive. Therefore, it is difficult to measure them and establish causal links (cf. Blaikie 2010: 99, Manheim et al. 2012: 95-96, 352-355). The dissertation is not concerned with finding objective truths. Conversely, it attempts to provide plausible interpretations of discourses and substantiate them with historical, political and sociological analysis, drawing on prominent scholarly works.

The plausibility of the arguments made through this hermeneutic approach was discussed in regular consultations with analysts and scholars who work in relevant fields in leading research institutes in the three countries under consideration. More specifically, the researchers consulted are specialists on EU-Russia relations based at the Institute of European Politics (IEP) and at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) in Berlin, at the Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW) in Warsaw and at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) in Helsinki. Useful advice and guidance on available sources was provided also by participants in specialised workshops focusing on identity and foreign policy analysis at conferences of the European Consortium for Political Research and the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies.

Consultations and conference discussions helped sharpen the analysis and evaluate the plausibility of arguments, but it would be inappropriate to claim that they ensured the reliability of findings in a positivist sense. For positivists, the results of a study are reliable if they can be replicated by other researchers using the same methodology and data. However, from an interpretive perspective this approach is inadequate for the investigation of complex social phenomena that cannot be measured easily, such as national identity. For this type of analysis, reliability stems primarily from the transparency of research methods and the cogency of arguments (Blaikie 2010: 217, Bryman 2008: 380, Yardley 2000: 222).

In this study, the clarification of methodological procedures and of used sources was functional to guaranteeing transparency. In addition, all primary texts referred to are publicly available and most of them can be freely consulted online. Easy access to sources allows other researchers to check the plausibility of interpretations and the cogency of arguments. Furthermore, the methodology adopted in the dissertation is applicable also to other texts that were not included in this study. Using the same procedures, further research may therefore explore whether the analysis of other pertinent sources leads to similar findings regarding dominant discursive structures.

Social scientists are also interested in the generalisability of findings. In particular, positivist research attempts to draw scientifically valid conclusions about the wider

population based on the samples under analysis (cf. Blaikie 2010: 192-194, 217). However, also in this respect a positivist approach does not seem appropriate for the subject under investigation. The dissertation's findings concern the relationship between identity and foreign policy in the discourses of a restricted group of key figures in national executives. As argued, these findings matter because top political officials are the main actors in foreign policy making and enjoy considerable discursive power in both the national and the international arena. Their discourses are representative of official national foreign policy narratives in a specific timeframe, but not of all societal discourses concerning foreign policy. The latter are much more complex and diverse and cannot be analysed within the scope of this work.

Another issue concerns the generalisability of findings from national discursive arenas to the EU level. As the dissertation *inter alia* examines the existence of a shared discourse on Russia in the European Union, it is important to assess whether the focus on the selected countries leads to findings which have EU-wide relevance. Due to the restricted focus on three member states, the findings cannot entirely reflect the complexity of twenty-eight national discourses on Russia. However, as previously argued, the selected countries are representative of the main stances taken by most EU member states towards Russia during the last decade. They are also significant for their actorness in relations with the Kremlin, both at the bilateral and at the EU level. Therefore, their leaders' discourses are likely to play an essential role also in the EU-wide debate on Russia.

Ethical considerations

From an ethical point of view, the research did not raise any particular issues. As discussed previously, the sources used in the dissertation were publicly available. The researcher analysed dominant narratives in national and European discursive arenas. There was no direct communication with the policy makers whose discourses were examined. Thanks to the abundance of publicly available material, there was no need to arrange interviews for further data collection. Private consultations took

place with researchers and scholars, but these were only aimed at improving the research design and did not generate data for the dissertation.

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the relevance of a discursive approach to the study of national identity, foreign policy and the construction of a country's external Others. It argued that Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical approach, a variant of critical discourse analysis, provides an appropriate methodology for the dissertation because it focuses on the historical dimension of discourse. It is therefore functional to the investigation of the relationship between deep-rooted national identity narratives and foreign policy discourses about Russia. In addition, its focus on discursive strategies allows for a systematic analysis of the linguistic and rhetorical tools that are used in the construction of Russia as the Other.

Due to the impossibility of investigating all national discursive arenas within the EU, three member states (Germany, Poland and Finland) were chosen for closer inspection. This selection was based on the depth of the countries' historical interactions with Russia, actorness in current relations and representativeness of the main national stances towards Russia within the EU. Furthermore, three key events in which Russia played a major role in recent years were selected in order to provide a common basis for the analysis of discourses in each national arena. They included the construction of the Nord Stream pipeline, the Russian-Georgian war in August 2008 and the post-electoral mass demonstrations in Russia in 2011-2012. These events concerned key policy areas in EU-Russia relations, namely energy security, the security and stability of the shared neighbourhood and the development of democratic institutions in Russia. German, Polish and Finnish leaders' statements during their countries' most recent EU presidency are analysed in a final case study in order to compare national narratives on Russia in the EU discursive arena.

The chapter also gave an account of source selection and of limiting factors in the research process, notably the lack of access to sources in Polish and Finnish

language. It emphasised that the dissertation focuses on the formulation of plausible interpretations of discourses, which are substantiated by historical, political and sociological analysis. The reliability of interpretations stems primarily from the transparency of research methods and the cogency of arguments. Although findings do not reflect the whole spectrum of national discourses on Russia, they are representative of dominant official narratives. Furthermore, as the selected countries play an important role in EU-Russia relations and epitomise the member states' main stances towards Russia, findings can be generalised to draw conclusions about influential discourses on Russia at the EU level.

Ultimately, this chapter completed the theoretical, conceptual and methodological body of the dissertation and set the stage for the ensuing empirical analysis. The next chapter provides the essential background and contextual framework to apply theory and methodology to the empirical part of this work.

Chapter 4: National identities in historical perspective

Introduction

As the analysis in chapters 1 and 2 has highlighted, national identity is a complex construction that involves a large number of cultural and historical factors. Deconstructing national identity and examining its key components is essential in order to understand its relationship with a country's foreign policy. This chapter analyses the historical construction of German, Polish and Finnish identity, with particular focus on discourses that are considered most relevant to national foreign policy towards Russia. The key argument is that, in the last two centuries, Russia was a prominent Other in national foreign policy discourses and perceptions of Russia played an important role in national identity formation. The main questions addressed are: how were German, Polish and Finnish identities constructed over time? How did national identity interact with dominant foreign policy discourses in the last two centuries? What were the dominant national narratives about Russia and how were they constructed?

In order to answer these questions, the chapter draws on some of the most prominent works published on the topic and on original material collected during fieldwork in the countries under investigation. National identity construction is studied in a *longue durée* perspective. The focus is in particular on the period starting from the nineteenth century, when modern national identities began to be constructed. The *longue durée* approach highlights the historical roots of current national identities and foreign policy behaviours. It thereby provides a historically grounded and substantive interpretive framework for the discourse analysis in chapters 5-8, which focuses on speeches, interviews and statements formulated between 2005 and 2012.

While the discussion below is by no means an exhaustive analysis of the three national identities, it hopes to provide the essential framework to understand and interpret them, most notably their mutually constitutive relationship with national

foreign policy. For each of the three countries under analysis, the dominant themes and historical trends of national identity construction are investigated alongside their relationship with contemporary foreign policy. The role of Russia as Other in identity construction and the evolution of national discourses on Russia are analysed in greater depth in distinct, yet strongly interconnected sub-sections. The dominant national identity discourses and the discourses on Russia identified through this analysis are summarised in illustrative tables.

Democracy, stability, multilateralism: the historical construction of German identity

Well into the second decade of the twenty-first century, Germany appears as one of the most successful countries in Europe, with well-established democratic institutions, a strong economy and a leading role in the European Union. The Berlin Republic seems to have successfully combined political stability and a strong economic performance, after nearly a century of wars, dictatorships and territorial division.³⁶ Democracy, economic prosperity, the respect of human rights and the rejection of war as means to solve international disputes have become an integral part of German identity (cf. Berger 1996; Bjola and Kornprobst 2007). These values influence German foreign policy discourses, notably the country's strong support for multilateralism and its normative approach to international affairs (Risse 2007). Governments in Berlin believe that their foreign policy priorities can be achieved best within the framework of the European Union, which explains their strong pro-European orientation (Banchoff 1999).

Some International Relations scholars attempted to define the nature of post-reunification German foreign policy by developing concepts such as that of "civilian power" (Harnisch and Maull 2001). Civilian powers are defined as states that actively promote the "civilising" of international relations through efforts to

³⁶ The term "Berlin Republic" is used to distinguish post-reunification Germany from the country's previous republican experiences: West Germany, which had Bonn as its capital (1949-1990), and the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) (cf. Wittlinger 2008).

constrain the use of force, strengthen the rule of law and promote international cooperation. The endorsement of participatory forms of decision-making, social equity, sustainable development and interdependence are also important features of civilian powers (Harnisch and Maull 2001: 3-4). However, this conceptualisation leaves important questions unanswered: how does a country develop a specific type of foreign policy discourses? In what historical and cultural context can concepts such as that of civilian power be understood?

The historical construction of German national identity is illuminating in this respect. The dominant identity discourses that constitute current German foreign policy have been constructed as a rejection of the national experience between 1871 and 1945 and of the East German dictatorship (Jarausch and Geyer 2003: 235-240). The record of united Germany between 1871 and 1945 is widely considered as catastrophic, as it is associated with two world wars, economic instability, a brutal dictatorship and, most importantly, genocide. Militaristic and chauvinistic Imperial Germany (1871-1918), the economically and politically unstable Weimar Republic (1919-1933), let alone the racist and genocidal experience of the Third Reich (1933-1945), could provide no positive reference for the identity of post-1989 reunified Germany. The disastrous outcome of the first national unification also diminished the potential value of previous events, such as the liberal revolutions of 1848, as founding myths for the construction of a positive national identity. Ultimately, nineteenth century liberals and democrats had been unsuccessful in their attempts to spearhead the national project. Due to the failure of the liberal experiment, political unity had been achieved under the lead of Prussian militarism, which shaped profoundly national identity until 1945 (James 1989: 35-54, Jarausch and Geyer 2003: 222-231, 358).

In 1945, the German nation had no “usable past” (Moeller 2003) to reconstruct its political identity.³⁷ Foreign occupation and the existence of two radically different German states after 1949 further complicated the emergence of a new sense of national identity. East German authorities drew a thick line between the Third Reich

³⁷ While in 1945 Germany had no “usable past” in political terms, a large part of German cultural and artistic heritage was not discredited by the catastrophic outcome of national unity until 1945 and – together with the shared language – continued to constitute a powerful unifying factor in the following decades.

and the newly-founded German Democratic Republic (GDR). Official rhetoric portrayed GDR citizens as either anti-fascist heroes or victims of the Nazi regime, who had finally been united under the first socialist state in German history (Fulbrook 1999: 55-59, Naimark 1995). It also attempted to construct a separate identity based on anti-fascism and hostility to the capitalist Western world. However, most East German citizens never fully accepted the official narrative. In fact, East-West competition and the GDR authorities' obsession with defining their country in opposition to West Germany acted as a constant reminder of all-German commonalities among East German citizens (Fulbrook 1999: 198).

In West Germany, the dynamics of national identity construction were more complex. In the first post-war decade, the focus was on material and economic reconstruction. The swift achievements in these fields, including the so-called economic miracle (*Wirtschaftswunder*), created a feeling of identity based on collective working ethics and the resolve to rebuild a country that lay in ruins (James 1989: 177-195). In foreign policy, alignment with the United States and support of European integration were seen as absolute priorities in order to be accepted as a full member of the Western community. The issue of coming to terms with German history, particularly with the recent past, proved more controversial. Although the Bonn Republic accepted to pay reparations to Israel in 1952, public debates on the Nazi past did not gain momentum until the early 1960s. When they did, it was mostly as a reaction to developments abroad (Adolf Eichmann's capture and trial in Israel 1961-1962) and to non-institutional, civil society initiatives, first and foremost the 1967-1968 protest movement (Herf 1997: 334-372).

From the 1960s onwards, memory of the Holocaust became a dominant public and institutional discourse, as well as a crucial constitutive element of West German identity and foreign policy. The sense of responsibility for genocide undermined attempts to positively define West German identity and to reassess German history in less negative or exculpatory terms.³⁸ The impracticability of positive identification

³⁸ Conservative historians Ernst Nolte and Andreas Hillgruber attempted to relativise German responsibility for the Holocaust by presenting it as a reaction to Bolshevism (Nolte 1986) and by comparing it to the suffering of German expellees from East-Central Europe (Hillgruber 1986). Their

with the nation led to a revival of regional allegiances, which had been very strong both before and during the process of nation-formation in the nineteenth century (Jarausch and Geyer 2003: 228). In foreign policy, the rejection of unilateralism and the support of European and Western integration appeared even more as the only possible course of action to re-establish the country's reputation (Banchhoff 1999: 273-274). West German attitudes to national identity and foreign policy choices led many intellectuals to argue that, by the 1970s, the country had become a post-national democracy. According to this view, West Germans had learnt from the past and moved beyond the ideas of nation and nationalism (Berger 1997: 77-108, Jarausch and Geyer 2003 240, Winkler 1996).

This interpretation was seriously challenged by events in East and West Germany in 1989-1990. Reunification brought about attempts to renationalise German history and identity (Berger 1997: 198-221). The fall of the Berlin Wall clearly showed that a German nation had survived Cold War divisions. Undeniably, the existence of two German states with different political and economic systems left material and cultural traces in post-1990 united Germany (cf. Arnold-de Simone 2005, Herf 1997, Kocka 1996, Weidenfeld 2001). The Wall fell when East and West Germans were growing apart in practice, but the West German government and the majority of GDR citizens still believed in the unity of the nation in principle (Fulbrook 1999: 23). Trade and cultural contacts preserved a sense of shared identity. Even GDR leader Erich Honecker, in spite of all official efforts to create a distinct East German identity, made a distinction between East German citizenship and nationality, considering the latter as simply 'German' (Jarausch and Geyer 2003: 236). Although elements of a distinct GDR identity survived among its former citizens and sometimes resurface in nostalgic filmic and cultural representations, they do not overshadow dominant identity discourses and are contested by competing narratives that focus on the authoritarian and repressive nature of the East German regime (Arnold-de Simone 2005, Sabrow 2009).

claims sparked a vitriolic exchange with left-leaning intellectuals such as Jürgen Habermas and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, known as *Historikerstreit* (historians' quarrel). The debate took place on the pages of prominent national newspapers (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Die Zeit*) and was followed with great interest by the West German public (Berger 1997: 91-92, Knowlton and Cates 1993).

While reunification revived the feeling of a German national identity, it neither reawakened the extreme nationalism that had characterised the history of Germany in 1871-1945, nor did it mark a sudden departure from pre-1989 West German identity and foreign policy discourses. The latter became dominant also in reunified Germany. Memory of the Holocaust and the suffering inflicted upon other nations during the Second World War play a central role in united Germany's collective identity (Langenbacher 2010: 43-49, Wilds 2010, Wittlinger 2011: 139-140). If anything, debates on these issues have become deeper and more prominent since the 1990s, including social groups that had been neglected earlier (such as Soviet prisoners of war and forced labourers, Roma and Sinti, homosexuals).³⁹ The erection of numerous monuments commemorating the victims of National Socialism in reunified Berlin has led some authors to label it as "the capital city of remorse" (in German, *Hauptstadt der Reue*; cf. Reichel 2005).

The experience of the East German dictatorship constituted a further controversial issue which the Berlin Republic had to come to terms with in order to forge a united national identity. The trials of GDR officials and border guards in the 1990s, the social issues and the economic difficulties resulting from reunification ensured that the East German past was present in public debates in both the 1990s and the 2000s (Ahonen 2011, Gellner and Douglas 2003). Despite the already cited nostalgia for some aspects of life in the GDR, dominant discourses and historical analyses have drawn an unequivocally negative balance of the East German regime (cf. Fulbrook 1995, 2011, Hodgkin and Pearce 2011, Jarausch 1999, Jarausch and Geyer 2003: 77-81, Langenbacher 2010: 54-57). This contributed to reinforcing the stress on democracy and human rights and the rejection of any form of totalitarianism in German identity discourses. The dominant narrative now tends to portray the GDR as "the second German dictatorship", thereby emphasising authoritarian and totalitarian similarities with the Third Reich (Klessmann 1999).

³⁹ These debates were fuelled by the appearance of new studies, films, documents and exhibitions. Among the most important are the Goldhagen controversy concerning the responsibility of ordinary Germans in the Holocaust, the exhibition on the crimes of the German army in the Soviet Union organised by the Hamburg Institute of Social Research and the Walser-Bubis quarrel over the building of the Holocaust memorial in central Berlin (cf. Weidenfeld 2001: 30-32).

Although the national past has remained mostly a source of remorse and collective responsibility for the perpetration of unprecedented crimes, in the second post-reunification decade the Berlin Republic felt confident enough to address the issue of German suffering during and in the aftermath of the Second World War. This concerned in particular the expulsion of approximately twelve million ethnic Germans from East-Central Europe between 1945 and 1950, the rape of thousands of German women in the last months of the war by Allied soldiers, the carpet bombing of all main German cities and the internment of millions of Wehrmacht soldiers in Soviet camps (Langenbacher 2010: 49-54, Moeller 2003). German suffering had been largely a taboo in mainstream public and institutional debates since the 1960s. It returned forcefully to mainstream discourses in 2002 with the publication of Günter Grass's novel *Crabwalk* and Jörg Friedrich's *The Fire: The Bombing of Germany 1940-1945*. During the following years, a lively memory debate on German suffering took place, fuelled by numerous television productions and new publications (Langenbacher 2010: 51, Wittlinger 2008: 10, Zehfuss 2006: 222-226).

This memory received institutional endorsement in 2008 through the creation of the *Bundesstiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung* (Federal Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation). The foundation was given the task of setting up and curating a museum that will commemorate the expulsion of ethnic Germans from East-Central Europe in the wider context of Nazi racial policies and of other forced resettlements in twentieth century Europe.⁴⁰ Chancellor Merkel's endorsement of the project and her simultaneous, unambiguous acknowledgement of Germany's historical responsibility reflect her willingness to encourage a discussion of multiple national memories and identities, without relativising the role of the Holocaust and Germany's criminal policies in the Second World War (Wittlinger 2008: 22). The focus on German suffering during the last decade has not significantly altered the nature of dominant German identity and foreign policy discourses. If anything, it strengthened their pacifist and anti-totalitarian components by emphasising the pernicious consequences that aggressive and unlawful policies may have on the state unleashing them (cf. Langenbacher 2010: 50).

⁴⁰ Details are available on the foundation's website, <http://www.sfvv.de/> (accessed 18/12/2012).

The long way to *Ostpolitik*: Russia in German identity and foreign policy discourses

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Russia was a significant Other in German identity construction. German perceptions of Russia were predominantly negative, emphasising its presumed social and economic backwardness and threatening military power. However, a counter-narrative that relativised these negative views also existed, notably in particular social *milieux* and historical periods. A significant strand of German official discourses emphasised the necessity of a cooperative approach to Russia that took into account its strategic importance for Germany and in the international arena. From the late 1960s onwards, these discourses constituted a cooperative West German foreign policy stance towards the Soviet Union that has become enshrined in the concept of *Ostpolitik*. The term literally means “Eastern policy” and generally refers to Germany’s foreign policy towards its Eastern neighbours (cf. Ash 1993: 34-35). It acquired a more specific meaning in the context of Cold War detente, when West German *Ostpolitik* established a tradition of cordial bilateral contacts that has remained an important element of reunified Germany’s policy towards Russia. The coexistence of deeply rooted stereotypes and the *Ostpolitik* tradition has resulted in an ambiguous relationship, which Russia’s role in German identity discourses can help to understand.

Negative perceptions of Russia in German intellectual and policy making elites date back at least to the sixteenth century. In 1549 German diplomat and writer Sigmund von Herberstein published a book describing the country as a brutal authoritarian regime and its people as backward and wretched. As Russia was largely unknown in Western Europe at the time, the book became a major source of knowledge (von Herberstein 2010; cf. Schröder 2012: 97). Criticism of Russia in German discourses became dominant in the nineteenth century and was fuelled by popular publications such as Astolphe de Custine’s *Empire of the Czar*. Published in 1839, it portrayed the Tsarist Empire as a corrupt, inefficient and despotic police state (de Custine 1989). Contemporary German liberals were particularly critical of Russian autocracy and of

the overall backwardness of the Tsarist Empire. For them, Russia was a threat to German and European liberal values (Schröder 2012: 99).

Conservatives tended to be less contemptuous of the Tsarist political system. Between 1847 and 1852, Prussian agricultural expert August von Haxthausen published a report on his trips to Russia, describing it as a well-ordered patriarchal monarchy. Von Haxthausen's (1972) publication promoted a competing, more positive discourse on Russia and was particularly popular among German aristocracy, which considered the Tsarist Empire as a bulwark against revolution and democracy. However, sympathetic conservatives were also convinced of Germany's cultural superiority and looked down on the Russian social and economic model. Stereotypes about Russia, such as its image as an underdeveloped and uncivilised country, were widespread throughout German society. Negative views were only partially mitigated by the appreciation of Russian literature, music and art (cf. Schröder 2012: 99-100).

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Tsarist Empire's alliances with France and Britain led to a shift in perceptions also among German conservatives, who no longer considered Russia as a political ally. Dominant discourses in political and intellectual circles portrayed it as a backward colossus that threatened German culture and simultaneously offered a vast expanse for the extension of German power and civilisation.⁴¹ These discourses provided the rationale for Berlin's annexationist policy during the First World War and, in a more extreme and racist variant, during the Nazi-Soviet war (cf. Liulevicius 2000).

Racial arguments about Russia were widespread already before the Nazis' rise to power. In Wilhelmine Germany, publicist Johannes Haller (1917) described the Tsarist Empire as an Asiatic, Tatar state, a true heir of the Golden Horde poised for war of conquest and pillage. After the Bolshevik revolution, racial discourses intertwined with political ones. The German elites and middle class associated the "Bolshevik threat" with Jewish commissars and savage Slavs that were keen to

⁴¹ Until 1945, German academia contributed to this line of thought. The scholarly discipline of *Ostforschung*, focusing on the European territories east of Germany, justified Berlin's expansionist aims in East-Central and Eastern Europe with pseudohistorical arguments (Mühle 2003a).

commit atrocious crimes and enslave Europe. On the other hand, a sizeable minority (mostly radicals and communists) viewed the Soviet Union as an economic and social model. From the opposite side of the political spectrum, some conservatives remained sympathetic to Russia, in spite of its communist regime, because they saw it as a partner in their fight against the Versailles system. These competing and more positive views resulted in the coexistence of diverse discourses and approaches to Russia also in Weimar Germany (cf. Schröder 2012: 100-103).

Following Hitler's rise to power, racist and anti-Bolshevik discourses became omnipresent; the Nazis silenced all competing views. From the start of the war with the Soviet Union (June 1941), the Nazi regime incessantly disseminated propaganda that described Russians and other peoples of the Soviet Union as "sub-humans" (*Untermenschen*). German racial policies in the East built on and radicalised pre-existing anti-Russian stereotypes. The Third Reich's military defeat frustrated Nazi plans to enslave and exterminate Slavic peoples. However, Goebbels' propaganda had a longer lasting impact on German mindsets. The image of Russians as uncivilised Asians, threatening German and European values, persisted in post-war West German discourses (Schildt 2003: 158).

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Soviet Union was the main Other against which West German identity was constructed. The Bonn Republic pursued transatlantic integration and shifted Germany's geopolitical self-perception from being part of Central Europe to full membership of the capitalist and democratic West (cf. Schröder 2012: 106). As West Germany left behind the historical enmity with France and Britain, the Soviet Union and its satellites became the only neighbouring foes. Perceptions of Russia were not positive in the German Democratic Republic either. East German official discourses on Soviet-German friendship were considered hollow also by most GDR citizens, particularly after the Soviets used tanks to repress popular protests against low living standards in East Germany in June 1953 (Knopp 2003, Ostermann 2001).⁴²

⁴² Furthermore, the violence of Soviet soldiers against German citizens, especially in the first months of occupation, left many East Germans embittered (Naimark 1995: 470).

The presence of Soviet troops and Moscow-friendly regimes on German soil and in bordering countries allowed West German politicians to focus public debates on the contemporary communist and Russian threat and avoid confrontation with the Nazi past. Soviet Russia was described as a totalitarian state that menaced the West with both its military might and its alleged cultural backwardness (cf. Schröder 2012: 107-109). Overtly racist discourses on Russia of the early post-war years lost momentum only gradually from the 1960s onwards, when the focus of West German debates shifted to Nazi crimes, most of which had been committed in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Chancellor Willy Brandt's genuflection in the former Warsaw ghetto in 1970 and his cooperative *Ostpolitik* with the Soviet Union epitomise the shift in official West German identity discourses and policies towards the Soviet bloc (cf. Ash 1993: 298-300).

Brandt's *Ostpolitik* enhanced trade exchanges between West Germany and the Eastern bloc and resulted in a series of treaties, signed between 1970 and 1973, that improved diplomatic relations between Bonn and Soviet Russia. Negative discourses on Russia did not disappear among West German political elites (Hildermeier 2003: 41; cf. Satjukow 2008). However, the Soviets were no longer perceived as aggressive and uncivilised Bolsheviks; the image of a peaceful neighbour that could become an economic partner gained momentum (Schildt 2003: 169; cf. Albert 1995, Thumann 1997). *Ostpolitik* created a new, powerful discourse showing that cooperation was possible and beneficial to both Moscow and Bonn. It marked a turning point in West German policies towards Russia that was eventually endorsed by all political forces. Leaders of the conservative opposition to Willy Brandt declared their approval of *Ostpolitik* in the mid-1970s and did not change course when they won elections and became the ruling majority in the 1980s (Schildt 2003: 171; cf. Marx 1990).

A further positive turn in German discourses on the Soviet Union took place in the late 1980s, when Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms in Moscow improved dramatically the USSR's image in the West. Dominant West German discourses about the Soviet Union abandoned the emphasis on economic and social stagnation, which had characterised the Brezhnev years, and stressed profound change. West German politicians and German civilians on both sides of the Iron Curtain acclaimed

Gorbachev for his role in ending the Cold War and allowing Germany's reunification. West German leaders took pride in arguing that peaceful transformation in Eastern Europe had taken place also as a result of their cooperative *Ostpolitik* with the Soviet Union. Furthermore, chancellor Helmut Kohl developed a personal friendship with Gorbachev, thereby establishing a tradition of cordial relationships between Russian and German leaders that lasted for nearly two decades. In the euphoria of reunification, the image of Russia as the aggressive Other disappeared and left room to optimism and hope for further democratic change in the Eastern bloc (Ahrens and Weiss 2012: 149-150, Krumm 2012a: 115-117).

The collapse of communism in Russia and East Germany brought the end of ideological controversies, but Russian capitalism and democracy turned out to be very different from the German variant. Boris Yeltsin's violent confrontation with the Russian parliament in October 1993 and the beginning of the war in Chechnya a year later ended German optimism about democratisation and rule of law in Russia. The image of destitute masses of Russian citizens, juxtaposed to that of a few opulent oligarchs who had enriched themselves with shady privatisations of state-owned assets, became prominent in German media. Russian politicians were also perceived with increasing scepticism (Krumm 2012a: 118-119). By the mid-1990s, the euphoric German discourse about Gorbachev's and Yeltsin's reforms gave room to the realisation that Russia was failing to democratise (Ahrens and Weiss 2012: 153)

As the First Chechen War (1994-1996) unmistakably showed, mass violations of human rights were commonplace also in post-communist Russia. In this context, deep-rooted German discourses on Russia as a socially and economically backward state became dominant again. In addition, the discourse on Russia as a chaotic country with a corrupt government and a crumbling social structure gained prominence. From a German viewpoint, the Cold War-time military and political threat was replaced by the risk of Russia's complete economic and social collapse, with spill-over effects that would reach far beyond the country's borders (Ahrens and Weiss 2012: 150). As Yeltsin's health worsened and Russia was hit by a disastrous financial crisis in 1998, critical perceptions overshadowed the positive image that Moscow had acquired by facilitating German reunification and ending the Cold War.

Vladimir Putin's rise to power in 1999 and Russia's economic growth during his first two presidencies was accompanied by a new shift in German perceptions. Critical discourses about the lack of democracy, the maltreatment of journalists and gross violations of human rights in Chechnya remained prominent in the German press. However, Putin was also ascribed the merit of economic and political stabilisation, an achievement that is valued highly in Germany due to the deeply engrained memory of the consequences that instability had on the country in the 1920s and 1930s (cf. Ahrens and Weiss 2012: 152). Hence, negative perceptions were accompanied by a more positive discourse about Russia's economic and social development, which was exemplified by chancellor Gerhard Schröder's friendly approach to Moscow and personal relationship with Putin. As was shown by a study of articles published in 2003 in *Spiegel* and *Stern*, the two main German weekly magazines, German news coverage of Russia became more differentiated (Daniliouk 2006). Optimistic evaluations of Russia were juxtaposed to critical assessments, particularly in the conservative press.

A study of editorials on Russian domestic and foreign policy published between 2001 and 2008 in the two most widely read and authoritative German dailies, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, provides further evidence for diversity in German discourses about Russia (Ahrens and Weiss 2012). Overall, assessments remained negative, particularly on issues such as Chechnya, democracy, freedom of the press, the rule of law and Russia's handling of Islamic terrorism within its borders. However, the theme of Russia as a stable and important actor in the international arena was dominant in 40 per cent of foreign policy editorials. The dominant discourse that emerges from the editorials describes Russia as an undemocratic country with internal problems, but also with a key international and economic role that made Germany's cooperation with Moscow inevitable.

Table 8. Dominant themes in German identity discourses

National identity discourses	Discourses on Russia
Democracy and human rights	<i>Ostpolitik</i>
Economic prosperity and stability	Authoritarian, corrupt, socially and economically backward
Rejection of war as means to solve disputes	Economic partner
Pro-European Union and multilateralism	Key actor in international arena

Source: own compilation

Martyrdom and heroism: the historical construction of Polish identity

After two centuries of foreign occupation and tutelage, Poland recovered its full independence in 1989. Since then, the country has pursued a West-oriented foreign policy that led it to join NATO and the European Union (in 1999 and 2004 respectively). However, the long periods of foreign occupation have left a profound impact on the construction of Polish identity. Post-1989 identity and memory discourses have focused on themes such as the suffering and heroic resistance of the Polish nation under the German and Russian yokes (Orla-Bukowska 2006). Discourses constructed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries frequently re-emerge in current public discussions and interact with debates concerning Poland's foreign policy.

In 1990, the decision to restore 3 May as a national holiday established an ideal link between post-communist Poland and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the eighteenth century. On 3 May 1791 the Commonwealth adopted a constitution that can be regarded as Europe's first democratic constitution (Davies 1996: 699). Four years later, the Commonwealth was partitioned between Austria, Prussia and Russia and ceased to exist. It took 123 years before an independent Polish state re-emerged. During this period, a modern Polish national identity was constructed and many

debates that still characterise Poland's self-image as an international actor were started (Porter 2000).

In the early nineteenth century, Polish intellectuals relocated the idea of the nation on a spiritual plane, where it could survive also in the absence of a nation-state. According to contemporary romantic nationalists, Poland was a community defined by moral principles, rather than by political structures. This conception of the nation was inclusive and left room for cultural, religious and ethnic diversity. Tyranny, rather than a specific country or nation, was identified as Poland's and Europe's main enemy. Catholic Poland was also considered as a Christian rampart (*antemurale christianitatis*), ready to sacrifice itself for Western civilisation ("for your freedom and ours", as a contemporary Polish romantic motto emphasised).⁴³ These ideas provided the foundations for the 1830 uprising in the part of Poland occupied by the Russian empire, while Russia came to be seen as an embodiment of tyranny (Porter 2000: 16-22, Prizel 1998: 40-41).

The failure of the 1830 uprising was the first major defeat for Polish romantic nationalists. Although the Poles considered their fight against Tsardom fundamental for Western civilization, other European nations did not join in the battle. The commitment that Poles had shown in the fight for the freedom of other nations (for instance, during the American Revolution and the Napoleonic wars) remained unreciprocated. The theme of unrequited commitment to the Western cause was dominant in Polish identity discourses well into the twentieth century, when it was further radicalised into accusations of outright betrayal addressed to the West (Prizel 1998: 41-42, 72-73). Poland started seeing itself as the "Christ of nations", an image propagated in particular by the national poet Adam Mickiewicz after the 1830 uprising (cf. Mickiewicz 1833). According to this interpretation, the Polish nation sacrificed itself for the sake of all other nations; one day, like Jesus Christ, it would resurrect.

⁴³ This discourse emphasised the role of Polish troops in the successful defence of Vienna from Muslim Turks in 1683 and motivated Polish romantics to fight in the American Revolution and to join Napoleon's armies (Prizel 1998: 41).

Mickiewicz's metaphor appealed to the Poles' deep religious sentiment and aptly combined political and religious imagery to foster faith in national rebirth. However, the hopes of romantic nationalists suffered a fatal blow in 1863, when another major uprising was crushed in Russian Poland and the Tsar launched policies of cultural and linguistic Russification.⁴⁴ The ideals of Polish romantics seemed to be negated, particularly because they had failed to arouse most of the Polish nation. In the nineteenth century, national identity debates were confined to a small fraction of the population, notably the aristocratic gentry and the intellectual elites. The peasantry was excluded from these deliberations and was even hostile to the idea of an independent Poland, which it associated with the feudal system of the Commonwealth. Only at the end of the century did a sizeable part of it become politicised and start to share a national sentiment (Stauter-Halsted 2001: 244-246, Porter 2000: 15).

Furthermore, due to its emphasis on freedom and justice, romantic nationalism appeared as too revolutionary for many Polish conservatives, who refused to support it. For the same reasons, both the Polish Catholic Church and the Vatican denounced the national struggle (Porter 2000: 29-31). After 1863, the ideals of Polish romantics were gradually displaced by those of positivists. According to positivists, patriots would serve the nation best by focusing their attention on solving problems of administration, economics and education. Prominent writer Bolesław Prus went as far as arguing that the Polish nation could survive without a state if it had a strong economy (Prus 1883). Economic development would allow Poland to emancipate itself from the backwardness of the Tsarist Empire. For positivists, political independence was only a matter of time, as Russian tyranny was considered temporary and doomed eventually to retreat back to Asia (Porter 2000: 46-82, Prizel 1998: 48).

With the advent of Positivism, the definition of nation became more focused on Polish culture and language. Positivists believed that national minorities in the former territories of the Commonwealth (notably Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Jews and

⁴⁴ In 1866-1867 Russian was established as mandatory language for the teaching of all subjects in all Polish secondary school, with the exception of religion (Porter 2000: 79-80).

Belarusians) would converge towards Polish culture and language due to Poland's cultural superiority. In this conception, the nation was no longer an ideal and spiritual entity (as for romantics), but rather an ethnic and linguistic community. The positivist reconceptualization of the nation paved the way for ethnonationalism, namely the aggressive and more exclusive form of nationalism that became widespread at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century (Prizel 1998: 40-50).

Ethnonationalism was advanced by political organisations that originated in the 1880s, most notably the National League of Roman Dmowski. In the 1890s a political party representing the views of ethnonationalists was also created, *Endecja* (National Democracy). Thanks to the gradual politicisation of the peasantry in the last years of the nineteenth century and the appeal of ethnonationalism, *Endecja* quickly became a mass movement. Its nationalist discourse was authoritarian, xenophobic and anti-Semitic. Power and discipline were the key tenets for the internal organisation of the nation. Particularly after the 1905 revolution in the Tsarist Empire, *Endecja* became preoccupied with disunity and disobedience within the Polish nation. Instead of striving for better social conditions, the Polish masses had to put themselves at the service of the ethnic nation, which was seen as the supreme ideal. By co-opting the masses to their nationalist ideas, *Endecja* leaders were able to claim a popular foundation while simultaneously controlling peasants and workers as they joined the political process (Porter 2000: 125-126, 136-155).

In the period when ethnonationalism was dominant in Polish discourses (from the late 1890s until the 1940s), it influenced dramatically the relationship between Poles and neighbouring nations. Jews, who numbered several million in the former territory of the Commonwealth, were depicted as an alien body that had to be either expelled or polonised. They were the first community to be considered as irredeemable Others, but by the end of the nineteenth century Polish nationalists applied similar discourses also to Germans, Russians, Lithuanians and Ukrainians (Porter 2000: 158-177). Ethnonationalists became convinced that a Polish state had to be rebuilt within the Commonwealth boundaries (stretching over most of today's Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine), but with the Poles as a dominant ethnic group.

Poles were also seen as having the messianic task of educating ethnic Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians, with the ultimate objective of polonising them (Prizel 1998: 52-67).

Between 1918 and 1939 Poland temporarily became independent and, as *Endecja* leaders were appointed to leading positions in the new state, their nationalist narrative became dominant in official discourses. Although national minorities constituted one third of Poland's interwar population, they were marginalised and had hardly any representation in political institutions (Prizel 1998: 62-67; cf. Brubaker 1996: 416-430). Ethnonationalist policies irremediably soured relations between Poles and neighbouring nationalities. In the 1990s, when Poland finally regained full independence, its foreign policy with Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and Russia was still constrained by the image that the country had projected towards its Eastern neighbours in the heyday of ethnonationalism (Snyder 2003; cf. Fedorowicz 2007).

The interwar Polish state was dismantled abruptly in 1939, when Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union partitioned the country. The brutal Nazi and Soviet war occupations strengthened and radicalised Polish perceptions of Germany and Russia as hostile Others. Since the Second World War is the key episode in current national memory, resentment towards both Germany and Russia has been perpetuated in dominant discourses until today (Ruchniewicz 2007). Polish characterisations of their Second World War experiences can be clustered around the themes of suffering and heroism. Discourses on suffering stress that Poland was the first country to be attacked by Nazi Germany (and simultaneously by the Soviet Union), experienced the longest foreign occupation in the war and endured enormous material losses and the worst human losses as a proportion of its total population (nearly 6 million deaths out of a pre-war population of nearly 35 million). This discourse was influenced by and perpetuated nineteenth century narratives on national martyrdom that portrayed Poland as the "Christ of nations".

The discourse on Polish heroism is closely linked to that of suffering and stresses that the nation did not remain passive or collaborate with the Nazis during the

occupation. As the dominant narrative goes, Poles never formally surrendered to the Nazis, kept fighting with the Allies on all fronts, organised a powerful network of domestic resistance and rose against the Germans in the Warsaw uprising, fighting for two months against a militarily superior enemy (Ruchniewicz 2007: 19). The opening of the Warsaw Rising Museum, which was inaugurated in the Polish capital in 2004 and immediately drew thousands of visitors every month, highlights the enduring relevance of the discourse on heroism. As the official website states, the museum is “a tribute of Warsaw’s residents to those who fought and died for independent Poland and its free capital”.⁴⁵ The historical event is turned into a founding myth of post-1989 Poland, regardless of its disappointing outcome, the large number of civilian casualties and the ensuing destruction of Warsaw.

Poland’s wartime experience also led to a revival of the discourse on Western betrayal and the unreciprocated support to the cause of freedom. Poles felt betrayed in 1939, when the United Kingdom and France provided no military assistance during the German invasion, and particularly at the Yalta conference in 1945, when the Western Allies agreed to leave Poland in the Soviet sphere of influence (Prizel 1998: 73-74). The Western decision of accommodating Moscow’s requests left Poles with the conviction that the United States’ foreign policy would always prioritise the Soviet Union. This fear motivated Polish foreign policy makers swiftly to use the window of opportunity of the 1990s and apply for NATO integration, while Russia was focusing mostly on internal problems and could not exert sufficient diplomatic pressure on the Atlantic Alliance to make it reconsider its membership offer to Poland (Snyder 2003: 110-111).

The outcome of the Yalta conference and Poland’s swift Sovietisation after the Second World War led Polish intellectuals and political opposition to reassess the country’s role in the international scenario. Poland had unmistakably become hostage of great power politics and it was clearly anachronistic to believe that it could have an independent role as “Christian bulwark” or as “civilising force” in Eastern Europe, as Polish interwar leaders had thought (Prizel 1998: 75-87). Poland’s communist leaders attempted to develop a socialist, pro-Soviet identity, but were

⁴⁵ See website of the Warsaw Rising Museum, <http://www.1944.pl/en/> (accessed 5/2/2013).

perceived as alien and imposed on the country by a foreign power. Next to the official communist discourse, prominent oppositional discourses originated in the underground and in *émigrés* communities. The literary-political *émigré* magazine *Kultura* was one of the leading forums for the discussion of Polish identity and Poland's future role in the international arena. From the 1970s onwards it prepared the conceptual background for the foreign policy of post-communist Poland (Snyder 2003: 220).

In a fundamental break with Poland's interwar foreign policy, *Kultura* advocated the acceptance of existing borders (even though Poland had lost most of its pre-1939 Eastern provinces, the so-called *kresy*), the recognition of post-communist Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus as equal nations and the rejection of any division of Eastern Europe in spheres of influence with Russia. By accepting its post-war territorial losses in the East, Poland would be less exposed to German territorial claims in the West based on 1939 borders.⁴⁶ By the late 1980s, *Kultura's* foreign policy ideas had become widely accepted among Poland's opposition politicians, who were about to become the country's new leadership (Snyder 2003: 220-225).

The success of *Kultura's* ideas had been made possible also by the fact that a significant part of the Polish Catholic Church and the Vatican endorsed them and encouraged reconciliation with Poland's Eastern and Western neighbours. This endorsement was fundamental to promote the new international self-image of Poland among the masses, as the Church enjoyed widespread support in civil society. Due to the protracted lack of independent state structures, the Polish Catholic Church became the main repository of the country's national identity, particularly during communism (Prizel 1998: 90-91, 229-230). As a result, the Church influenced identity discourses for most of Poland's history, retaining a prominent role in identity politics also after the recovery of full independence in 1989. According to a 2005 survey, Catholicism in Poland is linked to national pride; Poles are very religious and trust the Church more than any other institution, except for the army (McManus-Czubinska and Miller 2008: 147-148; cf. Sidorenko 2008: 119).

⁴⁶ In 1945, the former German provinces of Silesia, most of Pomerania and part of East Prussia were annexed to Poland; ethnic Germans living there were expelled.

According to popular perceptions, the Polish Catholic Church was one of the main factors leading to the end of communist rule in Poland. With the support of the Vatican, where Polish cardinal Karol Wojtyła became Pope in 1978, the opposition Catholic trade union Solidarity became a mass movement and challenged the regime, eventually leading to its demise in 1989 (Ash: 2002). Between the late 1970s and the 1990s the Catholic Church, the intelligentsia and the working class, under the banner of Solidarity, shared a common vision and purpose that marginalised the communist regime and led the country to regain full independence (Prizel 1998: 92-93). The metaphor of Poland as the “Christ of nations” gained momentum once again: after decades of martyrdom, the nation finally resurrected.

After 1989 the theme of the “return to Europe”, meant as joining the achievements of post-war Western Europe (Snyder 2003: 291), became dominant. Poland made EU and NATO integration its primary foreign policy goals. In order to achieve these aims, Warsaw adopted the policy of reconciliation with its neighbours conceptualised by *Kultura* and embraced a rhetoric that stressed so-called European standards (territorial integrity and minority rights) for Eastern Europe (Snyder 2003: 256-258; cf. Curry 2008: 186-187). The ethnonationalist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic discourses of the interwar period lost dominance, but they did not disappear and remained widespread in important sections of the Catholic Church, right-wing political parties and public opinion in general (Bikont: 2012).

The fact that by 1990 Poland was almost a mono-ethnic state, having lost most of its interwar national minorities, made previous ethnonationalist discourses about threatening internal Others anachronistic. However, deep-seated perceptions of Western Europe as a treacherous ally and of Germany and Russia as Poland’s historical enemies survived (Orla-Bukowska 181-187). Between 2005 and 2007, when the right-wing party Law and Justice formed a coalition government with the far right, these perceptions constituted the backbone of a virulent official discourse (Reeves 2010). The strong anti-German and anti-Russian rhetoric of the mid-2000s showed that, for a considerable part of its leadership, Poland still lived in an insecure international environment, where it was threatened by its historical Others.

Russia in Polish identity discourses: the eternal Other?

Throughout Poland's modern history, Polish identity discourses constructed Russia and Germany as aggressive and threatening Others. Poland's post-1990 rapprochement to Germany and European integration have not cancelled negative images of the Western neighbour, which are strongly rooted in national memory. However, they have contributed to reconciliation and to the belief that a new era in Polish-German relations has begun (cf. Langenbacher 2008: 74-75). In this context, Russia has become the dominant Other in current official Polish discourses.

Russian domination over Poland was the longest the country ever experienced, stretching from 1795 to 1918 and then again (under the Soviet banner) from 1939 to 1941 and from 1945 to 1989.⁴⁷ It was also the one that ended most recently and is generally considered by Poles as the most economically damaging for the country. Dominant Polish discourses describe the Russian partition zone in 1795-1918 as the least developed (by contrast with the German and Austrian zones) and blame the Russians for having imposed a repressive and inefficient economic and political model after 1945 (Zarycki 2004: 604). In the dominant Polish narrative, Soviet tutelage during the Cold War is seen as the continuation of Tsarist domination and the terms "Russia" and "Russians" are used as metonymies for "Soviet Union" and "Soviets" (Orla-Bukowska 2006: 203).

Russia plays a key role in identity discourses portraying Poles as either martyrs, sacrificing themselves for Europe's freedom, or as heroes, never surrendering to foreign occupiers. The discourse on Polish heroism was constructed mostly in the context of wars and uprisings against Russian domination. The 1830 and 1863 uprisings against the Tsarist Empire, the Polish-Soviet war of 1920 and the anti-communist uprisings of 1956, 1968, 1970 and 1980 are considered as a *continuum* in

⁴⁷ By contrast, the German occupation of Western Poland lasted from 1795 until 1918, with a second short, but very brutal spell during the Second World War (1939-1945); Austrian domination over Southern Poland lasted from 1795 until 1918.

a two century-long tradition of anti-Russian struggle (Loew 2008: 87-95, Ruchniewicz 2007: 11-12).

Particular importance is attributed to the 1920 Polish-Soviet war.⁴⁸ The decisive battle of the war, fought at the gates of Warsaw, is commonly referred to as “the miracle at the Vistula”, as it averted a Bolshevik victory that had seemed inevitable (cf. Orla-Bukowska 2006: 204). It is commemorated every year on 15 August, which is also Army Day and Assumption Day. Due to the concurrence of the “miracle” with the religious festivity, for Poles the victorious battle has acquired a quasi-religious significance. It also fosters the romantic image of Poland’s resurrection after it sacrificed itself to defend Europe and Christianity, and hence the themes of Poland as “Christ of nations” and as *antemurale christianitatis*.

Within the context of the martyrdom discourse, Russia plays a key role as the oppressor that crushed nearly all Polish attempts to regain freedom. Most notably, it is portrayed as the brutal, dictatorial power that partitioned Poland with the Nazis in 1939 and exterminated nearly 22,000 Polish officers at Katyn in April 1940.⁴⁹ The Katyn massacre and the Nazi-Soviet (or Ribbentrop-Molotov) Pact have been widely discussed in public only in post-1989 Poland, as both topics were taboo under communism (Paul 2010). According to surveys conducted in 2006 and 2007, most Poles consider the events of 1939-1940 as the main reason why Russia should feel guilty and issue an official apology to Warsaw (Levintova 2010: 1357).

Post-Soviet Russia, however, has refused to take responsibility for Stalinist crimes. In 2010 Russian president Dmitri Medvedev suggested that Warsaw lacked moral grounds to demand an apology for Katyn, as interwar Poland had been responsible for comparable crimes against the Soviet Union, such as the death of 16,000-20,000 Soviet prisoners of war in Polish detention camps (cited in Feklyunina 2012: 444). Polish narratives reject such comparisons and the dispute concerning responsibility for Katyn has not ended. In fact, the death of former Polish president Lech

⁴⁸ Most recently, memory of the 1920 Polish-Soviet war was fostered by Jerzy Hoffman’s movie *Bitwa Warszawska*, released in September 2011.

⁴⁹ The killings were perpetrated not just at Katyn, but also at other sites near Tver, Minsk, Kiev, Kharkov and Kherson. However, the phrase “Katyn massacre” is generally used in dominant discourses to refer to all the killings.

Kaczynski in a plane crash in April 2010, while he was going to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the Katyn massacre, contributed to the topic's continued prominence in public discourse. The ensuing debate on who was responsible for the plane crash showed that mutual distrust and hostility are still important factors in Polish-Russian relations.⁵⁰

Indeed, Russia's enduring role as Poland's threatening Other has turned the country into a negative reference point for the construction of the Polish Self and for Poland's understanding of its role in the international arena. According to Tomasz Zarycki (2004), in Polish discourses Russia fulfils the function of relativising Poland's distance from the West. Russia is perceived as inherently undemocratic and as an inferior imitator of European civilisation (cf. Prizel 1998: 82-85). Polish discourses orientalise Russia; they describe it as a less civilised and backward country, with a tradition of despotism linked to strong Asiatic influences. The ensuing feeling of cultural superiority allows Poland to strengthen its European identity, to construct itself as Central Europe and feel closer to Western European civilisation (Zarycki 2011: 132-134; cf. Said: 1978).

Polish identity narratives also use Russia as a unifying threat. They portray it as imperialist and aggressive, both in the past and in the present. Post-communist Russia's use of energy politics to achieve geopolitical objectives is constructed as a continuation of Tsarist and Soviet expansionist policies by different means. Zarycki (2004: 607-614) went as far as to argue that the image of Russia as a potential threat was the backbone of Polish foreign policy after 1989 and the main reason behind Poland's pursuit of EU and NATO membership.

After the collapse of communism, relations between Moscow and Warsaw improved only slightly and briefly when Red Army soldiers left their bases in Poland and Russian president Boris Yeltsin initially agreed to Polish NATO membership (Snyder 2003: 245-246). By September 1993, Yeltsin had changed his position and

⁵⁰ Cf. Simon Shuster, "Russia-Poland tensions rise with crash report", *The Time*, 19 January 2011, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2043130,00.html> (accessed 3/2/2013).

vehemently opposed Warsaw's accession to the Atlantic Alliance.⁵¹ Poles perceived his volte-face as the demonstration that post-Soviet Russia was still imperialist and wanted to retain a sphere of influence by constraining Polish foreign policy choices (Zarycki 2004: 609). Furthermore, the Russian parliamentary crisis of October 1993, which Yeltsin ended by having tanks fire at the Parliament, revived the argument that Russia was inherently undemocratic and would not change course despite the end of communism. After the crisis, a survey showed that 70 per cent of Poles considered Russia a military threat (Snyder 2003: 278).

For the rest of the 1990s, while Poland prepared for Western integration and Russia faced repeated economic crises, Polish-Russian diplomatic relations were restricted to the bare minimum. In 2002 Vladimir Putin finally travelled to Poland, nine years after the last official visit of a Russian president (Feklyunina 2012: 438). However, the renewed activism of Russia's foreign policy under Putin, combined with the rapid economic growth that the country experienced in the years 2000-2008, reawakened deep-seated Polish fears of the powerful Eastern neighbour.

In 2004, Poland and Russia got involved in the dispute between pro-Western Viktor Yushchenko and pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovich for the post of president in Ukraine. Warsaw and Moscow resented each other's attempts to influence political developments in a neighbouring state (cf. Minton 2006). The following year was marred by a series of bilateral crises, culminating in a Russian ban on the import of Polish meat and dairy products. In response, Poland (an EU member since 2004) vetoed the start of EU-Russia negotiations on a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (Feklyunina 2012: 439). Furthermore, Putin's invitation of his Polish counterpart Aleksander Kwasniewski to the May 2005 celebrations of the Soviet victory in the Second World War revived the Polish public debate on Soviet crimes in Poland during the war (cf. Onken 2007).

⁵¹ Furthermore, the Liberal Democratic Party of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who strongly opposed Poland's NATO membership, became the largest party at the December 1993 parliamentary elections and seemed poised to take over power in Russia. Zhirinovskiy publicly referred to Poland as "NATO's whore" (cited in Snyder 2003: 278).

Polish official discourses about Russia became further radicalised due to the 2005 electoral victory of the profoundly anti-Russian and anti-German party Law and Justice of Lech and Jaroslaw Kaczynski. The Law and Justice governments made constant use of historical analogies to address foreign policy issues with Germany and Russia. In 2006 Polish defence minister Radoslaw Sikorski dubbed the Nord Stream gas pipeline connecting Russia to Germany via the Baltic Sea (thereby circumventing Poland) a “new Molotov-Ribbentrop pact”.⁵² A year later, Law and Justice foreign minister Anna Fotyga publicly called Russia and Germany Poland’s “historic enemies” (cited in Reeves 2010: 522). The government’s decision to host elements of the US anti-missile shield on Polish territory, describing them as an anti-Russian guarantee, further spoiled relations with Moscow (Ozbay and Aras 2008).

A study of articles concerning Russia published between 2000 and 2007 on *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the largest-circulation Polish daily, and on *Rzeczpospolita*, the third-largest, reveals that historical stereotypes and rivalry were still dominant in Polish discourses (Levintova 2010). Russia was described mostly as an aggressive power, authoritarian, corrupt and xenophobic. Bilateral relations were framed negatively, particularly in the energy sector, where Russia was considered as an unreliable supplier. The worst criticism concerned the field of memory politics, most notably Russia’s refusal to condemn the Yalta agreement and take responsibility for the Katyn massacre and the 1939 invasion of Poland. Furthermore, Russian political elites were portrayed very negatively and identified with the whole country. Only under themes such as culture and arts, Russia was portrayed in a more positive light (cf. Zarycki 2011).

After the end of the Law and Justice governments, Polish-Russian relations started to improve. In October 2007, centre-right candidate Donald Tusk won the elections and became prime minister. The Tusk government sought partial reconciliation with Russia by adopting a pragmatic approach on economic issues and by fostering dialogue on sensitive topics such as the Katyn massacre. Anti-Russian discourses did not disappear but were toned down, at least at the official level. The Russian ban on the import of Polish meat and dairy products was swiftly lifted and Poland removed

⁵² Cited in Stephen Castle, “Poles angry at pipeline pact”, *The Independent*, 1 May 2006.

its veto on the negotiations of the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Some progress was made also in discussions regarding historical controversies. In 2010 a forum of prominent Russian and Polish experts appointed by their respective governments produced a joint publication addressing sensitive issues, including the Katyn massacre and the origins of the Second World War (Feklyunina 2012: 438-441).⁵³ According to surveys, the number of ordinary Poles seeing Russia as friendly modestly rose from 9 per cent in 2005 to 19 per cent in 2011 (Feklyunina 2012: 445).

For the first time in the history of Polish-Russian relations, in April 2010 the two countries' prime ministers jointly commemorated the Katyn massacre (Schwartz 2010). However, the atmosphere of reconciliation generated by the joint commemoration was marred only a few days later by the plane crash in which Polish president Lech Kaczynski died. In the months following the accident, the Polish right overtly blamed Russia for the plane crash and constructed a discourse stressing Russian past and (alleged) present crimes, which swiftly became dominant. This discourse was strengthened further in 2011, when a Russian enquiry commission published a report exculpating the Russian authorities from responsibility for the accident. Conspiracy theories blaming Russia for a "new Katyn" became omnipresent in Polish media.⁵⁴

Hence, Poland's reconciliation with Russia under Tusk was only partial and has proven to be fragile. Virulent anti-Russian discourses have remained prominent both at official and unofficial level and are often voiced by Law and Justice, which enjoys the support of approximately one-third of the electorate and is one of the two largest parties in the country. Furthermore, relations with Moscow were tense during the 2008 Russian-Georgian war and its aftermath. Apart from some tentative

⁵³ The forum was named "Group on difficult issues" and their work was published under the title *White Spots – Black Spots: Difficult Issues in Russian–Polish Relations* (Feklyunina 2012: 440). Furthermore, Andrzej Wajda's movie on Katyn, produced in Poland, was shown on Russian television, which greatly contributed to ordinary Russians' awareness of the massacre. Cf. Timothy Garton Ash, "This tortured Polish-Russian story is something we can all learn from", *The Guardian*, 23 February 2011, www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/feb/23/tortured-polish-russian-story (accessed 4/2/2013).

⁵⁴ Cf. Simon Shuster, "Russia–Poland tensions rise with crash report", *The Time*, 19 January 2011.

reconciliatory steps, historical contentions are far from resolved and are likely to retain their prominence in official discourses in the near future (Feklyunina 2012: 441-444).

Table 9. Dominant themes in Polish identity discourses

National identity discourses	Discourses on Russia
National martyrdom (Christ of nations)	Imperialist and aggressive
National heroism	Brutal occupying power for most of Poland's modern history
Catholicism	Oriental, undemocratic and corrupt
Euro-Atlanticism	Relativising Poland's distance from the West
Unreciprocated commitment to the West	Partner in pragmatic foreign policy

Source: own compilation

Nordicity along the East-West continuum: the historical construction of Finnish identity

Finnish national identity has been constructed around the concepts of marginality, Nordicity and the historical necessity to locate the country along an East-West continuum. These conceptualisations do not merely concern geography; they have profound cultural and political significance and have shaped the way Finns perceive their country and its role in the international arena. They were constructed during the last two centuries within historical frameworks that allowed Finland to become first an autonomous entity within the Russian empire, then a fully independent country.

The year 1809 marks a key date in the construction of Finnish national identity. After nearly six centuries of Swedish control, the Grand Duchy of Finland was created as part of the Tsarist Empire, with autonomous institutions and a distinct legal and

administrative system (Tiilikainen 1998: 120-122). Within this political context, Finns could develop for the first time a feeling of national belonging based on a common language and the rediscovery of their cultural heritage.⁵⁵ The lack of full political independence was not perceived as an obstacle to the emergence of the nation at this stage. Finland was considered as a young nation in the process of maturation. Within this discourse, the autonomy acquired under Russian tutelage was seen as a considerable step forward from the period of Swedish domination. Key figures of the Finnish national movement such as Yrjö Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen and Johan Vilhelm Snellman argued that the nation could be constructed also within Russian imperial structures by focusing on the cultural sphere and temporarily renouncing ambitions of independence (Browning and Lehti 2007: 697).

The dichotomy between the cultural and the political conception of the nation, each gaining the upper hand in different historical periods, has remained a key element of Finnish identity until today (Joenniemi 2002). In the nineteenth century, the emphasis on cultural identity was also part of a discourse portraying Finland as a small nation that needed the protection of a stronger, benevolent Other while it developed a distinct identity. Simultaneously, Finnish nationalists used the Grand Duchy's peripheral location in the Tsarist Empire and its administrative autonomy to relativise Finland's political dependence on Russia. Being marginal meant being distinct from the rest of the empire. Marginality and the notion of being a small country at the mercy of neighbouring great powers became dominant traits of Finnish identity and of Finland's self-image in the international arena (Browning and Lehti 2007, Tiilikainen 2006).

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the central government's Russification campaigns and increasing repressiveness led to a gradual rethinking of Finland's national identity construction and relationship with Russia. While the Finnish leadership attempted to accommodate Russian requests and retain political autonomy, a new conception of national identity, based on ethnicity and exclusive boundaries, became widespread (Joenniemi 2002: 198). According to this view,

⁵⁵ In 1835 the *Kalevala* was published, a national epic of Finland and one of the main works in Finnish literature. It had a profound impact on virtually all aspects of Finnish cultural life.

national identity could not be based simply on cultural distinctiveness and political autonomy; Finns had to strive for full independence and the creation of a nation-state. The Russian revolution provided the opportunity to disentangle the country from the crumbling Tsarist Empire. In December 1917 Finland proclaimed its independence.

The newly-born Finnish state immediately experienced a bloody civil war between the political right and the left, which led to a radicalisation of national identity discourses. The victory of the right in Finland and the success of the Bolsheviks in the Russian civil war brought about fundamental changes in Finnish self-images and perceptions of the country's international role. The Soviet Union was orientalised and constructed as the main national threat, while Finland was portrayed as an outpost of Western civilisation (Joenniemi 2002: 199). From this time, locating Finland somewhere along a continuum between East and West became a permanent feature of national identity discourses (Browning and Lehti 2007: 691). In the following decades, the country was alternatively depicted as a Western, anti-Soviet bastion or as a bridge between East and West, with the function of bringing Russia closer to the latter.

In the interwar period, ethnonationalism dominated Finnish political discourses and was accompanied by the formulation of expansionist foreign policy ideas, such as the creation of a Greater Finland extending to Eastern Karelia and Siberia. Confidence in the country's ability to stand on its own and confront larger neighbours was temporarily bolstered by the successful defensive campaigns of the Winter War against the Soviet Union (1939-1940). Eventually, such confidence was however shattered by Finland's entanglement in the broader geopolitical struggle between Nazi Germany and the USSR and its defeat in the Second World War (cf. Vehviläinen 2002). The harsh conditions imposed by the Soviets at the end of the war, including the loss of considerable portions of national territory and a large indemnity, led Finnish leaders to reject the political course of the interwar years and reformulate the country's foreign policy (Browning 2008: 169-178).

Dominant discourses stressed that involvement in great power politics had had catastrophic consequences for Finland. The idea of Finland as a small nation that should adopt a pragmatic policy and stay aloof from geopolitical struggles as much as possible remained central in foreign policy making throughout the Cold War. Pragmatism in foreign policy meant primarily accommodating the requests of the Soviet Union, the powerful neighbour with which Finland shared a border of over 1,000 kilometres in length. In 1948 a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union was signed. While maintaining good relations with the USSR, Finland became a neutral state. This pragmatic foreign policy doctrine became known as Paasikivi-Kekkonen line, from the names of Juho Paasikivi, who became president in 1946 and is credited with having started it, and his successor Urho Kekkonen, who was in office from 1956 until 1981 (Browning 2008: 169-171; cf. Tiilikainen 1998: 146-151).

The key objective of the Paasikivi-Kekkonen line was the preservation of independence and territorial integrity, which appeared seriously threatened at the end of the Second World War. The idea of the nation as sovereign and linked to a specific territory survived the defeat in the war against the USSR and was a key foreign policy tenet throughout the Cold War. This conception also constituted the pragmatic essence of “Finlandisation”, a term coined in the German scholarly debate during the Cold War referring to the policy of securing sovereignty through appeasement of the Soviet Union (Jokela 2010: 56).⁵⁶ Following this policy line, Finland would accommodate Soviet requests and obtain in return Soviet acceptance of its independence, political system and free market economy (Browning 2008: 176).

The choice of neutrality in the East-West confrontation was also pragmatic and functional to the country’s foreign policy interests. It sent a positive message to both Cold War camps. For the communist world, it meant that Finland would stay neutral in international crises, despite its adherence to Western values. The 1948 treaty with

⁵⁶ In Finland the term “Finlandisation” has acquired a negative meaning, indicating an excessive willingness to appease the Soviet Union also at times when Moscow no longer seemed poised to threaten Finnish sovereignty (cf. Browning 2008: 207, Jokela 2010: 56).

the Soviet Union was a further guarantee that Helsinki was interested in maintaining good relations with the Eastern bloc. For the West, neutrality was a message of belonging: it could be read as evidence that Finland had been forced to accommodate Soviet interests, but while doing so it kept Western political and economic structures. As the Cold War unfolded, Finnish neutrality evolved from a defensive policy for the preservation of sovereignty to an opportunity to acquire an active role in mediating the East-West conflict. Finland was constructed as a successful bridge builder within the framework of detente between the two blocs. The 1975 summit of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which was held in Helsinki, was arguably the greatest success of the Finnish policy of bridge building between East and West (Tiilikainen 1998: 153-156).

The policy of neutrality allowed Finland to become active and construct a distinct identity also in other fields of world politics where some room for manoeuvre existed outside the East-West conflict. Most notably, the country became a prominent supporter of “internationalist solidarism” (Browning 2007: 33), namely the efforts to bridge the economic gap between rich and poor states. Finland was a fervent advocate of the United Nations and, together with the other Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway and Denmark), provided 25 per cent of the military personnel deployed in UN operations during the Cold War (Browning 2007: 35). Alongside the focus on international solidarity, Finland shared with its Nordic neighbours the domestic model of egalitarian social democracy (portrayed as a third way between communism and capitalism) and the international image of being a peaceful and highly modern society. These three elements became the foundations of a Nordic identity through which Finland constructed its international role during the Cold War (Browning 2007: 32-35).

When the Cold War ended, the main tenets of Nordic identity and of Finland’s self-image were challenged by the new geopolitical reality. The idea of the Nordic countries as the most peaceful region of Europe and as the main supporters of international solidarity became somewhat anachronistic, particularly as the European Union started to be constructed as the main guarantor of peace in the continent and became the largest provider of development aid. Most importantly, the end of the

East-West confrontation questioned the significance of a model that was alternative to the Cold War's blocs. Domestically, it made little sense to define the Nordic social democratic model as a middle way between Western European capitalism and Eastern European communism, as the latter no longer existed. In foreign policy, Finland had to face the fact that it appeared no longer useful to define its identity in terms of an East-West continuum. The changed international scenario caused a temporary identity crisis in the country (Browning 2007: 36-43, Tiilikainen 1998: 159; cf. Waeber 1992).

The crisis was however solved in a relatively short period through the combination of a new identity discourse and the adaptation of pre-existing discourses. The new narrative argued that Finland could finally return to the West and to Europe, after being forced to stay at their margins in order to retain its sovereignty during the Cold War (Browning and Lehti 2007: 704). This was exemplified by the country's first foreign policy moves after the end of the Cold War. The 1948 treaty with the Soviet Union expired in 1992 and Finland applied for membership in the European Union, which was granted after nearly 57% of Finns expressed their approval in a referendum held in October 1994 (Joenniemi 2008: 186).

The shift in Finland's foreign policy identity brought about by accession to the European Union could be reconciled with pre-existing identity discourses. The EU was conceptualised as an entity that did not intrude on the Finnish social model and on the country's security policy. Hence, it could coexist with Finland's Nordic identity (Joenniemi 2002: 204). Within the European Union, Finland also attempted to keep its Cold War role as bridge builder to Russia. The Northern Dimension, a Finnish initiative launched in 1998 to coordinate the Union's cross-border policies with Norway, Iceland and particularly Russia, provides the best example of these attempts (cf. Haukkala and Ojanen 2011: 159-161).

By stressing interdependence and the need for cooperation among the countries involved, the Northern Dimension sought to blur the boundaries between the European (and Finnish) Self and the Russian Other. In particular, it endeavoured to harmonise the EU's views and policies with those of its partners. For instance, during

the 1999 Finnish presidency of the European Union, Northern Dimension partners were invited to present position papers prior to the European Council summit in Helsinki; their stance influenced the drawing up of a relevant EU action plan (Haukkala 2005: 287-288).

Despite the EU's declared objective of creating a common foreign and security policy for its members, Finland did not relinquish its neutrality in the military field. The Finnish security discourse was partially reframed in terms of alignment. Helsinki conceded that it had aligned with the West and the EU politically and economically, but continued to adhere to military non-alignment (Jokela 2010: 61). This position has constantly enjoyed the support of the majority of Finns, which highlights how strongly the country's public opinion has internalised military neutrality as part of national identity. Surveys conducted in the years 1996-2008 revealed that a proportion of Finns oscillating between 58 and 79 per cent believed that Finland should remain neutral (Möller and Bjereld 2010: 371).

The ease with which Finland adapted its foreign policy identity to the new post-Cold War conditions may be understood through the country's historical tendency to adjust itself to changing foreign policy scenarios in order to survive (Joenniemi 2002: 209). The awareness of being a small nation with limited room for independent manoeuvre in foreign policy has continued to be a key characteristic of Finnish political identity (Tiilikainen 2006). However, Finnish policy makers have justified the country's foreign policy flexibility also in more positive terms. A discourse on Finland as a young, future-oriented nation that quickly adapts itself to the challenges of the modern world has emerged, somewhat in continuation with the country's early nineteenth century depictions (cf. Joenniemi 2010: 56). Locating Finland at the economic centre of the globalised world, in spite of its small size and geographic marginality, is the main aim of the current discourse (Browning and Lehti 2007: 708).

Russia in Finnish discourses: economic partner and “security deficit”

The discussion of Finnish national identity construction has highlighted Russia's and the Soviet Union's prominent role in Finland's history and foreign policy choices. By contrast with dominant Polish narratives, Russia has not always been portrayed as a threat in Finnish discourses. In fact, for most of the nineteenth century a majority of Finns considered the Tsarist Empire as a benevolent Other that allowed Finnish culture and national identity to blossom (Joenniemi 2010: 48). Russia's benevolence was contrasted with the previous period of Swedish government, during which Finns had enjoyed much less autonomy and cultural independence. The positive experience under the Tsarist Empire constituted an important precedent for later Finnish leaders who made the case for peaceful coexistence and close cooperation with Russia (Browning 2003: 53).

The positive memory of the early Tsarist period is however counterbalanced by that of the conflicts that characterised bilateral history in the first half of the twentieth century. The Russian Revolution allowed Finland to break off the Tsarist Empire and acquire full political independence, but it also created an ideological and military threat east of the newly-born Finnish state. With the rise of Finnish ethnonationalism in the 1920s and 1930s, a new narrative depicting Russians in overtly racist terms (as evil, treacherous and culturally inferior) became prominent. The border with the Soviet Union was considered a civilizational demarcation between European and Asian culture (Browning 2007: 700).

The radicalisation of negative discourses on the Soviet Union reached a peak during the Winter War (1939-1940), when the Red Army attempted a full-scale invasion of Finland. The unexpected and strenuous Finnish defence saved the country's independence and became one of the key national myths. In this narrative, the Russians play the role of brutal aggressors against whom the whole country united. The loss of the region of Karelia to the Soviet Union and the resettlement of its inhabitants to other areas of Finland were constant reminders of the pain inflicted by the Soviets (cf. Forsberg 1995, Vehviläinen 2002). The desire to avenge Soviet

aggression led Finland to participate in the German attack against the Soviet Union in 1941.

Military defeat eventually stimulated a reconsideration of Finland's stance towards its powerful Eastern neighbour. The virulent anti-Soviet discourses of the interwar years were considered responsible for the outbreak of a war that Finland could not win. They had also legitimised Soviet security concerns and subsequent military action. Finland's post-war leaders concluded that criticism of the USSR had to be curtailed in order to avoid a new confrontation (Browning and Lehti 2007: 700-701). Since the Soviet victory and the geopolitical realities left no alternative, the majority of Finns supported this policy line. Finland's economic success, the development of an alternative social model and its global role as a peace-maker translated into constant support for the neutral, Soviet-friendly foreign policy throughout the Cold War. Criticism of the Soviet Union was self-censored and the country was publicly described as an important partner for Finland (cf. Vihavainen 2006: 31). Threat perceptions did not disappear, but they were not voiced at official level.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the expiry of the 1948 treaty have changed the nature of Finland's relations with its Eastern neighbour. Finnish media and public opinion have often openly criticised Russia in the post-Cold War period. The post-war policy of appeasement towards the USSR no longer provides a model for Finnish foreign policy and has been retrospectively condemned by some politicians. However, at official level rhetoric has not changed dramatically. There are no prominent bilateral controversies left unsolved from the past; even the wartime loss of Karelia, which has remained part of Russia, is no longer considered as an important issue by the majority of Finns. When Finnish politicians refer to their country's historical relationship with Russia, they almost always emphasise positive moments, such as the development of Finnish national identity under Russian rule in the nineteenth century and the "special" Finnish-Soviet relationship during the Cold War (Vihavainen 2006).

Finnish perceptions of a security threat emanating from Russia still exist. Evidence for this is provided by Finland's continued reliance on territorial defence and a

relatively large army of reservists. Finnish political and military leaders do not openly mention Russia as a threat, but they refer to it indirectly, often speaking in code and with euphemisms such as “Finland’s security deficit” (Forsberg 2006: 143). Some scholars go as far as arguing that the image of a Russian threat is still present in Finnish psyche and is an essential component of the grand national narrative (cf. Medvedev 1999: 104). However, a majority of Finns is in favour of friendly relations with Moscow (Forsberg 2006: 148). After the crises and instability of the 1990s, Russia has become again a key trade partner for Finland. Within the European Union, Finland is one of the main advocates of a policy of constructive engagement with Russia. Finns consider maintaining a positive dialogue with Moscow essential in order to avoid confrontation at their country’s borders (Etzold and Haukkala 2011: 253-254).

Furthermore, Helsinki has retained positive bilateral relations with Moscow, which guarantee a safe channel of communication whenever the European Union proves unable to formulate a shared policy towards Russia (Haukkala and Ojanen 2011: 165; cf. Vihavainen 2006: 45). Finland’s reluctance to abandon its military non-alignment and join European or Transatlantic security structures is evidence of the importance that is still attributed to bilateral relations with Russia. Finnish leaders and public opinion believe that a change in the country’s security policy would alienate Russia, thereby producing more security drawbacks than benefits for Finland (cf. Giles and Eskola 2009). Hence, Finland has upheld its constructive policy towards Moscow and has reconciled EU membership with its traditional role as bridge builder between the West and Russia.

Table 10. Dominant themes in Finnish identity discourses

National identity discourses	Discourses on Russia
Moving along an East-West continuum (bridge builder to East / Western outpost)	Benevolent Other
Marginality	Economic partner
Nordicity (egalitarian social model, international solidarity, multilateralism)	Finland's "security deficit"
Neutrality	
Finland as a young and modern nation	

Source: own compilation

Conclusion: national identities and historical discourses as interpretive frameworks

This chapter showed that current German, Polish and Finnish national identities are the result of a *longue durée* process of construction that extends well into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The analysis emphasised that, following the experience of National Socialism and of GDR Soviet-style communism, German identity has been constructed around the rejection of authoritarianism and war. Economic prosperity, political stability, democracy and multilateralism in international politics (notably the advocacy of policies agreed upon at EU level) have become key tenets of German identity.

In Poland, national identity narratives have focused on the themes of martyrdom and heroism. The martyrdom narrative focuses on the country's loss of independence and foreign occupation from 1795 until 1918, during the Second World War and throughout the Cold War. The heroism narrative stresses that Poland never accepted its loss of independence and consistently fought for its freedom, in spite of overwhelming hostile forces and the indifference of Western democracies. During the periods of foreign occupation and tutelage, the Catholic Church and Catholicism

acquired fundamental importance as key constituents of Polish identity, providing ideological and institutional support for the political forces fighting for independence.

Finnish identity construction was profoundly influenced by the country's geographical location and its geopolitical implications. Narratives of marginality and Nordicity played an essential role, with the latter acquiring particular importance during the Cold War. In this historical phase, Finland closely identified with the Nordic countries' egalitarian social model, support for international solidarity and for multilateralism as a way to address international disputes. Most importantly, Finland was conceptualised as a country moving along an East-West continuum, belonging to the West ideologically but simultaneously acting as a bridge builder towards the East, namely Russia and the Soviet Union. This self-perception as mediator between East and West also contributed to turning neutrality into a key factor of the country's post-1945 identity.

Russia emerged as an important Other in national identity narratives in the three countries under investigation. However, constructions of Russia varied significantly from country to country and over time. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through to the Cold War, most German discourses dismissed Russia as authoritarian, corrupt and backward. While these narratives still play a role in post-reunification Germany, new dominant discourses have emerged, portraying Russia as an essential economic partner and as a key international actor that Germany must engage. The *Ostpolitik* discourse, advocating dialogue and partnership with Russia, has been particularly influential from the 1970s onwards.

By contrast, Russia was constructed as the main negative Other in Polish identity throughout Poland's modern and contemporary history (sharing this role with Germany until 1945 and for brief spells in the early 1990s and mid-2000s, at times of tension between Poland and Germany). Dominant Polish narratives portrayed Russia as imperialist, aggressive, undemocratic, oriental and therefore unaware of the Western values that Poles claimed to cherish. Only recently, following the election of Donald Tusk to the post of prime minister (in 2007), a more positive discourse on

Russia has emerged, highlighting its role as potential partner in a pragmatic foreign policy.

Dominant Finnish narratives alternated positive and deeply negative representations of Russia over time. In the early nineteenth century, Russia was considered mostly as a benevolent Other that liberated Finland from Swedish oppression and allowed it to become autonomous. As a result of the policies of Russification in the latter part of the century and the Bolshevik revolution, dominant discourses changed radically. Soviet Russia was seen as the most formidable threat to Finnish independence, a perception that was strengthened after the Soviet aggression in 1939. Both positive and negative discourses survived after the Second World War, but were reformulated in more moderate terms. Russia was portrayed both as an essential economic partner and, due to its military might, as the chief source of Finland's "security deficit".

Hence, the analysis of national identity and historical narratives on Russia revealed considerable differences across the three countries under investigation. Table 11 below summarises the dominant discourses, as they emerged from the analysis in this chapter. In the following chapters, these findings are used as an interpretive framework to examine foreign policy makers' speeches and statements on Russia between 2005 and 2012. It is possible that some of the identity constituents and narratives listed in table 11 may have a stronger reflection than others in the foreign policy speeches under analysis. With the passage of time, some identity discourses that played a role in foreign policy making in the past may have lost importance, while others may have emerged in a slightly different form, adapted to present circumstances. While allowing for these eventualities, the analysis refers to key elements in *longue durée* national identity formation and historical discourses on Russia to deconstruct and provide one way of understanding foreign policy makers' speeches.

Table 11. Dominant themes in German, Polish and Finnish identity discourses

	German discourses	Polish discourses	Finnish discourses
National identity discourses	Democracy and human rights	National martyrdom (Christ of nations)	Moving along an East-West continuum (bridge builder to East / Western outpost)
	Economic prosperity and stability	National heroism	Marginality
	Rejection of war as means to solve disputes	Catholicism	Nordicity (egalitarian social model, international solidarity, multilateralism)
	Pro-European Union and multilateralism	Euro-Atlanticism	Neutrality
		Unreciprocated commitment to the West	Finland as a young and modern nation
Discourses on Russia	<i>Ostpolitik</i>	Imperialist and aggressive	Benevolent Other
	Authoritarian, corrupt, socially and economically backward	Brutal occupying power for most of Poland's modern history	Economic partner
	Economic partner	Oriental, undemocratic and corrupt	Finland's "security deficit"
	Key actor in international arena	Relativising Poland's distance from the West	
		Partner in pragmatic foreign policy	

Source: own compilation

Chapter 5: The Nord Stream pipeline and European energy security

Introduction

This chapter presents the first of the three case studies examining German, Polish and Finnish foreign policy makers' discourses on Russia. It investigates discourses on the Nord Stream pipeline project and, more broadly, on the energy relationship between the European Union and Russia in the years 2005-2012. The analysis shows that national narratives diverged considerably and that identity provides a useful interpretive framework to explain this diversity. The key questions addressed are: how are the Nord Stream pipeline and energy relations with Russia portrayed in foreign policy makers' discourses? What are the main discursive strategies and linguistic devices used in each discourse? How do these discourses relate to national identity and to the constructed images of Russia therein? How do different national discourses relate to each other?

In order to answer these questions, the dissertation applies the theoretical and methodological framework outlined in chapters 2 and 3. Foreign policy makers' statements on Nord Stream and energy relations with Russia are deconstructed and examined within their political, historical and sociological background through discourse-historical analysis. The chapter then investigates the relationship between dominant discourses and national identity. In particular, dominant narratives are related to the key elements of national identity construction and to the historical perceptions of Russia that were discussed in chapter 4.

The chapter opens with a concise survey of the broad policy context in which discourses on Nord Stream and energy relations with Russia were formulated. The main factors that motivated the construction of the pipeline and the stance of the European countries affected by the project are reviewed briefly. This background contextualises the case study and shows its significance for both the EU's and its member states' relations with Russia. In the following sections, the main German,

Polish and Finnish discourses are analysed. Each section includes a brief introduction of the national political context and of the main actors (heads of state or government and foreign ministers) that were involved in the construction of dominant discourses on Nord Stream and energy relations with Russia.

Ultimately, this chapter allows for a comparison of national discourses on one of the most important and controversial aspects of EU-Russia relations, namely the energy partnership. The main insights emerging from this comparison are outlined in the concluding section of the chapter. The choice of a particularly contentious policy field as case study allows an assessment of whether divergent perceptions of Russia and of its policies can be interpreted and understood through the prism of national identity.

The framing of the Nord Stream project

The debate concerning the European Union's and its member states' energy security was one of the liveliest in European foreign policy circles during the period under consideration. The demand of fossil fuels in EU member states is much larger than domestic production. In 2005, EU member states imported most of their gas and oil from several neighbouring countries, including Russia, Norway and Algeria. Russia was the EU's main energy partner, accounting for 40 per cent of the Union's total gas imports and 36 per cent of its oil imports (Aalto and Westphal 2008: 7). Faced with declining domestic production and increasing demand, most EU member states were concerned with securing energy imports from non-EU countries. Due to the EU's plans to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide, gas (as a less polluting fossil fuel than oil and coal) became an increasingly important component of the European energy mix.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ The European Commission website argues that "natural gas, the cleanest fossil fuel, is a vital component of the world's energy mix [...] At a time when European reserves are being depleted and consumers' appetite continues to increase, natural gas is becoming critically important to the EU"; http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/gas/gas_en.htm (accessed 29/5/2014).

As the longest standing gas provider to Europe and holder of the world's largest gas reserves, in 2005 Russia was an essential energy partner for most European countries (Högselius 2013). Most Central and Eastern European states were heavily reliant on imports of Russian gas. In the three countries under analysis, this reliance varied. It was highest in Finland, where 100 per cent of imported gas came from Russia, and lower but nevertheless very significant in both Poland and Germany, with respectively 63 and 45 per cent of total gas imports coming from Russia (Aalto and Westphal 2008: 8). The share of gas in total national energy consumption was particularly high in Germany (23 per cent), followed by Poland (13 per cent) and Finland (10 per cent).⁵⁸

Russian gas was channelled to EU member states through pipelines. However, among the EU countries only Finland, Estonia and Latvia had direct pipeline connections with Russia. Russian gas reached the markets of other EU member states after transiting the territory of Ukraine and Belarus, two former Soviet republics that were also heavily dependent on imports of Russian energy supplies. Most of the gas (around 100 billion cubic meters a year) was channelled to Central Europe via the Brotherhood (*Bratstvo*) pipeline in Ukraine, which had been built in the late 1960s and expanded over the subsequent decades. The Yamal-Europe pipeline, built in the late 1990s to transport Russian gas to Poland and Germany via Belarus, provided an alternative route, but had a much lower capacity than Brotherhood (Högselius 2013: 212-213).⁵⁹

As long as Russia's relations with Ukraine and Belarus were good, Russian gas supplies to Europe via the Brotherhood and Yamal-Europe pipelines were undisrupted and secure. The situation changed in the mid-2000s, when diplomatic relations between Russia and Ukraine became tense and Russia's state-owned energy

⁵⁸ The data on the share of gas in total national consumption refer to 2004 and is available in the European Commission's Energy Mix Fact Sheets for Germany (http://ec.europa.eu/energy/energy_policy/doc/factsheets/mix/mix_de_en.pdf), Poland (http://ec.europa.eu/energy/energy_policy/doc/factsheets/mix/mix_pl_en.pdf) and Finland (http://ec.europa.eu/energy/energy_policy/doc/factsheets/mix/mix_fi_en.pdf, all accessed 29/5/2014).

⁵⁹ In 2005 the Yamal-Europe pipeline transported 20 billion cubic metres of gas a year, less than one fifth of the total gas shipped through the Brotherhood complex of pipelines (Högselius 2012: 213).

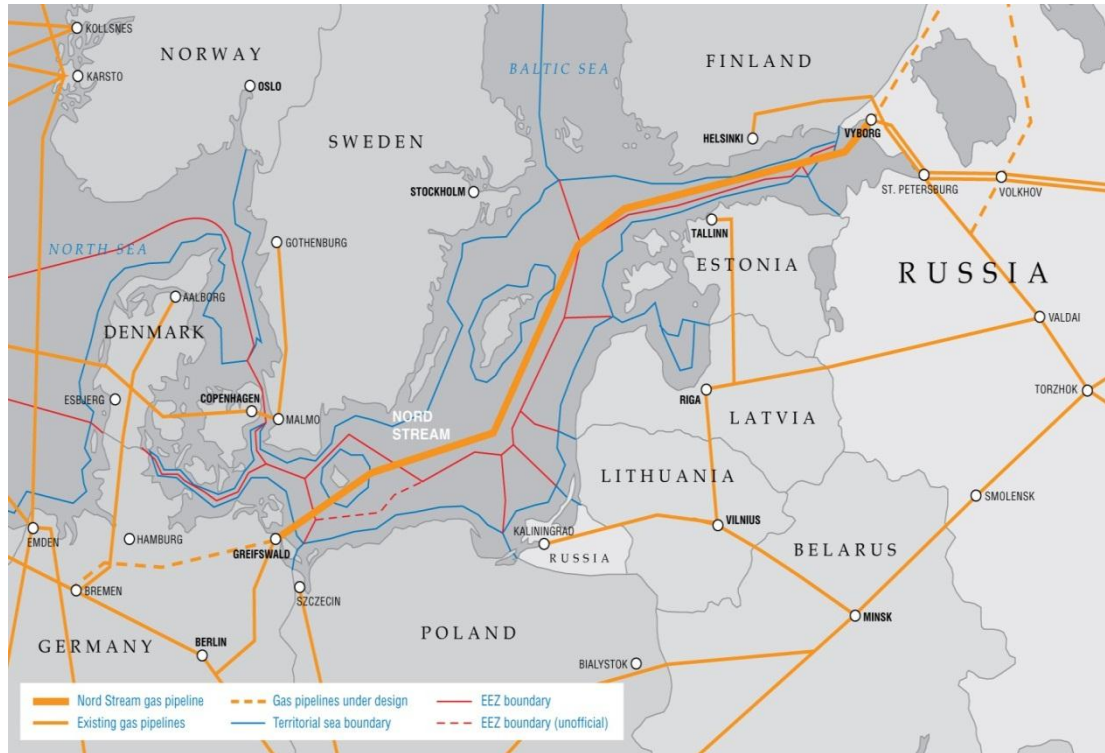
company Gazprom announced its intention to gradually increase the price of gas sold to Belarus and Ukraine.⁶⁰ Until then, Russia had sold gas to both countries at prices far below market levels (cf. Balmaceda 2012: 138). The Ukrainian and Belarusian governments attempted to resist price increases and their frequent disputes with Gazprom led to several disruptions in the flow of Russian gas to the European Union, starting with the January 2004 Russia-Belarus gas dispute.⁶¹ Most of these disputes followed a similar pattern: when the Ukrainian or Belarusian governments refused to accept Gazprom's price increases, the Russian company stopped gas supplies. Belarus and Ukraine then siphoned off the Russian gas transiting their territory directed to the European Union for national consumption. As a result, the security of Russian gas supplies to Central and Western Europe became increasingly dependent on the status of Russian-Ukrainian and Russian-Belarusian relations (cf. Balmaceda 2012, Pirani 2012).

Both Russia and EU member states investigated possible solutions to strengthen the security of Russian gas supplies. On 8 September 2005 Gazprom and the German energy companies BASF and E.ON signed an agreement for the construction of a North European gas pipeline (renamed Nord Stream in 2006) connecting Russia and Germany via the Baltic Sea. The planned pipeline bypassed Ukraine, Belarus and all other East-Central European countries (see map 1).

⁶⁰ Tensions were due mainly to the Orange revolution in Ukraine in November 2004 and Viktor Yushchenko's election to the Ukrainian presidency in January 2005. The Russian leadership considered Yushchenko hostile to Russia's interest and backed then Kremlin-friendly candidate Viktor Yanukovich.

⁶¹ Further disputes on the price of energy between Russia and Belarus took place in January 2007 and June 2010, whereas the main Russian-Ukrainian disputes happened in January 2006 and January 2009.

Map 1. The route of the Nord Stream pipeline



Source: www.gazprom.com

The government of German chancellor Gerhard Schröder was particularly enthusiastic about the project and gave financial guarantees to cover part of its cost. In December 2005, a few weeks after the end of his mandate as chancellor, Schröder became chairman of the Nord Stream consortium's board.⁶² Nord Stream thus appeared as a German-Russian corporate project with strong governmental backing in both countries. However, both before and after the Russian-German deal of September 2005 the project saw the involvement of other European actors. The planning for a pipeline connecting Russia to Central Europe via the Baltic Sea started in the mid-1990s as a Russian-Finnish initiative. Finnish companies Neste and Fortum were involved in the planning process until 2004. In 2000 the European

⁶² Following his appointment to the Nord Stream board, Schröder was heavily criticised both in Germany and abroad for having obtained private gains out of his political support for the pipeline when he was chancellor; cf. "Schröder attacked over gas post", *BBC News*, 10 December 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4515914.stm> (accessed 29/5/2014).

Commission declared the North European gas pipeline one of the key energy projects involving European interests and included it in the Trans European Natural Gas Network guidelines. Between 2007 and 2010 the Dutch company Gasunie and the French GDF Suez also acquired stakes in the project, thereby making it a joint Russian-German-Dutch-French endeavour (cf. Smith 2012: 122-123).⁶³

The Nord Stream project involved key energy companies of Western and Central European EU member states but had no stakeholder in the East-Central European countries that joined the EU in 2004. In fact, the pipeline was designed and built following a route that circumvented not only Belarus and Ukraine, but also the three post-Soviet Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and Poland. Despite Gazprom's argument that this choice had been made in order to avoid transit fees, the governments of Poland and the Baltic republics considered the pipeline's route to be politically motivated. Russia and the EU member states supporting Nord Stream, particularly Germany, were accused of making deals that were detrimental to the interests of East-Central European states and to EU plans to build a shared European energy policy (Westphal 2008: 109). According to this argument, Nord Stream would create a preferential energy corridor from Russia directly to Germany and Western Europe. Russia would then be able to use its gas exports to East-Central Europe as a political lever, reducing supplies and increasing costs at its discretion while leaving gas flows to West European countries unaffected.⁶⁴ Poland and the Baltic states feared that they would be increasingly exposed to Russian political and economic influence, a prospect that awakened anti-Russian collective memories and parallels with their subjugation to the Soviet Union during the Cold War (cf. Grigas 2013). The debate on Nord Stream became heavily politicised, with identity and memory politics playing a major role in its development.

⁶³ Following the entry of GDF Suez in the consortium in March 2010, Nord Stream stakes were divided as follows: Gazprom 51%, Wintershall (subsidiary of BASF) 15.5%, E.ON 15.5%, Gasunie 9% and GDF Suez 9%.

⁶⁴ Polish officials strongly advocated the expansion of the Yamal-Europe pipeline's capacity as an alternative to the construction of Nord Stream. This would have allowed Poland to acquire a key role as transit country of Russian gas to Central Europe and to earn transit-related revenues (cf. Gorska 2010: 107-134, Westphal 2008: 110).

In the Nordic coastal states of the Baltic Sea, the public debate focused primarily on the environmental consequences of the pipeline. Nord Stream was to transit the Finnish, Swedish and Danish exclusive economic zones and posed a potential threat to the already fragile Baltic Sea ecosystem.⁶⁵ In October and November 2009, after four years of analyses concerning the pipeline's environmental impact, the Danish, Swedish and Finnish authorities granted the Nord Stream consortium the authorisations to build the necessary infrastructure in their exclusive economic zones (Smith 2012: 124-126; cf. Aalto and Tynkkynen 2008). The construction of the pipeline began in early 2010 and gas started flowing through the first of the four planned lines in September 2011. On 8 November 2011, Nord Stream's official inauguration took place in the presence of German chancellor Angela Merkel, Russian president Dmitri Medvedev, French and Dutch prime ministers François Fillon and Mark Rutte and European Commissioner for Energy Günther Oettinger. The expansion of the pipeline has continued since then, with the inauguration of the second line in October 2012 and preparatory work for the construction of a third and fourth line.⁶⁶ While the pipeline was under construction, Gazprom signed long-term contracts to supply gas via Nord Stream to customers in Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and the United Kingdom (Smith 2012: 121).

A pipeline in Europe's interests: German leaders' discourses

The Nord Stream pipeline and energy relations with Russia are a central theme in numerous speeches and newspaper interviews of German political leaders throughout the period under analysis. Between 2005 and 2012 Germany had three governments. The first one had a centre-left majority, with social democrat Gerhard Schröder as chancellor and Green Party leader Joschka Fischer as foreign minister; its mandate

⁶⁵ An exclusive economic zone is an area of the sea over which a state has special rights for the exploration and use of resources. For a more technical definition of the term, cf. article 55 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, available at http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf (accessed 29/5/2014).

⁶⁶ If built, the third and fourth lines will double Nord Stream's current capacity, reaching 110 billion cubic metres a year (cf. Socor 2013).

ended in November 2005. Angela Merkel, a member of the centre-right Christian Democratic Union, was chancellor in the second and third cabinets, covering the whole remaining timeframe of analysis (November 2005-December 2012). During her first government, which lasted until October 2009, Merkel was in a coalition with the centre-left Social Democratic Party. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a leading member of the social democrats, covered the post of foreign minister. In October 2009, following new parliamentary elections, Merkel formed a coalition with the centre-right Free Democratic Party (FDP). FDP leader Guido Westerwelle became foreign minister in the new cabinet.

The analysis focuses on speeches and interviews held by Merkel, Steinmeier and Westerwelle. Schröder was still in power when the agreement on the construction of Nord Stream was signed (8 September 2005). However, his party lost the parliamentary elections only ten days later (18 September) and his government had to step down the following November. The archives that were consulted do not include any statements on Nord Stream by Schröder or Fischer dating back from the period September-November 2005 (between the signature of the construction agreement and the end of their mandate). Hence, the analysis starts from the speeches and interviews given by chancellor Merkel and foreign minister Steinmeier after the formation of the new cabinet in November 2005.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ The speeches and statements of German federal presidents were not included in the analysis because the federal president does not play a major role in foreign policy making. The German constitution only gives the federal president ceremonial functions in foreign policy, such as the conclusion of international treaties and the accreditation of foreign envoys; cf. Article 59 of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany, full text available at <https://www.btg-bestellservice.de/pdf/80201000.pdf> (accessed 15/5/2013). Furthermore, no speeches or statements on Nord Stream were found in the electronic archive of the German presidency, neither in the English nor in the German version.

Table 12. German foreign policy leaders in the period under investigation

Chancellor	Foreign Minister
Angela Merkel (November 2005 – December 2012)	Frank-Walter Steinmeier (November 2005 - October 2009)
	Guido Westerwelle (October 2009 – December 2012)

Source: own compilation

Three broad discourses emerged from the analysis of German leaders' speeches on Nord Stream and energy relations with Russia in the period under analysis. The first one emphasised that Russia was a reliable energy partner and referred to the long history of German-Russian energy cooperation, which started in the late 1960s and became a key component of West German chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* (cf. Högselius 2013, chapter 7; Lippert 2011).⁶⁸ This discourse advocated a pragmatic approach to German-Russian energy relations: as Russia was a reliable partner and could export the gas that Germany and the European Union needed, projects such as Nord Stream contributed to Europe's energy security. It also argued that the EU and Russia were interdependent in the energy sector: Russia needed the European export markets just as much as the EU needed Russian gas. The second discourse stressed the European dimension of Nord Stream and of German energy policy towards Russia. Within this narrative, German initiatives were presented as consistent with EU policies and objectives. The third discourse took a normative approach and linked themes such as the respect of human rights, democratic freedoms and European values to the debate on German-Russian and EU-Russian energy relations.

The next sections investigate these three broad discursive areas. The analysis follows a chronological order (starting from earlier texts), which allows studying the development of discourses over time. However, relationships among different texts

⁶⁸ On *Ostpolitik*, see chapter 4.

developing the same discourse (intertextuality) and between the three discourses outlined above (interdiscursivity) are also examined.

Russia as reliable energy partner: history, pragmatism and interdependence

The discourse on Russia's reliability as energy partner was prominent throughout the period under analysis, regardless of the speaker's political affiliation. The case for Russia's reliability tended to be constructed through the discursive strategy of argumentation and was bolstered by references to German-Russian energy cooperation from the 1970s until today. As the argument went, Russia had been a reliable energy partner for decades, even at the height of the Cold War, when Europe was divided into competing political and military blocs; hence, there was no reason to doubt Russia's reliability in much less strained times. In this discourse, history is the *topos* that connects the argument (Russia is a reliable energy partner) to its logical conclusion (energy relations with Russia should be developed and strengthened).⁶⁹

In the texts retrieved, the discourse on Russia's reliability appeared first in an interview of foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier with the German news broadcasting radio RBB Inforadio, dated 14 October 2006.⁷⁰ Steinmeier was asked whether he considered Russia an "absolutely reliable energy supplier", in the context of a discussion on the 2006 Russian-Ukrainian gas dispute and the criticism of Poland and the Baltic States against the Nord Stream project. He argued that Germany never had any reason to claim that Russia was an unreliable energy supplier. Furthermore, in the same interview Steinmeier highlighted the German tradition of *Ostpolitik* towards Russia and argued for "*Annäherung durch Verflechtung*" (convergence through economic interlocking), a phrase that is reminiscent of Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* motto "*Wandel durch Annäherung*" (change

⁶⁹ As explained in chapter 3, *topoi* are content-related parts of the argumentation that connect the arguments with the conclusion.

⁷⁰ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with RBB Inforadio, 14 October 2006, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2006/061014-SteinmeierRBB.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

through rapprochement). Hence, Steinmeier justified his cabinet's energy policy towards Russia by building parallels with the German *Ostpolitik* of the 1970s, which in German foreign policy identity is positively framed as a historical example of constructive cooperation with Russia.⁷¹

Steinmeier made selective use of the history of German-Russian energy relations by evoking exclusively the memory of peaceful cooperation in the latter part of the Cold War and after the fall of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, he harshly criticised arguments comparing his government's Russia policy to that of interwar Weimar and Nazi Germany. This became particularly clear in his speech at Viadrina European University on 26 October 2006.⁷² A few months before the speech was held, Polish defence minister Radoslaw Sikorski had compared the Nord Stream pipeline to the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939.⁷³ With implicit reference to Sikorski's statements, Steinmeier emphasised the inappropriateness of using catchwords such as "Rapallo" (an allusion to the German-Soviet treaty signed in 1922, when both Germany and the USSR had revanchist aspirations in Eastern Europe) and "Hitler-Stalin pact" to describe present German-Russian relations. The symbolic location where Steinmeier's speech was held, a European university founded on the German-Polish border shortly after the end of the Cold War, was functional to his argument: it suggested that Germany was seeking reconciliation with all its Eastern neighbours within, as he put it, "a united Europe that has learned from past experiences".

Steinmeier's references to the history of German-Russian relations aimed at providing evidence for Russia's reliability as energy partner. This emerged, for instance, in his interview with the German business news magazine *Wirtschaftswoche* on 22 January 2007.⁷⁴ In this interview, the German foreign minister talked of the "long tradition in energy and economic cooperation" between

⁷¹ See chapter 4.

⁷² Frank-Walter Steinmeier's speech at Viadrina European University, 26 October 2006 <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2006/061026-Viadrina.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

⁷³ Cited in Stephen Castle, "Poles angry at pipeline pact", *The Independent*, 1 May 2006.

⁷⁴ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with *Wirtschaftswoche*, 22 January 2007, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2007/070122-WiWo.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

his country and Russia. He also used the discursive strategy of predication, most notably through stereotypical evaluations, to label Russians in positive terms, namely as reliable partners (“the Russians are partners with whom you can speak frankly and who keep their word”).

Positive references to the history of German-Russian energy relations surfaced also in later speeches held by chancellor Angela Merkel. In a joint press conference with Russian president Vladimir Putin on 1 June 2012, Merkel stated that Russia was “a reliable [energy] supplier” and that Germany “experienced this for decades”.⁷⁵ Merkel’s argumentation aimed at strengthening the case for Germany’s energy partnership with Russia and for the construction of the Nord Stream pipeline, which she described as a successful “German-European project”. In a speech held in October 2012 at the German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations (*Ost-Ausschuss der deutschen Wirtschaft*), an influential business group advocating the interests of German companies in Eastern Europe, Merkel went as far as claiming that the gas deals between West Germany and the Soviet Union in the 1970s greatly enhanced German-Soviet relations. Moreover, she portrayed German economic involvement in the USSR as a “success story”.⁷⁶

The history of successful German-Russian energy cooperation was used also as an argument in favour of adopting a pragmatic approach in relations with Russia. In the interview with *Wirtschaftswoche*, Steinmeier argued that relations with Russia had to be assessed in “realistic” rather than “overly emotional” terms, bearing in mind both past cooperation and Europe’s future energy needs. The argument was sustained by the use of perspectivation, a discursive strategy through which the speaker adopts a strongly subjective rhetoric and clearly positions his point of view.⁷⁷ In order to advocate pragmatism in relations with Russia, Steinmeier stressed the “undisputable

⁷⁵ Angela Merkel’s and Vladimir Putin’s joint press conference, 1 June 2012, <http://www.bundestkanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2012/06/2012-06-01-merkel-putin.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

⁷⁶ Angela Merkel’s speech at the German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, 25 October 2012, <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Rede/2012/10/2012-10-25-merkel-60-jahre-ostausschuss.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

⁷⁷ To cite an example from Steinmeier’s interview with *Wirtschaftswoche* on 22 January 2007: “I have always advocated a realistic approach in our relationship with Russia. Naivety in this matter helps as little as the tendency – widespread here in Germany – to get too agitated about things”.

fact” that Russia “is and will remain Europe’s neighbour”. Furthermore, he argued, Europeans had to confront the reality that Russian energy supplies would acquire increasing importance for the EU due to the depletion of other import sources. Hence, as he aptly summarised in an article published on the German magazine *Internationale Politik* in March 2007, “for the EU Russia is an indispensable partner of strategic significance” and “the key factor in our energy supply, above all in the field of gas”.⁷⁸ Following from this line of argument, Steinmeier described the Nord Stream project as “sensible, economically viable” and motivated by “sheer economic necessities”.⁷⁹

The German foreign minister was careful not to describe Europe’s reliance on Russian gas in terms of a threatening strategic dependence. Conversely, Steinmeier portrayed EU-Russia energy relations as an example of positive interdependence, a relationship from which both sides could benefit. This view was best articulated in his speech at the French Institute of International Relations (an influential, Paris-based think tank) in February 2008.⁸⁰ Steinmeier argued that Russia and Europe were

economically dependent on each other [...] Russia needs the income from fossil fuels exports to the EU and the EU needs secure and stable energy supplies from Russia.

According to Steinmeier, the Russian pipeline system was “geared so much towards Europe” that Russia was “as – or even more – dependent on exports to Europe as is Europe on imports from Russia”. Following this argument, Nord Stream strengthened the current interdependence and was “a very important contribution to Europe’s energy security”. Through the use of perspectivation, Steinmeier expressed his personal conviction that Russia and the EU were interdependent (“I feel very

⁷⁸ Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s article on *Internationale Politik*, “Verflechtung und Integration”, March 2007, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2007/070315-ArtikelIP.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

⁷⁹ Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s speech at the French Institute of International Relations, 1 February 2008, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2008/080201-Erlar-IFRI-Europa-Energie.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

inclined to follow the reasoning of interdependency supporters”) and again referred to “historical experience” to bolster his view.

Interdependence and pragmatism retained their prominence in German foreign policy makers’ discourses about energy relations with Russia also after the end of Steinmeier’s mandate as foreign minister (October 2009). On 8 November 2011, at the inauguration ceremony of the Nord Stream pipeline, Angela Merkel argued that EU gas importers and Russia would “benefit equally from the pipeline”.⁸¹ The pipeline itself was the “expression of a long-lasting cooperation that offers great economic opportunities”. These opportunities, as Merkel explained in a joint press conference with Putin in June 2012, were particularly important “for many German companies that have signed long-term contracts with Russia”.⁸² Merkel highlighted German corporate interests in energy relations with Russia in many other public speeches. During a press conference held in July 2011, for instance, she publicly endorsed the business strategy of BASF/Wintershall, one of the main German companies involved in the Russian gas sector.⁸³

The strong, long-term German economic interests in the Russian energy market contribute to explaining the pre-eminence of pragmatism and of a cooperative approach in German official discourses on Russia throughout the period under analysis. However, most of the speeches under investigation did not overstress the bilateral dimension of German-Russian economic relations. German foreign policy makers juxtaposed national interests to European interests and, consistently with Germany’s pro-European and multilateral foreign policy identity, they attempted to frame discourses on German energy policy within a broader European context.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Angela Merkel’s speech at the inauguration of the Nord Stream pipeline, 8 November 2011, <http://www.bundestkanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Rede/2011/11/2011-11-08-merkel-lubmin.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

⁸² Angela Merkel’s and Vladimir Putin’s joint press conference, 1 June 2012.

⁸³ Angela Merkel’s press conference, 22 July 2011, <http://www.bundestkanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2011/07/2011-07-22-sommerpk-merkel.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

⁸⁴ See discussion on German identity in chapter 4.

Europeanising Nord Stream and German-Russian energy relations

In the texts analysed, German foreign policy makers portrayed the Nord Stream project as an European endeavour and rebuffed criticism describing it as a German-Russian pipeline. Argumentation was the main discursive strategy used to emphasise Nord Stream's European and multilateral nature. The key argument was that, next to Germany and Russia, other countries and foreign companies had become involved in the Nord Stream project. It was claimed that the pipeline would bring profits to a diverse group of European actors and contribute to European energy security, hence it was a European endeavour. Economic usefulness is the *topos* that connects the argument (Nord Stream is a profitable European project) to its logical conclusion (Nord Stream should be supported by the EU and its member states).

This discursive strategy emerges in Steinmeier's interview with RBB Inforadio on 14 October 2006. Steinmeier argued that Germany's energy policy with Russia was functional to European interests and cited the Nord Stream pipeline as an example. According to him, the participation of a Dutch company in the Nord Stream consortium and Britain's interest in extending the pipeline to its territory demonstrated that the project "does not just satisfy a specific German interest but also strengthens European energy policy".⁸⁵ The same argument was repeated in his interviews with the prominent Polish daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* on 10 December 2007⁸⁶ and on 17 June 2009.⁸⁷

In other speeches, Steinmeier stressed the European dimension of Nord Stream by presenting foreign companies that were only indirectly linked to the project as its supporters. In his talk at the French Institute of International Relations in February 2008, he suggested that French, Dutch, British and Danish companies were supporting the pipeline's construction because they had already ordered large

⁸⁵ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with RBB Inforadio, 14 October 2006.

⁸⁶ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 10 December 2007, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2007/071210-Steinmeier-GazetaWyborcza.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

⁸⁷ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 17 June 2009, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2009/090617-BM-GazetaWyborcza.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

quantities of gas that would be channelled through it.⁸⁸ Furthermore, in an interview held in February 2009 with another large-circulation Polish daily, *Rzeczpospolita*, Steinmeier stated that Nord Stream was originally a Finnish project, thereby implying that German companies merely took over a corporate initiative started in another EU member state.⁸⁹

Steinmeier's successor as German foreign minister, Guido Westerwelle, continued to portray German energy policy with Russia as consistent with EU policy. In a speech delivered in October 2010 at a prominent German think tank, the German Council on Foreign Relations, Westerwelle argued that Germany's policy towards Russia was "integrated into an overall European approach".⁹⁰

The old and persistent suspicion that Germany was implementing its policy on Russia without consulting our [Germany's] immediate neighbours and other partners has been allayed".⁹¹

As emerges from this passage, Westerwelle advocated Germany's policy towards Russia by minimising the criticism directed at it. The argument (stressed *inter alia* by Polish leaders) that Germany's policy towards Russia pursued unilateral interests was negatively qualified as "old and persistent suspicion".⁹² In a speech held a few days earlier at the German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations,

⁸⁸ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's speech at the French Institute of International Relations, 1 February 2008.

⁸⁹ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with *Rzeczpospolita*, 9 February 2009, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2009/090209-BM-Rzeczpospolita.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

⁹⁰ Guido Westerwelle's speech at the German Council on Foreign Relations Berlin, 21 October 2010, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/101021-BM-dgap-grundsatzrede_node.html (accessed 15/5/2013).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² For an extensive discussion of Polish criticism of Germany's energy policy towards Russia, see section on Poland below, in chapter 5.

Merkel used an even harsher tone, defining criticism against Nord Stream as “multifarious stereotypes” that her cabinet had managed to “dismantle”.⁹³

By contrast, in most of the German policy makers’ speeches under investigation the semantic field associated with Nord Stream was unambiguously positive and emphasised its correlation with European policies. This emerged with utmost clarity in Merkel’s talk at the pipeline’s inauguration ceremony, in November 2011. Through the discursive strategy of predication, she qualified Nord Stream as a “strategic project [...] exemplary for the cooperation between Russia and the European Union”, an “outstanding example” for the construction of a “robust partnership with Russia” and “setting new standards for European energy partnerships”.⁹⁴

The Europeanness of Nord Stream was constructed also through the discursive strategy of categorisation, which aims at defining in-groups and out-groups through a selective use of language and figures of speech. In German foreign policy makers’ speeches on Nord Stream, categorisation was used to construct a European energy community as an in-group that included both the European Union and Russia. Within this framework, the Nord Stream pipeline was categorised as European in spite of the fact that it was mostly a German-Russian project (Russian and German companies control 82 per cent of the consortium) and some EU member states were vocally opposed to it.

In the speeches under analysis, this categorisation was built up progressively and became more forceful over time. In the earlier texts, Steinmeier emphasised the pipeline’s European nature by stressing that it was not a national or bilateral project, as argued by its critics. In his speech at the French Institute of International Relations of February 2008, Steinmeier claimed that Nord Stream was “a European, not a

⁹³ Angela Merkel’s speech at the German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, 14 October 2010, <http://www.bundestkanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Rede/2010/10/2010-10-14-merkel-ostausschuss.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

⁹⁴ Angela Merkel’s speech at the inauguration of the Nord Stream pipeline, 8 November 2011.

German project”⁹⁵. He reiterated this point also in an interview with *Gazeta Wyborcza* in June 2009, when he stated:

I hear time and again that Nord Stream is a German-Russian project. No, it is a European project for more energy security”.⁹⁶

In later texts, criticism of the pipeline’s bilateral nature was ignored and Nord Stream was defined exclusively in positive terms. In October 2010, Merkel described it as a “European-Russian project”⁹⁷ and in, June 2012, as “a German-European project”⁹⁸, thereby simultaneously emphasising the European dimension of the project and Germany’s leading role in it.

In Merkel’s later speeches, the tone and content of the discourse on Nord Stream’s European nature became more assertive. The chancellor went as far as arguing that, if the pipeline did not fully comply with EU standards, the latter should be adjusted accordingly. This argument was made in particular with reference to the EU’s third energy package, namely the legislation that stipulates a different ownership for energy production and energy transmission networks (a controversial provision for Nord Stream, as Gazprom is both the gas producer and main owner of the pipeline).⁹⁹ In her speech at Nord Stream’s inauguration in November 2011, Merkel raised this issue before EU Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger (sitting in the audience):

⁹⁵ Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s speech at the French Institute of International Relations, 1 February 2008.

⁹⁶ Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s interview with *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 17 June 2009.

⁹⁷ Angela Merkel’s speech at the German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, 25 October 2012.

⁹⁸ Angela Merkel’s and Vladimir Putin’s joint press conference, 1 June 2012.

⁹⁹ Cf. “Single market for gas and electricity: third energy package for electricity and gas market”, http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/legislation/third_legislative_package_en.htm (accessed 15/5/2013).

The third energy package is not immediately understandable for someone outside Europe [...] And, dear Günther Oettinger, perhaps we should change what we are not able to explain to others.¹⁰⁰

Merkel reiterated this point in October 2012, during her speech at the German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations. Addressing once again Commissioner Oettinger, who was sitting in the audience, she argued:

Indeed, dear Günther Oettinger, we must admit: also the European Union's actions sometimes confuse our partners. I am thinking about the legendary discussions on why someone who owns a pipeline [...] cannot ship gas through it.¹⁰¹

Using the discursive strategy of perspectivation, Merkel clearly positioned herself against the application of the EU's third energy package to the Nord Stream pipeline. However, she was not dismissive of European rules and attempted to reconcile them with the project. For instance, in a joint press conference with Putin in November 2012, she argued: “[...] I will continue to lobby, also in Brussels, for using the pipelines we have, rather than ending up – so to speak - without gas”.¹⁰² In accordance with Germany's pro-European foreign policy identity, Merkel attempted to keep her policy on Nord Stream within the EU framework.

Energy, democracy and European values

In many of the speeches under analysis, German policy makers discussed the issue of democracy and human rights in Russia alongside or within the context of energy

¹⁰⁰ Angela Merkel's speech at the inauguration of the Nord Stream pipeline, 8 November 2011.

¹⁰¹ Angela Merkel's speech at the German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, 25 October 2012.

¹⁰² Angela Merkel's and Vladimir Putin's joint press conference, 16 November 2012, <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2012/11/2012-11-16-merkel-moskau.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

relations. This is particularly true of speeches held in the period until late 2010, which attempted to reconcile the view of Russia as an economic partner with Germany's concern for the respect of democratic values and human rights. This approach to relations with Russia reflected the interaction of two key components of German national identity, as seen in chapter 4: both narratives on Russia as an economic partner and on the centrality of democracy and human rights are key constituents of Germany's foreign policy identity. In the speeches in question these two discourses were reconciled with the argument that energy cooperation between the EU and Russia was functional to the strengthening of democracy and human rights in Russia, as it created both the economic prosperity in which these principles could be implemented and a positive atmosphere for dialogue.¹⁰³ Hence, the German identity narrative advocating democracy and human rights was used instrumentally to support economic cooperation with Russia. Humanitarianism and economic advantage are the *topoi* that connect the argument with its logical conclusion: the EU should support energy cooperation with Russia.

This line of argument emerged clearly in foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interviews and speeches. In his interview with RBB Inforadio of October 2006, Steinmeier argued that the EU-Russia energy partnership should lead to the strengthening of democracy and "European values" in Russia.¹⁰⁴ In the same interview, he claimed that "a wise and correct policy" towards Russia had to address both human rights and business, which in his opinion were not mutually exclusive. This argument was further developed in an article on EU-Russia relations published on the German magazine *Internationale Politik* in March 2007. In the article, Steinmeier claimed that there was "no contradiction between our [the EU's] interest in expanding economic relations and the respect of human rights and the rule of law". Energy cooperation, he argued, could be developed into a much broader

¹⁰³ This was also the rationale behind Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, which aimed at influencing domestic developments in the Eastern bloc by fostering economic cooperation and dialogue with the West (cf. Lippert 2011).

¹⁰⁴ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with RBB Inforadio, 14 October 2006. Steinmeier did not explain what he meant by „European values“. The EU's founding values, to which he presumably referred, are defined in Article 2 of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union as "respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities" (Treaty on European Union, Art. 2).

partnership where it was possible to address also “issues on which we [the EU] do not always share the same opinion [with Russia]”.¹⁰⁵

On the question of reconciling the energy partnership with the promotion of democracy and human rights in Russia, foreign minister Guido Westerwelle adopted the same approach as his predecessor. In his speech at the German Council on Foreign Relations in October 2010, Westerwelle stated that “regarding Russia as a partner is the best way to solve problems”, including “shortcomings in Russia’s society and mode of governance”.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, in an interview with the German daily *Der Tagesspiegel* in November 2010 Westerwelle argued that the economic partnership with Russia should be expanded to include the legal system and domestic reforms.¹⁰⁷

In the speeches held by the German policy makers under analysis after 2010, energy cooperation and the question of democracy and human rights in Russia tended to be discussed separately, with very few exceptions. This might be due to the deterioration in democratic and human rights standards in Russia following the parliamentary elections of December 2011, which may have made German leaders reluctant to discuss the energy partnership within the context of Russia’s increasing authoritarianism. Internal developments in Russia from December 2011 seemed to refute the argument previously made by German leaders that increasing economic and energy relations would lead to improvements in democratic and human rights standards.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Frank-Walter Steinmeier, “Verflechtung und Integration”, *Internationale Politik*, March 2007.

¹⁰⁶ Guido Westerwelle’s speech at the German Council on Foreign Relations Berlin, 21 October 2010.

¹⁰⁷ Guido Westerwelle’s and Radoslaw Sikorski’s interview with *Tagesspiegel*, 4 November 2010, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2010/101104-BM-Sikorski-Tagesspiegel-Int.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

¹⁰⁸ Discourses on the deterioration of democratic and human rights standards after December 2011 are analysed in chapter 7.

From Molotov-Ribbentrop to economic nonsense: Polish leaders' discourses

The Nord Stream project sparked a heated debate in Polish society and among the country's political leaders, most of whom argued that the pipeline undermined Poland's interests. The analysis focuses on discourses of Polish prime and foreign ministers who were in power from the signing of the Nord Stream agreement until the end of 2012. Furthermore, the speeches of president of the republic Lech Kaczynski are also investigated, as he was very vocal and prominent in the debate on energy relations with Russia throughout his mandate (2005-2010). Conversely, his successor Bronislaw Komorowski (in power since August 2010) did not become significantly involved in the debate on Nord Stream; none of the 323 entries on the Polish presidential website concerning Komorowski's speeches and activities refers to the pipeline.¹⁰⁹ When specifically asked about Nord Stream in media interviews, Komorowski adopted the same political line and arguments as the contemporary Polish government headed by Donald Tusk.

In the period under analysis, Poland had four prime ministers and four foreign ministers. The mandates of the first two prime ministers (Marek Belka and Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz) and foreign ministers (Adam Rotfeld and Stefan Meller) were very short, covering only the period until May-July 2006.¹¹⁰ Since the archives consulted had no speeches by these policy makers addressing Nord Stream or energy policy towards Russia, the analysis will focus on discourses of their successors. These include prime minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski and foreign minister Anna Fotyga, both members of the right-wing party Law and Justice, which in May 2006 formed a coalition government with the far right parties Self-Defence of Polish Farmers and League of Polish Families. Following the October 2007 parliamentary elections, Jaroslaw Kaczynski and Anna Fotyga were succeeded respectively by Donald Tusk and Radoslaw Sikorski, both members of the more moderate centre-right party Civic

¹⁰⁹ Website of the president of the Republic of Poland, <http://www.president.pl/en/news/news/> (accessed 15/5/2013; the English version of the website was consulted).

¹¹⁰ Meller left his post in May 2006, followed by Marcinkiewicz in July 2006.

Platform. Tusk and Sikorski were re-elected for a second mandate in October 2011 and stayed in power throughout the remaining period under analysis.

Table 13. Polish foreign policy leaders in the period under investigation

Prime Minister	Foreign Minister	President of the Republic
Jaroslav Kaczynski (July 2006- November 2007)	Anna Fotyga (May 2006-November 2007)	Lech Kaczynski (December 2005- April 2010)
Donald Tusk (November 2007- December 2012)	Radoslaw Sikorski (November 2007-December 2012), Defence Minister (October 2005- February 2007) ¹¹¹	Bronislaw Komorowski (August 2010- December 2012)

Source: own compilation

The main discourse in Polish foreign policy makers' speeches between 2006 and 2007 emphasised that Russian leaders used fossil fuel resources to achieve political aims, notably to strengthen their influence on the countries that depended on energy imports from Russia. It stressed Russia's historical role as a geopolitical threat for Poland and constructed parallels between Russia's past and present policies. During the same period, another dominant narrative focused on the lack of solidarity among EU member states with regard to their energy policy towards Russia. As the argument went, the agreement to build Nord Stream highlighted the self-serving logic guiding the policies of some EU member states, which supported the pipeline in spite of its negative impact on the energy security of other members. The discourse on the lack of EU solidarity is reminiscent of a dominant theme in Polish

¹¹¹ Before joining Tusk's government and becoming a member of Civic Platform, Sikorski had been the defence minister in Kaczynski's cabinet. Following his change of political allegiance, Tusk's rhetoric on Russia and Nord Stream became more moderate, as shown in the analysis below.

identity narratives, namely Poland's unreciprocated commitment to the Western cause.¹¹² In the context of the Nord Stream debate, Polish leaders argued that their commitment to build a shared EU energy policy was not reciprocated by Germany and other EU members supporting the pipeline's construction.

The two discourses introduced above played an important role also in Polish policy makers' speeches and interviews held after 2007, particularly in president Lech Kaczynski's statements. However, following the change of government in November 2007, another dominant discourse emerged. Tusk and Sikorski adopted a more pragmatic tone with regard to energy relations with Russia and emphasised the need for cooperation. In their public speeches, opposition to the Nord Stream project was voiced mostly with economic arguments, while references to historical rivalries and Russia's hostile geopolitical intentions were downplayed. The next sections in this subchapter analyse more in detail the three dominant discourses in Polish leaders' statements concerning Nord Stream and energy relations with Russia.

History, geopolitics and the political use of energy

The discourse on Russia's political use of energy was ubiquitous in Polish leaders' speeches during the right-wing government of Jaroslaw Kaczynski (July 2006 – November 2007). In this period, all the main institutional posts concerned with Poland's foreign policy making (prime minister, foreign minister and president of the republic) were held by members of the ultraconservative and deeply anti-Russian Law and Justice party (cf. Reeves 2010). The main argument within this discourse emphasised that Russia abused its role as chief energy supplier of Eastern European countries in order to exert political pressure on them. In particular, it was argued that Russia made energy deals with Central and Western European EU member states (most notably Germany) undermining the interests of East-Central European members. According to this view, Nord Stream was one of such deals. Memory politics played a prominent role in this discourse, as comparisons with Soviet

¹¹² See chapter 4.

Russia's former domination of Poland and with Nazi-Soviet plans to partition Eastern Europe were made in order to bolster the main argument. History is the *topos* linking the argument with its logical conclusion, namely the claim that Russia intended to re-establish a sphere of influence over Eastern Europe.

Radoslaw Sikorski's interview with the German magazine *Der Spiegel* on 1 May 2006 exemplifies the prominence of memory politics in this discourse.¹¹³ Sikorski, then the defence minister in Jaroslaw Kaczynski's right-wing government, argued that the Nord Stream agreement was reminiscent of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact because it was "geopolitically targeted against Polish interests". The comparison with the Nazi-Soviet agreement to partition Poland, an event deeply engrained in Polish identity as one of the worst national catastrophes, highlights both the deeply anti-Russian posture of Kaczynski's government and the strong interaction between Polish identity and foreign policy discourses on Russia. Sikorski made instrumental use of the national identity narrative of Polish victimhood in the Second World War to pursue current political interests, namely discrediting and opposing the Nord Stream project.

The analogy between Russia's energy policy and past Soviet policies towards Poland emerged very clearly also in prime minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski's interview with the German daily *Handelsblatt* in October 2006.¹¹⁴ Kaczynski claimed that Poles

do not want to be afraid that, at some point, someone will shut off our [Poland's] supply [of gas]. The older and adult generations of Poles can still remember well that, 25 or 30 years ago, they were asking themselves the question: will the Russians invade us or not?

¹¹³ Radoslaw Sikorski's interview with *Der Spiegel*, 1 May 2006, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/indirect-hitler-comparison-polish-minister-attacks-schroeder-and-merkel-a-413969.html> (accessed 16/5/2013).

¹¹⁴ Jaroslaw Kaczynski's interview with *Handelsblatt*, 30 October 2006, <http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/interview-mit-jaroslaw-kaczynski-man-darf-nicht-mit-zweierlei-mass-messen/2725710.html> (accessed 16/5/2013).

Kaczynski's reasoning suggested that, for many Poles (including himself, as a member of the older generation), Russia appeared as threatening to Poland's independence as the Soviet Union in the 1980s, when they feared an imminent Soviet military invasion to crush the anti-communist opposition movement.¹¹⁵ Russia's energy power was juxtaposed to the military threat emanating from the Soviet Union. Linguistically, the analogy between Soviet and Russian foreign policy is emphasised by Kaczynski's metonymic use of "Russians" in lieu of "Soviets".

Sikorski's and Jaroslaw Kaczynski's line of argument and discursive strategy were echoed by president Lech Kaczynski in an interview for *Der Spiegel*, published in March 2006.¹¹⁶ In the interview, Lech Kaczynski stated that the reasons for building the Nord Stream pipeline were "purely political" and that the project "starkly contrast[ed] with Polish interests". Although the historical interpretive framework was not as explicit as in Sikorski's and Jaroslaw Kaczynski's interviews, it can be inferred easily also in Lech Kaczynski's statements. For instance, the Polish president argued that he was "very vigilant when it comes to the German-Russian relationship" and, when asked whether Russia and Germany posed the greatest danger for Poland, he replied: "That's certainly a true statement if you look at history books".

Polish foreign policy makers' perception of Russia as a historical and geopolitical threat influenced also their assessments of EU-Russia energy relations. In a letter to *The Financial Times* published in May 2007, Sikorski stated that the Nord Stream pipeline was "the most outrageous attempt by Mr Putin to divide and damage the EU" because it gave Russia the "ability to decouple old and new members by differentially turning off the tap".¹¹⁷ Through the use of perspectivation and a harsh

¹¹⁵ See chapter 4.

¹¹⁶ Lech Kaczynski's interview with *Der Spiegel*, 6 March 2006, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/spiegel-interview-with-poland-s-kaczynski-we-are-very-vigilant-when-it-comes-to-the-german-russian-relationship-a-404675.html> (accessed 16/5/2013).

¹¹⁷ Radoslaw Sikorski, Maciej Olex-Szczytowski and Jacek Rostowski, "Russian gas pipeline would be geopolitical disaster for EU", *The Financial Times*, 28 May 2007, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/db259cf2-0cb7-11dc-a4dc-000b5df10621.html> (accessed 30/5/2014). The letter was co-authored with Maciej Olex-Szczytowski, an adviser to the foreign minister, and Jacek Rostowski, then adviser to the Bank of Poland and later minister of finance in Tusk's cabinets.

anti-Russian rhetoric, Sikorski argued that Nord Stream would enable Russia to keep gas flows to Central and Western Europe unaltered while it simultaneously used its energy power to re-establish a sphere of influence in East-Central Europe. Hence, the pipeline was “an economic and geopolitical disaster for the Union”. According to Sikorski, EU member states could avert the threat of Russia’s “divide and rule” policy only by showing solidarity to each other.

Nord Stream and European solidarity

The discourse on European solidarity played a central role in Polish leaders’ speeches criticising the Nord Stream pipeline, particularly during 2006 and 2007. Within this discourse it was claimed that, although Poland had joined the EU and was fully committed to its values, it was still not treated as an equal by other EU members.¹¹⁸ This criticism was addressed particularly to Germany, which was blamed for supporting the Nord Stream project in total disregard of Polish interests. In its handling of the Nord Stream question, it was argued, Germany showed no European solidarity to Poland and prioritised its partnership with Russia. Russia was portrayed merely as a negative factor, hostile to EU principles and eager to disrupt European solidarity. This discourse aimed at exposing the irreconcilability of Nord Stream and German-Russian energy policy with the European Union’s values. Europeanism, meant as the commitment to EU values and policies, is the *topos* linking the key argument (Nord Stream undermines EU values) with its logical conclusion (Germany and the EU should withdraw their support of Nord Stream).

The discourse on European solidarity featured prominently in Lech Kaczynski’s and Sikorski’s interviews in 2006 and 2007. The arguments of both politicians were based on the presumption that Russia used gas as a political instrument. In an interview with *The Financial Times* in November 2006, Kaczynski claimed that Russia’s political use of energy was inherent in its possession of vast natural

¹¹⁸ This emerged for instance in foreign minister Anna Fotyga’s interview with the *New York Times* on 14 August 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/14/world/europe/14iht-poland.4.7116334.html?_r=0 (accessed 16/5/2013). Fotyga claimed that “Poland’s status is not equal to other EU and NATO member states”.

resources (“Russia has enormous energy resources, and it is difficult not to take advantage of them”).¹¹⁹ Hence, Russia’s energy policy and the Nord Stream pipeline were portrayed as a test for European solidarity.¹²⁰ In their comments on Nord Stream, Sikorski and Kaczynski concurred in the opinion that there was not enough solidarity in the EU on energy relations with Russia and put the blame on Germany. For instance, Sikorski argued that

[...] To first make a decision and then offer consultations is not our idea of European solidarity [...] We are shocked that Germany would do something that [...] is geopolitically targeted against Polish interests.¹²¹

Kaczynski made a similar argument in his interview with the *Financial Times*.

Question: do you expect that Germans will understand Poland’s issues when it comes to energy?

Lech Kaczynski: We do understand the need for compromise, but it cannot be that in this area a single European country, even a very powerful one, decides on a particular solution, almost as if it had stepped momentarily outside of the Union, and then says it will not change even if that solution contradicts the interests of other countries.¹²²

To convey their criticism of Germany, both Sikorski and Kaczynski resorted to the discursive strategy of perspectivation, which is particularly evident in phrases such as “we are shocked” or “we do understand”. Kaczynski did not mention Germany explicitly, but his allusion to it appears obvious in the light of the journalist’s question. In spite of this reticence, Kaczynski’s criticism was very harsh. His

¹¹⁹ Lech Kaczynski’s interview with the *Financial Times*, 6 November 2006, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/aca4ec46-6ceb-11db-9a4d-0000779e2340.html> (accessed 16/5/2013).

¹²⁰ Cf. Anna Fotyga’s statement to the *New York Times* on 14 August 2007: “The gas pipeline [Nord Stream] undermines European solidarity and questions our ability to have an equal voice”.

¹²¹ Hans Michael Kloth, “Indirect Hitler Comparison: Polish Minister Attacks Schröder and Merkel”, *Spiegel Online*, 1 May 2006, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/indirect-hitler-comparison-polish-minister-attacks-schroeder-and-merkel-a-413969.html> (accessed 30/5/2014).

¹²² Lech Kaczynski’s interview with the *Financial Times*, 6 November 2006.

reasoning suggested that Germany's support of the Nord Stream pipeline had placed the country outside the framework of the European Union. This assessment stands in complete contradiction to German foreign policy makers' discourse Europeanising Nord Stream and German-Russian energy relations and epitomises the conflict between contemporary German and Polish discourses on the pipeline.

The narrative on European solidarity continues to play a role in Polish foreign policy makers' speeches on energy policy after the change of government in 2007. For instance, in an interview with the *Financial Times* in January 2010 Tusk defined Nord Stream "an example of lack of energy solidarity"¹²³. Moreover, in an article published in July 2010 on the *New York Times*, Sikorski lamented that "in areas like energy and military cooperation, some EU members act unilaterally".¹²⁴ However, references to the lack of European solidarity became less frequent and were framed within a more moderate rhetoric. Russia was no longer portrayed exclusively as a hostile country trying to disrupt Polish interests and European solidarity. For example, in January 2010 Tusk adopted an unusually positive tone to describe relations with Russia.

While we [the Polish government] say that there is a need for maximum European solidarity in the area of energy security, we do not have any particular problems ourselves. Relations with Russia and with Gazprom are very correct.¹²⁵ (Donald Tusk, *Financial Times*, 27 January 2010)

Polish criticism of Nord Stream continued also during Tusk's government but it no longer focused on claims of betrayed European solidarity. Pragmatic arguments such as the pipeline's economic cost became dominant.

¹²³ Donald Tusk's interview with the *Financial Times*, 27 January 2010, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/9ad8793a-0b74-11df-8232-00144feabdc0.html> (accessed 16/5/2013).

¹²⁴ Radoslaw Sikorski's interview with the *New York Times*, 16 June 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/17/opinion/17iht-edsikorski.html?_r=0 (accessed 16/5/2013).

¹²⁵ Donald Tusk's interview with the *Financial Times*, 27 January 2010.

Economics and pragmatism: Tusk's Poland and Nord Stream

As discussed in chapter 4, improving Poland's relations with Russia was one of Tusk's main foreign policy preoccupations after his election. Tusk attempted to pursue this objective by adopting a more pragmatic approach and rhetoric to address contentious issues in the relationship, including the Nord Stream question. His statements at the joint press conference with Putin in Gdansk in September 2009, during the commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War, best summarise his change of rhetoric on Nord Stream.

Concerning our position on Nord Stream, Poland is not suspicious on this issue. We do not suspect any evil political intentions [from Russia]. However, we evaluate this project sceptically from an economic and ecological point of view.¹²⁶

Tusk rejected the argument that Russia made a political use of energy, which had been a leitmotif in Polish leaders' speeches on Russia during Jaroslaw Kaczynski's government. Moreover, he did this on the occasion of a symbolic joint commemoration of a highly contentious historical event, on which Polish and Russian official memory narratives diverge (cf. Ruchniewicz 2007, Siddi 2012). This contrasts strikingly with previous Polish discourses that used memory politics to discredit Nord Stream as a political project.

Tusk's criticism of Nord Stream was voiced in more moderate terms than in previous discourses ("we evaluate this project sceptically") and, most importantly, it was grounded on economic and environmental issues. This line of argument is representative of Polish foreign policy makers' discourse on Nord Stream during Tusk's cabinet. Economic advantage is the key *topos* of a discursive strategy that

¹²⁶ Donald Tusk's and Vladimir Putin's joint press conference in Gdansk, 1 September 2009.

attempted to accommodate opposition to Nord Stream with a milder rhetoric, conducive to reconciliation with Russia.

The economic discourse against Nord Stream focused on the higher cost of laying an underwater pipeline rather than building a land connection. Before the start of Nord Stream's construction, Tusk argued that building an alternative pipeline via the Baltic countries and Poland was much cheaper.¹²⁷ Furthermore, in an interview with the *Financial Times* in January 2010 he stated that he did not understand the "economic rationale for a decision whose outcome is a much more expensive transit of gas than by the traditional land route".¹²⁸

The economic argument was reiterated in both Bronislaw Komorowski's and in Radoslaw Sikorski's remarks on Nord Stream in 2010 and 2011. In an interview with the European news channel *Euronews* shortly after his election as Polish president, Komorowski argued that "the building of a more expensive pipeline via the Baltic [...] is the fruit of a decision that was taken too rapidly several years ago".¹²⁹ In November 2011, commenting on Nord Stream's inauguration, Sikorski stated that the pipeline was "a waste of money".¹³⁰ In spite of this criticism, neither Komorowski nor Sikorski portrayed Nord Stream as a major threat for Poland. In the same interviews quoted above, Sikorski argued that Poland's energy security was not affected by the pipeline because gas was not very important in the country's energy mix. Komorowski maintained that Poland should strengthen its ties with Russia and Germany "without concentrating too heavily on the Baltic gas pipeline".

As Sikorski's and Komorowski's reasoning highlights, economic rationalisations on Nord Stream enabled Polish leaders to downplay the pipeline's actual importance for Poland. This approach was functional to the Polish government's overarching

¹²⁷ Donald Tusk's interview with *Novaya Gazeta*, 19 February 2008, <http://en.novayagazeta.ru/politics/8522.html> (accessed 16/5/2013).

¹²⁸ Donald Tusk's interview with the *Financial Times*, 27 January 2010.

¹²⁹ Bronislaw Komorowski's interview with *Euronews*, 31 August 2010, <http://www.euronews.com/2010/08/31/komorowski-seeks-greater-eu-involvement-for-poland/> (accessed 16/5/2013).

¹³⁰ Donald Tusk's interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, 9 November 2011, <http://blogs.wsj.com/emergingEurope/2011/11/09/nord-stream-waste-of-money-but-irrelevant-for-poland/> (accessed 16/5/2013).

objective of improving relations with Germany and Russia after 2007. Although Polish foreign policy makers remained critical of Nord Stream, they increasingly considered it as an old controversy that should not be allowed to disrupt present relations. This attitude was reflected, for instance, in Sikorski's statements during a joint interview with German foreign minister Westerwelle in November 2010. Asked whether Nord Stream was still a contentious issue in Polish-German relations, Sikorski briefly argued that the controversy belonged to the past and suggested moving on to "questions concerning the future".¹³¹

Environmental challenges and a norm-based partnership: Finnish discourses

In Finnish foreign policy making circles, the debate on Nord Stream was particularly lively between September 2005 and November 2009, when the Finnish authorities allowed the laying of the pipeline through Finland's exclusive economic zone in the Baltic Sea.¹³² Nearly all the Finnish policy makers' speeches and statements on Nord Stream that were retrieved date back from this period. During this timeframe, Finland had two governments, both headed by prime minister and Centre Party leader Matti Vanhanen. Social democrat Erkki Tuomioja was foreign minister under the first government (until April 2007), which was supported by a predominantly centre-left parliamentary coalition. Ilkka Kanerva (until April 2008) and later Alexander Stubb, both members of the centre-right National Coalition Party, were foreign ministers during Vanhanen's second government, which had a centre-right political orientation.

Tarja Halonen was the president of Finland throughout the period when Nord Stream was a prominent topic in Finnish foreign policy makers' discourses. Since the Finnish president is responsible for the conduct of foreign policy (together with the

¹³¹ Donald Tusk's and Guido Westerwelle's interview with *Tagesspiegel*, 5 November 2010.

¹³² "Finnish Government grants consent for Nord Stream's offshore gas pipeline project", press release of the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 5 November 2009, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentId=179823&nodeId=23&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> (accessed 16/5/2013).

government)¹³³ and Halonen played an important role in the Finnish debate on Nord Stream, her speeches are also analysed. On the other hand, no references to Nord Stream were found in either the speeches of Halonen's successor, Sauli Niinistö, or in those of prime ministers Mari Kiviniemi and Jyrki Katainen, who were in office after Matti Vanhanen. This may be because Nord Stream lost prominence in the Finnish political debate after the country agreed to the laying of the pipeline in its exclusive economic zone.

Table 14. Finnish foreign policy leaders in the period under investigation

Prime Minister	Foreign Minister	President of the Republic
Matti Vanhanen (September 2005 -June 2010)	Erkki Tuomioja (September 2005-April 2007 June 2011-December 2012)	Tarja Halonen (September 2005- March 2012)
Mari Kiviniemi (June 2010-June 2011)	Ilkka Kanerva (April 2007-April 2008)	
Jyrki Katainen (June 2011- December 2012)	Alexander Stubb (April 2008-June 2011)	Sauli Niinistö (March 2012- December 2012)

Source: own compilation

Two key discourses emerged from Finnish policy makers' speeches on Nord Stream and energy relations with Russia. The first one stressed that Finland and the EU should continue to foster energy relations with Russia because they needed Russian gas and Russia had proven to be a reliable supplier. Nord Stream was seen as a positive development for European energy security because, it was argued, more infrastructure was necessary to meet the EU's increasing energy demand. This

¹³³ Article 93 of the Finnish constitution states that "the foreign policy of Finland is directed by the President of the Republic in cooperation with the Government". The full text of the constitution is available at <http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/kaannokset/1999/en19990731.pdf> (accessed 16/5/2013).

discourse also had a strong normative focus, as it argued that energy relations with Russia should take place in accordance with a clear regulatory framework that was compatible with EU energy market rules.¹³⁴ The second discourse contended that, while a positive development for European energy security, Nord Stream also constituted an environmental challenge for Finland and other Baltic Sea countries. Within this discourse, Finnish policy makers claimed that Finland's support of the pipeline was conditional to the respect of environmental standards.

The two dominant Finnish discourses on Nord Stream reflect both Finnish historical perceptions of Russia as an important economic partner and as Finland's "security deficit".¹³⁵ Russia's importance as an economic partner emerged from the first discourse, which portrayed it as a key energy provider. The perception of Russia as Finland's "security deficit" appeared in the second discourse; the "security deficit" stemmed from the environmental risks concerning the construction of Nord Stream. Both discourses can be found in speeches of policy makers with different political orientations. Hence, the texts under investigation suggested that political allegiance did not play an important role in shaping Finnish foreign policy makers' stance towards energy relations with Russia.

Market and norms: Russia as a key energy partner

In most of the speeches under analysis, Finnish policy makers argued that the EU and Russia should cooperate in the energy field because they were interdependent. In particular, the EU needed to engage Russia because of its dependence on Russian gas. Cooperation should be based on clearly established norms, which would allow the formation of a united European energy market, including Russia. Economic advantage, legality and Europeanism are the *topoi* in this argumentative strategy.

¹³⁴ In this context, Finnish foreign policy makers often argued that EU-Russia energy relations should be based on the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT), an international agreement regulating cooperation in the energy sector. The EU and all its member states have signed and ratified the ECT, see http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/energy/external_dimension_enlargement/l27028_en.htm (accessed 16/5/2013). Russia signed only but never ratified the agreement. In July 2009, the Russian government announced its withdrawal from the ECT (cf. Westphal 2011: 2-3).

¹³⁵ See chapter 4.

They connect the argument (the EU should engage Russia with a normative approach) to its logical conclusion that a norm-based cooperation will lead to mutual benefits and create a European energy market.

This discourse emerged clearly in prime minister Vanhanen's speech at the European Business Leaders Convention (a forum of top business leaders, experts and political decision makers) in Saint Petersburg, in July 2006.¹³⁶ Vanhanen called Russia "a strategic partner for the EU" and claimed that, in the energy field, "Russia and the EU have complementary needs – the EU as a customer and Russia as supplier". Moreover, he argued that EU-Russia energy cooperation should be developed in institutionalised frameworks (in particular, he referred to EU-Russia and G8 summits) and be based on international and European law.¹³⁷ A norm-based cooperation with Russia and other EU partners would allow the creation of "truly European energy markets".

We need truly European energy markets. European not in the EU meaning, but pan-European including Norway, Russia, the Ukraine and other partners.¹³⁸

Vanhanen thus substantiated his argument for cooperation with Russia by constructing European energy markets as an in-group of which Russia was a member. This inclusive discourse was grounded on economic considerations, which Vanhanen attempted to make more forceful through the use of perspectivation.

¹³⁶ Matti Vanhanen's key note speech at the European Business Leaders Convention, 7 July 2006, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/579/?language=en>. A description of the Convention and its activities is available at <http://www.eblc.org> (accessed 16/5/2013).

¹³⁷ First, he urged Russia to ratify the Energy Charter Treaty, then he stated: "At EU level, we support the extension of internal market principles to our neighbouring countries".

¹³⁸ Matti Vanhanen's key note speech at the European Business Leaders Convention, 7 July 2006.

I am convinced that market logic means that the EU will remain Russia's main energy customer and Russia the EU's main supplier. Demand and supply fit nicely, in geographical terms too.¹³⁹

Vanhanen's emphasis on market principles as the basis for EU-Russia cooperation was echoed in a speech held by foreign minister Tuomioja in May 2006.¹⁴⁰ According to Tuomioja, "Finnish experiences of energy cooperation with Russia have been positive" and "Russia has proved to be a reliable supplier" because Finland "has always followed the market principles [...] in its energy relations with Russia". He also stressed that 100 per cent of Finnish gas was imported from Russia and implied that this dependence did not constitute a problem because market rules were respected.

Tuomioja's emphasis on economic arguments may also be due to the context in which his remarks were made. The speech was held at a seminar co-organised by the embassies of the Visegrad Group countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary) in Helsinki. The leaders of some of these countries, most notably Poland, considered Russia's contemporary energy policy as an instrument to achieve geopolitical goals in East-Central European countries that depended on Russian energy supplies.¹⁴¹ Hence, Tuomioja's statements may have also been intended to convey to the Visegrad Group countries' representatives that positive energy cooperation was possible, in spite of energy dependence, if relations with Russia were based on market principles, rather than on geopolitical arguments. According to Tuomioja, the market would also ensure that, in spite of Nord Stream's construction, the Visegrad countries remained "important transit routes for Russian energy supplies further to the West".

The argument in favour of fostering energy relations with Russia and basing them on mutual confidence and market rules however appeared also in speeches held before

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Erkki Tuomioja's speech at the seminar "Visegrád Group and Finland", 31 May 2006, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=68999&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> (accessed 16/5/2013).

¹⁴¹ Cf. previous section of this chapter, focusing on Polish discourses.

audiences that were likely to be more sympathetic to Russia and Nord Stream than the Visegrad countries. President Tarja Halonen's speech at the Federation of German Industry in June 2006 provides a good example.¹⁴² Halonen argued that energy trade was beneficial for both buyers and sellers only if it was clearly regulated. According to her, EU-Russia energy dialogue had to be based on "mutual interest and confidence". In this context, she stated that she considered the Nord Stream pipeline "an acceptable development", thereby suggesting that she had no reason to doubt the economic rationale of the project.¹⁴³

Nord Stream's economic significance was emphasised also by prime minister Vanhanen in a speech held during a state visit to Japan in June 2008.¹⁴⁴ In his remarks, Vanhanen positively characterised Russia as "the most important energy supplier for the EU" and "a reliable supplier of gas and electricity", using the discursive strategy of predication. If, occasionally, Russia had not managed to deliver the agreed quantities of gas, it was due to the lack of generating capacity and infrastructure. According to Vanhanen, Nord Stream contributed to addressing these deficiencies because it improved the infrastructure to transport Russian gas. Furthermore, he dismissed claims according to which the pipeline was a political project.

¹⁴² Tarja Halonen's speech at the conference of the Federation of German Industry, 20 June 2006, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/1409/> (accessed 16/5/2013). As previously discussed, German business interests played an important role in the Nord Stream project, as well as in other fields of German-Russian bilateral relations (see also Judy Dempsey, "Despite Crisis, Germany Sees Russia as Land of Opportunity", *The New York Times*, 25 October 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/25/business/worldbusiness/25dresden.html?pagewanted=print&r=0>, accessed 1/6/2014).

¹⁴³ By contrast, Sikorski's analogy between Nord Stream and the Nazi-Soviet pact was made only three weeks before Halonen's speech.

¹⁴⁴ Matti Vanhanen's speech at the Japan National Press Club, 9 June 2008, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/788/?language=en> (accessed 16/5/2013). The overall focus of the speech was on energy and environmental policies in the context of climate change, as well as on Russia as Finland's and Japan's common neighbour.

The main question to be raised in this context is not whether energy might be used as a political weapon, but is there enough gas to be exported?¹⁴⁵

Vanhanen focused his assessment of Nord Stream and energy relations with Russia on economic and technical issues, such as Russia's export capacity. He believed that Russia had a genuine economic interest in the construction of Nord Stream and that its energy policy was the logical consequence of market structures.

Russia is clearly interested in exporting more energy to Europe. The reason is simple: there is a buyer and there is a seller. Europe needs the energy, they need the money. This is what trade is all about.¹⁴⁶

According to Vanhanen, energy trade with Russia should be secured through investments in European and Russian energy production and transport, namely in projects such as Nord Stream. The argument that the EU should engage Russia to obtain the energy it needed is reiterated in foreign minister Alexander Stubb's statements. In an article published on his personal website in October 2009, Stubb went as far as arguing that Nord Stream would not suffice to satisfy the EU's increasing energy demand and the implementation of other energy projects involving Russia would be necessary.¹⁴⁷

Echoing Vanhanen's argument, Stubb claimed that Nord Stream was "a commercial European energy security project" and that "it gained a more political character than was probably intended".¹⁴⁸ According to Stubb, the European countries that opposed

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Alexander Stubb, "Europe's gas dilemma", October 2009, <http://www.alexstubb.com/artikkelit/bw0809stubbREV.pdf> (accessed 16/5/2013). In particular, Stubb mentioned the South Stream project, which should export Russian gas to Europe via an offshore pipeline placed under the Black Sea and an onshore pipeline crossing the Balkans.

¹⁴⁸ Alexander Stubb's speech at the Pohjola-Norden Seminar, 10 November 2009, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/Print.aspx?contentid=180523&nodeid=15149&culture=en-US&contentlan=2> (accessed 16/5/2013).

the project could have taken a different stance if more discussions and closer cooperation had taken place. Hence, he advocated further institutionalisation of EU energy relations with Russia in order to promote cooperation and dialogue.¹⁴⁹ This approach reflected the belief, recurrent in the Finnish foreign policy makers' speeches under analysis, that a European energy market including Russia could be created through the establishment of adequate institutions and norms.

Nord Stream as an environmental challenge

Although Finnish foreign policy makers were generally favourable to the Nord Stream project, most of them emphasised the respect of environmental standards as a fundamental prerequisite for its implementation. As the argument went, Nord Stream was a contribution to European energy security, but it should not affect negatively the Baltic Sea environment, which was Finland's primary interest. As the pipeline was to be laid in Finland's exclusive economic zone and an authorisation of the Finnish authorities was necessary for its construction, the debate on its environmental impact became dominant in the country. The stance of Finnish foreign policy makers on the issue is best summarised in the speech president Tarja Halonen gave in May 2008 at the Überseeclub in Hamburg, a German cultural and debating society.

Finland considers the project [Nord Stream] a way of improving energy security in Europe. The pipeline in itself is a safe way of conveying gas, but we want – and indeed our legislation requires – that all environmental factors involved in the project will be carefully studied. When Finland decides on whether to allow the use of her sea areas, the decisions will be based on environmental factors.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.; in particular, Stubb argued that the dialogue could take place within the EU's Baltic Sea Strategy, a policy framework launched in 2007 to promote cooperation in the Baltic region, and in regional forums such as the Baltic Sea States Summit.

¹⁵⁰ Tarja Halonen's speech at the Überseeclub in Hamburg, 8 May 2008, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/1247/?language=en> (accessed 16/5/2013).

Environmentalism and legality are the *topoi* that connect the argument (Nord Stream must respect environmental standards) to its logical conclusion (Finland will authorise the construction of Nord Stream only if it complies with its environmental legislation). Also in this discourse, Finnish foreign policy is framed within a strong normative dimension: decisions concerning Nord Stream are contingent upon the respect of environmental norms during the construction of the pipeline.

Halonen's line of argument was reiterated in most other speeches under analysis in which Finnish policy makers referred to the Nord Stream project, irrespective of the audience to which they were addressed. In his remarks before the representatives of the Visegrad Group countries, foreign minister Tuomioja argued that Finland's interest was "to ensure the fulfilment of environmental requirements".¹⁵¹ In a speech at the Norwegian Nobel Institute, Tuomioja's successor Ilkka Kanerva referred to Nord Stream within the context of an analysis of ecological threats in the Baltic Sea.¹⁵² He lamented that the Baltic was "one of the most polluted seas" and had been "transformed into an energy supply route". He then stated that Finnish authorities would examine an environmental impact assessment before making decisions on Nord Stream. Along the same lines, foreign minister Stubb claimed that Nord Stream was "largely an environmental issue".¹⁵³

Despite their reservations on the environmental impact of Nord Stream, Finnish foreign policy makers maintained a positive attitude towards both the project and energy cooperation with Russia. In fact, the controversy about the environmental impact of the pipeline ended in November 2009, when the Finnish authorities granted the authorisation to lay it in Finland's exclusive economic zone. Subsequently, references to Nord Stream's environmental impact were framed in more positive terms. For instance, in a speech held in May 2010 Halonen suggested that the planning of Nord Stream was an example of good cooperation with Russia because

¹⁵¹ Erkki Tuomioja's speech at the seminar "Visegrád Group and Finland", 31 May 2006.

¹⁵² Ilkka Kanerva's speech at the Norwegian Nobel Institute, 22 January 2008, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/272/?language=en> (accessed 16/5/2013).

¹⁵³ Alexander Stubb, "Europe's gas dilemma", October 2009.

“its environmental impacts were investigated thoroughly before decisions concerning permits were made”.¹⁵⁴

Halonen’s remark reflected the belief that Finland could best achieve its foreign policy objectives with Russia through dialogue and norm-based cooperation, particularly in such sensitive areas as environmental security. This belief emerged most clearly in Ilkka Kanerva’s speech at the Norwegian Nobel Institute, when he argued for the “need to engage Russia in addressing global challenges and encourage full implementation of international commitments”.¹⁵⁵ In the field of energy and environment, cooperation should lead to the “sustainable utilisation of natural resources”. In this context, Kanerva claimed that “for Finland, Russia represents both an opportunity and a challenge that are worth seizing”, a statement that mirrors Finnish historical perceptions of Russia as both a partner and a threat.¹⁵⁶ Kanerva’s remark also suggested that, if Finland did not seek cooperation, Russia might turn into a menace. Finnish foreign policy makers’ statements on Nord Stream generally reflected this underlying logic. Russia tended to be referred to as a partner and was never openly criticised. As shown, also the environmental controversy concerning Nord Stream was eventually reframed into a narrative of a learning process with a positive outcome.

Conclusion

This case study exposed the diversity of national discourses on the Nord Stream project and energy relations with Russia, a highly relevant policy field for the EU and its member states. Most importantly, it showed that these discourses can be better understood through an analytical framework that takes into account national identity construction and Russia’s role therein. For instance, German leaders’ positive attitude to energy cooperation with Russia was explained within the context of the long-standing energy partnership between the two countries, which dates back

¹⁵⁴ Tarja Halonen’s speech at the Estonian parliament, 5 May 2010, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/1098/?language=en> (accessed 16/5/2013).

¹⁵⁵ Ilkka Kanerva’s speech at the Norwegian Nobel Institute, 22 January 2008.

¹⁵⁶ See chapter 4.

to the *Ostpolitik* of the early 1970s and has become part of Germany's foreign policy identity. On the other hand, Polish leaders' strong criticism of Nord Stream was set against the background of Poland's troubled historical relations with Russia and Germany, which influenced profoundly their perceptions of both countries as foreign policy actors.

German discourses emphasised Russia's reliability as an energy partner and cited the history of German-Russian energy cooperation as evidence. They also stressed that, in the energy field, the European Union and Russia were interdependent and had a mutual interest in cooperating. According to German leaders, the Nord Stream pipeline strengthened the partnership with Russia, contributed to European energy security and hence met the interests of the whole EU (rather than just German national interests). This discourse reflected the high relevance of the European Union in German national identity. Furthermore, German policy makers argued that energy cooperation had positive repercussions for democracy and the human rights situation in Russia because it created favourable conditions for dialogue with the EU and hence for the implementation of these principles. This narrative mirrored the *Ostpolitik* tenet according to which economic cooperation had positive repercussions on Russia's domestic development.

Polish foreign policy makers' discourses were antithetical to German discourses in several respects. Like their German counterparts, also Polish leaders made reference to history in order to justify their stance on energy relations with Russia. However, in Polish discourses references to history were entirely negative and served the purpose of opposing energy cooperation. Russia was portrayed as the heir of Soviet Cold War policies, notably as an imperialist country that used its energy resources to pursue geopolitical objectives in East-Central Europe. Furthermore, Polish leaders took a diametrically opposite stance on the significance of Nord Stream for European energy security. Contrary to German policy makers, they argued that Nord Stream was a bilateral project that affected negatively the security of East-Central European EU members. Accordingly, the support of some EU countries for the pipeline showed the lack of solidarity within the European Union.

The clash between German and Polish discourses on Nord Stream was particularly strong in the years 2005-2007, when the far right Law and Justice party was in power in Poland. It lost impetus after 2007, following the election of centre-right leader Donald Tusk as Polish prime minister. Tusk adopted a more moderate discourse and a pragmatic approach to Poland's controversies with Germany and Russia. While the previous Polish government had made use of highly emotionally charged memory politics, Tusk focused his criticism of Nord Stream on economic arguments and simultaneously sought reconciliation with Germany and Russia.

Finnish leaders' discourses tended to be in line with those of German policy makers on issues such as the necessity to foster the energy partnership with Russia and Russia's reliability as an energy supplier. However, Finnish discourses put a stronger emphasis on norms (market rules, European and international law) as the basis of the EU's partnership with Russia. Moreover, Finnish leaders were more critical than their German and Polish counterparts on the question of Nord Stream's environmental impact, which they considered a potential security threat. Finnish discourses on energy cooperation with Russia and Nord Stream reflected constructed images of Russia that are deeply rooted in Finnish identity. Consistently with its traditional image as Finland's key economic partner, Russia was portrayed as an essential energy supplier. On the other hand, long-standing Finnish fears of the security threat emanating from Russia emerged in the discourse on Nord Stream's environmental impact.

Hence, the chapter revealed considerable diversity in German, Polish and Finnish discourses on Nord Stream and energy relations with Russia. Divergences were particularly marked as long as Polish narratives emphasised constructed images of Russia as a security threat, while German discourses simultaneously depicted it as a reliable partner. Following the departure from power of the Polish right in 2007, Polish official discourses became more moderate and more compatible with German narratives. Furthermore, after Finland granted environmental permits for the building of Nord Stream in its exclusive economic zone (November 2009), Finnish discourses ceased to present the pipeline as a potential threat. From 2010 onwards, Nord Stream

Divisive identity, divided foreign policy?

no longer appeared as a major contentious issue across the three national discursive arenas under analysis.

Chapter 6: The August 2008 Russian-Georgian war

Introduction

This case study investigates German, Polish and Finnish foreign policy makers' discourses on Russia during the August 2008 Russian-Georgian war, against the broader background of contemporary European security. It shows how national identity permeated different national readings of the crisis and of Russia's role in it. However, the chapter also reveals that national discourses during the August 2008 crisis were less discordant than those concerning Nord Stream in the previous two years (2005-2007). The analysis focuses mostly on statements, speeches and interviews dating back from August 2008 and the following months of the year. Some previous and later texts are also included in the study in order to assess the nature of security discourses on Russia prior to the August 2008 crisis and its long-term impact. The main questions addressed are: how is Russia depicted in foreign policy makers' discourses during the August 2008 crisis? How do these discourses relate to national identity and deep-rooted national perceptions of Russia? What discursive and linguistic techniques are used to convey the main arguments? To what extent are national discourses similar or dissimilar?

As with the investigation of discourses on Nord Stream and energy relations, the analysis of national identity and dominant historical discourses on Russia in chapter 4 provides the interpretive framework. The main events and actors discussed in this chapter are briefly introduced and contextualised in the opening section. This includes a concise account of the origins of the Georgian-Ossetian and Georgian-Abkhaz conflicts, as well as an overview of the geopolitical background in which tensions between Georgia and Russia escalated. The description of the August 2008 crisis is based mostly on the report of the EU's fact-finding commission concerning the conflict and on some of the most eminent scholarly works published on the topic thus far. While it is by no means an exhaustive account of the crisis, this section hopes to provide an objective contextualisation of the ensuing discourse analysis.

The following three subchapters have a similar structure: they introduce the top foreign policy makers that formulated official national discourses on the Russian-Georgian war and then analyse dominant discourses in Germany, Poland and Finland. The concluding section summarises the main findings and compares national discourses. Ultimately, this chapter allows an analysis of different national reactions to a conflict that arguably marked the highest peak in tensions between Russia and NATO in the first two post-Cold War decades. This context also provides an opportunity to assess the contemporary relevance of historically constructed national images of Russia as a security threat in official foreign policy discourses.

The August 2008 war: context and European response

In Europe and the United States, the five-day conflict between Georgia and Russia in August 2008 caused a vibrant debate about the nature of Russia's foreign policy and its role in the international arena. In the Western press, Russia was largely portrayed as an aggressive country with imperialist ambitions in its neighbourhood (Heinrich and Tanaev 2009, Sakwa 2012: 593-595, 601-603). Numerous journalists and academics spoke of a "return to the Cold War" between Russia and the West.¹⁵⁷ Within the European Union, the leaders of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden were particularly vocal in their criticism of Russian policies, whereas other countries (including Germany and Finland) took a more moderate stance (Lasas 2012).¹⁵⁸

The causes, development and consequences of the August 2008 Russian-Georgian war have been analysed in depth in a large body of literature (Asmus 2010, Cornell and Star 2009, Forsberg and Seppo 2011, Jones 2013, Rich 2010, Sakwa 2012).

¹⁵⁷ Richard Sakwa (2008) offers a thorough analysis of how Cold War patterns of thinking resurfaced in debates about Russia's foreign policy during Putin's first and second presidency. Edward Lucas's 2008 book *The New Cold War* provides a good example of this thinking (cf. Braithwaite 2008).

¹⁵⁸ At the other end of the spectrum, Italian officials seemed to side with Russia. Italian foreign minister Franco Frattini argued: "We cannot create an anti-Russia coalition in Europe, and on this point we are close to Putin's position [...] This war has pushed Georgia further away [from the EU and NATO]" (cited in Katrin Bennhold, "Differences emerge in Europe of a response to Georgia conflict" *The New York Times*, 12 August 2008, www.nytimes.com/2008/08/12/world/europe/12iht-diplo.4.15218653.html?_r=0, accessed 30/5/2014).

Moreover, a fact-finding mission appointed by the EU compiled a detailed, three-volume report on the conflict, which was based on extensive fieldwork conducted in the months after the war (IIFFMCG 2009). Drawing from these sources, the following paragraphs summarise very briefly the main phases of the conflict in order to outline the essential factual background and contextualise the ensuing discourse analysis.

The conflicts between Georgia and its separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia date back to the Russian Civil War (1917-1922), when the newly-independent Georgian state clashed with Ossetian and Abkhaz Bolsheviks. During the Soviet period, the two conflicts remained dormant, but re-escalated into armed hostilities during and in the years immediately following the dissolution of the USSR (1991-1994). Under the Soviet Union, Abkhazia and South Ossetia were granted autonomous status within the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic; the two entities however refused to become part of an independent, post-Soviet Georgian state (cf. Suny 1994, Zürcher 2007: 115-151).

The military conflicts that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in the *de facto* independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia from Georgia. However, the independence of the two separatist entities was not recognised by any country. Russia played a key role in mediating a cease-fire and in the subsequent international peacekeeping missions, which were organised under the auspices of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (in South Ossetia), the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States (in Abkhazia). Despite the involvement of international organisations, conflict resolution efforts between 1994 and 2008 were not successful (IIFFMCG 2009: vol. 2, 74-118).

In January 2004, following the Rose Revolution, Mikheil Saakashvili was elected president of Georgia with a programme that included the return of Abkhazia and South Ossetia to Georgia as a key point. Relations between the new Georgian government and Russia quickly deteriorated as Saakashvili made clear that he would seek NATO and EU integration, demand the withdrawal of Russian troops from Soviet-time bases in Georgia and increase cooperation with the United States.

Saakashvili also accused Russia of implementing policies that would lead to its annexation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, such as the distribution of Russian passports and the payment of pensions to the local population. Between 2006 and the spring of 2008, incidents at the Abkhaz-Georgian and Ossetian-Georgian borders became more and more frequent, while tensions between Russia and Georgia steadily increased (cf. IFFMCG 2009: vol. 2, 2-32, 200-208, March 2011: 195-196).

The wider geopolitical scenario contributed to exacerbate tensions. From the early 2000s onwards, Georgia acquired importance as a strategic transit country in the Southern oil and gas corridor, a route that was not controlled by Russia and would allow exporting the abundant resources of the Caspian Sea basin to the European Union. Russia drew large profits from its dominant position as EU energy supplier and considered the implementation of a competing Southern energy corridor as a threat to its economic interests. The inauguration of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and of the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline in 2005-2006, both following the route of the Southern corridor, contributed to increasing Russian concerns (German 2010: 98-101). Furthermore, in 2007 and early 2008 the Russian government became increasingly anxious about the prospect of Georgian NATO membership and US plans to deploy an anti-missile defence system in Eastern Europe, which Russian leaders considered as a threat to their country's strategic deterrent (cf. Mankoff 2012: 333-337). Russian concerns about these issues were expressed with utmost clarity in president Vladimir Putin's speech at the Munich security conference in February 2007.¹⁵⁹

In the months preceding the war, two international events greatly contributed to the escalation of tensions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In February 2008, Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia, Russia's main partner in the Balkans. Kosovo's declaration of independence and its recognition by most EU and NATO member states irritated Russian leaders, who argued that it would constitute a precedent for separatist entities in other regions of the world (cf. Averre 2009: 586;

¹⁵⁹ "Vladimir Putin's prepared remarks at 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy", *The Washington Post*, 12 February 2007, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/12/AR2007021200555.html (accessed 7/7/2013).

Hamilton 2010: 207-208). Furthermore, in April 2008 the leaders of NATO countries met in Bucharest to discuss *inter alia* the granting of a membership action plan to Georgia and Ukraine, a prospect that was strongly opposed by Russia. Due to strong German and French opposition, Georgia and Ukraine were not offered a membership action plan. Georgia's unresolved conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia were one of the main arguments used by the opponents of its NATO accession.¹⁶⁰ However, the prospect of Georgia's future NATO membership remained on the table and was strongly supported by both the United States and some East-Central European members of the alliance, including Poland (cf. Blank 2009: 116).

Against this background, tensions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia escalated throughout the spring of 2008. Both Russia and Georgia increased their military presence near the conflict zone. In the second half of July 2008, the Russian and Georgian armies (the latter in conjunction with US troops) held military exercises in the South Caucasus (IIFMCG 2009: vol. 2, 47-48).¹⁶¹ On the night of 7-8 August, following several days of skirmishes and fire exchanges along the Georgian-South Ossetian border, the Georgian army launched a full-scale attack on Tskhinvali, South Ossetia's capital. A few hours later, the Russian ground, air and naval forces became involved in the conflict, attacking Georgian targets in both South Ossetia and the rest of Georgia (IIFMCG 2009: vol. 2, 209-210). This sequence of events was reconstructed by the EU fact-finding mission in the months following the conflict. However, the question of who started the war has remained heavily disputed, with both sides blaming each other.

The intervention of Russian forces swiftly decided the outcome of the conflict. By 10 August, most Georgian troops had been expelled from South Ossetia, while the Russian army extended the theatre of operations to Abkhazia. From 10 to 12 August,

¹⁶⁰ In particular, this argument was used by German federal chancellor Angela Merkel. On the other hand, French foreign minister Bernard Kouchner argued that NATO's relations with Russia were already too strained due to the issue of Kosovo's independence and the US plan to place a missile defense shield in Poland and the Czech Republic (IIFMCG 2009: vol. 2, 45).

¹⁶¹ Russia held the exercise "Caucasus 2008" in its North Caucasus republics of Chechnya, North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachayev-Circassia, involving 8,000 troops. Approximately 600 Georgians and 1,000 US soldiers took part in the exercise "Immediate Response" at the Georgian base of Vaziani (IIFMCG 2009: vol. 2, 47-48).

Russian forces advanced into Georgian territory and occupied several towns and military bases (IIFFMCG 2009: vol. 2, 211-214). An armistice was achieved on 12 August, when French president Nicolas Sarkozy (in his capacity as President of the European Council) convinced the parties to sign a ceasefire agreement. The agreement provided *inter alia* for the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of troops to the positions occupied prior to the conflict (cf. Forsberg and Seppo 2011, IIFFMCG 2009: vol. 3, 587-592, Volkhonskiy 2009: 203-206).

However, the ceasefire agreement did not end the political crisis. On 26 August 2008, Russia recognised the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, a move that was harshly criticised by Georgia, the US and most European countries. NATO temporarily suspended talks with Russia in the NATO-Russia Council and the EU postponed negotiations on a strategic partnership agreement with Russia (cf. Blank 2010: 189-191). Furthermore, some Russian troops delayed their withdrawal. In order to speed it up, an implementation agreement (complementing the ceasefire agreement) was signed in Moscow on 8 September 2008 (IIFFMCG 2009: vol. 3, 593-594). The document provided for the withdrawal of Russian troops from undisputed Georgian territory within ten days after the deployment of a monitoring mission of the European Union (EUMM), which was established at the EU Council of foreign ministers on 15 September. The deployment of EUMM was completed by 1 October and, on 9 October, the Russian foreign ministry announced the full withdrawal of all Russian forces from undisputed Georgian territory (IIFFMCG 2009: vol. 2: 219).¹⁶²

In spite of international conflict resolution efforts, particularly through numerous rounds of talks involving both the authorities of Georgia and of the two separatist republics, the post-conflict status quo has crystallised.¹⁶³ In the months following the war, Russia increased its economic and military presence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia (cf. Weitz 2009: 6-8). Following Russia's recognition of the two separatist

¹⁶² However, the issue of full compliance by the parties with the implementation agreement has been the subject of different interpretations and remained contentious for many months after the conflict (IIFFMCG 2009: vol. 2: 219-223).

¹⁶³ The talks were held in Geneva and became known as "Geneva process".

entities, Georgia severed diplomatic relations with Moscow.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, in 2009 Russia vetoed the continuation of both the UN and the OSCE missions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.¹⁶⁵ As a result, after 2009 no international missions were present on the territory of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (IIFMCG 2009: vol. 2: 441).¹⁶⁶

Russia's relations with the United States, NATO and the European Union were negatively affected in the months following the war (cf. Blank 2009). Within the European Union, however, different positions emerged throughout the crisis of August 2008 and in the ensuing months. While the fighting was still taking place, Polish president Lech Kaczynski participated in a public demonstration held in Tbilisi in support of Georgia, together with the presidents of Ukraine, Estonia and Lithuania and the prime minister of Latvia. Conversely, German and French leaders took a much more cautious stance, which also allowed French president Sarkozy to mediate between the warring parties (cf. Sakwa 2012: 601). The Finnish government also took a moderate bearing and sought a role as mediator through its OSCE chairmanship.¹⁶⁷

In the three countries under analysis, the August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia was a central topic in foreign policy makers' speeches during the military escalation and in the following two months, until Russian troops completed their withdrawal from undisputed Georgian territory. The discourse analysis in the following subchapters focuses primarily on this period (August-October 2008). However, speeches concerning security relations with Russia in the months preceding the crisis are also analysed in order to assess the nature of discourses in the

¹⁶⁴ Diplomatic relations have not been resumed at the time of writing.

¹⁶⁵ "Russia's veto ends UN mission in Georgia, Abkhazia", *RIA Novosti*, 16 June 2009, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20090616/155262319.html> (accessed 7/7/2013); 'U.N. monitors leave Georgia, OSCE mission shuts', *Reuters*, 30 June 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/06/30/us-georgia-monitors-idUSTRE55T3OR20090630> (accessed 7/7/2013).

¹⁶⁶ EUMM was not granted access to the South Ossetian and Abkhaz side of the border, which seriously hindered its monitoring of the post-war stabilization process (IIFMCG 2009: vol. 2: 441).

¹⁶⁷ Finnish foreign minister Alexander Stubb, then OSCE chairman-in-office, flew to Tbilisi on 10 August 2008 and attempted to mediate between the warring parties; cf. "Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland Alexander Stubb to Georgia today", press release of the Foreign Ministry of Finland, 10 August 2008, <http://www.finlandosce.org/Public/default.aspx?contentid=134741&nodeid=38328&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> (accessed 7/7/2013).

run up to the war. Furthermore, the analysis includes a few speeches held after October 2008 in which the Russian-Georgian war is addressed. This allows an investigation of any lasting impact which the conflict may have had on discourses regarding relations with Russia.

Partners in difficult times: German leaders' discourses

During the August 2008 crisis, chancellor Angela Merkel and foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier were the most prominent German politicians who made public statements concerning the Russian-Georgian conflict and represented Germany's official stance. Hence, the analysis will focus primarily on their statements. Both Merkel and Steinmeier were very active throughout the crisis. Merkel travelled to Russia and Georgia and attended the extraordinary European Council held in Brussels on 1 September 2008 to discuss the EU's position on the conflict. Steinmeier discussed his views on the war and Russia in interviews with mainstream German newspapers and held speeches on the same topic in official contexts, including the UN General Assembly and diplomatic conferences at the German ministry of foreign affairs. Furthermore, Steinmeier travelled to Abkhazia and Georgia in late July 2008 and was the last high-ranking Western politician who attempted to mediate between the parties before the outbreak of war (IIFFMCG 2009: vol. 2, 59).

In addition to Merkel's and Steinmeier's statements, two speeches by secretary of state Gernot Erler and one by state minister for Europe Günter Gloser were also examined. Like Steinmeier's statements, Erler's and Gloser's speeches were retrieved in the electronic archive of the German foreign ministry. They are of particular relevance because they delve further into some of the issues addressed in the foreign minister's speeches. Since Erler and Gloser were prominent officials in the German foreign office, their views can be considered as part of German foreign policy making elite's public discourse, which is the subject of this analysis.

The investigation of German foreign policy makers' statements revealed three dominant discourses concerning the August 2008 war and contemporary security relations with Russia. The first discourse stressed Russia's importance as an international actor and as an essential partner for the EU on all key issues pertaining to European security. This discourse emerged in speeches held before, during and after the August 2008 war; it therefore reflected a broad, consolidated line of thought on security relations with Russia in German foreign policy making circles. On the other hand, the second discourse appeared mostly in speeches held during or immediately after the August 2008 war. It criticised some of Russia's political and military decisions during the crisis, such as the large-scale use of force and the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. However, this criticism was not particularly strong and was often accompanied by requests for further political consultations with Russia. The third discourse focused on Germany's and the EU's role in the August 2008 crisis and their subsequent stance towards Russia. It praised the EU's mediation during the crisis and emphasised the need for a coherent and active EU foreign policy towards the conflict region and Russia.

No return to the Cold War: Russia as a strategic security partner

From early 2007 until the final months of 2008, German foreign policy makers' speeches on Russia were held against a background of deteriorating NATO- and EU-Russia relations, which was exacerbated even further by the August 2008 war. Within this context, German leaders attempted to counter the negative trends in relations with Russia and sought dialogue with Moscow. The dominant German security discourse in this period stressed that Russia was a key player in the international arena and hence an indispensable partner for the strengthening of European security. German policy makers rejected the contemporary media discourse foreshadowing a new Cold War with Russia and attempted to expose comparisons between the Soviet Union and Russia as historical anachronisms. Political pragmatism and history are the *topoi* linking the argument (Russia is a key partner for European security and no longer a Cold War rival) to its logical

conclusion that Germany, NATO and the EU should seek cooperation with Russia. This discourse reflects long-standing German perceptions of Russia as an essential factor in European security. Negative memories of the Cold War, when Germany was politically divided and stood on the frontline of superpower confrontation, played an important role in the rejection of the Cold War discourse.

German leaders' preoccupation to halt the deterioration of relations with Russia emerged already in March 2007, in a speech held by foreign minister Steinmeier only a few weeks after Putin's critical remarks about NATO enlargement and defence policies at the Munich security conference.¹⁶⁸ Addressing the German parliament on the issue of the US anti-missile shield in Eastern Europe and Russia's opposition to it, Steinmeier argued:

In my opinion, the danger of a division of Europe and NATO, as well as Russia's lapse into old habits, would be a very high price to pay [for the deployment of the anti-missile shield]. German foreign policy aims to unite Europe, maintain the transatlantic partnership and the strategic partnership with Russia. A new Cold War between the USA and Russia, even if it is only fought with words, damages the interests of our country.¹⁶⁹

Steinmeier defined the partnership with Russia as "strategic" and juxtaposed it to the partnership with the US, thereby implying that, for Germany, it was of no less importance. Through perspectivation (signalled by the phrase "in my opinion"), he emphasised his opposition to confrontation with Russia on the issue of missile defence and argued that it would undermine German interests. In the attempt to

¹⁶⁸ Vladimir Putin's prepared remarks at 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy, *The Washington Post*, 12 February 2007.

¹⁶⁹ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's speech at the lower house of the German parliament (Bundestag), 21 March 2007, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2007/070321-Abruestung-Btg.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

reconcile Germany's alliance with the US and its partnership with Russia, Steinmeier proposed a "shared system, or at least joint efforts in the field of missile defence".¹⁷⁰

Steinmeier's desire to find an agreement with Russia on controversial issues of European security surfaced also on a few other important occasions, such as his speech at the German parliament on the recognition of Kosovo's independence in February 2008 ("We all would have wanted a solution [...] that took more into account Russia's position").¹⁷¹ Furthermore, from mid-May 2008 until the outbreak of war in the South Caucasus, Steinmeier's speeches on Russia were dominated by the launch of the German-Russian modernisation partnership, a policy initiative aimed at cooperation and promoting internal reforms in Russia (Spanger 2011: 655). After the election of apparently reform-oriented Dmitri Medvedev to the Russian presidency in March 2008, Steinmeier became the main advocate of the modernisation partnership. In a relevant speech held at the University of Yekaterinburg in May 2008, the German foreign minister argued:

Russia is and remains an indispensable partner for Germany and the EU, also for the shaping of tomorrow's world. We need your country [Russia] as partner for security and stability in Europe and beyond. We need each other for issues such as energy security, arms control or in the worldwide struggle against terrorism.¹⁷²

Through the discursive strategy of predication, Russia was qualified as "an indispensable partner" on a vast range of key European and global security issues. As this extract shows, Steinmeier used the modernisation partnership also to promote cooperation in security policy and reiterate Germany's consideration of Russia as an essential international partner. His views were echoed by chancellor Angela Merkel,

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's speech at the lower house of the German parliament (Bundestag), 20 February 2008, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2008/080220-Steinmeier-BT-Kosovo.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

¹⁷² Frank-Walter Steinmeier's speech at the Institute of International Relations of Yekaterinburg Ural University, 13 May 2008, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2008/080513-BM-Russland.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

who stressed that Russia was a partner on several occasions. Most significantly, she did so at the Bucharest NATO summit of April 2008, where relations with Moscow on the question of NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine were a highly divisive issue among member states.¹⁷³

As transpires from a speech held by state secretary Gernot Erler two months later at a conference in Berlin, Germany's opposition to granting Georgia a NATO membership action plan was motivated primarily by Georgia's unresolved conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia and "the particular consequences for European stability and security" which granting the action plan would have entailed.¹⁷⁴ The latter point was an implicit reference to the negative impact that accepting Georgia as a NATO member would have had on relations with Russia. Furthermore, on the eve of the Bucharest summit, state secretary for Europe Günter Gloser had anticipated that discussions on NATO enlargement would be difficult due to potential disagreements with Russia. Gloser's remarks emphasised that the EU had no alternative to the partnership with Russia, particularly in the energy sector, thereby strongly implying that a conflict with Moscow over NATO enlargement should be avoided.¹⁷⁵

During the August 2008 war and the ensuing crisis, the discourse on Russia as a key security partner was toned down but continued to be present in German leaders' speeches and policy decisions. On 15 August, while Russian troops were still operating on undisputed Georgian territory, Merkel and Medvedev concurred that dialogue with the US on the anti-missile shield should continue, despite the simultaneous US-Polish agreement to deploy the system without consulting

¹⁷³ Press release of the office of the Federal Chancellor on the NATO summit in Bucharest, 4 April 2008, <http://www.bundestkanzlerin.de/Content/EN/Reiseberichte/ro-nato-abschluss-pk.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

¹⁷⁴ Gernot Erler's speech at the opening of the conference "Security policy in the Black Sea area" in Berlin, 3 June 2008, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2008/080603-ErlerSchwarzmeer.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

¹⁷⁵ Günter Gloser's speech at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, 1 April 2008, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2008/080402-GloserStockholm.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

Russia.¹⁷⁶ In late August, in spite of tensions with Russia due to Moscow's unilateral recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Steinmeier returned to the issue of the anti-missile shield and criticised the US-Polish agreement on the grounds that it was ill-timed and could be misunderstood by Russia. Moreover, Steinmeier expressed his hope that "the debate [on the anti-missile shield] would not be disrupted by the conflict in Georgia".¹⁷⁷ In an interview with a mainstream German newspaper, *Welt am Sonntag*, the German foreign minister also spoke against suspending cooperation with Russia at the EU level and in the NATO-Russia Council.¹⁷⁸ As early as September 2008, Steinmeier returned fully to his pre-war discourse stressing the need of a partnership with Russia on security issues. At the opening of a conference of German and EU diplomats and parliamentarians at the German ministry of foreign affairs, he emphasised the need for "Russia's constructive contribution in the region [the South Caucasus], as a partner in shaping the European security and peace order and in tackling global challenges".¹⁷⁹

Steinmeier's statements in favour of cooperation with Russia were often accompanied by a resolute rejection of the contemporary media discourse on a new Cold War. In an interview with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on 27 August 2008, the day after Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Steinmeier stated:

I am appalled by those who, in the West and Russia, seem to wish a return to the cynical realities of the Cold War. I am disconcerted by the loss of historical memory about years that I remember very well and that saw the death of many. And I don't understand what leads some to make

¹⁷⁶ "Merkel redet Medwedew ins Gewissen", *Spiegel Online*, 15 August 2008, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/georgien-krise-merkel-redet-medwedew-ins-gewissen-a-572360.html> (accessed 30/5/2014).

¹⁷⁷ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 27 August 2008, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2008/080827-BM-Sueddeutsche.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

¹⁷⁸ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with *Welt am Sonntag*, 17 August 2008, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2008/080817-BM-WamS.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

¹⁷⁹ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's speech at the opening of the ambassadors' conference at the German foreign ministry, 8 September 2008, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2008/080908-Rede-BM-Boko-Eroeffnung.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

frivolous comparisons with historical situations such as Munich 1938 [the symbol of Western appeasement of Nazi Germany] or Sarajevo 1914 [the outbreak of the First World War]. It is clear that our conflicts are no longer guided by systemic differences and ideologies.¹⁸⁰

Steinmeier used the discursive strategy of perspectivation to convey his harsh personal criticism of a memory politics discourse that constructed similarities between the August 2008 crisis and some of the most tragic events of twentieth century European history. During the above-mentioned conference at the German foreign ministry in September 2008, Steinmeier argued (with the same emotionally-charged rhetoric) that Cold War times were “over once and for all. And therefore all the talk about the Cold War is just a rhetorical relict of past times”.¹⁸¹ To make his argument more compelling with the German public opinion, in a speech held in December 2008 Steinmeier emphasised the differences between German and European security in 2008 and during the Cold War:

There are no longer soldiers patrolling borders in Central Europe, no simulation games involving the use of tactical nuclear weapons in the Fulda gap [in Central Germany] [...] All those who inconsiderately talk of a new Cold War today seem to forget what the [Berlin] Wall and barbed wire, ideological rivalry and a nuclear arms race meant concretely.¹⁸²

The speech was held at an independent German foundation focusing on European politics, on the occasion of the thirty-seventh anniversary of Willy Brandt’s Nobel Peace Prize speech.¹⁸³ The commemoration provided Steinmeier with the

¹⁸⁰ Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s interview with *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 27 August 2008.

¹⁸¹ Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s speech at the opening of the ambassadors’ conference at the German foreign ministry, 8 September 2008.

¹⁸² Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s speech at the Heinz Schwarzkopf Foundation, 11 December 2008, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2008/081210-schwarzkopf.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

¹⁸³ A description of the Heinz Schwarzkopf Foundation is available on its website at <http://www.schwarzkopf-stiftung.de/area.3.Foundation.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

opportunity to praise Brandt's *Ostpolitik* and portray its approach to the Soviet Union as a model for cooperation with Russia. According to him, only this cooperative approach could lead to arms control and to the settlement of the frozen conflicts, which "cannot be resolved without Russia's constructive contribution".¹⁸⁴ By the time Steinmeier made these remarks, Barack Obama had been elected president of the United States (in November 2008) and had announced a reformulation of US relations with Russia, based on a cooperative approach. Hence, Steinmeier's discourse on treating Russia as a partner was also in tune with the new policy line of the White House. This further encouraged him to advocate the resumption of dialogue with Russia in forums that had been suspended after the August 2008 war, notably the EU-Russia summits and the NATO-Russia Council.¹⁸⁵

The military escalation of August 2008: mild criticism, no rash judgements

Although German leaders tended to see Russia predominantly as a security partner, a more critical discourse emerged during the August 2008 war. This discourse mildly criticised Russia's disproportionate use of force, the delay in the withdrawal of Russian troops after the ceasefire agreement and Moscow's unilateral recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. However, Merkel's and Steinmeier's criticism focused mostly on a few technical and legal issues and was not radical. In fact, they both advocated further talks with Russia to solve the crisis and were opposed to retaliatory measures that might lead to harsher confrontation. Furthermore, German leaders refused to put all the blame for the outbreak of war on Russia, which strikingly contrasted with the behaviour of their Polish and American counterparts and with the dominant Western media discourse (cf. Heinrich and Tanaev 2009).¹⁸⁶ In particular, Steinmeier's statements suggested that Georgians and South Ossetians shared responsibility for the crisis.

¹⁸⁴ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's speech at the Heinz Schwarzkopf Foundation, 11 December 2008.

¹⁸⁵ In the above-mentioned speech at the Heinz Schwarzkopf Foundation, Steinmeier praised Obama for his call to "overcome Cold War thinking" and "to build a partnership encompassing the whole [European] continent, including Russia". He also called for the resumption of meetings in the NATO-Russia Council and for cooperation with Russia on numerous global security issues.

¹⁸⁶ See next section of this chapter for the analysis of Polish leaders' discourses.

German leaders' stance towards Russia during August 2008 can be interpreted as a reflection of two essential constitutive elements of German national identity: the rejection of war as means to solve disputes and the support of multilateralism and international law (cf. Berger 1996, Bjola and Kornprobst 2007).¹⁸⁷ Preference for multilateralism and long-standing German perceptions of Russia as a key partner in European security also help understand Merkel's and Steinmeier's insistence on engaging Russia to achieve a negotiated solution of the crisis. Legality and political pragmatism are the *topoi* that link the key argument in this discourse (Russia's reaction to the crisis was disproportionate, but a solution can be found only through dialogue with Moscow) and its logical conclusion (talks with Russia have to continue).

The critical discourse on Russia was prominent in particular in the first public statements issued after the outbreak of war. On 15 August 2008, during a meeting with Russian president Dmitri Medvedev, Merkel defined Russia's military intervention as "partly disproportional" and claimed that Georgia's territorial integrity was a precondition for conflict resolution.¹⁸⁸ During her visit to Tbilisi two days later, the chancellor forcefully demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgian territory.¹⁸⁹ Merkel's arguments were echoed in a harsher tone in Steinmeier's interview with *Welt am Sonntag* on 17 August.

Georgia's territorial integrity remains the foundation of our [the EU's] policy [...] In our talks with the Russian side we have made very clear that, by bombing and sending troops to the core of Georgian territory, they have crossed a red line.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ See analysis of German identity in chapter 4.

¹⁸⁸ "Merkel redet Medwedew ins Gewissen", *Spiegel Online*, 15 August 2008.

¹⁸⁹ Press release of the office of the Federal Chancellor, 17 August 2008, http://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/EN/Reiseberichte/ge-merkel-tiflis_en.html (accessed 7/7/2013).

¹⁹⁰ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with *Welt am Sonntag*, 17 August 2008.

In the interview, Steinmeier argued that Germany's position was based on international law. He also referred to international norms in order to justify his call for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgian territory. Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia on 26 August was perceived as another violation of international law, which led to a new exacerbation in German discourses. Shortly after Russia announced its recognition of the two separatist entities, Merkel defined the decision as "completely unacceptable and contrary to international law".¹⁹¹ The day after, in an interview with *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Steinmeier called the Russian decision "wrong", "dangerous", "very regrettable" and "in no way acceptable".¹⁹²

Despite these occasional peaks of tensions, German discourses during the conflict were mostly balanced and never took an anti-Russian tone. Contrary to the dominant trend in Western media, German leaders did not accuse Russia of starting the conflict. In the above-mentioned interview with *Welt am Sonntag*, Steinmeier stated that the conflict had roots that reached far back into the past and that "making a chronology of the escalation and blaming either side" was not his task.¹⁹³ Moreover, he suggested that, by July 2008 (when he went on a trip to Abkhazia to mediate between the parties), conflict appeared inevitable.

In Abkhazia I had to witness how uncompromising and irreconcilable the parties to the conflict were. For this reason, I did not delude myself about the explosiveness of the situation, even if it was not possible to predict that the outbreak of war would take place in South Ossetia.¹⁹⁴

Steinmeier attempted to make his claim about the likelihood of a military escalation more compelling through perspectivation, which is highlighted by the first-person narrative and the ensuing subjective description of the situation on the ground. By

¹⁹¹ Press release of the office of the Federal Chancellor, 26 August 2008, http://www.bundestkanzlerin.de/Content/EN/Reiseberichte/ee-lt-merkel-estland_en.html (accessed 7/7/2013).

¹⁹² Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 27 August 2008.

¹⁹³ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with *Welt am Sonntag*, 17 August 2008.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

emphasising that the parties were “uncompromising” and “irreconcilable”, Steinmeier also conveyed the idea that responsibility for the crisis was shared. This view was reiterated more clearly in his interview with *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on 27 August 2008.

Attributions of responsibility are certainly not a key issue now, but we should base our assessments on the fact that the Georgian attack of Tskhinvali was preceded by days of mutual provocations between Georgians and South Ossetians.¹⁹⁵

In this passage, Steinmeier suggested that responsibility for the outbreak of war is shared by Georgians and South Ossetians, but he also implied that the Georgian attack on Tskhinvali was to blame for the start of full-scale military operations. Russians were neither accused of having started the war, nor of having played a role in the “mutual provocations”. This interpretation of events was functional to alleviating tensions with Russia and returning to the negotiating table, which appeared as the main objective of German diplomacy during the August 2008 crisis. Even in the tensest phase of the crisis, Steinmeier argued that “a solution of the conflict is hardly possible without Russia. We must therefore keep all communication channels open [...]”.¹⁹⁶ In the statements made immediately after Russia’s recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Merkel continued to advocate “direct talks” with Medvedev, while Steinmeier hoped for “joint efforts [together with Russian leaders] that will allow us to return to normality in our relationship”.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s interview with *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 27 August 2008.

¹⁹⁶ Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s interview with *Rheinische Post*, 23 August 2008, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2008/080823-BM-RheinPost.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

¹⁹⁷ Press release of the office of the Federal Chancellor, 26 August 2008; Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s interview with *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 27 August 2008.

Negotiating with Russia: the EU as a successful mediator

Following the August 2008 crisis, German leaders argued that the EU had proved successful in crisis management and that, based on this positive experience, it should play a key role in enhancing relations with Russia and the Eastern neighbourhood. This discourse reflected German leaders' tendency to support EU policies and multilateralism, which is a well-established trait of Germany's foreign policy identity. Europeanism, meant as the commitment to EU values and policies, is the *topos* linking the key argument (the EU proved successful in negotiations with Russia and in crisis management in Georgia) with its logical conclusion (EU policies towards Russia and the Eastern neighbourhood should be enhanced).

In German leaders' speeches, the claim that the EU had been successful at mediating in the Russian-Georgian crisis appeared as early as mid-August 2008. In his interview with *Welt am Sonntag* on 17 August 2008, Steinmeier argued:

Europe can achieve something. The mediation of [French and European Council] president Sarkozy and of his foreign minister Kouchner, supported by other EU states including Germany, has contributed to the cessation of hostilities [...] From the phone calls that I made after the outbreak of war, I know how difficult it was to stop the fighting. Therefore we should not underestimate the successful mediation of the French Council presidency and of the EU.¹⁹⁸

Through perspectivation ("From the phone calls that I made [...] I know how difficult it was"), Steinmeier emphasised the significance of Sarkozy's mediation, which he framed as a joint EU effort, rather than as a success of the French president.¹⁹⁹ Further on in the interview, he underplayed internal divisions in the EU

¹⁹⁸ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with *Welt am Sonntag*, 17 August 2008.

¹⁹⁹ A debate exists on whether the achievements of Sarkozy's mediation should be attributed to his authority as French president, rather than to his simultaneous clout as president of the European Council. For instance, Whitman and Wolff (2010: 10) suggest that Sarkozy's achievements were largely due to his being "accepted as equal" by Russian leaders on the basis of his national political role and to the support he received from the "well-experienced and well-resourced [French] foreign

during the crisis and stressed the “common positions” on which all member states converged, namely the support of Georgia’s territorial integrity and the decision to contribute to stabilisation and humanitarian relief efforts. In his interview with *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on 27 August, Steinmeier bluntly rejected the assertion that the EU was helpless and deeply divided over the crisis, calling such claims “superficial” and “unjustified”.²⁰⁰ His views on this issue were shared by Angela Merkel. Following the extraordinary European Council on 1 September 2008, Merkel claimed that the EU had sent out “a signal of unity and resoluteness” regarding the Caucasus crisis and defined the EU-brokered six-point plan “an important document” on which to build future endeavours.²⁰¹

Based on these positive assessments of the EU’s role in the crisis, both Merkel and Steinmeier advocated the enhancement of EU policies towards the conflict zone and Russia. In August 2008, shortly after the ceasefire agreement, Merkel argued that there were “good reasons to step up the EU’s neighbourhood policy with Georgia”.²⁰² A few days later, she claimed that the EU should do all it could to support Georgia through its “policy of neighbourliness”.²⁰³ On 8 September 2008, at a conference of German and EU diplomats and parliamentarians at the German ministry of foreign affairs, Steinmeier argued that the EU was ready to take part in conflict management and monitoring operations. He also advocated the intensification of EU policies in the Eastern neighbourhood in order to create “a European space of security, stability and prosperity”.²⁰⁴ In his speeches of late 2008, Steinmeier encouraged the formulation of the EU’s Eastern Partnership, a policy framework that aimed to intensify relations with neighbouring European post-Soviet

office staff”. They also claim that the EU played an important role mostly because the Russian-Georgian war coincided with the presidency of France, an “internationally heavyweight incumbent”.

²⁰⁰ Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s interview with *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 27 August 2008.

²⁰¹ Press release of the office of the Federal Chancellor, 1 September, http://www.bundestkanzlerin.de/Content/EN/Reiseberichte/be-kaukasus-gipfel-br%C3%BCssel_en.html (accessed 7/7/2013).

²⁰² Press release of the office of the Federal Chancellor, 17 August 2008.

²⁰³ Press release of the office of the Federal Chancellor, 26 August 2008.

²⁰⁴ Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s speech at the opening of the ambassadors’ conference at the German foreign ministry, 8 September 2008.

countries.²⁰⁵ Furthermore, he argued that the EU should continue to engage Russia in order to negotiate a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (the previous agreement expired in 2007) and jointly build security and stability in Europe.²⁰⁶

The long shadow of history challenging pragmatism: Polish discourses

Polish foreign policy leaders engaged differently in the debate concerning the Russian-Georgian war. President Lech Kaczynski was undoubtedly the most vocal in condemning Russia's policies and expressing solidarity with the Georgian government. Prior to the August 2008 escalation, Kaczynski established a very close relationship with the Georgian leadership and became one of the staunchest supporters of Georgia's integration in NATO and EU structures. During the August 2008 war, while military operations were still taking place, Kaczynski travelled to Tbilisi and gave a deeply emotional speech attacking Russia during a rally in support of Saakashvili. He maintained the same stance after the crisis was over, travelling to Georgia and meeting Georgian leaders on several occasions in late 2008 and early 2009.²⁰⁷

Although their involvement in public debates was less emotional and militant than Lech Kaczynski's, prime minister Donald Tusk and foreign minister Radoslaw Sikorski also issued statements on the Russian-Georgian war, both during and after the August 2008 crisis. Furthermore, on 20 August 2008 Sikorski signed an agreement with US secretary of state Condoleeza Rice concerning the deployment of elements of the US anti-missile shield on Polish territory. As the document was

²⁰⁵ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's speech at the Heinz Schwarzkopf Foundation, 11 December 2008; Frank-Walter Steinmeier's speech at the lower house of the German parliament, 18 December 2008, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2008/081218-BM-BundestagER.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²⁰⁶ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with *Welt am Sonntag*, 17 August 2008; Frank-Walter Steinmeier's speech at the Heinz Schwarzkopf Foundation, 11 December 2008.

²⁰⁷ All official meetings between Kaczynski and Georgian leaders are reported on the Polish presidential website, <http://www.president.pl/en/archive/news-archive/news-2009/> (accessed 7/7/2013).

signed during the Russian-Georgian crisis and contributed to rising tensions with Russia, the debates on the anti-missile shield and the war in the Caucasus became intertwined. Sikorski had to engage with press speculations according to which the signing of the agreement was a way of retaliating against the Russian military campaign in Georgia.²⁰⁸

The analysis of Polish leaders' statements highlights two dominant discourses concerning Russia with regard to the August 2008 war. The first discourse appeared in Lech Kaczynski's speeches and emphasised Russia's alleged role as aggressor. Memory politics is central to this discourse, as Kaczynski described Russia's policies during the August 2008 crisis as a continuation of Tsarist and Soviet imperialism. In addition, he advocated greater NATO and EU involvement in the crisis and the adoption of a tougher stance against Russia. The second discourse was found in Tusk's and Sikorski's speeches and can be understood better within the context of the Polish government's attempts to improve relations with Russia after the fall of 2007. Also this discourse was critical of Russia, but it made a more moderate use of memory politics (mostly limited to a few statements by Sikorski in August 2008) and was framed in a less emotional rhetoric. It advocated a pragmatic approach to Russia and, particularly when the August 2008 crisis subsided, it highlighted improvements in Polish-Russian relations after the election of Tusk's government.

Lech Kaczynski: confronting the imperialist aggressor

As argued, Kaczynski's speeches during and after the August 2008 war were virulently anti-Russian. Kaczynski claimed that Russian political elites and foreign policy were inherently imperialist and aggressive as a result of the country's long imperial history. Hence, he put all the blame for the outbreak of war on Russia and sided unequivocally with Saakashvili's government. In most of Kaczynski's speeches, the argument for Russia's culpability in the August 2008 crisis was based

²⁰⁸ Cf. Sikorski's interview with *The Telegraph*, 20 August 2008, http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/harrydequetteville/4959586/Poland_and_the_Missile_Shield_a_n_interview_with_Radek_Sikorski/ (accessed 7/7/2013).

entirely on memory politics, notably the construction of parallels with Russia's imperial history. Occasionally, violations of international law were also cited in order to support the argument. History and legality are the *topoi* connecting Kaczynski's main argument (Russia's imperialism and aggressiveness are to blame for the outbreak of the August 2008 war) with its logical conclusion that the European Union and the United States should take a tougher stance against Russia.

The discourse propagated by Kaczynski reflected traditional Polish perceptions of Russia as an imperialist country, which became deeply engrained in Polish national identity as a result of the Tsarist occupation, the wars with the Soviet Union and Poland's inclusion in the Soviet sphere of influence during the Cold War. Kaczynski's occasional references to differences in values between Russia and the rest of Europe resonated with long-standing Polish discourses that describe Russia as oriental, less civilised and hence morally incompatible with European civilisation. Furthermore, his calls for EU and particularly NATO actions to confront Russia reflected the strong Euro-Atlantic dimension of post-communist Poland's foreign policy identity. On the other hand, Kaczynski's disappointment at the alleged failure of some EU member states to support Georgia can be understood within the context of the historical discourse on Poland's unreciprocated commitment to the Western cause.²⁰⁹

The shared experience of conflict with Russia and a strong support for Georgia's NATO and EU integration were the foundations on which Kaczynski's partnership with Saakashvili was built before the August 2008 crisis. This emerged particularly in a speech Kaczynski held in early March 2008, during Saakashvili's official visit to Warsaw.

The Polish and the Georgian nations have a diverse history in the sense that the Georgian nation was in existence for a longer time. In a sense, our histories are similar, though, for both nations had to fight a tough fight for their independence. Both at one time fell victim to Russian imperialism. This happened more or less at the same time. Both rebelled.

²⁰⁹ See chapter 4.

[...] And then, the time has come when independence could be once more regained, after years of struggle and vicissitudes, when in both countries the striving for freedom finally prevailed. And this has become a platform for very close cooperation.²¹⁰

Russia was portrayed in unambiguously negative terms: imperialist, oppressive, opposing the “striving for freedom” in Poland and Georgia. The construction of a common experience of “falling victim to Russian imperialism”, rebelling against it and finally regaining independence was considered so significant as to constitute “a platform for very close cooperation” in the present. In the following sentences, Kaczynski explained the concrete focus of this cooperation.

I am confident that Georgia has entered the finishing straight as far as NATO membership is concerned. I also think that the EU perspective will open up soon. Be assured that in four weeks’ time in Bucharest [...] you will be able to take advantage of our support. We are doing this in the name of the old maxim which was coined in the nineteenth century: “For your freedom and for ours!”

Kaczynski clarified the rationale of his promise to support Georgia’s NATO and EU integration with a nineteenth century motto that Polish romantic nationalists used in their fight against the occupying Tsarist army.²¹¹ The historical parallel suggests that Kaczynski supported Saakashvili’s bid for NATO and EU membership in order to protect both Poland’s and Georgia’s freedom from Russian imperialism. This logic was therefore based on the assumption that Russia still threatened Polish and Georgian independence.

At the NATO summit in Bucharest (2-4 April 2008), Kaczynski upheld his pledge to support Georgia’s application for NATO membership, in spite of strong German,

²¹⁰ Lech Kaczynski’s press conference on 3 March 2008, <http://www.president.pl/en/archive/news-archive/news-2008/art.18.poland-supports-georgias-membership-of-nato.html> (accessed 7/7/2013). Minor grammar mistakes in the original English translation were corrected, without altering significantly either the style or the content of Kaczynski’s statement.

²¹¹ See chapter 4.

French and Russian opposition. In an open letter published on the *Financial Times* a few days before the start of the summit, Kaczynski went as far as claiming that leaving Georgia and Ukraine out of NATO “might put at risk the construction of a stable European security system”.²¹² Furthermore, in a press conference held during the summit, Kaczynski argued that “for Poland the central issue is that of [the NATO membership of] Ukraine and Georgia”.²¹³

As tensions in Georgia’s separatist republics increased in the spring and early summer of 2008, Kaczynski continued to give unrelenting support to Saakashvili and held Russia uniquely responsible for the deterioration of the situation on the ground. In mid-July, he publicly appealed to Russia “to refrain from measures which could exacerbate the tension and might imperil the achievement of an agreement”.²¹⁴ It is therefore no surprise that, when full-scale war started on 8 August, Kaczynski blamed Russia alone and openly sided with Saakashvili. In his speech at the political rally in Tbilisi, on 12 August 2008, Kaczynski argued that the war in Georgia exposed Russia’s desire to reconstruct the Soviet empire.

It is the first instance in a long time that our neighbours from the North [...] have shown the face that we used to know all too well for centuries. Those neighbours believe that the nations surrounding them should be subordinated to them [...] The country I have in mind is Russia. That country believes that the old days of an empire that collapsed some twenty years ago are now about to return, that domination will be again the distinctive feature of the region.²¹⁵

²¹² Lech Kaczynski, “NATO has a duty to embrace Ukraine and Georgia”, *Financial Times*, 31 March 2008, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d7aa03ba-feba-11dc-9e04-000077b07658.html#axzz2akelFTBj> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²¹³ Lech Kaczynski’s press conference statements, 3 April 2008, <http://www.president.pl/en/archive/news-archive/news-2008/art,89,president-of-rp-participates-in-nato-summit-in-bucharest.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²¹⁴ Statement of the chancellery of the president of the Republic of Poland in connection with the situation in Georgia, 12 July 2008, <http://www.president.pl/en/archive/news-archive/news-2008/art,132,statement-of-the-chancellery-of-the-president-of-rp-in-connection-with-the-situation-in-georgia.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²¹⁵ Lech Kaczynski’s speech in Tbilisi, 12 August 2008, <http://www.president.pl/en/archive/news-archive/news-2008/art,119,president-of-rp-sets-off-to-visit-georgia.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

Through perspectivation and the use of memory politics, Russia was portrayed as imperialist and aggressive. Kaczynski's condemnation of Russia was not limited to the decisions of its political elites, but concerned the country as a whole. Russia was personified (it had a "face", it "believes") and treated as a malevolent entity poised to subjugate neighbouring nations, just like the Soviet Union did until the end of the Cold War.

Kaczynski used memory politics and references to Russia's imperial past in numerous other speeches concerning the August 2008 crisis. On 24 September 2008, in his address at the conference of the Foreign Policy Association (a US-based, non-profit organisation focusing on foreign policy issues), Kaczynski argued that Russia's desire to reconstruct its empire had never subsided.

This imperial tendency started to revive slowly and in various forms [...] The fundamental reason, I believe, is something that is ingrained in the tradition of a given nation and state, in the tradition of relations between the rulers and the people; this is a question of paramount importance in Russia [...] My point is that the revival of the imperial tendency was a natural phenomenon in a sense, a natural striving of the Russian elite.²¹⁶

According to Kaczynski, Russia and its elites were inherently imperialist as a result of the country's history. Imperialism was "ingrained" in Russian tradition, hence "the revival of the imperial tendency" (of which Russia's war in Georgia is "the best example"²¹⁷) was "a natural phenomenon". He also emphasised the alleged peculiarity of Russian imperialism, which according to him was the result of "national customs often very different from our European customs".²¹⁸ Through this

²¹⁶ Lech Kaczynski's speech at the conference of the Foreign Policy Association, 24 September 2008, <http://www.president.pl/en/archive/news-archive/news-2008/art,93,nato-is-an-exporter-of-stability-and-peace.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²¹⁷ Lech Kaczynski's statements at a press conference in Tbilisi, 23 November 2008, <http://www.president.pl/en/archive/news-archive/news-2008/art,163,the-president-of-the-republic-of-poland-visits-georgia.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²¹⁸ Lech Kaczynski's speech at the conference of the Foreign Policy Association, 24 September 2008.

categorisation of Russia as non-European and opposed to the West, Kaczynski went as far as to frame the Russian-Georgian war in terms of a clash of civilisations.

[...] I can say that, in Georgia, Russia showed the face it wanted to show. It was not a coincidence. ‘We are powerful, and you are helpless’. Who are the ‘you’? ‘You’ stands for the West as a whole.²¹⁹

Accordingly, Kaczynski believed that the Russo-Georgian war was only the first episode of a larger geopolitical clash between Russian imperialism and the West.

What is the meaning of that [the violation of Georgia’s territorial integrity] in geopolitical terms? Namely, for Europe, as well as for the United States, it is not Georgian territory - for Georgia merely serves as a pathway – but today definitely Azerbaijan, and tomorrow Kazakhstan perhaps, and the same is true of Turkmenistan [...]²²⁰

For Kaczynski, taking a tougher stance and confronting Russia was the only way for the EU and NATO to stop this expected succession of crises. This emerged in his speech at the rally in Tbilisi on 12 August 2008, where he claimed that the purpose of his perilous trip to war-ridden Georgia was “to make the world react even stronger [against Russian actions], the European Union and NATO in particular”.²²¹ Furthermore, in his address at the Foreign Policy Association conference, Kaczynski argued that after the Russian-Georgian war “NATO should return to defence objectives”, namely focus on the military defence of its member states from foreign aggressors. In this context, he welcomed the signature of the agreement on the anti-missile shield between Poland and the United States as “a major victory” of his foreign policy line. He also stated that, most likely, Georgia would not have been

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ Lech Kaczynski’s speech in Tbilisi, 12 August 2008.

attacked by Russia if it had been granted a NATO membership action plan at the Bucharest summit in April 2008.²²²

Within this discourse advocating a tougher stance towards Russia, Kaczynski often criticised EU and NATO countries that supported a more cooperative approach. In his remarks at the Foreign Policy Association, he lamented that some European states “display an attitude vis-à-vis the existing threats that I would describe as extremely moderate; outright extremely soft”.²²³ In the speech held in Tbilisi in August 2008, Kaczynski’s criticism of these states echoed the Polish identity discourse on Poland’s unreciprocated commitment to Western values.

If the values that are to be the foundation of Europe are to have any practical significance at all, we can defy [we have to defy Russia]. If those values are to matter at all, we must be here; the whole of Europe must be present here. Among us, there are four NATO members [...] There is Mr President Sarkozy, who at present presides over the European Union. But there should be 27 of us here.²²⁴

Besides Poland, the four NATO members which Kaczynski referred to included Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, three former Soviet republics where past conflicts with Russia have influenced profoundly the construction of national memory and identity (cf. Grigas 2013).

While parallels with Russia’s imperial past and aggressive foreign policy provided the main rationale of Kaczynski’s discourse, his criticism of Russian actions during the August 2008 crisis was occasionally substantiated also with references to international law. In his statement condemning Russia’s recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, for instance, he argued that the “unprecedented aggression by the Russian Federation against the independent Georgian state” was “entirely incompatible with international law” and hence “cannot fail to elicit a resolute

²²² Lech Kaczynski’s speech at the conference of the Foreign Policy Association, 24 September 2008.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Lech Kaczynski’s speech in Tbilisi, 12 August 2008.

response from the states of the free world”.²²⁵ Similarly, in his speech before the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2008, Kaczynski condemned the Russian intervention in Georgia on the grounds that “fundamental principles of international law, namely the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity, were infringed”.²²⁶

However, memory politics played a role also in these speeches, even if in a more subtle way. For instance, phrases such as “the states of the free world” were borrowed from Western Cold War rhetoric and implied that Russia belonged to the ‘unfree’, ‘undemocratic world’, just like the Soviet Union during the Cold War (cf. Neumann 1998:103). By the same token, in the aforementioned speech at the UN General Assembly Kaczynski argued that Russia’s violation of another country’s territorial integrity was unacceptable because this was “the principle against which the United Nations was established 63 years ago as a consequence of World War II”. Following his reasoning, Russia’s intervention in Georgia was reminiscent of the power politics that characterised Europe until the Second World War and posed “a problem for every country which struggles [...] with the superiority of its more powerful neighbours”.²²⁷

Sikorski and Tusk: a rocky path to pragmatism in relations with Russia

The reactions of the Polish prime minister and the foreign minister to developments in Georgia in August 2008 differed significantly from Kaczynski’s, in both tone and content. Although both Tusk and Sikorski were critical of Russia’s actions, they developed a discourse that did not preclude cooperation with Moscow. This discourse can be understood within the context of Tusk’s attempt to improve Poland’s relations with Russia after his election in the fall of 2007. It emphasised

²²⁵ Lech Kaczynski’s statement on Russia’s recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, 26 August 2008, <http://www.president.pl/en/archive/news-archive/news-2008/art,109,statement-by-president-of-rp.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²²⁶ Lech Kaczynski’s speech at the General Assembly of the United Nations, 23 September 2008, <http://www.president.pl/en/archive/news-archive/news-2008/art,95,63rd-session-of-the-un-general-assembly-in-new-york.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

that, thanks to the pragmatic approach of his government, relations between Poland and Russia improved in the months before the start of the Russian-Georgian war, particularly in the commercial field. Assessments of the war's origins were more balanced and the continuation of a pragmatic engagement with Russia was advocated. Occasionally, this discourse coexisted with the use of memory politics and harsh criticism of Russia's foreign policy, notably in Sikorski's speeches. However, the core of the discourse stressed that, due to Russia's economic and political importance, Poland should continue its attempts to improve relations, also while maintaining a critical attitude towards some of Russia's foreign policy decisions. Political pragmatism and economic convenience are the *topoi* linking the main argument (in spite of the war in Georgia, Russia is an important actor for Poland and relations with it can improve) to its logical conclusion (Poland should continue to engage Russia while maintaining a critical stance towards its foreign policy).

Within this discourse, the focus on engaging Russia reflected the government's efforts to forge a new foreign policy identity where traditional Polish perceptions of Russia and Germany as Poland's historical enemies were downplayed. On the other hand, the positive potential of engagement and cooperation was emphasised. Sikorski occasionally made use of memory politics that reflected deep-seated Polish fears of Russia. However, criticism of Russian policies was based mostly on substantive arguments (violation of territorial integrity, disproportionate use of force), rather than on the construction of historical parallels.

Tusk's reluctance to use historical arguments in his speeches concerning relations with Russia emerged already during his first official visit to Moscow. The visit took place in February 2008, only three months after his appointment as prime minister, and was a clear attempt to restart dialogue with the Kremlin after the period of frosty relations under the government of Jaroslaw Kaczynski. In an interview with the Russian newspaper *Novaya Gazeta* held shortly after a meeting with the Russian

leadership, Tusk argued that he preferred not to focus on the history of Polish-Russian relations but rather to “overcome its consequences”.²²⁸ In addition, he stated:

It's important to solve the difficult issues of our [Poland's and Russia's] neighbourhood in the spirit of truth, but without excessive and exaggerated emotions from both sides. History must not be used in the political struggle, as it causes more problems mainly.

Accordingly, Tusk's replies in the interview focused exclusively on current issues, which were analysed in pragmatic terms and with a clear intention of minimising contentious issues. Disputes over the price of Russian gas were described as the logical result of different market interests (hence Tusk claimed that “No drama should be made out of it!”), while on the issue of the anti-missile shield Tusk stated that Poland was “not interested in anything that could be meant to be anti-Russian”. Furthermore, he stressed the improvement of relations with Russia during his first months in office, focusing particularly on substantive issues such as the resolution of trade disputes.

Tusk's discourse was echoed in Sikorski's statements in the spring of 2008. In an interview with the BBC television programme *Hardtalk*, Sikorski claimed that Polish-Russian relations had improved during his time in office. He explained that Poland was “dealing with Russia pragmatically, because it's an important country and a major trade partner, we [Poland] have 17 billions of trade with Russia”. Like Tusk, Sikorski emphasised that relations with Russia should be guided by pragmatism, rather than by historical controversies: “We [Poland and Russia] are neighbours and there is plenty of history between us, but it's a pragmatic relationship”.²²⁹

²²⁸ Donald Tusk's interview with *Novaya Gazeta*, 19 February 2008, <http://en.novayagazeta.ru/politics/8522.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²²⁹ Transcript of Radoslaw Sikorski's interview at BBC television programme *Hardtalk*, 30 April 2008.

The outbreak of the August 2008 war constituted a major challenge for Tusk's and Sikorski's discourse advocating a pragmatic relationship with Russia. The Russian military intervention in Georgia reawakened deep-seated fears of Russia among the Polish public opinion and caused a change of attitudes regarding security relations with Russia.²³⁰ In particular, the fear of future Russian military operations against Poland increased, together with the support for the deployment of the anti-missile shield and US troops on Polish territory, which had previously encountered much opposition due to the risk of undermining relations with Russia. Confronted with this change of attitudes, Sikorski attempted to hold to the discourse emphasising pragmatism, but occasionally slipped into arguments that show the enduring relevance of memory politics and wariness of Russia in his foreign policy thinking.

In an interview with the British newspaper *Telegraph* on 20 August 2008, Sikorski gave a much more balanced assessment of the war's origins than Kaczynski, claiming that "Georgia allowed itself to be provoked" and that the "Russian response" (implying that Russia did not start the escalation) had been "disproportionate".²³¹ He also stated that the Polish decision to announce the agreement on the deployment of the anti-missile shield during the Georgian crisis "had nothing to do with [developments in] Georgia" and was not targeted against Russia. However, in the same interview Sikorski argued that Russian military operations in Georgia were "reminiscent of things we hoped belonged to the past". He also used memory politics, particularly references to the Nazi-Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939, to justify his demands for additional US military presence and weapons on Polish territory.

A similar combination of pragmatism and occasional slips into memory politics can be detected in other speeches given by Sikorski in the months after the August 2008

²³⁰ Nicholas Kulish, "Georgian crisis brings attitude change to a flush in Poland", *The New York Times*, 21 August 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/21/world/europe/21poland.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 (accessed 30/5/2014).

²³¹ Radoslaw Sikorski's interview with *Telegraph*, 20 August 2008, http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/harrydequetteville/4959586/Poland_and_the_Missile_Shield_a_n_interview_with_Radek_Sikorski/ (accessed 7/7/2013).

war. In November 2008, during his address at the Atlantic Council (a US-based think tank focusing on transatlantic issues) he argued:

Poland had difficult, sometimes very painful relations with Russia in the past, but we don't want confrontation with our neighbours. The government of Donald Tusk has restarted pragmatic dialogue with Russian authorities [...]. I have already visited Moscow twice. Warsaw is the first NATO capital visited by the Russian foreign minister after the war in Georgia. We had good, frank discussions [...] In fact, Poland is the last country on earth that wants a return of the age of East-West confrontation [...] On the contrary, we would like to see Russia as a partner.²³²

In these remarks, Sikorski reiterated unequivocally the pragmatic foreign policy approach to Russia that Poland had developed before the August 2008 war. Russia was associated with a positive semantic field (“neighbours”, “partner”) and portrayed as a country with which it was possible to have “good, frank discussions”. Sikorski emphasised his commitment to improving relations with Russia through perspectivation, which highlighted both his personal involvement in the diplomatic efforts (“I have already visited Moscow twice”) and his desire to build a partnership with Moscow (“we don't want confrontation”, “we would like to see Russia as a partner”). This approach is all the more remarkable if compared with Kaczynski's contemporary speeches, which advocated confrontation with Moscow by stirring traditional Polish fears of Russia. However, Sikorski made occasional use of memory politics also in his talk at the Atlantic Council, particularly when he compared Russia's justification for its intervention in Georgia with the rationale the Soviet Union had provided for its invasion of Poland in 1939. Furthermore, in the same speech he accused Russia of attempting to undermine European security and argued that NATO should improve its defence capabilities as a result of “Russian tanks rolling into Georgia”.

²³² Radoslaw Sikorski's speech at the Atlantic Council, 19 November 2008, http://www.acus.org/event_blog/polish-foreign-minister-radoslaw-sikorski-talks-council/transcript (accessed 7/7/2013).

Tusk also disapproved of Russia's actions in Georgia, but his criticism concerned exclusively substantive, contemporary policy issues. For instance, in his interview with the German daily *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung* in early September 2008, Tusk focused primarily on questions concerning the EU's role in the August 2008 crisis and the presence of Russian troops in Georgia.²³³ No significant use of memory politics was made. Russia was criticised mostly on technical grounds concerning the withdrawal of its army from the conflict area. As the crisis subsided, Tusk reframed his criticism within a narrative arguing that relations with Russia might improve through a pragmatic approach, but only after a long and uneasy process. This narrative emerged clearly in an interview with the *Financial Times* in December 2008.

We showed a lot of good will and Russia also appeared interested in improving ties with Poland [...] My meetings with Putin and Medvedev showed a good direction. However, the crisis in the Caucasus definitely showed that this process will not be easy [...]²³⁴

In spite of these expected difficulties, Tusk claimed that he saw Russia as “a potentially positive partner for Poland and the EU” and defended his pragmatic approach to relations with Moscow, arguing that it corresponded to the expectations of Poland's EU partners.

I get the impression from European capitals that there is a clear expectation that Poland play the role of a leader in the positive change of European-Russian relations, and that is the policy we are trying to follow. We don't have any particular illusions about Russia and I think we see her rationally. I am one of the politicians who does not have an anti-

²³³ Donald Tusk's interview with *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung*, 6 September 2009, <http://www.noz.de/deutschland-und-welt/politik/20866622/ukraine-braucht-von-eu-klare-perspektive> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²³⁴ Donald Tusk's interview with the *Financial Times*, 8 December 2008, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1eb81238-c49f-11dd-8124-000077b07658.s01=1.html> (accessed 7/7/2013).

Russian obsession. In Brussels and in many European capitals, this change in Warsaw's approach was treated very well, even with relief.²³⁵

Hence, Tusk suggested that his reformulation of Poland's policy towards Russia had allowed the country to be considered as a leader in steering the Union's relations with Moscow. Remarkably, as is implied by his reasoning, this could only be achieved by developing a new foreign policy approach that downplayed long-standing Polish fears of Russia, which Tusk critically labelled as "anti-Russian obsession".

Finnish discourses: Russia's comeback, challenge or a new partnership?

The August 2008 crisis took place during Finland's chairmanship of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). As the OSCE is the main pan-European security organisation of which both Russia and Georgia are members, Finnish foreign minister and OSCE chairman Alexander Stubb felt the urge to take the initiative and seek a mediated solution to the crisis.²³⁶ He travelled to both Georgia and Russia and held negotiations with the leaders of both countries. Among Finland's top foreign policy makers, he was the most active contributor to the debate on the August 2008 crisis. His predecessor Ilkka Kanerva (in office until April 2008), prime minister Matti Vanhanen and president Tarja Halonen also participated in the public debate, but featured less prominently than Stubb in the media.

Two main discourses emerged from the analysis of Finnish foreign policy makers' statements on the Russian-Georgian war and contemporary security relations with Russia. The first discourse emphasised Russia's return to the role of key actor in

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ As he wrote in an article published on his personal website in October 2008, "Finland happens to hold the presidency of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). This meant that we had to be involved on the ground [during the August 2008 crisis]", Alexander Stubb, "Georgia on my mind", October 2008, <http://www.alexstubb.com/artikkelit/2008-10%20BW%20Stubb%20Georgia.pdf> (accessed 7/7/2013).

European security. Russia's foreign policy was generally described as assertive and at times even militaristic, hence posing a challenge for Finland. Accordingly, the discourse stressed the necessity to engage Russia in order to defuse tensions. This narrative emerged also in texts preceding the outbreak of the Russian-Georgian war, but it became more prominent during the August 2008 crisis.

The second discourse highlighted Russia's role as a partner for Finland and the EU. Before the outbreak of war, the second discourse coexisted with the first. It lost momentum during the August 2008 crisis but became dominant again in the final months of 2008, when top Finnish foreign policy makers responded positively to highly controversial Russian requests to reform the European security system.²³⁷ In both discourses, neither Russia nor Georgia were explicitly blamed for the outbreak of the August 2008 war. Finnish leaders' speeches focused on supporting diplomatic efforts with both belligerents and on the need to alleviate the humanitarian crisis, without delving into the contentious debate concerning responsibilities for the conflict.

Russia's assertiveness and military comeback: engagement as the only option for Finland

As argued, the first of the two discourses introduced above emphasised Russia's military revival under Putin and the assertiveness of its foreign policy. Confronted with this scenario, Finnish foreign policy leaders claimed that there was no alternative to engagement and cooperation with Russia. Foreign ministers Ilkka Kanerva and Alexander Stubb were the main proponents of this discourse, which was dominant from the early months of 2008 until the end of August 2008. Danger, notably the perception of a potential threat emanating from Russia, and political pragmatism are the *topoi* linking the main argument (Russia's foreign policy is assertive and constitutes a challenge for Finland) to its conclusion (Finland should

²³⁷ Russian proposals for a new European security architecture are described in Zagorski (2009). Briefly, they advocated a new legally-binding security treaty enhancing the role of the UN Security Council (where Russia has veto power) in European security issues.

engage Russia). This discourse can be interpreted and understood through the prism of Finnish national identity, where Russia has been constructed both as the source of Finland's main "security deficit" and as an unavoidable actor in the security field.

The narrative highlighting the assertiveness of Russia's foreign policy was already present in speeches held in the months preceding the outbreak of the Russian-Georgian war. In February 2008, in his remarks at the Woodrow Wilson International Center (a prominent think tank based in Washington), Kanerva argued:

Today, Russia is much more active in foreign policy and seeks to position itself as a superpower – not only regionally but more globally, too. Moscow is pursuing its interests with determination and Russia's military posture has become more active also in our region.²³⁸

The statement that Russia's military posture had become more active also in Finland's neighbourhood reflected a perception of danger for Finnish security, to which Kanerva responded by advocating cooperation with Russia.

Even if it is difficult at times, I do not see any other possibility than trying to engage Russia in dialogue and cooperation [...] Russia's contribution is needed in combating terrorism and arms proliferation, in many regional conflicts as well as in fighting climate change.

Through the use of perspectivation ("I do not see any other possibility"), Kanerva presented cooperation with Russia as the only possible policy option for Finland. Significantly, he referred to the resolution of regional conflicts as one of the key areas in which Russia's contribution was needed. As emerges from a statement issued two days after his speech in Washington, Kanerva considered the frozen

²³⁸ Ilkka Kanerva's speech at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre, 11 February 2008, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=115051&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> (accessed 7/7/2013).

conflicts in Georgia a priority for Finland's OSCE Chairmanship.²³⁹ As concrete evidence for this, he also paid a diplomatic visit to the area in late February 2008.²⁴⁰ Hence, Finnish foreign policy towards the Abkhaz and South Ossetian conflicts appeared well-delineated already before the escalation leading to war in August 2008; mediation and cooperation with Russia were its key tenets.

This policy line remained substantially unchanged after Kanerva was replaced by Stubb as Finland's foreign minister. During the August 2008 crisis, Stubb sought a solution to the crisis through dialogue with Russia. He took a more critical attitude towards Russia only at the peak of the crisis, when Moscow delayed the withdrawal of its troops from the conflict zone and recognised South Ossetia's and Abkhazia's independence. On 25 August 2008, on the occasion of an address to top Finnish diplomats, Stubb argued:

Victorious war strengthened Russia's position as superpower. Nationalistic and protectionist superpower thinking has characterised its external relations even before this. But its superiority is not based on size and energy solely anymore. Today, Russia has both the will and capacity to deploy its armed forces as a foreign policy instrument. Another significant change is the doctrine of protection of expatriate Russians, developed to justify the conduct of aggressive policy. It is impossible to think that these factors would not be taken fully into attention in Finland.²⁴¹

The semantic field associated with Russia (nationalistic, protectionist, superiority in size and energy, willing and capable to deploy its armed forces as a foreign policy

²³⁹ Ilkka Kanerva's statement at the United States Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 13 February 2008, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=115012&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²⁴⁰ Press release of the Finnish foreign ministry, 21 February 2008, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/Print.aspx?contentid=115444&nodeid=17395&culture=en-US&contentlan=2> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²⁴¹ Alexander Stubb's speech at the annual meeting of the heads of Finnish diplomatic missions abroad, 25 August 2008, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=135322&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> (accessed 7/7/2013).

instrument, aggressive) constructed the image of a menacing country that based its foreign policy conduct on *Realpolitik*. Stubb's claim that Finland should take into account the aggressive shift in Russia's foreign policy resonated with the Finnish historical narrative portraying Russia as Finland's main "security deficit".

The tensest moment in Finnish-Russian relations during the Georgian crisis was reached on 26 August, when Stubb issued a statement condemning Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and arguing that "the international community cannot accept unilaterally established buffer zones".²⁴² Thereafter, tensions subsided and Stubb returned to a more cooperative rhetoric. In fact, even at the height of the crisis the Finnish foreign minister did not abandon the discourse stressing the need of cooperation with Russia. In the address to Finnish diplomats quoted above, Stubb also argued that Russia did not pose a military threat to Finland. This statement appears in contradiction with his remarks concerning Russia's aggressive foreign policy, but it can be understood as a reflection of the belief, deeply rooted in post-1945 Finnish foreign policy identity, that Finland had no alternative to engaging Russia.²⁴³ Hence, Stubb avoided a discourse that might lead to confrontation between Finland and Russia and sought to multilateralise the debate, most notably by arguing that Finland could "restrain the nationalist and nation-state oriented trend only by being active in the EU".²⁴⁴ This approach was also compatible with the traditional Finnish preference for multilateralism in addressing international crises and the pro-European orientation of Finnish foreign policy.²⁴⁵

The press release issued by the Finnish government's Communications Unit on 29 August, on the verge of the extraordinary European Council on the crisis in Georgia, clearly shows in what direction Finland intended to steer EU policy towards Russia. After restating Finnish support for Georgia's territorial integrity, the communiqué declared that Finland did not support any sanctions against Russia and that sanctions

²⁴² Press release of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26 August 2008, <http://www.osce.org/cio/50011> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²⁴³ See chapter 4.

²⁴⁴ Alexander Stubb's speech at the annual meeting of the heads of Finnish diplomatic missions abroad, 25 August 2008.

²⁴⁵ See chapter 4.

“would trigger a vicious circle of counter-measures that would be hard to break”.²⁴⁶ Therefore, also at EU level Finland rejected hostile confrontation with Russia and advocated dialogue as the best policy to solve the crisis.

Leaving the war behind: good neighbourly relations and strategic partnership

Following the government’s communiqué on 29 August, the Finnish stance towards Russia in the context of the South Caucasus war was softened and a discourse stressing good neighbourly relations and strategic partnership with Russia became dominant. This discourse existed already before the crisis and can be detected especially in prime minister Matti Vanhanen’s and president Tarja Halonen’s speeches. It lost prominence temporarily during the August 2008 war, but it did not disappear. Arguably, its enduring influence may have been one of the reasons why Finnish foreign policy makers focused on alleviating the humanitarian crisis and defusing tensions throughout the month, thereby paving the way for the resumption of friendly relations with Russia. Strategic advantage, meant as the benefits from cooperating with a key security actor, is the *topos* linking the main argument (Russia is a neighbour and a strategic partner) to its conclusion (Finland should pursue a co-operative relationship and be open to Russia’s policy initiatives). This discourse reflected the post-1945 conceptualisation of Russia as a key partner in Finnish foreign policy identity.

Before the outbreak of the August 2008 war, the narrative describing Russia as a peaceful neighbour emerged, for instance, in Vanhanen’s remarks at a seminar organised by the Finnish Centre Party on the topic of foreign and security policy.

Above all, Russia signifies for us a neighbour, a neighbour, and a neighbour. Russia has changed fundamentally in terms of its societal systems since the Cold War era. Finland has a great interest in Russia

²⁴⁶ Press release of the Finnish Government Communication Unit, 29 August 2008, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=135644&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> (accessed 7/7/2013).

remaining stable and co-operative [...] From Finland's perspective, certain conclusions can be made. Russia does not pose a military threat to Finland.²⁴⁷

Vanhanen's description suggested that Russia was radically different from the Soviet Union and no longer posed an ideological and military challenge to Finland. Consequently, it was simply a "neighbour", with no threatening intentions, and Finland had "a great interest" in cooperating to ensure that it remained so. Within this context, the triple emphasis on the word "neighbour" takes a positive connotation and conveys the idea that post-Soviet Russia deserved special attention in Finnish foreign policy due to its extensive border with Finland.

The behaviour of Finnish foreign policy makers during the August 2008 crisis can be interpreted as a reflection of both this narrative and of the discourse arguing for cooperation with Russia as the only option for Finland. Foreign minister Stubb fostered diplomatic channels with Moscow, focused on negotiations and on deescalating the crisis, an approach that is reminiscent of Finland's Cold War role as mediator between Russia and the West.²⁴⁸ Accordingly, Stubb claimed to be "in constant contact with [his] colleagues in the European Union and the United States", while at the same time he held talks with Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov.²⁴⁹ On 12 August, as soon as the Russian army decided to halt operations in Georgia, Stubb issued a statement to "welcome president Medvedev's decision", which implied that he was still treating Russia as a partner, in spite of tensions due to its disproportionate use of force.²⁵⁰

In the first month after the cited communiqué of 29 August, Finnish leaders' statements on the Russian-Georgian war emphasised primarily Finland's role in mediating and providing humanitarian relief. In Halonen's words, "Finland focused

²⁴⁷ Matti Vanhanen's speech at the Finnish Centre Party foreign and security policy seminar, 2 April 2008, <http://vnk.fi/ajankohtaista/puheet/puhe/sv.jsp?oid=226536> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²⁴⁸ See chapter 4.

²⁴⁹ Press release of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 8 August 2008, <http://www.osce.org/cio/49982> (accessed 7/7/2013); press release of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 12 August 2008, <http://www.osce.org/cio/49986> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²⁵⁰ Press release of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 12 August 2008.

on achieving a ceasefire, ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid and promoting respect for international law”.²⁵¹ Similarly, in his speech at the United Nations’ Security Council in late September, Stubb stressed his efforts “to promote the implementation of a ceasefire agreement and the humanitarian efforts in the region”²⁵². The question of responsibility for the outbreak of war, which as seen played a prominent role in the speeches of German and Polish leaders, was never addressed. This omission served the purpose of avoiding further tensions and focusing on post-conflict developments.

In the following months, Finnish leaders responded in a remarkably positive way to Medvedev’s controversial proposals to reform the European security architecture and described Russia as a strategic partner. In a speech at the London School of Economics in November 2008, Stubb argued that, “against the backdrop of the war in Georgia, the financial crisis and the election of Barack Obama”, the world was “witnessing the embryo a post-American, multipolar world”, thereby drawing conclusions that resonated with Russian leaders’ contemporary analyses.²⁵³ While most European and North American leaders reacted sceptically to Russia’s calls for a debate on a new European security structure, Stubb welcomed them, with the proviso that existing institutions remained in place (cf. Lo 2009). In her address to the OSCE ministerial council on 4 December 2008, Halonen went even further in meeting Russia’s plea.

²⁵¹ Tarja Halonen’s speech during her official visit to Italian President of the Republic Giorgio Napolitano, 9 September 2008, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/1118/> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²⁵² Alexander Stubb’s speech at the United Nations’ Security Council, 26 September 2008, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=137874&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²⁵³ Alexander Stubb’s speech at the London School of Economics, 20 November 2008, <http://www.eilen.fi/se/307/?language=en> (accessed 7/7/2013). Cf., for instance, Medvedev’s claim in an interview with the three main Russian TV channels: “The world should be multi-polar. Unipolarity is unacceptable, domination is impermissible. We cannot accept a world order in which all decisions are taken by one country, even such a serious and authoritative country as the United States of America. This kind of world is unstable and fraught with conflict” (cited in Paul Reynolds, “New Russian world order: the five principles”, *BBC News*, 1 September 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7591610.stm>, accessed 30/5/2014).

The participants of this OSCE ministerial council should use the opportunity to [...] share views on the future of security in Europe. The Presidents of the Russian Federation and France have already contributed to this debate. I hope that it will be continued in an open and constructive atmosphere. We should not assume that current practices of co-operation will continue forever unchanged.²⁵⁴

The last sentence of this passage suggested openness to Russia's proposals to reform the existing European security system and sounded as an invitation to the other OSCE member states to take a flexible stance on the issue. Halonen's approach to the topic reflected the tendency in post-1945 Finnish foreign policy to respond positively to Russia's foreign policy initiatives and act as mediator with NATO countries.

By December 2008, the Russian-Georgian war no longer appeared as a source of tension in Finnish discourses about Russia. In an interview with the Finnish Journal of Foreign Affairs *Ulkopolitiikka*, Stubb argued that the war had "strengthened the unity of Europe", while Russia was defined as "a strategic partner for the EU".²⁵⁵ According to the Finnish foreign minister, the "big challenge" was "to transform the partnership into a functional relationship". Hence, once the August 2008 crisis had subsided, Stubb returned to the deep-rooted Finnish identity narrative portraying Russia as both a partner and a challenge that could be turned into an opportunity if Finland engaged it with adequate policies.

Conclusion

This case study highlighted the relevance of historically constructed images of Russia as a security threat in national foreign policy discourses during the August 2008 crisis. In particular, it explored the extent to which Russia's Tsarist and Soviet

²⁵⁴ Tarja Halonen's speech at the OSCE ministerial council, 4 December 2008, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=144318&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> (accessed 7/7/2013).

²⁵⁵ Alexander Stubb's interview with *Ulkopolitiikka*, 18 December 2008, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=153423&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> (accessed 7/7/2013).

imperial past provided the key for national leaders' interpretations of current events. References to Tsarist and Soviet imperialism were most prominent in Polish discourses, notably in those of president Lech Kaczynski. Kaczynski's statements were deeply fraught with memory politics and portrayed Russia's foreign policy in 2008 as a continuation of Soviet foreign policy. Conversely, German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier rejected the use of memory politics to blame Russia for the crisis in Georgia. Steinmeier made historical references only in order to emphasise the differences between East-West relations during the Cold War and tensions with Russia in August 2008. On the other hand, Finnish foreign policy makers never openly referred to Russia's past to interpret the war in Georgia. Nonetheless, their behaviour during the crisis was also influenced by deep-rooted national perceptions of Russia and of Finland's role as bridge builder in relations between Moscow and the West.

German discourses emphasised Russia's central role in European security and the consequent need of treating Russia as an indispensable partner. Negative memories of the Cold War, when Germany was divided and stood on the frontline of superpower rivalry, informed German leaders' rejection of confrontation with Russia. A German narrative criticising Russia's actions during the August 2008 crisis did emerge, but it focused mostly on technical and legal issues (the withdrawal of Russian troops after the ceasefire and the disproportionality of Russia's military intervention). Rather than a deep-rooted anti-Russian attitude, this discourse reflected elements of post-1945 German national identity such as the rejection of war as means to solve disputes and the support of multilateralism and international law. These aspects of German identity also contribute to understanding Merkel's and Steinmeier's discourse praising EU mediation during the crisis and advocating further EU engagement in relations with Russia.

Polish discourses revealed a marked dichotomy between top government officials and the presidency. The discourse advanced by prime minister Tusk and foreign minister Sikorski was critical of Russia's actions in Georgia but also emphasised the necessity of continuing to engage the Kremlin, reflecting the government's attempt to construct a new foreign policy approach towards Russia after 2007. Occasionally,

Sikorski's speeches slipped into memory politics and comparisons with Russia's Soviet past. However, for the most part this discourse was pragmatic and not fundamentally irreconcilable with dominant German discourses. Conversely, Lech Kaczynski's discourse was profoundly hostile towards Russia, which was portrayed as aggressive and intolerant of European values. This narrative reflected long-standing Polish perceptions of Russia as an imperialist country, morally incompatible with European civilisation. Kaczynski also accused other EU countries of being too compromising with Russia and of leaving him alone with a few other East-Central European countries to defend European values. This discourse resonated with the Polish identity narrative on Poland's unreciprocated commitment to the Western cause.

Competing discourses on Russia existed also in Finland throughout the Georgian crisis. Here, however, different narratives reflected traditionally ambivalent Finnish perceptions of Russia. At the peak of the crisis, in August 2008, the dominant discourse stressed the growing assertiveness and militarism of Russia's foreign policy and argued for the necessity to engage Russia in order to defuse tensions. This narrative can be understood through the prism of Finnish national identity, where Russia was simultaneously constructed as a security challenge and as an indispensable partner for Finland's security. While this discourse appears wary of Russia's foreign policy posture, the narrative that became dominant in the weeks following the August 2008 military escalation was very supportive of cooperation with Moscow. Most strikingly, it argued for openness in the Western response to Russia's controversial requests of reforming the European security system after the August 2008 war. Similarly to German discourses, it portrayed Russia as a strategic partner.

Ultimately, the empirical analysis in this chapter reiterated the relevance of national identity and historically constructed images of Russia to foreign policy makers' discourses. Divergences in the conceptualisation of Russia in German, Polish and Finnish identity were reflected in the different stance that each country took during the August 2008 crisis. Kaczynski's discourse stood out from all the others because it relied on profoundly anti-Russian perceptions and memory politics that are peculiar

to Polish identity. However, pragmatism and the support for a multilateral solution of the conflict were common traits across other national narratives. Therefore, compared with discourses on Nord Stream in 2005-2007 (prior to the events discussed in this chapter), national narratives on Russia during the 2008 Russian-Georgian war were less discordant. As the next chapters show, in the following four years national discourses on Russia continued to converge towards a pragmatic stance across different policy fields.

Chapter 7: Post-electoral democratic protests in Russia, 2011-2012

Introduction

This chapter focuses on German, Polish and Finnish foreign policy makers' discourses on the street protests that took place in Russia from December 2011 until the end of 2012. As opposed to the previous two chapters, which analysed discourses on Russia as an international actor, this case study investigates narratives about domestic developments in Russia. This focus allows an evaluation of the role played by historical perceptions of Russia's internal system of government in current discourses. Moreover, it enables an assessment of the relevance of value-based constituents of German, Polish and Finnish identity, such as the support for democracy and human rights, in policy makers' discourses on Russia

The main research questions addressed in the chapter are: how are the Russian state and street demonstrators portrayed in German, Polish and Finnish policy makers' discourses? Which discursive strategies are used and which semantic fields are associated with the Russian authorities and demonstrators? How do discourses relate to national identity and to historical perceptions of Russia? How do discourses relate to each other within each national discursive arena and across the three countries under investigation? As for the previous two case studies, the main components of national identity and the dominant historical narratives on Russia identified in chapter 4 provide the interpretive framework.

The analysis starts with a brief survey of the street protests in Russia in 2011 and 2012, including their main causes, key features and developments. This section is based on some of the most recent literature published on the topic and fulfils the purpose of contextualising the ensuing discourse analysis. The following three subchapters analyse the discourses of German, Polish and Finnish foreign policy leaders in accordance to the theory and methodology presented in chapters 2 and 3.

For each national discursive arena, the most prominent issues in contemporary bilateral relations with Russia are outlined briefly in order to identify the wider background of the debate on street protests. The concluding section reviews the chapter's main findings and compares national discourses.

Most notably, this case study allows an investigation of the dichotomy between long-standing constructions of Russia as an important partner and as an authoritarian country that violates democratic principles and human rights. It attempts to establish which characterisation of Russia was predominant in 2011 and 2012, namely at a time when Russia was becoming both more authoritarian and increasingly important in economic and commercial terms. The chapter argues that the two historical narratives competed for dominance, but the one portraying Russia as a partner eventually prevailed in official discourses in all countries under analysis.

Street protests in Russian cities, December 2011 - May 2012

The mass protests that took place in Russian cities between December 2011 and May 2012 were among the largest the country had experienced since the disintegration of the Soviet Union. As Russia was recovering from the 2008 economic crisis at a relatively swift pace, the demonstrations were largely unexpected. They started immediately after the national parliamentary elections of 4 December 2011, drawing much attention from international media and analysts. The elections were won by Vladimir Putin's and Dmitri Medvedev's United Russia party amidst accusations of electoral fraud. United Russia received over 49 per cent of the votes, a drop of approximately 15 per cent compared with the party's 2007 election result, but still sufficient to ensure a majority of seats in parliament (Gill 2012: 449).

As Graeme Robertson (2013) and Lilia Shevtsova (2012a) have argued, the protests may have been sparked by electoral fraud, but had much deeper causes and were a continuation of longer-term trends.²⁵⁶ Frustration with the corruption of state

²⁵⁶ During 2009 and 2010, the number of protests and demonstrators in Russia grew steadily. It is however important to note that these protests focused mostly on local issues (the protection of a

officials, lack of opportunities for social mobility for younger Russians and disillusionment with politics accumulated over the previous years. As Gordon Hahn (2012) and Vladimir Gel'man (2013) noted, president Dmitri Medvedev's discourse on modernisation nurtured expectations of liberal reforms among the urban middle class, which were disappointed when his mandate drew to an end without any significant change.

Although the Russian economy had largely recovered by 2011, the 2008 crisis may have contributed to the discontent of the middle class by bequeathing to it a growing sense of political impotence and uncertainty about the future (Chaisty and Whitefield 2012: 202-204, Volkov 2012: 55). This discontent could not be channelled through established opposition parties, which were perceived as part of the Kremlin's corrupt system of power (cf. March 2012). Furthermore, Medvedev's continuous stress on the need to modernise the economy may have involuntarily conveyed the idea that the country was failing to recover from the 2008 financial crisis (Robinson 2013).

Other shorter-term factors also played a role. After 2010, the new mayor of Moscow, Sergei Sobyenin, proved more liberal than his predecessor on the issue of approving opposition protests, which allowed an increasing concentration of demonstrations in the Russian capital (Hahn 2012: 488, Robertson 2013: 18). Furthermore, in September 2011 Russian president Medvedev announced that he had already agreed long time before with then prime minister Vladimir Putin that the latter should return to the presidency in 2012 (Putin had already served two terms as president between 2000 and 2008). In return, Putin promised to support Medvedev's bid for the position of prime minister in case their party, United Russia, won the December 2011 parliamentary elections. Together with the accusations of electoral fraud in December, the announcement of this pre-arranged swap of posts and the prospect of Putin's return to the presidency until 2018 or even 2024 acted as the main catalysts

forest, the dismissal of a regional official, a local construction project), rather than on the Russian political system as a whole (Evans 2012).

for the post-election mass protests in Moscow and other Russian cities (Shevtsova 2012a: 212, Volkov 2012: 55-57).²⁵⁷

The protesters were mostly well-educated, young or middle-aged and belonged to the middle class. They obtained information on political events primarily from the internet, a fact that differentiated them from the majority of Russians, who relied mostly on televised news (Volkov 2012: 57-60). They also used social media to organise and coordinate protest marches and rallies (cf. Bode and Makarychev 2013). Their ideological background was very diverse, ranging from liberalism to communism and nationalism (Koesel and Bunce 2012: 411-412). The demonstrations that they organised after the 2011 parliamentary elections were different from previous ones in post-Soviet Russia in several respects. Contrary to previous, local protests, demonstrators were able to forge new ties among existing extra-parliamentary opposition groups (Greene 2013: 41). As a result, demonstrations became larger and focused on broader issues of national politics, with the declared aim of influencing them (Robertson 2013: 18). Protesters demanded *inter alia* new parliamentary elections, easier rules for the registration of opposition parties and the dismissal of Central Election Commission head Vladimir Churov (Shevtsova 2012: 21).

The first demonstration took place in Moscow on 5 December 2011, the day after the parliamentary elections. The protest was unsanctioned and involved approximately 8,000 people, mostly activists from civil society organisations and extra-parliamentary political parties, including street opposition leaders Boris Nemtsov and Alexei Navalny (Greene 2013: 42, Robertson 2013: 19). Subsequent protests were much larger. On 10 December a demonstration held in Moscow's Bolotnaya Square drew around 50-60,000 people. Two weeks later, on 24 December, over 100,000 protesters gathered on Sakharov Avenue. Smaller demonstrations were held in early 2012, throughout the campaign for the presidential elections in March. Prominent non-governmental organisations such as Golos and Memorial and the banned

²⁵⁷ In 2008, an amendment to the Russian constitution extended the presidential term to six years starting from the 2012 mandate. With the possibility of being re-elected once, Putin could potentially stay in power until 2024 (cf. Shiraev 2013: 95).

People's Freedom Party took part, together with other smaller civil society movements. They demanded free and fair presidential elections and harshly criticised United Russia's candidate Vladimir Putin (Greene 2013: 42, Hahn 2012: 495-496).

Between December and March, Russian authorities responded to protests with a "mixture of repression plus half-hearted measures to redress grievances" (Volkov 2012: 56). Some reforms were announced, including easier rules for the electoral registration of political parties and the reinstatement of popular elections for regional governors (Gel'man 2013: 7). Putin stated that the demonstrations were orchestrated from abroad, portrayed the street opposition as "unpatriotic" and "anti-Russian" and argued that protests would hinder Russia's economic recovery. However, as demonstrations continued, he reframed his rhetoric and claimed that he was pleased with the protests because they highlighted the strength of Russian democracy and civil society (Koesel and Bunce 2012: 415-416).

Until March 2012, Putin and his supporters focused primarily on achieving an absolute majority and winning the presidential elections in the first round. As the street opposition did not field a candidate, its actions appeared unlikely to have any concrete impact on the campaign.²⁵⁸ Despite the lack of real challengers, United Russia launched a more aggressive media campaign than the one for the previous parliamentary elections, attacking opposition leaders and emphasising the negative consequences of social unrest on the country's economy (Gel'man 2013: 8). Moreover, it organised large pro-Putin rallies to show that he enjoyed overwhelming support among Russians (Smyth et al. 2013). Together with new instances of electoral fraud and the lack of any strong alternative candidate, these measures ensured Putin's re-election in the first round, with over 63 per cent of the votes (Gel'man 2013: 3).

²⁵⁸ Billionaire businessman Mikhail Prokhorov was the only non-systemic candidate for the presidential election. According to leading Russian polling institutions such as VTsIOM and Public Opinion Fund, he never seemed to have had a chance to beat Putin; cf. VTsIOM, "Elektoralny reiting politikov" [Politicians' electoral ratings], May 2012, <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=168> (accessed 1/6/2014) and Public Opinion Fund, "Presidentskiye vyibory 2012. Elektoralny reiting" [Presidential elections 2012. Electoral ratings], 19 January 2012, <http://bd.fom.ru/pdf/d02pv12.pdf> (accessed 1/6/2014).

Following the presidential election, the authorities' strategy to deal with street protests became more repressive. Furthermore, demonstrations drew smaller crowds, showing that social media provided an insufficient base for permanent political mobilisation (Gel'man 2013: 8-9). As Gordon Hahn (2012: 497-503) noted, scarcer participation may have also been due to the growing belief that, with adequate organisation, the street opposition could acquire political power through the regular electoral process. In March 2012, opposition candidates won mayoral elections in several large provincial capitals, including Tolyatti, Yaroslavl and Oryol. Furthermore, on 2 May 2012 a law relaxing requirements for the electoral registration of political parties entered into force, making it easier for the extra-parliamentary opposition to be able to run in future elections.

The authorities combined this concession with harsher measures against new demonstrations. On 6 May 2012, on the eve of Putin's inauguration to the presidency, the police crushed unsanctioned protests with an overwhelming use of force and the arrest of over 250 people.²⁵⁹ After Putin's return to power, the extra-parliamentary opposition underwent a process of internal reorganisation to create a more solid and coherent political base, which culminated in the election of a coordinating council in October 2012. Demonstrations continued during the summer and fall of 2012, but on a smaller scale and in a context of increasing repression (Robertson 2013: 21-22).

Democracy or partnership? German leaders' conflicting discourses

Mass protests in Russia were a prominent topic in the German political debate throughout 2012. From mid-2008, German-Russian bilateral relations focused on the development of a modernisation partnership, including economic, technological and legal cooperation. From the German perspective, the partnership was to serve

²⁵⁹ Cf. Miriam Elder, "Vladimir Putin's return to presidency preceded by violent protests in Moscow", *The Guardian*, 6 May 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/may/06/vladimir-putin-presidency-violent-protests-moscow> (accessed 30/5/2014).

Germany's economic interests, contribute to the modernisation of the Russian economy and strengthen the rule of law in Russia. By the fall of 2011, however, the partnership had seemingly failed to produce tangible results in terms of Russia's modernisation. Within this context, German policy makers considered the December 2011 and March 2012 elections as important factors to assess the strength of the rule of law in Russia and the Russian political leadership's willingness to modernise the country (cf. Gotkowska 2010, Meister 2012).²⁶⁰

As the elections and the ensuing demonstrations took place in Russia, two dominant and conflicting discourses developed among German foreign policy makers. One was very critical of Russia's political system, of the authorities' handling of post-electoral demonstrations and of the overall running of the country's economy and society. From the fall of 2011, this discourse featured prominently in the speeches of some officials at the German foreign ministry, most particularly in those of Andreas Schockenhoff and Markus Löning. At the federal foreign office, Schockenhoff was responsible for German-Russian civil society cooperation, while Löning was commissioner for human rights policy and humanitarian aid. Both played a key role in German official discourses on events in Russia in 2011 and 2012 through interviews with mainstream media, press releases and public appeals to the Russian leadership. Hence, their speeches are also investigated.

The other discourse appeared in particular in chancellor Angela Merkel's and foreign minister Guido Westerwelle's speeches and was considerably less critical towards Russia. Merkel and Westerwelle described the protests in Russian cities as a positive development and expressed disapproval of some of the Kremlin's measures to curb demonstrations and restrict civil freedoms. However, they consistently reiterated their commitment to building a strategic partnership with Russia regardless of the outcome of its parliamentary and presidential elections. They also argued that their occasional criticism of Russia's internal affairs was no obstacle for bilateral dialogue and economic cooperation.

²⁶⁰ A succinct official description of the German-Russian modernisation partnership is available on the website of the German federal foreign ministry at http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/RegionaleSchwerpunkte/Russland/Russland_node.html (accessed 25/10/2013).

Democracy, human rights and Russia's failed modernisation

Russia's failure to modernise and the repressive policies implemented by the Russian ruling elite during the 2011 and 2012 elections were the dominant themes of Schockenhoff's and Löning's speeches. According to them, Russia had consistently violated democratic principles and human rights, namely core German and European values. Hence, they argued that Germany should take a more critical stance towards Russia (including the application of sanctions) and support the cause of Russian street demonstrators. Humanitarianism is the *topos* linking the key argument (Russia violated democratic principles and human rights) to its conclusion (Germany should take policy countermeasures and support the Russian opposition).

Schockenhoff's and Löning's emphasis on human rights and democracy can be understood through the prominent role which these principles have played in identity construction and foreign policy discourses in post-1945 Federal Germany. In German foreign policy discourses, individual freedoms and democracy have long been described as core elements of the German state and as major constituents of its foreign policy.²⁶¹ Furthermore, Schockenhoff's and Löning's arguments resonate with German historical discourses describing Russia as a backward and corrupt country. As argued in chapter 4, these narratives also influenced German perceptions of post-Soviet Russia.

Schockenhoff expressed his concerns about political developments in Russia shortly after Medvedev and Putin announced their intention to swap their posts. In October 2011, while speaking at a conference on Russia at the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Berlin, Schockenhoff questioned whether the country's modernisation would be possible after Putin's return to the presidency.

²⁶¹ See chapter 4. In the speeches under analysis, this concept was best summarised by German state secretary Cornelia Pieper in her statements at the opening of an exhibition on German and Russian history in Moscow in June 2012: "The free and democratic constitutional order is the core element of our state and guarantees individual freedoms and rights. These shape our actions and thinking and are the precept for Germany's value oriented domestic and foreign policy"; http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2012/120620-StM_P_Ausstellung_St_H_M.html (accessed 25/10/2013).

I am worried about internal developments in the country [Russia] [...] Above all, I am worried because the Russian middle class does not see its interests represented in the political system [...] It seems to me that the basic problem in Russia is that also today there is no consensus on the need to modernise the country. On the contrary, among the elites and in society there is a consensus for the preservation of the status quo, so against modernisation!²⁶²

Through perspectivation (signalled by the phrases “I am worried”, “it seems to me” and by the use of exclamation marks), Schockenhoff clearly positioned himself against the Russian elites’ political line. He also claimed that his only hopes for Russia’s modernisation were based on the “revitalisation [...] of particular parts of the Russian civil society”, namely those that were ready to become engaged in civil campaigns to address the country’s problems.

These themes were developed further in his interview with the German daily *Der Tagesspiegel* on 27 November 2011, a week before the Russian parliamentary elections. Schockenhoff drew a bleak picture of the Russian political system and, quoting prominent Russian scholars, qualified it as “neo-feudal power system”, “tyranny of incompetence”, “blatantly inefficient” and degrading. Within this context, he claimed, “the most important chance [for Russia’s modernisation]” was to be found in “the increasing activeness of Russia’s civil society”. He therefore concluded that

Germany and the EU need these citizens as partners for the modernisation partnership! [...] In the future, it is therefore essential to get civil actors, NGOs, independent initiatives and experts much more involved in all fields of the modernisation partnership with Russia!²⁶³

²⁶² Andreas Schockenhoff’s speech at the Heinrich Böll Foundation, 26 October 2011, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2011/111026_KoRus_Boell.html (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁶³ Andreas Schockenhoff’s interview with *Der Tagesspiegel*, 27 November 2011, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2011/111127-Ko_RUS_Tsp.html (accessed 25/10/2013).

The mass protests following the parliamentary elections consolidated Schockenhoff's belief in the political potential of Russian civil society. On 15 December 2011, speaking at the lower house of the German federal parliament, he argued that the demonstrations had changed both Russia and Western perceptions of Russia.

The protests were a victory over the fear of the Kremlin. They were above all a victory over the political apathy that paralysed Russian society in the last years. They have revealed a new generation, a changed society, many young people, activists and a growing middle class. For me, these are the new Russians – democratically-minded, active, engaged, well-informed [...] These people are the most important force in favour of reforms and the most important modernisation partner of the Russian state and hence an important partner for us.²⁶⁴

Through predication, Schockenhoff qualified the demonstrations as a momentous triumph for Russian civil society and emphasised the importance of protesters for Russia's future. The semantic field associated with the demonstrations ("victory over fear", "victory over political apathy") and demonstrators ("a new generation", "young", "active", "engaged", "well-informed") is unambiguously positive, which is functional to Schockenhoff's declared aim to get Russian civil society more involved in the German-Russian modernisation partnership. By contrast, in the same speech the Russian political establishment is described as "leading to apathy, cynicism and to a dangerous estrangement between power and society".

Schockenhoff's criticism of the Russian political system was echoed by Löning in an interview with the German daily *Die Welt* on 20 December 2011. Löning denounced "many violations of human rights, the infringement of basic democratic principles and the near absence of the rule of law".²⁶⁵ Furthermore, he appealed to the Russian authorities to respect the freedoms of opinion and assembly and not to "beat up or

²⁶⁴ Andreas Schockenhoff's speech at the German Bundestag, 15 December 2011, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2011/111215-KoRUS-Bundestag.html?nn=336102> (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁶⁵ Markus Löning's interview with *Die Welt*, 20 December 2011, <http://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article13776313/Putin-Gegenteil-eines-lupenreinen-Demokraten.html> (accessed 25/10/2013).

arrest demonstrators just because they have different opinions from the Russian government”. Most importantly, he urged the European Union to take a more critical stance in defence of democracy and human rights in Russia.

The Russian parliamentary elections [on 4 December 2011] were criticised, but we Europeans should express our opinion much more clearly [...] Human rights are the core values of the European Union. If we do not defend them, we betray our own values and the credibility of European foreign policy will go to the dogs.

Löning’s statement reflects the relevance of human rights and the European Union in German foreign policy discourses. Through perspectivation and the use of direct, idiomatic expressions, he conveyed the message that the credibility of the EU’s foreign policy depended on the Union’s response to contemporary events in Russia. Accordingly, he argued that the EU should prioritise values over economic interests and “clearly demand from Russian political leaders the respect of the rule of law”. He also advocated the application of sanctions on Russian public officials who were responsible for human rights violations.

As the March 2012 presidential elections in Russia approached, Schockenhoff and Löning expressed their concerns about the conditions under which they would take place. Schockenhoff criticised the “harassment” of independent election monitors and the fact that no one had been held responsible for the ballot-rigging that occurred during the December 2011 parliamentary elections.²⁶⁶ Löning denounced the further restrictions on civil freedoms and violations of human rights that took place both before the elections and in the ensuing months.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁶ Press release of the German foreign ministry, 26 January 2012, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2012/120126-Ko_RUS_Wahlen.html (accessed 25/10/2013); press release of the German foreign ministry, 3 February 2012, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2012/120203-Wahlen_RUS.html (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁶⁷ Press release of the German foreign ministry, 9 February 2012, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2012/120209_MRHH_RUS.html (accessed 25/10/2013);

Following Putin's return to the presidency in May 2012, Schockenhoff overtly condemned political developments in Russia. In an interview with *Der Tagesspiegel* in August 2012, he argued:

The Russian leadership does not offer any dialogue to society. Putin relies on repression and confrontation [...] Russia lags behind in all international rankings, regardless of whether they concern fighting corruption, competition or demographic development. Putin sees his own [Russia's] population not as a partner, but as a threat to the state.²⁶⁸

Schockenhoff's harsh critique of Russia reflected a clear prevalence of the normative dimension of Germany's foreign policy identity in his discourse. If Schockenhoff's stance had become dominant within the German foreign ministry, we could have expected a serious deterioration of German-Russian relations by the end of 2012, as the Russian authorities continued their repressive policies. However, a different discourse became prominent in German foreign policy circles after March 2012, toning down Schockenhoff's and Löning's criticism and arguing for partnership with Russia.

Strategic partnership and friendly criticism

An analysis of the German foreign ministry's and the federal chancellor's electronic archives suggests that Angela Merkel and Guido Westerwelle played a marginal role in the German public debate about developments in Russia between the fall of 2011 and February 2012. After the March 2012 presidential elections, their official

press release of the German foreign ministry, 15 May 2012, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2012/120515-MRHH_Tag_Homophobie.html (accessed 25/10/2013); press release of the German foreign ministry, 13 July 2012, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2012/120713_MRHHB_NGO_Gesetz_Russland.html (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁶⁸ Andreas Schockenhoff's interview with *Der Tagesspiegel*, 9 August 2012, <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/russland-koordinator-schockenhoff-cdu-putin-setzt-auf-repression/6978120.html> (accessed 25/10/2013).

statements about Russia's internal affairs became more frequent and constructed a distinct German official discourse. This narrative criticised the Russian authorities' handling of the presidential elections and the subsequent crackdown on the street opposition and civil freedoms. However, Merkel's and Westerwelle's criticism was much milder than Schockenhoff's and Löning's. Most importantly, Merkel and Westerwelle argued strongly in favour of continuing dialogue with the Russian authorities and developing a strategic partnership based on shared economic and security interests. According to them, criticism and partnership were not mutually exclusive, as reciprocal trust and friendship was necessary while discussing difficult issues.

In this argumentative strategy, economic advantage and security are the *topoi* linking the key argument (Russia is an essential economic and security partner for Germany) to its logical conclusion (Germany should continue to develop a strategic partnership with Russia). The discourse reflected long-standing German perceptions of Russia as an economic and security partner. It also appeared as a logical continuation of the basic principle of German *Ostpolitik*, namely the idea that economic cooperation may have positive effects on Russia's internal affairs.²⁶⁹ Considerations about the violations of human rights and democratic principles also played a role in this discourse, but they were largely overshadowed by the prominence of arguments in favour of economic and security cooperation.

As argued, until February 2012 Merkel's and Westerwelle's statements on Russia largely ignored the issue of electoral fraud. The irregularities that took place during the December 2011 parliamentary elections and the ensuing mass demonstrations were mentioned only briefly in a few statements. For instance, at the OSCE ministerial council of 6 December 2011 Westerwelle declared:

We have noted with concern the reports by the OSCE election observers on the recent parliamentary elections in Russia. These reports show that

²⁶⁹ This belief is epitomised in the main German *Ostpolitik* motto, "change through rapprochement" (*Wandel durch Annäherung*); see chapter 4.

the Russian Federation still has some way to go before it completely meets all OSCE standards [...] We encourage the Russian Federation to take this path now, particularly with an eye to the next elections due in Russia.²⁷⁰

In the light of the serious violations of democratic principles which the international press revealed immediately after the elections, Westerwelle's statement appears remarkably mild.²⁷¹ The German foreign minister ignored the opposition's call for a repetition of the vote and merely “encouraged” Russia to respect democratic standards at the next elections. Merkel only made a brief reference to events in Russia at the New Year reception for German diplomats, expressing her hopes that the Russian presidential elections would “take place well, democratically” and anticipating that German-Russian cooperation would “remain a focal point” for her government also after the elections.²⁷²

Willingness to cooperate with the Kremlin became a central theme in Merkel's and Westerwelle's statements after February 2012, when internal developments in Russia began to feature more prominently in their speeches. This emerges clearly from Westerwelle's interview with the mainstream German newspaper *Welt am Sonntag* on 4 March 2012, the day when presidential elections were held in Russia.

We would like to continue the modernisation partnership with Russia, which is urgently necessary, including the dialogue on the rule of law. Russia is a nation with a rich culture [*Kulturnation*] and a large part of it is in Europe. European security can only be achieved with Russia, not

²⁷⁰ Guido Westerwelle's speech at the OSCE ministerial council, 6 December 2011, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2011/111206-BM_OSZE.html (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁷¹ Cf. Miriam Elder, “Vladimir Putin set to lose majority amid complaints of electoral violations”, *The Guardian*, 4 December 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/dec/04/vladimir-putin-majority-complaints-violations> (accessed 30/5/2014).

²⁷² Angela Merkel's speech at the New Year reception of the German diplomatic corps, 26 January 2012, <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Rede/2012/01/2012-01-26-bkin-dipl-corps.html> (accessed 25/10/2013).

against it. I am committed to keep Russia as a strategic partner for Germany and Europe.²⁷³

In the interview, Westerwelle associated Russia with a positive semantic field through predication, notably by calling it “a nation with a rich culture”. Moreover, using the discursive strategy of categorisation, he constructed Russia as part of a European in-group on the account that “large part of it is in Europe” and that “European security can only be achieved with Russia”. This use of predication and categorisation was functional to substantiate Westerwelle’s desire to continue the strategic partnership with Russia on the grounds that it played an indispensable role for Europe.

On the other hand, Westerwelle appeared keen to avoid comments on the street protests in Russia. When specifically asked for his opinion on the topic, he described the demonstrations as “interesting and a positive sign”, but refused to comment on the violent clashes between protesters and the Russian authorities. His subsequent criticism of “worrying developments” concerning press freedom and homophobia in Russia was toned down by the assertion that “economic, political and social progress” was also taking place.²⁷⁴

In his next newspaper interview, held with the German daily *Passauer Neue Presse* on 10 March 2012, Westerwelle clearly explained Germany’s foreign policy line towards Russia following Putin’s re-election.

We believe president Putin’s announcement that all evidence of electoral fraud will be investigated [...] We have a strategic interest in the

²⁷³ Guido Westerwelle’s interview with *Welt am Sonntag*, 4 March 2012, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2012/120304-BM_BamS.html (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

partnership with Russia. We want to expand this partnership further. But this does not mean that we will not express any criticism.²⁷⁵

Remarkably, Westerwelle trusted Putin's promises about investigating electoral irregularities, despite the fact that the irregularities had benefitted Putin himself and had been executed by a state apparatus that Putin largely controlled. As the passage shows, expanding the existing partnership with Russia was Germany's "strategic interest" and hence its main priority. On the other hand, Westerwelle's pledge to maintain a critical stance towards Russia appears weak, as it was constructed with a double negation ("does not mean", "we will not express") and was not accompanied by any actual criticism in the interview.

Westerwelle's discourse was embraced by Merkel, which practically meant that throughout the spring of 2012 both Germany's top foreign policy makers emphasised achievements in economic relations and only made mild statements about democracy and the human rights situation in Russia. This emerged, for instance, at Merkel's joint press conference with Putin in Berlin, on 1 June 2012. The German chancellor first praised the "very intense, good and friendly relations with Russia", with particular emphasis on "economic cooperation".²⁷⁶ Her comments on Russia's internal affairs were limited to the claim that

We [Germany] have a strong interest in the continued development of democratic plurality in Russia. Because, as far as I can tell from my experience, this is the only way a strong civil society can form and support the development of a country.

²⁷⁵ Guido Westerwelle's interview with *Neue Passauer Presse*, 10 March 2012, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2012/120310-BM-Neue-Presse.html> (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁷⁶ Angela Merkel's statements at joint press conference with Vladimir Putin, 1 June 2012, <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2012/06/2012-06-01-merkel-putin.html> (accessed 25/10/2013).

Using perspectivation (signalled by the phrase “as far as I can tell from my experience”), Merkel alluded to her personal experience as former citizen of the German Democratic Republic in order to stress the importance of civil society in democratic transitions. However, by referring to her experience in East Germany she also avoided addressing directly the situation in Russia. Moreover, the phrase “continued development of democratic plurality” suggests that democratic plurality was already developing in Russia, a remarkably optimistic assessment in the light of two recent flawed elections.

The few times when Merkel and Westerwelle discussed the violation of democratic principles and fundamental freedoms in Russia, they both strongly emphasised that criticism and occasional disagreement was not intended to disrupt the German-Russian strategic partnership. For instance in his November 2012 interview with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Westerwelle claimed that German and Russian leaders had “differences of opinion” on some of Russia’s recent internal developments, but remained “honest friends and strategic partners”.²⁷⁷ Similarly, speaking at a German-Russian civil society forum in November 2012, Merkel argued that Germans and Russians should listen to each other’s arguments “as partners and friends” also when discussing issues on which they disagreed. Furthermore, disagreements were downplayed and portrayed as a normal feature of bilateral relations.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁷ Guido Westerwelle’s interview with *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 12 November 2012, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2012/121112-BM_FAZ.html (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁷⁸ Angela Merkel’s speech at the plenary conference of the German-Russia Petersburg Dialogue, 16 November 2012, <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Rede/2012/11/2012-11-16-rede-petersberger-dialog.html> (accessed 25/10/2013). In order to downplay disagreements, Merkel argued: “Sometimes people disagree, it is necessary to have arguments. As we say in Germany, this happens in the best families”.

Pragmatism and reconciliation before values: Polish leaders' discourses

The analysis of Polish top foreign policy makers' public statements in 2011 and 2012 revealed that they were reluctant to comment on contemporary domestic developments in Russia. In this period, the main focus of their diplomacy towards Russia was on promoting trade and seeking reconciliation by tackling contentious issues in bilateral relations. During 2011, Poland and Russia negotiated the establishment of a special visa-free regime for their citizens residing in the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad and the adjoining Polish territories. The agreement was signed by the Russian and Polish foreign ministers in Moscow in December 2011 and was hailed as a step towards the lifting of all visa requirements between the European Union and Russia.²⁷⁹

Much attention was devoted to the process of historical reconciliation, a highly sensitive issue in both Poland and Russia (cf. De Lazari 2011). The Polish-Russian Working Group for Difficult Matters, an official forum bringing together academics from both countries, advanced projects that were conducive to a shared interpretation of contentious events in the history of Polish-Russian relations. The Polish foreign ministry strongly supported these efforts and reported the achievements of the Group's meetings in press releases on the ministerial website.²⁸⁰ Reflecting the atmosphere of cultural reconciliation, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill, paid a historic visit to Poland in August 2012.²⁸¹

Throughout 2011 and 2012, Polish diplomacy tackled several bilateral disputes, most notably the investigation of the plane crash in which president Lech Kaczynski died in April 2010 and the return of the plane's wreck to Poland.²⁸² Tensions and

²⁷⁹ "Visa-free travel gets a lift from Russia-Poland agreement", *Russia Today*, 14 December 2011, <http://rt.com/politics/russia-poland-moscow-visa-free-travel-katyn-767/> (accessed 30/5/2014).

²⁸⁰ Cf. press release of the Polish ministry of foreign affairs, 17 December 2012, http://www.mfa.gov.pl/en/news/10th_meeting_of_polish_russian_group_for_difficult_matters (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁸¹ "Russian Patriarch Kirill makes historic visit to Poland", *BBC News*, 16 August 2012, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-19281205> (accessed 30/5/2014).

²⁸² "Russia, Poland plan memorial to Smolensk air crash victims", *RIA Novosti*, 17 December 2012, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20121217/178220563.html> (accessed 30/5/2012).

disagreements persisted on the matter, but this did not prevent progress in other areas of bilateral relations. Most importantly, in November 2012 the Polish state-controlled energy company PGNiG successfully negotiated a reduction in the price of gas purchased from the Russian state company Gazprom.²⁸³

The wider context of Polish diplomatic efforts to improve relations with Russia in 2011 and 2012 helps understand why Polish foreign policy leaders refrained from commenting on electoral manipulations and on the repression of mass protests in Russia. The discourse advocating a pragmatic approach to relations with Russia, which was constructed in governmental circles after the election of Donald Tusk in 2007, shaped the statements of Polish foreign minister Radoslaw Sikorski. Conversely, long-standing Polish perceptions of Russia as an undemocratic and corrupt country played a lesser role in official discourses.

Sympathy with demonstrators, but other priorities

Foreign minister Sikorski was the only Polish foreign policy leader who made regular statements regarding the mass protests in Russia, mostly on occasions in which journalists specifically asked him to comment on the events. When addressing the issue, Sikorski's main argumentative strategy consisted in expressing sympathy towards the demonstrators. However, these expressions of sympathy were not accompanied by any criticism of the Russian authorities. Conversely, Sikorski argued that Putin enjoyed large support in Russia. Furthermore, he juxtaposed this interpretation of events to claims that Poland needed to pursue reconciliation and cooperation with the Kremlin regardless of domestic developments in Russia. Political and economic advantage are the *topoi* linking this argumentative strategy to its logical conclusion: reconciliation and economic cooperation took priority over value-driven support of civil society and democratic change in Russia.

²⁸³ Cf. James Marson, "Gazprom cuts gas price for Poland", *Wall Street Journal*, 6 November 2012, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052970204349404578102230135329520> (accessed 1/6/2014).

In the months preceding the outbreak of mass protests in Russian cities, Sikorski maintained an ambiguous stance in his assessments of domestic developments in Russia. In a speech held at Harvard University in February 2011, he argued that Poland was “dedicated to good relations with Russia”, but criticised its system of government.

Democracy, markets and respect for the rights of the individual – these define relations between Europe and America. Russia, along with many other former Soviet republics, still does not accept those values. Moscow hankers after something rather different: ‘managed democracy’. Which is fine – if you are one of the managers.²⁸⁴

Through the discursive strategy of categorisation, Sikorski constructed Russia as alien to Europe and the United States due to its disregard of democratic principles and human rights. This description of Russia appeared in continuity with traditional Polish perceptions of the country as oriental, undemocratic and corrupt.²⁸⁵

However, a few weeks later Sikorski described domestic developments in Russia in more positive terms. In his speech before the lower house of the Polish parliament (*Sejm*), he claimed:

Those who believe that one way of thinking reigns in Russia are mistaken [...] Many Russians, including top leaders, are becoming aware of the need to curb corruption, modernise the economy and enhance the rule of law and democracy.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ Radoslaw Sikorski’s speech at Harvard University, 28 February 2011, <http://www.mfa.gov.pl/resource/f733dba2-09d4-4322-aa0d-e4fb5dfac966:JCR> (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁸⁵ See chapter 4.

²⁸⁶ Radoslaw Sikorski’s speech at the *Sejm*, 16 March 2011, <http://www.mfa.gov.pl/resource/86fefef22-d645-4dd8-9532-9e244ed41b1e:JCR> (accessed 25/10/2013).

Furthermore, on this occasion Sikorski argued that Russia could choose “the democratic path leading to integration with the West”, thereby blurring the boundaries of the categorisation constructed in his Harvard speech. Admittedly, he also stated that part of the Russian leadership “continue[d] to long for superpower glory and heavy-handed rule” and that he did not know “which way Russia [would] go”. However, he unambiguously argued that Poland needed to cooperate with the Kremlin “no matter how Russia is ruled” because it was an “important neighbour”.²⁸⁷

While the December 2011 elections in Russia approached, this pragmatic stance prevailed in Polish foreign policy circles. This emerges clearly in Polish president Bronislaw Komorowski’s letter to the EU-Russia civil society forum that took place in Warsaw on 1 December 2011.²⁸⁸ In spite of the forum’s primary focus on issues such as the promotion of democracy and the rule of law, Komorowski made no reference to the violation of democratic principles that took place in Russia during the electoral campaign.²⁸⁹ Instead, he advocated “normalisation” and “rapprochement” in Polish-Russian relations. Using the discursive strategy of predication, he positively described Russia as “our [Poland’s] neighbour” and as an actor that would “always play one of the key roles on the European scene”. Accordingly, he argued, improving Polish-Russian relations was “an investment in the European future”.²⁹⁰

Despite the numerous denunciations of irregularities in the December elections and the beginning of mass protests in Russia, the rhetoric of Polish foreign policy leaders did not change. On 14 December, ten days after the elections and the beginning of street protests, Sikorski paid an official visit to Moscow and signed the agreement establishing a visa-free regime for the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad and the adjoining Polish territories. At the joint press conference with the Russian foreign minister, Sikorski praised Russia as Poland’s “supportive neighbour” and did not

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Bronislaw Komorowski’s letter to the EU-Russia civil society forum, 1 December 2011, <http://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta/inne/art,162,list-prezydenta-rp-na-ii-forum-spoleczenstwa-obywatelskiego-ue-rosja.html> (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁸⁹ Cf. Mission Statement of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum, <http://eu-russia-csf.org/home/about/mission-statement.html> (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁹⁰ Bronislaw Komorowski’s letter to the EU-Russia civil society forum, 1 December 2011.

make any reference to the mass protests that were taking place in many Russian cities.²⁹¹ Only when specifically asked by a journalist of the Polish magazine *Polska Times*, Sikorski commented on the demonstrations.

At this time we are observing a reinvigoration of civil society in Russia. This makes us happy, because so far it has been said that Russians are passive and it turns out this is not true. We have our Polish experiences in this area. Poland is a country that fought for freedom, won it and that is why we sympathise with those who want to democratise their countries.²⁹²

Sikorski's statement reflected dominant national identity narratives about Polish heroism and fight for freedom in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²⁹³ He constructed a historical parallel between the struggle of Polish patriots and that of Russian demonstrators, thereby exposing his empathy for the latter. However, Sikorski's support was limited to expressions of happiness and sympathy. Most importantly, the Polish foreign minister failed to criticise the Russian authorities' handling of the elections and of the subsequent protests.

In January and February 2012, as the Russian presidential elections approached and street protests continued, Polish foreign policy leaders continued to avoid commenting on Russia's domestic developments. For this period, only a statement by Sikorski vaguely expressing support for Russia's "democratic aspirations" was retrieved.²⁹⁴ On 7 March 2012, following Putin's victory in the elections,

²⁹¹ Press release of the Polish foreign ministry, 14 December 2011, http://www.mfa.gov.pl/en/news/20111214_minister_sikorski_on_a_visit_to_moscow (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁹² "Sikorski wyraża sympatię dla protestujących w Rosji. 'Mówiono nam, że Rosjanie są pasywni'" ["Sikorski expressed sympathy for the protesters in Russia. 'They told us that the Russians are passive'"], *Polska Times*, 14 December 2011, <http://www.polskatimes.pl/artykul/483147,sikorski-wyraza-sympatie-dla-protestujacych-w-rosji-mowiono-nam-ze-rosjanie-sa-pasywni,id,t.html?cookie=1> (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁹³ See analysis of Polish identity in chapter 4.

²⁹⁴ Press release of the Polish foreign ministry, 29 February 2012, http://www.mfa.gov.pl/en/news/weimar_triangle_foreign_ministers_meeting_in_berlin (accessed 25/10/2013).

Komorowski congratulated the newly-elected Russian president and advocated “cooperation and dialogue” with Russia.²⁹⁵ On the same day, Sikorski briefly referred to the Russian election during a joint press conference with US secretary of state Hilary Clinton. Despite numerous reports of electoral fraud and the repression of demonstrations in Russian cities, he made no negative comments.²⁹⁶ He merely defined Russia “an important neighbour of Poland” and stood by Clinton while she argued that the Russian presidential election had “a clear winner”, namely Putin.²⁹⁷

Sikorski returned to the topic of the Russian presidential elections and mass protests during an interview with the French daily *Le Monde* in late March, in response to a question on the lawfulness of Putin’s election.

The prime minister [Putin] has demonstrated that he has strong support among the population, but at the same time we see the awakening of civil society. I have sympathy for these Russians who do not want to move to London or Paris, but wish it were the same in Russia. This will give Vladimir Putin the chance to keep his promises, particularly those of his first mandate, when he spoke of Russia’s modernisation, of the fight against corruption and of entrepreneurship.²⁹⁸

In addition to reiterating some of the claims made in previous interviews (such as expressing sympathy towards Russian demonstrators), Sikorski highlighted that Putin enjoyed strong support in Russia. Furthermore, the Polish foreign minister portrayed the street protests as an opportunity for Putin to carry out reforms and, in the same

²⁹⁵ Press release of the Polish foreign ministry, 7 March 2012, <http://www.president.pl/en/news/news/art,273,president-komorowski-congratulates-putin-victory-in-presidential-elections.html> (accessed 25/10/2013).

²⁹⁶ Cf. “ Hundreds detained after Moscow anti-Putin protest”, *The Guardian*, 5 March 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/blog/2012/mar/05/russian-election-reaction-putin-live> (accessed 30/5/2012).

²⁹⁷ Transcript of Radoslaw Sikorski’s and Hilary Clinton’s joint press conference, 7 March 2012.

²⁹⁸ Radoslaw Sikorski’s interview with *Le Monde*, 21 March 2012, http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2012/03/21/radek-sikorski-la-pologne-n-acceptera-pas-de-revenir-sur-l-acquis-de-schengen_1673286_3214.html (accessed 25/10/2013).

interview, he categorised Russia as “a potential member of the West”.²⁹⁹ Sikorski’s rhetoric revealed the intent of his government to seek pragmatic cooperation with the new Russian president.

This intent was formulated most clearly in Sikorski’s annual address to the *Sejm* on the priorities of Poland’s foreign policy, on 29 March 2012. The Polish foreign minister argued that his government would “continue to work towards Polish-Russian reconciliation” and that in 2012 the reconciliation would “take on a spiritual dimension” thanks to the first ever visit of the Patriarch of Moscow to Poland.³⁰⁰ The press releases of the Polish foreign ministry during the following months show that the policy of reconciliation and cooperation with Russia was pursued consistently, focusing in particular on the resolution of historical contentions, the visit of the Moscow Patriarch and the implementation of the visa-free regime between the Kaliningrad enclave and the bordering Polish region.³⁰¹

In the last months of 2012, Sikorski’s interviews continued to reflect the Polish government’s pragmatic approach to its relations with Russia. In an interview with the BBC programme *Hardtalk*, he argued that Poland was “working to reconcile with Russia” and had an important “commercial relationship” with it.³⁰² Questioned on whether Poland’s approach implied turning a blind eye on Russia’s domestic developments, Sikorski deliberately refused to comment on the issue, claiming that trade had “nothing to do” with Russia’s domestic developments. Furthermore, in an interview with the French television channel *France24*, he claimed that Poland’s

²⁹⁹ Also in late March, Sikorski expressed similar views in a speech held at the Paris office of the European Council on Foreign Relations, a London-based think tank focusing on the European Union’s foreign policy; cf. Radoslaw Sikorski’s speech at the European Council on Foreign Relations, 22 March 2012, <http://www.mfa.gov.pl/resource/6c250265-3db6-4912-aaef-b2f2a9d027ef:JCR> (accessed 25/10/2013).

³⁰⁰ Radoslaw Sikorski’s speech at the lower house of the *Sejm*, 29 March 2012, <http://www.ms.gov.pl/resource/db6d43cf-cd4a-4993-a08b-ce578440f0cd:JCR> (accessed 25/10/2013).

³⁰¹ Cf. press release of the Polish foreign ministry, 22 June 2012, http://www.mfa.gov.pl/en/news/meeting_of_the_polish_russian_group_for_difficult_matters (accessed 25/10/2013); press release of the Polish foreign ministry, 26 July 2012, http://www.mfa.gov.pl/en/news/foreign_ministers_sikorski_and_lavrov_hold_phone_talks (accessed 25/10/2013).

³⁰² Transcript of Radoslaw Sikorski’s interview at BBC television programme *Hardtalk*, 14 November 2012.

relations with Russia were “steadily improving” and that Putin was “in the lead in improving relations with Poland”.³⁰³

Sikorski’s last statements of 2012 on Polish-Russian relations epitomised the rhetoric of pragmatism and reconciliation that permeated Polish discourses throughout the period under analysis in this chapter. At a joint press conference with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, the Polish foreign minister expressed “satisfaction with the progress made in Polish-Russian relations in both the economic and socio-cultural context”, highlighting the achievements of the preceding year.³⁰⁴ No comment was made on the electoral process and the handling of mass demonstrations in Russia during the previous months.

Overshadowed by trade: the Russian protests in Finnish official discourses

Throughout 2011 and 2012, Finland’s relations with Russia focused primarily on trade, investments in the Arctic region and the facilitation of cross-border mobility for Finnish and Russian citizens. Commercial relations were the most salient issue. Russia’s application to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO) was accepted on 16 December 2011, after 18 years of negotiations, and took place formally on 22 August 2012.³⁰⁵ As Russia was Finland’s main commercial partner, its WTO accession had a strong positive impact on bilateral relations. From the Finnish

³⁰³ Transcript of Radoslaw Sikorski’s interview with French television channel France24, 13 December 2012.

³⁰⁴ Press release of the Polish foreign ministry, 17 December 2012, http://www.mfa.gov.pl/en/news/minister_sikorski_in_moscow_meeting_of_the_committee_for_polish_russian_cooperation_strategy (accessed 25/10/2013).

³⁰⁵ Cf. Ministerial Conference approves Russia’s WTO membership, WTO News, 16 December 2011, http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news11_e/acc_rus_16dec11_e.htm (accessed 26/10/2013); WTO membership rises to 157 with the entry of Russia and Vanuatu, WTO Press Release, 22 August, http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres12_e/pr671_e.htm (accessed 26/10/2013).

perspective, it established legal guarantees on trade and on future investments in the Russian market.³⁰⁶

Furthermore, Finnish leaders fostered cooperation with Russia over the exploration of Arctic mineral resources, which in their view offered the prospect of large long-term profits for Finnish companies. In particular, they encouraged Finnish investments in Arctic Russia and promoted the export of relevant Finnish technology and expertise. In order to further enhance bilateral relations, Finnish authorities also attempted to facilitate the mobility of Russian and Finnish citizens across the border, particularly through the opening of new visa application centres and the issuing of a large number of visas to Russian citizens.³⁰⁷

Among Finnish foreign policy makers, Russia's accession to the WTO and growing bilateral contacts strengthened the deep-rooted conviction that Russia was an essential partner for Finland.³⁰⁸ This context helps understand why Finnish leaders refrained from comments on the violation of democratic principles and human rights that characterised the 2011 and 2012 elections in Russia. During this period, their statements on Russia focused almost exclusively on economic cooperation. A more critical discourse emerged only in the spring and summer of 2012, urging the Russian authorities to strengthen the rule of law and respect human rights. However, this discourse did not supplant the one on economic cooperation, which remained dominant until the end of 2012.

Values matter, but economics more

In most of the statements retrieved for this analysis, Finnish foreign policy makers portrayed Russia as a fundamental economic partner for Finland. The increasing violations of democratic principles and civil unrest in Russia did not affect this

³⁰⁶ For data on Finnish-Russian trade, cf. Foreign trade 2011: Finnish trade in Figures. Finnish National Board of Customs, 2011, http://www.yrittajat.fi/File/0e613f82-8144-4445-bfc5-eb1bd33069c6/foreign_trade_pocket2011.pdf (accessed 26/10/2013).

³⁰⁷ Cf. Erkki Tuomioja's speech at the opening ceremony of the Visa Service Centre in Kouvola, 18 September 2012, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/1825/?language=en> (accessed 26/10/2013).

³⁰⁸ See chapter 4.

discourse significantly. According to the main argument in this narrative, Russia was becoming increasingly important for Finland as a result of its WTO accession and economic growth. Hence, Finland had to seek cooperation and intensify commercial relations. Economic advantage is the *topos* in this argumentative strategy. Within this discourse, Russia's democratisation and modernisation were considered as desirable developments, but by no means as fundamental preconditions for cooperation. This foreign policy stance reflected Finland's traditional pragmatic approach towards Russia, which shaped its bilateral relations with the Soviet Union during the Cold War and became a key constituent of Finnish foreign policy identity.³⁰⁹

In December 2011, while mass protests were spreading to numerous Russian cities, Finnish leaders rejoiced about Russia's WTO accession. Speaking at a seminar on the future of Europe in the Finnish city of Turku, prime minister Jyrki Katainen argued that "both Russia and its trading partners like us benefit hugely from Russia's integration into the global, rule-based system of trade relations".³¹⁰ A few days later, Alexander Stubb (now minister for European affairs and foreign trade) claimed that trade with Russia "headed towards a new era" and invited Finnish companies to make investments in the country.³¹¹

On the other hand, Finnish policy makers did not comment on the electoral manipulations and mass protests that were taking place in Russia during the same period. This stance was maintained also in forums where civil society and electoral issues were normally discussed. This emerges, for instance, from foreign minister Erkki Tuomioja's December 2011 speech at the ministerial council of the OSCE, the organisation which *inter alia* monitors and reports on elections in most European countries, including Russia.³¹² By the time the speech was held, OSCE reports about electoral manipulations had become available and spurred critical remarks on Russia

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Jyrki Katainen's speech Jyrki Katainen's speech at the seminar on the future of Europe in Turku, 12 December 2011, <http://www.eilen.fi/se/949/> (accessed 26/10/2013).

³¹¹ Finnish foreign ministry news, 16 December 2011, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=236663&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> (accessed 26/10/2013); Alexander Stubb was foreign minister until June 2011, when he moved to the position of minister for European affairs and foreign trade.

³¹² Erkki Tuomioja's speech at the OSCE ministerial council, 6 December 2011, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/467/?language=en> (accessed 26/10/2013).

by other participants in the ministerial conference, including German foreign minister Westerwelle.³¹³ Nevertheless, Tuomioja abstained from commenting on the topic. Similarly, president Tarja Halonen did not discuss internal developments in Russia during her last official visit to Moscow, on 17 and 18 January 2012.³¹⁴

The discourse advocating economic cooperation with Russia remained dominant also after the election of Sauli Niinistö, who succeeded to Halonen as president of Finland in March 2012. In his inauguration speech, Niinistö argued that “the values important to us [Finns] are fairness, strengthening sustainable development and supporting democracy, human rights and the rule of law”.³¹⁵ Nevertheless, his remarks on Russia reflected the pre-eminence of economic pragmatism over normative considerations.

Our relationship to Russia remains at the centre of our foreign policy. Both our bilateral relations with Russia and the evolving co-operation between the EU and Russia are important for us. Human and commercial interaction is increasing, and it is important to develop an operating environment as predictable as possible.

Developing a positive “operating environment” for trade with Russia remained Finland’s chief preoccupation under the new president. In Niinistö’s speeches, Russia was constructed as a fundamental partner and defined as “extremely important for Finland”, “our greatest single trading partner” and “at the centre of our foreign policy”.³¹⁶ Until the spring of 2012, this stance did not leave much room for criticism.

³¹³ Cf. Guido Westerwelle’s speech at the OSCE ministerial council, 6 December 2011.

³¹⁴ Finnish foreign ministry news, 17 January 2012, <http://www.presidentti.fi/halonen/Public/defaultf952.html?contentid=238834> (accessed 26/10/2013).

³¹⁵ Sauli Niinistö’s inauguration speech as president of Finland, 1 March 2012, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/1708/?language=en> (accessed 26/10/2013).

³¹⁶ Sauli Niinistö’s speech to the diplomatic corps in Helsinki, 26 April 2012, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/1775/?language=en> (accessed 26/10/2013); Sauli Niinistö’s speech at the

Nordic identity: dealing with an authoritarian partner

A partial change in Finnish official discourse took place in the spring and summer of 2012, when the country's foreign policy leaders started to voice their concerns about authoritarian developments in Russia. Most likely, the emergence of a more critical discourse was linked to the increasing repressiveness of Russian official policies after Putin's re-election in March 2012. Finnish leaders felt they could no longer ignore Russia's growing authoritarianism, which stood in clear contradiction with the values and norms they cherished in public statements.³¹⁷

While taking a more critical stance towards internal developments in Russia, Finnish policy makers continued to foster economic cooperation. In order to justify this posture, Finnish leaders made instrumental use of the country's Nordic identity. They argued that Finland was a Nordic society based on values such as the rule of law, democracy, openness and equal opportunity.³¹⁸ This provided them with moral ground to criticise domestic developments in Russia. At the same time, however, they argued that Russian society was fundamentally different from Nordic societies and had to be accepted for what it was. This approach, together with the narrative portraying Russia as a fundamental economic partner, allowed Finnish leaders to reconcile criticism with the support for a strong commercial relationship. Pragmatism is the *topos* linking this argumentative strategy to its policy implications.

The discourse criticising internal developments in Russia emerged progressively during the spring of 2012. Its inception can be detected, for instance, in a speech held by foreign minister Tuomioja in Helsinki on 12 April 2012, at a seminar concerning security in Northern Europe.

plenary session of Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum, 21 June 2012, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/1785/?language=en> (accessed 26/10/2013).

³¹⁷ Cf. Sauli Niinistö's inauguration speech as president of Finland; Sauli Niinistö's speech at the plenary session of Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum.

³¹⁸ Cf. Sauli Niinistö's speech at the plenary session of Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum.

For Europe and the Nordic area, developments in Russia are an important factor. It is of crucial importance that the situation in Russia remains stable and the democratic reform process continues along with strengthening the rule of law. Without this Russia's leaders cannot expect to achieve their goal of modernisation.³¹⁹

Tuomioja's statement was somewhat ambiguous, as it argued for both stability and for democratic change. However, if compared with previous statements, it reveals that the state of democracy and the rule of law were acquiring a more important role in Finnish official discourse on Russia.

By the late summer of 2012, the critical discourse about authoritarian developments in Russia had become more clearly delineated. On 20 August 2012, Niinistö expressed his concerns during an address to Finnish ambassadors. After discussing post-Soviet Russia's economic achievements, he argued:

Even in the eyes of the Russians themselves, Russia has not yet become everything that was perhaps hoped for. The reactions of the civil society show signs of frustration, disappointment and protest [...] We should not avoid voicing problems relating to rule of law, democracy or human rights in Russia.³²⁰

Finnish leaders followed this policy line during the visit of Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov to Finland in August 2012. Tuomioja expressed his concerns about the tightening of laws on the freedom of speech in Russia, while Niinistö and Katainen discussed the state of civil society in the country.³²¹ This was a remarkable shift from

³¹⁹ Erkki Tuomioja's speech at the seminar "Changing security environment – challenges in the North", 12 April 2012, <http://forin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=246548&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> (accessed 26/10/2013).

³²⁰ Sauli Niinistö's speech at the ambassador seminar in Helsinki, 20 August 2012, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/1788/?language=en> (accessed 26/10/2013).

³²¹ Finnish foreign ministry news, 23 August 2012, <http://www.forin.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=255671&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> (accessed 26/10/2013).

the official discourse in the previous months. However, as argued, the new narrative did not replace, but rather coexisted and was reconciled with the discourse focusing on economic cooperation. In the address to Finnish ambassadors referred to above, Niinistö also claimed:

As for us Finns, we must always take Russia for what she is. This is often easier said than done, as Russian society needs to be viewed through different lenses from those we use for Nordic society. Russia will remain important for Finland. Our strengths lie in our relations, which are functional at all levels, and in our ability to launch initiatives and create fruitful cooperation with Russia. Our economic contacts have grown to become extremely significant.³²²

Niinistö argued that any criticism of Russia had to take into account its different societal development and its economic importance for Finland. Most importantly, in spite of increasing concerns about its domestic developments, the image of Russia as a key partner remained dominant in his discourse. In official statements made in the last months of 2012, Niinistö and the other Finnish foreign policy leaders continued to portray Russia as one of the most attractive markets for Finnish companies, as well as a friendly neighbour offering significant opportunities for cooperation in the Arctic region.³²³

Conclusion

This case study highlighted the prevalence of economic interests over normative considerations in German, Polish and Finnish discourses on Russia during the street protests that took place in Russian cities in late 2011 and in 2012. As the protests

³²² Sauli Niinistö's speech at the ambassador seminar in Helsinki, 20 August 2012.

³²³ Sauli Niinistö's speech at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 11 October 2012, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/1797/?language=en> (accessed 26/10/2013); press release of the Finnish foreign ministry, 5 November 2011, <http://www.finnland.de/public/default.aspx?contentid=261755&nodeid=37055&contentlan=33&culture=de-DE> (accessed 26/10/2013).

occurred at a time when trade relations between the European Union and Russia were quickly improving, they provided an invaluable opportunity to research the discursive interaction between economics and norms in policy makers' narratives about Russia. As shown in chapter 4, parallel national discourses about Russia as both an economic partner and an authoritarian state had coexisted and clashed for a long time, each becoming dominant in different periods and social contexts.

German discourses best reflected the tension between economic interests and normative concerns. Between December 2011 and February 2012, low ranking foreign ministry officials focusing on civil society and human rights in Russia shaped the dominant German discourse. This narrative reflected the democratic and humanitarian component of German foreign policy identity. It was very critical of authoritarian developments in Russia and advocated a normative approach for German and EU foreign policy, including targeted sanctions towards Russian officials that were considered responsible for electoral mismanagement and human rights violations.

From March 2012, this narrative became increasingly challenged by a milder, more pragmatic stance, which was advocated by chancellor Angela Merkel and foreign minister Guido Westerwelle. Their discourse attempted to reconcile the normative component of German foreign policy identity with long-standing German perceptions of Russia as an economic partner. Merkel and Westerwelle argued that cooperation with Russia and criticism of its internal affairs were not mutually exclusive. Practically, however, this discourse put greater emphasis on economic interests, thereby implicitly rejecting the normative foreign policy approach advocated by the competing narrative. Due to Merkel's and Westerwelle's higher position in the hierarchy of government and greater access to national media, their discourse became dominant after March 2012.

As their German counterparts, Polish leaders emphasised economic and political cooperation far more than the respect of democratic standards. In 2011 and 2012, the Polish debate on Russia focused primarily on reconciliation and the resolution of practical issues in bilateral relations, such as the renegotiation of the price of Russian

gas and the investigation of the presidential plane's crash in Russia in 2010. Polish leaders opted for a cooperative and pragmatic approach towards Russia. This reflected the substantial shift in Polish foreign policy identity under Tusk's government, which was discussed in chapter 4.

Within this context, little room was left for critical remarks on elections and street demonstrations. Foreign minister Sikorski was the only Polish leader who regularly commented on domestic developments in Russia, mostly when journalists specifically asked him to do so. On these occasions, he expressed sympathy for Russian demonstrators and, drawing on a dominant Polish identity discourse, argued that Polish patriots also had to fight for democracy in the past. However, these statements were not followed by criticism of Russian policies and authorities. Sikorski emphasised that Putin's popularity remained very high and that Poland would continue to pursue cooperation and historical reconciliation with the Russian establishment.

Finnish foreign policy leaders also prioritised trade and cooperation with Russia. As Russia was Finland's main trade partner, its accession to the World Trade Organisation in August 2012 had positive effects on bilateral relations. Until the spring of 2012, Finnish leaders refrained from making critical comments on domestic developments in Russia. This foreign policy stance appeared as a continuation of Finland's long-standing cooperative approach towards both the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia.

In the spring and summer of 2012, Finnish foreign policy leaders constructed a more critical discourse. Most likely, the new narrative emerged as a reaction to the increasing repressiveness of Russian policies after Putin's re-election, which stood in clear contradiction with the democratic and humanitarian values advocated by Finnish leaders. However, this narrative did not supersede the one on partnership and economic cooperation. It was relativised by the argument that Russian society was based on different values from those of Nordic societies such as Finland. Furthermore, Finnish leaders continued to claim that Russia would remain an important partner for Finland regardless of its internal developments.

Therefore, narratives stressing economic cooperation emerged as dominant in all national discursive arenas under analysis. At official level, constructions of Russia as a partner proved stronger than those portraying it as a challenge for EU norms and values. From a comparative perspective, national discourses on Russia in 2011 and 2012 revealed a greater degree of convergence than in the two previous case studies. Economic and political pragmatism was increasingly becoming the common denominator of national narratives on Russia.

Chapter 8: National identities in the EU discursive arena: German, Polish and Finnish presidencies of the EU

Introduction

This chapter analyses German, Polish and Finnish foreign policy leaders' discourses on Russia during their latest national presidencies of the European Union, which took place between July 2006 and December 2011. In particular, it focuses on speeches in which national leaders discussed policies towards Russia in their functions as representatives of the rotating presidency. This focus allows an analysis of the relevance of national identity in the formulation of narratives about Russia in the EU discursive arena. Moreover, it exposes similarities and differences in national conceptualisations of Russia at the EU level, arguing that these can be understood through the prism of national identity.

The main research questions addressed in this chapter are: how do German, Polish and Finnish leaders describe Russia and the EU's relations with Russia during their respective national presidencies of the European Union? How do dominant discourses relate to national identity and to historical perceptions of Russia? Which discursive strategies are used and how do they relate to the key arguments made by the speakers? Does national identity contribute to an understanding of different discourses on Russia within the European Union? As in the previous case studies, the interpretation of discourses relies on the findings of chapter 4 concerning national identity and dominant historical narratives about Russia.

The chapter begins with the contextualisation of the three EU presidencies under analysis. The main foreign policy events and the status of EU-Russia relations during each presidency are reviewed briefly. Subsequently, the main discourses on Russia and EU-Russia relations of the three presidencies' leaders are presented. The analysis follows the chronological order of the presidencies, starting with the Finnish and

ending with the Polish presidency. Finally, dominant discourses on Russia during the three presidencies are compared and contrasted in the chapter's concluding remarks.

Essentially, this case study shows that national conceptualisations of Russia based on dominant identity narratives constitute and influence foreign policy discourses also within the European Union. Furthermore, it exposes how national priorities concerning Russia are transposed discursively to the European level. Ultimately, the results of this analysis allow for an identity-based understanding of divergence and convergence in the three presidencies' discursive construction of relations with Russia.

The Finnish, German and Polish presidencies of the EU, 2006-2011

The presidency of the European Union rotates among member states every six months and provides the country holding it with the opportunity to include *inter alia* its national policy priorities in the Union's agenda (cf. Szabo 2011, Vandecasteele et al. 2013). Most importantly for the purposes of this study, the political leaders of a member state holding the rotating presidency intervene in debates at EU institutions in order to present policy priorities and strategies to implement them during the presidency. Chronologically, Finland's was the first of the three presidencies under investigation, spanning from July until December 2006. The German presidency followed immediately after, from January until June 2007. In contrast, the Polish presidency took place much later, between July and December 2011. The three presidencies fall within the timeframe of this study (2005-2012). However, as they took place at different times, a few introductory and contextual remarks are necessary before presenting the analysis of discourses.

While the Finnish and German presidencies occurred before the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon (which became effective on 1 December 2009), the Polish presidency had to follow the rules established by the new legal framework. From a juridical and political perspective, this difference is significant because the Lisbon

Treaty reduced the powers and prerogatives of the rotating presidency, particularly in the field of foreign policy. The treaty provided for the appointment of a permanent Council president and a High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, chairing respectively the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council. Both chairs had previously been held by the rotating presidency. Furthermore, the treaty narrowed the agenda-shaping powers of the rotating presidency, particularly in foreign policy (Gebhard 2011: 122-123, Szabo 2011: 6-9).

For the purposes of the ensuing discourse analysis, however, the different legal framework under which the Polish presidency operated is not of essential importance. In spite of its reduced powers, the rotating presidency continued to influence debates and advocate its priorities in many EU institutional forums, including those concerning the Union's external action (cf. Gebhard 2011: 123, Pech 2011: 34-35). This is particularly true of the Polish presidency, which was very active in setting the agenda for EU policies towards the Eastern neighbourhood (Vandecasteele et al. 2013: 20; cf. Bunse and Klein 2014). Therefore, in spite of the changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, we can expect also high-ranking representatives of the Polish presidency to have participated in the debate and constructed narratives about the Union's foreign policy.

While EU institutional changes did not affect considerably the substance of this analysis, the international context in which each presidency took place was an important varying factor. As different international configurations may have affected the presidencies' priorities, and hence Russia's prominence therein, appropriate contextualisation is necessary. The Finnish presidency started half a year after a major Russian-Ukrainian dispute over the price of Russian gas, which led to a temporary drop in shipments to the EU (Stern 2006: 43-49). We can therefore expect energy relations with Russia to feature prominently in Finland's presidency agenda and in the speeches of Finnish leaders.

Furthermore, the Finnish presidency attempted to start negotiations with Russia for a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), as the existing legal framework for bilateral relations was expiring at the end of 2007. However, this attempt was

frustrated by a Polish veto on the launch of negotiations in November 2006. Warsaw used the veto in response to a Russian ban on the import of Polish meat, imposed earlier in 2006 (Reeves 2010: 351). The human rights situation and freedom of the press in Russia also raised concerns in the EU during the Finnish presidency. These issues featured prominently in European media after the murder of Anna Politkovskaya, one of the most prominent critics of the contemporary Russian political establishment (Azghikhina 2007).

In order to address outstanding issues in EU-Russia relations, the Finnish leadership invited Russian president Vladimir Putin to attend an informal summit of EU heads of state or government in the Finnish city of Lahti on 20 October 2006.³²⁴ Moreover, the following November the Finnish presidency hosted one of the biannual EU-Russia summits in Helsinki.³²⁵ The presidency's focus on Russia was compounded by the decision to renew the Northern Dimension, a Finnish policy initiative at the EU level launched in 1999 to promote cooperation in Northern Europe with Russia, Iceland and Norway (cf. Haukkala 2010: 152-167).³²⁶

Despite the efforts of the Finnish leadership, EU-Russia relations appeared to be deteriorating when Germany took over the rotating presidency in January 2007. In the following six months, the Polish veto frustrated German hopes of opening negotiations with Russia on a new PCA. In early January, the reliability of EU fossil fuel imports from Russia was called into question again when deliveries of Russian oil were discontinued as a result of a dispute between the Kremlin and Belarus, a key transit country (cf. Balmaceda 2012). The dispute did not have any significant impact on the EU and was solved within two days. However, in a meeting with Putin on 21

³²⁴ "EU summit to focus on Russia and energy", *Euractiv*, 16 October 2006, <http://www.euractiv.com/energy/eu-summit-focus-russia-energy/article-158812> (accessed 15/2/2014).

³²⁵ Press release of the Finnish EU presidency, 24 November 2006, http://www.eu2006.fi/NEWS_AND_DOCUMENTS/PRESS_RELEASES/VKO47/EN_GB/175543/INDEX.HTML (accessed 15/2/2014).

³²⁶ The nature and aims of the Northern Dimension are described in detail in the websites of the Finnish foreign ministry (<http://formin.finland.fi/Public/default.aspx?nodeid=15579&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>, accessed 15/2/2014) and of the EU's External Action Service (http://www.eeas.europa.eu/north_dim/, accessed 15/2/2014).

January, German chancellor and European Council president Angela Merkel expressed the need of better communications with Russia over energy issues.³²⁷

Even more significantly, the German presidency took place against a broader context of deteriorating security relations between Russia and the West. Speaking at the Munich Security Conference in February 2007, Putin attacked US plans to deploy an anti-missile defence system in East-Central Europe and the unwillingness of NATO countries to ratify the Adapted Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe.³²⁸ Tensions over both issues resulted in Putin's announcement of a Russian moratorium on the treaty in late April 2007 (Wilcox 2011; cf. Averre 2009a: 101-102). While these controversies did not involve the EU presidency directly, they arguably had an impact on EU-Russia relations, as most EU countries were also NATO members and US allies.

Furthermore, in April 2007 tensions between Russia and Estonia escalated as a result of the Estonian government's decision to relocate a Soviet war memorial in the capital city of Tallin. The decision led to heavy protests by the large Russian minority living in Estonia, which perceived the monument as an important identity symbol. Protests took place also in Moscow, where demonstrators besieged the Estonian embassy for a week. Most significantly, the websites of numerous Estonian public and private institutions were targeted by widespread cyberattacks. The Estonian government accused the Kremlin of masterminding the attacks (cf. Ehala 2009, Haukkala 2010a).³²⁹ The EU-Russia summit organised by the German presidency took place against this backdrop in May 2007.

Mostly due to this succession of crises, relations with Russia were one of the main concerns for the Finnish and German presidencies. By the time Poland took over the rotating presidency in July 2011, tensions with Russia no longer dominated the EU's

³²⁷ "Merkel calls for improved EU-Russia energy ties", *Deutsche Welle*, 21 January 2007, <http://www.dw.de/merkel-calls-for-improved-eu-russia-energy-ties/a-2320330> (accessed 15/2/2014).

³²⁸ The integral text of Putin's speech at the conference is available at http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2007/02/10/0138_type82912type82914type82917type84779_118123.shtml (accessed 15/2/2014); see also chapter 6.

³²⁹ "Estonia hit by 'Moscow cyber war'", *BBC News*, 17 May 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6665145.stm> (accessed 15/2/2014).

foreign policy agenda. Some contentious issues (for instance, negotiations on a new PCA) no longer seemed to be a priority for either side, while others (notably the security of Russian energy supplies) appeared to be temporarily solved.³³⁰ Furthermore, developments in other regions of the world, most particularly the Arab Spring revolutions, shifted the attention of European foreign policy makers away from Russia.

With regard to Eastern Europe, the Polish presidency focused primarily on the organisation of the Eastern Partnership summit in Warsaw, which took place on 29 and 30 September 2011 (Vandecasteele et al. 2013: 10). As Russia did not participate in the Eastern Partnership, Polish leaders referred to it only tangentially during the summit. In relations with Moscow, the Polish presidency sought to avoid tensions and prioritised pragmatic issues, notably the negotiations on a visa-free area for residents of Russia's Kaliningrad region and the adjacent Polish provinces.³³¹ Furthermore, in contrast with its posture during the Finnish and German presidencies, in the second half of 2011 the Russian government was much more focused on domestic politics, notably on the upcoming parliamentary elections of December 2011 and on the presidential elections of March 2012.³³²

The Finnish EU presidency: building bridges with the Russian partner

During its EU presidency, Finland devoted considerable attention to strengthening relations with Russia, particularly in the areas of trade and energy. The priorities of Finland's presidency concerning EU external relations reflected long-standing

³³⁰ The last energy transit crisis (involving a Russian-Ukrainian dispute) took place in January 2009, after which the EU and Russia set up an early warning mechanism to ensure a rapid and coordinated reaction in case of emergency situations; see http://ec.europa.eu/energy/international/russia/dialogue/warning_en.htm (accessed 15/2/2014).

³³¹ "Visa-free travel gets a lift from Russia-Poland agreement", *Russia Today*, 14 December 2011, <http://rt.com/politics/russia-poland-moscow-visa-free-travel-katyn-767/> (accessed 15/2/2014).

³³² See chapter 7.

Finnish perceptions of Russia as a key economic and security partner.³³³ The dominant discourse on Russia among Finnish foreign policy leaders stressed the need of fostering closer ties between the European Union and the Kremlin, particularly due to Russia's significance as an energy provider.

Next to this narrative, a normative discourse was also prominent in Finnish foreign policy circles. It argued that relations with Russia should be based on the respect of market principles, human rights and democracy. In addition, it stressed the importance of solidarity among EU member states as a precondition for the formulation of a shared and effective European foreign policy towards Russia. This discourse epitomised the significance of the normative dimension and of EU solidarity in Finnish foreign policy identity.

Russia as a strategic European partner

The discourse advocating closer ties with Russia was based primarily on economic arguments, but it also rested on cultural considerations. Finnish leaders argued that cooperation with Russia should be pursued both in order to strengthen the security of EU energy supplies and because Russia belonged to Europe in cultural terms. In this argumentative strategy, economic advantage and culture are the *topoi* connecting the main argument (Russia is a key energy partner and belongs to Europe culturally) with its logical conclusion (relations with Russia must be strengthened). The historical construction of Russia as a key economic partner, and particularly Finnish leaders' self-perception as bridge builders between the West and Russia, provide the identity-based interpretive key to understand this discourse.

The importance attributed to Russia transpired from the initial stages of the Finnish presidency. Speaking at a plenary session of the European Parliament in early July 2006, prime minister Matti Vanhanen announced that "Finland's presidency [would]

³³³ Cf. Matti Vanhanen's address to the Finnish Parliament, 21 June 2006, [http://www.eu2006.fi/NEWS AND DOCUMENTS/SPEECHES/INDEX.HTM](http://www.eu2006.fi/NEWS_AND_DOCUMENTS/SPEECHES/INDEX.HTM) (accessed 15/2/2014).

place particular emphasis on relations with Russia”.³³⁴ A few days later, foreign minister Erkki Tuomioja told the European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs that Russia was “among our [Finland’s] key priorities in EU’s external action”.³³⁵ Finnish leaders’ self-perception as bridge builders between Russia and the West emerged most clearly in Vanhanen’s address to the Finnish Parliament concerning the priorities of the Finnish presidency.

The EU’s relations with our most important neighbour, Russia, and the Northern Dimension are included in the list of priorities during our term. We believe that we can contribute towards improving relations between the EU and Russia [...] We should put the EU’s relations with Russia on a new footing; a more long-term framework is needed.³³⁶

Vanhanen’s claim that Finland could “contribute towards improving relations between the EU and Russia” exemplified the long-standing attitude of Finnish leaders to seek a role as facilitators in relations between Russia and the West.³³⁷ In addition, the use of perspectivation (highlighted by the repetition of the pronoun “we”) conveyed Vanhanen’s personal commitment to strengthening EU-Russia relations. Arguably, as “we” stood broadly for “Finnish leadership”, perspectivation in this context also suggested that Finnish diplomacy was particularly suited to the task of strengthening the partnership with Russia.

In his address to the Finnish Parliament, Vanhanen defined Russia as “our most important neighbour”, using the discursive strategy of predication. In the speeches by Finnish leaders retrieved for this study, predication was instrumental in the construction of Russia as a key partner for the EU and as a European country. The use of this linguistic device was reiterated in many of the Finnish texts under analysis. For instance, in his talk at the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for

³³⁴ Matti Vanhanen’s speech at the plenary session of the European Parliament, 5 July 2006, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/578/?language=en> (accessed 15/2/2014).

³³⁵ Erkki Tuomioja’s speech at the European Parliament, Committee on Foreign Affairs, 12 July 2006, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=71204> (accessed 15/2/2014).

³³⁶ Matti Vanhanen’s address to the Finnish Parliament, 21 June 2006.

³³⁷ See chapter 4.

Union Affairs, Vanhanen argued that “Russia is a European country, a close neighbour and strategic partner for the European Union”.³³⁸

Most notably, both Vanhanen and president Tarja Halonen portrayed Russia as a “strategic partner” on multiple occasions during the Finnish presidency. In September 2006, for example, Halonen told members of the European Parliament that “today Russia is a strategic partner of the EU”.³³⁹ Speaking at the European Business Leaders Convention in Saint Petersburg in July 2006, Vanhanen explained that the strategic nature of the EU-Russia partnership was due to their complementarity in the energy field:

Russia is a strategic partner to the EU, and this is especially true in energy, where Russia and the EU have complementary needs – the EU as a customer and Russia as a supplier.³⁴⁰

Halonen and Vanhanen followed the same line of argument in other speeches held during the Finnish presidency, describing EU-Russia relations in terms of “mutually beneficial interdependence” and of “close and interdependent cultural, economic and political lives”.³⁴¹

Portraying Russia as a country close to the EU in cultural, economic and political terms was functional to the Finnish presidency’s objective of strengthening relations with the Kremlin. In particular, Finnish leaders repeatedly classified Russia as a European country through the discursive strategy of categorisation. As shown,

³³⁸ Matti Vanhanen’s speech at the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs, 20 November 2006, <http://www.eilen.fi/fi/680/?language=en> (accessed 15/2/2014); the forum includes the committees dealing with EU affairs in the national parliaments of member states and the representatives of the European Parliament.

³³⁹ Tarja Halonen’s speech at the European Parliament, 5 September 2006, <http://www.eilen.fi/se/1413/> (accessed 15/2/2014).

³⁴⁰ Matti Vanhanen’s keynote speech at the European Business Leaders Convention, 7 July 2006, <http://www.eilen.fi/fi/579/?language=en> (accessed 15/2/2014).

³⁴¹ Matti Vanhanen’s speech at Visby conference “Prosperity and Sustainability - Local Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region”, 17 August 2006, <http://www.eilen.fi/fi/627/?language=en> (accessed 15/2/2014); Matti Vanhanen’s speech at the EU-Russia Industrialists’ roundtable meeting, 23 November 2006, <http://www.eilen.fi/fi/681/?language=en> (accessed 15/2/2014).

Vanhanen stressed that Russia was “a European country” in an EU institutional context.³⁴² In another speech held at the European Parliament, he argued that the EU-Russia partnership should be based on “our common European values”.³⁴³ Halonen also emphasised Russia’s Europeanness in her speech at the European Parliament in September 2006, highlighting in particular historical factors and Russian leaders’ statements on the country’s European orientation.

The fate of Russia and that of the rest of Europe have been linked for centuries [...] The Russian leadership has repeatedly declared that Russia is irreversibly linked with Europe.³⁴⁴

The underlying logic of this categorisation was that, if the perception of Russia as a European country became dominant among EU public opinion and political elites, the Finnish presidency could effectively use cultural and historical arguments to justify its cooperative stance towards Moscow. Hence, the discursive construction of Russia as “European” would allow Finland to act in accordance with its self-perception as bridge builder between the West and Russia.

Furthermore, the portrayal of Russia as a strategic, European partner paved the way for ambitious policy objectives for the Finnish presidency. At the beginning of the presidency semester, Vanhanen told the European Parliament that the Finnish presidency aimed to establish a “broad-based partnership” with Russia.³⁴⁵ In mid-July, he specified that Finland intended to “launch negotiations on an ambitious and comprehensive new post-PCA with Russia”.³⁴⁶ Despite the Polish veto on the launch of the negotiations in October, Vanhanen continued to stress that relations with Russia were a priority for the Finnish presidency. As late as November 2006, on the

³⁴² Matti Vanhanen’s speech at the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs, 20 November 2006.

³⁴³ Matti Vanhanen’s speech at the plenary session of the European Parliament, 5 July 2006.

³⁴⁴ Tarja Halonen’s speech at the European Parliament, 5 September 2006, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/1413/?language=en> (accessed 15/2/2014).

³⁴⁵ Matti Vanhanen’s speech at the plenary session of the European Parliament, 5 July 2006.

³⁴⁶ Matti Vanhanen’s speech at the Centre for European Policy Studies, 12 July 2006, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/580/?language=en> (accessed 15/2/2014).

eve of the EU-Russia summit in Helsinki, he argued that “the main objective of the Finnish presidency [was] to contribute to the development of the EU-Russia relationship in the long-term”.³⁴⁷

A partnership based on values and solidarity

Finnish leaders qualified their arguments in favour of the partnership with Russia with normative statements specifying the conditions for cooperation. These statements can be analysed as a distinct narrative that reflects the prominence of market principles and of values such as democracy and EU solidarity in Finnish foreign policy identity. The main argument in this narrative contended that norms and solidarity among member states were essential prerequisites for a successful EU foreign policy. Law and advantage are the *topoi* connecting the argument with its logical conclusion: in relations with Russia, member states should follow the Union’s founding principles and be united in order to achieve the best possible foreign policy outcome.

The normative discourse appeared in Vanhanen’s address to the European Parliament on 5 July 2006, when he argued that the partnership with Russia had to be

based on our [the EU’s and Russia’s] common European values and global interests. The goal is to intensify Russia’s involvement in democratic European cooperation in various sectors of society.³⁴⁸

Vanhanen specified what he meant by “common European values” in a subsequent speech at the EU-Russia Industrialists’ Round Table Meeting.

³⁴⁷ Matti Vanhanen’s speech at the EU-Russia Industrialists’ roundtable meeting, 23 November 2006.

³⁴⁸ Matti Vanhanen’s speech at the plenary session of the European Parliament, 5 July 2006.

Foundations of our strategic partnership are the shared values of democracy, rule of law and human rights as well as the principles of market economy and sustainable development.³⁴⁹

As emerges from this passage, Finnish leaders conflated human rights and market principles into a single normative discourse concerning relations with Russia. This narrative reflected the Finnish presidency's key objective of establishing an overarching normative base for EU-Russia relations, particularly through a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. The interaction of identity, discourses and policy that emerges in this context provides further evidence for the model theorised in chapter 2. The normative discourse is a reflection of deep-rooted Finnish support of human rights, democracy and market principles, which are constituents of Finnish national identity. In addition, the normative discourse is closely interrelated with policy making, which shows that policies are discursively constructed.

Finnish leaders' advocacy of market principles was particularly forceful in the field of energy, the most important area of EU-Russia economic relations. Following the disruptions caused by the Russian-Ukrainian gas dispute of January 2006, the Finnish presidency sought Moscow's cooperation to restore European confidence in Russia's role as energy supplier. Vanhanen's talk at the European Business Leaders Convention in Saint Petersburg epitomised Finland's normative approach to energy relations.

During the Finnish presidency of the EU, Russia has an excellent opportunity to demonstrate its willingness to work constructively with the EU as a reliable supplier and energy partner. The key in developing this energy relationship between Russia and the EU is reciprocity [...] Energy trade with Russia should be based on business interests, long-term contracts and market prices.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁹ Matti Vanhanen's speech at the EU-Russia Industrialists' roundtable meeting, 23 November 2006.

³⁵⁰ Matti Vanhanen's keynote speech at the European Business Leaders Convention, 7 July 2006.

Consistent with Finland's construction as bridge builder with Russia, Vanhanen adopted a positive stance towards energy cooperation, which is reflected in his choice of vocabulary ("work constructively", "reliable supplier", "energy partner"). Simultaneously, however, he made normative statements on how cooperation "should be" in the future.

His speech at the European Parliament on the outcome of the Lahti summit exposed the combination of a positive posture towards Russia with the advocacy of norms for cooperation.

The tone of the debate was positive and, despite certain slight differences, also very coherent [...] With regard to energy relations, we agreed that there is a need for tighter cooperation. This cooperation should be based on the principles laid down in the Energy Charter and the G8 declaration [...] These principles should already be applied now and they should be incorporated in a concrete form into the forthcoming EU-Russia Agreement.³⁵¹

Although during the summit Putin had clashed with several European leaders on the issue of human rights, Vanhanen wrote off disagreements with Russia as "certain slight differences" (cf. Peterson 2012: 214). However, he also took a normative stance on the relationship with Russia, which is highlighted by the repetition of the verb "should" and the phrase "there is a need for".

Furthermore, Vanhanen argued that the achievement of a common position on Russia including all EU member states was the essential precondition for a value-based relationship.

The European Union needs to be able to speak to its partners with one voice. If we are divided and disunited, we will be weak. We will not be able to defend our interests or promote the values on which the Union is

³⁵¹ Matti Vanhanen's speech at the plenary session of the European Parliament, 25 October 2006, <http://www.eilen.fi/en/671/?language=en> (accessed 15/2/2014).

based. At Lahti, we succeeded in showing president Putin that the Union is united and determined.³⁵²

Vanhanen's statement reflected Finnish commitment to EU solidarity and values. Most notably, it exposed his belief that EU solidarity was essential for a successful policy towards Russia. This argument was reiterated by other leaders of the Finnish presidency. For instance, Tarja Halonen claimed that cooperation within the EU was "vital" for the Union's energy policy towards Russia.³⁵³

Significantly, Vanhanen used the need to formulate a common EU position on Russia also as an argument to prompt reluctant member states to engage in dialogue with the Kremlin. For example, he urged Polish leaders to lift their veto on the start of negotiations on a new EU-Russia PCA, arguing that "without a new agreement for the Union as a whole, the only option is for each country to deal bilaterally with Russia on energy and other crucial issues".³⁵⁴ Vanhanen's statement suggested that EU member states could not avoid dealing with Russia on essential matters such as energy supplies. Accordingly, vetoing negotiations with Russia within the EU would merely move them to the bilateral level, where individual member states had less bargaining power. Through this line of argument, the Finnish presidency could advocate simultaneously stronger relations with Russia and EU solidarity, thereby acting consistently with Finland's self-perception both as bridge builder with Russia and as promoter of European integration.³⁵⁵

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Tarja Halonen's speech at the European Parliament, 5 September 2006.

³⁵⁴ Matti Vanhanen's speech at the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs, 20 November 2006.

³⁵⁵ See chapter 4.

The German EU presidency: partnership for energy and human rights

The stance of the German presidency on relations with Russia was similar to that of the Finnish presidency, particularly in its advocacy of a new EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. German leaders' support for the strategic partnership with Russia was even more emphatic, notably in the field of energy. The long-standing German-Russian energy partnership and Germany's *Ostpolitik* tradition help understand this approach. In some of the speeches under analysis, they were overtly used by speakers as arguments to explain or justify Germany's position towards Russia.

German leaders also adopted a normative discourse about EU-Russia relations, stressing democratic principles and human rights. However, the German narrative differed from the Finnish normative discourse. It suggested that the partnership with Russia would be conducive to its democratisation and hence put less emphasis on the respect of democratic principles and human rights as preconditions for cooperation. Moreover, it juxtaposed economic partnership and democratic transformation, thereby implying that they were closely interconnected.

Partnership and energy

Throughout the German presidency, Russia's key role as EU energy provider was the main argument in German leaders' speeches advocating cooperation with Moscow. In this discursive strategy, economic advantage is the *topos* linking the argument (Russia is an essential energy provider) to its logical conclusion (the EU should pursue a partnership with Russia). The objective of strengthening energy relations provided the rationale for the overall policy of the German presidency towards Russia. This is exemplified by German leaders' claims that the EU should negotiate a new PCA with Russia in order to consolidate and regulate energy relations. Other policy fields were subordinate to energy.

This line of argument appeared in Angela Merkel's first speech at the European Parliament during the German presidency, in January 2007.

Yet we must not look solely towards America. For Europe's partnership with Russia is also strategically significant and should be expanded as broad as possible. That is why we have to negotiate a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. The question of cooperation on energy issues will play a key role in this. We will do our utmost to ensure that negotiations can begin during the German presidency.³⁵⁶

Merkel stressed the "key role" of energy cooperation in relations with Russia, which she portrayed as "strategically significant", using the discursive strategy of predication. Moreover, she expressed her personal commitment to starting negotiations on the new PCA during the German presidency, which is emphasised through perspectivation (signalled by the phrase "we will do our utmost").

Merkel's urge to start negotiations on the PCA was reiterated in most of her addresses to the European Parliament as representative of the German presidency and became more and more emphatic as the EU-Russia summit approached. Energy cooperation was used consistently as the main argument for launching negotiations. On 13 February, she argued that energy policy would be a priority for the German presidency in the PCA negotiations. In addition, she regretted that negotiations had not started earlier and expressed her hopes that they would begin at the Samara summit ("I am hopeful that we will have taken a positive step forward by the time we meet for the EU-Russia summit in May").³⁵⁷

Merkel's views were echoed by Steinmeier in his speech at the European Parliament in mid-March 2007. The German foreign minister claimed that the German

³⁵⁶ Angela Merkel's speech at the European Parliament, 17 January 2007, http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Speeches_Interviews/January/Rede_Bundeskanzlerin2.html (accessed 15/2/2014).

³⁵⁷ Angela Merkel's speech at the European Parliament, 13 February 2007, http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Speeches_Interviews/February/0213BKinEP.html (accessed 15/2/2014).

presidency “continue[d] to advocate the early launch of negotiations on a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement” because the EU needed “a reliable and transparent energy relationship with Russia”.³⁵⁸ Confronted with Poland’s protracted opposition to starting negotiations, Merkel made another forceful appeal at the European Parliament at the end of March.

Alongside the transatlantic partnership, the strategic partnership with Russia is absolutely crucial to us. I hope that we will be able to overcome the obstacles which are currently preventing us – or to be more precise the Commission – from engaging in negotiations [...] for the negotiations on a new partnership agreement are of course essential, particularly with regard to energy security and the energy partnership. I therefore believe we should attach prime importance to these negotiations. The EU-Russia summit to be held in Samara in Russia is therefore of the greatest significance.³⁵⁹

Merkel’s choice of vocabulary and use of predication conveyed the urgency of negotiating a new PCA with Russia. The partnership with Russia was defined “strategic” and “absolutely crucial to us” and PCA negotiations were considered “essential” and of “prime importance”. The discursive construction of Russia as a key strategic partner was functional to Merkel’s objective of opening negotiations at the Samara summit, which she described as an event “of the greatest significance”.

Merkel further emphasised the importance of the relationship with Russia by juxtaposing it to the transatlantic partnership. The comparison was even more explicit in her speech at the official ceremony held in Berlin to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the treaty establishing the European Economic Community.

³⁵⁸ Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s speech at the European Parliament, 14 March 2007, http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Speeches_Interviews/March/0314AAERvorEP.html (accessed 15/2/2014).

³⁵⁹ Angela Merkel’s speech at the European Parliament, 28 March 2007, http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Speeches_Interviews/March/0328BK.html (accessed 15/2/2014).

I firmly believe that close, amicable relations with the United States of America and a strong NATO are and will remain in Europe's fundamental interest. [...] A comprehensive strategic partnership with Russia is just as important to Europe. We need both a strategic partnership with Russia and the transatlantic alliance.³⁶⁰

Speaking to an audience of EU heads of state or government, Merkel went as far as putting relations with Russia on a par with the alliance with the United States, which has been one of the cornerstones of Germany's foreign policy since the end of the Second World War (cf. Hyde-Price 2000:180). This juxtaposition highlights the construction of Russia as an essential economic and security partner in German foreign policy identity, which dates back to Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*.³⁶¹

Partnership, human rights and economics

Alongside the discourse concerning energy relations with Russia, another narrative was also prominent in German leaders' speeches during Germany's EU presidency. It advocated economic cooperation with Russia by stressing that it would have positive effects on its democratic transformation. Thus, the narrative provided a value-based argument in favour of economic cooperation. Economic advantage is the *topos* linking the main argument (economic cooperation with Russia contributed to its democratic transformation) with its logical conclusion (Germany and the EU should strengthen the partnership with Russia). The construction of Russia as a key economic partner and the prominence of values such as democracy and human rights in German identity provide a framework to understand this discourse.

The linkage between economic partnership and democratisation appeared, for instance, in Steinmeier's address to the OSCE Permanent Council in January 2007.

³⁶⁰ Angela Merkel's speech at the official ceremony for the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, 25 March 2007, http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Speeches_Interviews/March/0325BKBerliner.html (accessed 15/2/2014).

³⁶¹ See chapter 4.

While presenting the objectives of the German rotating presidency in the EU's neighbourhood, he stated:

Firstly, during the next few months we would like to consolidate and expand the European Union's strategic partnership with Russia. Russia's transformation into a democratic state based on the rule of law and into a strong economic partner is a key task for the EU. [...] We therefore want to prepare a new agreement which will substantially enhance the quality of our relations.³⁶²

The concepts of democratisation and economic partnership were juxtaposed and subsumed under a single, overarching task for the EU. The idea that the EU could contribute to Russia's transformation through a policy of engagement and partnership was consistent with the key tenet of West Germany's *Ostpolitik* from the 1960s onwards, namely the concept of "change through rapprochement" (*Wandel durch Annäherung*). Indeed, in a speech delivered at the end of the presidency semester, Steinmeier overtly claimed that Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* provided the philosophy for his party's policy towards Russia in 2007.³⁶³

Accordingly, Steinmeier argued that the EU should continue cooperation with Russia in spite of problems in its process of democratisation. In January 2007, in a speech concerning the future of Europe, he stated:

A long-term future alliance with Russia is no less important [than Turkey's EU accession]. Surely, it's a difficult topic, especially these days [...] Russia is no flawless democracy. It does not have a long democratic tradition either. But it is in the interest of Europe that we do

³⁶² Frank-Walter Steinmeier's speech at the OSCE Permanent Council, 18 January 2007, http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Speeches_Interviews/January/0118AAOSZE.html (accessed 15/2/2014).

³⁶³ "In its lead motion for the party congress in October, the German Social Democratic Party is now drafting a new policy of detente that is based on the experiences and the principles of this time [the 1970s and 1980s]"; Frank-Walter Steinmeier's speech at the Willy-Brandt-Haus in Berlin, 2 July 2007, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2007/070702-Buchvorstellung.html> (accessed 15/2/2014).

and support everything in order to favour the anchoring of European values in Russia and a tight interdependence with our continent. And, not least, also considerable economic interests tie us to Russia.³⁶⁴

As in the speech at the OSCE Permanent Council, Steinmeier juxtaposed the EU's economic interests and the objective of contributing to Russia's democratisation. Although he admitted that Russia was "no flawless democracy", Steinmeier used both the economic and the normative argument in order to advocate an ambitious policy of engagement, aiming at "a long-term future alliance".³⁶⁵

Furthermore, Steinmeier claimed that Russia's democratic transformation should take place in accordance with both European values and its traditions. In an article concerning the EU's policy towards Eastern Europe that was published in the international relations magazine *Internationale Politik* in March 2007, Steinmeier argued:

We want a thriving Russia that is geared to European values and manages successfully its transformation into a stable, constitutional democracy, while taking into account its own traditions.³⁶⁶

The phrase "taking into account its own traditions" toned down Steinmeier's normative discourse, as it suggested that Russia could follow its own path to democracy. This argument reflected Steinmeier's cooperative attitude towards the Kremlin and his reluctance to endorse an inflexible normative policy. Such an uncompromising stance would have been hard to reconcile with the German EU presidency's objective of starting negotiations on a new PCA at the Samara summit.

³⁶⁴ Frank-Walter Steinmeier speech at the conference "Talks about Europe", 14 January 2007, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2007/070114-Muenchen.html> (accessed 15/2/2014).

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's article on *Internationale Politik*, "Verflechtung und Integration", March 2007, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2007/070315-ArtikelIP.html> (accessed 15/5/2013).

At the summit, despite the enduring Polish veto on PCA negotiations and the escalation of the Russian-Estonian crisis in April, Merkel and Steinmeier kept a conciliatory tone towards Russia. Merkel stated that there were many areas where the EU and Russia could work together and claimed that difficulties could be overcome.³⁶⁷ Similarly, Steinmeier argued that conflicts could be solved and that he intended to contribute to their resolution. Within this context, he also reiterated the significance of relations with Russia.

Alongside the consolidation and expansion of our transatlantic partnership, alongside the deepening of European integration, of course we have to develop a reasonable relationship with Russia. That is why I always say that we can't forget our long-term interests despite the current conflicts. We have to work on this, even if sometimes – as in the last summit – it is a bit difficult.³⁶⁸

Steinmeier mentioned relations with Russia next to the transatlantic partnership and the deepening of European integration, which highlights the importance he attached to them. Most notably, his statement unambiguously conveyed the message that cooperation with Russia should continue because long-term interests were more important than occasional conflicts. This line of argument exemplified German leaders' deep-rooted belief that Russia is a key factor in the international arena and an indispensable partner for Germany.

³⁶⁷ Press release of the German presidency of the EU, 18 May 2007, http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/May/0518AASamara.html (accessed 15/2/2014).

³⁶⁸ Frank-Walter Steinmeier's interview with the German television channel ARD, 20 May 2007, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2007/070520-BerichtAusBerlin.html> (accessed 15/2/2014).

The Polish EU presidency: pragmatism and civilisational mission

During the Polish presidency, the foreign policy statements of Polish leaders focused primarily on Eastern Partnership countries, notably on Ukraine. This focus corresponded to the presidency's objectives of intensifying relations with Ukraine and holding a successful Eastern Partnership summit in Warsaw at the end of September 2011. Within this context, relations with Russia (which did not participate in the Eastern Partnership) played mostly a secondary role in Polish official statements. The economic crisis, the Arab Spring and reflections on the symbolic significance of the Polish presidency as accomplishment of Poland's "return to Europe" also took precedence over relations with Russia. This scale of priorities is reflected in the speeches held by Polish leaders for the inauguration of the Polish presidency.³⁶⁹

Nevertheless, the topic of EU-Russia relations was addressed in a few speeches by foreign minister Sikorski and president Komorowski. In these texts, the dominant narrative portrayed Russia as a partner and focused on the achievement of substantive objectives in bilateral relations, notably the Kaliningrad transit agreement. In line with the reorientation of Polish foreign policy towards Russia pursued by Tusk's government, Polish leaders advocated pragmatic engagement with Moscow. Next to this discourse, another narrative stressing the need to democratise and Europeanise Russia was also prominent. It emerged within the discursive construction of a civilisational role for Polish and EU policy in Eastern Europe. It reflected deep-rooted perceptions of Russia as an oriental and undemocratic country, as well as Polish leaders' long-standing self-perception as carriers and propagators of European culture and values.

³⁶⁹ Radoslaw Sikorski's speech at the College of Europe, Natolin, 30 June 2011, <http://www.mfa.gov.pl/resource/6b89c4f9-eaec-4abf-aa69-fcd1efc6d4d6:JCR> (accessed 15/2/2014); Bronislaw Komorowski's speech at the Polish parliament, 1 July 2011, <http://www.president.pl/en/news/news/art,211,a-speech-delivered-by-the-president-upon-the-occasion-of-commencement-of-the-polish-presidency.html> (accessed 15/2/2014).

Pragmatism and constructive engagement

According to the dominant narrative, cooperation with Russia was in the EU's interests, therefore a policy of constructive engagement should be pursued. Economic and political advantage are the *topoi* linking the main argument (cooperation with Russia was in the EU's interests) with its logical conclusion (pursuing a policy of constructive engagement). This argumentative strategy was functional to Poland's immediate policy objectives in relations with Russia during the presidency, notably the conclusion of a local border traffic agreement concerning the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad and adjacent Polish provinces.

The discourse advocating cooperation with Russia appeared already on the eve of the Polish presidency, in the first public speeches held by Polish leaders to outline the presidency's priorities. At the end of May 2011, speaking at a conference on the EU neighbourhood in Brussels, Sikorski stated:

Two issues were prominent: one was Belarus [...] Secondly, the local border traffic agreement for the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, which is now in the Commission and we hope we will lead to the changing of the regulation, so that Poland and Russia can sign the agreement this summer. [...] I see some disturbing elements of Russophobia here in Brussels, not everybody wants to give this concession to the Russians. We are concerned about this in Poland. I would ask your support because I believe it is in our interest to Europeanise the Western part of Russia.³⁷⁰

Sikorski claimed that cooperation with Russia was in the EU's interests. Pragmatic arguments (signing the Kaliningrad agreement) were intertwined with cultural ones (Europeanising Russia), providing an example of interdiscursivity. The discourses about cooperating with Russia and Europeanising it were used in parallel in order to advocate a policy of engagement. Moreover, Sikorski accused opponents of cooperation of Russophobia, a term often used to describe prejudiced criticism of

³⁷⁰ Sikorski's speech at a conference on the EU's candidates and neighbours in Brussels, 23 May 2011, http://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/ministers_speech.pdf (accessed 15/2/2014).

Russia (cf. Tsygankov 2009).³⁷¹ Sikorski's accusation strikingly contrasts with the fact that Poland itself had been one of Russia's most vocal critics within the EU until a few years earlier. This extract therefore highlights Sikorski's willingness to distance himself from the policy of the previous Polish government and to construct a new, pragmatic Polish foreign policy approach towards Russia. The use of perspectivation throughout the passage (signalled by the phrases "we hope", "I see", "we are concerned" and "I believe") contributed to conveying his critical stance towards opponents of cooperation.

Sikorski reiterated his support for a policy of engagement with Russia on different occasions during the presidency. In an article published on *The Guardian* the day after the inauguration of the Polish presidency, he declared that Poland would "work to set up a new framework for co-operation between the EU and Russia, its largest neighbour".³⁷² At the Eastern Partnership conference in Warsaw, arguably the main foreign policy event organised by the Polish presidency, he stated that "Russia's constructive input" was necessary for the resolution of post-Soviet conflicts and claimed that negotiations with Russia on a new PCA were "a step forward".³⁷³

Furthermore, in November 2011 Sikorski and German foreign minister Guido Westerwelle jointly authored a letter addressed to the EU's High Representative Catherine Ashton, which argued for the revitalisation of EU-Russia relations. The letter had a strong symbolic value, as it was written jointly by the foreign ministers of two EU countries that had often disagreed on the way the Union should approach Russia. It also offers one of the most significant examples of the Polish presidency's discourse about engaging Russia. Aptly using the discursive strategy of categorisation, the letter argued that Russia belonged to the "European family of nations" and implied that this affinity could provide the basis for a rapprochement between Russia and the EU. Although it also highlighted issues in Russia's

³⁷¹ Andrei Tsygankov (2009: xiii) defines Russophobia as "a critique [of Russia] beyond any sense of proportion, waged with the purpose of undermining the nation's political reputation".

³⁷² Radoslaw Sikorski, "For Poland, European integration is not a crisis. It's an inspiration", *The Guardian*, 2 July 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/jul/02/poland-eu-presidency> (accessed 30/5/2014).

³⁷³ Radoslaw Sikorski's speech at the Eastern Partnership conference, 29 September 2011, www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=9442 (accessed 15/2/2014).

democratic transformation, the letter ultimately stated that the EU should “stay the course to intensify [its] relationship with Russia and to overcome political and economic lethargy”.³⁷⁴

The analysis of speeches summarising the achievements of the Polish presidency suggested that the cooperative approach towards Russia was part of a broader strategy to achieve substantive policy results and alter the perception of Poland as an obstacle to policy making within the EU. This emerged with utmost clarity in Sikorski’s address for the closing of the Polish presidency in January 2012.

You will remember the fears that were voiced initially in the Western media. [It was claimed] That Poland will take sides and that the heirs of *liberum veto* will surely be heard more than once. This was not the case. We have silenced our critics. And by no means with fudge sweets, but with our impartiality, with our readiness to make compromises and the successes known to you. It is enough to mention the Six-pack, the partnership agreement with Ukraine, the small border movement agreement with the Konigsberg [Kaliningrad] region, the accession treaty with Croatia and the debate on the multi-annual financial framework.³⁷⁵

Sikorski stressed that the Polish presidency had achieved much more than its detractors expected. He particularly criticised the construction of Polish politicians as “the heirs of *liberum veto*”, a practice that in the early modern age allowed any member of the Polish parliament to veto legislation. The rebuttal of this historical parallel highlighted Sikorski’s attempt to construct a new image of Polish actorness at the EU level. The Kaliningrad border traffic agreement was listed among the presidency’s successes, thereby emphasising that Poland’s cooperative approach towards Russia was a significant constituent of the new foreign policy image.

³⁷⁴ Radoslaw Sikorski’s and Guido Westerwelle’s joint letter to Catherine Ashton, 17 November 2011, http://www.mfa.gov.pl/en/news/joint_letter (accessed 15/2/2014).

³⁷⁵ Radoslaw Sikorski’s speech for the closing of the Polish presidency of the European Union, 19 January 2012, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/resource/068e5d52-f37e-4abf-9fd-5096781f9228:JCR> (accessed 15/2/2014).

The civilisational discourse and Russia's Europeanisation

As emerged from the analysis of his speech in Brussels in May 2011, Sikorski argued for a policy leading to Russia's Europeanisation on the grounds that the latter was in the EU's interests. Advantage is therefore a key *topos* in this argumentative strategy. However, a broader investigation of Polish discourses during the presidency showed that other factors also played a role in Poland's advocacy of Russia's Europeanisation. The discourse on Europeanisation did not concern only Russia; it shaped the Polish discursive approach to the Eastern neighbourhood more in general. Polish leaders described Poland's experience of post-communist transition as a successful template for the EU's Eastern neighbours and portrayed Poland's EU presidency as the accomplishment of this success.³⁷⁶ Furthermore, they argued that EU policies towards neighbouring countries should aim at the diffusion of European values and of the European civilisational heritage.

Hence, history (Poland's post-communist transition) and culture (European values and civilisation) were also important *topoi* in the argumentative strategy advocating Russia's and other post-Soviet EU neighbours' Europeanisation. Historical narratives portraying Poland as a disseminator of European culture, with a civilising mission in Eastern Europe (see chapter 4 and Prizel 1998: 52-67), provide an identity-based framework to understand the discourse on Europeanisation. Long-standing Polish constructions of Russia as an oriental, undemocratic country (and therefore in need of Europeanisation) contribute to explaining why this discourse appeared also in speeches concerning relations with Russia.

Civilisational and historical arguments were prominent in Bronislaw Komorowski's speeches concerning Poland's assumption of the EU presidency. In a talk held in Berlin in June 2011, Komorowski argued that Poland's emancipation from communist rule in 1989 created "a broader framework and better possibilities for the implementation of a joint civilisational and political project such as the European

³⁷⁶ Cf. Bronislaw Komorowski's speech at the Polish parliament, 1 July 2011, and Radoslaw Sikorski, "For Poland, European integration is not a crisis. It's an inspiration", *The Guardian*, 2 July 2011.

Union and its enlargement”.³⁷⁷ This narrative involved two key aspects: it stressed Poland’s role in the process of European integration and defined the latter in civilisational terms, thereby paving the way for the claim that also its expansion (namely EU enlargement) should follow civilisational criteria.

A consequence of our civilisational identity is something that, today, we can call the European lifestyle, the European social and economic model [...] Europe’s borders are determined by its identity. Europe is not only a geographic concept, it is above all a cultural concept. Therefore, the enlargement of the European Union should take place according to the civilisational criterion, which includes the intellectual aspect, the field of values and the systemic dimension in the political, juridical and economic sense.³⁷⁸

Komorowski’s conception of the EU’s enlargement as a civilisational process was remarkably similar to notions of Poland’s messianic and civilising role in Eastern Europe, which were widespread among the Polish gentry during the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and among Polish ethnonationalists in the first part of the twentieth century.³⁷⁹

By analogy, the EU’s process of association with Eastern partnership countries fitted particularly well with these notions, as partner countries were required to adopt European legislation and values. Hence, in an address to the European Parliament Komorowski praised Ukraine for “making efforts to come closer to the Union in order to associate with it”. He then reiterated his view of a “Union which will ensure

³⁷⁷ Bronislaw Komorowski’s speech at a meeting with the German Federal President, 17 June 2011, <http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Christian-Wulff/Reden/2011/06/110617-Berliner%20Rede-Komorowski.html> (accessed 15/2/2014).

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ See chapter 4.

Europe a role in the world in keeping with the size of its civilisation and [...] protect the vitality of that civilisation – European civilisation.”³⁸⁰

Within this narrative, the EU’s and particularly Poland’s task was that of helping Eastern partners to adopt European norms. Polish leaders resolved to do this by using their country’s European integration as reference. This transpires, for instance, from Sikorski’s speech at the Eastern Partnership summit in Warsaw.

Most importantly, the [summit] declaration will consist of a strong message supporting the integration of partner countries with the European Union, the acknowledgment of European aspirations and European choice of partner countries as well as a reference to the community of values inscribed in the Treaty of the European Union [...] We want to share the experiences from our own integration process, so that our partners can best benefit from this process, just as Poland once benefitted from it.³⁸¹

Sikorski portrayed partner countries as learners who, as highlighted in the proposed declaration, have “European aspirations” and have made a “European choice” that was defined by the values inscribed in EU treaties. As aspirants to European integration, partner countries could benefit from the experience of Poland’s EU accession. The image of Poland constructed in this extract is that of a successful member of an exclusive “community of values” which, as emphasised by perspectivation (signalled by the phrases “we want”, “our own”), felt sufficiently confident to teach other countries those values.

The Polish discourse about Europeanising Russia followed the same line of argument. Sikorski’s remarks at the European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs in November 2011 exemplified this narrative.

³⁸⁰ Bronislaw Komorowski’s speech at the European Parliament, 13 September 2011, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20110913+ITEM-006+DOC+XML+V0//EN> (accessed 15/2/2014).

³⁸¹ Radoslaw Sikorski’s speech at the Eastern Partnership conference, 29 September 2011.

We want to help Russia Europeanise itself and to tie it closer to Europe. We have spelled out this objective in a joint Polish-German letter to the High Representative [...] A partnership with this country, based on constructive engagement and responsibility, would be a great opportunity.³⁸²

Although partnership, rather than association with the EU, was the stated objective of relations with Russia, the conditions to achieve it were the same: Russia needed to be “Europeanised” and “tied closer to the EU”. Through the use of perspectivation (“we want to help”), Sikorski stressed that Poland was willing to provide help in order to Europeanise Russia, thereby acting in accordance with the Polish identity discourse that portrays the country as a conveyor of European values. Similarly, the letter mentioned by Sikorski in this extract argued that the EU’s help would allow Russia to find “an adequate place in a democratic Europe of shared freedom and shared prosperity.”³⁸³

Conclusion

This chapter argued that national identity and historic perceptions of Russia provide a framework to understand the construction of German, Polish and Finnish narratives about Russia in the EU discursive arena. It also highlighted the convergence of these narratives in the area of economic and political cooperation. It did this by exploring national leaders’ discourses during their country’s last EU presidency. The rotating presidency of the European Union provided national leaders with a platform to advance their country’s priorities in the EU foreign policy agenda. Therefore, foreign policy speeches held by leaders of the rotating presidency were ideal sources to study the discursive interplay among national identity, national policy and EU policy.

³⁸² Radoslaw Sikorski’s speech at the European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs, 23 November 2011, <http://www.mfa.gov.pl/resource/9dafd5d8-cad8-4409-854f-90c5adbac8ae:1CR> (accessed 15/2/2014).

³⁸³ Radoslaw Sikorski’s and Guido Westerwelle’s joint letter to Catherine Ashton, 17 November 2011.

As the three presidencies under analysis took place at different times, and thus in distinct international scenarios, contextualisation was necessary. Relations with Russia were a particularly prominent issue during the Finnish and German presidencies, which occurred respectively in the semesters July-December 2006 and January-June 2007. During this period, the start of negotiations with Moscow on a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and the security of Russian energy supplies were at the top of the EU's foreign policy agenda. Conversely, during the Polish presidency (July-December 2011) relations with Russia were not among the most critical issues. This was due both to the simultaneous occurrence of key events in other areas of the EU's neighbourhood (notably the Arab Spring) and to the Polish presidency's decision to focus primarily on relations with Eastern Partnership countries. Furthermore, the economic crisis in the Eurozone shifted the presidency's attention towards domestic issues, relegating foreign policy in general to a less important role.

The different relevance of relations with Russia during the three presidencies is reflected in the frequency with which the topic appeared in national leaders' speeches. German and Finnish leaders often broached the issue, portraying it as a top foreign policy priority. On the other hand, their Polish counterparts addressed the topic less regularly, sometimes only briefly within the broader context of the Eastern neighbourhood. Nevertheless, dominant narratives about relations with Russia could be identified also in the Polish case, which allows a comparison of discourses across the three presidencies.

All presidencies advocated constructive engagement with Russia. This discursive approach was not a novelty for German leaders, as it originated with West Germany's *Ostpolitik* in the 1960s and 1970s. Similarly, the Finnish narrative could be understood within the context of a long-standing foreign policy identity that conceptualised Russia as a key partner. For Polish leaders, however, the discourse about cooperation with Russia was new. Rather than reflecting an established tradition, it highlighted their intention of constructing a new foreign policy image for Poland. In particular, it aimed at altering the perception of Poland as an obstacle to

the development of EU-Russia relations, which had become dominant in the years immediately following the country's EU accession.

The narrative about cooperation with Russia had different nuances depending on the presidency in question. During the German and Finnish presidencies, the focus was primarily on the energy partnership. German leaders were particularly vocal in their support for energy cooperation, which was highlighted by their frequent use of perspectivation when addressing the topic. Finnish leaders stressed Russia's European identity and cultural proximity in order to advocate the intensification of economic cooperation. In their speeches, the linguistic strategies of predication and categorisation were often used to describe Russia as a close neighbour and as a European country. Polish leaders put less emphasis on the energy partnership and more on formulating a pragmatic approach to relations in general. In spite of these differences, it is significant that the three presidencies converged on a policy of engagement and cooperation with Moscow.

Next to the discourse on economic cooperation, the presidencies under analysis constructed narratives concerning the normative foundations of EU-Russia relations. On this issue, discursive differences were greater, reflecting different identity and foreign policy constructions. The Finnish presidency was adamant in stressing that market principles and democratic values were the basis of the relationship; this reflected Finland's traditionally strong normative approach to foreign policy. Following the *Ostpolitik* tenet of "change through rapprochement", the German presidency conveyed the message that Russia's democratic transformation and economic cooperation with the EU could take place simultaneously, as mutually reinforcing processes. German leaders also accepted that Russia would follow its own path to democracy. Conversely, Polish leaders argued that EU policies towards the Eastern neighbourhood and Russia should promote the Union's values and civilisational heritage. Significantly, they portrayed Poland as a propagator of such values, thereby echoing Polish historical narratives that describe the country as a disseminator of European culture, with a civilisational mission in Eastern Europe.

Ultimately, this case study showed that national identity permeates foreign policy leaders' narratives also in the EU discursive arena. Most significantly, it highlighted that national identities are not necessarily an obstacle to the formulation of a shared discourse on Russia at the EU level. In fact, the dominance of long-standing and (in the Polish case) new narratives portraying Russia as a partner was essential for the convergence of national discourses in the field of economic relations.

Conclusion: towards a shared discourse on Russia?

This dissertation examined the relationship between national identity and official discourses about Russia in three member states of the European Union. One of its key aims was to assess to what extent the “othering” of Russia was still an important component of foreign policy discourses in the countries under analysis in the years 2005-2012. Through a comparison of national narratives, the thesis also explored prospects for the emergence of a shared European discourse on Russia. The analysis showed that national identity and historically constructed images of Russia permeated foreign policy narratives, both in the national and the EU discursive arena. Based on the outcome of this research, it is possible to make some general remarks concerning the study of international relations.

National identities are a key factor of international politics. They play an essential role both in inter-state relations and within international organisations. Some scholars (see Delanty 1995, Habermas 2003) have described the EU as a post-national organisation, namely an entity where supranational structures are more important than nation states and national identity. However, this thesis has shown that the Union constitutes no exception: national identity deeply influences foreign policy debates also in the EU discursive arena. Hence, national identity is an essential construct that neither International Relations scholars nor their colleagues working in the sub-discipline of EU studies can ignore.

Within the study of national identity, particular attention must be devoted to the politics of memory. Narratives about a country’s past are fundamental components of national identity because they define the nation’s historical heritage and create a reciprocal sense of obligation among its members over time. Furthermore, the study of memory politics exposes the construction of a country’s historical Others and their impact on national identity formation. It is therefore essential for an investigation of EU member states’ relations with Russia, which is one of Europe’s main historical Others (Neumann 1998).

The dissertation focused in particular on the role that national identities and memory politics play in foreign policy narratives. Divergent national foreign policy discourses were expected because Russia played different roles in identity construction in the EU member states under analysis. The case studies partly confirmed this expectation. However, the analysis also suggested that, from 2008 onwards, German, Polish and Finnish official discourses about Russia started to display several similarities. In order to explain this shift, the thesis argued that political elites favouring a pragmatic relationship with Russia became dominant in the three countries under analysis. Having won the contest for political leadership, these elites constructed foreign policy narratives drawing on national identity discourses that were functional to a pragmatic approach to Russia. Where such discourses were not available, as in the Polish case, the governing elite attempted to forge a new narrative and partly reshape the country's foreign policy identity.

The following sections revisit the main findings and arguments, drawing conclusions on the prospects for the emergence of a shared discourse on Russia in the European Union. They also discuss the main limitations of the theoretical and methodological approaches adopted in the dissertation and possible avenues for further research.

National identity and discourse: reassessing and theorising the research puzzle

The divided nature of EU foreign policy towards Russia provided the initial empirical stimulus for this work. In the last decade, Russia was a country of great economic and strategic importance for the EU. However, it was also one of the most controversial partners for European foreign policy makers. The statement of former EU trade commissioner Peter Mandelson (cited in Kagan 2008: 14) that no other country revealed the Union's internal differences as much as Russia epitomised the relevance of this conundrum for European foreign policy. As these differences followed national fault lines, an adequate understanding of the issue had to focus on the domestic, national level of analysis.

EU member states have a long history of differentiated and in some cases very controversial relations with Russia, which had an impact on national identity construction. The dissertation theorised that divergent discourses on Russia within the EU could be explained by using national identity as an interpretive framework. In order to do this, the thesis relied primarily on social constructivist scholarship that conceptualises identity as a cognitive device providing national leaders with an understanding of other countries' motives, interests and actions (Hopf 2002: 5). As Richard Ned Lebow (2008) and Jeffrey Checkel (2006) have argued, identities are malleable constructs that guide the formulation of national interests and foreign policy decisions. By contrast, identity is exogenous to neorealist and neoliberal theory. Neoliberal and neorealist scholars tend to consider identities as constant factors, which do not influence agents and structures (Laffey and Weldes 1997).

Social constructivists agree that identity is an important constituent of international relations, which is shaped by interaction with one or more significant Others. However, different schools of thought exist within constructivism on the role of Others in identity formation and the epistemological approach to study the relationship between identity and foreign policy discourses. Alexander Wendt (1999) claimed that conflict with external Others is an essential element of national identity construction. In addition, he adopted a positivist approach to the study of international relations, theorising a causal relationship between identity and foreign policy.

Wendt's epistemology was criticised by scholars who claimed that identities are not logically bounded entities and cannot be used as explanatory categories in causal models due to their complexity (Zehfuss 2001). Richard Ned Lebow (2008) argued that identity is not always constructed in opposition to an Other; identity formation also entails positive interaction with external actors and the assimilation of elements of foreign cultures. Furthermore, Ole Waever (2002: 22) contended that Wendt's approach neglected material power and therefore failed to account for an essential factor of international politics.

The dissertation attempted to refine the Wendtian approach by addressing this criticism and incorporating its most compelling observations into a revised theoretical model. In this respect, it also sought to answer Jeffrey Checkel's (2006) call to bridge rationalist and interpretive constructivist approaches. The relationship between national identity and foreign policy discourses was conceptualised as complex and mutually constitutive, rather than in terms of a unidirectional cause-effect correlation. National identity construction was studied within the domestic constituency and in the context of a country's relations with external actors, allowing for the eventuality of both positive and negative interaction. Furthermore, the theoretical model endogenised material power as a key element of international relations that acquires significance within particular political contexts and discursive constructions.

The formulation of an identity-based model for the study of European foreign policy discourses on Russia was the dissertation's main theoretical contribution. The application of discourse-historical analysis and the adoption of a historicist approach to the study of foreign policy discourses were the key methodological innovations of this work. The discourse-historical approach, a variant of critical discourse analysis developed by Ruth Wodak (2002a), had previously been applied to examine media and institutional debates about immigration and identity politics (Krzyzanowski 2010 and 2009, Oberhuber et al. 2005, Reisigl and Wodak 2001, Wodak 2009). This dissertation provided the first application of the methodology to the study of official European discourses on Russia and their relationship with national identity.

Thanks to the interdisciplinary nature of the discourse-historical approach (Wodak 2002a), it was possible to integrate the theoretical model of the dissertation with an interpretive framework that was largely derived from the findings of historical scholarship. As argued, national identity construction takes place over a long time span. For most European nations, this process dates back from the nineteenth century or earlier (Gellner 1983, Guibernau et al. 2004, Hobsbawm 1990, Smith 1996). Therefore, the thesis claimed that current discourses are best studied in a *longue durée* perspective. Admittedly, this approach risks overstating historical factors in the interpretation of current discourses. However, the *longue durée* perspective

ultimately offered an insightful analysis of foreign policy discourses. While other methodological approaches may have also provided interesting and relevant interpretations, the one adopted in the dissertation proved very apt to understand the historical dimension of foreign policy narratives.

The empirical analysis did however expose a few limitations and shortcomings of the theoretical and methodological approaches adopted in the dissertation. Explaining why a particular discourse acquired or lost dominance proved difficult without introducing factors that are not strictly related to national identity. Changes in the dominance of discourses were explained through references to foreign policy leaders' agency, notably their pursuit of political and economic goals and their reactions to developments in international structures. For instance, it was claimed that, after 2007, Polish leaders developed a new discourse on Russia in order to pursue economic and political objectives. Moreover, it was argued that Finnish discourses on internal developments in Russia became more critical in response to the increasing repressiveness of the Kremlin's policies in the spring of 2012. These claims suggest that a more thorough analysis of agency can contribute to explaining change in constructivist and discourse analytical approaches. Such an analysis would also address one of the long-standing problems in constructivist theory, which has struggled to address adequately the problem of agency (cf. Knafo 2008: 13).

Furthermore, the theoretical and methodological framework of the dissertation allowed for the study of foreign policy only at the level of discourses. The adoption of a different approach may have resulted in a more direct analysis of EU and member states' policies towards Russia. For instance, rationalist models could provide a more comprehensive analysis of decision-making in the EU at the height of the August 2008 crisis in Georgia. This is not to say that the theoretical model adopted in the dissertation has less explanatory power than others; it only means that different approaches highlight different perspectives depending on the focus of the analysis.

Due to the complexity of the national and EU discursive arenas, the investigation of discourses was limited in scope to those advocated by the most prominent officials in

power. The rationale for this selection was that such officials were the most influential in the domain of foreign policy and enjoyed considerable discursive power thanks to their visibility in the media. The discourses of oppositional forces, minority groups and other non-official narratives were left out of the analysis. However, it is important to note that these also play a role in the domestic construction of identity and foreign policy. Hence, an analysis that took them into account would provide a more exhaustive discussion.

National identities and Russia's role as Other in historical perspective

The investigation of national identity construction and historical narratives about Russia revealed considerable differences among the three countries under analysis, which were mostly linked to distinct historical experiences. Controversial bilateral relations with Russia in the past left an enduring trace in German, Polish and Finnish identities. While in Germany and Finland positive and negative narratives about Russia coexisted and alternately became dominant, mainstream Polish discourses were unambiguously negative throughout the country's modern history.

In Germany, narratives portraying Russia as authoritarian and corrupt existed side by side with those depicting it as an important economic and strategic partner. Criticism of Soviet and Russian authoritarianism in post-war (West) Germany can be seen as a reflection of the country's own history. Following the catastrophic outcome of Wilhelmine and Nazi authoritarianism, the Federal Republic of Germany restructured German identity around democratic principles and respect for human rights. This led the country to adhere to international institutions that claimed to support these principles (notably NATO and the European Union) and opposed Russian authoritarianism (Banchoff 1999: 273-274, Herf 1997).

However, from the late 1960s the Federal Republic adopted a more cooperative approach towards Soviet Russia, which became enshrined in the concept of *Ostpolitik*. The *Ostpolitik* discourse advocated dialogue and partnership with Russia.

It argued that the resulting rapprochement with Moscow would lead to positive domestic change in Russia. *Ostpolitik* was also seen as contributing to Germany's economic interests and preference for a multilateral approach to international relations. German narratives depicted Russia as a key actor in the international arena and a partner that had to be engaged in a multilateral context (cf. Albert 1995). The *Ostpolitik* discourse became dominant and was endorsed by all the main political parties in the Federal Republic (Schildt 2003: 171).

By contrast, dominant Polish historical narratives consistently portrayed Russia as one of the main national threats. The image of Russia as Poland's main Other was functional to the construction of discourses on Polish heroism and martyrdom, which are central to Polish national identity. According to these narratives, Poland fought valiantly against Russian imperialism and authoritarianism for most of its modern history, thereby sacrificing itself for the defence of Western civilisation (Ruchniewicz 2007). However, Poland's commitment was not reciprocated by its Western allies, which (as the narrative goes) abandoned it to its fate during the Russian and Soviet occupations. Religious imagery drawing on the country's Catholic identity was used to bolster the discourse on martyrdom. Poland was described as "the Christ of nations", sacrificing itself for the sake of other European peoples (Prizel 1998: 41-42, 72-73).

The construction of Russia as oriental, undemocratic and corrupt also served the function of relativising Poland's cultural distance from the West. Polish narratives stressed the superiority of Polish over Russian culture in order to claim that, in spite of its long political subjugation to Russia, Poland belonged to the West (Prizel 1998: 82-85, Zarycki 2004). In the foreign policy of post-communist Poland, this discourse translated into a strong Euro-Atlantic orientation and opposition to Russia. Only in the late 2000s did dominant official narratives partially change, allowing for the emergence of a discourse that portrayed Russia as a potential partner within a pragmatic foreign policy (Feklyunina 2012: 438-445).

In Finnish historical narratives, dominant representations of Russia changed considerably over time. For most of the nineteenth century, Tsarist Russia was

portrayed as a benevolent Other, which had allowed Finland to emancipate itself from Swedish rule and granted political autonomy within the empire's structures (Joenniemi 2010: 48). Positive perceptions faded out in the latter part of the century, when the Tsarist Empire attempted to russify ethnic Finns. Tensions between newly independent Finland and Soviet Russia intensified in the interwar period, reaching a peak during the military confrontation that lasted almost uninterruptedly from 1939 until 1944 (Browning 2008: 169-178).

Post-war Finland largely reformulated its identity and foreign policy posture. Anti-Russian narratives were considered responsible for the escalation that had dragged the country into a disastrous war and were marginalised in official discourse. Soviet Russia was reconceptualised as an important partner. During the Cold War, the cooperative stance towards Moscow allowed Finland to retain independent political and economic structures and fulfil its self-perception as bridge between East and West (cf. Tiilikainen 1998: 153-156). Military neutrality, the practical outcome of Finland's positioning between East and West, became part of the country's national identity and remained an essential constituent of its international posture after the end of the Cold War (Möller and Bjereld 2010: 371). At the same time, Russian military might and economic influence continued to be sources of insecurity for the Finnish elite. After the fall of the Soviet Union, these preoccupations were voiced more openly in official discourse, showing that perceptions of Russia as a potential threat persisted in spite of economic and diplomatic cooperation (Forsberg 2006: 143).

Having reviewed national identity formation and historical narratives about Russia in the selected countries, the thesis assessed whether these constructions had an impact on official discourses on Russia in recent years. In order to do this, three case studies of high relevance for EU-Russia relations were investigated. The chapter concerning the Nord Stream pipeline focused on discourses about Russia's energy power and related European energy security issues. Perceptions of Russia as a security and military actor were investigated in the case study on the August 2008 crisis in Georgia. The chapter on post-electoral mass demonstrations in Russia in 2011-2012 allowed an assessment of whether the normative constituents of German, Polish and

Finnish identity were reflected in official pronouncements. Furthermore, dominant discourses on Russia during the selected countries' presidencies of the European Union were analysed in a separate case study in order to assess the reflection of national identity narratives and prospects for the emergence of a shared discourse on Russia in the EU discursive arena.

A European cacophony: national discourses on Nord Stream

The analysis of official discourses on Nord Stream revealed considerable divergences across member states, particularly in the years 2005-2007. The debate on the construction of the pipeline became highly politicised and Polish officials made extensive use of memory politics in order to justify their opposition to the project. German leaders also made selective references to the past in order to back their policy. Conflicting German, Polish and Finnish historical narratives about Russia re-emerged in official statements. Within this context, national identity provided an excellent framework to interpret official discourses.

German leaders' positive attitude to energy cooperation with Russia was explained within the context of the *Ostpolitik* tradition (cf. Albert 1995, Schildt 2003). German officials openly referred to the history of German-Russian cooperation in the energy field from the 1970s onwards to argue that Russia was a reliable partner. Their claims that energy cooperation would have positive repercussions also in other fields, particularly for the dialogue on human rights and democracy with Russia, reflected the *Ostpolitik* logic of "change through rapprochement". This approach predicated that Western cooperation with Moscow would eventually lead to political and social change in Russia. Furthermore, German leaders attempted to reconcile their stance towards Russia with Germany's pro-European identity by claiming that Russia and the EU were interdependent in the field of energy, hence the German-Russian energy partnership served broader EU interests.

Polish leaders had a diametrically opposed view of German-Russian energy cooperation. They argued that it was detrimental to Polish interests and allowed

Russia to use its energy power as an instrument to coerce Poland. In addition, they formulated analogies with German-Soviet cooperation at the beginning of the Second World War, which had resulted in the destruction of the Polish state. The construction of Russia as a threatening, imperialist power in Polish identity played a central role in this discourse (cf. Zarycki 2004). Moreover, Berlin's stance on Nord Stream reawakened Polish identity narratives portraying Germany as a menacing Other (Ruchniewicz 2007). This provided evidence for theoretical claims about the complexity of the construction of the Other in national identity (see chapter 2). As the Polish case revealed, multiple Others, notably Russia and Germany, played a role in shaping foreign policy discourses.

Polish leaders also claimed that Nord Stream negatively affected European energy security as a whole because, by cutting off several EU member states, it showed the lack of solidarity within the European Union. This argument mirrored the Polish identity narrative about the unreciprocated commitment to the West (cf. Loew 2008: 87-95, Prizel 1998: 41-42, 72-74, Ruchniewicz 2007: 11-12). It was argued that, in the Nord Stream controversy, Germany had proven a disloyal partner for Poland and other East-Central European countries. Following Donald Tusk's rise to power in late 2007, the use of identity and historical narratives against Nord Stream became less prominent in Polish official discourse. However, Polish leaders upheld their opposition to the project, relying mostly on economic arguments.

Finnish discourses on Nord Stream reflected the dichotomous construction of Russia in Finnish identity as both an important economic partner and a potential security threat (cf. Forsberg 2006, Vihavainen 2006). On the one hand, Finnish leaders portrayed the pipeline as a positive development, arguing that the EU needed additional energy infrastructure and that Russia had already proven to be a reliable supplier. On the other hand, they emphasised the normative foundations for energy cooperation with Russia (notably the respect of market and EU rules) and the potential environmental threats deriving from the construction of the pipeline. Finnish leaders' final decision to allow the building of Nord Stream in Finnish territorial waters can be understood within the established Finnish foreign policy

tradition of engaging Russia and pursuing norm-based cooperation (cf. Etzold and Haukkala 2011: 253-254).

Overall, discourses on Nord Stream varied depending on the ways in which Russia's energy power was conceptualised in national identity narratives. In Poland, it was constructed as an instrument for Russia's geopolitical and imperialistic goals, hence dominant discourses were very critical. In Germany, and to some extent also in Finland, it was perceived as an opportunity for enhancing trade and EU-Russia relations as a whole. Therefore, the different perceptions of Russia's energy power confirmed the theoretical claim that material power acquires significance only within specific discursive constructions (see chapter 2 and Waever 2002: 22) Furthermore, the case study exposed multiple and ambivalent representations of Russia, which is consistent with Iver Neumann's (1998) claim that Russia is a liminal case of European identity: depending on circumstances and context, European discourses either externalise it as a threat or portray it as part of geographic, cultural and economic constructions of Europe.

From a broader theoretical perspective, this case study also showed that national identities can lead to discursive conflicts in the international arena. As argued in the theoretical section of this work, national identities play an important role in interest formation. Hence, if identities are radically different, countries will develop divergent foreign policy interests and priorities. This suggested that, if EU member states want to forge a common foreign policy, national identities will have to be reconciled and at least partially reconstructed around shared values and discourses.

The rocky path towards a shared discourse: the August 2008 war

Divergences were found also between national discourses concerning the Russian-Georgian war of August 2008. As in the previous case study, German and Polish leaders provided different readings of events, drawing largely on dominant narratives in national memory and identity. However, most discourses across the three national

case studies were not as conflictual and irreconcilable as those concerning Nord Stream. This is particularly significant if we take into account that the events in question (Russia's military intervention outside its borders, in another European state) were highly dramatic and could have produced more radical responses in countries where Russia was traditionally perceived as a security threat. Only the Polish president formulated a very critical, anti-Russian narrative, which however did not find resonance in other Polish, German and Finnish official discourses.

German leaders rejected confrontation with Moscow and dismissed arguments about the beginning of a new Cold War with Russia, which were widespread in international media and official discourses during the August 2008 crisis (Sakwa 2012: 593-603). German collective memories of the Cold War, particularly the country's division and the possibility of nuclear war on German soil, influenced the stance of policy makers in Berlin. German criticism of Russia during the crisis was mild, focusing primarily on the disproportionate nature of Russian military intervention and on the need to seek a mediated solution to the crisis. This discourse was a reflection of fundamental constituents of post-1945 German national identity, such as the rejection of war as means to solve disputes, the support of multilateralism and international law. Ultimately, however, German leaders were reluctant to abandon their long-standing, cooperative stance towards Russia; despite the tensions caused by the military escalation, the *Ostpolitik* approach prevailed.

In Poland, official positions about the crisis were discordant. This was due mostly to the fact that the president of the republic and the government (which were supported by different political forces) pursued divergent domestic and foreign policy goals and used national identity narratives differently. Polish president Lech Kaczynski formulated a discourse that was profoundly hostile towards Russia and drew from Polish identity narratives portraying Russia as aggressive, imperialist and incompatible with Western civilisation. On the other hand, high government officials combined milder criticism with the advocacy of continued engagement with Russia. The dissertation made the claim that this approach was part of a broader policy of the new Polish government, which aimed at normalising relations with Moscow and marginalising traditional anti-Russian attitudes in official discourse. Hence, Polish

leaders' statements about the August 2008 crisis demonstrated the complexity of the national foreign policy arena, where conflicting discourses coexist and compete for dominance.

The analysis of Finnish official statements also highlighted two dominant discourses. In contrast to the Polish case, where the two main official narratives were prominent at the same time, each discourse gained dominance at different stages of the crisis. In the tense months before the outbreak of war and during the military conflict, perceptions of Russia as a security challenge prevailed. The second discourse became dominant in the post-war period and advocated a quick resumption of the partnership with Moscow. The two discourses mirrored the dichotomous construction of Russia in Finnish identity as both a potential security threat and an essential partner. The shift in dominance from one discourse to the other did not occur abruptly, neither were the two discourses completely discordant. At the peak of the crisis, Finnish leaders voiced concern over the security threat emanating from Russia, but they simultaneously advocated engagement with Moscow as the best way to defuse tensions. A gradual transition from the first to the second discourse occurred as the crisis de-escalated, reflecting the malleability and adaptability of discursive constructions.

Hence, with the exception of Lech Kaczynski's discourse, the analysis of official narratives about the August 2008 war revealed some convergence across the three national arenas under investigation. Conflicting views still existed; the image of Russia as a potential security threat influenced Polish and (to a lesser extent) Finnish discourses, whereas it hardly played any role in German narratives. Moreover, German and Finnish leaders were keener than their Polish colleagues to resume cooperation with Russia when the crisis de-escalated. However, narratives advocating a pragmatic approach to Moscow were prominent across the three national discursive arenas. By emphasising constructions of Russia as an important security and commercial partner, national leaders conveyed the message that engagement was the best policy option. This also suggested that, in the three countries under analysis, narratives about economic and security cooperation

provided an opportunity for reconciling national identities and discourses about Russia.

Paving the way for a common stance: pragmatism and economics

The case study concerning discourses on mass protests in Russian cities in 2011 and 2012 exposed the growing focus on Russia's economic significance in German, Polish and Finnish official narratives. As the events in question signalled an unambiguous authoritarian shift in Moscow, the re-emergence of historical narratives portraying Russia as undemocratic was expected. However, the analysis showed that these narratives were marginal. Representations of Russia as a key commercial partner and the advocacy of a pragmatic approach to bilateral relations overshadowed the normative discourse.

A very critical discourse on the Russian establishment was prominent only among some German officials during the first months of the protests. It was propagated by second-in-rank representatives of the foreign ministry who managed to influence the relevant domestic debate while Germany's top leaders appeared reluctant to comment on internal developments in Russia. As the Russian presidential election of March 2012 approached, chancellor Merkel and foreign minister Westerwelle intervened more frequently in the debate, arguing that cooperation with Russia and criticism of its domestic developments were not mutually exclusive. This discourse attempted to reconcile the normative component of German foreign policy identity with constructions of Russia as a key economic partner. Due to Merkel's and Westerwelle's greater political prominence and media visibility, their narrative quickly became dominant, which highlighted the discursive power of national leaders in foreign policy debates.

Polish discourses revealed that, four years into Tusk's mandate, Poland's new pragmatic approach to Russia had become consolidated. Following Lech Kaczynski's sudden death and the election of more moderate Bronislaw Komorowski

to the presidency in 2010, the Russophobic far right no longer had any representatives in the country's top foreign policy posts. This allowed Poland to formulate a more coherent official stance towards Russia. Throughout 2011 and 2012, Polish official statements about Russia focused on practical issues (trade, cross-border mobility of citizens) and reconciliation in bilateral relations. When asked to comment on the protests, foreign minister Sikorski expressed sympathy for the demonstrators. Otherwise, he continued to advocate cooperation with the Russian authorities.

Finnish leaders' stances were similar to those of their German and Polish counterparts. As Russia was Finland's main trade partner, Finnish policy makers rejoiced when it finally joined the World Trade Organisation in mid-December 2011. Despite electoral fraud and mounting protests in Russian cities, economic considerations dominated Finnish official discourses on Russia throughout the following winter. A more critical narrative focusing on Russia's domestic developments emerged in the spring of 2012, as the Kremlin adopted harsher measures to curb the protests. However, this narrative did not preclude economic cooperation. Russia's democratic deficit was relativised through claims according to which Russian society was fundamentally different from Finland's and hence it had to be judged from a different perspective. Together with the construction of Russia as a key partner for Finland, this logic was functional to justifying further economic cooperation despite Moscow's repressive policies.

Hence, the national discourses under analysis showed a high level of convergence. By stressing that Russia remained a key partner in spite of its domestic developments, national leaders implicitly established a scale of priorities in which economic interests ranked higher than normative considerations. As seen in chapter 4, both narratives stressing the principles of democracy and human rights and constructions of Russia as an economic partner were rooted in the national identities under analysis - with the partial exception of Poland, where the discourse depicting Russia as a partner had emerged only recently. In the winter of 2011-2012, against the broader context of Russia's increasing economic importance and integration in international economic structures, the narrative about economic partnership emerged

as dominant. This substantiates the claim made earlier in this work that international structures influence the domestic contest among conflicting identity discourses.

National leaders also played a key role in this contest. As theorised in chapter 2, they were not simply influenced by identity discourses, but actively contributed to determining the dominance of one over another. In particular, this case study showed that policy makers emphasise particular identity constructions in order to pursue their domestic and foreign policy goals (in this case, supporting cooperation with Moscow and the national industry that trades with Russia). It is significant that the leaders of three countries which traditionally had different stances towards Russia chose to emphasise the same construction, namely that of Russia as a partner. This suggests that economic and political pragmatism potentially provided the discursive foundation for a shared stance towards Russia within the European Union. In order to investigate this finding in a more specific EU discursive arena, the thesis analysed the main foreign policy narratives concerning Russia advanced by the last German, Polish and Finnish presidencies of the European Union.

Russia and the EU: no longer a divisive factor?

The analysis of discourses on Russia during the respective national presidencies confirmed that economic and political pragmatism played an essential role and was conducive to a shared narrative about Russia. All three presidencies under investigation advocated constructive engagement and cooperation with Moscow. It was particularly remarkable that Poland also adopted this stance by the time it took over the rotating presidency, in the second half of 2011. This starkly contrasted with Warsaw's harsh criticism of Russia within the EU in the mid-2000s, which had led it to vetoing negotiations on an EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (Reeves 2010: 351). Hence, the aforementioned claim of Peter Mandelson that no other country divided the EU as much as Russia was losing relevance by the early 2010s.

This does not mean that a shared discourse on Russia existed within the EU by the end of the timeframe under consideration. As the analysis of the three EU presidencies highlighted, differences persisted with regard to the EU's normative approach to relations with Russia. While German leaders argued that economic cooperation and democratic transformation in Russia took place simultaneously, their Finnish counterparts stressed that market principles and democratic values were preconditions for cooperation. Polish leaders went even further with their emphasis on norms, claiming that the EU should take a civilisational approach towards its Eastern neighbours. The thesis showed that these differences mirrored deep-rooted constituents of national identity and traditional national approaches to Russia. Therefore, different identity constructions and divisive historical narratives on Russia continued to be reflected in national discourses, even while the latter converged on the advocacy of economic and political pragmatism in relations with Moscow.

As argued in chapter 3, the countries selected for investigation were representative of the various member states' stances towards Russia within the EU. However, discourses within EU institutions would also have to be explored in order to draw deeper conclusions about narratives in the European Union. More national discursive arenas would have to be examined in order to provide an analysis that reflects the whole spectrum of national discourses on Russia in the EU. A broader investigation could include the study of discourses in other large EU member states, such as France and Britain, which are particularly influential in shaping the Union's relations with Russia (cf. ECFR 2014: 119). An analysis of narratives in other East-Central European countries is also likely to present interesting results: while most of these countries share the experience of Soviet control during the Cold War, some (such as Hungary) have recently developed a friendly stance towards Russia (Sadecki and Kardas 2014). Hence, the analysis could explore the factors within and without national identity that led to the new foreign policy posture. Furthermore, the statements of influential epistemic communities, advocacy groups and civil society organisations would have to be investigated in order to provide a more complete account of national discourses on Russia, including unofficial and competing narratives.

Due to time and space constraints, this dissertation focused on official narratives in three EU member states, exposing the increasing convergence of discourses in countries with traditionally different stances towards Russia. It showed that convergence was primarily the result of the fact that constructions of Russia as an important economic and political partner became dominant across the three national discursive arenas under analysis. This finding substantiated some of the key theoretical claims made by the dissertation. Changes in official foreign policy discourses take place as different national identity constituents and narratives become dominant over time. From late 2008 until 2012, the dominance of official constructions of Russia as a partner in Germany, Poland and Finland allowed national foreign policy discourses to converge.

As the analysis of Polish discourses highlighted, policy makers can also formulate narratives that are not strongly rooted in the national heritage and, through their discursive power, contribute to remoulding national identity. Polish leaders' acceptance of their country's Eastern borders in 1989 and the recognition of Poland's Eastern neighbours as equal nations provide an example in this respect (see chapter 4 and Snyder 2003: 220-225). The discursive construction of Russia as a partner under Tusk's government may well become engrained in Polish identity and have an impact on Poland's stance towards Moscow also in the long run.

Furthermore, the thesis exposed the complexity of the construction of the Other. As argued, multiple Others (Russia and Germany) featured in Polish official narratives on Nord Stream. This highlights that Russia is by no means the only Other for the European Union and its member states. Using the same theoretical and methodological approach, further research could explore the role of different Others in European domestic and foreign policy discourses. For instance, studying the construction of immigrants, ethnic or sexual minorities in domestic policy debates would be highly topical: internal Others are at least as important as external ones in national identity construction (cf. Krzyzanowski 2010, Wodak 2002a).

As for external Others, an analysis of narratives on Turkey building on Neumann's (1998) work is likely to produce very interesting results, particularly because Turkey

is another key EU neighbour that, according to Neumann, played an essential role in the emergence of a European identity. Future works could also investigate European discourses on the United States. The USA were traditionally a closer (and arguably less controversial) Other for Europe in cultural and political terms. However, the divided stance of EU member states towards the US during George W. Bush administration and, more recently, the debates originating from the National Security Agency spying scandal would provide highly stimulating case studies.

Although Russia is probably the most controversial among Europe's historical Others, the dissertation's findings corroborated Richard Ned Lebow's (2008a) claim that positive interaction between Self and Other can occur. In the debate on Nord Stream, Polish leaders tended to construct Russia as a threatening Other in the field of energy relations. Narratives describing Russia as a threat were prominent also during the August 2008 war, notably among Polish and (to a lesser extent) Finnish leaders. However, Russia's othering did not always have negative connotations. In fact, some German and Finnish discourses (particularly those concerning energy relations) portrayed Russia as a positive Other. German and Finnish policy makers often claimed that Russia was European or shared European culture and values, thereby blurring the boundaries between their Selves and the Russian Other. Following Tusk's election, even long-standing Polish constructions of Russia as the main national threat were challenged by more positive narratives at the official level.

The findings of this work suggested that national discourses on Russia in the EU may become increasingly similar if constructions of Russia as a pragmatic partner (and hence as a positive or neutral Other) remain dominant. As the analysis of discourses from 2005 to 2012 showed, approaching Russia pragmatically allowed national leaders to marginalise the most polarising constituents of national identity. Conversely, whenever constructions of Russia as a threat became prominent, national discourses tended to diverge. Different and divisive national historical narratives resurfaced, leading to contrasting assessments of the nature of the threat emanating from Russia. This was particularly evident in the analysis of discourses concerning Nord Stream and energy security.

At the end of the timeframe for this study, pragmatism had become a common feature of German, Polish and Finnish discourses on Russia. This may have changed in light of the crisis between Russia and the European Union concerning political developments in Ukraine in 2013 and 2014. The Russian army's military intervention in Crimea is likely to revive deep-seated perceptions of Russia as a security threat in many EU member states. It is possible that, following these events, a shared European discourse on Russia will emerge, focusing on the construction of a threatening Other. Further research could explore whether such a discursive shift is taking place. However, this study has shown that othering and antagonising Russia has not proved to be a cohesive factor for European member states in the recent past. Another possible scenario involves the continuation of a pragmatic stance, which would attempt to engage Russia in order de-escalate and resolve the crisis over Ukraine. National identity and national leaders' choices of emphasising particular constructions of Russia will play an important role in determining which approach will prevail. Based on the outcome of this research, a pragmatic stance appears to offer the best prospects for the emergence of a shared discourse on Russia at the European level.

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