The Narration of Russia through Public Diplomacy: A Case Study of Russia-Japan Relations

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Abstract

This dissertation presents an extensive conceptual and theoretical discussion of public diplomacy, pointing out how the positivist traditions of realism/neorealism and liberalism/neoliberalism hinder the understanding of PD, discourse, and Russian foreign policy in particular. It aims to examine the period from 2012 to 2019 to discover how various narratives surrounding Russian public diplomacy have emerged and how Russia constructs its "self" for the foreign public. In Chapter 3, utilizing constructivism as the theoretical foundation, this research brings into the discussion of public diplomacy issues of power/discursive power, intersubjective knowledge, identities/collective identities, as well as discusses the importance of history and practice/discursive practice in its reproduction. The dissertation also offers a constructivist understanding of how constructivism enriches the study of public diplomacy and provides a theoretical view on how to measure the effectiveness of public diplomacy in achieving the state's goals.

To empirically test the applicability of constructivism in analyzing public diplomacy, the dissertation is separated into three main parts. In Chapter 4, the author analyzes narratives in the context of Russia's state identity construction from 2012 to 2019. The discussion focuses on international events and the ways Russia's political elite responded to them in the process of defining Russia's identity, values, and norms. This allows the recognition of narratives as interconnected and interdependent elements of knowledge construction, which legitimize an overall discourse that Russia aims to present to the world. In Chapter 5, the research uses discourse analysis to approach the first set of data consisting of Russian President Vladimir Putin's interactions with foreign journalists to discover how constructed narratives are presented to the foreign public.

In Chapter 6, the study examines how unique configurations of Russia-Japan relations affect the meanings-making discursive practices. First, it analyzes the history of bilateral relations to discover how Russia's political elite constructed them based on the evolving identity. Then proceeds to utilize three data sets that represent how Russia's political elite uses public diplomacy on the level of the president, foreign minister, and embassy. This makes it possible to understand the practices of public diplomacy as they unfold. In addition, the thesis pays attention to discursive practices that the president and foreign minister utilize concerning Japan. The combination of data sets allows for the establishment of differences in practices of public diplomacy in different settings that reflect how the identities of states inform foreign policy.

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Introduction

International relations exist in a competitive environment of interconnected and often contradicting interests of different political figures and institutions. Among them, states are the most powerful actors, not only because of their size, and economic or military capabilities, but also because of their power to control, produce, and combat discourse. However, after the end of the Cold War, two major changes that redefined the balance of power took place. First, pubic influence on a state's decision-making became more pronounced across the globe, albeit with some exceptions in the form of authoritarian states. Second, technological development significantly changed the ways and means of communicating. This opened up possibilities for the public to obtain and exchange information from different sources, which has impacted the credibility of government-produced discourse. Consequently, the current field of political and international studies seeks to understand changes in this balance of power by investigating how states and the public communicate and compete with each other in the creation of discourse about the surrounding social reality.

Governments enjoy relative freedom in discourse production domestically by utilizing media, the education system, and other means of knowledge initialization. This allows the creation of a "regime of truth" (Foucault, 1982) through which governments seek to strengthen the state by creating a positive image of aspects such as its ruling elite and its cultural identity. However, it remains challenging to project this positive discourse abroad. When aimed at a foreign audience, government discourse is often forced to collide with other, often contradictory narratives from different sources and perspectives. Thus, even if a narrative is relatively successful at home, its credibility can be questionable abroad, undermining the government's ability to control its representation.

Consequently, governments demonstrate an increasing interest in having favorable representation abroad developing politics to reach and engage with the foreign public. One of the major policies on that track is known as "public diplomacy" (PD). Tuch (1990, 3) defines it as "a government's process of communication with the foreign public in an attempt to bring about an understanding of its nation's ideas and ideals, its institutions, and culture, as well as its national goals and policies." In contrast to traditional diplomacy, which is practiced between governments, PD opens up a direct line of communication between a state and the foreign public. In other words, PD is meant to relieve institutional constraints on the ability of a government to project its desired discourse to foreign audiences around the world.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, Russia’s political elite was faced with rewriting such well-rooted negative images of the country as the “red state,” a rival, and an enemy to the West. Despite both Gorbachev and Yeltsin being greeted by the international community with expectations of change, the growing dissatisfaction of the Russian political elite with the West hindered the process of positive changes in the understanding of Russia. Consequently, with a growing understanding of national interests, the Russian political elite recognized the need to manage the country’s international image.

During the first term of Vladimir Putin (2000-2004), this notion began to take shape. The need for “objective” (read, “favorable”) information about Russia was stressed in the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation (2000). After that, in 2005, the Russian Today broadcast channel was created, which became the first major platform for public diplomacy. However, several conflicts, including the Russia-Ukraine gas dispute (2005) and the Russo-Georgian war (2008), demonstrated that Russia’s ability to construct its image internationally is limited and often countered by other actors. Thus, PD policy and the ability to present a coherent and persuasive message during massive foreign policy changes became a top priority.

At the beginning of Putin’s third term (2012-2018), Russia had gone through the long process of forming the main features of its identity. By regaining political power, Putin was able to embark on a foreign policy application of identity, shaping an agenda based on national interests, values, and norms. In doing so, Russia became involved in multiple international events at that time, including but not limited to Brexit, the United States election scandal, and the war in Ukraine. These events are viewed and explained differently by various countries, which created conflicting discourse on what has happened and what to make of it. While Russia’s leadership proclaimed that the country had not been involved, many others accused it of being an aggressive state engaged in malicious activities. These narratives have challenged Russia’s ability to present its position, creating a significant amount of empirical data on how countries engage in often competing for interpretations of the fact, events, or the social reality in general.

Despite an increased level of financial support for PD programs and institutions, Russia was not able to improve its international image. This raised debates among scholars as to why. Some argue that one of the main reasons is that Russia adheres to state-oriented practices of public diplomacy which place limited focus on dialogue with the public (Simons, 2014; Just, 2016; Velikaya and Simons, 2020), and that narratives that the Russian government produces are based on "biased information that is simply disseminated in a one-way, top-down manner." (Avgerinos, 2009, 123). Scholars also notice that, through narratives, Russia promotes concepts such as "superiority of Russian values and institutions" (Gerber and Zavisca, 2016), and "conspiracy theories" (Yablokov, 2015, Watanabe, 2018) and argue that some countries are in decline, for example, Sweden (Wagnsson and Barzanje, 2019). On the other hand, others note that the Russian approach to public diplomacy and soft power is often "demonized" or dismissed as counterproductive by the West since Russia's narratives do not fit "a pool of liberal values" (Kiseleva, 2015; Feklyunina, 2016; Keating and Kaczmarska, 2019, 2).

This research argues that the debates on how to understand Russia, its public diplomacy, and propaganda are hindered by the positivist paradigm, which imposes certain limitations on a necessary epistemological and methodological pluralism. Since positivists believe that "external realities can be known objectively" (Patomaki & Wight, 2000; Morçöl, 2001), the interest in how those realities are constructed remains limited. As researchers argued, positivists' emphasis on establishing/discovering universal laws creates significant deficiencies in discovering the complexity of social reality (Giere, 1990; Laudan, 1996; Goduka, 2012). This research paradigm focuses on exploring the distribution and effect of Russian public diplomacy narratives, which do not accidentally assume the meanings behind them, rather than analyzing how they are constructed and why they are effective/ineffective.

In contrast to the positivist approach, this proposal sees narratives as story-telling and "meaning-making" (Hayden, 2013, 205) tools that help to "make sense of the social world" (Somers, 1994, 606). They are not simple by-products of government propaganda, but powerful instruments of knowledge construction that construct and are constructed by the social reality around them. In this regard, researchers of Russian public diplomacy note the existence of an "empirical blindness" (Keating and Kaczmarska, 2019, 5) that affects the current analysis of Russia and the general message that it wants to convey. Positivist assumption about the universality of liberal values, which derives partly from the majority of researchers sharing liberal values, does not allow approaching Russia's conservative values by imposing certain models of PD. Others also argue that a limited and restricted understanding of Russia's political landscape can lead to an escalation of international conflicts rather than to their resolution (Osipova, 2014; Just, 2016). More importantly, for this research is that the questions of how Russia's identity affects the construction of PD narratives and have they are projected to the foreign public remain understudied.

Thus, this dissertation dives into an extensive conceptual and theoretical discussion of PD, pointing out how the positivist traditions of realism/neorealism and liberalism/neoliberalism hinder the understanding of PD, discourse, and Russian foreign policy in particular. It aims to examine the period from 2012 to 2019 to understand how various narratives surrounding Russian PD have emerged and constructed their "self" for the foreign public. Utilizing constructivism as the theoretical foundation, this research analyzes narratives in the context of Russia's state identity construction. This allows the recognition of narratives as interconnected and interdependent elements of knowledge construction, rather than as simply autonomous and government-produced instruments of propaganda. The period from 2012 to 2019 is selected since, as previous research (Vershinin, 2021a) and recent events have demonstrated, Putin and the Russian political elite have accelerated efforts to pursue an active foreign policy after strengthening state identity. Simultaneously, to support its foreign policy goals, various institutes and instruments of PD were used to produce narratives to convince the foreign public of the rightfulness of Russia's actions, thus providing extensive empirical data for this research.

Following the constructivism theory, the **objective** of the research is two-fold. First, to test the suitability of constructivism for explaining the functioning of PD in international relations, based on a case study of Russia-Japan relations. Second, to analyze how Russia's political elites under Vladimir Putin narrate Russia on different levels of PD: global and local as well as presidential, ministerial, and ambassadorial. Therefore, this research will mainly be concerned with two questions:

1 How does Russia narrate "self" internationally through public diplomacy?

2 How does Russia narrate "self" in country-specific settings on different levels of Russia-Japan relations?

   A President Level (Representational)

B Foreign Minister Level (Executional)

C Embassy Level (Local Executional)

To answer the questions, the study adheres to the constructivist methodology that recognizes the importance of social constructions of reality, which implies a postpositivist view on the interpretative/subjective nature of science. Following the research design, the study focuses on two parts of Russian PD discourse projection: the global (World) and the local (Japan). It helps to reveal variations in communication that are based on differences in identity configurations: Russian identity – the international community identity, and Russian identity – Japan identity/collective Western identity.

The data collection part of the methodology consists of secondary sources that represent official channels of Russian PD and communication. It includes but is not limited to presidential and ministerial websites, embassy pages, and official media accounts. The data analysis is approached using two methods: content analysis and discourse analysis. The first aims at quantitative analysis of Facebook posts from the Russian Embassy in Japan that represent a local and executive level of Russia PD. The second method focuses on the analysis of discourse constructed by the Russian president globally and locally, and the Foreign Minister only locally.

The study develops in the following order. First, in Chapter 1, the current state of research on PD is discussed to highlight general problems and gaps in the literature. Such problems as conceptual, theoretical, and epistemological deficiencies are highlighted. In Chapter 2, the thesis discusses a methodology that focuses on addressing the problems by combining qualitative and quantitative tools. Then, Chapter 3 proceeds to discuss how two major IR theories, liberalism, and realism, recreate positivists' assumptions, which could be challenged by constructivism. This chapter includes a lengthy discussion of concepts, ideas, and debates relevant to the study, based on which the thesis introduces constructivists' understanding of PD and effectiveness. Consequently, Chapter 4, Chapter 5, and Chapter 6 represent four data sets with analysis and empirical evidence on how identities, discourses, and narratives interact within PD.

Chapter 1. Concepts and Theories of Public Diplomacy in the Study of Russia

Introduction

Although attempts to define public diplomacy began to flourish in 1965 thanks to the introduction of the term by Edmund Gullion (Cull, 2008a), the scientific community does not share a dominant understanding of the nature of public diplomacy (Sevin, 2017, 883). The main points of disagreement are not only the definition itself, but also what to include in the study of PD, how to evaluate its effectiveness, and how to explain the process of PD interaction between governments and the foreign public, or its theoretically grounded source of influence. Moreover, with a worldwide expansion of internet technologies, PD policies have undergone significant changes including expansion of ways and instruments of information dissemination. As Johnson argues, the evaluation of PD effectiveness is heavily affected by new technologies, which makes it harder to analyze (Johnson, 2006, 46). Consequently, PD studies is a relatively new, poorly defined and constantly expanding research area that still lacks theory and conceptual unity (Dodd and Collins, 2017).

There are two main major points of debate among scholars that are widely discussed in the literature. First, the theoretical approaches are scattered and present various explanations of the ways PD reaches and affects the foreign public. To date, scholars have introduced various ways to explain the nature and effectiveness of PD, including "the pathway of connection" (Sevin, 2015, 2017); soft power (Nye, 1990, 2004, 2011; Wei, 2016); conspiracy theory (Yablokov, 2015); image cultivation (Yang et al., 2012); the Cascading Activation Model (Entman, 2003); and the Excellence Theory (Yun, 2006). However, others have noticed that a "more coherent and integrated research agenda is needed" (Vanc & Fitzpatrick, 2016, 5) since plurality has not led to a consensus on the best practices and universal rules of PD policy implementation. In contrast to their observation, this research argues that before the integration of different theoretical views should be considered a viable option, it is important to first deepen the understanding of the existing approaches. This would help to ensure that future integration will be based on comprehensive theoretical grounds rather than on theories whose features are reduced for integration.

The second debate is centered on an evaluation of PD or defining which practices are more effective in achieving planned goals. Here, the lack of consensus on how to evaluate PD is directly related to disagreements on which data reflects the effectiveness of PD policies. For example, public opinion polls are widely used to demonstrate how the foreign public is affected by general PD policy or specific programs (Comor and Bean, 2012; Gerber & Zavisca, 2016: ACPD, 2018). However, it is not exactly clear how much PD contributes to long-term positive or negative changes, or whether extensive financial resources improve the effectiveness overall. As shown in the Soft Power yearly reports, extensive financial support for various PD and soft power programs does not correlate with the improvement of an image. While China spends an estimated $10 billion a year on soft power campaigns (Shambaugh, 2015), it ranked 27th for soft power in 2019 (The Soft Power 30, 2022). Regarding the second debate, this research argues that the problems with evaluation directly rest on two main, but not the only, problems: a lack of empirical evidence outside the West analyzed in the local context and dominance of positivism in researching PD.

Because of a visible concentration on the West, non-western examples of PD practices and practices of communication (for example, Arab, Islamic, Post-Soviet, etc.) are often ignored or dismissed as ineffective (Kiseleva, 2015; Keating and Kaczmarska 2019). As Zaharna (2009, 97) argues, Western scholars tend to assume the nature of communication practices that are not necessarily accepted in different cultural settings. This assumption is based on the positivists' arguments that "laws" established in the Western context are "universal" and applicable to non-Western settings as well. Consequently, Auer and Srugies (2013, 36) indicate that future studies should "scrutinize on a large scale how PD is understood and practiced in different countries" based on new empirical evidence. That would help in developing "empirically grounded theories" or testing the existing ones based on a more scholarly inclusive context. In other words, while PD is assumed to have a "grand" strategy that proved to be effective, there is a pronounced necessity to approach it in the social context in which it operates. Since social constructions define both practices and discourse/narratives of PD, their reduction maintains the dominance of the positivist approach in the field.

In an attempt to point out the Russian perspective on PD, Anna Velikaya and Gregory Simons (2020) note in the introduction to their edited book, that the Western analysis of Russian PD is often contradictory and conceptually unclear. Various examples of approaching Russian understanding and practices of PD are closely interrelated with pre-established knowledge about the Soviet Union (Saari, 2014, Kragh and Asberg, 2017) or "Putin's regime" (Snegovaya, 2015; Gerber and Zavisca, 2016), which shifts focus away from an analysis of modern Russian practices of communication. However, this book is also limited by the grip of positivism on the methodological and conceptual boundaries of understanding Russian PD.

The last problem is coming from the dominance of the positivism/postpositivism view on PD. While the positivist approach does allow the development of a policy or a concept of PD that will effectively function in one context, it is an ungrounded overstretch to claim that the same type of view on PD will be equally, if at all, functional in others. This approach is reflected not only in various attempts to establish formal models of PD (Entman, 2003; Wilding, 2007; Steven, 2007) but also in concepts, among which are soft power and PD itself. For example, if a government of a particular state suffers from corruption on various levels, PD institutions might be as well impaired by it. Thus, increased financial support might not lead to an implementation of an effective strategy. It also applies to soft power since the spending of countries on this policy does not correlate with their position within the soft power ranking (Soft Power 30, 2022). Additionally, various scholars noticed that the U.S. PD relies on discursive "appearance" or claim engagement rather but acts differently in practice (Comor and Bean, 2012; Hayden, 2013)

Although this narrow view ignores local, state/society-specific understanding and practices of PD, the influence of the Western approach cannot be dismissed as it is a dominant research paradigm. While the above-mentioned researchers argued for a more inclusive study of PD, Russia's approach has been long analyzed from a Western perspective. This leads to a very limited understanding of what Russian PD is and how it should function. A striking example of this is an interview with Natalia Burlinova, the director of the Center for Support and Development of Public Initiatives Picreadi (Lenta, 2019). When she was asked to present coherent and attractive PD goals for government officials to achieve an allocation of financial resources, her answer was vague and did not contain specifics. Moreover, Burlinova mentioned the US as an example of successful PD programs without taking into account differences in experience, qualified staff, financial resources, developed civil society, etc. This comparison haunts Russian experts and scholarly fields, making it hard to even set achievable and realistic goals for Russian PD, much less to get them implemented by convincing the Russian political elite.

Taking into account the above debates, this chapter focuses on the discussion and operationalization of the PD concept for this research. Because theoretical debates are central to the dissertation, their extensive discussion is placed in the next chapter. This chapter, however, deals with the main approaches to public diplomacy and related concepts. Chapter 1 also covers issues of effectiveness, the influence of positivism on the discussion of PD, and the place of Russian PD.

1.1. Definition of PD

A widely cited definition of PD is "a government's process of communication with the foreign public in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation's ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and policies" (Tuch, 1990, 3). Tuch's book was cited multiple times, which includes references made by key figures of PD studies (Joseph Nye, Eytan Gilboa, Jan Melissen, etc.). Thus, like any other highly cited, hence reproduced, definition in the field, it creates and maintains discourse on what PD is and what it is not. However, this definition reflects an informative side of PD with no clear indication of objectives or end goals, which governments want to achieve as a result of this "understanding."

On the one hand, it presupposes that this is a "correct" understanding since it is rather irrational to assume that a government would consider any type of negative perception as beneficial. For example, even inside just one country, the U.S., there are more than 9 major political groups, which have from small to significant differences in views on ideas, institutions, national goals, and so on ("Beyond Red vs. Blue", 2021). On the other hand, this definition omits the complicated imbalance of discursive powers between the government and the public. By discursive power, this research means "an ability to affect discourse by creating, altering, or challenging it." Although the amount of discursive power that the public possesses will differ from state to state, PD policy is based on the idea that the government is supposed to serve the interests of the public, not the other way around. While not every definition should be explicit and take into account all possible elements of the term, it acts through discursive practices as a unit of knowledge, which affects how we think about PD.

The main problem associated with this widely used definition is that it declares that understanding is the ultimate goal of PD communications. As Dutta-Bergman (2006, 104-105) noted, PD "is positioned in the backdrop of Habermas's theory of communicative action." Consequently, it reproduces the long-existing Foucault-Habermas debate on the nature of power, ethics, and morality, particularly concerning what role power plays in the production of knowledge and practices (Kelly, 1994). Habermas's communicative action theory argues for the possibility of establishing some form of consensus-based on reasoning and "truth" (Kratochwill, 1989; Billy-Matter, 2005, 96). While Foucault emphasized a controlling and suppressive side of power (Schneck, 1987), Habermas considered it in a more liberating and legitimizing sense (O'Mahony, 2010). Concerning PD, this debate leads to an axiological question of whether PD can be "moral" or based on dialogue between parties, rather than one side influencing the other without being influenced itself; in other words, whether Tuch's "understanding" could be an ultimate goal of PD.

While Dutta-Bergman (ibid, 121-122) emphasizes that Habermas' communicative approach in connection with PD could be beneficial "for developing mutual understanding" based on "sincere commitments," no critical reflection on definitions and the issue of power are presented. Similar problems are traceable in the works of scholars who promote the concept of New Public Diplomacy (Melissen, 2005; Pahlavi, 2007; Pamment, 2016), which will be discussed below. As argued by Bruce Gregory (2005, 13-14), "public diplomacy is instrumental as its core," which means that it does fundamentally focus on achieving the state's goals beyond "mutual understanding." At the same time, while acknowledging the instrumental aspect of PD, they notice that the U.S. uses "firewalls" as some form of a mechanism for ensuring credibility and integrity, which might be abused to establish a power grip over discourse.

The definition of PD is crucial for not only understanding PD (Perl, 2006; McDowell, 2008) but also for its evaluation (Steven, 2007; Pahlavi, 2007; Sevin, 2015). If the end goals are not clearly defined, the specification of effectiveness inherits this uncertainty, making it harder for scholars and practitioners to analyze/implement PD. Ultimately, some researchers have pointed out that PD should support foreign policy and help to achieve national goals rather than merely inform the foreign public about them (Pratkanis, 2009, 112-113). Concerning how this support is achieved, Frederick argued that PD's "objective is to influence a foreign government by influencing its citizens" (1993, 229). Thus, this approach emphasizes that understanding leads to influence. The definition that the research uses is: "Public diplomacy is a policy that the government carries out, intending to create a positive understanding of itself among the foreign public to achieve political goals." Its appropriateness is based on addressing two of the above-mentioned problems: it emphasizes positive understanding over just understanding and stresses the political end goals of this understanding.

1.2. Components of Public Diplomacy

Along with this definition, the unclear aspects of current PD debates are also discussed. While the way we define a term is important to begin the discussion, understanding the components of PD is essential to continue. By components, this research means "various elements that construct a rather conceptual side of PD: what PD is supposed to do rather than how it does it." Thus, this subsection discusses views on components of PD but does not engage with reality on the ground (see empirical Chapter 4 and Chapter 5) of underlying mechanisms (see theoretical Chapter 2).

Nicholas Cull (2008b) has divided PD into five parts which constitute his "core approach" to understanding it. Despite the that his position is not universal and does not embody all existing views, it is arguably the most cited taxonomy of PD. The first element is "Listening," which highlights the ability of the government to collect and analyze data (opinion polls, reviews, feedback, etc.) about the targeted public. In practical terms, it helps to connect PD practitioners with their intended audience, evaluate the success rate of PD initiatives, and make timely modifications in response to negative shifts in public opinion. The second element is "Advocacy," which constitutes the foundational aim of the government to promote its understanding of various issues. The third is the "Cultural Diplomacy (CD)" that PD practitioners use for promoting the country's cultural image abroad. Fourth, the "Exchange Diplomacy (ED)" allows countries to directly introduce foreign citizens to the country's life, education, and technological achievements by inviting them for short or long-term visits. The last element is "Broadcasting," which represents the use of various information technologies (internet, TV, radio, etc.) for achieving larger engagement with foreign audiences.

At the same time, Cull's classification faces two problems. The first relates to non-discursive PD practices such as tools, methods, and institutions. Since the PD activities of the countries mentioned in his work (Switzerland, the United States, France, Japan, Britain) are highly developed, supported by skilled workers, and well-financed, the elements that Cull's core approach represents may or may not be present due to multiple reasons that need to be taken into account. As an example, Byrne (2012) argues that Australian PD was "one-dimensional, one-directional in nature" in the early stage of its development. This, however, did not represent propaganda, but rather immature practices and a lack of understanding of PD.

In addition, while listening, advocacy, and broadcasting can utilize domestic means of information collection (intelligence agencies, embassies) and dissemination (domestic channels with translations in foreign languages), CD and ED require additional finances, actors, and institutions to be involved. Thus, although these elements of PD might be highly beneficial for a successful PD strategy, they should not be treated as the only way PD should be structured. It is also important to note that the power balance between various elements might be different in various contexts. For example, CD and ED can be embodied in advocacy to such an extent that the line becomes thin and indistinguishable.

While Cull does acknowledge that many countries, including the U.S., continue to pursue effective listening practices in a limited way, his core approach, nevertheless, argues for an “ideal structure” (Cull, 2008b, 34) or the way it “must work” (53). However, his core approach is mostly western-centered and inherits a consequential bias toward a model of communication, which reflects certain historical and socio-cultural elements. To address this problem, various scholars have attempted to broaden the understanding of non-discursive PD practices by presenting more non-western empirical data. For example, Park and Lim (2014) analyze South Korean and Japanese approaches to PD. They argue that, while South Korean social media practices represent two-way communication, Japanese PD pursues a less hierarchical approach to knowledge production. Dodd and Collins (2017) compare Western and Central-Eastern European PD strategies in social media. They conclude that, while the former emphasizes advocacy, the latter primarily promotes its CD. As Lee and Melissen (2011, 2-3) note, the dominance of the West-oriented research “does not do sufficient justice to our general understanding” of PD.

The second problem is related to non-discursive practices, or patterned meaning-making practices that legitimize or delegitimize certain knowledge. While both discursive and non-discursive practices, the former “specify the nature of the processes of text production and interpretation” (Fairclough 1993, 4). In this context, Cull’s classification creates a dichotomy between non-discursive and discursive practices that affects the way PD is understood. While noticing that the government’s involvement in such elements of PD as CD, ED, and international broadcasting is not desirable since it might affect credibility, it is worded as “perceived connection to government” (Cull, 2008, 36). Thus, it is not exactly clear whether these elements of PD should be created non-discursively or separate from government, or should be discursively framed (read, hidden) as such.

Since PD is a governmental instrument to achieve political goals, the former is hardly applicable; if it were, the definition of PD would become blurred. At the same time, if Cull meant constructing/framing a discourse about various institutes and actors being independent of government, then the way to preserve credibility would be to control, or police, the discourse. For example, since "the gathering of intelligence has been the core of diplomatic activity throughout history" (Jowett and O'Donnelt, 2015, 311), the institutional delegation of "listening" functions for collecting information such as intelligence agencies (CIA, FSB, etc.) and think tanks should be beneficial. However, since many think tanks employ various former and current government officials, distancing their activities from the government may not be "factual," but rhetorical/discursive.

This problem, in addition to being difficult to solve, raises serious questions about the ability of researchers to accurately define what PD is or to highlight boundaries between such terms as PD and propaganda. Consequently, as Mark McDowell (2008) argues, broadening the discussion about PD in recent years has led to a situation in which, despite a growing interest in the subject, the understanding of it has diminished rather than reached a point of agreement. At the same time, it is worth arguing that finding the consensus might not be the most beneficial for the development of a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to PD. Since the establishment of the "consensus" will act as a form of the discursively established locus of truth or Foucault's episteme, it will inevitably limit the possible alternative explanations or views on PD. However, in addition to the definition and components, to understand what a PD is, one must also define what it is not. Thus, a discussion of concepts that are related to PD is needed.

1.3. Concepts Related to Public Diplomacy

1.3.1 PD and New Public Diplomacy

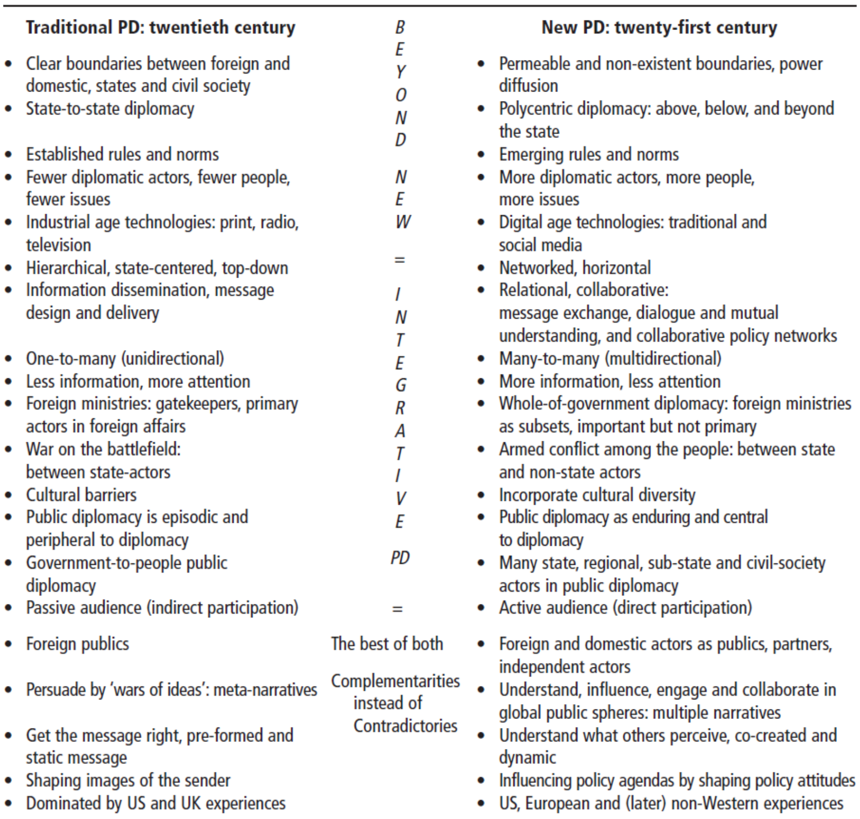
In recent years there have been vivid attempts to expand the conceptual and practical boundaries of PD. Some of the researchers (Vickers, 2004; Melissen, 2005; Seib, 2009) tend to separate traditional PD from what they call the New Public Diplomacy (NPD) to highlight differences in practices between the early stages of the development of PD and its contemporary, more sophisticated understanding. Although it is difficult to draw clear boundaries between the "early" and "modern" stages, the first can be attributed to the post-war period until the early 2000s (Kruckeberg & Vujnovic, 2005; Zaharna, 2010; Fitzpatrick, 2011). Since the discussion of PD has been mainly based on activities in the West, 2001 is usually considered the year of initiation of changes in various PD policies from propaganda to communication (, in response to the 9/11 attack.

In short, the traditional type of PD that was prevalent throughout the twentieth century saw a much higher level of government control over the definition of goals, resources, and implementation of strategies. Following a trend toward globalization, an increased number of international actors, and outreach of information technologies, supporters of NPD noted the need to reconsider the state-centered approach to accommodate the growing need for flexibility and adaptability of PD policies to these changes. In the article titled "The End of Foreign Policy?" Peter Hain (2001) argues that new technologies have initiated "the search for new legitimacy". One of the most pressing issues or windows of opportunity that affect the credibility of a state has been the increasing influence of the public on discourse. In the context of the AP, this means that the once unified discourse created and projected by governments has moved out of the traditional zone of control.

The need for NPD has been growing as a response to the terrorist act of 9/11. The event undermined the perceived effectiveness of the traditional approach to PD, which had failed to understand negative changes in attitudes toward the U.S., and led to a "communication campaign disaster" (Zaharna, 2010, 65). Since the traditional approach implied a one-way, asymmetrical communication, it was not flexible enough to be able to interact with the audience and detect a growing dissatisfaction with the U.S. Although this does not mean that the 9/11 attack was a result of miscommunication or that a great PD policy could have prevented it, the event caused a revelation effect for scholars and practitioners. As Kruckeberg and Vujnovic (2005, 300) argue, the Cold War propaganda model that proved to be ineffective must shift to "something else". More importantly, some researchers (Van Ham, 2003; Taylor, 2008; Zaharna, 2010) have noticed that the post-9/11 antiterrorist campaign might lead to even bigger dissatisfaction with the U.S. not only regionally, but globally. In the CRS Report for Congress, Susan Epstein (2005) concludes that various foreign policy decisions made without a "truthful" explanation can diminish the effectiveness of PD.

There are two main arguments for the need for NPD that scholars focus on. The first concentrates on highlighting deficiencies of the traditional one-way asymmetrical approach in comparison with a two-way symmetrical one. The former strategy implies that a government does not "listen" to the public. Shaun Riordan (2005, 189) argues, "A successful public diplomacy must be based not on the assertions of values, but on engaging in a genuine dialogue". Thus, NPD is presented as a step toward general PD understanding, away from a state-centered monologue-style approach to dialogue and collaboration with the foreign public (Cowan and Arsenault, 2008).

Table 1. The Differences between Traditional and New PD



Traditional PD: twentieth century		**New PD: twenty-first century**
Clear boundaries between foreign and domestic, states and civil society	*BEYOND*	Permeable and non-existent boundaries, power diffusion
State-to-state diplomacy		Polycentric diplomacy: above, below, and beyond the state
Established rules and norms		Emerging rules and norms
Fewer diplomatic actors, fewer people, fewer issues	*NEW*	More diplomatic actors, more people, more issues
Industrial age technologies: print, radio, television		Digital age technologies: traditional and social media
Hierarchical, state-centered, top-down	=	Networked, horizontal
Information dissemination, message design and delivery	*INTEGRATIVE*	Relational, collaborative: message exchange, dialogue and mutual understanding, and collaborative policy networks
One-to-many (unidirectional)		Many-to-many (multidirectional)
Less information, more attention		More information, less attention
Foreign ministries: gatekeepers, primary actors in foreign affairs		Whole-of-government diplomacy: foreign ministries as subsets, important but not primary
War on the battlefield: between state-actors		Armed conflict among the people: between state and non-state actors
Cultural barriers		Incorporate cultural diversity
Public diplomacy is episodic and peripheral to diplomacy		Public diplomacy as enduring and central to diplomacy
Government-to-people public diplomacy	*PD*	Many state, regional, sub-state and civil-society actors in public diplomacy
Passive audience (indirect participation)	=	Active audience (direct participation)
Foreign publics	The best of both	Foreign and domestic actors as publics, partners, independent actors
Persuade by 'wars of ideas': meta-narratives	Complementarities instead of Contradictories	Understand, influence, engage and collaborate in global public spheres: multiple narratives
Get the message right, pre-formed and static message		Understand what others perceive, co-created and dynamic
Shaping images of the sender		Influencing policy agendas by shaping policy attitudes
Dominated by US and UK experiences		US, European and (later) non-Western experiences

Source: Costas et al. (2016)

The second argument criticizes the traditional state-centered approach and emphasizes the need for engagement of various actors (the general public, influencers, academics, etc.) and institutions (NGOs, think tanks, non-profits, etc.) in PD (Riordan, 2003; Potter, 2003; Vickers, 2004; Fitzpatrick, 2007; Pamment, 2012; Hall, 2012). Zaharna (2010, 61-62) argues that nongovernmental organizations have "the highest trust and credibility," which could be beneficial for PD practitioners to consider. At the same time, as is noted by Cull (2009) the perceived distance from the government has a significant effect on whether the more institutionally inclusive approach to PD will bring expected benefits. While NGOs can operate independently, the willingness of governments to build on the credibility of non-governmental organizations through active participation or financial support can taint results. In addition to the two mentioned arguments, Costas et al. (2016) summarize additional variances between traditional and new PD (Table 1).

Despite the academic value of broadening PD understanding, NPD raises several concerns about its adaptability, at least in the foreseeable future. First, since policies are designed by a government, which approves budgets and defines aims, there is an omnipresence of the state in PD. In that context, an attempt of (mostly western) scholars to distance PD from the government requires redefining the whole concept. Traditionally NGOs were seen as targeted by PD policies. For example, an assessment made by the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy (2000, 5) wrote that the difference between traditional and public diplomacy is that the latter deals “with nongovernmental organizations and the foreign public at large”. In other words, although the role of NGOs in PD was recognized, they were seen as targets for PD, or facilitators of the dialogue between the state and the public.

Contrary to that, Philip Seib (2009, 12) argues that PD activities should be carried out by “NGOs, commercial entities and even individuals” or that governments should treat them “as an equal partner in the public diplomacy endeavors” (Zateplina, 2009, 166). While PD is defined as various practices conducted by the government, a new line of research advocates the transfer of power from the state to society. Thus, NPD research views NGOs as power-wielding and independent actors, which implies a certain form of deliberate cooperation while preserving the fundamental values and goals of the NGOs themselves. Consequently, as Kathy Fitzpatrick (2011, 37) noted, it means that some researchers have started to pull a blanket toward the idea that PD should become truly “public” rather than “governmental”.

The idea itself, however, is not new but presented from a different angle. Hampson and Oliver (1998, 380) describe the “Axworthy doctrine” of the Canadian government that was introduced in the late 1990s, and they emphasize the role of NGOs as a “vanguard of the ‘new diplomacy.’” However, they argue that NGOs have continuously played a role in foreign policy, but question the idea that all NGOs will represent “the interests of the Canadian public” (ibid, 401). Similarly, scholars (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 1999, 203) noticed that NGOs might be involved in the “war” with the government/other NGOs over public opinion and that NGOs have their PD agendas (Lee and Ayhan, 2015).

Thus, it raises concerns about "confidentiality and the trust" (Langhorne, 1997, 12-13) that governments are willing to provide to NGOs by diffusing their power. This position creates a pressing need to empirically demonstrate the balance of power between government and NGOs in cases where some form of "equality" is established. Despite Jan Melissen, (2011, 18) as one of the main promoters of NPD, having stated that collaborations between states and NGOs "have been well researched," discussion of power relations and large-scale empirical evidence remains scarce, which refers to the second concern with NPD.

The second concern that arises is that NPD is a relatively new direction of research that currently lacks empirically and theoretically explicit studies. Despite noting the necessity to expand the understanding of PD beyond the West (Table 1), NPD faces a range of difficulties in non-Western settings. Since it is a more sophisticated approach, it not only implies a need for PD to be well-understood by the local practitioners but in practical implementation also requires a significant increase in financial and institutional support. In that context "sophisticated" and "elaborated" do not necessarily mean something effective in a practical sense. As Hall (2012) points out regarding Indian PD, although the country's approach was influenced by Western understanding, the estimated effect remained low. What is more concerning is that the author concluded that "well-crafted public diplomacy may prove a good investment" (ibid, 1110), which raises more questions than addressing the reasons behind the failure.

In that context, (2015, 274) has challenged "the alleged rise of 'new' public diplomacy," arguing that the PD of non-Western countries such as Russia and China is not so easily characterized by one or another concept. The author argued that the policies of both countries reflect a blurred line between propaganda and PD. Thus, an attempt to evaluate these approaches according to more developed NPD standards seems unrealistic. On the other hand, Gregory Simons (2018) notes that, although Russian NGOs challenge the West on some issues, Russian PD does move toward NPD. The difference between the two positions is: that while Rawnsley considers Russian antagonism toward the West to be an obstacle, Simons highlights it as a unique historically and socially constructed peculiarity of the Russian approach to PD.

At the same time, while Rawnsley aligns Chinese and Russian approaches to PD, Simons (2015) argued that China is less oriented toward NPD. Concerning China, Yang and Taylor (2014, 591) argue that, while the country continues to receive negative coverage from "the Western liberal journalists," it is possible to trace positive changes after China has implemented an NPD-like approach toward NGOs. In other words, while China's PD policy is still characterized as traditional, its practices do reflect various elements of NPD. However, there is an active debate as to whether they are effective (d'Hooghe, 2005, 2011; Metzgar, 2015) or not (Nye, 2010; Hall and Smith, 2013). Taking a middle ground, other scholars (Wang, 2011; Hartig, 2016; Zhao, 2019) noticed that unique approaches to PD, cultural differences, and pre-established negative perceptions directly alter the effectiveness of PD in various contexts. Ociepka (2018, 4) even argues that NPD is "conducted by democratic regimes with democratic regimes," which seems to be a reasonable position considering that the notion of NPD mainly develops within universities and political circles of liberal-democratic countries.

The last concern is centered on the discursive and practical separation of the Western and non-Western. While NPD argues for more inclusion, it creates a wide range of discursively established practices of disparagement. When Edward Gullion introduced the term PD in 1965, he noticed that the main reason was to discursively delineate propaganda from PD. It allowed distinguishing "bad"/authoritarian practices from "good"/democratic ones, which allowed simplifying the perceived difference between the practices of the Soviet Union and the Western PD.

Since the end of the Cold War, and thus the major ideological confrontation, various countries have begun to engage with the concept and practical use of PD. In that context, NPD scholars have introduced the new discursive separation, which signaled a step forward toward a more progressive and inclusive/dialogue-centered understanding of PD practices. However, to date, there are not many large-scale examples of NPD policies, most of which continue to exist only in theory. Rather it represents a dividing line between Western (discursively positioned as "new") and non-Western PD (discursively positioned as "old"), which became a fashionable concept to use as a part of foreign policy. In addition to eroding differences between propaganda and traditional PD, it creates a possibility for biases, which could create such problems as analysis of practices from only one angle, or the possibility of misidentifying amateur practices, cultural differences, pre-existing knowledge, power issues, or lack of resources as propaganda or old-fashioned propaganda-like PD.

For example, Caitlin Byrne argued that Australia's "one-dimensional, one-directional nature" of PD can illustrate an early-stage development of practices rather than propaganda (Byrne, 2012). At the same time, Avgerinos (2009, 123) notes that, concerning Russia's PD activities, "biased information that is simply disseminated in a one-way, top-down manner is considered propaganda." Thus, what in one case can be seen as an inexperienced practice with a path to possible improvements, and in another is seen as a negative or even aggressive policy of propaganda. While some scholars point out that PD, as an instrument to spread government information, is "by nature biased" (Gonesh and Melissen, 2005, 5), NPD scholars are more likely to ignore the discussion of such issues as power imbalance or conflict of interest.

The serious question that should be addressed is whether the discussion of NPD contributes to a policy of PD in general since the practice might be noticeably distant from its academic discussion (Wiseman, 2011). As Pamments (2011) noticed, while using such words as "network" or "dialogue", the U.S. PD continues to see the public as passive consumers of American narratives. Thus, the distinction between PD and NPD seems to be discursive rather than reflected in reality or practice. In a sense, the distinction of NPD reproduced a similar discursive separation of "good" and "bad" practices that were done by Gullion.

In the context of this research, Russian PD falls under the description of traditional PD rather than NPD, but there is no clear cut. As Greg Simons (2014, 1-3) notes, the Russian approach is based on an outdated, one-way understanding of PD concerning broadcasting. However, at the same time, he indicates the existence of a more diverse approach to social media. Similarly, Natalia Tsvetkova (2020, 103-106) shared the idea that Russia's digital diplomacy is reasonably developed, but still concentrates on the "promotion of state narrative" rather than engaging in dialogue (i.e. the two-way NPD approach). At the same time, a simple "promotion of state narrative" can also be understood as propaganda. Thus, for the sake of completeness of the discussion and before making assessments about what Russia's approach to PD is, it is also necessary to analyze the conceptual differences between PD and propaganda.

1.3.2 PD and Propaganda

Since PD is viewed mostly from the Western perspective, non-western practices suffer from an even larger conceptual ambiguity. In addition to the above-mentioned vagueness that NPD has led to, the distinction between PD and propaganda has become even less certain. It represents a significant issue when studying Russia's PD, which is often viewed as propaganda (Saari, 2014; Snegovaya, 2015; Yablokov, 2015; Inkster, 2016; Kragh and Asberg, 2017; Watanabe, 2018). Scholars argue that, since Russian understanding, approach, and practices of PD still adhere to a top-down government model (Simons, 2014;

Velikaya, 2018), the difference between propaganda and PD is blurred. More precisely, Russian researchers (Lukin, 2012; Velikaya & Simons, 2020) have observed that the government has an outdated approach to information, including such practices as keeping archives closed, maintaining a perception of providing information support as a service rather than a duty, and the absence of separate institutions that directly regulate the work related to Russian PD.

However, being an epistemic community, or a group with power over discourse and knowledge construction (Haas, 1989) and acting as "guardians" of intersubjective knowledge, scholars contribute to the formation and functioning of the discursive barriers to Russian PD. Since the Western liberal democracies have the hegemonic power to define the "correct" practices of PD and soft power (Kiseleva, 2015), they tend to establish "anchoring practices" (Adler & Pouliot, 2011), or the practices that are considered to be the "ideal." Consequently, many non-western PD practices are overlooked, including Russia's (Just, 2016). Moreover, the term propaganda is often employed to delegitimize opposing views without a thorough analysis of practices, which becomes especially pronounced in relations between Russia and the West (Chernobrov & Briant, 2020). Thus, in addition to being overlooked, they also might be discursively dismissed.

Despite recognizing the complexity of the two concepts, little was done to agree on the "nature" of Russia's PD. Some even argued that the difference between propaganda and PD "is likely to lie in the eye of the beholder" (Saari, 2014, 51) or that moral or "immoral" intentions define the difference (Cull, 2009, 23). Although the scholarly concepts do not require to be shared and agreed upon by the whole academic community, it is nevertheless important to clearly express an individual position that a researcher holds rather than dismissing the issue due to its complexity. As some researchers point out, the ignorance toward complex analysis of Russian PD and labeling it as "propaganda" is not only damaging to the constructive discussion but also could contribute to the escalation of international relations through the creation of the "aggressive Russia" narrative or misunderstanding (Osipova 2014; Just 2016).

Academic views on propaganda and its interconnection with PD are diverse and often contradictory to each other. From a perspective of propaganda studies, the term is defined as a "means to disseminate or promote particular ideas" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2015, 4). Others have noticed that propaganda acts as a "means of organizing and shaping thought and perception" that received its "sinister connotation" after the

First World War (Auerbach & Castronovo, 2013, 2). Consequently, there was a necessity to use an alternative term for the dissemination of ideas to avoid the "discredited term 'propaganda'" (Huijgh, 2016, 438). Thus, as noted above, the differences between the two terms might not be reflected in practice but they may be discursively established.

Despite a significant number of attempts to elaborate on the differences between the two terms (Tuch, 1990; Zaharna, 2004; Brown, 2008), a general agreement among scholars has not yet been established (Gilboa, 2008). For example, Mor (2007) highlighted that propaganda is a combination of self-representation as well as an attempt to simultaneously diminish the opponent's representation. However, this view ignores that states as individuals construct their identities based on the opposition between "self" and "others," which implies that positive characterization of "self" can be supported through negative characterization of others. As an example, among liberal democracies that best represent PD practices, no country does not condemn terrorism and terrorist organizations. While most of the time this condemnation is well-deserved, it pits the self against the other, downgrading one's representation. The same is true for geopolitical enemies or countries with historically complicated relationships, including the U.S. and Russia, the U.S. and China, Japan and South Korea, Israel and Palestine, and so on.

Another position is, as Rugh (2006, 4) argues, that the difference reveals itself in "openness" and "truth," where PD is "always truthful." In the same manner, Cull states that "PD clearly may become propaganda if used for an immoral purpose" (2009, 23). Both statements represent a simplification of the terminological distinction between propaganda and PD through subjectively colored epithets that open the floor for biases and maintain positivist dominance in PD studies. This position assumes that researchers can establish the truth and evaluate states' intentions by separating themselves from the issue under investigation. Other researchers (Hart, 2013; Jowett and O'Donnell, 2015) have noticed that PD could be embodied in forms that may or may not "fit into a strict definition of propaganda" (311). However, this position is often countered, since fitting the patterns of propaganda is not equal to being propaganda. Graham (2015, 207) argues that while the U.S. PD does use propagandist methods, it maintains a "truthful, enlightening approach to the exchange of culture and information with foreign audiences" overall.

It is important to notice that case study-based research is often accompanied by pre-existing knowledge about actors, institutions, and countries involved in the practices of PD (see Chapter 1.6.).

Although case studies make a highly important contribution to empirical data, the general discussion of propaganda may present a more coherent explanation of the differences between propaganda and PD since it is distant from a range of possible pre-established biases. Thus, Castronovo and Auerbach have distinguished thirteen propositions arguing that propaganda "too often has been bogged down and narrowed by categorical and repetitious preconceptions" (2013, 4). The following selected propositions (Table 2) illustrate and elaborate on several major points of confusion that are present in the literature on PD and propaganda.

Table 2. Propaganda Propositions

Proposition	Example
Propaganda is not intrinsically evil or immoral. Its characteristics depend on a variety of purposes.	Propaganda of democratic values against the propaganda of racism.
The relation between propaganda and information is fluid, varying according to context and function. Facts and truth are framed by discourse and not objectively "truthful".	Different in reading a data set by conservative or democratic U.S. parties: "Alternative facts".
Although propaganda is not an essential category with precise formal attributes, particular techniques of propagation can be studied with variable results. Each piece of information should be carefully analyzed in dependence on related factors rather than fixed instruction on what to consider "propaganda."	Fact-checking sites appeal to the understanding of "fake news" as propaganda, even though imprecise information may illustrate a lack of professionalism rather than the government's campaign.
People can actively use propaganda and are not simply passive dupes used by it. Propaganda does not necessarily spread from top to down.	The difference between "bots" or individuals with political messages who start the disinformation.

Source: Castronovo and Auerbach (2013).

The four selected propositions do not intend to formulate a complete understanding of propaganda or its differences with PD, but rather draw attention to a more comprehensive and nuanced analysis. The table presents a postpositivists' view that rejects the objective identification of "truth" and "facts" emphasizing context-dependent PD practices and discourse-dependent PD analysis. This argument points out that the terms “propaganda” and “PD” are social constructs, which means that although some form of agreed-upon identification of the differences is important, researchers should be careful to avoid making vast generalizations.

In addition, it is necessary to look at “black propaganda,” which is often what both scholars and the public mean by “propaganda.” The “black” type can be spotted “when the source is concealed or credited to a false authority and spreads lies, fabrications, and deceptions” (Jowett and O’Donnell, 2015, 21). The notion of “fake news” is a clear example of black propaganda. Contrary, the “white” type is concentrated on open, credible, and fact-checked information, but is still distributed in a top-down and non-dialogue form. For example, in the Russian agency TASS, there is no open journalistic passion, so the articles give the impression of impersonality, which limits the interactive potential between the news agency and the public.

Two main factors allow clarifying differences between the two types of propaganda. Firstly, black propaganda refers to covert measures taken to disseminate certain types of information produced by a state. Although direct or indirect participation of governments is an essential part of PD, links to the government should be publicly disclosed or explicitly stated to avoid confusion between white and black types. For example, NGOs gain credibility through established independence from a state (Nye 2008b; Zhang and Swartz, 2009; Zateplina, 2009; Pisarska, 2016). Thus, the public image of state-sponsored NGOs is likely to suffer from their association with the state, which was hidden but subsequently exposed (Cull, 2009). In that case, the NGOs will be seen as what Barston (2019) called a “disguised state” or a government’s use of the declared independence of state-sponsored NGOs to spread favorable ideas.

Secondly, black propaganda attempts to delegitimize or discredit the image of another country using knowingly false information to misinform the foreign or domestic public. It is a more controversial distinction because the deliberate characterization of actions should be proven and not simply assumed based on subjective or moral judgments. In this case, various anonymous statements or even official reports cannot simply be accepted as evidence of black propaganda on their own but must be carefully considered and critically examined. Hiebert (2003) summarizes the key features of “black” propaganda by analyzing the UK and the U.S. information campaigns during the Iraq War. He argued that both countries used “nameless underlings,” “unverified intelligence reports,” and “unproven” allegations. This became apparent only after the Iraq War received unprecedented press coverage and public discussion, which allowed the uncovering of discrepancies in testimonies, forgery of documents, and disinformation techniques.

It must be concluded from this discussion that there is no agreed definition of PD, NPD, and propaganda across the board. The main problem lies not only in the lack of consensus among scholars but also in the fact that the definition of propaganda at the societal level has a strong negative connotation. For example, while Merriam-Webster gives three definitions, which include a positive as well as a negative view of propaganda, Britannica explicitly describes it as a tool of manipulation. In that context, the need for scientists to be precise about the terminology is essential. However, it is not what the literature on Russia's foreign policy, public diplomacy, or propaganda demonstrates (see Chapter 1.7). It is also the case that positivists' discourse significantly affects the way differences between PD, NPD, and propaganda are described, which an accent of the "truthful" and "honest" character of communication reflects.

Besides the conceptual problems, the second part of the discussion about PD is hidden in several major theoretical positons. If concepts define predominantly abstract characteristics of the term, highlighting its possible reflections in practice, then theories explain how PD functions and achieves foreign policy goals. Ultimately, theories provide an explanation of underlying mechanisms of communication in general that are not limited to PD. In other words, theories, sufficiently supported by empirical evidence, can explain the practice and clear up conceptual ambiguities. Among them, there are two major views on PD: from the position of public relations and soft power.

1.4. Theories of Public Diplomacy

1.4.1 PD and Public Relations Discourse

Rather than making attempts to develop the theory of PD, the need for which is questionable, many researchers argue that borrowing from the sphere of public relations (PR) could bring a fresh perspective to the field of PD (Grunig, 1993a; Ham, 2002; Yun, 2006, Buhmann, 2016; Khalitova et al., 2019). They have noticed that both PD and PR involve interactions of an actor (state, company, NGOs, various social groups) with the public to achieve certain goals. Being among the first, Signitzer and Coombs (1992, 146) summarize that while PD and PR "share basic concepts" and examining how they are related may enrich our understanding, more empirical evidence of possible convergence is necessary.

Even after more than 20 years, a breakthrough in this direction is still far from complete. Based on an extensive investigation, Van and Fitzpatrick (2016) conclude that researchers of PR have published 120 articles concerning PD in major PR journals from 1990 to 2014. They have found that despite the significant amount, only around 20% of the papers used a multiple method approach, while many (46.40%) preferred an essay-type of research (ibid, 3-4) and devoted little attention to qualitative data analysis. Among 120 articles, only 13.11% have contributed to the discussion of conceptual convergence (ibid, 3). In other words, while the integration would be desirable, limited support has been received from the research community.

Despite that, several approaches should be considered since they have significantly affected the emergence and development of NPD. The first is an approbation of the Excellence Theory (ET) to evaluate the practice of PD from the conceptual positions of PR. James and Larissa Grunig (1992; 2008, 328) have developed the ET, the purpose of which is not just the introduction of a new theory, but the unification of various existing theories of PR into a functional unity (Grunig et al., 2006). By “excellence” they mean “a set of attributes and practices that helped to build quality, long-term relationships with strategic constituencies” (Grunig, et al., 1992, 86). The authors argued that, on a global level, PR practitioners should take into account factors such as culture, the level of economic development, activism, and political, economic, and media systems to achieve results.

The ET argues that “generic principles” should be applied differently in “different settings” for PR to be effective (Grunig and Grunig, 2008, 338). This corresponds with what they call a “post-modern” understanding of communication as being subjective and socially constructed through interactions between various actors. Adam Tyma (2008, 203) notices that this combination of modern and postmodern/critical positions allows the ET to combine “the macro-level,” on which it presents the general effective strategy, with “the micro-level” that brings into the discussion various cultures and identities. Further development of ET methodology and presentation of case studies have been performed by a range of different quantitative and qualitative articles (Rhee, 2002; Wakefield, 2000, 2007; Macnamara, 2012).

Regarding PD, Yun (2006) argues that, with the development of technologies and public involvement in policy-making, modern governments have to use some type of PR model to efficiently communicate with the foreign public. To test the conceptual connection between PR and PD, the author conducted macro-comparative large-scale research on 113 embassies in Washington, D.C. However, while

Yun concludes that “PR frameworks are transferable to conceptualizing and measuring public diplomacy,” the results are not convincing since no necessary triangulation (Montabon et al., 2017) was provided. In addition, similarly to his supervisor, James Grunig, who received extensive criticism for the modernist approach (see their response in Grunig and Grunig, 2008), Yun has failed to consider various socio-cultural settings and their influence on the way the embassy staff has responded to surveys. Moreover, since embassies are parts of PD, they do not represent it overall.

While the ET is widely cited, thus, having discursive power to define some aspects of modern PR studies, it also has attracted a fair amount of criticism. Among many is the discussion of western-centrism (Macnammara, 2012), being conceptually overblown (Coombs, 2009), and methodology that is not able to distinguish unethical practices (Davidson, 2016), which is also a point of concern about Yun’s article (2006). The ET also attracts some of the criticism addressed to Hebarmas’s views on the possibility of dialogue and consensus through rational dialogue between various social groups (see Davidson, 2016). In line with this criticism, some scholars argue that attempts to establish a consensus and genuine dialogue with a presence of unequal power relations “may actually intensify conflicts” (Verheyden and Cardon, 2018, 3) or that “symmetrical communication…is hegemony, by definition” (Roper, 2005, 83).

Concerning the convergence between PD and ET, the same problems and criticism are applied. In addition, it is still not clear whether this convergence is possible without massive changes in our understanding of PD. As some scholars notice (Mayfield et al., 2020, 195), for ET, “communication…becomes an organizational priority.” While communication is an important part of PD as well, it ignores the government's expectations of foreign policy benefits as end goals. Moreover, ET, and NPD’s for that matter, emphasis on two-way symmetrical communication is unlikely to benefit the discussion of the growing online technologies at the service of the state PD. As scholars argued, even nonprofit organizations use one-way communication rather than symmetrical dialogue online (Waters and Jamal, 2011). It is telling that in a recent book, several scholars, in their attempt to respond to criticisms of the theory, avoid most of it (Hung-Baesecke et al., 2021). Thus, while facing its challenges, the ET approach is unlikely to be useful in addressing gaps in PD discussion comprehensively.

The second implementation of PR approaches to PD is agenda-setting or agenda-building theories. “Agenda setting” or “Agenda building” theory concerns actors’ (mainly government or media) attempts to craft a specific agenda that will establish some form of dominance in the public sphere. It is used to give prevalence to some information/knowledge/discourse over others “to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution” (Entman, 2003, 5). In other words, it is the theory of influence that aims at achieving goals by affecting “attitudes, opinions, and behavior” (McCombs et al., 2014, 782).

Most of the research is concentrated on interactions between government, media, and the public (Cook, 1998; Van Ham, 2003; Sheafer and Gabay, 2009). In their fundamental work, McCombs and Shaw (1972) argued that media can manipulate public discourse by allocating different kinds of physical space (on a screen, on a newspaper) and time (screen time, the number of stories). In a more developed approach, Wu and Coleman (2009) differentiate between two levels of this manipulation: the level of coverage and the level that assigns properties to covered issues. While the initial work implies some form of independent deception, modern studies concentrate on uncovering the issues of power and bias arguing about more complex interrelations between involved actors (Entman, 2007; Neuman et al., 2014).

In contrast to the Excellence theory, some researchers of framing theory argue that public relations are only a part of PD, whereas the second part is public communications (Hiebert, 2003). If first, similar to NPD, it involves “a mutuality, a duality” (244) and a two-way approach, public communications are more consistent with a one-way propaganda strategy. Similar to Roper (2005), Hiebert argues that it is unrealistic to assume PD to be a force of good, which pursues two-way symmetrical mutuality since it does prioritize someone’s position. In the example of the failure of the U.S. public communication regarding the Iraq war, the author demonstrates that propaganda is an essential part of PD, especially during crises. The research represents the important distinction between PD practice in a time of relative peace, and changes toward more propagandistic approaches which occur in a time of turmoil, which is usually ignored in PD studies.

Concerning PD, agenda-setting and framing are often perceived as a necessary part of “mediated public diplomacy” (MPD), (Entman, 2008b; Sheafer and Gabay, 2009; Cheng et al., 2016; Albishri et al., 2019; Zhou, 2022). Gilboa (2008, 88) defined this term as “short-term targeted efforts to use mass communication to increase support of a country’s specific foreign policies.” However, he also noticed that mediated public diplomacy is different from PD, which concentrates more on long-term strategies. In that context, agenda building and framing are tools, which governments use as a part of PD through mediated public diplomacy or strategic communications (Potter, 2019; Tsvetkova et al., 2020).

One of the hypotheses of MPD is that politico-cultural congruence between countries/nations will affect the way framed "facts" are accepted (Entman, 2008). Although this idea corresponds with the postmodernist view on the importance of context and empirical data, it is disputed or its applicability is questioned (Sheafer &Gabay, 2009; Fahmy et al., 2012). For example, Pan (2020) argues that in countries with restricted control over media, it is important to establish congruence with their political elites rather than expect results from political or cultural proximity. Regarding Russia, Golan and Vietchaninova (2014, 1279) also notice consistency between Russia's agenda-setting and "Putin's multipolar positioning strategy." Thus, there is a concern related to the applicability of MPD and politico-cultural congruence hypothesis in the Russian context that is complicated by positivist and modernist approaches, such as overreliance on quantitative data.

In addition, despite the theory being valuable to the discussion of PR, it seems to be less relevant to PD. The relationships between governments, media, and the public are, no doubt, important but do not reflect PD policies overall. Moreover, the agenda-setting theory has been controversial to an extent, since it does develop in line with other theories of PR, thus, facing the same issue. While some researchers argue about the positive effect of agenda-setting practices on public opinion (Yang & Saffer, 2018; Albishri et. al., 2019), others notice that a long-term agenda-influencing strategy is required to achieve visible results over time (Servaes, 2012). However, the agenda-setting theory can significantly contribute to the discussion of power over PD discourses among newly emerging actors. As several researchers notice, in the modern world, various actors such as media platforms and social networks compete for discursive power over agenda settings (Wu et al., 2013; Guo & Zhang 2020).

To conclude, despite many arguing that the PD-PR interdisciplinary vision could be beneficial for understanding PD, "there is little empirical evidence" (Fitzpatrick et al., 2013, 2) that various PR theories would be useful or usable. One of the biggest problems is that while PR argues for the crucial importance of communication itself, PD is more inclined to see communication as one of the tools to achieve political results. As noted in Chapter 1.3.1, PR theories negatively affect a conceptual differentiation between PD and propaganda. Since all PD strategies are done for political benefits as end goals, switching the emphasis toward communication following PR theories exaggerates differences between state-run one-way propaganda and two-way PD or NPD.

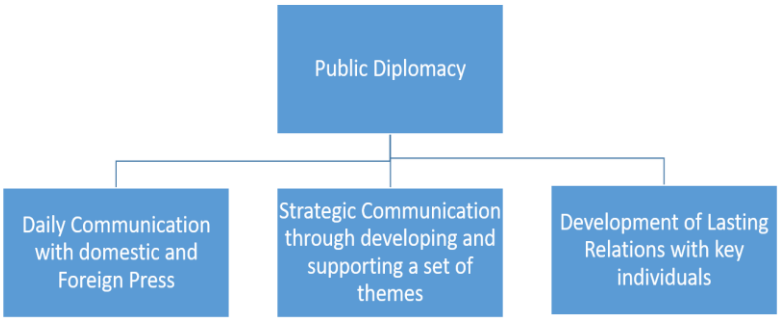
Moreover, PR theories alone do not allow the researcher to analyze the PR strategy from goal setting to the final result, but only consider the general principles of effective communication. In other words, they reflect a limited understanding of the context in which communication is happening. Consequently, it omits detrimental important elements of PD such as the complexity of interstate/intercultural dialogue and the importance of power relations and distribution. Thus, despite being useful to analyze some forms of PD communication, PR theories do not provide a multilayered and complex analysis of it overall.

1.4.2 PD and Soft Power

Soft power is the second influential theory that affects the contemporary understanding of PD. Many argue that soft power is an essential part of PD (Melissen, 2005; Pahlavi, 2007; Atkinson, 2010; Wei, 2016; Pamment, 2016). The author of the term, Joseph S. Nye, developed the idea in the 1980s while having a high-ranking position in the U.S. government, which predetermined his narrow understanding of international relations from the U.S. perspective. In the book "Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power" (1990), he defines "soft power" as a way of indirectly influencing the decision-making of other countries through attractiveness rather than coercion or payment. Thus, Nye has put forward an alternative to realists' focus on hard power that represents the use of economic or military tools to achieve a country's goals.

Nye considered PD as part of government policy to spread information abroad and create a positive image or overcome a negative one (ibid, 105). From this perspective, information itself becomes a source of power in the hands of PD practitioners who can control its production and distribution. At the same time, it also creates a responsibility to maintain reputation and credibility, which implies that countries have to act out on the principles that they promote. Similar to the NPD concept and PR theories, soft power perspectives on PD promote the need for a two-way symmetrical approach. Nye (2004) argues that the main sources of soft power influence are culture, political values, and behavior of the country internationally and domestically. He also proposes three dimensions of PD (Figure 1) through which soft power acts and obtains its influence. The work of Joseph Nye has had a major influence on modern PD research. His three major books (Nye, 2004, 2011, 2016) have more than 24881 citations, which represents a significant discursive power over the definition of soft power. At the same time, there are also several major weaknesses associated with Nye's approach.

Figure 1. Three dimensions of PD.


Public Diplomacy
Daily Communication with domestic and Foreign Press
Strategic Communication through developing and supporting a set of themes
Development of Lasting Relations with key individuals

Source: Nye (2004)

Although multiple studies were conducted to overcome this weakness, the western-centrism of soft power research continues to maintain its grip on the theory. This means that studies conducted based on various empirical evidence outside the West cannot challenge the dominance of Nye's approach, which is a necessary step in the theory development process. Consequently, this leads to a narrow understanding of soft power and PD, the wide range of scientific and practical implications of which is questionable.

To argue based on the example, while the first two dimensions of Nye's PD model are applicable in different settings, the third dimension is based on a more sophisticated, developed, and financially powerful U.S. policy. The third dimension centers around communication with elites that may include current political figures as well as individuals/groups that might become powerful in the future. Thus, influencing them would create a predisposition to support US policy and an attraction to US soft power sources. One of the factors that might indicate possible success is that to become opinion leaders, elites, or influencers, exchange participants should have potential ambitions or leadership potential. Since empirical evidence showed that "unstructured exchanges of diverse persons" are less effective (Atkinson, 2010, 19), a selection of people with the highest potential is needed.

However, as Banks (2011, 36) noted, although youth as future leaders could be influenced, it is a "gamble." If the youth activists currently are perceived to be "future elites," there is little evidence that they will have any influence on policy-making in the future. The success of exchanges depends not only on how well-selected participants can use an experience or gain influence to form positive views on the sponsoring country within the domestic audience, but also includes the need for long-term follow-up communications (Kim, 2015) to ensure a lasting effect of the exchange.

In addition, some scholars have observed that the effectiveness of exchanges cannot be considered separately from various other factors involved (Lima, 2007; Iwabuchi, 2015), which means that even if the third dimension of Nye's approach to PD is developed, there is no guarantee that it will bring about the expected results. Thus, although this policy might be beneficial, not all countries will be financially ready to bet on a long-term, theoretical result. Consequently, the application of the soft power theory in different settings, including cultural, historical, and state-specific examples, is questionable.

Nye also notices (Nye, 2016; O'Neil, 2022) that the U.S.' soft power is independent of government institutes, relying instead on facets of civil society such as Hollywood and universities. Since Nye and most of the soft power scholars rely on positivist and overall modernist positions, they tend to ignore the way such institutions contribute to the construction of knowledge and discourses. However, from a social constructivist perspective, Hollywood and American universities throughout the 20th century provided and continue to enhance soft power as relays of information. Thus, an important question is whether the theory of "soft power" applies only to the United States or countries with a similarly well-established system of knowledge construction.

The second weakness of soft power theory is that it relies on a vague definition of influence, attractiveness, and more importantly power. As several researchers notice (Gilboa, 2008; Bilgin and Elis, 2008; Zahran and Ramos, 2010, 16), the theory "lacks rigor; its use is problematic and uncertain, making a strict definition of the concept hard to obtain." The biggest problem centers around the issue of power, which is an essential but ill-defined part of Nye's theory. Comparing it with Foucault's definition of "power," Gallarotti (2011, 31-32) argues that soft power "manifests itself in more specific contexts and situations" rather than being omnipresent. On the other hand, this specificity, which ultimately was not provided, does not equate to a more comprehensive analysis of power relations.

To contribute to this discussion, Jiang (2017) distinguishes between the "software" and "hardware" of soft power. The difference between the two is that the latter reflects dominance and causes changes in the values of the target country, while the former leads to dialogue and co-existence. However, it remains unanswered whether equal, two-way, or “power-free dialogue is possible” (Fitzpatrick, 2011, 40) or how relevant soft power is without “the presence of a hegemon power” (Kearn, 2011, 81). Although the theory of soft power operates with the concepts of power, values, interest, attractiveness, etc., it ultimately does not consider the historical and socio-cultural roots of their constructions (see Chapter 2).

The last weakness among the many discussed here is a conceptual and theoretical ground of soft power effectiveness. Faced with criticism, some attempts to revitalize the theory were made, including by Joseph Nye himself (Nye, 2016; Ohnesorge, 2020). This led to the introduction of the concept of “smart power,” which became an alternative to the bloated and exaggerated effectiveness of “soft power.” The new concept argues that soft power is only effective when combined with hard power, which is a combination of previously (Nye, 1990) deprecated military and economic tools of influence. This step has acknowledged the existence of problems but did not fix them. Consequently, the effectiveness of soft power remains weakly explained.

In line with that, it is important to consider the applicability of soft power in the context of Russia’s PD. As one of the central documents of foreign policy, the “Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation” (2016) defines “soft power” as a set of “tools”, such as “the capabilities of civil society, information and communication, humanitarian and other methods and technologies” that are used “besides to traditional diplomatic methods.” This definition is different from the one in scholarly papers or Western practices. While researchers consider soft power to be more like an effect or ability, the Russian political elite positions it as a tool, which implies the existence of certain mechanisms for its use.

The second issue with the Russian approach is that soft power comes in conjunction with the perception of a threat to the unity of the cultural space. Thus, the concept of soft power is discursively placed in direct dependence on issues of national security. One of the consequences of this approach is that NGOs and various groups with foreign sponsorship might be seen as “foreign agents,” which complicates the work with companies, and public and non-governmental organizations as one of the important transmitters of soft power. Experts of the Russian International Affairs Council think tank noted that this could pose a great danger both to the operation of soft power in general and to NGOs as necessary agents for its dissemination (Maika, 2018).

Thus, at the very core of Russian politics, soft power is perceived as a set of tools or certain mechanisms through the prism of national threats, and similar to PD policy, the state plays a key role in its promotion. Regarding such an understanding, Joseph Nye (2013) wrote that Russia practices soft power under strict control of the government, which undermines soft power's resources. Several scholars express a similar view, arguing that Russian political elites "fail to understand exactly what soft entails" (Hudson, 2015; Rutland & Kazantsev, 2016, 408). This argument is based on the assumption that there is an agreement on soft power, which ignores lengthy debates about the theoretical deficiencies. Since there are significant disagreements and debates about soft power, the issue seems to be much deeper than these scholars imply. Thus, it is necessary to critically examine the most common controversial issues regarding the discussion of the Russian soft power policy.

One of the problems is that most studies of Russian influence and soft power represent quantitative studies (Khalitova et al., 2019; Golova, 2020; Crilley & Chatterje-Doody, 2020) or the use of quantitative indicators, such as public opinion polls (Gerber & Zavisca, 2016; Fisher, 2021). The quantitative data, while useful in some cases, does not allow us to access the question of "why" certain values are attractive/not attractive, which is a burden to answer to scientists. Some studies also reflect methodological insufficiency (see Hudson, 2015; Gerber & Zavisca, 2016). For example, although a significant proportion of Russian soft power is directed toward a more Russian-speaking population of eastern Ukraine, Cheskin (2017) conducted focus group interviews in Kyiv but applied his conclusion to the whole Ukrainian population. An exact problem is seen in Hudson's (2015) disproportional focus group selection.

Another problem is reflected in the argument that the problem with Russian soft power lies in corruption (Sergunin & Karabeshkin, 2015) or its influence is facilitated by corruption in other countries (Grigas, 2012). However, as data from Transparency International (Corruption Perception Index, 2022) shows, the real level of perceived corruption in Russia has not changed that significantly. Thus, it does not correlate with changes in the Russian soft power ranking (Soft Power 30, 2022). It also does not correlate with various opinion polls on Russia (Ray, 2011, Huang, 2020). Thus, although corruption might and likely does negatively affect Russian soft power, it remains an assumption with an approximate evaluation of the effect.

The last problem discussed here is the idea that Russia "failed to appreciate the idea of partnerships with clear advantages for both sides" (Bogomolov and Lytvynenko, 2012; Ćwiek-Karpowicz, 2013, 47), which negatively affect Russia's ability to project its influence through soft power. However, as Konstantin Kosachev (2012), one of the key figures of Russia PD, notes, cooperation is a central element of Russian soft power. The argument also does not correlate with the data. As Gallup reported in 2008, more Ukrainians (English, 2008) and Georgians (Esipov, 2008) saw more value in ties with Russia than the U.S. At the same time, the shift in opinion emerged not with an alteration of Russia's view on the partnership, but with geopolitical crises in 2008, 2014, and 2022. In the two above cases (corruption and partnership), the problems appear to be not in factual data but in power and discursive constructions about them (see Chapter 3).

To conclude, there is an ongoing debate about soft power theory, which requires empirical data, diversification of theoretical presuppositions, and methodological instruments. Researchers criticized the soft power conception for being "ethnocentric" (Fan, 2008, 153) and not taking into account the complexity of both domestic and foreign societies, which consist of different identity groups (Varrall, 2015, 34; Köse et al., 2016). Thus, while the soft power theory remains western-defined, it will not contribute significantly to the discussion of Russian PD. As Hudson (2015, 296) notices since the concept of soft power is a "Western…construct" Russian and China have had to adopt it to their alternative political values, which will inevitably cause discrepancies between existing and emerging views. However, this western episteme also indicates discursive practices concentrated around the discussion of Russia, its PD, and its influence, which will be argued further (see Chapter 3).

At the same time, various existing concepts and theories create a certain understanding of practices overall, which affects how Russia's PD is approached from a scholarly and practical perspective. Since the Western, or more specifically, American, understanding of PD acts as a mode of knowledge, it imposes certain discourse and dismisses/simplifies the local understanding of the issue. It is not to say that the "western" approach is wrong or "imperialistic" but it does create limitations in collecting and analyzing data from a different socio-cultural and historical understanding of such issues as power, state, and communication. In that context, it is important to understand whether Russia's PD fits the above-described concepts, and how it is viewed by scholars and practitioners.

1.6. Russia's PD from Russia's perspective

From the practitioner's viewpoint, the need for "objective" (read, "favorable") information about Russia was stressed in the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation, 2000. The need has been recognized as a response to the continuation of the conflict in Chechnya, which demonstrated the role that media could play in narrating the war. However the exact words "PD" was officially reflected in the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation of 2008. It was discursively placed as a "means of information influence" to achieve "objective perception" and "repel information threats". This understanding was not much different from U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication policy released a year prior (Policy Coordinating Committee, 2007).

On the other hand, some changes happened concerning Russia's understanding of PD. First, the term "publičnaja diplomatija" (public diplomacy) generally disappears from Russia's discourse in subsequent documents, including the concept of the foreign policy of 2016 (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2016). Instead, the term "obščestvennaja diplomatija" is used, which could be translated to "public diplomacy" as well. Second, the discourse also reflected that PD should act as a "means of establishing inter-civilizational dialogue, reaching agreement and ensuring mutual understanding between peoples, paying special attention to interreligious dialogue". It corresponds with the modern U.S. concept emphasized: "efforts to understand, inform, and influence" (ACPD, 2021). In other words, both countries have changed their concepts by discursively adopting the language of NPD scholars.

A feature of the application of PD in practice in Russia is the conceptual declaration without a separate institutionalized system for its implementation. In comparison, the U.S. has the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy with the congressional mandate to conduct research, report to the President, and attract an expert commission. The major institute that performs PD functions in Russia is the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation, or Rossotrudnichestvo. The second institute that focuses on informing the domestic and foreign public is the Information and Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. In addition, several other institutes are involved in one or the other aspects of Russia's PD: think tank-type Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) and the

Gorchakov Fund, the language promotion-centered “Russkij Mir”, and media channels such as “RT” and “Russia Beyond”.

A year before his appointment as a head of the Rossotrudnichestvo, Yevgeny Primakov Jr. (2020a) stated that “humanitarian policy should be ideologized” by which he implied that it should not be “loaded with additional political values, does not impose them on people, families, society or the state, violating the sovereignty of the country or contrary to the traditionally accepted way of life.” After the appointment, he also argued that the concept of soft power is overrated and the “legacy of imperialism” (Primakov, 2020b). At the same time, he emphasized the need to combine “defending our identity” and “searching for common ground” without universalization of values (Primakov, 2020c). The importance of his discourse is in the reflection of the uniqueness of Russia’s view on PD, which build upon counter-positioning to the U.S. approach.

While Primakov's discourse on PD is consistent with the NPD literature, its practical implementation remains to be seen, especially since some of the problems in implementing the PD strategy lie in the structure of political power. As Alexander Lukin (2012) highlighted two main problems that lead to discrepancies (discursive and practical) between the U.S. and Russia’s practice of PD: the dominance of Soviet elites with an outdated view on PD and government reluctance to accept civil society as an independent participant of PD. Ex-president Dmitry Medvedev (President of Russia, 2008a) also pointed out that “we lose, of course, both quantitatively and qualitatively” in comparison with the U.S. because of “our legislation and bureaucratic party”. These problems are most pronounced in interaction with NGOs. However, to Antoncheva and Vasileva (2019, 11) the limited inclusion of NGOs in the implementation of PD “leaves room for maintaining controllability of the implementation of the international course of the state.” Thus, the power balance between the government and NGOs remains a serious issue of concern and reluctance to engage with for Russia’s political elite.

Primakov’s attempt to make a step away from the Western concepts corresponds with Russian scholars' point of view, which emphasizes the difference between PD and “obščestvennaja diplomatija”. Several scholars argued that the two terms despite sharing the same translation are different conceptually. For example, Parubochaya and Piskunov (2018) argued that the Russian approach refuses to “implant” a certain way of life and focuses on co-existence. In addition to that, Shershnev (2015) and Primakov (2020b) highlighted the “pragmatism” of Russia’s PD arguing that “Russia is gradually becoming such a large continent of adequacy, therefore, interest in us is growing”. It is reasonable to expect this discourse to continue since it reflects the concept of multipolarity introduced by Primakov, the father of the current head of Rossotrudnichestvo.

On the other hand, Russian scholars and the expert community continue to mainly rely on the Western concept in defining both PD and soft power (Velikaya, 2019; Tsvetkova & Rushchin, 2021; Burlinova et al., 2021). It means that approximately the same scholars/publications dictate the definition, conceptual boundaries, and approaches to PD in most Russian scholarly literature. In addition to the existing discrepancy between scholarly theory and practice, especially concerning NPD, this creates a significant problem in evaluating the effectiveness of Russia’s PD. For example, Tsvetkova and Rushchin (2021, 56-57) argued that “Russia has neglected to promote cooperation” and that “Russia’s advocacy campaigns comprise primarily monologue-based forms”. The problem with that is not in whether it is “actual” characteristics of Russia’s PD but with the number of citations and discussion involvement. The paper itself lacks references, especially concerning examples of dialogue-based strategies. The authors seem to rely on the established concept that, as was noted above, predominantly exists in theory. Moreover, they have adopted the term “sharp power”, which, in the author of this thesis's opinions, reflects the additional discursive separation between “good” and “bad” countries similar to the PD/propaganda, PD/propaganda/NPD differences.

It needs to be highlighted that the reliance on Western concepts is not wrong on its own since the current episteme is formed and dominated by Western scholars. Moreover, nationality, race, or identity does not define comprehension or scientific inquiry. However, it becomes a problem when the adopted concepts/models limit the level of interest in explaining non-Western practices from non-Western perspectives. This will imply a deep, nuanced study of social constructs and intersubjective knowledge that define the local form of episteme without dismissing it by embracing its differences.

To put it simply, this research notice that it is not an effective research strategy to evaluate local practices by their coherence with the meanings/standards produced outside. It leads to a significant discrepancy between the object of investigation and the theory implied. As an example, members of the think tank Picardi, the expert community that focuses on analyzing PD in Russia, criticized attempts by scholars to establish a unique view on Russia's PD (Burlinova et al., 2020). Not surprisingly, their argument is based on comparing it with U.S. public diplomacy, which has historical, practical, financial, and other advantages. The problem with that is a perception of PD through formal models, which ignored socio-cultural, historical, and practical aspects of conducting policy in a specific context. As the result, the experts recommend expanding coordination and systemic control over PD. This recommendation is arguably counterintuitive since it would only deepen the major point of criticism of Russia's PD "apparatus" for being centralized and relying on a one-way propaganda approach.

1.7. View on Russia's PD in the Literature

Despite the western-centered conceptualization and discussion of PD, the scientific community has demonstrated reasonable interest in Russia's PD, which is often closely interconnected with issues of propaganda. It contributes to the confusion about the two terms and Russia's PD practices overall. For example, Gerber and Zavisca (2016) state that the spread of the "Russian narrative," by which he meant an alternative vision of international issues, is without a doubt, propaganda. Researcher Watanabe Kohei (2018, 5) attributes the Russian website Sputnik News to "propaganda" for "alternative news content." Snegovaya identifies the website "Russia Beyond," which heavily concentrates on information about Russian culture, travel opportunities, and lifestyle, as part of "Russia's propaganda in Germany" (Snegovaya, 2015, 20). As a consequence of being in the middle of current political controversies, the discussion of Russian PD is interconnected with major political discourse on Russia's political elites, and it should be approached with consciousness since there are plenty of politically aggravated publications that promote negative but surface views on Russia's information campaigns.

Thus, while the literature review is usually done by assembling themes, this research will take a different approach. Since scholars act as members of epistemic communities, or a group with a legitimized power to affect (create, alter, protect) discourse, debates among them significantly contribute to the construction of knowledge. While positivists argue that scientists act independently, this study is postpositivist, pointing to the impossibility of separating the researcher from his/her research. In other words, being exposed to the social constructs scholars cannot avoid biases, certain pre-established knowledge, and discourse that affects their engagement with the topic of discussion. Since PD involves communication practices and evaluation of their effectiveness, it is important to understand not only conceptual/theoretical/methodological positions but also the language of positioning Russia’s practices within the literature.

In general, the literature demonstrates a range of conceptual, empirical, and methodological deficiencies. As the arguments of this thesis go, the main problem derives from attempts to impose exogenously produced concepts/models without paying enough attention to practices and knowledge. One of the most visible manifestations of that is vague differentiation between PD and other practices, which often have negative connotations. Concerning the current political climate, justifiably or not, attention is often directed from Russian PD towards other forms of communication, among which are the widely discussed propaganda (Yablokov, 2015; Snegovaya, 2015; Inkster, 2016; Watanabe, 2018) and “covert activities” (Hare, 2019, 156). Some scholars align Russian PD practices with the active measures of the Soviet Union (Saari, 2014; Abrams, 2016; Kragh and Asberg, 2017), attributing descriptions like “fitting the old pattern” (Tsygankov, 2019, 26) without giving attention to the significant post-Cold War changes in the discourse of Russia’s political elites.

The first thing that should be noted is that several pieces of research which focus on discussions of Russia’s “propaganda” are directly or indirectly sponsored by the military (see Gerber and Zavisca, 2016; Abrams, 2016) or defense corporations through non-profit research institutions (see Snegovaya, 2015). Many others were, to some extent, involved in or part of PD policy in various Western countries, but did not state it in the conflict of interest section of their papers. In the current political climate, especially after the beginning of the war between Russia and Ukraine, various Western countries openly declared that Russia is an “enemy” or disruptive actor. It means that receiving financial incentives from their governing bodies and conducting research about Russia have to be discussed.

Despite not being wrong in itself, this does cause a range of concerns regarding research being dominated by positivist views in this field, which does not take precautions to counter possible problems. The precautions usually include disclosing data and ensuring methodological diversity/triangulation. However, as literature demonstrates, it is rarely done. Another concerning part is that the literature from both cases where possible conflicts of interest might take place is getting a significant amount of citations in the field without a proper critical engagement with their conclusions (see Rotaru, 2017; Lanoszka, 2019; Fisher, 2020). From the author's position, it is one of the consequences of the dominance of the positivism paradigm in IR literature, which emphasizes objectivity of research and independence of researchers from pre-established knowledge.

Another issue centered on the discussion of Russia's PD is the tendency to focus on data that confirms the negative views on Russia's practices without comprehensive engagement with general tendencies. For example, Martin Kragh and Sebastian Asberg (2017) attempted to analyze the "boundaries between public diplomacy and active measures," by which they meant to distinguish Soviet-type propaganda from PD in current Russia's foreign policy implementation. However, the initial author's reliance on the historical perspective of KGB policy during the Cold War led to the limited recognition of current features of Russia's PD and propaganda campaigns. The comparison between Soviet definitions of "information warfare" and current Russian policy regarding information security disregards the distinction between PD and "active measures," to support an argument of the paper. Taking into account the U.S. approach to information operations reflected in the "Field Manual 3-0" (Operations, 2008), there are no tangible/discursive differences between what authors called Russia's "KGB lexicon" of informational security and the U.S. practice in the same area. In other words, there is a tendency for selective rather than large-scale and comparative data analysis.

Moreover, Kragh and Asberg have failed to adhere to the methodology that they claimed to follow. They refer to the study of Soviet propaganda by Richard Shultz and Roy Godson (1984), which emphasizes two major points. First, Kragh and Asberg select the then newly created 2015 Sputnik's Nordic, which was terminated in the following year. This is drastically different from the methodology presented by Shultz and Godson, which argues that the source should be characterized by "authoritativeness" and "regularity." Second, Kragh and Asberg only utilized part of the highlighted methodology, which is classification and tabulation, but did not use descriptive textual analysis, which Shultz and Godson designed to overcome the shortcomings of their approach. Consequently, this led to a blurred understanding of the selected metanarratives and an elimination of the possibility to repeat the study, which is the main criterion for establishing scientific knowledge or seeking the "truth". It is not in any way designed to be a personal attack on the authors' integrity but a caution that various deficiencies in the literature were not addressed, currently exist and are not critically analyzed when recited.

Researcher Sinikukka Saari (2014) also analyzed Russian PD from the perspective of the Soviet "active measure" policy. Similar to the previously mentioned article, his paper ignores the existing conceptual debates on the differences/similarities between PD and propaganda. The author's reference to the statement that "the difference is likely to lie in the eye of the beholder" undermines the scientific discourse around such complicated issues. Saari's attempt to draw parallels between the modern Russian PD and the active measures of the USSR suggests that there should be a comparison of the international and Russia's practice of PD as well. Without it, the separate case of Russia's PD is presented as a kind of unique policy which is practiced exclusively by the USSR and Russia.

The author claims that "Russian PD clearly draws from both the overt and covert practices of Soviet PD" (ibid, 59). The overt practices are "international broadcasting and publishing, cultural diplomacy and events organized abroad were all established practices of Soviet overt PD," which are part of the international practice of PD. At the same time, Saari fails to provide an example of "covert" practices. To prove the point that there is a significant correlation between modern Russia and Soviet practices, they use an article by Lada Roslycky (2011), which discusses Russia's soft power covert operations in Crimea before the Ukrainian conflict. However, Roslycky's article considers these actions in line with the theory of soft power security rather than any specific characteristics of Russia's approach driven by the "active measures" legacy. Since the positivists' approach prevails in studies of PD, there is no account for the possibility of various cognitive biases occurring, such as conjunction fallacy (see Tversky & Kahneman, 1983; Ahn & Bailenson, 1996) or confirmation bias (see Nickerson, 1998; Kappes et al., 2020).

Another problem is questionable data interpretation and methodological limitations. For example, Avgerinos Katherine (2009) analyzed the early stage of Russia's PD during the 2000s from the perspective of nation-branding theory. They argue that a globally unfavorable view of Russia at the beginning of Vladimir Putin's first term (2000-2004) dictated the need for an improvement of the national image. As part of the methodology, Avgerinos used presidential speeches to understand messages and ways in which Russia projects its image. In contrast to this thesis, the paper's methodology is not a large-scale data collection, thus, it does not reflect tendencies but confirms them. In other words, the process of selection of speeches and the way narratives were distinguished is unknown, which means the data interpretation is, by definition, questionable.

The main claim of the paper is that Russian PD efforts failed to achieve significant results because they lacked a clear understanding of what and how desired messages need to be conveyed to the foreign public. Moreover, they argue that Russia did not "have a national strategy or identity" to have a baseline understanding of what the "country wants to achieve" (ibid, 128). This argument is in line with a constructivist view on PD, which will be discussed in the following theoretical Chapter 3. The main idea is for a country to formulate a discourse about "self," it is necessary to be aware of what this identity consists of or what are desired features of identity that the country wants to promote.

Despite the complex attempt to evaluate Russian PD effectiveness, the paper does not convincingly convey causal relations between PD and image. It argues that Russia failed to promote its image a year after a major international conflict, a war between Russia and Georgia in 2008. Gallup poll (Saad, 2009), which Avgerinos referred to, argued that "public attitudes toward Russia…seemingly sensitive to shifts in U.S.-Russian diplomatic relations." It also noted that a similar decline in public opinion on Russia (down to 40% of positive views) happened in 2003 as a response to Russia's position on the U.S. actions in Iraq, which confirms Gallup's point of view. The worst decline in 1999 (down to 33%) was also associated with Russia's condemnation of the Yugoslavia bombings.

It means that Russia's image suffers when its stance on international issues differs from the U.S. In other words, when Russia reflects its discourse, which contradicts the Western. The Gallup poll also shows periods of rising favorable views when Russia has not yet initiated an active PD policy. In other words, the argument that Avgerinos makes is weak and inconsistent. It does not take into account the wider picture of the developing rivalry between Russia and the U.S. since the Yugoslavia crisis. The situation seems to be directly opposite: the more Russia challenges the Western discourse, the more public opinion deteriorates. The paper also does not elaborate on why changes in public opinion do not correlate with policy changes but do with the appearance of international crises.

Similar to Avgerinos, Greg Simons (2011, 346) states that one of the biggest problems for PD and rebranding Russia is undefined "Russian identity." The definition of "Self" is necessary for PR, PD, and branding policy to confront "the old stereotypes and images" inherited from the Soviet past by introducing formulated/reformulated identity and a clear message of a new Russia. However, the constructivist theory allows Simons to add that the messages, which Russia tries to transmit, should involve the creation of a "platform for the basis of establishing a shared interest, linking common or shared values or norms" (ibid, 346). In contrast to Avgerinos (2009, 130) who argues that "Russia must send out a consistent message to the West" to improve its international image, constructivism opens a possibility to understand the West not as a homogeneous actor in the international community with singular and well-defined values. Rather while the most discursively powerful actors within the West define states' values, they are far from being the only existing.

As was pointed out by several scholars (Schmitt, 2018; Laruelle, 2018, Keating and Kaczmarska, 2019; Tsvetkova, 2020), Russia's PD messages or soft power are more attractive to some, predominantly what is called the "conservative", sometimes referred to as "right" or "far-right", part of the society. Thus, since the West represents liberal democracies, Russia's promotion of conservative values cannot lead to large-scale positive outcomes. It theoretically means that if Russia defines its identity solely through conservative values, it will not be successful no matter how precisely the message is formulated and delivered to an audience with divergent, often opposite views. Moreover, the effectiveness will also depend on how conservative values are discursively positioned: having positive or negative connotations. It illustrates that the issue of effectiveness is much broader and develops on the level of society, which requires appropriate methods to access intersubjective knowledge and discourses.

In addition to differences in values-structures, Thomas Just (2016) noticed that Russia's PD practices are different and consequently "tend to be undermined in many Western countries." Because Russia maintains a government-centered approach (Simons, 2014; Velikaya, 2018), which is reflected in strict control over narratives, instruments, and institutions, it diverges from Western practices and is often delegitimized as "propaganda." One of the unique features of Russia's PD is a focus on diasporas and nationalist movements, which are "by definition exclusionary." (Just, 2014). It appears less attractive to other sides of foreign countries' political spectrum such as globalists or movements that support immigration.

In a recent book by Anna Velikaya and Greg Simons (2020), authors gathered practitioners and researchers of Russia's PD to answer three questions: what is Russian PD? What does Russian PD look like? How effective are Russian PD efforts? Compared to previous articles, the authors discuss different views on the Russian PD from perspectives of propaganda, active measures, or a unique type of PD. The main idea of the authors corresponds with Yelena Osipova's (2014) post on the University of South California's Center of Public Diplomacy blog. It argues that ignorance of complex analysis of Russian PD practices and labeling it as "propaganda" not only damages the constructive discussion but also could contribute to the escalation of international relations through the creation of an "aggressive Russia" narrative. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a complex analysis of "the reality on the ground" (ibid, 2) or a more practice-oriented, divergent vision of Russia's PD.

At the same time, the book contains several shortcomings. First, despite focusing on Russia's unique practices and view on PD, none of the articles was intended to formulate and present these very distinctive features. It once again reflects the overconcentration of Western approaches, including terminology, concepts, criteria for evaluating effectiveness, and methodology. Second, most of the articles rely on the traditional evaluation of PD effectiveness by using opinion polls and media coverage. Diverse methodological tools or evaluation frameworks are necessary to trace the link between stated goals, actions, and the impact that leads to unclear boundaries between causations, correlations, and coincidence that will affect the evaluation of PD activities. Third, as Olga Krasnyak (2019) has noticed, the book did not present a full spectrum of PD elements (cultural, sports diplomacies, etc.). The articles are scattered by themes, ideas, methods, geographical specializations, and discourse. Additionally, the regional focus reduces the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of PD in general because it misses the complexity of values, identities, and norms, which can be seen in action in case studies.

In that context, Russian PD practices and narratives remain understudied. One of the problems discussed there is the West-oriented field of IR that defines not only defines "correct" and "incorrect" approaches but more importantly imposes conceptual/theoretical limitations on a plethora of non-Western practices. It leads to the empowering of one kind of practice and the delegitimizing of others, which is especially well reflected in the example of non-Western countries (Shani, 2008; Tickner, 2013; Acharya, 2014). Several researchers have argued that Russia's PD is often dismissed as counterproductive (Kiseleva, 2015; Keating & Kaczmarska, 2017), while measurements of effectiveness are established within the Western context and based on the dominant Western system of values. Consequently, while PD policies may consist of various "constellations of practices" (Wenger, 1998), some of them are not given enough attention and academic scrutiny since they are considered to be “incorrect” for diverging from “the anchoring” or dominant views.

The importance to differentiate practices is especially well pronounced in analyzing Russia’s digital diplomacy, or a PD through social media. Several researchers argued that communication practices through social media such as Facebook and Twitter represent a difference from the traditional approaches to PD engagement (Kampf et al. 2015; Mazumdar 2021). In particular, it gives much broader access to the audience and allows to have direct communication between private profiles of political figures and the public. However, studying Russia’s PD online provides a unique perspective not only on general digital diplomacy strategies but also on how particular countries engage in utilizing modern technology to their advantage.

Several scholars noticed that the way Russia’s political elite practices PD often goes beyond conceptual and theoretical understanding developed by Western scholars (Golan and Viatchaninova, 2013; Simons, 2014; Osipova, 2014; Vershinin, 2021b). For example, recent studies revealed the ways Russia utilizes humor (Manor, 2021), anti-establishment sentiments (Fisher, 2021), and conspiracy theories (Yablokov 2015) online. Due to a seemingly controversial character of communication, several scholars consider Russia to be a disruptive actor (Cull, 2016; Gerber and Zavisca, 2016; Shekhovtsov, 2017; Bjola, 2019; Manor and Pamment, 2022). Recently, Pamment (2021) noted a need to consider a “theory of disruption”, which will incorporate the discussion of disruptive activities in PD. They argued that some actors such as China and Russia could use polarization as a part of disruption activities. In that context, social media due to their outreach can significantly increase the magnitude of disruption.

While PD studies emphasize Russia’s activities through traditional media, more empirical studies are needed to understand the practices of various countries and PD actors on social media. Although Russia did not create those practices and is not alone in using them, the emphasis of the literature on this particular country demonstrates significant and unfilled demand for a better understanding of Russia, its political system, and communication. Thus, this thesis contributes not only to understanding traditional PD but also to how it is practiced online, through digital diplomacy and Facebook in particular. Before moving on to the methodology and theory of the study, it is necessary to dwell on the importance of a comprehensive study of the practices and narratives of Russia's PD. According to the argumentation of this thesis, the dominance of the positivist paradigm significantly affects the low interest in considering how narratives and the meanings behind them are built, especially in non-Western examples.

1.8. Positivism and the Study of Russia

Since this research is placed within IR, the discussion of positivism and postpositivism will not extensively concentrate on philosophical debates and will be limited to the field of IR. It needs to be noticed that postpositivism is not "unitary," but rather a combination of various critical stances addressed to the mainstream/positivist understanding of science (Lapid, 1989, 3). While positivists believe that "external realities can be known objectively" (Patomaki & Wight, 2000; Morçöl, 2001), postpositivists and constructivists in particular argue that realities are heavily affected by their discursive formation about them (Foucault, 1972; Campbell, 1998; Hall, 2001). Postpositivsts directly question the ability of scholars to be independent of discourse in conducting research. It does not mean that research is inherently biased, unscientific, or factually incorrect but it is the case that positivists impose certain theories, models, or concepts on the object of the inquiry (Lapid, 1989).

Max Weber (1968) suggested that the political realm would largely benefit from the value of the social scientific approach to the analysis of the real-world event. He argued that social scientists' "methodical, that is, systematic, detailed and concrete observational techniques" (Stehr, 1994, 30) allow combining secular scientific knowledge with political practices, consequently improving them. This argument is based on the idea that, with adherence to certain rules of conducting research and ethics, scientists can establish causal connections in the process of verification of the "true" hypothesis and eliminate the "false" (Burell and Morgan, 1979). However, postpositivists have questioned and challenged the vague distinction between facts/reasons and values (Kronman, 1983; Turner and Factor, 2006). They argue that, because scientific knowledge is socially constructed, scholars not only constructed knowledge but are also influenced by them (Schneck, 1987; Epstein, 2008; Latour, 2009).

As Michael Foucault argues in conversation with Gilles Deleuze, "Intellectuals are themselves agents of this system of power - the idea of their responsibility for "consciousness" and discourse forms part of the system" (1977, 207). In that context, critical theorists argued that scientists should aim to struggle with the system to avoid biases, but there is no guarantee that they will be able or willing to do so. In other words, the conception of collective scientific knowledge and historically constructed "enterprise" (Stehr, 2018, 173), rather than the objective reality that can be systematically employed. Consequently, the dominance of positivism was challenged, which led some scholars to claim that it “was largely dead” (Miller, 2000, 54). Others notice that positivism “had become sidetracked” because of its focus on “modeling science via predicate-calculus axiomatizations” (Suppe, 2000, s104). Thus, positivism in its classic form had undergone significant changes in an attempt to adapt to changing criteria of social science.

While various other challenges to positivists’ views on science emerged in the first half of the 19th century, the theoretical approach of positivism maintains a relatively stable dominance in social sciences; especially in IR. One of the most important investigations conducted by Daniel Maliniak, Amy Oakes, Susan Peterson, and Michael T. Tierney (2011) demonstrates that methodological and theoretical diversity has decreased since the 1980s. They found that 90% of articles in major American IR journals in 2006 were positivist, which is a significant increase from 58% in 1980 (ibid, 439). More importantly, the study reveals that 60% in 2006 and 68% in 2008 of researchers claimed that they use qualitative methods as a primary methodology, but only 29% of articles in 2006 were qualitative. This illustrates that while scholars recognize the importance of qualitative data, they tend to contribute to the established dominance of the positivist paradigm. As several scholars have noticed, this situation could change if the IR discipline will be taught with a more diverse and inclusive understanding beyond positivism (Biersteker, 1989; Kristensen, 2018). At the same time, another explanation might be that qualitative research, although used frequently, does not get enough attention from major journals and is not published as often as quantitative research.

There are several ways the dominance of positivism affects the study of Russia’s PD. First, along with the demonstrated racist and gender prejudice in social science (Honeycutt & Freberg, 2016), several researchers (Simmons et al., 2011; Duarte et. al., 2017) note the uneven approaches to liberal and conservative values. They demonstrated a global tendency to perceive conservative ideas negatively and conservatives “as a target” (Eitan et. al., 2018, 196) of research more often than liberals. This affects how often papers labeled “conservative” get published (Honeycutt & Jussim, 2020, 81). As is demonstrated by the UNESCO report (2016), the dominant majority of Scopus and Web of Science publications in social science comes from liberal democracies (more than 84.1%).

On the one hand, this does not mean that belonging to liberal democracies necessarily creates biases in studying conservative values, or that biases are reflected in research. Researchers argue that the scientific community has standards of publication practice such as double-blind peer review (Taber & Lodge, 2006; Zhang & Heavilin, 2017). On the other hand, belonging to a particular group makes it "tempting" to affect the data collection or data analysis process and step further from the objective conclusions (Tetlock, 1994, 515). Clark and Winegard (2020, 3) argue that tribalism, such as associating oneself with a certain political ideology, could induce ideological epistemology and affect analysis, which "lead(s) to predictable biases, distorted perceptions, and false beliefs." Thus, even with new publishing standards and ethics, biases continue to affect research, and "there are no reasons to believe" otherwise (Honeycutt & Jussim, 2020). In other words, the dominance of certain ideologies, in this context liberalism, could not necessarily will, affect the object of scientific inquiry.

In this regard, scholars also noticed that the Russian approach to soft power is often dismissed as counterproductive or is "demonized" since Russia's narratives do not fit "a pool of liberal values" (Feklyunina, 2016; Keating and Kaczmarska, 2019, 2). In particular, Kiseleva (2015, 319) argues that soft power is a "discriminatory and hierarchical" structure, created and controlled by the hegemon, which can determine "soft" values and practices. Consequently, the Russian academia and political elite themselves have framed Russia's approach to soft power in line with the dominant Western discourse, which ultimately does not fit.

The second problem of positivism affecting the study of Russia is the tendency to apply theories and concepts developed in the context of one social reality to others. It reflects the issue of generalization that was noticed in Chapters 1.6 and 1.7. In addition to the liberal/conservative values systems, various unequal distributions in knowledge construction between the global north/south, the Western/non-Western countries, and greater/lesser powers are reflected in studies of IR (Neuman, 1998; Nkiwane, 2001; Shani, 2008; Behera, 2010; Tickner, 2013). Those dividing lines between social groups/countries create a certain level of discrimination and determine subordinate roles. As Amitav Acharya (2014) points out, West-centered IR does not provide equal opportunities for all "voices, experience, and values" to be taken into consideration.

The amount of discursive power in the study of international relations that the Russian scientific community possesses is not more significant than the power of other communities within the "global south." According to the UNESCO World Social Science Report (UNESCO, 2016, 339-343), Russia's contribution to social sciences was only 0.3% of social science publications in Scopus and 0.4% in the Web of Science from 2008 to 2013. In comparison, 35.6%/37.5% (Scopus/Web of Science) of all publications are attributed to the US and 9.9 %/10.6% to Britain. Although this does not necessarily mean that the "Russian" discourse on IR does not exist, it reflects its marginalized status in studying both IR and Russia itself. It is especially relevant when discussing discourse since to analyze it means more than understanding the language but being able to access meanings within the intersubjective space of their origins. As seen, the first and second problems with positivism are interconnected and ingrained in epistemology.

Conclusions

Several important points should be taken into account regarding conceptual and theoretical views on PD. The important point to make is that PD is a concept in development, characteristics, and practices which continue to change. The basic definition that this thesis prefer is a view of PD as a policy that the government carries out, intending to create a positive understanding of itself among the foreign public to achieve political goals. It follows that three necessary elements embody PD. First, the government plays a central role in conducting the policy, which includes a disproportional executive and discursive power of a state over defining what discourse to project. In contrast to discussed concepts, this thesis argues that PD always represents a top-down policy since there are no studies that convincingly prove it otherwise. It means that even when NGOs and other non-state actors participate in PD, the government continues to define the ultimate goals.

Second, the government aims at establishing positive discourse about itself, which does not include an imprinted need to do the same regarding "others". The argument that many scholars make about the peaceful and engaging characteristics of PD is inadequate and does not reflect the complicated role of communications in social relations. As will be argued in the theoretical Chapter 3, the definition of "self" ultimately includes the definition of "others", which could be positive as well as negative. For example, while the U.S. might speak positively about many Western counties, its PD includes a negative or/and denigrating characterization of "other", such as authoritarian countries, terrorist organizations, Russia, and North Korea. It helps to elevate one's positive characteristics by counter-positioning values, norms, and identities.

Third, positive self-description is not an ultimate goal of PD but an achievement of political changes. In contrast to the NPD concept and theories of PR as well as soft power, which emphasize dialogue and understanding as an end-goal of PD, this thesis argues that this discussion is incomplete and contributes to the existent vagueness in analyzing the practice of PD. If the government is financially involved in executing the PD policy, it is expected that some political benefits will be achieved. The author argues that scholars often uncritically overly rely on public documents and speeches, which by definition will emphasize such issues as “dialogue” and “understanding” since it is a part of positively self-describing PD.

It is also the case that concepts of PD, NPD, and propaganda are intertwined rather than separately functioning policies. While there are differences between them, it seems obvious that the practice of one does not exclude the practice of the others. However, the important point to make is that policy receives more attention as a part of the discourse construction about certain countries. For example, while countries use PD and propaganda, the preference to discuss the latter concerning Russia imposes limitations on the understanding of its PD. Among the consequences of that discussed within this chapter, are conceptual, empirical, and methodological deficiencies in studying Russia.

The general scientific view of PD in Russia is relatively consistent among Russian and foreign scholars in terms of the application of Western concepts. While Russia’s practitioners, experts, and researchers reflected on the unique features of Russia’s PD, to date, not much was done in terms of conceptualizing it from a practical perspective. It is also the case that PR and soft power theories are useful to approach certain aspects of PD, but similarly to concepts, are not able to grasp the practice overall. However, those theories and debates around them made an important step toward a more inclusive understanding by pointing out that the effectiveness of PD depends on socio-cultural and political characteristics.

At the same time, the dominance of positivism with a specific ontology and epistemology in studying IR and PD limits the further development of the diversity of empirical examples and methodological tools to analyze PD practices across the board. On the one hand, positivists’ epistemology relies on establishing “facts” and seeking “truth” rather than analyzing how discourses and meanings are created. Since there is the prevalence of liberal and Western social, cultural, and political ideals in the field, it suppresses differing knowledge from a position of equivalent significance. In that context, various scholars relying on theories of PD assume liberal values to be dominant, “attractive”, and “objective”, whether Russia’s conservative values are presented as ineffective or unattractive. On the other hand, the tendency to apply models of how social reality functions obstructs the need to take into account empirical evidence from non-Western countries, in which intersubjective knowledge can, but not necessarily be, different.

Thus, this study will address existing gaps by introducing/reintroducing constructivism and its epistemology to the understanding of Russia's PD. The theory (see chapter 3) allows the author to approach practices and understanding of PD through the analysis of socially constructed knowledge. It means that meanings, identities, discourses, and narratives that PD carries are approached within the social reality that constructs them and that is constructed by them. To do that, the study concentrates on discourse analysis that reveals the inseparable influence of Russia's identity on how it presents itself through narratives of PD. The study also utilizes content analysis to contribute to the discussion of emerging practices of PD through social media. It also allows for a diversity of the data by comparing how PD functions on different levels.

Chapter 2. Methodology

Introduction

The research methodology for this study consists of a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze Russia's PD discourse, narratives, and discursive practices that embody them. On the one hand, PD is a practice-driven field, which massively relies on quantitative data and prioritizes data that shows outputs (Clark & Anderson, 2004; Wilding, 2007; Steven, 2007; McDowell, 2008; Brown & Hensman, 2014; Sevin, 2017). Scholars also regularly employ opinion polls (Gerber & Zavisca, 2016) to understand attitude changes over time, large-scale analysis of media communication (Nisbet & Mayers, 2010; Watanabe, 2018), or statistical methods (Buhmann, 2016; Buhmann & Sommerfeldt, 2019). These studies reflect positivists' views, which "emphasize the measurable properties of things" (Onuf, 2013). However, as argued by several scholars (Gonesh & Melissen, 2005; Snow & Cull, 2020; Di Martino, 2020), despite the prevalence of quantitative methods, they cannot alone explain PD. While quantitative methods focus on numbers and figures that ignore social constructions they still provide certain advantages over qualitative design alone. In particular, despite being the major positivist tools, they nevertheless can help to overcome historicism and purely interpretative constructivism (see Guzzini, 2011; Pouliot, 2007, Checkel, 2017).

While some discursive practices or narratives can be distinguished, qualitative data analysis alone cannot determine their impact on discourse. For example, if political elites adhere to certain religious beliefs and reflect them in their speeches, these beliefs will act as a part of or as a reflection of discourse. However, the limits of their discursive power cannot be measured by qualitative tools. It is also impossible to say how often political elites mention, follow or act following these beliefs. In other words, qualitative analysis can demonstrate that a particular narrative exists in the discourse, but how influential it is can only be approximated using quantitative tools. Simply put, presence is not the same as influence. Qualitative methods are also limited in measuring the reach of PD programs (Weaver-Hightower, 2013), while quantitative data helps understand how PD functions in terms of numbers. Therefore, this study adheres to the mixed-method approach to overcome some of the deficiencies of constructivism in studying OD instead of focusing exclusively on qualitative methods.

The research will also utilize a mixed-method model with component design when "mixing the methods takes place at the level of interpretation and inference, not in the process of data collection" (Jang et al., 2008, 222). Since the study utilizes multiple data sets which are documents, statements, and Facebook posts published from 2012 to 2019, the component design allows us to first proceed with data collection, approach it quantitatively, and then support it with qualitative interpretations. This, for example, can help to establish the above-mentioned discursive power of a certain narrative, which is reflected in its ability of it to effect (legitimize/delegitimize) other narratives.

To answer the stated questions, the dissertation will utilize the constructivism theory and the proposed PD Discourse Chain (see Chapter 3). However, some limitations will be artificially imposed to keep it concise by limiting the range of the inquiry. First, the research concentrates on Russia in its modern state, which means the main focus will be made on the period after 1991. While history is important, this study concentrates on modern Russia's foreign policy, which means the end of the Soviet Union. Second, while multiple actors can contribute to the construction of the state's discourse because the main focus is on PD as a government policy, only central government discursive practices will be taken. Among them, the research focuses on the two main actors who represent Russia's foreign policy elites according to the constitution: the President as a symbolic, terms of the constitution and a leader, a representative figure of Russia, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs as a representative of the executive branch.

Third, the research concentrates on two parts of the Chain, Discourse Production and Discourse Projection. This limitation is necessary because the Discourse Reception stage involves various constructions/reconstructions of discourse by the domestic public, which requires a comprehensive and deep analysis of Japanese identity and intersubjective knowledge. It also will limit institutions of discourse dissemination among the Japanese public to the two above-mentioned figures, who act as the main producers of foreign policy discourse, and Russia's Embassy in Japan, which is the main institute of Discourse Projection on the local level.

2.1. Data Collection: The First Data Set

The first data set represents how Russia narrates "self" to the world (Q1) by separating "global" and "local" narratives. This is done to see how different settings of "self" and "other" relations reenact various discursive practices and knowledge to construct and legitimize discourses/narratives. In case "other" is not identified when self-presentation of a state is addressed globally, thus, not depending on the specific historical and socio-cultural context of bilateral or multilateral relations. On the other hand, a local case reflects a way to present “self” to a defined “other”, relations with which will include a specific set of characteristics acquired through a long process of interactions. Therefore, the “local” illustrates how a unique construction of “self” emerges and differs from the “global”.

The “global” level consists of the collection of public speeches made by Vladimir Putin from 2012 to 2019. This selection is justified by two considerations. The first consideration, the timeframe illustrates Putin’s third term in power and ends with the start of the pandemic COVID-19, which inevitably brought significant differences in PD communication by limiting the number of events and changing the dominant narratives. Although Putin does not solely define how to present Russia, concentration on him is important because the main object of analysis is “a set of texts by different people presumed to be authorized speakers/writers of a dominant discourse” (Milliken 1999, 233). In other words, Putin possesses a significant discursive power to affect what Russia’s official discourse is since he is legitimizing not only by his official position but also by extensive public support. In that sense, both constitutionally and politically Putin plays a role of the main figure or a symbolic representation of the nation.

The second consideration, the necessity to analyze discourses and narratives in a “day-to-day context” (Wiener, 2006, 188) and “where society is being made” (Cruickshank, 2012) explains the choice of speeches rather than printed texts (newspapers, political documents, etc.). As constructivists argued, “social recognition stands to be constructed by social interaction” (Wiener, 2009, 179) and it is necessary to recover “meaning from agents” directly (Pouliot, 2007) rather than analyzing their reflection in the media. In addition, because the main goal is to analyze PD discourse/narratives, the data collection includes only the speeches or public interactions with the presence of foreign journalists or addressed to the foreign public. While there are many debates on how to identify discourse (Ferrara, 1992; Schiffrin, 2001), this research identifies them as various texts that reflect “ideas, knowledge, beliefs and practice” (Sunderland, 2004, 31) rather than just words or sentences. For example, texts that were not included were ones that mentioned Japan as a meeting place or that mentioned Japan as a document signatory but did not include any evaluative statements. To operationalize discourse, the study identifies discursive practices (see Chapter 3.5.6) and narratives that are understood as constructing elements of a discourse. The data consists but is not limited to, various public interactions of Putin with foreign elites (the Valdai Club, the Direct Line with President), press conferences with questions taken from journalists, and interviews with domestic and foreign media.

In addition, this research argues that official documents are the areas of interest of certain small groups of specialists, or epistemic communities, rather than the foreign public in general, which are supposed to be affected by PD. Even if these groups will ensure that the message in the documents will reach the foreign public, the initial discourse will face the possibility to be reinterpreted or reconstructed by discourses that the groups share. In that case, the initial discourses from the documents will be substituted by interpreted discourses, produced by specific groups. For example, such documents as the Concept of Foreign Policy or Constitution represent raw texts that require interpretations by epistemic communities, including journalists and think tank experts. Although no statistic exists on that issue, the general public will have less access/interest in official documents and more exposure to interpretations provided by epistemic communities. Thus, the initial discourse designed by a government will not directly reach the public but will be interpreted through various discursive filters before reaching the foreign public.

The data was collected through the official government website “http://kremlin.ru”, which stores and translates all of Putin’s public speeches into English. In case public speech was only accessible in Russian, this text was not included in the set because the author assumes that English-language texts are directed toward a global audience. Although not all foreign nations speak English, it is an internationally recognized language of communication, which makes it the “global” language.

Before starting data collection, an extensive analysis of the construction of Russian identity to better understand how this process informed/created discourse and narratives. In particular, the dissertation examines how various significant events challenged Russian identity, values, and norms, and led to its transformation. This allows us to have a pre-established understanding of the social reality within which narratives operate by accessing intersubjective knowledge and meanings created in the process of identity construction by Russia’s political elite.

After the collection, the data set was coded using Nvivo software. The codes were assigned in a three-step process. First, the documents were read to capture and name the main narratives. Second, the documents were read a second time to assign them with codes. Third, because narratives constitute "collective memories" (Wendt, 2004, 313) and construct a "common lifeworld" (Risse, 2000, 10), or a "self" and "other" (Campbell, 1998), narratives were placed into the "Self", "Other" and "the World" categories as a reflection of their socially constructed nature. The description of Russia, the Russian government, culture, and history were taken as "self". The description of other countries, political and non-political actors associated with politics, constituted the construction of "others". The description of independent processes, crises without an assigned perpetrator, global changes, etc. were coded as "the world" categories. Fourth, the codes were counted in a year to investigate changes in "self" presentation. This quantitative stage is also necessary to avoid possible biases when rarely, by which the author means that a narrative appeared in the texts less than 5 times, mentioned narratives are claimed to be significant. If the narrative does not appear on multiple occasions it is fair to say that its influence on discourse is less significant than the one that does.

2.1.1. Summary of the First Data Set (Q1)

As a result of the analysis, 52 narratives revealed themselves as significant and related to discourse on Russia as presented by Vladimir Putin (Table 3). Among them, 24 create "self" (see Chapter 5.1), with 14 that represent positive characterizations, five negative, four neutral, and two narratives presenting negative and positive comparisons with "others". Next 21 create "others" (see Chapter 5.2) with 17 negative and four positive characterizations. The last five narratives create the "world" discourse (see Chapter 5.3), with three negatives, and one positive and neutral characterization each. In total, there are 19 positive, 25 negative, 6 neutral, and 2 comparative characterizations.

The study follows inductive coding, which means that the narratives and codes were not identified in advance. In addition to that, the research utilizes a specific theoretical view of the meanings being intersubjective and socially constructed. The intersubjective part means that it is theoretically possible to come up with the same/similar understanding of narratives through inductive coding. The intersubjective part means that it is theoretically possible to arrive at the same/similar understanding of the narratives through inductive coding. On the other hand, the socially constructed nature of the meaning of narratives implies that even while keeping the narratives as close as possible to the social environment in which they were created, the researcher's interpretive filters will influence the way the narratives are identified/coded. To overcome these limitations, the productive and open way to proceed is to disclose how the author understands each particular narrative. Thus, the study will list narratives with their descriptions and examples in the following subchapters.

Table 3. The Narratives Table (Q1)

Field	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total (N)
Comparison/Pos	4	13	9	10	3	4	4	4	51
Cooperative	3	5	6	10	7	5	4	6	46
Comparison/Neg	6	10	3	3	8	4	7	4	45
Responsive	3	3	6	4	13	1	7	5	42
Instability	5	10	8	3	2	2	1	3	34
Law Obidient	2	8	8	5	2	2	3	4	34
US Criticism	5	5	11	4	5	0	2	2	34
Troubled	7	5	4	2	3	5	2	2	30
Precarious	2	2	7	7	5	3	2	1	29
Misrepresented	0	6	4	2	7	2	3	3	27
Non-Conflicting	0	5	3	4	3	2	2	7	26
Pawns	0	5	8	3	5	3	0	2	26
Strong Hand	3	7	3	4	7	1	0	1	26
Harsh Criticism	0	0	2	4	10	5	0	3	24
Politically Weak	2	7	3	2	2	3	3	2	24
Betrayal	3	2	2	4	7	1	2	2	23
Irrational	0	2	2	0	5	6	6	2	23
Inclusive	3	4	7	5	0	0	1	1	21
Non-Interacting	0	0	0	5	3	3	2	8	21
Imposition	0	4	3	3	2	1	0	4	17
Sovereign Rights	0	4	3	2	3	1	2	2	17
Persistant	3	3	2	2	4	0	1	1	16
The Public	0	0	0	7	4	1	1	3	16
Depersonification	1	6	4	2	1	0	1	0	15
Disrespected	2	4	4	0	3	2	0	0	15
Need of Enemy	2	0	1	1	4	3	2	2	15
90-s	2	4	2	0	0	2	2	2	14
Natural Place	1	1	3	3	4	0	2	0	14
Partners	0	5	0	2	3	0	2	2	14
Double Standarts	0	0	2	5	2	4	0	0	13
Economic Power	4	4	1	0	0	1	0	2	12
World Inclusion	2	3	6	0	0	0	1	0	12
Bad Governments	0	3	1	2	2	3	0	0	11
Morality	2	9	1	1	4	0	3	3	11
Inside Allies	0	4	1	1	2	0	0	2	10
Need for Russia	3	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	10
Overestimated	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	3	10
Threat	0	1	0	2	3	0	2	2	10
Economically Weak	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Indirect domesic criticism	1	4	0	2	0	0	1	0	8
Slow Changes	3	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	8
World Crisis	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	2	8
Allies	1	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	7
Being First	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	7
Soviet Past	1	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	7
Alternative	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	6
Defensive	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	6
World Changing	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	6
World Unstable	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	6
Conflictual	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	2	5

Source: Author

2.1.2. Narrative Description. Self

Table 4. The Descriptions of "Self" Narratives

Narrative	Description	Examples	N
Comparison/ Positive Type 1	Is intended to show the presence of similar elements, laws, orders, and other features between Russia and other countries.	“In all developed countries, such laws have long been adopted”; “The Russian judicial system is an integral part of the international, world judicial system”.	51
Comparison/ Positive Type 2	Is intended either to demonstrate the superiority of Russia in comparison with other countries or to whitewash its negative characteristics through comparison	“Firstly, we do not do this, unlike you. You, apparently, judge by yourself”; “But, as always happens, this is the case in Russia and in any other country - there is not enough money for things that seem even to be of the highest priority”; “We have many problems here too. They have always been and always will be, just like in other countries”	
Cooperative	It reflects Russia's willingness to cooperate even under harsh criticism	“If our partners wish, we will develop active relations on a bilateral basis with any of the G7 countries”; “We have common threats, as we wanted, and today we want, we strive to unite the efforts of all states of the world”.	46
Comparison/ Negative	Reflect on ways to paint Russia in brighter light or deny wrongdoings by direct blame, emotional answer, or negative characterization	“Your presidents were not killed, or what? Have you forgotten about it? Where was Kennedy killed, in the USA or Russia? What happened to King?... You have many problems of your own.”; “Let me, in hockey terms, return your puck and ask”; “and they do the same things that we are accused of. This is, of course, amazing cynicism”	45
Responsive	It reflects passive, non-conflicting characteristics of how and why Russia acts in the world. In many ways, the narrative reflects a defense mechanism, according to which Russia is forced to respond to challenges with countermeasures	“There is just an unwritten practice, unwritten laws in such cases: You have sent our diplomats, we are sending yours - that's all” “Russia was not the initiator of today's collapse, discord, and problems, the imposition of sanctions. All our actions were and remain exclusively reciprocal.”	42
Law Obidient	It refers to Russia following the rule of law or established international norms	“We act only on the decisions of the courts, but they do not resort to such decisions, as it turned out. This is a significant difference in the practice of Russian and American intelligence services.”; “I want to say that the results of the Second World War are unshakable, they are enshrined in international legal documents.”	34
Rationally Troubled	It responds to criticism by accepting it as such with elements of mitigation, or a pragmatic/rational approach	“We have a lot of problems of this kind, and we ourselves do not always effectively deal with them”; “The question arises, as usual: where is the money? Probably stolen. Or they miscalculated something when planning the construction. It happens. And we have this all the time”.	30
Misrepresented	Russia is misrepresented by the West and the media	“Despite the attempts - your attempts, the attempts of your colleagues - to spoil our relations with the help of the media and anti-Russian propaganda, it seems to me that it still failed to be done the way you would like.”; “Of course, it is funded by the state, and one way or another cannot but reflect the position of the Russian official authorities on what is happening in our country and abroad.”	27

Narrative	Description	Examples	N
Non-Conflicting	It describes Russia as a country that will try to avoid confrontation by all means	“We are ready to do this not in a confrontational way, we are ready to look for compromises, but, of course, based on international law, which is universally understood by all.”; “It's not about foreign policy. Russia's foreign policy is peace-loving, without any exaggeration.”	26
Strong Hand	It refers to certain characteristics of Russia, which could be described as ideas of authoritarian/centralized government	“Russia, like any other country, does not need dictators, but just principles of organization of the state and society, fair, effective and flexible responses to changes in the world inside and outside the country - this is what Russia needs”. You know, as soon as the state weakens in key parameters, centrifugal forces immediately appear, pulling it apart. It's like in the body: immunity has slightly dropped - and the flu.”	26
Justice/Morality	It describes Russia’s “moral” characteristics: compassion, tolerance, and pursuit of justice.	“Russia from the very beginning, by the way, of its creation and formation, is a multinational, multi-confessional country”; “After all, you cannot simply, say, listen to a telephone conversation, for example, in Russia - I can certainly tell you - without appropriate court sanctions”.	23
Inclusive	It presents Russia as equal to other players that should be involved in IR	“We do not pretend to be some kind of superpower”; “I have already spoken about this, but I would still like to add. Under no circumstances will Russia, and indeed our partners in the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space now, impose anything on anyone.”	21
Sovereign Rights	Russia emphasizes sovereign rights' importance	“Ankara's conduct of an independent foreign policy that meets the national interests deserves deep respect.”; “Second, about Iran. This is still not entirely our problem - to persuade Iran to withdraw from the territory of Syria. Both Syria and Iran are sovereign states, they must build relations between themselves.”	17
Persistent	Russia is not backing down on its promises	“I can't imagine going back, I just can't imagine it.”; “Did they think that we would run away from there, or what? No, of course, Russia is not that country.”	16
Depersonification	It attempts to reduce the emphasis on Vladimir Putin as a cornerstone or a symbol of Russia’s political system	“But from this, it does not follow at all that everything is connected with me. Erroneous opinion, delusion. This is not true. Absolutely not!”	15
Disrespected	Russia is undermined/disrespected by other international actors	“I think that reasoning about other countries, an attempt to talk about other countries in a pejorative manner, is the other side of proving one's exclusivity.”; “As for interference, you should see what your colleagues are doing with us. Yes, they just got into our internal politics with their feet, they sat on our heads, their legs hung down and they chew gum. Just having fun!”	15
90-s	Negative description of Russia in 1990-s	“Look, of course, very young people don’t remember, they don’t even know what happened in the 90s and early 2000s, and they can’t compare with what has happened now.”; “…the state is turning into some kind of muddy puddle, from which the oligarchs pick out and catch goldfish for themselves, as it was with us in the 90s and as it is happening in Ukraine today.”	14

Narrative	Description	Examples	N
Natural Place	It highlights that Russia has or has to hold its natural place in IR	“We did not declare our national interests, but we should have done so from the very beginning. And then maybe the world would be more balanced.”; “…to ensure unconditional progress and strengthening of our country inside, first of all, so that it takes its rightful place in the international arena, as an equal partner among equals.”	14
Economic Power	It emphasizes Russia’s economic power and potential	“…our economy, I can state this with full responsibility, has adapted to external shocks…”; “Russia's GDP growth in 2011 was 4.3 percent. These are the highest rates among major economies in Europe and the highest among major economies in the world.”	12
Need for Russia	It argues that the world and the actors need Russia	“…large companies want to work in Russia, but faced with certain restrictions..”; “I will say without exaggeration that Russia is making a significant contribution to resolving the situation around the Iranian nuclear program.”	10
Slow Changes	It reflects the desire of the state to solve problems gradually	“We need to achieve deoffshorization, this is an obvious thing. This must be done in a neat, civilized manner.”; “All this should make us think about how to take such decisions without haste.”	8
Being First	It highlights Russia's superiority	“We are absolutely absolutely, this is an obvious fact, the experts understand this, realize, we have overtaken all our, so to speak, partners and competitors in this area.”	7
Soviet Past	Negative description of the Soviet Past	“We have well mastered the inoculation of individual control by one political force - the Communist Party, the CPSU.”; “The code of the builder of communism, if you read it, is a miserable copy from the Bible: do not kill, do not steal, do not covet your neighbor's wife. In the code of the builder of communism, everything is there, only set out in primitive language and reduced to disgrace.”	7
Alternative	It embodies those ideals or models of international relations that Russia can offer. Presented as an alternative to Western hegemony	“Then there is the modern so-called liberal idea, which, in my opinion, has simply outlived its usefulness completely”; “But we got a unique experience, and I think it is in demand in the world.”	6
Defensive	It emphasizes Russia's desire to protein itself and its population from external and internal threats	“it is important for me to protect our population from some quasi-values.”; “Personally, I proceed from the fact that children should be left alone, they should be given the opportunity to grow up, realize themselves, and decide for themselves who this person is, who he considers himself to be, a man or a woman, does he want to live in a normal, natural marriage or non-traditional - that's and that's it.”	6

Source: Author

2.1.3. Narrative Description. Others

Table 5. The Descriptions of “Other” Narratives

Narrative	Description	Examples	N
US Criticism	It focuses on mild criticism of the U.S.	“Nobody listened to us! On the contrary, they thought that we were taking some sort of anti-Western, hostile position to the West..”; “Also, in my opinion, an erroneous step, it could have been built differently. In fact, the concerns of the United States, by the way, are understandable to me. I understand.”	34
Precarious	Rather a moral description of the behind-the-scenes decision-making of others	“About democracy. Freedom is usually spoken about by the ruling classes to fool those over whom they rule”; “The question arises: is there a desire to reignite the war and provoke hostilities?”	29
Pawns	It deprives other countries of the right to make independent decisions if they are consistent with US decisions	“So how did NATO allies react? Everyone is nodding like Chinese bobbleheads, not analyzing anything that is going on”; “Germany has a very strong foreign influence on the media, primarily from overseas”; “Such a unipolar, unified world does not need sovereign states, it needs vassals.”	26
Harsh Criticism	It focuses on extensive criticism of the U.S.	“You spoke about sanctions. I think this is a stupid decision and harmful.”; “They just didn't want to. They wanted to reign. Sit on this throne. So, what is next? Now we are discussing crises.”	24
Politically Weak	It describes others as politically weaker in comparison with Russia. Highlights domestic and international policies.	“And the negotiators, our partners, say: well, we would be happy, we signed it, we made this decision, but Congress does not let it through. Here are all the solutions.”; “Some countries have been brought to bankruptcy, and no matter what people are told now, they do not want wage cuts.”	24
Betrayal	It focuses on events or actions that were made openly in violation of rules or agreements	“We have always strived for open, partner relations with the United States, but in return, we received various reservations and attempts to interfere in our internal affairs”; “Regarding whom to believe and who not to believe and whether it is possible to believe at all: no one can be trusted.”	23
Irrational	It imposes irra0tional characterizations	“This question would be more correct to ask the US and the EU, whose logic is difficult to understand.”; “This indicates a significant level of degradation of political elites in the West, including the United States. But I really hope that common sense will prevail.”	23
Non-interacting	It positions others as avoiding negotiations with Russia	“It seemed to me that there was some sense in this because at least we represented some kind of the alternative point of view. Our partners have decided that they do not need this alternative point of view. This is their decision.”; “We have made these proposals, they are on the table of the American Administration. No answer.”	21
Imposition	It characterizes the decision-making of some others being influenced/imposed by the dominant power, which is predominantly the U.S.	“Numerous challenges and threats of our time require abandoning attempts to impose development models alien to them on other peoples. This approach has repeatedly proven its inconsistency.”; “Only those who feel their exclusivity allow themselves to behave in such a shameless way, to impose their will on others.”	17
The public	It describes Russia’s view on democracy in its traditional forms as a rule of a majority with no regard to how this majority appeared and why it supports a certain government	“This is absolutely none of our business, this is the business of the people of Great Britain.”; “we proceed from the premise that the Cypriots themselves must resolve these issues, without outside interference.”	16

Narrative	Description	Examples	N
Need of Enemy	It implies that others require Russia as an enemy	“A very good platform for consolidation - Syria, Russia, there is a common enemy, great.”; “What did they actually do in practice? They said: "We are not to blame, Russians are." What does it have to do with Russians?”	15
Partners	It consists of a positive description of the West, appreciation of cooperation, and highlighting their achievements	“And American intelligence is one of the best in the world, let's not throw stones at it. This is one of the most powerful, but she does not know everything. And you don't have to know everything.”; “And the United States, of course, does not want civilian casualties - of course not.”	14
Double Standards	It emphasizes different treatment of Russia or non-Western countries and others, predominantly Western	“Now I want to ask you: if the Kosovars in Kosovo have the right to self-determination, why don't the inhabitants of Crimea have the exact same right?”; “Here they teach everyone how to live, and teach democracy. And what, do you think that there are democratic presidential elections, or what?”	13
Bad Governments	It argues that it is not the people who want bad relations with Russia, but their governments	“Part of the American society and people treat Russia kindly or lovingly”; “It's good that there are people who sympathize with us in these our ideas about traditional values.”	11
Inside Allies	The second part of the “Bad governments narrative, reinforces the idea that people inside foreign countries want to cooperate with Russia	“I think that ordinary US citizens have absolutely nothing to do with it, they do not understand what is happening”; “To all residents and citizens of Ukraine. We have no enemies there. I repeat once again: Ukraine is a friendly state.”	10
Overestimated	It characterizes the U.S. and the West as overconfident	“I know his opinion that the American nation, the United States, is exceptional. I do not agree with either one or the other.”; “Those who order materials of this kind should not be guided by considerations of revenge, not based on their imaginary exclusivity.”	10
Threat	It centered on the discussion of threats outside Russia. Predominantly describes NATO.	“We are not concerned about the advancement of democracy to our borders - we are concerned about the advancement of military infrastructure to our borders.”	10
Economically Weak	It describes others as economically insufficient	And the crisis in several European countries has demonstrated this. The keyword here is inefficiency”; “On the contrary, to a certain extent I am even glad of this because it showed all the insolvency and all the unreliability of investments in Western financial institutions.”	8
Indirect domestic criticism	It is largely concerned with the political characterization of “others”, including domestic and foreign policies	“After all, the problems of immigration in Western Europe, by the way, and in the States partly, they are connected ... they are more severe, in my opinion.”; “You look at what is happening in American courts. That's what you need to rely on, and not on rumors.”	8
Allies	It concerns building "self" through the demonstration of common interests, values, and goals with countries that can be considered like-minded or allied states	“Raise the role of developing countries, including our BRICS partners.”; “On the contrary, there are positive experiences, examples of how a group of interested states joins efforts to solve specific questions. I mean the work of, for example, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization…”	7
Conflictual	It describes others as initiating conflict for the same conflicts	“…but America has announced that they have begun the procedure for withdrawing from this treaty. Why, on what basis - do not even explain why. They just don't explain why.”; “At the same time, we do not see the desire of some of our partners to solve real international problems.”	5

Source: Author

2.1.4. Narrative Description. The World

Table 6. The Descriptions of "the World" Narratives

Narrative	Description	Examples	N
Instability	It covers an existing fear of domestic crisis, mostly caused by opposition forces taking to the streets and overthrowing the government.	“The question about Ukraine has already been raised here. Do you want dozens of these, excuse me, Saakashvili to run around the squares?”; “It is known what the situation in Libya has led to. The disintegration of the country, murder of diplomats, including the American ambassador. Chaos, in short.”	34
World Inclusion	It presents a vision of changing the international configuration, which could allow Russia and other states to restore their “Natural Place”	“…but also fast-growing countries that play an increasingly prominent role in world politics and economics.”; “I have already said: we need to decide together, because everything is interconnected in the modern world, and if we create some kind of regional associations, this is how we create a regional association, the Eurasian Economic Union, with Belarus and Kazakhstan, then only as an addition to existing global instruments, which must work according to these global rules.”	12
World Crisis	It highlights the existence of different paths of development, including positive, or uncertainty	“At the same time, many of the old recipes for global governance, overcoming conflicts and natural contradictions are no longer suitable, often do not work, and new ones have not yet been developed.”; “At the same time, not a single real international problem can be solved under such conditions and with such a formulation of the issue, relations between countries are only degrading. There is less security in the world. Instead of advancing progress, democracy gets free hands-on radical elements, extremist groups that deny civilization itself, seek to plunge it into archaism and chaos, into barbarism.”	8
World Changing	It pictures a more unpredicted development, which may or may not change Russia’s positions	“…new economic balance of power.”; “Today, almost all countries, all peoples face the need to search for a new strategy and preserve their identity in a radically changing world, in a world that has become more open, transparent, interdependent.”	6
World Unstable	It implies that changes would undermine the system of international relations, which leads to negative results	“You know, the world, in general, is always and in our time woven from contradictions.”; “Unfortunately, the international situation is becoming less and less predictable.”	6

Source: Author

2.2. Data Collection: The Second and Third Data Sets

The second, third, and fourth data sets cover a “local” level or a case study analysis on the example of Russia-Japan relations (Q2). The case study reflects differences in how Russia constructs and presents “self” globally and locally. The second and third steps are to some extent similar to the first because the data is gathered from Putin and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov’s public speeches from 2012 to 2019 as well. Lavrov’s speeches were included because according to Russia’s Constitution and power relations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs represents an executive branch of the government, while the President, in contrast to some countries, is not a part of it. Despite Vladimir Putin being a central figure of current Russia’s political system, two of them represent different power structures in Russia’s foreign policy. The Minister of Foreign Affairs also represents traditional diplomacy or traditional diplomatic elites. Moreover, Lavrov holds the position since 2004, which means that it is equal to Putin’s “official” time of the presidency. Thus, while his construction is ignored in the literature, Lavrov’s discourse on Russia is not less important than the President’s. Except that the collection source was changed to the official MOFA website “http://mid.ru” since all foreign minister’s speeches are available there, the same conditions were applied to gather this set of data.

Before the beginning of the data collection, the same process of discovering how identities are constructed was done. In contrast to the first data set, which focuses on Russia’s identity, the second and third sets cover the interactions between Russia and Japan. Focusing on Russia, the study engages with the process of how its identity affects or is affected by bilateral relations. As was argued in the previous research (Vershinin, 2021a), the U.S. rather than Japan is a significant “other” for Russia, which means that the process of Russia’s identity construction has a direct connection to the development of Russia-Japan relations. However, since interactions between “self” and “other” create a mutual influence of intersubjective knowledge and meanings, Russia-Japan and Russia-U.S. relations are not the same. Thus, the study first discovers how specific discourse and narratives evolve in Russia-Japan relations in comparison and/or following the process of Russia’s identity construction overall.

Regarding the second and third sets (Q2A; Q2B), there are several differences in how and what data was collected. First, public speeches should be addressed to Japan and about Japan. It does not mean that a whole speech should be devoted to a discussion of Japan, nor it should have a mention of Japan. The speeches that were collected contain a certain narrative or discourse about Japan, its foreign policy, or Russia-Japan relations. Second, because the second and third data sets provide lesser data, they are not limited to interactive contexts, such as press conferences where journalists can ask questions. These sets also include non-interactive conferences, where statements were made by Putin or Lavrov but no questions asked.

2.2.1. The Second Data Set: Vladimir Putin's Construction of Japan

In adherence to the rules of the previous stage of data collection and analysis, 63 units of documents represent how Vladimir Putin constructs Russia toward Japan. In total, data analysis revealed 10 narratives (Table 4). Because of a comparatively small number of narratives discovered, quantitative indicators reassure the importance of certain narratives in comparison with others rather than their evolution throughout the stated period. Among them, 5 constructs "self" ("Cooperative", "Trust", "National Interest", "Responsive", "Law Obedient"), and 5 construct "other" ("Vassal", "Non-Cooperative", "Taking Sides", "Sanctions", "International Power").

Table 7. Narratives of Russia-Japan Relations (Putin)

Name	Quantity
Cooperative	15
Vassal	13
Trust	11
Non-Cooperative	7
National Interest	5
Taking sides	5
Responsive	5
Sanctions	4
Law Obidient	3
International Power	3

Source: Author

2.2.2. Narrative Description. Russia-Japan (Putin)

Table 8. Narrative Description. Russia-Japan (Putin)

Narrative	Description	Examples	N
Cooperative	It refers to Russia's successful economic development and its ability to accommodate foreign capital	"But in 2000, the then prime minister of Japan asked me to return to this process, to this conversation, to these negotiations, by the way, based on the 1956 declaration. I agreed."	15
Vassal	It describes Japan as a state with limited sovereignty	"We are ready, but I want to repeat once again: in conditions when Japan has joined the sanctions against Russia, how ready and able is Japan to do this without violating its allied obligations?"; "This means that Japan has some kind of allied obligations. We respect this, but we need to understand the degree of freedom of Japan and what Japan is ready to go for."	13
Trust	The issues related to trust but not limited to the use of the "trust" word	"Therefore, everything here must be calculated in advance, we must agree on everything in advance. And not just agree, but consolidate these agreements in such legally binding documents that would be a guarantee of the fulfillment of mutual obligations."	11
Non-Cooperative	It characterizes Japan as unwilling/unable to cooperate	"So we are ready, is Japan ready? I have not yet learned for myself, I want to ask you."; "But today, our dialogue has practically been curtailed at the initiative of the Japanese side."	7
National Interest	It emphasizes Russia's focus on its national interest first	"…any solution that is found must be in the national interests of the Russian Federation."	5
Taking sides	It refers to a possible solution to the territorial problem by choosing if not a rejection of the US-Japan security treaty in favor of independence or joining the Russia-China partnership	"But it is certainly necessary to look for a solution that would meet the strategic interests of both Russia and Japan and be accepted by the peoples of both countries."; "These are compromises between friendly countries. It seems to me that it is almost impossible to achieve compromises of this kind on a different basis."	5
Responsive	It shows the responsive character of Russia's actions to the aggressive behavior of other states	"And what should we do - look at it, perhaps, simply, limply? No, it won't. We react accordingly"; "No, we are not going to worsen it, and nothing scares us at all, but we see, let's say, what is happening in the United States: this anti-Russian campaign, Russophobia continues. How will the situation develop? We do not know, it does not depend on us, we are not the initiators of this process."	5
Sanctions	It focuses on sanctions and the way they contributed to Russia-Japan relations	"Are we ready to negotiate? Yes, we are ready, but we were just surprised to hear recently that Japan has joined some kind of sanctions. What does Japan have to do with it, I don't really understand…"; "The sanctions policy against Russia, to which Japan has also joined, also has an effect."	4
Law Obidient	It characterizes Russia as a country that will follow its obligations	"We must understand that the results of that terrible tragedy of the 20th century… are enshrined in the relevant international documents and this is a very subtle thing."; "…not just reach an agreement, but fix these agreements in such legally binding documents that would be a guarantee of the fulfillment of mutual obligations."	3
International Power	It describes Japan as a state to cooperates with IR	"In the world, in the Far East region, we are natural partners…"; "Close cooperation between Russia and Japan on topical issues of world politics is an essential factor in ensuring global and regional security and stability."	3

Source: Author

2.2.3 The Third Data Set: Sergey Lavrov's Construction of Japan

As a result of the data analysis of 63 documents during the period from 2012 to 2019. Because of a comparatively small number of narratives discovered, quantitative indicators reassure the importance of certain narratives in comparison with others rather than their evolution throughout the stated period. In total 10 narratives were highlighted (Table 9), five of which represent Russia ("Cooperative", "Strong Stance", "Responsive", "Isolation of the public", "Trust"), and five are attributed to Japan ("Vassal", "US", "Threat", "Non-Cooperative", "Taking Sides").

Table 9. Narratives of Russia-Japan Relations (Lavrov)

Name	References
Vassal	17
Cooperative	13
US	12
Strong Stance	10
Responsive	10
Threat	9
Isolation of the public	6
Non-Cooperative	4
Trust	4
Taking Sides	3

Source: Author

2.2.4. Narrative Description. Russia-Japan (Lavrov)

Table 10. Narrative Description. Russia-Japan (Lavrov)

Narrative	Description	Examples	N
Vassal	It describes Japan as a state with limited sovereignty	"We are well aware that, unfortunately, Japan is not the only country that is not completely independent in its foreign policy actions."; "For the same reason of its alliance with the US, Japan votes with them in all international structures, including on those issues on which Russia votes in the opposite direction."	17
Cooperative	It refers to Russia's successful economic development and its ability to accommodate foreign capital	We are ready to resume the work of this mechanism. I felt that this idea was not rejected by our Japanese colleagues. The visit of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin to Japan is not hindered at all. In order for it to take place, it is necessary that an invitation made long ago take the form of a specific date.	13
US	It concentrates on the U.S. instead of Japan or as an important element of Russia-Japan relations	...the less our contacts will be subject to extraneous influence of external factors not related to our relationship... We have heard statements from Washington that they do not approve of high-level contacts between Russia and Japan. Recently, it seems, some official representative of the State Department or the White House said that, "It's okay, you can go once." This is outrageous behavior. I think that our Japanese colleagues understand this and treat it the way such unacceptable manners deserve.	12

Narrative	Description	Examples	N
Strong Stance	It emphasizes Russia's superiority over Japan, including its political power and national interests	Answering the question of whether Russian officials will refrain from traveling, I will say: no, they will not. This is the reality we discussed today."As for sanctions, this is not our problem. We have heard explanations from our Japanese colleagues as to why Japan has decided to join the separate sanctions imposed by the Americans and Europeans. We didn't ask our Japanese friends for such explanations, they seemed to justify themselves to us.";	10
Responsive	It shows the responsive character of Russia's actions to the aggressive behavior of other states	When, during one of the meetings this year, Prime Minister of Japan S. Abe proposed to see what could be done in practical terms with regard to joint economic activities, Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed, and relevant discussions began. Of course, we have every right to assess how these agreements on our borders affect the security of the Russian Federation.	10
Threat	It emphasizes the threat that Russia faces/will face in relation to Japan/ the U.S.	The Russian Federation considers it absolutely unjustified and very dangerous to attempt to use this situation as a pretext for a disproportionate increase in military presence in this region. As for the Kuril Islands, these are the eastern borders of the Russian Federation.	9
Isolation of the public	It argues that the public is dangerous/not important part of political negotiations. Although it does not depricve it the right to affect bilateral relations through on other directions.	...to continue the dialogue in a calm, constructive manner, without emotional outbursts and public controversy. Not a single problem can be solved if emotions prevail in the approach to its discussion, and even those expressed in public - this only escalates tension and antagonizes the negotiators.	6
Non-Cooperative	It characterizes Japan as unwilling/unable to cooperate	The protests voiced from Tokyo over the trip of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev do not help create the atmosphere necessary for a normal dialogue on the issue of a peace treaty. Our Japanese colleagues cannot change their position in any way.	4
Trust	The issues related to trust but not limited to the use of the "trust" word	Therefore, gradually, step by step, "brick by brick", building trust, working on the "fabric" of practical cooperation, we will move closer to creating an atmosphere... We presume that the closer interweaving of our economies, civil societies, the establishment of business ties between businessmen, mutual investment, the implementation of joint economic, trade, infrastructure and foreign policy initiatives will help create an atmosphere that will be much more favorable for reaching agreements on any difficult issues, than the current one.	4
Taking Sides	It refers to a possible solution to the territorial problem by choosing if not a rejection of the US-Japan security treaty in favor of independence or joining the Russia-China partnership	We noted that in the UN our positions do not always, if not more often than not, differ with regard to Japan's voting on Russian initiatives. The G20 presidency, which this year is Japan, must ensure that the conditions allow all twenty members to reach consensus, and not work only for the interests of one group that is part of the G20.	3

Source: Author

2.3. Discourse Analysis

The first three data sets, two of which contain Vladimir Putin's construction of Russia globally and locally, and one represents Sergey Lavrov's local construction, were approached by discourse analysis (DA; see Chapter 3 for more discussion). Because these sets are concentrated on how two powerful political figures construct Russia for the foreign public, it is important to understand their discursive practices in a day-to-day context. Despite pointing out linguistic and critical roots of discourse research, this dissertation's DA concentrates not only on what is said or which particular linguistic constructions were used but also on the historical and contemporary social reality that affects those constructions. The role of DA here is to analyze how discourse about Russia's "self" and "others" is constructed through PD narratives expressed by figures with significant domestic political power.

This study DA aims at distinguishing discourse presented in the first three data sets (Q1; Q2A; Q2B). It approaches discourse as "the space where intersubjective meaning is created, sustained, transformed and, accordingly, becomes constitutive of social reality" (Holzscheiter, 2013, 144). To separate it from the text, discourse is understood as "ideas, knowledge, beliefs and practice" (Sunderland, 2004, p. 31) enacted by and through narratives. Thus, the main focus of the research is to locate discourse through narratives or "structure of meaning-making" (Hayden, 2013), which helps to construct the reality around us to "know, understand, and make sense of the social world" (Somers, 1994, 606).

Narratives are distinguished as certain "stories" or interpretations of social reality, including the state's or political elite's "self", "others", and events. This research also highlights the "intertextuality" that represents the interconnected nature of narratives produced by actors within the framework of their social reality. These connections are reflected in the analysis of the historically constructed background of the narratives.

To analyze the discourse about Russia that Vladimir Putin presented from 2012 to 2019, in the first step 201 public speeches with foreign journalists and interviews were collected, coded, and analyzed using the Nvivo software. Two additional conditions were applied to avoid the disadvantages of the chosen approach. First, interaction with the press implies the existence of questions that are formed based on the current agenda. In this regard, the same question in different variations can be asked many times throughout the year. Therefore, the answer to similar questions with similar constructs was coded as one response unit.

When discrepancies were found in the answer to the same questions, the discrepancies were codified in the corresponding code.

Second, the emergence or extinction of certain narratives has been delineated within one year, even though this is a simplification of the process. At the same time, it seems impossible to determine the moment of the emergence of a narrative, only its reflection in a certain public statement. This is because the narrative either crystallizes over time or arises as a response to a certain change in external conditions (for example, crises). In this regard, the breakdown by year serves as the most convenient mechanism for fixing narratives.

The next step was to isolate and remove narratives that appeared less than three times during the designated period with the exclusion of one narrative with two mentions, which appeared later and present changes. This was done to avoid mentioning narratives that do not have a solid foundation as part of the discourse. A single or extremely rare outline of a narrative cannot serve as sufficient evidence of its existence as part of a discourse.

Then the interconnected character of narratives was outlined. Because the description of “self”, “others”, and from a part of the “world” is accompanied by mutual references to each other, narratives present different types of interconnection. These include but are not limited to comparison, opposition, and sequence. The first is reflected when meaning is constructed by referring from one narrative to another. The second is in delineating one narrative to describe another narrative positively or negatively. The third is built on the “from here follow” principle, which implies the appearance of a narrative as a response to some external factors, like actions or events.

The last stage was to indicate the existence of spikes, which can appear during the specified period in the form of an increase in the number of certain narratives with subsequent fading out or continuation. This is necessary to trace not only the dynamics of the narrative development but also to make certain assumptions about their emergence, strengthening, or fading importance. Because there were several objectively important for Russia’s identity events from 2012-to 2019, the spikes reflect how Russia’s PD attempted to manage them.

2.4. Data Collection: The Fourth Data Set

2.4.1. Facebook and PD

With the raise of social media platforms, access to up-to-date information became widespread, which pawed the way for individuals, NGOs, and states to engage with each other more profoundly and directly. Social media as internet-based platforms for mass communication between users (Carr & Hayes, 2015) have become a part of modern life (Hinton & Hjorth, 2015). As Pew Research Center (2021) reported, around 72% of adults in the U.S. alone use social media. According to Statista ("Facebook MAU Worldwide 2021", 2022), in the coming years, the number of social media users worldwide is likely to reach almost 4 billion, which will be half the world's population. Not surprisingly researchers have been arguing that social media provide immeasurable potential opportunities for governments to engage with both domestic and foreign publics as part of their public or digital diplomacy (Dale, 2009; Bjola and Holmes, 2015; Mazumdar, 2021).

Among various social media platforms, Facebook has one of the largest numbers of users. According to various reports, only in the U.S., around 69% of adults use Facebook (Auxier and Anderson, 2021). Despite financial problems during the pandemic, the Facebook audience grew to 1.96 billion daily active users in 2022 (BBC News, 2022) with 2.9 billion users worldwide ("*Facebook MAU Worldwide*", 2022). It means that there is a significant pre-existing audience for governments to utilize for PD purposes. Since PD aims at influencing the foreign public to achieve political goals (Tuch, 1990; Gilboa, 2008; Melissen, 2005), Facebook provides an access to, as expected, the majority of the world population. In addition, flexible search engine and recommendations setting allow for expanding the audience of like-minded individuals without intensively promoting official pages.

In recent years, the interest in Facebook as an instrument of influence and PD channel has intensified. Scholars have actively engaged with various empirical data to measure the opportunities and limitations of PD through Facebook using examples of EU and South Korea (Yoon and Chung 2020), Pakistan and India (Ittefaq 2019), Israel and Palestine (Yarchi et al., 2017; Samuel-Azran and Yarchi, 2018), China (Schliebs, 2021; Shumba, 2021), and cross-national communications (Elmasry, 2015; Spry, 2019). Despite multiple case studies, there are ways to expand the understanding of how Facebook contributes to

PD. It includes taking into consideration how socially constructed discourses influence the communication and practices of PD (Enverga, III 2021; Vershinin, 2021b).

At the same time, in addition to providing opportunities, there are various visible and hidden threats that social media create for the general public or particular states. It includes the creation of social instabilities (Margetts, 2018), foreign interference in democratic processes (Hall & Jamieson, 2018), and terrorism proliferation (Hossain, 2015). Surowiec and Manor (2021, x) argued that the discussion of how "political uncertainty" shapes politics and PD practices is crucial for the development of the field. This increasing interest in social media from governments and scholars aims at broadening the understanding of how such platforms as Facebook and Twitter contribute to modern communication strategies. It is especially necessary to utilize empirical evidence that cover "controversial" countries or states that create uncertainty/challenges. Thus, this paper aims to contribute to the discussion of PD communication practices through social media using empirical evidence derived from the Facebook page of Russia's Embassy in Japan.

2.4.2. Content Analysis and Coding

While the presidential and ministerial data sets are approached by DA, the last set requires a different method since it consists of the data gathered through Russia's Embassy in Japan's Facebook page. Because the Embassy does not participate in the creation, but in the construction of the main discourse on Russia, and because of the specificity of a Facebook analysis, quantitative content analysis with elements of qualitative coding was used (mixed method). This thesis utilizes content analysis to approach the data since scholars recognize the method for its replicability, validity, and systematic process that allows for less outside interference such as the subjectivity of the researcher (Krippendorff, 2018). Moreover, it provides an opportunity "to test theoretical issues to enhance understanding of the data" (Neuendorf, 2002; Elo and Kyngäs, 2008, 108; Krippendorff, 2018). Researchers of PD also widely use this method since it allows to cover a large volume of data online (Taylor & Kent, 2010; Omar Bali & Karim, 2018; Zhang & Ong'ong'a, 2021).

The data collection follows the steps suggested by Neuendorf (2002): formulation of research objectives/questions, selecting data, creating initial categories/sections, following the imposed coding procedure, ensuring reliability, and reporting. Agreeing with Kyngäs et al. (2020) argument that data saturation remains a problem for content analysis, this paper will initially differentiate three sections. Since the research unfolds around the constructivism theory, a certain element of the deductive approach was used by identifying several thematic sections in advance: “self” and “other”. Others sections, which united the data not directly related to “self” and “other” themes, were identified inductively in the process of reading and coding.

Since meanings are often complex and socially constructed (Schreier, 2013, 13), when reiterating a state’s position on certain issues or performing advocacy functions, embassies may emphasize self-identity, norms, or values as well. To account for that, the paper separates posts about “self” and “others”. Consequently, the first “self” section summarizes codes that refer to the description of Russia and its political, historical, and socio-cultural aspects. Constructivists” approach to defining “self” differs from that of PD scholars. If the latter imply by that a “self-presentation” (Collins and Bekenova 2018), the former makes an accent on a broader concept of “self”, which goes beyond a simple description of state’s features, values or norms. Constructivists “self” highlights interrelations between defining “self” and/or through “others” (Berger & Luckmann 1967; Hopf 1998; Wendt 2004; Adler-Nissen 2016). As an example, one of the codes within this study is “war”, which does not promote war or Russia/Soviet Union is interested in it, but emphasize narrative construction on what war means in terms of values, norms, and identity of the state.

Since the “other” in the context of the research refers to a specific country, the second section includes describing codes of Russia-Japan relations (“RJR”). This section, although directed to the description of “other”, ultimately concentrated on presenting Russia rather than Japan since “self”-presentation is the main role of the embassy. The third section complements the description of “others” through advocacy functions by referring to states, NGOs, and international organizations. Moreover, in the process of coding, due to the number of codes describing the culture, this code became a sub-section. This differentiation and naming combine Cull’s (2009) taxonomy, which lists advocacy and cultural diplomacy as the main goals of PD, and constructivists'” approach to state communication that emphasizes differences in communication of “self” and “others”.

The fourth data set reflects the Discourse Projection and covers public Facebook posts on the Embassy of the Russian Federation to Japan’s official Facebook page from the data it was created, August 14, 2013, to 2019. This data set allows analyzing how Russia projects its image through a local executive branch (Q2C). In addition to that, Russia's embassies around the world act as the main PD institutes or actors, whose duties are to project Russia's discourse through advocacy, communicate with the local population and provide information on Russia's political, cultural, and social life. At the same time, the data collection method was modified to accommodate the differences between discourse creators and discourse projectors. Since the Embassy does not produce the main state's discourse and the Facebook page does not present a speaker/person in charge of publishing, instead of collecting narratives as parts of discourse, narratives were collected as codes. In other words, the posts were collected based on keywords or meanings related to a certain issue (see Chapter 5.4.1).

Because of privacy restrictions, which both Facebook and the embassy have, the data was collected manually through the Facebook search engine. Initially, the search for posts was done by typing the word "ロシア" [Russia] to collect the data on all issues related to Russia. Then the data was expanded by searching each particular month and day in various combinations to locate as many articles as possible. For example, "1月31日"; "3月10日", etc. Because Facebook's search engine does not allow direct access to all available posts within a certain period including their total number, there is no guarantee that all available posts in Japanese were collected. At the same time, the data set contains a significant amount of posts (N=810, which is approximately 165 posts per year). The author considers it to be a representative sample of main themes or an appropriate amount of posts available within the period from 2012 to 2019 that reflect overall tendency.

In contrast to the previous data sets, the Embassy's data set consists solely of posts in the Japanese language or with an equivalent translation, which means that it covers the message, narrative, or discourse rather than just being a translation of the post's title. In addition, the embassy is not a creator of the main discourse on Russia, but a projector (an institution acting within the Discourse Projection stage, see Figure 6) of it, which means that the embassy's posts are just reflections of the discourse produced by Putin and Lavrov. In other words, there is no specific reason to analyze the discourse or narratives that reflect it, because the embassy's discourse will not significantly diverge from Putin and Lavrov's constructions. Thus, the coding is done based not on narratives, but reflected themes about Russia's "self".

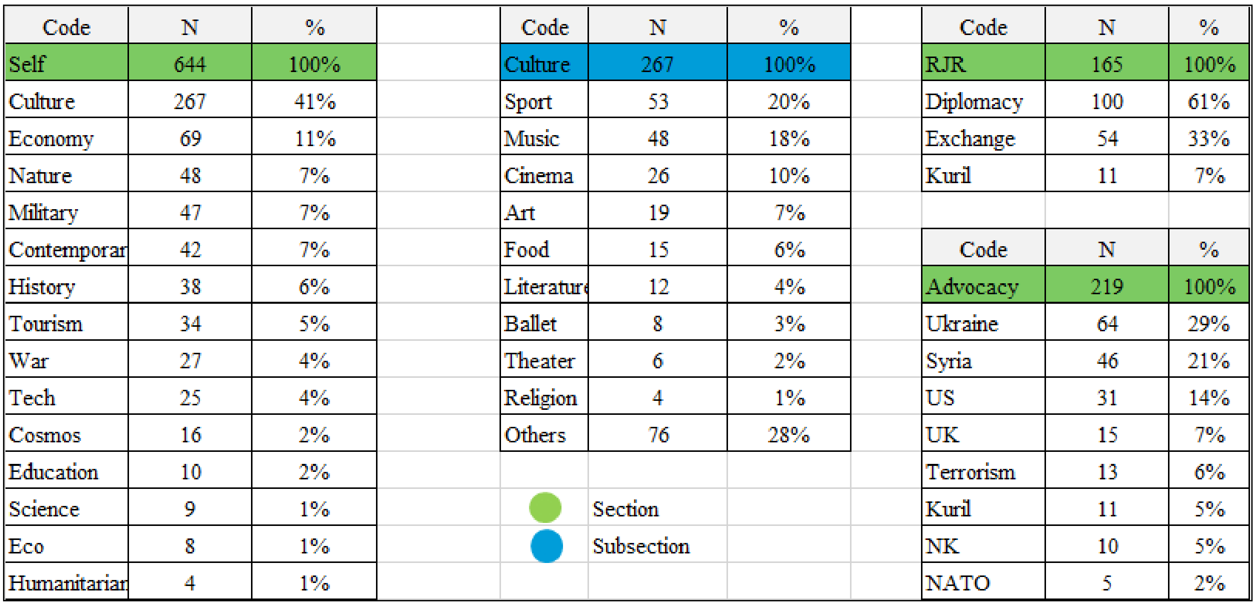
In its essence, the study follows a certain form of the grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Corbin and Strauss, 1990). While constructivism informs the epistemology, ontology, and methodology of the research, it is not a theory in a sense of having pre-established “rules” or concepts that could be approached by hypothesis testing (see Chapter 3). The grounded theory allows us to focus on raw empirical data with open coding. The research design of this study corresponds with the constructivist grounded theory developed by Kathy Charmaz (2006; see also Alemu et al., 2017). She argued that in the process of analysis, researchers “enter participant‘s liminal world of meanings” (Charmaz, 2009), which allows them to conduct inductive grounded theory coding but remain the interpretation process as close to socially constructed intersubjective meanings of actors as possible. While relying on this methodology, this thesis goes further by bringing into the discussion how identities are constructed and inform discourse/narratives, which provide the necessary overview of intersubjective meanings.

The study also uses an inductive approach (Thomas, 2006; Elo and Kyngäs, 2008) to approach the data. As several studies argued, an inductive approach is consistent with constructivism since it allows one to code the raw data without overly relying on pre-established concepts, models, or theories (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Pavlović & Maksić, 2019; Chandra & Shang, 2017; 2019; Oblak et al., 2021). The study design included the following steps. First, retrieved articles were collected through Nvivo software as copies of Facebook posts through the NCapture function, and categorized by year. Some posts that included pictures were also collected as an image. The data was separated into smaller sets of raw data, limited to 50 posts. Then, the author proceeded to read the first sample, assigning the first codes. After that, the study kept the stepwise and gradual process of coding separating data into small sets. With new samples and codes distinguished, a step back was made to recode the previous sample according to newly appearing codes. For example, if the first sample included four codes, but the third consisted of seven codes, the first and second samples were reread to make sure that the three unique codes of the third sample do not appear earlier.

2.4.3. Summary of the Fourth Data Set

As a result of the data collection, 810 posts were collected and coded based on elements of constructivism theory and PD (Table 6). The collected posts received 1028 codes that represent 100% in total (Table 7). It follows that codes do not equal the number of posts since the latter can include multiple codes. The data includes 35 unique codes with three main sections, which summarize thematically connected codes, and one subjection, which is a code in itself but also summarizes other codes.

Table 11. Summary of codes by categories and subcategories



Code	N	%
Self	644	100%
Culture	267	41%
Economy	69	11%
Nature	48	7%
Military	47	7%
Contemporar	42	7%
History	38	6%
Tourism	34	5%
War	27	4%
Tech	25	4%
Cosmos	16	2%
Education	10	2%
Science	9	1%
Eco	8	1%
Humanitaria	4	1%

Code	N	%
Culture	267	100%
Sport	53	20%
Music	48	18%
Cinema	26	10%
Art	19	7%
Food	15	6%
Literatur	12	4%
Ballet	8	3%
Theater	6	2%
Religion	4	1%
Others	76	28%

🟢 Section
🔵 Subsection

Code	N	%
RJR	165	100%
Diplomacy	100	61%
Exchange	54	33%
Kuril	11	7%

Code	N	%
Advocacy	219	100%
Ukraine	64	29%
Syria	46	21%
US	31	14%
UK	15	7%
Terrorism	13	6%
Kuril	11	5%
NK	10	5%
NATO	5	2%

Source: Author

Table 12. Summary of codes by the percentage of total

Code	N	%		War	27	3%
Total	1028	100%		Cinema	26	3%
Self	644	63%		Tech	25	2%
Culture	267	26%		Art	19	2%
Advocacy	219	21%		Cosmos	16	2%
RJR	165	16%		Food	15	1%
Diplomacy	100	10%		UK	15	1%
Economy	69	7%		Terrorism	13	1%
Ukraine	64	6%		Literature	12	1%
Exchange	54	5%		Kuril	11	1%
Sport	53	5%		Education	10	1%
Nature	48	5%		NK	10	1%
Music	48	5%		Science	9	1%
Military	47	5%		Eco	8	1%
Syria	46	4%		Ballet	8	1%
Contemporary	42	4%		Theather	6	1%
History	38	4%		NATO	5	0%
Tourism	34	3%		Humanitarian	4	0%
US	31	3%		Religion	4	0%

Source: Author

The first section is “Self”, which comprises 644 posts, 23 codes, and one subjection devoted to Russia’s presentation of itself. The subjection “Culture” contains 267 posts and nine other codes but does not consist entirely of them. The second section, "Advocacy", summarizes 219 files and eight codes representing one of the main functions of PD to promote Russia's view on the world, others, and international events, but is also code in itself and includes posts that did not fit into eight of mentioned above. The third section is "RJR" devoted exclusively to posts concerning bilateral relations, including political, cultural, economic, and other aspects, which are summarized by 165 posts and three codes.

The majority (71.8%) of them were in Japanese with a Russian translation (see Table 8). A small percentage was in Japanese with English translation (4.6%), and 23.4% was in Japanese only. Since the author assumes that the Embassy staff has exceptional Japanese language skill, translation of the posts were not questioned and taken as granted. In cases where translation was not provided, Google Translate was used at first and then a native speaker was asked to ensure that the codes reflected the intended meanings.

Table 13. Approaching Foreign Language Sources

Language	Number of posts (%)	Approach
Japanese/Russian	582 (71.8%)	Original translation is used
Japanese/English	38 (4.6%)	Original translation is used
Japanese	190 (23.4%)	Google Translate/Native speaker check
Total	810 (100%)	

Source: Author

Regarding the language of the posts, one condition was stable across the data: a post should reflect information in the Japanese language. Since the research focuses on PD rather than PR, posts should communicate with the foreign public, thus, in their native language. In addition, two types of posts were excluded from the data sets. First, posts that were written in the Japanese language but referred to other sources written in English or Russian to access the information. For example, some posts gave a heading in Japanese but did not include a translation of the main information. Second, technical posts with general information related to the Embassy's functions (visas, working hours, etc.), because it does not contain any practical information for this research.

While the study adheres to postpositivism and generally questions what is called "trustworthiness" (Kuzel & Like, 1991; Kyngäs et al., 2019) of research, the content analysis is an exception since it focuses on relatively objective and stable codes. It means that quantitative coding with qualitative pre-established elements does not require a researcher to comprehensively engage with historical and socio-cultural elements of a discourse, which could complicate the interpretation process. While there is no consensus on what serves as criteria of research quality (Bengtsson, 2016) and the question of trustworthiness is predominantly applied to qualitative analysis, this study will employ intercoder reliability to account for possible author biases during the coding process. Despite there being no agreement on how it should be conducted as well (Lombard et al., 2002), Neuendorf (2002, 141) and others (Singletary, 1993; Tinsley and Weiss, 2000) argued that "reliability is paramount" for quantitative research. The study relies on the practical guide by O'Connor and Joffe (2020), which while focusing on qualitative research, has its merits for quantitative studies as well. At the same time, since this study is quantitative, some elements necessary for qualitative studies such as Cohen's Kappa, Krippendorff's alpha, or Scott's pi were relatively simplified. The process of ensuring intercoder reliability followed several steps.

First, two coders were selected and asked to participate. The main criteria for selection were being fluent in Japanese since it is the language of a significant portion of data, and background in social science. Second, the author assigned numbers to all posts separated 10% (N=81) of all posts through a randomizer and created a new data set in Nvivo. Since the software is not free of charge, the main data was secured and the coders were given access to the author's laptop with the author being present as a non-interfering actor. Third, the coders were given a brief description of the research, main concepts (PD, media diplomacy, and the coding process), pre-established sections (Self, RJR, Advocacy), and a sub-section (Culture) and informed on how to utilize Nvivo software for coding.

The coders were separated, and presented with the author's coding sheets (summary and code description) as well as examples of coding. While this step is controversial from the perspective of qualitative study since the coders are exposed to pre-established themes, the same rule is not usually applied when grounded theory and/or inductive approaches are used (Krippendorff, 2004; Campbell et al., 2013). The coders were asked to code the main theme and assign a maximum of three codes per post.

Fourth, the coders independently engaged with the data set. Fifth, the author assigned each post in the two received coding sets with numbers whether they confirm the original coding: yes (1), no (0), and unsure (2). The "unsure" number meant that the codes assigned by the author and coders while having different names might have reflected the same meanings. For example, the code "war" was interchangeably used with the code "military" or "history"; the code "diplomacy" correlated with the code "exchange" as well. Since the coding sheet and examples were provided, coders were instructed not to change/modify existing codes but to note their disagreements/comments if necessary. After the "unsure" codes were discussed with both coders separately to understand whether the assigned code contains the same meaning, only two numbers were left, yes (1) or no (0). If the numbers of codes within posts were different, the discussion was taken place again. Sixth, the original set and the coded sets assigned numbers were transferred to an Excel sheet, compared and the percentage was calculated. As the result, intercoder reliability amounted to 92.5 for the first coder and 93.8 for the second. An average of 93.15 is achieved, which is considered sufficient.

2.4.4. Codes Descriptions

Three sections reflect the main aims of PD on a local level. First, to describe "Self" (Table 9) or a performing PD country (Russia) through history, culture, values, norms, and other aspects that create discourse. Second, to address "RJR" or bilateral relations with a country of interest. Third, to perform advocacy functions by informing the foreign public about the country's position on major international events, actors, and their actions. It aims to recreate a version of the social world by introducing readers to the country's understanding of it. In constructivism terms, it is different descriptive forms of "self" (Russia), "other" (Japan), and the "world" (Advocacy).

Table 14. Summary of "Self" section codes by percentage.

Code	N	%
Self	644	100%
Culture	267	41%
Economy	69	11%
Nature	48	7%
Military	47	7%
Contemporary	42	7%
History	38	6%
Tourism	34	5%
War	27	4%
Tech	25	4%
Cosmos	16	2%
Education	10	2%
Science	9	1%
Eco	8	1%
Humanitarian	4	1%

Source: Author

The first section is “Self” which includes 644 codes and 23 codes devoted to Russia’s description of itself to the Japanese public. This section is exclusive, which means it is not a code itself. The description of codes will begin with the ones with the highest amount of coded files and then proceed to the lowest since it represents the amount of attention paid to a specific theme. In some cases, posts included hashtags that directly indicated a theme to which they refer. However, since the number of hashtags in posts was limited, the author’s coding was used.

Table 15. "Self" Narratives Description

Narrative	Description	Examples	N
Economy	Posts about Russia’s economy, economic achievements, events, projects, etc.	ロシアのマントゥロフ産貿大臣の訪日の2日目[Second day of Russia's Minister of Industry and Trade Manturov's visit to Japan]	69
Nature	Posts about Russia’s nature, animals, and historical sites with an accent on surroundings, etc.	ミールくんの写真はこちらです[Photos of cat Mir]	48
Military	Posts about Russia’s military past and present, military-related technologies, events, etc.	2013年12月、ロシア太平洋艦隊の舞鶴港への表敬訪問 [Courtesy call to Maizuru Port of the Russian Pacific Fleet in December 2013]	47
Contemporary	Posts about Russia’s contemporary life, including events, celebrations, habits, etc.	ロシア・ママの育児やライフスタイルの8つの特徴 [The eight characteristics of Russian mom's childcare and lifestyle]	42
History	Posts about Russia’s history, mostly related to the Second World War, etc.	今日、ソ連のスパイであったゾルゲが巣鴨拘置所で処刑されてから70周年となりました [Today marks the 70th anniversary of Sorge's execution at Sugamo Prison, a Soviet spy]	38
Tourism	Posts about Russia’s tourism industry, places/events to visit, cities and regions, etc.	昨年8月から14カ国の3.92万人以上の外国人が電子ビザを使ってロシアの極東 を訪れている [Since August last year, more than 39,000 foreigners from 14 countries have visited the Far East of Russia using electronic visas]	34
War	Posts about Russia’s military past, First and Second World Wars, etc.	今日（9月2日）は「第二次世界大戦終結の日」です [Today (September 2nd) is “The day of the end of World War II”]	27
Tech	Posts about Russia’s achievements and cooperation in the field of technology, space-related, modern development	神聖な土地に建てられたと考えられている #バイコヌール は1955年6月2日に建 設された世界最大の #宇宙基地 [Baikonur, believed to be built on sacred land, is the world's largest space base built on June 2, 1955]	25
Cosmos	Posts about Russia’s achievements in space and aerospace engineering, which are closely associated with the Soviet Union's history and the code “Tech”, etc.	同じ日に、アレクセイ・レオノフは12分続いた世界初の #宇宙遊泳 を実現 し、宇宙探査、宇宙航空開発の歴史に新しいページを開くことになりました [On the same day, Alexei Leonov made the world's first spacewalk, which lasted 12 minutes. It was a new page in the history of space exploration]	16

Narrative	Description	Examples	N
Education	Posts about Russia's education, promotion, and reports on exchanges, cooperation between universities, etc.	無償ロシア留学までの5ステップ ロシアで学ぶことを希望する外国人には [5 steps to study abroad in Russia for free for foreigners who want to study in Russia]	10
Science	Posts about Russia's achievements in science, research cooperation, and exchange, short biography about Russian scientists, etc.	環境における放射性物質の飛散を予想する新たなソフトウェア分析システム が、極東連邦大学で発表されました。[A new software analysis system that anticipates the dispersal of radioactive substances in the environment has been announced at the Far Eastern Federal University]	9
Eco	Posts about Russia's actions, concerns, or positions on ecological issues, etc.	ロシア:中国で残された化学兵器の廃棄を日本に呼びかける [Russia: calling Japan the waste of chemical weapons left in China]	8
Humanitarian	Posts about Russia's humanitarian actions, aid, expressions of condolences, etc.	川崎市 で起きた殺傷の犠牲者のことに対して心よりお悔やみ申し上 げます[We express our condolences to the families and friends of those killed and injured in the tragedy in Kawasaki]	4

Source: Author

Culture (N=267). The subsection and code about Russia's culture are in various manifestations (Table 11). This subsection is inclusive, which means it is a code itself. In other words, it contains some files that were not classified as any other codes. Thus, despite there being 191 codes included in the subsection in total, the subsection acting as a code includes 267 codes. Culture correlates with the term cultural diplomacy, which Nicholas Cull (2008b) considered a part of PD, because it covers Russia's cultural diplomacy policy, but is not limited to it.

Table 16. Summary of "Culture" subsection codes by percentage.

Code	N	%
Culture	267	100%
Sport	53	20%
Music	48	18%
Cinema	26	10%
Art	19	7%
Food	15	6%
Literature	12	4%
Ballet	8	3%
Theater	6	2%
Religion	4	1%

Source: Author

Table 17. “Culture” Narratives Description

Narrative	Description	Examples	N
Sport	Posts about Russia’s sports achievements, records, cooperation, and events.	2018FIFA ワールドカップロシアの優勝杯が日本で披露された [2018 FIFA World Cup Russia's championship cup unveiled in Japan]	53
Music	Posts about Russia’s classical music and opera, events, and biographies of artists.	皆様は、アクロバットロックンロールのことをご存じですか [Do you know about acrobat rock and roll?]	48
Cinema	Posts about Russia’s movies, actors, etc. Mostly concentrates on history and war, but also includes animation.	ロシア映画祭 in 東京で 2 年連続 [Russian Film Festival in for the second consecutive year in Tokyo]	26
Art	Posts about Russia’s museums, art exhibitions, exchanges, famous painters, etc. There were no mentions of modern art.	「国立トレチャコフ美術館所蔵 ロマンティック・ロ シア」という展覧会が東京で開かれます [An exhibition called "Romantic Russia in the State Tretyakov Gallery" will be held in Tokyo]	19
Food	Posts about Russia’s cuisine, eating habits, etc.	ロシアグルメ週間)のご案内[Information on Russian Gourmet Week]	15
Literature	Posts about Russia’s artists, poems, books, etc. with a significant accent on Alexander Pushkin.	ウラジーミル・ナボコフは、1899 年ロシア帝国時代のサンクトペテルブルクで生まれま した [Vladimir Nabokov was born in St. Petersburg during the Russian Empire in 1899]	12
Ballet	Posts about Russia’s ballet, ballet dancers, etc.	クリミア共和国の #ケルソネソス で 第 3 回「国際 #オペラ #バレ エ フェスティバル」開催[The 3rd "International #Opera #Ballet Festival" held at #Kersonesos in the Republic of Crimea]	8
Theater	Posts about Russia’s theater, performances, actors, etc.	ユーリ・#ククラチョフ 氏は 70 才誕生日を迎えます [Yuri #Kuklachov is celebrating his 70th birthday]	6
Religion	Posts about Russia’s religion, religious traditions, churches, etc.	正教の一大聖人ミラのニコラオスの聖遺物がロシアの首都モスクワに到達された [The Holy Relics of Nico Laos, a great saint of the Orthodox Church, reached the Russian capital Moscow]	4

Source: Author

The second section is “RJR” (Table 13), which concentrates on the description of bilateral relations. RJR is an exclusive section and includes 165 posts, which are summarized by three codes.

Table 18. Summary of “RJR” section codes by percentage.

Code	N	%
RJR	165	100%
Diplomacy	100	61%
Exchange	54	33%
Kuril	11	7%

Source: Author

Table 19. “RJR” Narratives Description

Narrative	Description	Examples	N
Diplomacy	Posts about Russia’s diplomatic relations, which summarize recent events, statements, and meetings regarding bilateral relations.	世耕経産相 ロシアの閣僚と極東振興策の連携で一致 [Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Seko and Russia's counterpart agreed to cooperate on promotion of the Far East]	100
Exchange	Posts about Russia-Japan exchanges in various fields including technology, education, culture, etc.	文化イベント「ファー・フロム・モスクワ」は、安倍総理とプーチン大統領との合意に 基づいた日本とロシアの文化交流の一環として11月に東京で開催されます [The cultural event “Far From Moscow” will be held in Tokyo in November as part of the cultural exchange between Japan and Russia based on the agreement between Prime Minister Abe and President Putin]	54
Kuril	Posts about Russia’s position on the disputed territories. Does not include arguments from the Japanese side, which leads it to be identical to a code from the “Advocacy” section.	#ガルージン大使：9月15日付の The Japan Times 紙の社説はいわゆる領土問 題においてロシアが妥協を探る用意がないかのように主張している [#Ambassador Galuzin: An editorial in The Japan Times, dated September 15, argues that Russia is not ready to seek compromise on so-called territorial issues]	11

Source: Author

The third and last section is “Advocacy”, which is a recognized part of PD. It presents Russia’s official position on various international events, and actors and generally draws a picture of Russia’s values and norms. It is also significantly oriented toward “otherness” as it often presents Russia’s position as a response to the position of others with the notable exception of terrorism-related issues. In other words, together with the advocacy of its position, Russia is counter-positioning “self” to “others”.

Table 20. Summary of “Advocacy” section codes by percentage

Code	N	%
Advocacy	219	100%
Ukraine	64	29%
Syria	46	21%
US	31	14%
UK	15	7%
Terrorism	13	6%
Kuril	11	5%
NK	10	5%
NATO	5	2%

Source: Author

Table 21. “Advocacy” Narratives Description

Narrative	Description	Examples	N
Ukraine	Describes Russia’s position on Ukraine, the Ukrainian crisis, the war in Ukraine, and Crimea. In addition, includes comments on the Ukrainian political system and decision-making.	SNS で話題になっている #ウクライナ のパラドックスについて [About the Ukrainian paradox, which has become a hot topic on SNS]	64
Syria	Describes Russia’s position on the Syrian war, including military, humanitarian and civilian issues. Includes criticism of the Western actions in Syria.	シリア上空で撃墜された #ロシア 機の搭乗員2人のうち1人がパラシュート降下 中に地上からの銃撃を受けて死亡しました [One of the two #Russian aircraft passengers, who were shot down over Syria, died after shooting from the ground during the parachute descent]	46
US	Describes Russia’s position on US actions in various parts of the world, but rarely touches upon the domestic scene.	先週、ロシアと米国の間に直接軍事衝突の可能性が生じたことにより全世 界に深刻な懸念が広がりました[Last week, serious concern has spread across the whole world due to the possibility of a direct military clash between Russia and the US]	31
UK	Appeared as a response to the UK’s position on the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal in 2018. Describes Russia’s position on UK’s actions. Used exclusively as a response to official statements from the UK rather than independent criticism.	英政府の行動に関するロシア外務省の声明 [Statement of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the actions of the British government]	15
Terrorism	Describes Russia’s position on terrorism in various parts of the world. Generally corresponds with positions of “other”, but also points out differences in treatment of terrorism in Syria.	毎日３０－４０回の空爆を #テロリスト に対して行って いる[30-40 airstrikes daily against # terrorists]	13
Kuril	Identical to the code from the RJR section.	#ガルージン大使：9 月 15 日付の The Japan Times 紙の社説はいわゆる領土問 題においてロシアが妥協を探る用意がないかのように主張している[#Ambassador Galuzin: An editorial in The Japan Times, dated September 15, argues that Russia is not ready to seek compromise on so-called territorial issues]	11
NK	Describes Russia’s position on North Korea and cooperation on the issue of nuclear programs.	国連安全保障理事会におけるロシア国連大使の朝鮮半島問題に関する発言 [Remarks on the Korean Peninsula issue by the Russian UN Ambassador to the UN Security Council]	10
NATO	Describes Russia’s position on NATO’s actions and decisions as a collective rather than concentrated on the US.	北大西洋条約機構 について、#プーチン大統領 [About the #North Atlantic Treaty Organization, #Putin President]	5

Source: Author

Chapter 3. The "Ism" Theoretical Perspectives on Public Diplomacy

Introduction

Although three major theories (realism, liberalism, and constructivism) are widely used in general IR studies, they remain less relevant to the study of PD. With some exceptions (Yun & Toth, 2009; Nye, 2013; Sevin, 2015), PD researchers avoid utilizing "ism" approaches, which focus on state-to-state relations and rarely consider the role of the public. In addition, PD research ultimately strives for some form of practical implementation, which does not necessarily benefit from an engagement with the theories. In other words, PD research is less paradigmatic than general IR. At the same time, the major theories provide a valuable contribution to PD studies, because they concentrate on states' goals, values, interests, and power exercised toward the foreign public.

3.1 Realist Approach

One may argue that the realist theory was initially formulated during the time of Ancient Greece and the city-state "international" system. Such philosophers as Thucydides considered war the most important part of foreign affairs between "states." The same idea was repeated and reinforced throughout various periods of history, which signaled some form of "common knowledge" and stayed true in various historical settings. Despite the active evolution of the original concept (Beitz, 1999, 19; Prinz & Rossi, 2017), some have argued that realism still plays a significant role in the study of international relations (Bell, 2017, 1). On the other hand, quantitative studies demonstrate that there is a misconception about the extent to which realism has dominated the IR field (Maliniak et al., 2011).

The first wave of international relations theories originated not as a result of scientific debates, but as an attempt to explain real-world events and intergovernmental agreements (for example, the Briand-Kellogg Pact, the Charter of the League of Nations, and the Stimson Doctrine.) World War I dictated a need to reconsider and introduce a new understanding of the international system. It gave rise to an idealist theory that claimed that the growing interdependence of states and a plethora of emerging international agreements can create a stable international system (Snell, 1954, 364).

The League of Nations marked an emergence of public (parliamentary) diplomacy that was characterized as "an important step forward in the methods of solving international conflicts"

(Alexandrowicz, 1962, 1120). It implied a revolutionary step from diplomatie de couloir or backroom diplomacy to a more open discussion of political issues. However, Rosenbaum (1967, 218) points out that the term meant a “continuing system of regulated debate” among different nations rather than a current understanding of PD. At the same time, an acknowledgment of the importance of international communication was a major step forward from state or political elite-centered communication, which was partly a victory for the idealism and emerging liberalism theories.

However, due to the failure of the appeasement policy of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, idealists’ expectations failed and were challenged by realists. Political realists not only subjected idealism to crushing criticism, pointing out, in particular, that the idealistic illusions of statesmen of that time greatly contributed to the outbreak of the Second World War, but they also offered a fairly well-balanced theory of their own. The most prominent proponents of realism are Reinhold Niebuhr, Frederick Schumann, George Kennan, George Schwarzenberger, Kenneth Thompson, Henry Kissinger, Edward Carr, and Arnold Walfers. They have defined the path for realism as an emerging concept of international relations.

In 1939, Edward Carr made one major criticism against idealism. His claims were not only addressed to the theoretical foundation of idealism but also to how dangerous the misinterpretation of international behavior was (Carr, 2016 [1946], xxxiii-xxxiv). Carr notices that the idealist view on public opinion had a “double fallacy”: an assumption that public opinion will prevail and that it is always right (Carr, 1946, 31). This position reflected a dominant state-centrist realists’ view on PD, which defined the development and consequential criticism of realism theory by neoliberalists and constructivists. Although it did not dismiss the role of the public entirely, realism criticized a focus on public opinion present among liberal and neoliberal theorists.

His colleague, Hans Morgenthau, formulated the main theses of realism in 1948 after World War II and the beginning of the Cold War, both of which provided evidence for realism to thrive until the collapse of the Soviet Union. The realism theory included three main concepts: anarchy as the central setting of IR, the balance of power as a prevailing behavior among states, and the central role of states in world politics. The anarchic nature of IR suggests that the state constantly struggles to survive against various external threats, including other actors. That is why the main goal of the state is to ensure its security (Morgenthau, 1948, 7-11), which means to play a “self-help game” (Snidal, 1991, 387-389).

Power and the balance of power are key concepts of realism that define a government's driving goal as to use, maintain and strengthen its power. Morgenthau described power as a “psychological relation between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised” (Morgenthau, 1948, 14). Despite the similarity to the constructivist and critical scholars' views on the definition of “power” (see Ross, 2006; Lebow, 2008), the core of foreign policy for realists has become the assertion of the tendency to dominate (Morgenthau, 1948, 14-17), when for constructivist, it remains conditional.

From realist’s perspective, PD policies are tools among many others to ensure a state’s survival by expanding the outreach of its power to the foreign public. In Morgenthau's (ibid, 432) opinion, public diplomats did not look for common ground rather than try to “persuade the world and especially their nations that they are right and the other side is wrong.” In the condition of the anarchy of international relations, the PD should serve as a tool to ensure national security by influencing a foreign audience, effectively as one-way, old-fashioned propaganda. Ultimately, public opinion, in a realist’s interpretation, has irrational “preferences” and does not matter for “good foreign policy” (Haas, 1953, 473; Morgenthau, 1948). In other words, since the state-centered view on international relations excluded non-state actors as a part of PD, the public is considered only as an object of influence. Currently, following a relative erosion of state sovereignty and the increasingly powerful influence of the public, realists still consider intergovernmental dialogue the main form of international cooperation (Vogler, 1996, 11) but with an acknowledgment of a relatively weak non-state actors’ role.

Carr, as one of the key figures of realism, did not consider realism to be the only suitable theory to explain the complexity of IR. He argued that some of the goals and interests of states “acquire an emotional, irrational appeal which realism itself cannot justify or explain” (Carr, 1946, 90). However, realists tend to ignore this statement and emotional level in general (Dowding, 2011, 333). It is important to note that Carr’s research made a great contribution to the study of Soviet foreign policy. In particular, he noted that relations between the Soviet Union and Japan in the 1920s were not similar to relations with other capitalist countries because various smaller issues, not significant for “strong” realists, continued to cause “mutual suspicion” (Carr, 1979, 104). As mentioned above, realism in its classical form was not able to explain the existence of “mutual distrust,” similar to what Wendt (1992) describes, between the two countries due to unrecognized emotional, historical, and socio-cultural influence in IR.

3.2. Neorealist Approach

Faced with various challenges posed by critics, realism was revived with the publication of Kenneth Waltz's The Theory of International Politics in 1979. Neorealism reflected the aspirations of several American scholars (Kenneth Waltz, Robert Gilpin, Joseph Grieco, etc.) to preserve the advantages of the classical realist tradition, and at the same time, to enrich it, taking into account new international realities and developments. The main differentiating feature of neorealism is an argument about the structural nature of international relations. According to Waltz (1979, 39-43), the non-interacting behavior of states does not stem from their inherent characteristics, determined by geographical location, demographic potential, or sociocultural background, but from the structural nature of the international system itself. Being a result of international actors' interactions, the structure of the international system is not reduced to a simple sum of material factors; it is capable of imposing certain restrictions on states or, on the contrary, providing them with favorable opportunities in world politics. In other words, neorealists reduce the power of states to affect IR.

Neorealism generally ignored the area of PD and the importance of public opinion in policymaking. In its view, diplomacy plays a role of a supporting tool for sustaining "willingness to cooperate" in power relations (Posen, 2003, 46). In other words, PD does not have significance in changing the structural features of international relations, rather than acting to maintain some parts of cooperation patterns. In addition to that, Waltz (2000b, 14-15) argued that closeness between states, interdependence, and propagation of "mutual understanding" creates the potential for negative consequences. It can even lead to war as power discrepancies could eventually lead to "uneven" conditions and conflicts, which undermine the importance of long-term PD strategies that NPD, PR, and soft power scholars argue for. Therefore, both realism and structural realism support the use of TPD as a means to maintain the power structures, rather than NPD as a way to build understanding between states and foreign nations.

3.3. Neoliberalist Approach

The theory of neoliberalism began to gain popularity in the 1990s after the end of the Cold War, which signaled a new stage in the development and understanding of IR. Several basic principles of neoliberalism were formulated by Robert Keohane in his book "After Hegemony" (1984). First, like Waltz and neorealists, admitted that anarchy exists in the international system, but suggested that order could be maintained if states decided to act jointly based on a similar value system.

The second difference is the decentralization of IR from the dominance of states. International institutions must play a key role in maintaining stability in anarchy. Thus, the presence of common interests can lead to overcoming the anarchic nature of the states. Various forms of international institutions play an important role by setting the rules and obligations for joint activities based on common interests. Thus, in contrast to neorealists, neoliberalists highlighted the interdependent nature of IR (Schmidt, 1998, 51), which reflected an emerging post-Cold war tendency of IR development. Broad movements such as the spread of democracy and shared values have allowed neoliberalists to argue that this limits the need for conflict and balance of power (Keohane, 1984). On the other hand, similarly to neorealists, they argued that states do strive for power, however, it could be achieved through cooperation rather than conflict since states are rational actors (Mattern, 2005, 40).

Concerning PD, Joseph Nye's research exemplifies much of the neoliberalist view of PD. He shared the realists' idea that the goal of PD is to achieve national interests (Yun and Toth, 2009, 496), but gave a different definition of them. In Nye's view, American interests and tools to achieve them should not be taken narrowly (2004, 60-61). Alongside border security and international order, U.S. political elites need to take into account the importance of values (democracy, human rights), which in the long run could assure the achievement of national interest (ibid, 140). In other words, the way for the U.S. to achieve its national interests and maintain power is to establish and promote/impose its values as the foundation of common interests. In this context, PD plays the role of a communication channel that helps to establish commonality and cooperation, thus overcoming the anarchic nature of IR.

Despite that (neo)realism and (neo)liberalism can explain various aspects of international politics which define their present influence, they are widely "undersocialized" (Wendt, 1999). Both theories maintain a state-centered approach, which, however, does not mean that the state is the sole power in world politics. At the same time, even if neoliberalism reduces the importance of the state while emphasizing the influence of intergovernmental cooperation and NGOs, it keeps states in the equation. It inevitably reduces the unaccounted influence and complexity of power, identities, and historical and socio-cultural aspects of IR. Since PD directly steps beyond the state-centered boundaries by considering relations between states and the public, it requires a more comprehensive view of how various social constructs interact in the process of communication.

3.4. Constructivist Approach

During the Cold War, the dominance of the realism theory had defined PS as an instrument of a state's power transmission. Later the revived version of liberalism (neoliberalism) and the concept of soft power shifted the understanding of PD from a state-centered approach to a polycentric understanding, which allows the consideration of the influence of various actors on PD communications. On the other hand, social constructivism theory in IR has not yet received sufficient attention from the PD research community. Several researchers have argued that constructivism could give "fresh insights" to the understanding of PD and move toward a more inclusive approach to theory building (Van Ham, 2002; Gilboa, 2008, 75; Byrne, 2012).

At the same time, many of them (Zhang, 2009, 2019; Van Ham, 2010; Huijgh & Byrne, 2012) continue to use certain aspects of "conventional" constructivism, which is often described as positivist since it continues to view social reality through formal models (Abbott, 1990; Hopf, 1998; Wiener, 2006). To some extent, constructivism itself is to blame for this gap due to difficulties in defining what constructivism is (Reus-Smit, 2005; Barkin and Sjoberg, 2019, 43). Some scholars have noticed that a "more coherent and integrated research agenda is needed" (Vanc & Fitzpatrick, 2016, 5). This implies that constructivism could be a useful tool if integrated with other approaches in PD studies. However, this position broadly ignored the differences in ontological, epistemological, and methodological stances on constructivism in comparison with other theories. In contrast to their observation, this paper argues that before the integration of different theoretical views is considered, it is important to first deepen our understanding of the existing approaches. In particular, it is necessary to re-examine the often misunderstood and understudied constructivist approach to PD.

Constructivism emerged as a social science theory and was introduced to the study of IR. This had a significant impact on how constructivists view the dichotomy of the power of the states, society, and individuals. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann made the first attempt to conceptualize the theory in the book "The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge." They have challenged the materialistic view of sociology with the idea that objective phenomenon coexists with subjective realities formed as a result of social interactions. It means that the reality of one person differs from others' rather than representing some form of objective truth: "The others have perspective on the common world that is not identical with mine" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967, 24). They argue that reality is intersubjective (ibid, 37) or shared by other people, which implies that the construction of reality is social in its nature, formed by constant interactions between individuals, and more importantly, social groups united by shared knowledge.

A new round of theoretical debate in the scientific community flared up after the end of the Cold War. Since the influence of values, norms, and identities on policy-making became more pronounced, even neoliberalists noticed that their approaches could not sufficiently explain the changes in world politics (Keohane, 1988, 379-80). Alongside elements of postpositivist and postmodernist critics, constructivists questioned the assumptions about the nature of IR, the behavior of states, and the importance of intersubjective knowledge and identities.

Nicholas Onuf was one of the first who introduced the term "constructivism" in IR, but in his own words, it was not a new theoretical approach, but a "philosophical position" (Onuf, 1989, 1). Scholars argue that constructivism "operates at a different level of abstraction. Constructivism is not a substantive theory of politics" (Wendt, 1992, 1999; Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001, 393). Carlsnaes (2013) emphasizes that constructivism is based on three points of inquiry: metaphysical position, social theory, and IR theory. Thus, various difficulties have emerged since constructivism goes beyond IR theorization in an attempt to diversify and enrich the understanding of it.

The American researcher Alexander Wendt (Wendt, 1992) proposed one of the most commonly used interpretations of constructivism. He borrowed the methodology of social psychology, drawing analogies between the interactions of states and the interpersonal relations of individuals. Within the framework of such an approach, participants in international politics appear as anthropomorphic subjects. Similar to individuals, relations between states that perceive each other as "friends" are fundamentally different from interactions between "rivals." In the first case, a collective identity arises, characterized by altruism, an awareness of the inseparable commonality of mutual interests and security. In the second, wariness, suspicion, or even outright hostility prevails in the relationship. At the same time, both friendly and unfriendly relations are not constant conditions as structural neorealists claim. Both internal and external environments, including communication with other actors, constantly define and redefine the existing relations, identity, values, and other variables (Reus-Smith, 2005). Unlike realists or liberalists, Wendt argued that the interaction between actors is not predestined to conflict or cooperation, but is determined in the process of interaction.

The negative type of interactions between states emerges not from the anarchic nature of IR, but from the possible anarchic understanding of IR by a certain state. Wendt claimed that "systems of international relations where an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust prevails are formed from cycles of interactions in which each side performs actions that the other side views as threatening, giving rise to expectations that the other cannot be trusted" (Wendt 1992, 406). He believed the experience of intensive cooperation could gradually transform relations, leading to the suppression of selfish individual identities by collective ideas of mutual ownership, as well as a corresponding reformulation of interests in the field of foreign policy and security.

On the other hand, cooperation can create a situation of vulnerability in cases of dishonest behavior of the other party. In addition, the relative benefits dilemma described by structural realism arises when one state fears that it may benefit less from cooperation than another. In this regard, to start cooperation, the subjects must overcome negative identification, that is, stop considering each other as rivals and potential opponents. Full-fledged cooperation is possible only if there is trust, which must be obtained through interaction between states (Wendt 1992, 417-422). In other words, Wendt and many contemporary constructivists do not deny the importance of realist and neoliberalist thinking but expand it and, to an extent, provide a platform for their convergence.

Nevertheless, constructivism asserts that states can break the circle of distrust. A social subject can decide to go beyond his established role (Wendt, 1992, 418–419) and try to change the ingrained negative practices of interaction with the other party. Given the repetition of positive mutual signals, the previous cycle of negative identification can be substituted by shared values and interests. In that context, PD and other channels of communication play a major role in achieving mutual positive understanding. At the same time, while positivist approaches such as framing, agenda-setting, and soft power concentrate on outcomes and characteristics that are exogenously imposed or taken as given, constructivists focus more on how particular characteristics were constructed and led to a certain outcome in a process. However, the degree to which constructivists pay attention to constructed realities, knowledge, and the role of power, processes or outcomes is defined by differences in their stance on positivism and modernism.

3.4.1. Conventional/Critical Distinction

The "schism" of constructivists in IR happened right from the beginning because the postpositivist foundation of social constructivism faced a well-establish, thus, dominant episteme of IR. Tedd Hopf distinguishes two groups of constructivists, conventional and critical, that share the same theoretical fundamentals but have different views on foundationalism itself (1998, 181). Constructivism is not a critical theory in itself, despite its high influence at the beginning, but many constructivists adhere to critical roots. In other words, conventional and critical constructivists, "Echoing the divisions within the critical international theory…are divided between modernists and postmodernists" (Reus-Smit, 2003, 207). They also echo the distinction between positivism versus postpositivism. In contrast to critical theory, conventional constructivists do not separate themselves from positivist traditions (Reus-Smit, 2003; Checkel, 2017, 6-7). As an example, Alexander Wendt calls himself a "positivist" (1999, 39-40) and urges scholars to combine constructivism with neoliberalism to overcome the weaknesses of both theories (Wendt, 1992, 425). It does not mean that critical constructivists reject positivism or modernism in their entirety. They combine different approaches from social sciences including positivist methodology such as quantitative tools. At the same time, critical direction urges us to overcome the positivist limitations (see Chapter 1.6.1).

To describe the differences between the two approaches, it is necessary to look at how they treat the "identity" concept, which is one of the cornerstones of constructivism. Conventional constructivists treat identity as an "intrinsic attribute of a state" (Hagstrom, 2006, 184) because they assume the existence of "stable norms in a community with a given identity that structure behavior" (Wiener, 2006, 23) and "expect to see one identity or another" (Hopf, 1998, 183). This position correlates with positivists' view on social reality through formal models (Abbott, 1990, 436). For example, if a state is considered democratic, there are certain types of identity or values that one may expect to see. Thus, conventional constructivists normalize certain forms of understanding to predict behavior. For example, if democratic states interact with non-democratic ones, conflicts can be expected to arise.

Besides the process of forming an identity based on the opposition of “self” and “other,” critical constructivists also highlight the opposition of “self” to “one’s prior self” (Lebow, 2008, 220; Hopf, 1998). Therefore, identity from a critical perspective acquires subjective and unique traits, the analysis of which cannot be limited to the framework artificially established by the researcher. On the other hand, Andrew Ross argues that these two approaches to identity might not be contradictory. He notices that while recognizing certain existing forms of identity, constructivists still could investigate “the nonconsciousness processes that reproduce and transmit them” (Ross, 2006, 210). It suggests deconstructing identity and carefully analyzing its unconscious and “inarticulable dimensions” (ibid, 2006, 211).

Despite both conventional and critical constructivists concentrating on identity, the former group tries to find and describe certain forms of relatively stable identities while the latter attempts to deconstruct and analyze them. It often leads critical constructivists to see power as a central unit of analysis since “certain powerful groups play a privileged role in the process of social construction” (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001, 398). Therefore, they are more willing to see power structures “in every social exchange” (Hopf, 1998, 185), including in identity construction (Table 17).

Table 22. Differences between Conventional and Critical constructivism

Conventional	Critical
Elements of positivism	Post positivism
Expect to see certain forms of identities	Identities should be studied case-by-case
Constructs could be positive even with power relations (Analytically neutral)	Constructs tend to be negative due to power mismatch, which must be challenged ethically.
A historical review focusing on the study of current events	Deconstruction of history to demonstrate how current events came about
PD as a form of individualistic or collective power (Habermas)	PD as a form of power (Foucault)

Source: Author

It often leads to a tendency of critical constructivism to pay specific attention to power structures and the ethical dimension does not imply alternative explanations for existing power relations between people or states (Price, 2008, 210). For example, Mattern (2001) considers diplomacy as a tool to use to promote "forceful narratives," which create or sustain identity groups like the EU or NATO. In their opinion, traditional military treatment is similar to narrative "guns." At the same time, this approach is overly narrow because of its power concentration.

The debate on the distinction between types of constructivists' approaches and the necessity to separate constructivism from its critical foundation has an ongoing status (Price, 2008; Weber, 2013; Barkin and Sjoberg, 2019). At the same time, these differences define a gap in the literature since the majority of PD scholars who attempted to utilize constructivism adhered to its "conventional" form (Zhang, 2009, 2019; Van Ham, 2010; Huijgh & Byrne, 2012). Thus, to close the gap, this research will review constructivists' views on diplomacy and PD before proceeding to expand the understanding of Russia's PD based on the (re)introduction of constructivist theory.

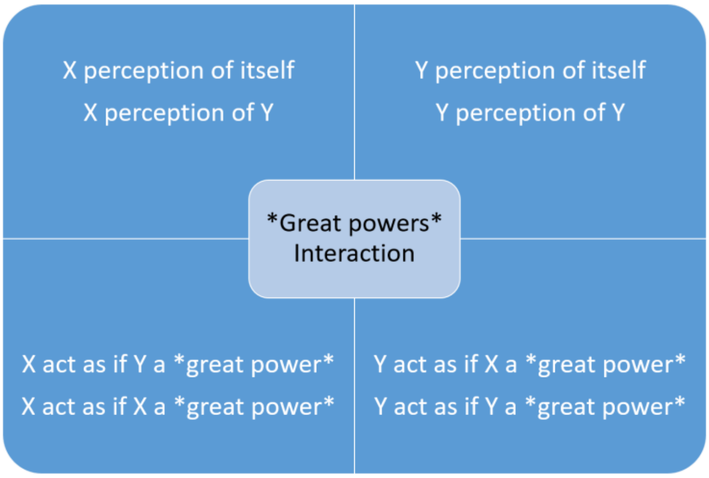
3.4.2. Constructivism and Diplomacy

The constructivists' focus on power relations largely defines the central role of states in knowledge construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Wendt, 1999; Dreher, 2015) which, for a long time, complicated the discussion of a 'public' component of diplomacy. Based on Wendt's theorization, diplomatic activities represent a form of interstate dialogue that can shape not only bilateral/multilateral relations but also the identity of performing states through repeated positive or negative interactions. Another understanding of diplomacy is not as a tool, but as a platform, "where beliefs about state interests and capacities are enacted, reproduced and changed" (Adler-Nissen, 2016, 95). In other words, diplomacy involves interactions between states and practitioners that participate in the construction and reconstruction of identities through various practices.

Constructivists understand diplomatic interactions as means to promote shared narratives and understanding among states, and to develop a sense of common identity, norms, and interests (Adler, 2013; Groulier and Tordjman, 2020). They argue that continuing diplomatic interactions lead to "transformation in collective meanings and discourse as a result of practice" (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, 28-30). Neumann (2002, 651) argues that diplomacy, similarly to identity, is constantly changing, which means changes in practice and discourse, which are accompanied by an appearance of new "metaphors and narratives." Thus, in continuing diplomatic interactions, it is important to maintain collective meanings and adapt to changes.

One of the major bodies of research on the issue of diplomacy and Russia was conducted by Pouliot (2010), who analyzed Russia-NATO cooperation using interviews with practitioners and empirical evidence to explain post-Cold War relations. He highlights three indicators of cooperation that represent the way for perceptual changes: the disappearance of the possibility of using force, normalization of disputes, and daily cooperation on the ground (Pouliot, 2010, 96). He also notes that the idea of terrorism as a "common threat" brought some diplomacy practitioners to the feeling of shared identity between two "contrasting organizational cultures" (ibid, 131). In conclusion, Pouliot highlights the equal importance of two dimensions (Figure 2) of symbolic interactions: perceptional (country X is perceived by itself or country Y as a great power) and practical (country X acts or is allowed to act by country Y as a great power). The dimensional balance sustains and reinforces the identity of country X and its cooperation with country Y (ibid, 238). In the case of a discrepancy (for example, X does not perceive Y as a great power through Y perceives itself as such) leads to a conflict of identities.

Figure 2. Symbolic Interactionism


X perception of itself
X perception of Y
Y perception of itself
Y perception of Y
Great powers Interaction
X act as if Y a *great power*
X act as if X a *great power*
Y act as if X a *great power*
Y act as if Y a *great power*

Source: Pouliot (2010).

At the same time, not all states and international organizations have the same configuration of power relations, which chooses between diplomacy and PD depending on a set of different factors. For example, Haacke (2003) investigated how the collective identity of ASEAN interacts with the individual identities of its members and other collectives (the West) through diplomatic and security cultures. He concludes that the success of diplomatic interactions depends on different types of socially constructed states' behaviors. Some of the attempts to build collective understanding among members of shared identity may face “defines and resistance” instead of internalization, because of domestically constructed understanding of regime security, norms, and interests. At the same time, Haacke and others noticed that “quiet diplomacy” (traditional, behind-doors) plays a more significant role in the ASEAN context than its public diplomacy variant (Haacke, 2003; Loh, 2018; Rosyidin, 2020) and that both of them may fail under a specific domestic context (Haacke, 2018).

Some scholars criticize traditional diplomacy as a “demanding, sometimes nasty, even dirty world” (Onuf, 2013, 178). Onuf argues that diplomats are “stubborn” and highly “ritualized,” which makes them lose their relevance in current IR (ibid, 249). Since the end of the Cold War, the setting and realities have changed, which has significantly affected the prevalence of traditional diplomacy and promoted a shift toward the recognition of the importance of PD. As Copeland notices (2006, 14), the public also helps to “ensure long-term peaceful nature of the other,” because it is directly involved in the constructions of “self” and “others” identities.

3.5. Constructivists’ Operationalization of PD

Despite relatively recent interest in constructivism, PD scholars have published several papers that discuss the convergence of constructivism and PD. Some of them argue that the branding that PD practitioners use as a long-term image promotion tactic is a “postmodern variety of identity construction” (Van Ham, 2002, 265). Others claim that constructivism makes an accent on how governments can alternate public discussion/discourse through PD, but it is limited in outreach (Sevin, 2017). Consequently, in line with Van and Fitzpatrick's argument about the integration of approaches, some PD scholars have suggested some form of analytical eclecticism, described by Sil and Katzenstein (2010) with the conjunction of realism, liberalism, and constructivism.

Scholars have also used various aspects of constructivist theory to investigate cultural diplomacy (Villanueva, 2007), various PD programs (Zhang, 2010, 2019), the influence of the domestic dimension of PD (Huijgh & Byrne, 2012), nation-branding (Van Ham, 2002, 2008, 2010; Sasikumar, 2016), and emotions (Graham, 2014). The general tendency continues to be to use the theory in a restricted manner by applying certain constructivist ideas without acknowledging their postpositivist complexity. Consequently, several approaches remain in the literature that constructivism challenges and could contribute to improvement.

3.5.1. The Power and Discursive Power

The first challenge that constructivism poses to the mainstream study of PD is that scholars tend to overlook the complexity of power in constructivism by aligning it with other approaches. PD, and especially soft power, scholars have argued that PD is more effective in achieving its goals when practitioners listen to and understand foreign audiences (Nye, 2004, 2011; Melissen, 2005; Atkinson, 2010; Wei, 2016). It highlights the necessity of two-way communication between governments and the public to create a sense of common values and interests. This view partially corresponds with constructivists' notion of collective identity formed in the process of interactions despite both of them arising from different traditions. Consequently, Van Ham (2010), building his argument on constructivist ideas, argues that "social power" is similar to soft power because of its seemingly "harmonious" character, which diverges significantly from the theory of constructivism.

Despite the focus on power, constructivists (critical to a higher extent) do not have a dominant/agreed-upon understanding of "power", which highlights that the concept itself has different constructed meanings. As Michael Foucault argued in conversation with Gilles Deleuze in 1977, "The question of power remains a total enigma" (1977, 213), which continues to be the case in contemporary literature. Farfan and Holzcheiter (2011, 141) distinguished two types of power. The first definition is from a behaviorist's perspective, as a "capacity to pursue his or her interest over" others and as an institutional/established control over human interactions. The second definition is more common among social constructivists who are interested in social interactions rather than inner reasons that motivate individuals to act in a certain way. However, it is not particularly easy to define the interconnections of "desire, power, and interests" (Foucault and Deleuze, 1977, 215), which governs interactions between people, nor it is always clear how actors and institutions obtain the power and exercise it.

Postmodernists and constructivists understand "power" as a structural (as structuring, not as the neorealists' idea of structure) characteristic or omnipresent element of social reality that constantly reproduced power relations through everyday interactions (Foucault, 1973; Giddens, 1979; Deetz and Mumby, 1990). In addition, social institutions, which "are rooted in distorted communication, in ideologically imprisoned consciousness," help to maintain existing power relations (McCarthy, 1985, 86). In other words, power is an integral part of social life, which "can be possessed and put to use" (Schneck, 1987, 20). Consequently, constructivists use discourse analysis to empirically analyze manifestations of power in "the cultural and social day-to-day context in which it has been used" (Wiener, 2009, 178).

In that context, discourse is one of the visible and trackable manifestations of existing power relations as well as the struggle between them. As Milliken (1999, 229) noted, discourse is "operationalizing a particular 'regime of truth' while excluding other possible modes of identity and actions" (see also Foucault, 1972). However, since the world is complex, interconnected, and not managed by a singular entity, various discourses and "regimes of truth" constantly challenge each other. According to Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) discourse theory, despite all discourses (or powers behind it) striving for a dominant position in society, a "closure" (complete dominance) is never fully possible because of a constantly changing power balance. This should not be mistaken with the realist understanding, since constructivists do not quantitatively measure the power capabilities. The dominant power is constantly challenged by other actors in the process of interaction. In other words, no discourse is explicitly "universal" (see more on that Canovan, 1983; Habermas, 1987; Richters, 1988) in nature but also metamorphosed by other powers.

It follows from Foucault's work (1977, 1981) that discursive power is a process of organizing, maintaining, or/and policing certain knowledge/interpretations of reality. Societies (or social groups, individuals) use discursive power to create a specific "regime of truth" (Foucault, 1977, 13), which also allows excluding alternative discourse if necessary (Young, 1981). For example, Wodak et al. (2009, 36-42) devoted significant efforts to describe different strategies by which the exclusion or policing is conducted, including strategies of casting doubt, legitimation/delegitimation, and dismantling or destruction of alternative interpretations of reality. Although, it does not mean that certain discourse is impossible to change while the power remains dominant. Foucault (1981, 62) argues that some "regions of discourse" are open for penetration and changes, while others have restrictions on participation.

Although Foucault's account of power and discursive power maintains significant influence in the approach to discourse, it is far from being the only one. Habermas (1987, 1998) presents a multidimensional view on discourse and discursive practices, arguing the "emancipatory potential" (Farfan and Holzscheiter, 2010, 141) of discourse. From this idealized (from idealism theory) point of view, he argued about the ability of the public or community to address deep, structural social problems through discursive practices (White, 2013, 13). In comparison with Foucault's account, Habermas also perceived power as a crucial part of social interactions but ascribed to societies a more active role in constructing and challenging existing dominant discourse. Consequently, several researchers have criticized Habermas for neglecting to recognize the complexity of social power that will not necessarily try to resolve social problems (O'Mahony, 2010, 70), for overestimating people's independence from media, as a power-wielding institute, influence (Morley, 1995) and strength of their consciousness (Staats, 2004, 593). At the same time, taking into account the critics of Habermas for unproven optimism, Foucault could be criticized for unproven pessimism toward social structure and changes.

At the same time, power, discourse, or regimes of truth do not have to be oppressive, dismissive, or negative on their own. The power that produces discourse and establishes "truth" is embodied/dispersed in social interactions. While some actors may exercise power intentionally, which fits the first definition by Farfan and Holzcheiter (2011) mentioned above, power "comes from everywhere" (Foucalut, 1978). Consequently, it represents constructivists' ontological stance that discourse, through which power manifests itself (ibid), "is shaped by the world, and it shapes the world" (Johnstone, 2017, 5). In other words, individuals/social groups wielding power and discourse mutually constitute each other. This distinction is significant for the discussion of differences between PD and propaganda since scholars tend to treat the latter as a top-down, intentional, and malicious exercise of power.

Since Berger and Luckmann (1967), constructivists have noted that unequal participation in reality construction characterizes power relations: the one with power produces reality (Dreher, 2015, 59) or has more opportunities to affect it favorably. In contrast to Van Ham's (2010) acceptance of co-opting between states as a result of PD, constructivists argue that interacting actors might meet defiance or resistance, leading to conflict rather than cooperation (Haacke, 2003). The reason lies not only in the power struggle over discourse, but because in differences in socially constructed components such as identities, values, and norms. In other words, PD scholars tend to emphasize the cooperative and neglect the confrontational side of power.

Some constructivists argue that diplomacy is a tool that promotes "forceful narratives" by which it creates or sustains collective identities (Mattern, 2001, 351–352). Thus, states use "the oppressive force of public diplomacy… to alter one culture to suit the preferences of another culture, based on differences in access to power" (Dutta-Bergman, 2006, 117). In that context, the "harmonious" character of social power is debatable since the more powerful actor might create and impose its knowledge on "others." In that context, control by a state PD policy represents an exercise of power, or more importantly, discursive power, since it aims to establish a regime of truth.

3.5.2. Constructivists' Critics of Soft Power

It is also important to compare the constructivists' understanding of power with that of soft power scholars since the latter significantly influences the contemporary discussion of PD. Despite the differences in the level of analysis epistemology, ontology, and methodology, constructivism and soft power share a similar understanding of "power" and "power structures." Constructivists consider "power" as an inevitable part of identity, values, and interest construction (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Wendt, 1992: Dreher, 2015; Adler, 2019) or construction of reality (Barnett and Duvall 2005; Searle, 2010).

Similar to constructivists' understanding, a successful soft power policy aims at the "creation of a dominant discourse or international norms" (Rothman, 2011). Hard and soft powers have shared goals to affect others through a set of instruments. The first uses physical or economic strength, and the second, available cultural and valuable resources. Both rely on the existence of "leadership" (Nye, 2008a) or hegemon (Keohane, 1984; Kearn, 2011, 81), which wields significant power in establishing the knowledge of others. At the same time, soft power scholars also acknowledge that leaders themselves can change under the influence of followers (Nye, 2008a, 147) and an indirect rather than intentional effect, that soft power has on a targeted public (Nye, 2005, 5). However, in theory, soft power interrelates with some elements of communication studies similar to Gruning's Excellence Theory, which are applicable in the economic studies world rather than in the world of politics.

From a communication studies perspective, an organization or a leader and its followers represent a dynamic two-way system, which allows the possibility for a power-possessing side to change. Researchers on leadership argue that some followers may have a passive role, some actively support a leader, and some oppose based on "basic beliefs…fundamental values…what you think of this leader and these followers in this situation in particular" (Kellerman, 2008, 229; Rough, 2009). Thus, the leader needs to be flexible to make concessions if necessary. However, incorporating communicative relations is difficult if the organization, company, or other gain-oriented entities do not have pre-established, historically and socio-culturally unique identities.

While they might have a corporate image or legacy which might recreate forms of identity and history accordingly, their identities are created by managers (Giddens, 1984; Mukherjee and He, 2008) rather than as a result of social interactions. Therefore, the identity of the company is flexible and changeable if it is necessary to achieve effective cooperation based on received feedback and through self-initiated changes. For example, changes in logos or slogans, modification of corporate policies, and denouncing or proclaiming various company values. However, constructions of state identities are much more complex and even the most powerful entities within a state cannot easily change social construction by re-branding. In other words, states' characteristics such as identities, values, and interests form through a long-term and ongoing process of interactions rather than being constructed or reconstructed by a design.

As psychology and leadership scholars argue, in contrast to hegemons, effective leaders should be ready to self-sacrifice to achieve integrity and trust within the collective/society (Yorges et al. 1999; De Cremer, 2002; De Cremer and van Knippenberg, 2005). This reflects one of the main arguments of not only soft power but NPD research, which concentrates on the way a state listens to the public and alters its strategy according to its desires. However, soft power scholars did not elaborate on what exactly the dominant cultural power is ready to alter within its own identity, values, interests, and norms to accommodate the foreign public. As was noticed in Chapter 1.4.2., the U.S. possesses well-established institutions through which it projects its power. Even if some parts of the U.S. PD might work based on two-way symmetrical communication principles, those institutions establish or impose certain discourses, thus exercising hegemon-type powers.

Despite similarities between constructivism and soft power approaches, there are two main criticisms Brent Steele (2007) addresses to liberalism, upon which soft power relies upon. First, constructivists (see Giddens, 1984) point out the duality of structure, which allows focusing on processes as well as outcomes of social interactions. While soft power scholars concentrate on "softness" as established outcomes of a state's policy or cultural influence, constructivists aim at analyzing how softness has emerged and obtained its characteristics. As Steele (2007, 38) noticed, because of positivists' ontology, liberal scholars rely on a "deterministic sense of one rationality." Thus, soft power scholars predominantly determine what is "soft" through quantitative outcomes such as opinion polls, ranking in the Soft Power 30 index, or whether actors agree to support the U.S. This position allows them to disregard the dominant influence of power as a process of establishing knowledge, including interpretations of "soft" policies.

The second critic is concentrated on the double hermeneutics (Steele, 38-44), which addresses the positivist argument for the independence of object and subject or a value-free approach in research. Steele (ibid, 39-40) argues that the political elite utilizes the "explanatory" or epistemic power of social science theories that are based on positivism to determine policies. In turn, social scientists use statements of the political elite to justify their theories. In other words, the positivist approach to science represents a form of self-fulfilling prophecy. The Western and U.S. scholars in particular who dominate the field of IR and soft power studies establish what "soft" power is, influence the establishment and confirm their beliefs based on outcomes. Since the field is dominated by positivism and biases toward conservative values, Western scholars define Russia's soft power and PD are not effective. On the other hand, constructivists analyze the "softness" of a state's power as socially constructed and intersubjective (see Chapters 2.5.2 and 2.5.3).

3.5.3. Intersubjective Knowledge

The second challenge that constructivism poses to PD studies is based on an understanding that knowledge is intersubjective, meaning that actors come and act together based on a system of common beliefs about social reality (Wendt, 1999, 158; Weldes, 1999). Despite an attempt to utilize constructivism, Zhang (2010, 298) argues that "emphasizing the power of ideas," Obama reflected "a constructivist worldview." However, neoliberalism recognizes the power of ideas as well (Goldstein & Keohane, 1993; Chwieroth, 2007). In contrast to neoliberalism, constructivism focuses on how these ideas, or the intersubjective knowledge that forms them, emerge and are enacted (Mattern, 2005, 36). Following the positivist tradition, Zhang concentrated on the surface manifestation of discourse in one of Barack Obama's speeches by highlighting particular words (e.g., "dialog," "change," "values") rather than analyzing the social constructions or intersubjective knowledge behind them.

In addition, in contrast to the positivist assumption about the exogenous character of identities, ideas, and interests (Wendt, 1992), constructivists understand differences in socially constructed identities and intersubjective knowledge as significant factors that define meanings (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

Fitzpatrick (2011, 34–36) rightfully noticed, when Obama implemented new a U.S. PD based on “mutual interests” and “shared values,” that none of these had been defined nor was there anyone who would define them among different “social collectives” (ibid, 38–39). In other words, declaring a “common worldview” does not imply “an inherently two-way symmetrical communication action” (Zhang, 2010, 298) but could allow a more powerful actor to impose “mutual interests” on those less powerful (Weldes, 1998; Dreher, 2015). In that context, constructivists would rather focus on identifying how socially constructed identities, interests, and knowledge of a state and the foreign public interact. This allows understanding of the socially constructed intersubjective knowledge behind words rather than the surface manifestations of such speech.

PD and soft power researchers are less inclined to analyze how interests and values appear in the first place, which leads to the understanding of them as static. The common approach to PD is based on a positivist idea that through logical investigation, it is possible to establish the meaning of good and bad, right and wrong, and attractive and unattractive values and interests. This concept does not account for the complexity of interactions and power relations between states with unique identities and knowledge. Thus, it offers limited insight into how to improve PD to achieve better results by establishing a two-way symmetrical dialog, especially between conflicting identities with their differentiating constructions of knowledge, values, and interests.

In contrast, constructivists argued that attractiveness is a socially constructed phenomenon, which encourages us to focus on the socially constructed identities of states. If they share similar knowledge about what is attractive and what is not, the value/efficiency of dialog and listening will likely increase due to the preexisting shared knowledge (Checkel, 2001; Lebow, 2007, 2008). Otherwise, two-way communication does not necessarily characterize an effective PD strategy since, based on an initially unequal balance of power, governments impose a certain discourse on the foreign public, which, in turn, can lead to rejection and confrontation. It also leads to the failure of the positivist approach to fully explain that Obama’s diplomacy had little effect in some countries (Hayden, 2011), especially Poland (Pew Research Center, 2020), but a positive effect in others (Golan & Yang, 2013).

This dominant view on PD also led Van Ham (2002, 262; 2008) to falsely claim that constructivism is not able to explain why states perceive the same norms differently. This statement relies on positivist logic and dismisses years of constructivist research into the socially constructed character of norms. In contrast, Graham (2014) observes that the role of constructivism is to analyze not only what people value or what norms they share, but also the intersubjective knowledge behind them. As social groups constantly construct and reconstruct collective/intersubjective meanings that define how they will perceive social reality, the positivist understanding of communication limits the ability of a researcher to analyze how the targeted society will receive and interpret PD narratives. Therefore, constructivism expands the understanding of PD communication efforts to penetrate the discourse of foreign societies while accounting for the complexity of intersubjective knowledge.

3.5.4. Identities and Collective Identities

The third challenge that constructivists pose to the mainstream view on PD is a recognition of the role that identities and collective identities play in interactions between states. The discussion of identity and how to define it remains a crucial point in constructivist literature. Despite having deep roots in the postwar understanding of power from the social constructivists' point of view, constructivism in IR faces difficulties in adopting similar premises. In short, identity can be defined as a distinctive self-understanding formed in the process of social interactions. However, one of the challenges is to apply an understanding of values, norms, ideas, and other defining features of an individual's identity to a state.

Positioned at the crossroads of philosophical understanding of ontology and individual-oriented sociological knowledge, the current tendency is to view a state as if it is a person (Wendt, 2004, 289). Wendt (ibid, 302) argued that states are not only physical objects but "superorganisms," which are collectively constructed by people, mainly their citizens. Because of their intersubjective character, identities require recognition and legitimization "within the context of a symbolic universe" (Bergman ad Luckmann, 1967, 118), which can be given by "others."

At the same time, researchers of interpersonal relations argued that not all social interactions are equally contributive to the construction of identities (Sullivan, 1953; Picou and Carter, 1976; Horowitz, 1991). The "significant other" differs from the "other" by the amount of influence that it possesses on someone else's "self" identity (Woelfel, & Haller, 1971). This influence does not necessarily have to be mutual. Individuals can look up to an "other" as a model for defining their behavior, norms, and values, but "others" are not required to reciprocate. These "significant" interactions may create patterns of behavior for further relationships (Andersen & Baum, 1994). Constructivists in IR have adopted a similar understanding of "significant others" (Wendt, 1999; Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001; Ashizawa, 2008).

Collective Identities

Since knowledge that embodies and is constructed by social interactions is intersubjective or shared by others, collective identities play a significant role in not only providing states with opportunities for self-identification but also in establishing a certain form of discursive control over its interactions with "others," in and out outside of the collective. The importance of this is also recognized by neorealists and soft power researchers. Nye (2004, 5) notes that soft power and communication, in general, are more effective "to shape the preferences of others" if states already share similar features, which has also been pointed out by constructivists (Lebow, 2007; Lebow, 2008). However, constructivism applies its epistemological stance on understanding that shared features are formed intersubjectively.

The "collective" refers to groups or identities aligning themselves with others to create a "cognitive extension of the self, rather than independent" (Wendt, 1994, 386). It does not mean those collective identities are obsolete since "strong national identification" can oppose "collective identification" (Kaelble, 2009, 203). Some scholars also argue that "the concept of collective identity is hard to specify, (since) its use (is), for the most part, metaphorical" (Onuf, 2012, 94). Wendt (1994, 386-387) argues that actors can reflect their collective by expressing "identification with the welfare of another" and "how they treat each other in their changing interaction context" (ibid, 390) but not all collectively implemented actions signal the existence of the collective "agency" (Wendt, 2004, 297). In other words, a collective can exist not only in physically or institutionally embodied forms but can also be connected by discursive practices. Constructivists distinguish certain forms of collective identities, such as "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983 [2006]), "security communities" (Pouliot, 2007), and international organizations (Finnemore & Sikkink, 2001).

Among them are states with active military cooperation, and bilateral and interstate associations (UN, EU, and SCO), which commit to specific discourse and are embodied by discursive power to achieve or maintain legitimacy. Koenig (2008, 108) notices that, because of the changing reality of IR, which includes globalization, alteration, or deterioration of such definitions as statehood and sovereignty, states “have to publicly recognize a variety of particularistic collective identities legitimated by universalistic human rights.” In the past, the creation of collective identities was connected with a territorial aspect – being neighbors or physically connected, – which was “unsettled” by globalization (Scholte, 1996, 46). However, such issues as human rights or freedom of religion increasingly go beyond the discursive control of the state and become part of the collectively defined knowledge. As argued by social psychologists, in some cases social identity may “function almost to the exclusions of personal identity” (Oakes & Turner, 1990; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Thus, collectivity can reduce the importance of individual/state power by redistributing/dispersing it among members (Wendt, 1992, 400).

Constructivists argued that it is important for social groups or identities, including states, to receive a seal of legitimization from the collective or a “relevant community of meaning” (Hopf, 1998, 179). Within a collective identity, members use power to produce/reproduce, discipline, and police intersubjective knowledge, which is necessary to maintain a sense of the common “self.” On the one hand, the “common lifeworld” (Risse, 2000, 10) itself provides legitimacy for its members to participate in the construction of discourses and contributes to mutual recognition of attractiveness since their values, norms, and interests are based on intersubjective knowledge.

On one hand, it imposes a discursive control over intersubjective knowledge (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004). This control creates a necessity of “protecting” collective knowledge from the incoming alternative discourses, thus creating discursive barriers to alternative and often challenging structures of meanings. If necessary, it also allows the delegitimation of certain members of the collective whose intersubjective knowledge diverges from the “mainstream” and creates an internal challenge for discourse. An example of this is Donald Trump’s alleged collusion with the Russian government. During the 2016 election cycle, he made a few positive statements to improve relations with Russia, which U.S. media widely criticized as a “bromance” (Diamond, 2015; Viebeck et al., 2016). The same happened with a Democratic presidential candidate in the 2020 election race and member of the U.S. Congress Tulsi Gabbard, who called for a thorough investigation into the use of chemical weapons in Syria and met with Syrian President Bashar Assad. After this expression of an alternative narrative, Hillary Clinton and some media called her a “Russian asset” (Lerer, 2019; Caputo & Strauss, 2019; Boyle, 2019) reflecting the collective's attempt to delegitimize divergent opinions.

Another example is prominent American whistleblower and former CIA agent Edward Snowden, who, after having declassified documents related to the U.S. surveillance system and being forced to seek political refuge in Russia, was accused of being the “Kremlin’s pawn” and a “Russian agent” (Thompson, 2014; Groll, 2014; Schindler, 2016). In one of his interviews, he said, “every time your name appears in the same sentence...with the word "Russia" it is considered a negative thing now” (JRE Clips, 2019), despite his criticism of the Russian government as “corrupt” (MacAskill, 2018). The same situation appears in the academy, where two famous international relations scholars, Stephen F. Cohen and John Mearsheimer, were widely blamed for their different views on the Ukrainian Crisis in 2014 and were called “Putin’s useful idiots” (Commonwealth Club of California, 2015; *VICE News*, 2018).

Identification (self-identification or otherwise) with multiple collective identities also creates various internal and external identity conflicts. In the example of Japan that is relevant for this research, researchers noted, that there are “East Asian” (Rozman, 2012), “Asian” (Carver et al., 2000), and “Western” (Deudney & Ikenberry, 1993/1994) aspects of Japanese identity, which can provide it with legitimacy in relations to a specific collective. After the defeat in the Second World War, Japan remains “faithful to its postwar political identity as a nonnuclear, nonbelligerent major power” (Ikenberry, 2004; 44) and has maintained its commitments to an “antimilitarist” identity (Katzenstein & Okawara, 1993; Berger, 1998). At the same time, Japan continues to accommodate foreign forces on its territory and follows collective securitized identification with the U.S., which partly cause Japan’s involvement in foreign military campaigns in the Gulf War (1991) and Iraq (2003).

Scholars argue that Japan acted in line with its commitments to the international community as a “humanitarian power” identification (Hook and Son, 2013) or as a responsible ally to the U.S. (Hirata, 2008). At the same time, several scholars argued that Japan used the legitimization from both sides to promote its changes in identity from post-war to a “normal” state (Catalinac, 2007, 90-91; Hagstrom & Gustafsson, 2014, 16-18), thus acting upon its own domestic identity rather than solely based on collective commitments. In any case, it creates a contradiction with Japan’s collective identification with other countries in Asia including China (Tanji, 2007) and Russia (Bukh, 2007).

Since diplomacy provides a platform “where beliefs about state interests and capacities are enacted, reproduced and changed” (Neuman, 2002; Adler-Nissen, 2016, 95), constructivists see diplomatic interactions as a means to promote shared meanings among states to develop intersubjective knowledge (Adler, 2013; Group & Tordjman, 2020). In that context, PD acts as a channel between states that imposes their knowledge about "self" and the world on the foreign public. If successful, the state and the public acquire a certain form of collective understanding based on shared beliefs, which reinforces positive and silences negative perceptions of the state, its identity, and its actions.

In that case, collective identities can install or ease discursive barriers depending on the PD-projecting and PD-receiving actors. If both the state and the public belong to a "liberal" collective which possesses shared intersubjective knowledge on the predominant importance of individual rights over national security, the state's efforts will be received in an environment predisposed for PD to succeed. On the contrary, if the state implementing PD and the recipient public belong to different collective identities, the original PD message will face discursive barriers and will unlikely maintain its intended meaning or have its intended effect. In the above-described case of Japan, its military-related actions may improve collective identification and legitimacy with the U.S. or the West. However, it causes a danger of delegitimization in relations with various countries in Asia, that suffered from Japan's actions during the Second World war and are arguing for the continuation of its demilitarization and neutrality.

As another example that is relevant to this research, the problem becomes even more acute in cases where the state and society belong to identities that directly oppose each other. For Russia, the discussion of collective identities is important because of the so-called Russian sphere of influence, which refers to Russia's policy of maintaining Soviet, or even Russian imperial, an outreach of influence on post-Soviet space. Philip Seib (2013) argues that through PD and soft power, it is possible to "establish the political and cultural identities" of Eastern European countries which previously were a part of the USSR, and create mutual support against Russia within the collective NATO identity. On the other hand, Frank Schimmelfennig argues that Central and Eastern Europe joined NATO because they already had "strong identification with Western values and norms" besides "common history and political culture" (Schimmelfennig, 1998, 217). Despite being a chicken and egg situation, both of these scenarios can be legitimate at the same time.

From a constructivist point of view, the appearance and persistence of real or imaginary external threats lead to the creation of a "shared identity" or "collective security identity" (Wendt, 1992, 408). It is also possible that “the collective identity led to the threat perception, not the other way round” (Risse-Kappen, 1995, 32), which can be shown in the example of USSR-NATO relations. In any case, the result is that “groups are motivated to form and maintain images of an enemy as part of a collective identity even in the absence of solid, confirming evidence of hostile intentions” (Stein, 2002, 395). Therefore, Seib’s argument about the “support of each other against Russia” will not present a clear-cut picture of soft power influence or PD, but will depend on the specific context.

Constructivism, in combination with other fields of study, provides an additional explanation for why Eastern European countries might combine their effort against the USSR and Russia. As psychologists argue, one might discredit and disassociate itself from a group to integrate into another group with a higher status (Noel, Wann, & Branscombe, 1995). After the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union officially lost the competition with the U.S. and Eastern Europe might have preferred to “emphasize those role identities that are perceived as advantageous” (Kratochwil, 2004, 9).

In contrast to soft power, Mattern used the term “representational force” as a “form of power that operates through the structure of a speaker’s narrative representation of ‘reality’” (2005, 586). Exercising this power through various institutions, the U.S. was able to create narratives of self-representation that described it as “good.” Consequently, it threatened the ones who the U.S. characterized as “evil.” In the example of Jordan, Mattern illustrated how “soft” character and coercion represented “nonchoice” logic (ibid, 608) to join one side or be doomed to be on another. Alternatively, from another constructivist stance, this type of persuasion has a “manipulative” nature in comparison with the “argumentative” type, which implies the existence of free choice (Checkel, 2001, 562). Thus, constructivism can provide various other explanations for the inclusion of Eastern Europe in the Western collective identity.

In that context, the case study of Japan is significant for understanding how power, intersubjective knowledge, and identities contribute to PD practices. While it is important to analyze how Russia describes itself concerning the foreign public in general, it does not reflect how various historical and socio-culturally constructed aspects of state-to-state relations affect PD communications. Since, in addition to having its own identity Japan also maintains associations with various collective identities, it provides an opportunity to analyze PD practices in a unique setting. First of all, it aims at discovering understudied PD communication between Russia and countries in Asia. Second, it exposes how Russia narrates itself toward a country outside of the “traditional” West but simultaneously has a strong association with it.

Therefore, this study analyses Russia-Japan relations to gather a unique set of empirical data on how the two main figures in Russian PD, the president and foreign minister, create meanings about the self and bilateral relations through various discursive practices. In this thesis, discursive practices refer to patterned meaning-making practices that legitimise/delegitimise certain knowledge or views of the self, others and IR. This study aims to understand practices of meaning-making, which Russia utilizes to construct knowledge of, or discourse on, its bilateral relations policy towards Japan.

3.5.5. History and Practices

Despite an extensive discussion of power, discourse, knowledge and identities, it is important to understand how they are formed. Constructivism understands historical interactions as the continuous process of how states construct knowledge about “self,” “others,” and the world. In contrast to realists and neoliberalists, constructivists highlight that this constructed knowledge significantly affects how states interact with each other (Wendt, 1992). History can have various, positive, negative, and minor influences on current affairs based on established knowledge (Haas 1990; Adler 1991; Checkel 2001). However, not all historical events will have significant and, more importantly, continuous influence, but those that are consistently reproduced and reinforced by practices as a part of the learning process. Historical events and discourse “are kept alive through the generations by an ongoing process of socialization and ritual enactment” (Wendt, 1999, 163). In other words, practices empower historical events with meanings and ensure the continuation of their influence in society.

To understand how knowledge and discourse are formed, it is important to trace how identities utilize various practices in relation to each other through historical deconstruction. Constructivists investigate practices to distinguish “historical patterns of actions” (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, 29) to discover how they were constructed and inform foreign policy (Wendt, 1992, 1999; Fearon & Laitin 2000; Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001). Despite recognizing history as a process (Katzenstein, 1996), “initial choices, often small and random, determine future historical trajectories” limit the possibility for change (Adler and Barnett, 1998, 49). History can affect how practices construct knowledge by applying interpretative filters.

From this point of view, PD represents practices that are aimed to reinforce historically pre-established settings of interactions if they are considered “fair” or change if not. For example, if Russian political elites describe Russia’s “self” as a great power but other states do not, the role of PD will be to shift pre-established knowledge through practices. Thus, the main role of PD practices is to use specific discourse and narratives to construct the reality of others and shift the flow of interactions in a positive direction. These practices, in turn, will form new positive historical patterns. To operationalize that for the study, it is necessary to introduce the practice theory (PT), which enriches the field of PD with a constructivist understanding of practices.

3.5.6. Practice Theory and Discursive Practices

PT was introduced to the field of international relations (IR) at the beginning of the 2000s (Neumann, 2002) and has received increasing attention from scholars in the fields of diplomacy (Adler and Pouliot, 2011; Pouliot and Cornut, 2015; Pouliot, 2016; Cooper and Cornut, 2019), personal diplomacy (Hall and Yarhi-Milo, 2012), digital diplomacy (Holmes, 2015) and paradiplomacy (Kuznetsov, 2015). These scholars argue that Russian practices are traditionally viewed as “unreflective, automatic, unconscious and habitual” (Holmes, 2015, 32), rather than as powerful instruments of knowledge construction or meaning creation “on the ground” (Adler and Poiliot, 2011, 4). In other words, both IR and PD lack insights into how knowledge and discourse are being constructed in a “day-to-day context” (Wiener, 2006, 188) or “where society is being made” (Cruickshank, 2012, 43). Thus, PT provides an opportunity to look into how Russian meaning-making practices create certain discourses about the “self” and “others”.

PT is an emerging approach to IR that concentrates on practices as units of analysis. Instead of focusing solely on the material capabilities or the identities of states, PT scholars are interested in how countries cooperate through different, historically constructed diplomatic practices (Adler and Pouliot, 2011; Neumann, 2012). In particular, how diplomats, through everyday “frontline” (Cooper and Cornut, 2019) activities, produce/reproduce knowledge and meaning (Bjola and Kornprobst, 2013; Kuus, 2015) that influence IR. At the same time, PT embraces different views and approaches (Kratochwil, 2011; Pouliot and Cornut, 2015), which makes it hard to conceptualize theory and practice as the main units of analysis (Ringmar, 2014). As Nicolini (2013, 9) notes, practice theories are “fundamentally ontological projects”, in which approaches to practices are diverse and dependent on the theoretical grounding of the authors.

This paper adheres to the social constructivist view on practices, concentrating discussion on how these practices produce discourse and knowledge.

Constructivists understand diplomatic interactions as a means of promoting shared discourse or intersubjective knowledge among states and developing a sense of common identity, norms, and values (Adler, 2013; Groulier and Tordjman, 2020). In contrast to the view of diplomacy as "epiphenomenal to power politics" (Holmes, 2015, 32), constructivists argue that diplomatic interactions lead to "transformation in collective meanings and discourse". In other words, practices are important for communication between states because they embody intersubjective knowledge, reflect "meaningful patterns" of interaction (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, 4), and participate in "sense-making" or norm construction (Bode and Huelss, 2018). Wendt (1995, 140) argues that "Changing practices will change the intersubjective knowledge that constitutes the system". Accordingly, practices are essential for the process of "generation, diffusion and institutionalization" (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, 36; Holmes, 2015) of both performance and knowledge that, in turn, affect international politics.

Even though practices are a central unit of analysis in the context of PD, they are understood in a "restricted/conservative" way (Doty, 1997, 376) that prioritizes performative characteristics and overlooks knowledge construction functions. In other words, PD practices are viewed as unreflective and disempowered in the production and reproduction of socially constructed meanings (Holmes, 2015; Bueger and Gadinger, 2018). Consequently, the traditional approach to PD often assumes it functions through limited concepts or models, instead of focusing on how it is employed in a day-to-day context or as social action (Neumann, 2002).

When considering that "the others have perspective on the common world that is not identical with mine" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967, 24), the role of PD is to ensure that the government's social worldview will become an integrated, and seemingly endogenous, part of the foreign public construction of reality. In this case, the projected discourse might be reproduced by local practices of meaning-making, becoming a constitutive, self-maintaining part of the foreign public's intersubjective knowledge. The convergence of reality constructions can break the circle of distrust (Wendt, 1992) and create a sense of a common destiny, bringing about positive changes in bilateral and multilateral relations. Although several scholars have noticed the advantage of establishing two-way symmetrical communication between states and the public

(Melissen, 2005; Atkinson, 2010), the role of PD is not to establish an equal dialogue but to attain political benefits by constructing favorable knowledge of the self. In contrast to diplomacy which centers on interactions between states, PD relies on an unequal power balance between states and the foreign public in the production of knowledge.

One of the major contributions of PT to the discussion of PD is the recognition that communication practices are not set in stone. In contrast to the many PD scholars emphasizing actions, PT researchers argue that practices are more important since they consist of "repeated interactional patterns" (Pouliot, 2016, 8) and "evolving [over time] sets of activities" (Adler, 2013, 29). In other words, actions are constitutive elements of practices. Thus, communication practices between states and the public represent unique sets of changing patterns of actions that "are kept alive through the generations by an ongoing process of socialization and ritual enactment" (Wendt, 1999, 163). These practices, after being incorporated and enacted, gain the power to construct knowledge, rather than remaining its by-product.

Practises exist in different forms, including verbal, non-verbal, material, and others. This research concentrates on Foucault's discursive practice that "specifies the nature of the processes of text production and interpretation" (Fairclough, 1993, 4). From Foucault's perspective, discursive practices are reflected in statements – the "limits and forms of the sayable" (Foucault, 1982, 59). In contrast to Neumann's (2002) focus on practices "outside the discourse", this study is more interested in "discursive formations" (see Foucault, 1977, for the original concept; Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, for the discussion and critics), which represent systems of established rules that define "what can be spoken of, who is allowed to speak" (Nicolini, 2013, 196). Discourse is defined as "the space where intersubjective meaning is created, sustained, transformed and, accordingly, becomes constitutive of social reality" (Holzscheiter, 2013, 144). Hence, discursive practices are patterned actions that form intersubjective knowledge, or shared meanings, that prioritize certain interpretations of reality over others (Neumann, 2008). This may include the definition of the "self", "others", values, norms, identities, and other aspects of the social reality.

Narrowing down to PD, countries use discursive practices to disseminate and maintain their interpretations of reality to the foreign public or to impose a certain "regime of truth" (Foucault, 1977, 13). States utilize discursive practices as a part of their PD "to express and/or to change ideas about who "the self" is" (Wendt, 1994, 391) or to construct a favorable image of the self for the foreign public. By participating in discursive practices, state/political elites can not only legitimise a particular discourse that presents a positive description of the self but also incorporate the discourse into the meaning-making practices of the target society. If PD is successful, the targeted society will engage in discursive practices, re-establishing, and re-legitimizing positive discourse as part of their intersubjective knowledge. However, it must be mentioned that the non-discursive domain is no less significant (Bacchi and Bonham, 2014, 189). For example, if Russia wants to present itself as a great power, and the foreign public views it as such, it must act following the desired image. This will not necessarily ensure the effectiveness of discursive practices, but it will at least cause fewer discrepancies between discourse and action. In contrast to acts of simple communication that inform the public, the discursive practices of PD, in combination with non-discursive practices, are aimed at preserving and reproducing knowledge, thereby resulting in long-term political change.

In addition, scholars argue that discursive practices are often used to elevate the self at the expense of others through the use of certain delegitimizing narratives (Moffitt and Tormey, 2014; Breeze, 2018) or by assigning roles of "threat" and "enemies" (Wodak, 2017). On the other hand, as Jæger (2000) shows with the example of Russia-NATO relations, discursive practices can also reduce 'otherness' and facilitate integration or at least make it "easier" (Wendt, 1999, 37). In other words, defining the state's self through interests, norms, values, and identities often involves specifying what the state is not by characterizing what others are. Going back to the example of Russia presenting as a great power, if Russian political elites want to construct this image, it is also important to identify which states are not great powers. Thus, countries that engage in discursive practices to disseminate/maintain positive meanings of the self may simultaneously be involved in constructing the image of others as a part of their PD efforts.

At the same time, PD is not an isolated way of communicating between the state and the public of a certain country but part of a larger public relations effort with the international community (Grunig, 1993b). It has long been argued that the domestic dimension is an inseparable part of modern PD (Melissen, 2005; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Huijgh, 2019). Since discourse is part of a wider social reality, with multiple competing actors, it cannot be divided into meaning-making segments that states can isolate, control, and direct. Consequently, the outcome of PD discourse inevitably reaches the foreign as well as the domestic public. In other words, political elites “have to deal with both foreign and domestic audiences” (Faizullaev and Cornut, 2017, 593) when engaging in discursive practices of narrative construction

Moreover, communication with the foreign and domestic public might be desirable for a state, since PD “may serve domestic purposes” by strengthening national identity (Campbell, 1992; Pisarska, 2017, 25). It exposes the domestic public to PD discursive practices since states project a domestically constructed “regime of truth” about the self to the foreign public. Political elites, who are legitimized by the domestic public to conduct foreign policy, possess discursive power to construct meanings for IR and other states. Although this power can be challenged by alternative sources of information or a lack of legitimacy in the eyes of the public, by establishing certain discursive practices political elites play a role in determining how other states will be viewed. On the other hand, those discursive practices directly affect the effectiveness of discourse and narratives in establishing the “regime of truth” for the foreign public.

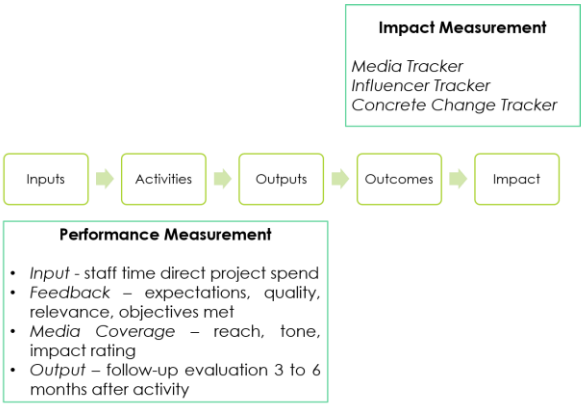
3.5.7. PD and Effectiveness Evaluation

Among different and contrasting issues of debates concerning PD, there is a general agreement on the necessity to pay explicit attention to PD evaluation (Banks, 2011, 7). Since scholarly discussion of PD is directly connected to government policy and exists within the state’s domain, it requires a close interconnection with practical implementation to go beyond theoretical grounds. In contrast to theories of PR or communication that can be adopted in various fields, PD studies predominantly concentrate on government/foreign policy and IR. Thus, the important question remains how to measure the “effectiveness” of PD as it is needed to have a practical implementation. This question is complex and designed to, in a sense, justify the importance of the field and ensure that the research will have a real-world impact.

PD evaluation debates concentrate on two main methodological issues: data collection and data analysis. Ultimately, effectiveness is defined as established causal connections/correlations between the state’s practice of PD and changes in the foreign public’s attitude toward this state. Concerning the data collection stage, there is a debate on what actually should be collected, let alone how the data should be understood (Gonesh and Melissen, 2005). Moreover, the “hyper-media” age introduces changes in PD practices and ways of communication, the evaluation of which is becoming even less methodologically clear (Pahlavi, 2007). On the other hand, data analysis also faces a wide range of problems, among which are: the “lack of clear goals, outputs-outcomes confusion, resources, insufficient analysis, and misuse of polling data" (ibid, 256-257). These types of effectiveness evaluation techniques belong not only to positivists or quantitative methodology but are also present in qualitative studies.

To overcome the methodological shortcomings, some scholars (Wilding, 2007) argue that it would be useful to adopt the logic models approach to evaluate the effectiveness of PD (Clark & Anderson, 2004; Wilding, 2007; Annual Report and Accounts, 2017). Steven (2007) uses an example of BBC to show the differences in aims that the UK and U.S. governments have in the field of PD to establish a clear "initial goals-achieved results" connection. Wilding argues that the practice, success, or failure of the governments' PD initiatives is inextricably dependent on highlighted objectives rather than on a general understanding of PD. For example, while researchers see the significance of PD in forming a positive opinion about a certain country overall, it might not be a goal of a specific PD policy with limited financial power. Another important part of the Logic Model is that it also challenges the concentration on the results. It allows one to analyze the relative inability of the Russian state to create a positive image abroad, approaching not only the impact, but also the initial inputs and activities. Thus, the Model opens up ways to overcome the "need-to-spend-more" argument (Nye, 2019; Bruen, 2021).

Figure 3. The Two-Stage Measuring Approach.


Impact Measurement
Media Tracker
Influencer Tracker
Concrete Change Tracker
Inputs
Activities
Outputs
Outcomes
Impact
Performance Measurement
Input - staff time direct project spend
Feedback – expectations, quality, relevance, objectives met
Media Coverage – reach, tone, impact rating
Output – follow-up evaluation 3 to 6 months after activity

Source: Vinter, L., and Knox, D. (2008)

While the Model can evaluate "the overall success or failure" (Pamment, 2014, 55), it does not accommodate the theory of how exactly PD causes changes in public opinion. Consequently, it does not allow to testing of hypotheses or theories of influence, which means it limits "explanations of laws to be assessed" (Bryman, 2016, 28). The same theoretical problems are present within various other approaches. For example, Louise Vinter and David Knox (2008) introduced the two-stage measuring approach (Figure

3). In contrast to Wilding, they aim at measuring long-term objectives through a sequence of shorter-term achievements. However, short-term goals do not play a role as better indicators, because they are “the diplomatic equivalent of not looking beyond quarterly financial results” (McDowell, 2008, 16). Although both long-term and short-term indicators are one of the few available indicators of PD success, they are not self-explanatory.

Another side of the data collection debate is centered on the possible sources of data. Several scholars argue that embassies play a crucial role in collecting and providing information, as well as conducting surveys/opinion polls to evaluate changes in public opinion (Gonesh and Melissen, 2005; Johnson, 2006; Perl, 2007). They also notice that the qualification of embassies’ staff should be a part of the “input” stage of PD and thus included in the evaluation process.

At the same time, the data from the embassy is controversial since it does imply a possible conflict of interest if PD institutions evaluate themselves. As Sommerfeldt and Buhmann (2019, 14-15) have noticed, embassies and central governments may see different values for PD, which in turn may lead embassy staff to be willing to provide a “massive amount of data” and justify its use for the evaluation. The reliability of embassies’ data should be called into question because of a conflict of interests, which inevitably occurs as embassies' staff members are explicitly interested in demonstrating the positive results of their work.

Another issue is that practitioners such as embassies staff prefer to use certain “buzzwords” such as “objectives” and “efficiency” as assessment indicators for their work (Pamment, 2014, 51). Pamment argues for “case-by-case” or “interpreting” assessment of PD strategies rather than generalized instructions or methodologies. In his opinion, the interpretative approach allows one to look at “resources available, working cultures, desired outcomes” and other internal features of particular PD practices.

Last but not least is the issue of what to collect. There is a significant focus given to the collection of polling data as the main indicator of changes in attitudes and possible changes over time (See Peterson, 2002; Gerber and Zavisca, 2016; Wei, 2020). However, this method of data collection is not designed to take into account a range of external factors (Johnson, 2006; Steven, 2007; Banks, 2011). Survey data usually lacks context, flexibility, and various forms of methodological constraints, and often requires additional surveys, which is a long-term and costly strategy.

Even though among researchers and practitioners of PD there is no consensus on what and how to measure, a set of conclusions can be drawn from the literature. Firstly, data from embassies represents one of the main sources of information for assessing PD. However, researchers should be aware of the conflict of interest in the collection and evaluation of data by official institutions. The problem is derived from the main characteristic of embassies as part of government institutions that are supposed to transmit a certain type of not necessarily objective information about performed PD actions and their results. Secondly, it is necessary to triangulate traditional tools for assessing PD (public opinion polls, questionnaires, interviews with officials) by expanding research methodologies. More flexible approaches are necessary to avoid possible conflicts of interest and biases by comparing different sets of information with additional data, which could illustrate gaps and errors in the evaluation process, or at least present a more comprehensive picture of how PD strategies function.

Thirdly, a focus should be made on specific stated PD goals rather than on general PD understanding (goals-impact connection). One of the main challenges for researchers is that they mostly adhere to the presupposition that the use of PD instruments leads to certain, expected results (Sevin, 2017, 883). In other words, the impact is usually assumed rather than actually measured based on a range of qualitative and quantitative indicators. Thus, if a certain change did not follow, PD policy is to blame. For example, Gerber and Zaviska (2016) use a one-time survey in former Soviet countries to evaluate the effectiveness of Russia’s narratives. This approach does take the present condition as a demonstration of success or failure since PD narratives are assumed to change public opinion. In one of the major works on this evaluation issue, Robert Banks (2011) highlighted “The Dirty Dozen” (Table 18) as a set of the most common problems that researchers tend to face regarding measuring the effectiveness of PD.

This view on how to approach PD strategies allows for expanding the understanding of PD effectiveness beyond a simple strategy-practice-result chain. At the same time, it continues to inherit the same problem from the field of PD. First, it is limited to Western-oriented PD practices. As Auer and Srugies (2013, 36) argue, future studies should go beyond the West and “scrutinize on a large scale how PD is understood and practiced in different countries” based on new empirical evidence. Second, the way to evaluate continues to be limited to positivist and modernist ontological and epistemological stances, which limits the understanding of how discourse and knowledge are constructed through social practices.

Table 23. “The Dirty Dozen”

Problem	Explanation
The impact can often be seen only over the long term	The timeframe between actions and results can be postponed, especially with youth exchanges
PD evaluation measures concepts that are intangible	Documenting verifiable changes in awareness, perceptions, and attitudes requires considerable time, effort, and skills
Results may not be directly attributable to PD intervention	Time, external events, and other actors can intervene to complicate the cause-effect equation
Tracking elites is often not sustainable over time	Difficulties engaging with a participant in an interview, especially over time to trace the changes
Evaluation is time, labor, and cost-intensive	Even those with resources, practitioners may find themselves forced to cut back
Because professional PD evaluation is relatively new, baseline data often does not exist	Not every government, PD institute, non-state actor, or individual is keeping track of the progress and collecting data
Changes in political leadership at home and in PD staff in the field can affect the evaluation	New political leadership brings with it new programs and policies, as well as new approaches to performance measurement
The growing emphasis on new approaches can complicate evaluation strategies	Organizational cultures, missions, objectives, and even jargon are different and must be harmonized
The proliferation of new media technologies requires new approaches to evaluation	Social media may pose a particular challenge because some of them may appear and disappear without external help
Institutions, government included, prefer success stories	No organization likes to admit that one or more of its programs are ineffective
There is often confusion about the difference between outputs and outcomes	Experts offer several different definitions of what constitutes an output and what separates an output from an outcome
PD Evaluation has attracted limited academic attention	Need for establishing academic advisory groups to accelerate the study and practice of PD evaluation

Source: Based on Robert Banks (2011)

As an example, the “undersocialized” state-driven soft power concept of effectiveness undermines the complexity of behavioral patterns (Kearn, 2011, 81). Nye's understanding of power, despite the attempt to associate it with effective leadership studies, has a hard time answering the question about how this power appears, functions, and more importantly participates in discourse, narratives and knowledge construction. In contrast with realist and liberalist conceptualizations of downward power relations or a state being a central power-wielding entity, constructivists also argue for the importance of the "discursive" dimension of power and the "power of practice" (Hopf, 1998, 177). It means that power reveals itself and is established/maintained in social practices and interactions, rather than only existing as a tangible manifestation of the state's capacity to exercise its power.

For this thesis to argue about the effectiveness of PD, the author adopts the notion of intertextuality. While Mikhail Bakhtin Julia Kristeva first coined this concept in linguistics, Lene Hansen (2006) reintroduced it for IR. They argued that texts could not be taken apart from each other, because "they build authority by reading and citing that of others" (ibid, 49). Beyond simple referencing, texts rely on each other to reinforce mutual legitimacy. As parts of specific social reality, taken together they create a coherent discourse through webs of mutually reinforced meanings. Therefore, the role of the research is to analyze "how facts and knowledge are drawn from one text to another and located within a particular foreign policy discourse" (ibid, 51) to make a more complete, diverse, and comprehensive picture of reality. In the case of PD, this implies that policy-related documents, interviews, or newspaper articles as main data sources for researchers, taken separately from their social context, are not able to provide a coherent picture of meanings.

A *narrative* represents a "structure of meaning-making" (Hayden, 2013), which helps to construct the reality around us to "know, understand, and make sense of the social world" (Somers, 1994, 606). Concerning PD, researchers have coined the term "strategic narrative," which Roselle et al. (2014, 71) call a "soft power in the 21st century." In contrast to the undefined nature of narratives utilized by Joseph Nye, strategic narratives are purposefully designed by governments in support of their international agendas, and political and diplomatic goals. Therefore, this concept is more useful to analyze PD, which represents a government policy to boost its attractiveness among foreign nations by telling compelling stories about the "self."

Several researchers of strategic narratives argue that, to demonstrate some form of effectiveness, "an external strategic narrative must be able to resonate with local political myths" (Schmitt, 2018, 2) and that to understand their effectiveness, they should be analyzed "within the broader concept of discourse"

(Pamment, 2014, 51). In other words, narratives created or used by states are part of a wider social reality in which they interact with other narratives creating a competitive environment. Some argued that "narratives cannot be separated from the processes that enact them and put them in competition with other narratives" (Faizullaev & Cornut, 2017, 598), which means that not only discourse should be understood within its conceptual boundaries but it should be accompanied by the analysis of its formation and function. At the same time, PD scholars, including Schmitt and Pamment, are reluctant to utilize this understanding in research. In addition to the dominance of positivism theory, an accent on "strategic" aspects also hinders a more broad, historical, and socio-cultural analysis of narratives.

The general tendency remains to separate narratives not only from their original meanings or the reality in which they operate but also from each other. In other words, each particular narrative is analyzed separately from the social reality in which it is constructed. Overlooking the social meanings of narratives is especially well-reflected when it comes to the analysis of non-western practices, like Russia's PD (see Hutchings and Szostek, 2015; Gerber and Zavisca, 2016; Kragh and Asberg, 2017; Watanabe, 2018). This is often overlooked in PD discussions about the discursive or interpretative step between messages, actions, and their reception by researchers. In this case, a situation might appear in which researchers are "imposing their taken-for-granted world onto their object of study" (Durkheim, 2014 (1894); Pouliot, 2007, 364).

Thus, the task of the researcher is to consider narratives in the social context that constructs them rather than imposing a certain external meaning. Because of the Western-centrism of general IR (Shani, 2008; Tickner, 2013; Acharya, 2014), such an approach to analyzing non-western countries often dismisses their PD narratives, values, and soft power as ineffective, not attractive, or counterproductive (Kiseleva, 2015; Keating and Kaczmarska, 2019), which reflects a lack of effort toward analyzing how narratives are constructed outside the Western discourse.

Concerning Russia, although researchers of PD agree that "Russia must send out a consistent message to the West" (Avgerinos, 2009, 130; Simons, 2011; 2014; Velikaya, 2018) to improve its international reputation, the image of a country depends not only on the actions taken or financial support of PD but also on the pre-formed intersubjective knowledge of a foreign public. Stahl (2006, 291) characterize intersubjective knowledge as created by group discourse and shared meanings "that can then be variously interpreted by the group members or sedimented in artifacts." Based on deeply historically rooted interactions, the foreign public forms intersubjective knowledge and develops representations of other countries (Neumann, 2008). These representations act as a precondition to the effectiveness of public diplomacy narratives to become a part of intersubjective knowledge of the foreign public, which has the power to interpret narratives differently from the intended meanings.

Thus, intertextuality addresses how narratives, being a part of the social reality, interact with each other to reinforce and justify mutual legitimacies. It also represents interconnections of narratives' meanings produced within the framework of one's social reality. From that perspective, because "the others have perspective on the common world that is not identical with mine" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967, 24), the legitimacy and meanings of narratives can and will vary among different societies, nations, and groups. A specific narrative within different social groups will have a distinct socially constructed meaning because different sets of narratives construct, legitimize and reinforce it.

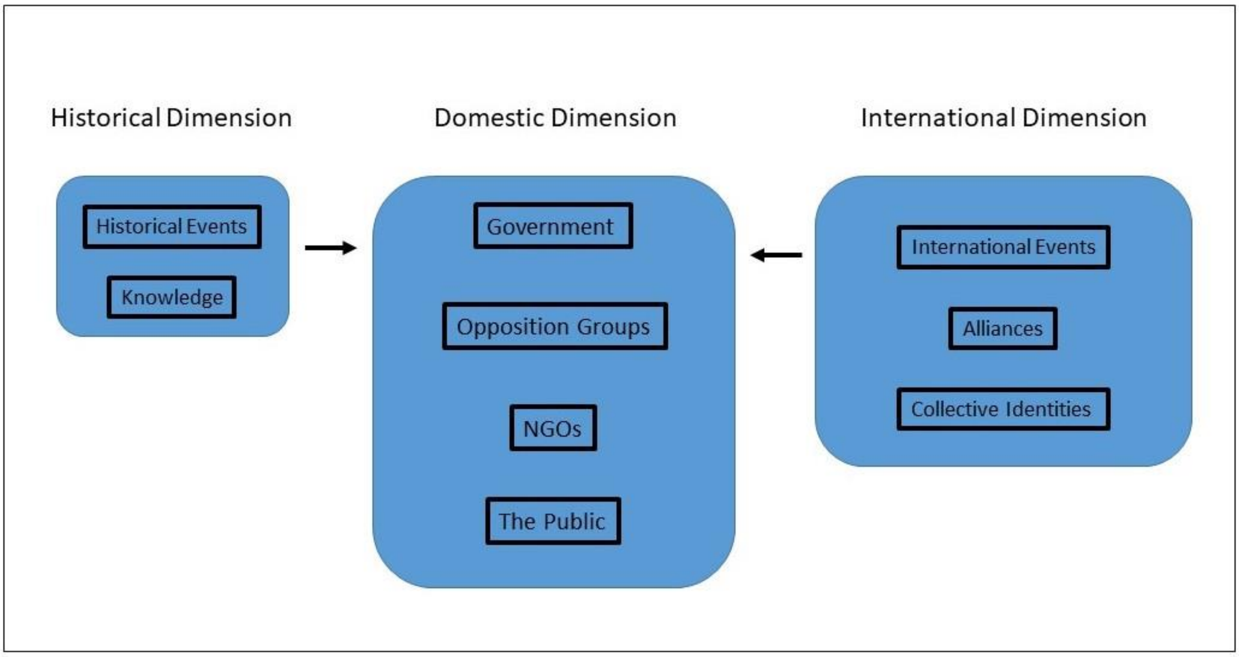
The recognition of intertextuality allows approaching PD narratives in two major ways. First, analyze them within a historical and social-cultural context. In other words, to analyze their original meaning enacted by countries' political elites as part of PD. Second, to take into account how they reinforce each other's legitimacy to create a comprehensive story and the main discourse about "self." Because the discourse is defined as a structure or space of "meanings-in-use" (Howarth, 2010), intertextuality exists as a constitutive part of this space, where intersubjective meanings are created and social reality is constructed. In other words, it is an inseparable part of the discourse that affects the way it operates.

Although pre-existing intersubjective knowledge or a sense of the common world affects how the foreign public will perceive PD's narratives, it does not imply that the way they are constructed is not important. On the contrary, the ability of PD specialists to use discursive practices in such a way that individual elements of pre-established knowledge do not reinforce stereotypes is crucial. For example, concerning the Soviet past, the lack of information and transparency in Russia's PD often brings to life the comparison with the USSR's tactics of "active measures." It is imperative for an effective PD to have a clear understanding of discursive practices through which narratives and discourse overall are enacted to construct a comprehensive and acceptable story about "self."

3.5.8.. The Constructivist PD

To further operationalize constructivists' understanding of PD, it is necessary to study how it emerges and how policies are enacted. This follows from the constructivism theory that the main goal of PD is to produce/reproduce, discipline, and police certain positive discourse, which countries create about "self," "others," and the world for the foreign public. PD represents a practice that is supposed to contribute to the learning process in a specific historical context, and change how and what knowledge is constructed. In other words, the main role of PD discursive practices is to use specific narratives that construct the reality/knowledge about the reality of others. It includes not only the foreign but the domestic public as well since narratives/discourses are not isolated within a particular communication channel. As van Ham (2010, 117) has formulated, this discourse is supposed to achieve wider coverage and create a community of receivers "susceptible to a way of thinking that is considered desirable." Following the theoretical discussion, the research proposes its understanding of the Discourse Construction (Figure 4), which allows tracing how the discourse is constructed and reaches the foreign public.

Figure 4. The Discourse Construction


Historical Dimension
Domestic Dimension
International Dimension
Historical Events
Knowledge
Government
Opposition Groups
NGOs
The Public
International Events
Alliances
Collective Identities

Source: Author

Identities are constructed through a long process of interactions between "self" and "others," which create historically predisposed characteristics. Those cannot be simply overcome, since they establish a certain regime of truth, or a generally accepted, dominant understanding. Governments can alter the way historical events are constructed to create a more favorable understanding of their identity through discursive practices, thus, ensuring a certain form of ontological security. The possibility to affect it, however, depends on a combination of various factors such as the government's discursive power or legitimacy, which is comparatively more significant within domestic settings. Thus, the way history affects the construction of PD discourse can be selectively engineered by the government or political elites. For example, although researchers highlight the importance of the Russo-Japanese war 1904-1905, whether it had a visible/traceable effect on the construction of identity will depend on how and to which extent it is reproduced within the society as significant. It is worth repeating that it does not necessarily imply a malicious intent or a design, which should be factually or empirically proven rather than assumed.

The second is the international dimension, which covers elements of an external influence on domestic identity and discourse construction. Among them are international events, collective identities and strategic alliances. In contrast to historical, international events are ongoing, which means that they continue to unfold and influence discourse. For example, such issues as global warming or NATO expansion, which is reflected not only on certain dates when events happened, but also in the perception of the threat in the immediate vicinity of the borders. At the same time, it does not mean that they have a stable, unchangeable influence on discourse since the perception of threat could be lower through discursive practices by political elites or other influential groups.

The difference between two other elements, collective identities, and alliances, is based on a level of power distribution and the sense of common "destiny" (Sjursen, 2004, 703). For example, the European Union maintains a relatively equal power distribution among its members through joint institutions. Although the political and economic superiority of such countries as Germany may affect the balance of power, member states participate in joint decision-making. On the other hand, the military alliance between the US and Japan is ultimately strategically unequal, because the latter hosts the military forces of the former, and not vice versa. More importantly, collective identities share values and perceive each other not only as friends, but as part of the "self." As shown in an opinion poll of Japan in 2019, only 18% of the U.S. respondents think that Japan shares democratic values, with 14% seeing it as conservative, closed and difficult to understand (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2022).

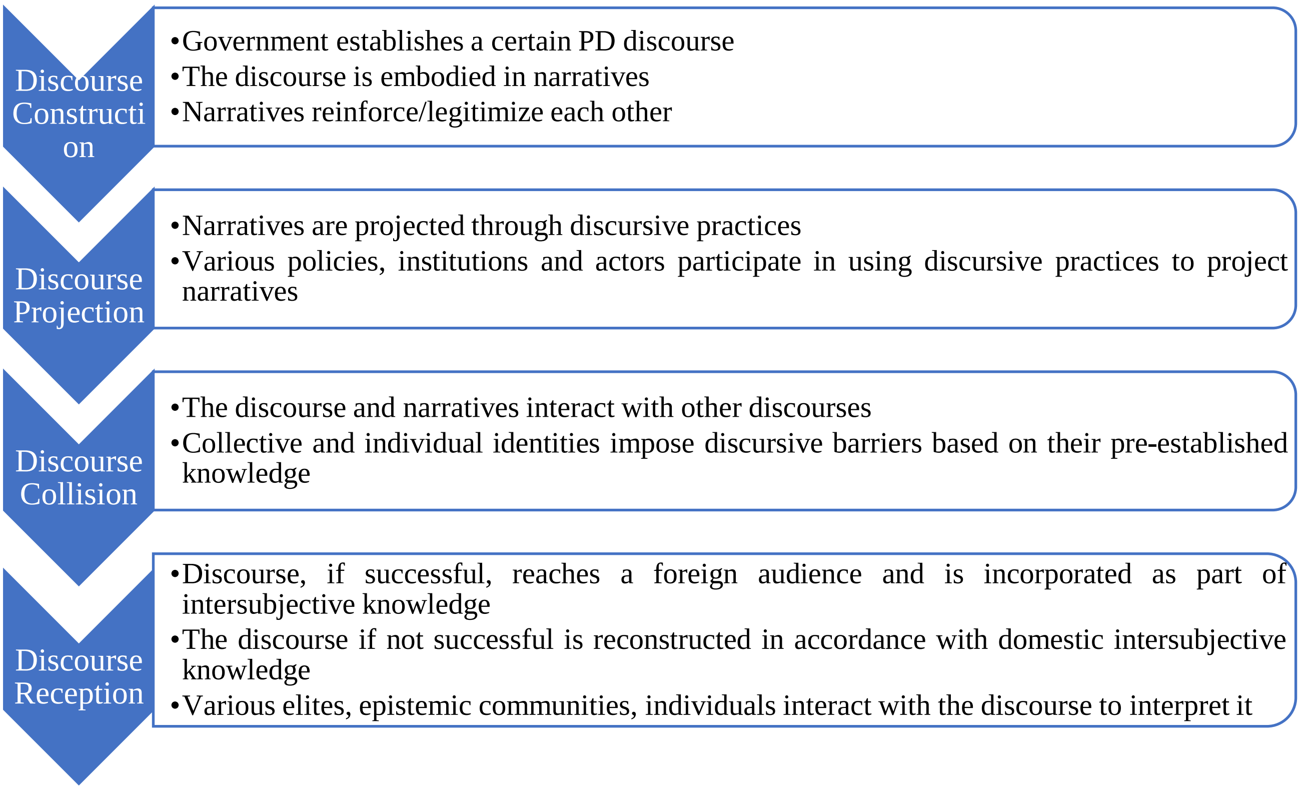
Although both Historical and International Dimensions have an influence on the discourse and identity constructions of a state, the Domestic Dimension remains the most significant in this process. The Domestic Dimension embodies various powerful groups with competing interests influencing the construction. Depending on a specific balance of discursive power within a state, such actors as the government, oppositional forces, the public, and influential social groups (NGOs, religious movements, nationalists, criminal structures). For example, authoritarian governments tend to restrain public participation in construction, while democratic governments allow a more diverse participation. These groups use different discursive practices to not only create a discourse identity, but also limit or expand the influence of the historical and international dimensions.

However, the diversity of social/political/ethnic groups inside states may imply the existence of different narratives that reach the foreign public. For example, the assassination of Qasem Suleimani on January 3, 2020, led to increasing discord inside the U.S. society surrounding the narrative that the country is going to send to the foreign public as a justification for its actions. The Republican Party supported Donald Trump and presented the narrative as “anti-terrorist” actions to protect American citizens (Kolinovsky, 2020). Therefore, the presented explanation should use discursive power to present the U.S. actions to its allies and members of the same collective as necessary and morally right, which can be challenged by some groups inside the western collective as being illegal (Woodcock, 2020).

At the same time, against the background of an election in 2020, the reaction of Donald Trump’s political opponents presented different narratives. The Democratic Party criticized the actions for not consulting with US allies and seeking approval in advance in Congress (Stewart, 2020). Therefore, the opposition party attempted to paint the current administration as solely responsible for that action, which, in their interpretation, does not reflect American values. However, outside the U.S., especially in Iraq and Iran, the image of the U.S. is not separated between “Republican” and “Democrat” and the blame is imposed on “America” rather than on Trump (Pickrell, 2020; *The Straits Times*, 2020). In contrast to the position of NPD scholars, the engagement of domestic actors in the transmission of discourse/narratives is not necessarily improving the effectiveness of PD.

At the same time, the initial narrative does not exist in a vacuum but is constantly challenged by other narratives, which are transmitted from similar to directly opposite interpretations. Concerning PD, it means that the initially designed discourse should be able to confront them. Therefore, to take into account other discourses, the research also proposes the PD Discourse Chain (Figure 5), which is designed to reflect a discourse lifeline from the level of formation to the level of reception by the foreign public. To empirically support the Chain, a case of Russia’s humanitarian support during the COVID-19 pandemic will be used.

Figure 5. PD Discourse Chain



Discourse Construction

- Government establishes a certain PD discourse
- The discourse is embodied in narratives
- Narratives reinforce/legitimize each other

Discourse Projection

- Narratives are projected through discursive practices
- Various policies, institutions and actors participate in using discursive practices to project narratives

Discourse Collision

- The discourse and narratives interact with other discourses
- Collective and individual identities impose discursive barriers based on their pre-established knowledge

Discourse Reception

- Discourse, if successful, reaches a foreign audience and is incorporated as part of intersubjective knowledge
- The discourse if not successful is reconstructed in accordance with domestic intersubjective knowledge
- Various elites, epistemic communities, individuals interact with the discourse to interpret it

Source: Author

Following the above discussion, the main goal of governments’ use of PD is to create, project and maintain positive discourse about themselves for foreign audiences. However, as Holzscheiter (2013, 144) has formulated, discourse is “the space where intersubjective meaning is created, sustained, transformed and, accordingly, becomes constitutive of social reality.” When the designed PD discourse is released to the information space, it becomes part of a wider social construction and is open to interpretation/reinterpretation. Consequently, a success of PD would be to keep the initial discourse as close to as intended as possible before it reaches the foreign audience.

In the outbreak of the coronavirus, humanitarian support and collective actions have become important parts of PD efforts. In the context of deteriorating relations with the West, Russia was able to use

PD tools, similar to joint anti-terrorism efforts with the US after the 9/11 terrorist attack. The initially designed narrative as a part of a larger discourse on Russia was to present Russia as a country with good intentions and prove itself a responsible international actor. Therefore, the first stage is Discourse Construction, which reflects how governments create certain discourse, which mainly reflects the values and interests of a dominant group rather than society as a whole. According to the report by Russia's Center for Advanced Governance, as of 2 August 2020 Russia has sent pandemic aid to 46 countries, including Serbia, Iran, Brazil, China, and others. For purposes of this paper, the focus will be made on two countries that belong to the traditional West identity – the US and Italy.

The Discourse Projection stage represents a practical part of the PD efforts. It includes the ways, techniques, institutions, and other means to project the created discourse. The main sources of state discourse are white papers, legal documents, official media, Embassies, and PD institutions. However, the newly created pandemic discourse has a more current basis and is projected mainly through the media, including state channels and social network accounts of Russian officials. As is noted by the above-mentioned report, Russia has largely failed to provide information on its humanitarian actions systematically and openly. In this situation, instead of an organized campaign that was supposed to support the intended discourse, the informational support passed into the hands of the media. This strengthened the possibility of discourse reconstruction at the basic, initial stage of its projection.

The Discourse Collision stage demonstrates how Russia's initial discourse and alternative narratives interact with each other. Narratives can have varying degrees of differences from small to significant in their foundations, which determines the degree of their conflict. At this stage, collective identities and intersubjective knowledge have a direct impact on the perception of the incoming narrative, because the prevalence of one narrative or another is largely determined by how well they correspond to the prevalent discourse within the target society. If the incoming narrative contradicts the social reality of the target foreign public, it will inevitably face a discursive barrier. Consequently, the foreign public will receive a reconstructed narrative that better aligns with their intersubjective knowledge, rather than the intended one. However, the degree of the changes will depend on the conflict potentiality of identities.

The conflict potential of discourse is especially noticeable concerning Russia's narrative perception in the West/within the Western audience. For example, Russian medical support for two of the countries most affected by the coronavirus (as of late March/early April 2020), Italy, and the U.S., has received negative coverage, which reflects a discursive barrier of the Western collective and reinforced negative intersubjective knowledge on Russia. In response to Italy's lack of critical medical (Horne, 2020) and financial resources, Russia provided 600 ventilators and 100 military medical specialists (*TASS*, 2020). Despite an intention to illustrate a "soft" side of PD with the idea of a "responsible" or "good" international actor, the response within the Western collective identity was not welcoming. *The Radio France Internationale* (2020) accused Russia of using the COVID-19 situation for propaganda purposes to support the idea that neither the EU nor NATO could provide aid to their allies.

At the same time, Braw (2020), a contributor to the Foreign Policy, wrote on March 14 that the EU had failed to support Italy "in its hour of need," but on March 30 claimed that both Russia and China were "bad Samaritans," using the coronavirus to achieve "geopolitical gains" in their alleged attempts to support affected countries. Thus, while there was an expressed/stated need for humanitarian support, the aid from "others", which actions have negative connotations within the collective, is perceived as a malicious act. Moreover, the Le Stampa, citing high-level anonymous sources, claimed that "Eighty percent of Russian supplies are totally useless" ("80% of Russia's Coronavirus Aid to Italy 'Useless' – La Stampa", 2020), which became one of the most cited narratives in the media.

Despite that only a couple of examples were given, they were recited by many, including high-level officials, and will continue to play a role in the future analysis of Russia's propaganda techniques. The negative response to Russia's aid reflected the juxtaposition of "self" and "other," which helps to secure and project discursive power over interpretations of reality. Since Russia plays a role of an "other" for the West because their identity and values often diverge, the Western media did not only perceive the aid as an attack of "other" on the collective identity but also dismissed it as being "useless". It is worth noticing that Le Stampa relied on anonymous reports which the official governments did not confirm, but it did not prevent the information from spreading and becoming a part of the discourse. Thus, two discursive barriers were applied. The first emphasized that the "other" had hidden intentions of helping. The second barrier by the attribution of "uselessness" delegitimized equally possible explanation that the "other" did have the hidden intentions but still helped by providing the aid.

The same narrative repeated itself after Russia sent humanitarian aid to the U.S. Reuters similarly citing an unknown source wrote “this cargo was a symbolic thing” (Taylor and Stolyarov, 2020). The BBC (2020) questioned the intentions of the Russian government and concentrated on “fake stories” of positive responses to medical supplies. The New York Times pointed out the misinformation of Russia’s state media about the “humanitarian” character of the aid, for which both countries shared the cost (“Turning the Tables, Russia Sends Virus Aid to the U.S.”, 2020). However, according to the official documents on which Russia relies when providing humanitarian aid (President of Russia, 2022), the United States cannot be included in the list of recipient countries of gratuitous aid. These countries include either developing countries or countries that maintain good relations with Russia. Thus, US emergency aid has gone beyond the official discourse of what is “humanitarian aid” and distorted the informational flow.

Consequently, the inability of the Russian media and officials to take the leading role of a conductor of information led to a discrepancy in perception; either the media made a mistake with the naming due to the unprecedented case, or they had malicious intent. As a result, the action itself, the narrative of providing humanitarian aid, is perceived in close connection with knowledge or discourse about Russia. Whether planned or not, the lack of information reinforces the formed perception of Russian actions as propaganda. Thus, understanding narratives as part of general discourse, rather than as separate messages, allows us to take into account the critical moments of their perception.

At the same time, the West, as a collective, is not a solid or singular entity. It brings together other identities with their intersubjective knowledge of Russia and norms of international relations. For example, after reporters in the U.S. raised the question of humanitarian aid being a part of Russian propaganda with President Trump, he responded that he was “not concerned” about it (Remarks by President Trump, Vice President Pence, 2020). Moreover, neither the United States nor Italy has officially criticized Russia's approach to humanitarian aid or its information campaign on this matter. Thus, Russia retains the legitimacy to take positive action toward the West within the framework of the common identity of international players, but it faces difficulties at a key level for PD: interaction with a foreign public.

The Discourse Collision stage demonstrates how the act of PD itself collides with the interpretation, not of its essence, but the intention behind them. Deteriorating relations with Russia and a widespread campaign against misinformation led Russia's actions to be perceived as an attack on a unified collective identity. Formed intersubjective knowledge about the “character” and “intentions” of Russia led to the rejection of the conceived discourse in its original form. Thus, negatively perceived actors of international politics are deprived of the right to conduct humanitarian policy and PD to certain collective identities because of the assumed malicious intent behind it. Counter positioning of Russia to the Western identity, intended and practiced by Russia itself, has led to a lack of legitimacy in exercising a “good” or “soft” policy toward this collective identity. Consequently, this discursive barrier recreates a distrust (Wendt 1992), which is “likely to assist in activating previously suppressed fears and prejudices” toward Russia (Tsygankov 2019, 18) and directly affects PD efforts.

The Discourse Reception stage represents the final version of settled discourse, which targets the country’s domestic actors with discursive power that can be reproduced as part of their discourse on Russia. At that stage, the initially designed discourse reaches the public after its reconstruction by other actors with discursive power in the previous stage. However, personal discourse may also imply their additional discursive reconstructions. One may argue that Trump dismissed the concerns about Russian propaganda because of his affinity with Russia and Vladimir Putin (*The Guardian*, 2020).

The PD Discourse Chain describes the process of how governments create and transmit discourse to the foreign public, thus addressing one of the indicated problems in an attempt to bridge a gap between theory and practice. In contrast with the traditional PD or soft power approach, which assumes the existence of ‘common good,’ constructivism allows working amid differences in values and interests, but more importantly, gives distinct social identities an ability to express themselves and be heard. As shown in Russia’s example, the existing contradictions between identities often lead to a situation where the action itself is blurred and insignificant in comparison with the intersubjective meanings attached to it.

Thus, the effectiveness is immeasurable in a purely quantitative sense since it involves a range of socially constructed elements, interactions, and practices that affect how the perception of a certain country is constructed. At the same time, based on constructivist theory, it could be theoretically assumed that effective communication is based on an ability to emphasize convergence and limit discrepancy between discourse or knowledge behind it. For example, it could have been beneficial for Russia to publicly acknowledge its mismanagement of information about humanitarian aid. This could have reduced the impact of the overall discourse on Russian disinformation, or pre-established knowledge, on the newly produced narratives during the pandemic.

3.6. Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis (DA) is recognized as one of the most in-demand instruments for constructivists because it allows analyzing reality as socially constructed and language components as crucial elements to understanding this reality (Potter, 1996, 2004; Silverman, 2017). At the same time, because of the similar postpositivist and postmodernist roots both the method and the theory encounter difficulties with the question of how to define the terms “constructivism” (Potter, 1998; Wiener, 2009) and “DA” (Campbell, 1998; Milliken, 1999; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). As Potter (1996, 2) noticed, an attempt to define terminology, which explains the social construction character of the reality, is in itself would be “a realist account” and therefore contradicts the theory. Consequently, DA is resistant to a unified, generally accepted definition or approach, which dictates a necessity for the operationalization of DA for the research.

Assuming having a generally accepted definition of the word “analysis” in DA as a process of detailed examination, the positions of researchers differ in defining the concept of “discourse”. Weldes (1998, 218) defined it as an “intersubjective structures of meaning-in-use”, which are produced by interactions and consolidated in constructions of social reality. Following this approach, Wiener (2009, 190) argued that to “enact” meaning-in-use researchers should address “individual interpretations as an additional dimension that allows for identifying cultural validation based on everyday experience”. In other words, how discourse is constructed through social practices (Wiener, 2008, 78-79). As noted in the theoretical section, discursive practices act as enactors of discourses.

Two elements of that definition are agreed upon by other scholars as well (Fitzmaurice, 2004; Holzscheiter, 2013). The first would be an “intersubjective” character, which Stahl (2006, 291) characterized as created by the group discourse’s shared meanings “that can then be variously interpreted by the group members or sedimented in artifacts”. By “artifacts”, he meant produced material sources of discourse such as a list of papers, a note, and a presentation (ibid, 291-292). From a psychological point of view, intersubjective discourses are formed during interactions with “peers” (Forman, 1992) or other people with whom a person could co-construct meanings (Salvatore et al., 2010). As noted above, not all interactions produce shared meanings equally. The “significant others”, among who are parents, friends, colleagues, and or psychiatrists, will possess some form of influential discursive power over others (Forman, 1992).

Concerning states, this issue is more complicated. Since states predominantly rely on the domestic dimension for the construction of the discourse, their peers, who are states and the foreign public, have limited influence on this process. Although this influence cannot be rejected entirely, there are significant differences in the effect of discourse that parents and states have. While acting as a part of society, individuals derive a definition of "self" and validation from peers. On the other hand, states can receive this seal of legitimacy from their public and do not have to be as dependent on "socialization". While discourse is an inextricable result of social interactions it is also a driving force of them. In relations between individuals (not collective identities) states' discourses produced domestically cause or predispose certain interactions.

The second element is a process-related view on discourse. Holzscheiter (2013, 144) defined discourse as a "space where intersubjective meaning is created, sustained, transformed and, accordingly, becomes constitutive of social reality". Similar to identity, discourse is not a dot on a map, but a constantly changing construction/setting of interrelated meanings. Therefore, to conduct DA, researchers should be able to analyze dynamic discourse's changes rather than its static expression in a particular time or situation. It dictates the necessity for this research to approach discourse during the period from 2012 to 2019 and simultaneously discuss the historical background, which forms or pre-conditions certain meanings.

The main embodiments of discourses are "talk and texts as social practices" (Potter, 1996, 7). However, discourses cannot be limited to their linguistic manifestations or collections of narratives. Bryman (2016, 536) argued that researchers also should recognize "the practices, dissemination, and reception that brings an object into being". Moreover, text in itself can represent more than simple combinations of words. Some discourses involve a "deliberately and meticulously composed set of words, assumptions, metaphors, grammatical forms, myths and forms of knowledge" (Jackson, 2005, 2). Neumann (2008, 63) noticed, "Any sign – a semaphore, a painting or a grimace – may be analyzed as text" because they are produced by and contribute to social practices. In other words, discourses are embodied in text, which represents different "semiotic modes" and their articulation, including, but not limited to "language, visual images, body language, music, and sound effects" (Fairclough, 2010, 7). This research identifies them as texts reflecting “ideas, knowledge, beliefs and practice” (Sunderland, 2004, p. 31) that are expressed through discursive practices.

Similar to constructivism, DA faces an ongoing distinction between its critical roots and a more flexible, conventional approach that affects the boundaries of DA. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) highlighted three main types of DA with different degrees of adherence to postpositivists and poststructuralist views, based on which this research builds its methodology. First is the “purest poststructuralist theory” of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1990), which considers reality through the prism of constant struggle, dominance, and suppression of different discourses. They argued that even physical objects “do not have being; they have only existence” (ibid, 104) without discourses assigned to them and that different discourses “will attempt to dominate the field of discursivity” (Mouffe, 1993, 52-53). Concerning IR it means that some states will be perceived as discursively dominant while others are discursively suppressed, which is in line with postcolonial studies. This research similarly argues that something that could be vaguely defined as “Russian” discourse is also suppressed. As was noticed several times, it does not mean something definitively negative but reflects that “Russian” discourse on IR and Russia itself has an insignificant quantitative presence (UNESCO, 2016).

The second type of DA is the most commonly used critical discourse analysis (CDA), which represents a step from postpositivist visions and is mostly attributed to Norman Fairclough. In comparison with Laclau and Mousse’s approach, CDA distinguishes between discursive and non-discursive elements of reality. Although derived from Michael Foucault's (1972) linguistic analysis of discourses through “interdiscursivity”, Fairclough (1993, 115-116) introduced the DA approach through “intertextuality”, by which he understood cases “where specific other texts are overly drawn upon within a text”.

The third type is discursive psychology, which is presented in the form of social psychology and CDA combination. In comparison with the two above types, discourse psychology concentrates on a discussion of personalities and their participation in discourse production rather than large-scale social changes and moral judgments cast upon dominance structures (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Some branches of discursive psychology contributed to poststructuralist critics of psychological approaches and methodology. For example, critical discursive psychology argued that “the variety of things that psychologists tell us they have ‘discovered’ inside us and among us” in itself is discourses and should be treated respectively (Parker, 2015, 130-131). Therefore, the idea is to treat psychology as “the object, rather than the tool, of analysis” (Wiggins & Potter, 2017, 93-94), because it is a part of social reality and affected by it. These arguments serve as a critique of positivist assumptions about the character or psychology of authoritative leaders. The contribution of the discursive psychology for this study is based on the opposition of what should be noticed and avoided rather than used.

These debates, however, do not imply the necessity to adhere to one or another form of DA for IR but allow a combination of various forms to enrich the analysis. Despite some researchers arguing that international relations have largely stayed reluctant to adopt DA for its theoretical and methodological purposes (Lundborg & Vaughan-Williams, 2014, 6), the scholarly focus on discourse raising with the growing amount of constructivist scholars in the field. Or at least among those who define themselves as such but do not necessarily step away from positivism (Maliniak et al., 2011). As Holzscheiter (2013) stated, the DA in IR made a long way from explicitly critical roots to a formation of a more modern type of analysis, similar to conventional constructivists’ adaptation of certain positivists’ assumptions.

Although such scholars as Foucault and Habermas influence the discussion of DA, the IR imposes certain philosophical/theoretical reconsiderations. One of the challenging problems for DA remains a largely positivist approach to studying IR (Maliniak et al., 2011). As Holzscheiter (2013, 155) argued based on the review of papers, which analyzed discourses from an IR perspective, one of the dilemmas is “the desire to marry a constructivist ontology… with a positivist epistemology that seeks to identify causal relationships”. In other words, constructivism and DA brings changes in how researchers view IR, states, and their identities but those changes are not easily adopted by the research community.

Holzscheiter argued that instead of looking at large social groups or contexts of everyday interactions, which affect and are affected by discourses, scholars prefer to concentrate on the influence of “traditional” IR agents: elites, governments, official documents, statements, and public speeches. At the same time, it is necessary to note that Holzscheiter's approach is close to critical theorization, because of which it views he argues that discourses should empower those who are deprived of power or suppressed. Despite it is necessary to take into account the voices of “local communities, women, etc.” (ibid, 156) and the necessity to measure their power over discourse and consequently an influence on politics, this research will combine a “traditional” with the Holzscheiter’s arguments by focusing on political elites’ public speeches with interactive elements such as responding to journalists' and other elites questions. In other words, this research concentrates on discursive interactions and enactment of practices of discourse production.

There is a growing number of IR scholars who utilize DA to analyze how discourses are constructed by both social groups and political elites (Mattern, 2001, 2005; Hansen, 2006; Epstein, 2008; Wiener, 2009; Johnstine, 2011 Holzscheiter, 2013; Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams, 2014). Each of them contributed to the understanding of discourse, discursive power/language power, and the construction of social reality in IR. For example, Mattern's (2004, 10) analysis of the Suez crisis concentrated around the notion of representational force or a "strongest type of language-power" that relies on a "blunt, self-interested, and nonnegotiable threat to its listeners". It needs to be noted that she distinguished concepts of discursive power and language power based on their understanding of discourses as "established" (ibid, 217) sets of "communicative configuration[s]" (ibid, 214). Contrary to common constructivists' accent on history as a main driving force of the construction of collective identities, Mattern (2004, 15) argued that U.S. and British elites used language-power-based representational force, by which they "eradicated each side's dissent" from the collective. It helped to construct a collective security community to respond to the Suez Crisis.

On the other hand, Epstein (2008, 3) in her analysis of discourses around whaling denounced the top-bottom, government-public understanding of power, which they saw as a realist account. By relying on Foucault's view of power, Epstein argued for the interdependency of material and discursive power in the construction of reality (ibid, 50), rather than for the representation of one of them as being more powerful and policy-driven instruments than the other. She also noted that actors could produce discourses, which, in turn, would give them an "agency" with consequential discursive or epistemic power. For example, environmental NGOs were empowered by the discourse of anti-whaling, which they produced (ibid, 248). Thus, constructivists approach not only how various social groups construct discourses but also how discourses construct social groups and their power within society. It illustrates the dichotomy of discourses and actors that ultimately affect this study since it does not intend to answer who, elites, and their discursive practices or discourses, come first but rather how they interact and co-construct each other.

Utilizing conceptualizations of Mattern (2004) and Epstein (2008), this study also points out discursive practices as patterned actions that form intersubjective knowledge, or shared meanings, that prioritize certain interpretations of reality over others. While agreeing with Matter's accent about traditional power structures dominated by elites since they possess significant discursive power, the author also takes into account Epstein's argument that those elites are empowered by their discursive practices and the public. Those discursive practices are seen in certain discursive positioning/definitions of "self", "others" and various actors participating in knowledge construction, which ultimately assigns them limits of their discursive power within discourse. In other words, the author understands discursive practices as a not necessarily top-down force but as interconnected cross-legitimizing patterned activities.

Conclusions

To sum up, there are several major challenges and contributions that constructivism makes to the study of PD, its practices and theoretically measuring effectiveness. First, PD and various produced narratives do not exist in a vacuum but act as a part of the social reality. It implies that PD, as well as other forms of communication, are constitutive and are constructed by knowledge construction. In that context, such issues as attraction or effectiveness of communication depend on the social context in which interaction between states takes place. Since collective identities produce/reproduce, discipline and police intersubjective knowledge, this predisposed shared understanding of reality increases the ability of PD to penetrate and fulfill its goals. On the other hand, if the collective directly opposes other collectives or a particular state, it will create discursive barriers, or obstacles, to the legitimization of incoming/external knowledge, discourse, and narratives.

Second, constructivism points out that the discussion of power and discursive power should not be omitted since it affects the understanding of PD practices and communication. In itself, PD represents an exercise of power over the construction of knowledge whether it is done for "good" (resolving conflicts, increasing mutual trust) or "bad" (black propaganda, disinformation) purposes. Since the world, states, and social groups consist of various collective and individual identifications with diverging intersubjective knowledge, PD, its discourse, and narratives will inevitably cause a discursive struggle over meanings. In other words, this exercise of power implies conflict. However, it does not mean that PD is exclusively negative, since establishing an episteme or a common knowledge of what is “right” or “wrong” is in itself beneficial for bringing people closer.

Third, constructivists criticize positivism/modernism and point out that since scholars themselves belong to certain identities, act as a part of the collective, and have intersubjective knowledge, it is important to recognize the limits of the contemporary approach to PD. Since Western scholars significantly affect the understanding of IR, PD and soft power, it requires the expansion of theoretical, conceptual and methodological boundaries beyond “ism” toward a more comprehensive and inclusive study of Russia. It does not mean that Western scholars in any sense are unable or unwilling to access Russia, its PD and discursive practices, but the study of them remains limited and restrained by positivist and modernist tendencies.

Fourth, constructivists attach great importance to the multilateral process of the interaction of various narratives based on intersubjective knowledge. In this context, the effectiveness of PD depends not only on how governments implement it, but also on whether there is a fundamental discrepancy between discourses. The existing discourse about Russia relies on a different set of pieces of intersubjective knowledge which can contradict or reinforce each other. Therefore, it is the role of PD practitioners to construct their messages in a way that will limit possible negative consequences of the clash between various constructions of Russia. Recognizing preexisting intersubjective knowledge and discursive practices through which it is projected is essential in understanding how different social identities, including collectives, states, and nonstate actors interpret specific PD practices and how to avoid the collision between conflicting points of intersubjective knowledge.

In contrast with traditional PD or soft power approaches, which assume the existence of a “common good,” constructivism allows working with the differences in values and interests, but more importantly, gives scholars the ability to trace how distinct social identities understand each other. As shown in the Russian humanitarian aid case, the existing contradictions between preexisting intersubjective knowledge that different identities share often lead to situations in which the action itself becomes blurred and insignificant because of preassumed meanings attached to it. However, it also raises questions for PD practitioners about how to avoid clashes between narratives or how to lower the reinforcement of intersubjective knowledge.

Chapter 4. Russia's Identity

Introduction

From that follows, that the key element of PD is how a country understands and defines its own identity to have a clear picture of the discourse, that it wants to present to the world. However, it is not particularly easy to define what the "Russian" identity is. In that particular research "Russia" or "Russia's" identity means a state identity, which is defined largely by political elites. Although it does have a direct and unchangeable connection with the identity of Russia from historical or cultural perspectives, this research concentrates on contemporary Russian foreign policy, thus, the most discursively powerful people are defined as political elites.

One of the major reasons is the political, economic, and social collapse of the Soviet Union, after which Russia had to reconstruct its self-identification. The Soviet identity existed for decades and did not come to an end entirely since it continued to be a part of intersubjective knowledge about what Russia meant for both elites and the public. At the same time, new emerging Russian political elites faced questions of what type of "Russia" should substitute the dissolving Soviet Union. Since Russia disavowed an ideological competition with the West or its significant other, some significant channels of identity formation on the opposition of "self" and "others" were limited. It meant that Russia had to enact new forms of interactions with the international community and other states to receive a seal of approval for its new identity.

As mentioned above, identity is a complex historically understanding of the "self" formed through interactions within and outside the state. Russia's national identity and Russia's identity as a state coexist and correlate, but their interchangeability is arguably misleading. In the context of state identity, the process of identity construction relies on the interaction between members of the state with political or other types of power, such as coercion or threat-based manipulation, to affect the construction of the identity. It usually includes the political elite, civil society, epistemic communities, NGOs, and various other groups. These groups impose their understanding of state identity, which becomes part of the intersubjective understanding of getting rejected. Consequently, the way intersubjective knowledge is formed will influence foreign policy, including PD.

On the other hand, Russia's national identity is deeply embodied in its history, culture, ethnic configuration of its population, and various other elements that are to some extent traceable through the existence of what can be defined as “Russia” or “Rus’”. However, whether certain parts of history will be adopted or rejected depends on their reproduction as a part of the learning process. Thus, once again, the most discursively powerful actors can impose their understanding. For example, by changing the coverage of issues in the primary education literature political elite can change the way certain events are understood. Because this research focuses on Russia’s foreign policy, while important, the discussion of national identity will be less pronounced.

It is commonly said that current Russia is a country that was born from three revolutions. The first occurred in 1905 and reflected new emerging discourses on Russia’s identity, which various competing politically powerful groups were fighting to define. Social science scholars distinguished different types of identities, which are based on personal relationships, vocations/avocations, political affiliations, ethnic/religious groups, and stigmatized groups (Deaux et. al, 1995). Some of them might define their identity in line or neutral to a state identity, but others will challenge it. For example, if the political elite defines the state identified as “secular”, various religious groups with discursive power over the public might directly engage in discursive or other types of competition. Apart from political, social, or economic reasons, revolutionary processes or high-scale changes reflect challenges for a current understanding of a state’s “self” and the discourse about identity created by dominant powers. The historian Theodore Shanin (Shanin, 1986) noted that the revolution in1905 reflected a struggle between democratic-authoritarian and ethnic-centralist identities. This struggle was called a conflict of “two Russias” by Abraham Ascher (1994, 13-15) since competing groups had sufficient resources to challenge each other over defining what “Russia” is.

The next two subsequent revolutions that occurred in 1917 led to the birth of the USSR, which triggered a whole range of further identity transformations. Despite the short gap (in historical terms) between revolutions, they were the results of social transformation within the country and, accordingly, a collision of identities. On the other hand, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War while not a “revolution”, had no less drastic consequences on identity transformation. The newly formed state, Russia, faced the task of forming a new identity to replace a long existed “Soviet personhood” (national identity) and “Soviet policy” (state identity). Moreover, it had to convince others that Russia is not the USSR by employing a range of PD instruments. Thus, this research begins the discussion of Russia’s identity and its effect on PD from the pre-collapse time or Mikhail Gorbachev period (1985-1991).

4.1. Pre-Collapse Transformations: The New Political Thinking

Changes in the USSR state identity did not occur overnight with Mikhail Gorbachev (1985-1991) coming to power but were the results of a whole specter of internal and external factors. During the six years of the last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, the political situation in the country, as well as the future of the Soviet Union, was uncertain. Policy changes initiated by him were almost impossible to evaluate during and right after his presidency (Hough, 1991, 89-90). However, the “Gorbachev effect” had a massive impact on how the USSR understood itself and how others perceive the Soviets. It emerged with the book, which had a “new political thinking” in the title (Gorbachev, 1987) and described the turning point in Soviet self-positioning for itself and in the international arena. On the one hand, Gorbachev acknowledged that the “new policy” had a vague definition. When asked about his understanding and expectations, the answer was “We are not gods; we do not know the answers to all the questions” (Chernyaev, 2006, 24). On the other hand, it illustrated that the necessity to change the discourse about the state had occurred before the collapse.

The main principles of the “new political thinking” started to shape USSR’s identity after Gorbachev came to power in 1985 through the introduction of new concepts and ideas (Checkel, 1993, 271-272). The first and most important step was to proclaim the end of the confrontation between the USSR and the West. This meant that the USSR recognized other political systems and rejected the class struggle (Gorbachev, 1987, 143). In many ways, this provision was an unofficial end to the Cold War on the Soviet side. This change attempted to cut the tie between the USSR’s identity and the West, which by playing the role of a “significant other” affected how the USSR defined itself.

Instead, the Soviet political elite focused on the creation of a sense of commonality with the West by highlighting the prevalence of common interests over class struggle and nationality in solving global problems (Gorbachev, 1987, 143-145). It reflected a desire of the Soviet Union to join the global collective identity for the benefits that it could provide. The economically damaged Soviet Union gradually started to adopt the famous expression of Deng Xiaoping about the prevalence of the economy over politics. By rejecting realists' "balance of power" and nuclear threats as a means to achieve goals, Gorbachev also acknowledged the importance of political dialogue and diplomacy (Holloway, 1988, 66). While this move from Gorbachev itself cared significant benefits for positive changes in public opinion, there was no financial or institutional support for developing a PD policy.

The new political thinking was in many ways an attempt to change the Soviet identity following the model of Western democracy (Lane, 1996, 32), which will then become the legacy of the Russian Federation. Despite the share of criticism from the Western press, which expressed doubts about the actual implementation of the new approach (Lee, 1986), Gorbachev and the political elite showed intentions in reconstructing the Soviet state identity by rejecting the opposition to the western, capitalistic world. At the same time, by rejecting the Soviet identity, its values, norms, and interests Russia had weakened the collective identification of states within the USSR. Consequently, the recognition of the right of the Soviet republics to secede from the Soviet Union and pursue their independent policies contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Despite Gorbachev's attempts to achieve consensus and solve accumulated economic problems (Schroeder, 1991) by providing the republics with political power, the weak Soviet collective identity construction was not able to keep the Union together.

4.2. Russia's Identity during the First Boris Yeltsin's term (1991-1996)

The collapse of the Soviet Union was a turning point in Russia's history, not only for the countries that were part of it but also for international relations. The confrontation between the two main ideologies in the framework of the Cold War came to an end, which caused changes in the interaction between the post-Soviet countries and the West. It required the reconstruction or reconfiguration of identities, which partly defined themselves through confrontation. However, the effect of the collapse of IR was not obvious. Francis Fukuyama (1992) advocated that the former USSR countries would join the democratic collective identity of the West. On the other hand, John Mearsheimer (1990) suggested that new centers of power would appear to balance or unbalance international processes. Some scholars such as Samuel Huntington (1993) also foreshadowed a clash of different identities formed based on civilizational differences.

Regarding Russia, some scholars argued that neither the Soviet nor the Western models were applicable for the "new" Russia because of a whole range of socio-economic and ethnic problems, accompanied by the lack of political consensus (White, 1990, 187-189). Unfitting external models and internal instability ultimately prevented the formation/reconstruction of the new identity. Vladimir Sogrin (1996, 38-41) noted that the principle of the "pendulum" in Gorbachev's policy or an attempt to find a consensus with each of the opposition forces was utopian. At the same time, to reconstruct a state identity, a united political power is necessary since it will allow the strengthening of discursive power domestically. Without that, it is not clear who will define the main principles, norms, values, interests, and features of identity. Thus, the discourse on the new identity for the domestic and international community was not established.

To resolve the domestic political instability, Russian president Boris Yeltsin (1991-1999) initiated a referendum on trust in the president, and the course of government reforms and proposed re-election of the president and parliament to pursue them. In a sense, this referendum should have confirmed Yeltsin's discursive power. The majority of those who participated in the referendum expressed support for him and confidence in the governmental social and economic policies but opposed the early re-election of the president (Belkin, 1993, 82-84). Despite acquiring a certain level of power and dealing with a military coup in 1993 by armed forces, Yeltsin continued to face strong opposition in the parliament (Doktorov, 2002, 107-109). At that time the ability of Yeltsin to reconstruct Russia's identity was so weak that the minister of foreign affairs Andrei Kozyrev (1990-1996) even asked Richard Nixon for advice on defining Russian "national interests" (Primakov, 2004, 194-195) or state's identity. As Eugene Rumer (1995, 17) noted in a report prepared for the US Air Forces, Gorbachev's legacy did not allow for the formation of a clear state identity due to the lack of consensus on its national interests domestically.

During the first Yeltsin term (1991-1996), Russia adhered to the concept of "democratic solidarity", which viewed the country as part of the global democratic community (Bogaturov, 2007, 54-55). Similar to Francis Fukuyama's arguments (Fukuyama, 1992) and Gorbachev's plan (Steele, 1994, 22), both Yeltsin and Kozyrev focused on incorporating state identity into the West rather than embracing the past and reconstructing Russia's identity based on historical, cultural and other roots. They tried to obtain recognition from the West by disavowing the USSR legacy and trying to present Russians as different people from the "Soviet" (Kozyrev, 1992). However, the rejection of the Soviet past did not lead to an instant acceptance by "others", because changes in identity perception might appear after lasting positive interactions but not by simple proclamation of the change. This became apparent after a so-called "Chicken Kiev Speech" when an attempt by US President George W. Bush to support Russia's respect for its national interests resulted in a wave of criticism from the American press (Safire, 1991; Fink, 1997).

The "Basic Provisions of the Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation" of April 23, 1993, made a special emphasis on the "rebirth" of the Russian state. It explicitly noted a "difficult process of finding a new political identity" (Kortunov, 2007). The document also reflects that internal political, economic, and social problems and the Soviet past replaced the West as a "significant other" for Russia. At the same time, just as it was difficult for the international community to rewrite perceptions of Russian identity overnight, it was not easy for the new Russian elite to change their views toward the West.

There were two major problems with the formation of Russia's identity. One of the factors that directly influenced the construction of Russia's identity concentrated around NATO and US foreign policy. After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of its enemy, NATO continued to function by reconstructing its collective identity from the opposition to the "socialist threat" (Cornish, 1996) toward a collective peacekeeping force. The question remained whether the countries of the former USSR including Russia can become a part of this identity (Williams and Neumann, 2000, 361). As was noted in Chapter 2, collective identities can form based on a common "lifeworld" but they also could act as cement for establishing it. Thus, accepting states into collective NATO identity could have a positive effect on its relations with the post-Soviet space.

The concept of "expanding democracy" put forward by the US government on September 3, 1993, gradually increased interactions with countries of the former socialist bloc. Despite proclaiming the promotion of democratic values to be the goal, Bill Clinton saw the concept as a part of the US strategy to strengthen its leadership position in IR, which met with criticism in both Russia and the US (Buchanan, 2019). The expansion of the West towards the formal Soviet space, which despite denouncing the Soviet Union acted as a part of Russia's collective identification, became one of several major issues in the process of reconstructing Russia's identity.

The second issue was separatist sentiments within Russia, which included a "troubled" Chechnya region (Tolz, 1996, 316) and tensions in Tatarstan (Danilenko, 1994, 463). In both regions, ethnic and national identities created extremely strong sentiments against the not yet formed Russian identity. In contrast to Tatar's self-identification of people stretched across Russia, Duffy Toft (2002, 104-105) argued that the Chechens lived in more territorially and culturally cohesive conditions, which provided a basis for establishing a strong sense of statehood (Toft, 2002, 104-105). This collective identification within Chechens became an obstacle to collective identification with Russians, as both national and state identities. Thus, the situation in Tatarstan did not reach a critical point as happened in Chechnya.

During the first war in Chechnya (1994-1996), the conflict emerged from a desire of nationalist movements in the region of the Chechen Republic to proclaim its independence from Russia. Campana (2006, 129) argued that during the First Chechen War national identity was “at stake in a top-level competition” between four different groups “the separatists, the radical Islamists, the traditionalists, and the pro-Russians” inside Chechnya. On the other hand, it allowed Russia to construct a discourse by opposing its identity based on principles of “democracy”, “unity”, “peaceful religion” (“Self”) to Chechen nationalists' identity of “terrorists”, “separatists” and “radical Islamists” (the “Other”). On the other hand, despite being an internal conflict, it caused major challenges for Russia’s course to become a part of the Western collective, which Russia’s political elite criticized for “double standards” (Menon & Fuller, 2000, 32) in viewing Chechen “terrorist” not in the same way with terrorist in other parts of the world.

The First Chechen war played a significant role in Russia’s identity construction by providing it with the opposition of “Self” and “Others”. The identification of the state’s “others” and the ability to confront them strengthened not only Yeltsin’s political power but also a sense of collective identity among Russian citizens. As the Washington Post reported, the Chechen war testified to the defeat of democratic reforms, but at the same time provided a patriotic upsurge (Hockstader, 1995). Russian scholars even noted that it had the same consolidating psychological effect as the Great Patriotic War (Gudkov, 2005, 40), which strengthen a sense of “self” for the Soviet identity.

During his first term, Yeltsin tried to lower tensions between Russia and the West by establishing a range of close personal contacts with foreign leaders. George H. W. Bush, he and Yeltsin managed to establish friendly relations based on mutual respect (U.S.-Russia Joint Statement, 1992). Some journalists saw the phrase “my friend” from Boris Yeltsin to George Bush as a symbol of the end of the Cold War (Radcliffe, D., & Thomas, 1992). Constructivists argued that that type of symbolic friendly interactions could not only improve interpersonal relations (Oelsner, A. & Hoef, Y., 2018) but also act as “a catalyst for change in international politics by transforming the nature of interstate relationships" (Oelsner & Koschut, 2014, 201).

Even greater success Boris Yeltsin achieved by establishing a friendship with President Clinton. After President Clinton asked Yeltsin for a joint sanctions regime on India's space program, an answer was "There should be no sanctions between friends. I cannot imagine sanctions between us. We're friends" (Clinton Digital Library, 2018a). Both leaders addressed each other by name and had frank friendly conversations outside of official meetings (Talbott, 2002). In his autobiography, Clinton (2005, 853) called Yeltsin "a courageous and visionary leader". Despite massive criticism at home (Gertz, 1999, 169; Goldgeier, J. and McFaul, M, 2003), Clinton provided Yeltsin with not only financial but also moral support for solving domestic problems within the country (Rivera, D. W. & Rivera, S. W., 2009, 592-593). These personal contacts reduced the factions between the two countries and supported the idea of making Russia part of "civilized states" or Western collective identity (Timmermann, 1992).

4.3. Russia's Identity during the Second Boris Yeltsin's term (1996-2000)

The second term of Boris Yeltsin reflected several changes in Russia's foreign policy partly inspired by the minister of foreign affairs Yevgeny Primakov (1996-1998). His article (Primakov, 1996) characterized international relations as "multipolar", which in contrast to the US-centrism implied the existence of different centers of power. It did not stop Russia's orientation toward Western values but reflected the dissatisfaction of Russia's elite with the world order. Primakov (ibid.) argued that international relations made a step away from the confrontational character, but did not reach a "democratic peace", because of the continuation of the Cold War mentality. According to him, a new world order can occur by following four main principles: not to create dividing lines, achieve liberation from the mentality of "leading" and "driven" states, democratize the economy and cooperate on the solution of international issues.

This article reflected Russia's desire to play a bigger role in international relations and be respected. In constructivists' terms, Russia's political elite aimed at receiving a seal of legitimization from "others". Moreover, by expressing dissatisfaction Russia's political elite highlighted values and norms, which were differentiated from the Western and reflected preconditions for a more defined understanding of "self" and formation of discourse. As noted in the theoretical section, international events and collective identities affect the formation of discourses, because they urge states to act following a certain understanding (individual and/or collective) of interests, values, norms, and identities. Regarding Russia, several events motivated it to express “self”, including NATO enlargement, the start of the Second Chechen War, and the Kosovo conflict.

NATO Enlargement in 1990-s

The policy of “expanding democracy” within the framework of NATO stretch its outreach by inviting post-Soviet countries to join, which became a serious obstacle to Russia's relations with Western countries. Schimmelfennig (1998, 198-199) pointed out that the expansion was a natural process of incorporating Eastern European countries into the framework of Western identity since they successfully adopted the values and norms of Western civilization (Schimmelfennig, 1998, 198-199). However, he and other scholars also noted that this is alienating policy could lead to a sequence of mutual distrust between Russia and the West in the future by creating a “threat” (ibid, 1998, 207; Reiter, 2001, 42) or “insecure Russia” (Legvold, 2001, 72-73). The main ideologist of the Cold War, George Kennan (1997), expressed the same idea calling the expansion of NATO a “fatal mistake” that will force Russia to act accordingly.

The Russian government did not openly declare that this step will be unacceptable but expressed its concerns. In his speech during the OSCE meeting in Budapest in 1994, Yeltsin (1994) stated that the reemergence of the Cold War is possible, because of NATO enlargement. From the constructivists’ point of view, this process had resurrected or relegitimized intersubjective knowledge of the Cold War, thus, recreating the West-Russia dichotomy of identities. At the same time, Yeltsin argued that the conflict is avoidable if countries will cooperate through international institutions and create formal agreements on how to proceed. Despite that, not all Russia’s politicians were so mildly critical. Vice speaker Sergey Baburin and other members of the State Duma (Russian Parliament) created an “Anti-NATO” Commission. They compared the NATO expansion with the German invasion of the USSR in 1941 (Baburin, 1999). At the same time, their discursive power over defining NATO as the ultimately aggressive entity was not sufficient.

After the Yeltsin speech, as shown by declassified documents, the US's political elite noted that the Russian president was already showing signs of "disillusionment with the West" in 1995 (Clinton Digital Library, 2016). Thus, the expansion of NATO reintroduced to Russia a direct dependency on the existence of an "external enemy" through which it became easier to formulate an understanding of "self". NATO enlargement caused mostly media and opposition parties' public outrage but did not change the discourse over Russia-West relations overall. However, this change was also reinforced by the Second War in Chechnya and the bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999.

The Second Chechen War (1999-2009)

From Russia's perspective, the Second Chechen war (1999-2009) was an anti-terrorist operation to eliminate armed formations in Dagestan and Chechnya. The agreement signed after the end of the First Chechen War did not bring peace. With the ongoing criminalization and rise of radical Islamism and Wahhabism, the situation continued to deteriorate challenging Russia's attempts to unite the country. It does not mean that the "truth" was on the side of the Russian government or that this unification was supported by all parts of Russian society. the Western media heavily criticized Russia for using extensive military force against the threat (Gittings, 1999). However, unification implies an establishment or utilization of a certain intersubjective understanding of the common "self", which both Chechen wars reinforced. Moreover, since the Chechen wars promote the establishment of a certain discourse, Western criticism or an expression of discourse divergence had faced a backlash from the Russian side.

At the same time, in contrast to the previous period, Russia initiated a massive media campaign to support its military actions, which became one of the major tools to transmit the government's position (Pain, 2000; Gerber, T. and Mendelson, S., 2008). Although it did not represent PD, certain elements of contemporary Russia regarding communication were reinforced at that point. In addition to media coverage, Russia managed to ensure support for its actions from the government of China (Laris, 1999), which intended to observe this conflict for tactical reasons expecting to prepare an answer to its own separatists' movement in the Xinjiang region (Scobell et. al, 2011, 286-291). Despite facing criticism from the West, Russia managed to control the discourse domestically and receive support from other powerful international actors creating a sense of collective actions and legitimization of its discourse.

At the time of 1998, Boris Yeltsin called his friendship with Bill Clinton “co-leadership”, which showed that the friendship was still resistant to deterioration. The leaders continued to discuss international issues, including possible trilateral cooperation with China to resolve a problem with the nuclear ambitions of India and Pakistan. In May 1998, a year before the Yugoslavia bombing, Bill Clinton said, “that kind of mutual trust and confidence makes all the difference” (Clinton Digital Library, 2018b). While both NATO enlargement and the Chechen wars could negatively affect the dialogue between Russia and the U.S., the main differences in discourse were presented by the Western media rather than the West as a collective, which became apparent during the Kosovo Conflict.

Kosovo Conflict and the Yugoslavia Bombing of 1999

Without deep immersion in the historical details of the process of ethnic, political, and religious conflicts in Yugoslavia, the Kosovo war (1998-1999) had a significant influence on the formation of Russia’s identity and on how Russia’s political elites expressed it to the world. The bombing of Yugoslavia by NATO forces during Operation Allied Force in 1999 led to ambiguous consequences for international relations since it irritated the discourse on international norms. Some researchers argued that “NATO’s decision deserves greater deference” because it reflects a collective “Euro-Atlantic” identity, which provided a “legitimacy” to act (Wedgwood, 1999, 833). Nevertheless, the use of force did violate the obligation not to wage war against a sovereign state (Mandelbaum, 1999, 7). Boris Yeltsin attempted to warn his “friend” Bill Clinton on May 23, 1999, one day before the start of NATO operations. In his letter to the President of the United States, he wrote that political dialogue was necessary and that Clinton’s decision would lead to the deterioration of bilateral relations (Clinton Digital Library, 2018c). As Yeltsin noticed regarding the use of force by NATO, “I ask you once more to weigh all the consequences before making this decision, which, I will tell you frankly, could be fatal”.

Russia adhered to irreconcilable positions regarding the use of NATO forces as part of an UN-authorized operation, which did not have a legal basis. Similar to the Chechen Wars, NATO actions in Yugoslavia led to the unprecedented unification of Russian society. With the discursive support for the government’s view provided by the media, more than 70% of the population in the early days of the crisis supported breaking off relations with NATO and 73% saw NATO’s actions as a threat to Russia’s national interests (Serebryannikov, 2000, 68). The Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov even compared the US ideology with “Hitlerism” (Petrov, 1999), which also illustrated the support from the opposition parties.

Consequently, Boris Yeltsin’s rhetoric regarding Russia's cooperation with Western countries shifted in a negative direction. In April 1999, the Russian president spoke about how NATO’s actions could push Russia into hostilities and military actions *(CNN*, 1999). If in the above-mentioned personal conversations Yeltsin highlighted a “special mission” of the leaders of the United States and Russia in restoring stability in the world, in December 1999 he said that Russia and China “will dictate to the world how to live, not only him”. He also characterized Clinton’s decisions as “flexing muscles”. In other words, the Kosovo crisis not only strengthened Russia’s domestic collective understanding of “self”, but also an emerging collective identity with China.

At that time, Boris Yeltsin criticized a reemerging “significant other” concentrating on the U.S. as a “spearhead” of NATO, rather than the West as a collective (OSCE Istanbul Summit 1999: Statement by President Yeltsin, 1999). The Kosovo conflict led to a dramatic change in relations between Russia and the United States but did not have the same consequences on its relations with the West collectively. During a telephone conversation with Bill Clinton, Boris Yeltsin said that the dialogue between them would continue, but there will be no “friendship” anymore. During the conversation, the length of Clinton’s statements and Yeltsin’s harsh, short answers reflected the U.S. president's attempts to convince his colleague that the decision was correct and that it was necessary to preserve the results. Nevertheless, Yeltsin replied that Primakov’s plane, which was going to the US but turn back over the Atlantic as the diplomatic reaction to the unfolding crises, was “only the first step” (Clinton Digital Library, 2018d). Thus, the strong personal boundaries between two leaders that had a positive effect on bilateral relations ceased to exist.

Thus, the two Yeltsin terms in power had significantly different results on the formation of Russia’s identity. During the 1990-s it generally began to acquire specific, which are still present in modern political discourse. The first period (1991-1996) indicated Russia’s attempts to incorporate its identity into the West seeking legitimation and acceptance by sacrificing its yet undefined interests. In constructivists’ terms, it meant lowering individual self-identification and emphasizing collectiveness. The second period (1996-2000) reflected a formation of a new Russian identity. One of its features of it was the concept of multipolarity, which proclaimed the end of a unipolar world established by the U.S., Russia’s “significant other”. It also allowed achieving closer cooperation with China which started to create an initial form of collective identity through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Instead of trying to revive its old identity of the great power, the first step was positioning “self” as a “developing economy” (Wilson & Purushothaman, 2003), and then “developing power” (Macfarlane, 2006), as an alternative to the idea of “dominance” promoted by the US.

Another feature is the reemergence of the “significant other” through which Russia positioned its policy, interests, values, and norms. Alla Kassianova (2001, 836) noted that “The tendency to emphasize difference/otherness in delineating the contours of the Russian state’s self-image” provided massive support for Russia’s identity construction during the 1991-2000 period. In addition to the United States and NATO’s actions, a continuation of the Chechen conflict led to the formation of an “enemy” image, which provided additional building blocks of identity construction. The “others” were “terrorist groups”, “separatists”, and “the West”, and the blocks were characterized as “national unity”, “respect for international law”, “sovereignty of states”, and “cooperation on equal terms”.

4.4. Russia’s Identity during the First and Second Terms of Vladimir Putin

The day before Boris Yeltsin’s abdication from the presidential post, his successor Vladimir Putin published an article entitled “Russia at the Turn of the Millennium” (1999), in which he reflected on the main postulates of the first and second terms in power. The economic and social instability remained the main threats for Russia, which forced foreign policy to “serve domestic policy” (Selezneva, 2002, 26-27). To resolve the problems, Putin proposed the creation of a “strong state” legitimizing the necessity by heavily referring to the Chechen crisis. As a part of the “strong state” policy, he managed to organize a more coherent political consensus that provided the foundation for identity construction. However, as some scholars noted, the first term was “more stylistic than substantive” (Lo, 2002, 9) and Russians continued to ask “the ‘who are we’ question” (Legvold, 2001, 63).

Consequently, during the first years of his presidency, Vladimir Putin intended to reduce growing tensions between Russia and the West and simultaneously develop an independent political line. He proclaimed that attempts to reorient Russia toward the West would no longer be undertaken (*Novaja Gazeta*, 2000). Nevertheless, Putin acknowledged that the U.S. is an important partner and that Bill Clinton’s administration provided a “good start” for a dialogue.

After meeting with George Bush on June 16, 2001, Putin highlighted that "concerns and threats are two different things", which reflected a refusal to utilize Yeltsin's more aggressive rhetoric towards NATO's actions. To reduce the tension, a critical stance on NATO shifted from a form of direct accusations toward a more flexible position (Putin, 2001). He also reintroduced the idea that with the cooperation of the United States and Russia it was possible to build a new security architecture. Making a step backward from Russia-China cooperation on that track. In addition, both presidents tried to restore the "friendship" type of diplomacy of the previous period. George Bush said about Putin, "I looked the man in the eye. I found him to be very straightforward and trustworthy". According to the New York Times, despite a part of the US political elite reacting critically to the "warmth" of this meeting, it helped to reduce the level of tension after the Yugoslavia crisis (Rivals, 2001).

Putin's speech in the Bundestag on September 25, 2001, after the September 11 attack also reinforced the need for cooperation between the United States, Europe, and Russia, which received largely positive coverage by the Western media (*CNN*, 2001; *BBC*, 2001). While the 9/11 terrorist attack was a terrible event, it opened up new opportunities for cooperation, postponing Russia's continuing divergence with the West by highlighting common interests and reinforcing a sense of collectivity.

Terrorism and Response

As a response to the terrorist attack on 9/11, George Bush positioned it as a "declaration of war" (*BBC*, 2001). Its rhetoric rang the bell for Russia's political elite. John Russel (2005, 109-110) found similarities between the Chechen war and 9/11, both of which "intensified feeling of insecurity" and made Russia "a key partner of the USA". Before the election, Vladimir Putin expressed his consistent irreconcilable stance about the Chechen war continuing to characterize Russia's actions as an anti-terrorist campaign, which contributed to his election victory (Colton & McFaul, 2003). Putin's phrase about dealing with "terrorists in the toilet" became a symbol of the antiterrorist campaign in Chechnya (Rutkevich, 2000, 39) and corresponded with the harsh rhetoric of George Bush regarding terrorism. Thus, the US and Russian governments shared a common threat or a common "other", against which even such distant identities expressed shared features.

In addition to that, the "friendship" diplomacy restored its place in the discourse of Russia-US relations. During the meeting between Putin and Bush, the latter said, "you only usually invite your friends into your house" ("President Bush and President Putin Talk to Crawford Students", 2001). This restoration of friendship was supported by various domestic groups within the U.S. Journalists noticed that Bush gave Putin a "Pootie-Poot" nickname, which reflected a positive personal evaluation rather than acting like a joke (*BBC*, 2002). Political elites such as the national security advisor, Condoleezza Rice, called their relationship "epoch-making" (Borger, 2002). Think-tank analysts of Brookings noted, that it was far from real friendship, but it became possible to build common interests against the backdrop of the fight against terrorism (Gordon, 2001). Regarding positive changes from Russia's side, instead of condemning NATO expansion, Putin believed that Russia and the United States are working "on changing the quality of our relations with NATO" (Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, 2002). It contrasted with the beginning of his first term, which signified the importance of collective actions.

However, with an increased understanding of its identity under the influence of unifying political power, Russia moved to active actions in the post-Soviet territory. In 2002, the Russian government announced that Chechen terrorists were hiding on the territory of Georgia, which, due to its political weakness, cannot resist their influence and could become a new terrorist stronghold (Mayers, 2002). Using an analogy with 9/11, Putin requested Bush to support Russia's actions again terrorists. Instead, the United States warned Russia against violating the territorial integrity of a sovereign state and launched a new program of training and equipping Georgian troops (Reinold, 2011, 257). This caused contradiction with the recent Kosovo crisis and led to a deterioration of collectiveness. Despite the Russian support of initial steps against terrorism after 9/11, further US actions raised concerns among the Russian political elite. After Bush introduced the term "axis of evil", it was closely associated with the US attempts to establish hegemony (O'Loughlin, et al., 2004, 315). Consequently, the end of the cooperation came with the Iraq War (2003) and color revolutions in the post-soviet region (2003-2005).

Iraq War

In 2002, George W. Bush stated that threats to American security could be located on the other side of the world (*The Guardian*, 2002). In this regard, the United States declared the need to launch a preventive attack on Iraq to counter the development of weapons of mass destruction. However, because this decision focused on US security instead of the general fight against terrorism, not all members of the Western collective or traditional allies supported the US. The German Chancellor announced the rejection of "adventures" and "checkbook diplomacy" because not enough evidence was provided to back the claim about the threat (Hooper, 2002). France, Sweden, Austria, and other members of NATO also spoke against the war. In addition, one of the major news agencies in the Arabic language, Al-Jazeera, accused the United States of possible falsification of evidence that the Iraqi government created weapons of mass destruction (Ghadban, 2003).

Russia's position on this issue had two aspects. Between 2001 and 2003, Vladimir Putin and George Bush repeatedly declared their friendship and the importance of personal meetings (Perlez, 2001; “Bush and Putin Sign Historic Anti-Nuclear Treaty”, 2002), which created a foundation for resolving issues. Russia argued that the US’s decision was a “mistake” since the invasion of Iraq could lead not to the victory over terrorism, but its further spread (Myers, 2003). Thus, Putin, similar to Yeltsin's rhetoric during the Kosovo crisis, continued to argue for political rather than military solutions (Dougherty, 2003).

Despite having its interests in the region, especially related to oil, business, and the $8 billion that Iraq owed (Freedman, 2003, 69-70), Russia decided not to engage. One of the reasons was still undefined features of identity, which is supposed to imply the existence of national interests and values needed to project abroad. Meanwhile, the split among western counties demonstrated weaknesses of the collective identity (Duncan, 2005, 293) and opened new possible ways for Russia to incorporate “self” into international relations without becoming a part of the West by rejecting individual “self” characteristics. Domestic problems continued to bother Russia more than the desire to state its active position on international issues. However, as Golan (2004, 458) argued, despite the uncertainty of Putin’s position, he “was perceived to have followed the correct policy” by the public. Thus, the process of constructing/reconstructing national identity continued.

Expansion of NATO

The further NATO enlargement planned in 2004 caused additional discrepancies between Russia and the West by expansion toward the post-Soviet region. For a short time, the previously establish cooperation and personal diplomacy held criticism. In 2002, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said that NATO expansion was not a threat (*Vesti*, 2002). In addition, Vladimir Putin did not express his dissatisfaction with NATO internationally (President of Russia, 2003) or domestically (Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, 2004). After the new minister of foreign affairs Sergey Lavrov wrote a paper about the “future of world order” he described the NATO enlargement as a “block approach”, but without significant criticism (Lavrov, 2005). However, as the Telegraph noted not all parts of the political spectrum supported the president’s view (Guargia, 2004).

Concerning the scholarly discussion, NATO enlargement raised debates about the question of identity among constructivists. Merje Kuus argued that the "assumption of otherness" between different regions of Europe was a part of a western discourse or embodied in it (Kuus, 2004, 479). Meanwhile, a perception of Russia as part of the "West" remained ambiguous (ibid, 476). It was not easy to define the "shared values" that NATO required its members to have. Helene Sjursen noticed that relations between NATO members should have a "sense of common history or a sense of sharing a common destiny" (Sjursen, 2004, 703), but Russia, who also shared history with other European countries, still played a role of a "Russian bear" and a threat for NATO (Safire, 2004). On the other hand, some scholars have blamed Russia, arguing that its government-created a difference in identity and negative perception of NATO to maintain a "weak Putin regime" (Greene, 2012). Margot Light (2003, 55-56) argued that after the Cold War Russia's political elite perceived Europe as a significant "other" and viewed Russia and Europe as "different…rather than identical".

Despite a relatively smooth wave of the enlargement in 2004, the initiation of new discussions about a possible enlargement toward Georgia and Ukraine led to the expression of gradually asserting Russian identity. Russia's political elite perceived the post-Soviet space of Ukraine and Georgia as a crucial area of national interests, which were much more pronounced and supported since the 1990-s. In 2006, Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Igor Ivanov said that there is "no political and military justification for expanding NATO" (*RIA Novosti*, 2006), reflecting a growing desire and ability to confront the NATO discourse on its own interpretation of unfolding events.

Colour Revolutions

Colour revolutions are mostly non-violent changes of power through mass protest movements. Regarding Russia's identity construction, the three revolutions that occurred between 2003 and 2005 had a significant effect on the definition of Russia's "self": the Rose Revolution in Georgia (2003), the Orange Revolution in Ukraine (2004-2005), and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan (2005). These three events challenged Russia's understanding of post-Soviet space as a part of not only Russia's national interest but its collective identification. While all three countries are independent, the sense of a common "destiny" or "fate" cannot be easily removed by a legal declaration of independence. It does not necessarily mean that

Russia’s political elite continued to perceive them as a part of “self” rather the unfolding crises in those countries could be extrapolated to Russia.

The official Russian position on color revolutions proclaimed that they emerged because of outside influence rather than a purely domestic response (*TASS*, 2014). According to researcher Vladimir Batyuk (2006, 24), the color revolutions allowed Russia’s political elite to form an “ideology of foreign policy” or more precisely, to move from a “defensive” to an “offensive” strategy. Several other scholars argued that it was the move toward “authoritarianism” (Kalandadze & Orenstein, 2009, 1418). In both cases, it was a powerful impetus for Russia’s identity not only to express “self” but also to strengthen a collective identity with China (Wilson, 2010, 29), which had expressed a similar understanding of the norms and values of IR.

Christian Thorun (2009) called Russia’s identity during the period from 2004 to 2007 “Cultural Geostrategic Realism”, by which he referred to a growing focus on culture and systems of values as a significant part of foreign policy. Thorun argued that Russian diplomacy after the end of the Cold War became more assertive and willing to cooperate with like-minded states “even at the expense of less warm relations with the Western countries” (ibid, 38). In contrast to realist theory that emphasizes the power balance, Russia’s policy demonstrated a value or identity-based cooperation. In addition, it also contrasted with liberalism since it would highlight a positive side of cooperation while new emerging collectivity does not necessarily lead to more cooperation with “others”. Consequently, the color revolution recreated an image of an “enemy at the gate”[1], which reinforced the “otherness” of the West while increasing the “similarity” with other independent/sovereign actors. This gave legitimacy to Russian actions that had previously been seeking Western approval.

The Munich Speech

The first steps to legally and discursively formalize the reemerging identity are reflected in the official speeches of Vladimir Putin. As noticed above, not only history and domestic powers contribute to the formation of identity, but also international events. Influential events were continuously occurring and affecting the identity construction process by forcing the country to act following certain values, norms, and interests that needed to be defined. By acting or speaking out, the identity and discourse on identity started to acquire more comprehensive, defined features. Before shaping them in the Munich Speech, a president's public speech on June 26, 2006, after the capture and murder of Russian diplomats in Baghdad paved the road for it (President of Russia, 2006).

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[1] The phrase came from a propaganda poster from the World War I, which said “Enemy at the gate! It brings slavery, hunger and death! Destroy the dark forces! Be ready to defend your country! Forward!”. It refers to an idea of Russia being a besieged fortress surrounded by enemies. See Monaghan (2008).

Vladimir Putin proclaimed that the "fundamental changes" that had taken place in the world required Russia to play a more active role in shaping the "global agenda". After dealing with pressing economic problems and achieving a relatively stable economic recovery, the country could "bear responsibility for global and socio-economic development" which should correspond with Russia's status. According to Putin, "the conflict potential of the world ... continues to grow" and requires "to reverse dangerous trends" with "new approaches". While emphasizing Russia's role and recognizing "self", as Angela Stent argued, it "inevitably set to confront the West" (Stent, 2008, 1103) since it would imply creating challenges to the Western discourse. The speech reflected a turning point in Russia's understanding of "self" that was a result of a long process of identity formation since the 1990-s but the Munich Speech summarized it.

Vladimir Putin delivered the Munich speech on February 10, 2007, as part of the Munich Conference on Political and Security Issues. It was the culmination of the growing confrontation of Russia with the Western collective understanding of international relations. Norms and values. The speech marked the transition of Russia's semi-official criticism of the United States, NATO, and the West to an open call to form a new system of international relations, taking into account Russia's national interests. The main provisions of his speech were accusing the US of conducting foreign policy outside its "borders", preserving the bloc-based thinking, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction because of ill-considered actions, and other actions that were considered dangerous for the system of IR. The response to this was not one-sided but represented various forms of intersubjective knowledge within the West. For example, some compared Putin's speech with the rhetoric of the Cold War (Watson, 2007) while others considered it as an expected outcome of ignoring Russia's interests (Tully, 2007).

Munich's speech did result in a turn against the West. Russia's political elite began to build a "center of values" (Monaghan, 2008, 733), which reflected an attempt to create a collective understanding of IR as an alternative to the West-dominated system. This collective would imply a diversity of political systems, non-interference, and respect for sovereignty. As Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in 2006, "We will not participate in any new sacred unions," which reflected a policy of balancing various "selves" rather than a conflict of “self” and “others” (Mir ne stal bezopasnee, 2006). The same position was repeated in the Survey of Russian Federation Foreign Policy in 2007: “Russia and the Western countries have a lot in common, but there are a lot of things that distinguish us - and that is why we are interesting to each other” (The Survey of Russian Federation Foreign Policy, 2007). Despite not having a clear juxtaposition, the proposed collective included countries outside the West, with different intersubjective knowledge, interests, values, norms, and identities, which still emphasized the “otherness”, thus, conflictual in itself.

Thus, during the first two terms of Vladimir Putin, Russia’s understanding of “self” reflected significant changes from the “defensive” foreign policy to declaring active participation in international affairs. Compared to the 1990-s, Russia managed to cope with major economic, political, and social problems within the country, ensuring the ability of the political elite to obtain domestic legitimacy over the definition of “self” and pursue foreign policy objectives. In addition to that, international events and actors with some collectiveness with Russia shaped Russia’s identity by creating a certain interactive and legitimizing setting. One of the major characteristics of this period was a revival of “otherness” in Russia’s view of the West, the role of which as a “significant other” was reclaimed. At the same time, while Russia had a more pronounced understanding of “self”, legitimized domestically and to some extent internationally by various actors, it does not lead to the same level of legitimization from the West. Despite continuing cooperation on common interests, such as the fight against terrorism, the stabilization of the Korean Peninsula, and nuclear non-proliferation, the Munich speech outlined the differences between undefined/defined or expressed/suppressed stages of Russia’s identity.

4.5. Russia’s Identity after the Munich Speech and during Dmitry Medvedev (2008-2012)

Despite being a significant element of Russia’s understanding of “self”, the Munich Speech did not instantly change relations with the West. As Fyodor Lukyanov (2007) noted, the speech was “the first brick in the foundation of Putin's historical heritage” and that it reflected a condemnation of the Western policy without specific proposals on how to challenge it. In other words, it was not a declaration of a new Cold War because it would require not only competitive “others” with their own intersubjective knowledge over IR to stand against each other.

More importantly “others” did not accept or legitimize these claims. Researchers argued that the “self-conceived identity” of rising power must receive an acknowledgment from “significant others” (Thies & Nieman, 2017, 42). Despite looking for like-minded states and attempts to build a form of collective identity with countries in Asia or with “the Third World” (Macfarlane, 2006), it was a “primarily instrumental” policy (Rangsimaporn, 2006, 187). One of the reasons was that Russia’s political elite did not have or formulated a reasonable level of collective identification, which, for example, the EU has. Consequently, the opposition to the West led to a situation where Russia was unable to form “too close relations with anyone grouping of states” (Browning, 2008, 7). In addition, Russia did not have the opportunity to project its own discourse and, more importantly, to convince others, which could create a sense of collectivity, such as discursive or soft power (Facon, 2008, 11).

Thus, the Munich speech became a “brick” or the first step of what scholars call the “Putin’s Plan” (Gaddy & Kuchins, 2008), which required the continuation of power, consistency of foreign policy decisions, and strengthening of Russia’s international role step by step. To achieve that, Putin managed to consolidate his leadership and control over the political scene by transferring the country to his party, United Russia, and his successor Dmitry Medvedev (Godzimirski, 2008, 24-25). In constructivists’ terms, he established and ensured the continuation of discursive control over the definition of Russia’s “self” and discourse in general.

Dmitry Anatolyevich Medvedev is a controversial figure because it is unclear how much political and discursive power he had when Vladimir Putin controlled the post of prime minister. Some scholars (Gehlbach, 2010, 86) and the media (Chivers, 2008) claimed that Putin retained power over the country and political institutions, thereby maintaining control. Others argued that “Medvedev was more liberal and more inclined to Russia’s modernization” (Schorr, 2008; Monaghan, 2012, 2) and that Medvedev and Putin demonstrated different positions on some issues of domestic and foreign policy (Polunin, 2011), which reflected differences in discourse. In both cases, four years of Dmitry Medvedev’s term in power were quite intensive for Russia's foreign policy and identity construction/expression, which was challenged by two international events of the Russian-Georgian war (2008) and Arab Spring (2011).

Russian-Georgian War

The Russian-Georgian war started on August 8, 2008, with the crossing of the borders of Georgia by Russian military forces. On the one hand, the Russian government claimed that it conducted a "peace enforcement" operation as a response to the Georgian shelling of Tskhinvali, the South Ossetia capital. On the other hand, most Western countries hold the view that Russia has shown armed aggression against the sovereign state (Law Library of Congress, 2008). While maintaining neutrality, this research argues that preconditions for this conflict were embodied in the formulation of its identity by Russia's political elite through the post-Soviet period. At the same time, it was the result of significant discrepancies in the legitimization of Russia's "self" domestically and internationally as well as in intersubjective knowledge of the collective West and Russia.

The first premise was an intersubjective understanding of sovereignty and the right to self-determination that emerged/ reinstated with Kosovo's desire to declare independence from Serbia in 2008. At the annual press conference, Vladimir Putin on February 14, 2008, stated that the situation with Serbia and Kosovo should develop following international law, which means that it is impossible to separate a part of a sovereign state solely based on the will of the people living within a territory that wants to proclaim independence (Transcript of Annual Big Press Conference, 2008). Because the majority of Western countries opposed that position, Russia had utilized Western intersubjective knowledge to support the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia (Friedman, 2008), which consequently would affect the situation around Crimea in 2014. Russia's political elites, parroting the Western position, argued that South Ossetia and Abkhazia had the right to declare their independence.

The second premise that led Russia to the armed conflict was the further expansion of NATO to Georgia and Ukraine, a decision the NATO countries made on April 3, 2008. Citing Russian general Yuri Baluyevsky, Reuters reported that Russia would take military steps as a response (*Reuters*, 2008). However, the general soon lost his post, which demonstrated that this position existed among Russia's political elite but did not have enough discursive and political power to be an official position. According to the transcript of Putin's speech on April 4, 2008, at the Meeting NATO-Russia Council in Bucharest, the Russian Prime Minister said that enlargement is a "direct threat to national security" (President of Russia, 2008b).

After the crisis in Yugoslavia, Russia questioned whether NATO is capable of spreading democracy, which the organization proclaimed to be the main reason for enlargement. Consequently, the discrepancies in the discourse on the enlargement between the West and Russia had emerged. According to Vladimir Putin, the statement that the military and political bloc's claims about spreading democracy are "nonsense" (ibid.). According to Dan Reiter (2001), the democratic tendencies in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic arose out of domestic changes, not because of the NATO carrot and stick policy. It could be argued that NATO or a desire of states to join NATO did not lead to democratic changes but democratic changes create preconditions of collectivity that allowed the state to join the collective identity of NATO. In that case, the military component of NATO does not play a role and could be seen, as Russia's political elite did, as extensive and needed to eliminate.

Russia's actions against Georgia demonstrated the existence of critical national interests but were "limited and largely defensive" (Larrabee, 2010, 37). In addition, Russia's political elite was not able to create a comprehensive/convincing discourse and/or project it to the foreign public. Russia faced a massive backlash from the West and some countries in post-Soviet space, which reflected the lack of "dominant" influence (Trenin, 2009, 18) and legitimization of its discourse from other states. While the formation of BRIC in 2006, which united Brazil, Russia, India, and China, did not provide discursive support or legitimization for Russia. Although these countries have distant geographical locations, historical and cultural roots, and speak different languages, they do share certain features that could create a sense of a collective, including being "developing powers" (Jain, 2006) that stand against developed/dominant powers.

Since discursive practices and narratives about the Georgian events relied on Russia's intersubjective knowledge and understanding of "self", the BRIC countries were not able to relate to that. For example, the narrative about the danger of the NATO expansion relied upon Russia's past and recent history, which ultimately if positioned within Russia's domestically powerful intersubjective knowledge, had little to no effect on the collective response from historically and culturally distant countries. On the other hand, the Arab Spring represented an international event and allowed BRICS to play a significant role in legitimizing criticism of the Western discourse since it was positioned as a threat to the international system and norms.

In contrast to the conflict in Yugoslavia, the intervention of the international coalition in Libya began with the UN sanction under Security Council Resolution 1973 on March 17, 2011. The initial aim was to conduct humanitarian intervention that is, using armed force to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe inside the country. The international coalition conducted the operation with broad support from NATO, but with abstaining BRIC and German votes in UN Security Council (Roth, 2011). On the one hand, the crisis demonstrated discrepancies within the Western collective understanding of international law and the appropriateness of actions. On the other hand, it also showed the domestic discrepancies in collective understanding within the Western countries. For example, the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate questioned Barak Obama's officials over the decision to join the intervention (*BBC*, 2011; Shrivastava, 2011).

Regarding Russia's position, despite Medvedev's initial support for the intervention, after the conflict unfolded it was Putin who criticized the operation, calling it a "new crushed" (Kirchick, 2011). It reflected that even if the discourses of Medvedev and Putin were different, the latter had extensive political and discursive power to project its vision through discursive practices that he maintained after coming to power once again in 2012. At the same time, partly because of this discrepancy between the two positions, Russia's political elite was not able to utilize the conflict to obtain international support for some form of consolidated discourse rather countries acted on the premises of their intersubjective knowledge that were to an extent similar.

As an example, four BRIC countries reflected certain collective features by demonstrating a consolidated position. On the other hand, all five BRICS countries criticized the UN resolutions and NATO actions (*BBC*, 2011; Kirchick, 2011). As Nehme Michel (2012) noted, "For Russia, which has been searching for a foreign policy identity since 1991, BRICs idea has come in very handy". The organizational structure of BRICS created an opportunity not only to provide support on political and economic issues but also to create a collective identity and legitimize each other's actions or criticism of the "others". Similar to the EU, BRICS played a role in unifying collective identity for most developing countries regarding certain, although not all, international issues. In contrast to the Russian-Georgian war, when Russia acted alone, the Libya war unfolded a new source of legitimizing power for its discourses and narratives regarding the West.

4.6. The Identity Construction from 2012 to 2019

Despite strengthening its identity, to have and project a well-supported intersubjective knowledge discourse, it is necessary to highlight at least some form of stable, defined features of it. The concept of sovereign democracy represents one of them. As Charles Ziegler argued, "The central ideological construct of the post-communist period – sovereign democracy – informs us that from the Russian perspective both sovereignty and democracy are socially and culturally determined" (Ziegler, 2012, 415). Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration Vladislav Surkov introduced the concept of "sovereign democracy" in 2006, by which he understood a unique construction of Russia's identity with an accent on the states' sovereign rights to establish their democracy (Lipman, 2006; *Lenta*, 2006). It also highlighted Russia's differences from the Western-type of intersubjective understanding of democracy and its promotion.

Without going into the debate whether Surkov was a "gray cardinal" (Faulconbridge, 2011) or just a projector of intersubjective knowledge of Russia's political elite, the concept of sovereign democracy reflects discourse on Russia's identity, its understanding of democracy, and political power as a result of a long process of identity construction. However, its tangible form manifested after the beginning of the third Vladimir Putin term in power (2012-2018). Two of Putin's pre-election articles "Russia: the national question" (Putin, 2012a) and "Russia and the changing world" (Putin, 2012b) declared a stage of active consolidation of the achieved progress in the construction of identity from the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The "Russia: the national question" declared an outside world to be in an anarchic state, which threatens not only Russia's borders but also its culture and identity. Recreating a realist's understanding of IR, it placed Russian people and their culture at the core of the historical, multi-ethnic state the preservation of which they paid a price referring to the payment in the blood through wars. The article also highlights the Russian experience of state and identity development as unique because of the "cultural code", which highlights national-patriotic values as "pillars of regime legitimacy" (Lo, 2018, 31). At the same time, since many post-Soviet countries share common features, cultures, values, norms, and identities, Eurasian integration is a key instrument for stabilizing the political and social situation around Russia. The article actively used constructivist vocabulary to define what is "self" and who "others" are but simultaneously emphasized a realist view on the anarchy of IR.

The second article, "Russia and the changing world" described several elements of Vladimir Putin's discourse on foreign policy. First, Russia should strive for an open policy to build confidence and obtain recognition/legitimization by other countries. Secondly, Russia's national interests and identity is respected "only when it is strong", which means that an active and assertive foreign policy is essential to obtain legitimacy. Thirdly, Russia has the right to be a part of the international system by participating in making decisions on major internationally important events. Fourth, Russia will be against foreign interferences across the world that have demonstrated to destabilize situations rather than solve problems. Putin provided an example of a civil war in Syria and highlighted that Western actions have created a threat to ordinary citizens. Fifth, Russia must develop PD and "soft power" policies to confront the unfolding information war. Sixth, China and other like-minded states are not "threats" to Russia and should be an active part of the international system alongside it.

Thus, at the beginning of the first Vladimir Putin term in power, Russia had gone through a long path of forming its identity and understanding how it should be discursively expressed. By regaining political power, Putin was able to embark on an active application of identity for foreign policy aims, shaping an agenda based on national interests, values, and norms. However, as the Russian-Georgian war has shown, the perception of identity by other actors is at odds with what the Russian political elite is trying to convey. PD policy and the ability to present a coherent and persuasive message during massive foreign policy changes became a top priority.

Despite policy documents and the above-described articles do provide information on are goals of Russia's foreign policy but they do not give an understanding of how those goals came to be. The assumption that various scholars make about the "nature" of Putin's power does not help understand the complexity of Russian foreign policy, identity, and discourse. Moreover, those assumptions do not allow approaching important questions about the effectiveness of Russia's propaganda, soft power, and PD. Thus, this dissertation will proceed to analyze the period from 2012 to 2019 to understand how Russia narrated "self" and created discourse about its identity for the public. It will highlight the importance of constructivism in explaining Russia's communication by applying concepts and terms extensively described in Chapter 3.

Conclusions

The collapse of the Soviet Union not only caused various political, social, and economic problems but significantly damaged ontological security, or the continuation of "self" preservation and continuation, of Russia. New political elites had implemented various successful and unsuccessful steps throughout the 1990-s to establish or define some stable form of identity. At the same time, international events, which to some extent reconstruct a “social environment” for states, significantly challenged the process of identity consolidation. Since those events needed to be addressed, political elites had to act following some values and norms, that eventually acquired more or less defined forms at the end of the 1990-s. Among them were new redefined Russia’s national interests such as multipolarity, closer ties with near abroad and Asia, accent on domestic and international stability that devalues adventurism, the issue of sovereignty and power as well as a specific view on international norms that prioritize dialogue.

Thus, during the first two terms of Vladimir Putin (2000-2008), Russia’s understanding of “self” reflected significant changes from the “defensive” foreign policy to declaring active participation in international affairs. Compared to the 1990-s, Russia managed to cope with major economic, political, and social problems within the country, ensuring the ability of the political elite to obtain domestic legitimacy over the definition of “self” and pursue foreign policy objectives. In addition to that, international events and actors with some collectiveness with Russia (SCO, BRIC) shaped Russia’s identity by creating a certain interactive and legitimizing setting. One of the major characteristics of this period was a revival of “otherness” in Russia’s view of the West, the role of which as a “significant other” was revitalized.

At the same time, while Russia had a more pronounced understanding of “self”, legitimized domestically and to some extent internationally by various actors, it does not lead to the same level of legitimization from the West. Despite continuing cooperation on common interests, such as the fight against terrorism, the stabilization of the Korean Peninsula, and nuclear non-proliferation, the Munich speech outlined the differences between undefined/defined or expressed/suppressed stages of Russia’s identity.

More importantly, with as the political elites’ understanding of the country's identity grew, so did the ability to determine what message Russia wants to convey to the world and the foreign public. At the same time, during the first two terms of Vladimir Putin, Russia’s political elites had tried to position the identity within some form of collective engaging in conversation with NATO, EU, SCO, and other international organizations. It helped to receive a seal of legitimation for its discourse as a growing power intended to acquire its rightful place within great powers. However, the Munich speech marked changes in Russia’s discourse about “self” since the necessity to define its identity through “others” had decreased. Consequently, Medvedev’s term in power from 2008 to 2012 presented various discrepancies in discourse between Russia and the West expanding the potential of the conflict. One of which was the Russo-Georgian war in 2008, which enacted/reflected identity, values, and norms formed through previous periods.

Through an analysis of how various forms of this identity were reflected as a result of reactions to significant events, this thesis outlined pre-existing knowledge about the Russian “self”, “others” and “the world”. This analysis also reflects how discourse and various narratives have been formed in the profession and as a result of reactions. The period in question (2012-2019), is an important part of Russian history, reflecting the transition from a relatively passive or verbal expression of identity to an active one. In turn, this expression, or rather its discursive-informational support, is associated with the formation of webs of meanings that positions Russia's actions through interconnected narratives. Consequently, identity analysis is a prerequisite for understanding PD narratives, their meanings, and their influence on domestic and foreign publics.

Chapter 5. Vladimir Putin's Construction of Russia to the World

5.1. The Construction of "Self"

The characterization of Russia by Vladimir Putin largely consists of positive narratives (Table 19), which reflect practices of positive self-description as the main function of PD discussed within the existing literature. They were reflected 323 times, which is 58.6% out of 551 mentioned narratives. Both negative and neutral self-describing narratives were mentioned 66 times. At the same time, the existence of negative narratives alongside positive in the right ratio could be beneficial. Although what is "right" ratio is hard to define, it could be assumed that positive narratives should represent a significant majority (more than 85%) of all narratives to reflect a general positive discourse but maintain a "reasonable" 15% level of humbleness/self-criticism.

Table 24. "Self" Narratives

Character	Narrative	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Sum
Positive	Cooperative	3	5	6	10	7	5	4	6	46
	Responsive	3	3	6	4	13	1	7	5	42
	Law Obidient	2	8	8	5	2	2	3	4	34
	Respectful	5	6	3	6	3	2	3	5	33
	Non-Conflicting	0	5	3	4	3	2	2	7	26
	Strong hand	3	7	3	4	7	1	0	1	26
	Inclusive	3	4	7	5	0	0	1	1	21
	Justice/Morality	2	9	1	1	4	0	3	3	23
	Sovereign Right	0	4	3	2	3	1	2	2	17
	Persistent	3	3	2	2	4	0	1	1	16
	Depersonification	1	6	4	2	1	0	1	0	15
	Economic Power	4	4	1	0	0	1	0	2	12
	Alternative	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	6
	Defensive	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	6
Negative	Rationally Troubled	7	5	4	2	3	5	2	2	30
	90-s	2	4	2	0	0	2	2	2	14
	Slow Changes	3	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	8
	Being First	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	7
	Soviet Past	1	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	7
Neutral	Misrepresented	0	6	4	2	7	2	3	3	27
	Disrespected	2	4	4	0	3	2	0	0	15
	Natural Place	1	1	3	3	4	0	2	0	14
	Need for Russia	3	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	10
Comparative	Positive	4	13	9	10	3	4	4	4	51
	Negative	6	10	3	3	8	4	7	4	45

Source: Author

It needs to be mentioned, that not all narratives presented as "positive" will be accepted as it is by the foreign public or by other scholars due to their complexity. For example, a "strong hand" is not an objectively positive characteristic for a majority of liberal-democratic societies. As well as "persistent" could be taken as stubbornness rather than having principles and acting in a trustworthy manner. As seen in Table 19, in addition to positive (N=14), negative (N=5), and neutral (N=4) narratives, during the stated period Putin used comparison with "others" 96 times, or 117 times if the "Soviet Past" and "90-s" are taken as "others" rather than a past form of "self". A more precise description of each narrative is given in the Methodology section (Narrative Description 2.1.2).

Table 25. "Self" Narrative Characterization

Characterization	Amount	%
Positive	323	58.6
Neutral	66	112
Negative	66	12
Comparison	96	17.4

Source: Author

Despite the majority of researchers arguing that the most important part of PD is self-description, the data demonstrate that various forms of comparisons act as significant elements of self-construction. There are two major types of comparison. First, the "Comparison/Positive" narrative refers to two types of comparisons, which do not contain any blame, emotional response, or negative characterization. The first type is intended to show the presence of similar elements, laws, orders, and other features between Russia and other countries. In other words, to show Russia as part of the world. Although it should be noticed, such type is rare in comparison with the other types of comparisons. The second type is intended either to demonstrate the superiority of Russia in comparison with other countries or to whitewash its negative characteristics through comparison. A feature of this type is the denial of negative characteristics.

The "Comparison/Negative" refers to different ways to paint Russia in brighter light or deny wrongdoings by imposing direct blame, emotional response, or negative characterization. Various forms of comparison are necessary for self-presentation since none of the characteristics is defined and wait to discover somewhere out there rather each of them is defined by the context. For example, such definitions as "good", "positive", "effective", and "responsible" simultaneously require the definition of what is the opposite, or “bad”, “negative”, “ineffective” or “irresponsible”. The recognition of comparative characteristics allows us to account for intersubjective meanings behind narratives.

In addition, two narratives about the “Soviet Past” and “90-s” could also be taken as comparisons. However, this comparison is not with others but with two past forms of “self”. By positioning two periods of its history separately from the “self” and delegitimizing some of their elements, Russia’s political elites can selectively adopt positive and reject the negative characterizations of Russia’s historically constructed identity. In other words, it acts as some form of discursive control over what meanings and intersubjective knowledge to reconstruct as a part of the current identity settings.

Three main categories could be distinguished from positive self-describing narratives. First, the “economic power” is one of the most straightforward characterizations of Russia's economy, thus, both a narrative and a section. The second, could be called “political power and includes Russia domestically and internationally. The Dometic dimension includes Russia’s understanding of political power through the “strong hand” narrative, which the main purpose is to demonstrate Russia's sovereignty, independence, integrity in decision-making, adherence to principles, effectiveness, and more importantly, stability. It is accompanied by the “personification” narratives that focus on countering the characterization of Russia as a dictatorship.

On the other hand, the international dimension concentrates on Russia’s behavior in foreign policy. Among those narratives are “persistent”, “law obedient”, “responsive”, and “sovereign rights”, which aim at positioning Russia as a trustworthy country that follows its obligations. At the same time, the narrative of “being the first” elevates Russia above some actors, which could act as a counter-narrative to ideas of equality of participation in IR. The two interconnected narratives, “Rationally Troubled” and “Slow Changes”, directly address existing problems in Russia versus their denials through “Comparison/Negative”. The first narrative responds to criticism by accepting it as such with elements of mitigation, or through a pragmatic acknowledgment. This helps to discursively transfer problems from a possible “crisis” manifestation into a milder, “problematic” form. The “Slow Changes” narrative besides pointing out the problems reflects the desire of the state to solve problems gradually. This narrative has a wide domestic purpose to lower down the “revolution” narratives by substituting it with gradual “evolution” of domestic institutions to deal with problems.

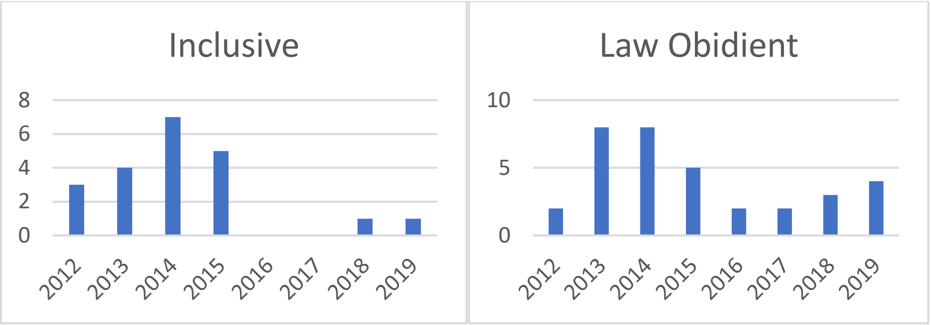
The third positive category is “Moral”, which includes narratives “inclusive”, “cooperative”, “respectful”, “non-conflicting”, and “justice/morality”. In comparison with international behavior-related narratives, those describe some form of inner motivation for Russia to act or not to act in a certain way. In other words, they reflect preconditions for behavior. For example, by being inclusive, cooperative, and respectful, Russia can acknowledge other states' sovereign rights. It also implies that those who do not have the same characteristics, do not respect the rights of other states to conduct an independent policy.

Four neutral narratives could be summarized under the narrative “natural place” since they all concentrate on the idea that Russia is “misrepresented” and does not fully act following its status as a great power. This also includes “need for Russia” as the narrative pointing out that Russia is an essential international actor and “alternative as recently emerged narratives aimed at presenting Russia’s vision on the IR.

Russia’s image presented to the foreign public only slightly greater than half consists of positive self-description. It confirms the inconsistency with Russia’s communication noticed by various researchers (Avgerinos, 2009; Simons, 2014, Just, 2016), which is one of the major issues of post-soviet Russia. This inconsistency reflects the lack of alternatives that Russia could offer to the world or other actors. The recent emergence of an “alternative” narrative might be a sign of a change, but further analysis is needed to trace whether it shapes and continues to be present. The narrative “alternative” embodies those ideals or models of international relations that Russia can offer as an alternative to the West-dominated political model.

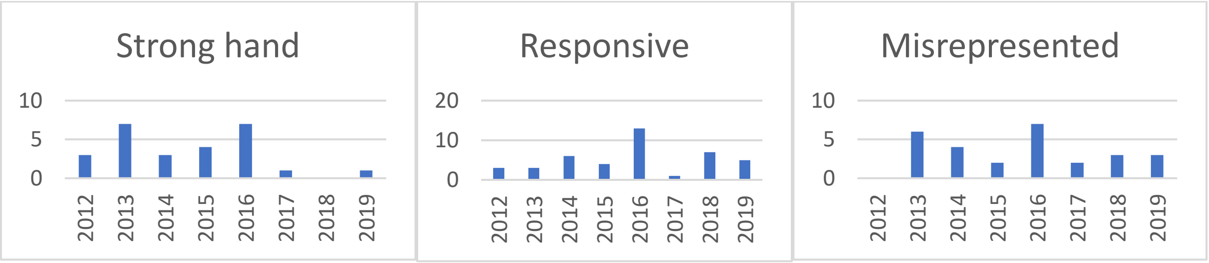
The data also shows certain changes in the dynamic of narratives, which correlates with international events/crises. First, despite the expected growth of “protective” narratives, the Crimean crisis did not lead to significant outbursts. On the contrary, two positive narratives have gone into a protracted decline since 2014 (Figure 6). It includes “Inclusive” and “Law Obedient” characteristics. Such changes are a reflection of the nature of the events themselves and the extent of Russian involvement. The Crimean events are the result of a direct, conscious and therefore controlled decision by Russia, rather than a standard “responsive” model of behavior. Compliance with international norms and respect for other domestic and international actors that are defended by these narratives is what Russia is charged with violating. Thus, not only the observance of the principles defended by Russia itself was in doubt, but also the use of these narratives began to decline, not fully recovering so far.

Figure 6. Crimea Crisis' Related Changes, 2014



Source: Author

Figure 7. Election Interference-related Narratives Changes



Source: Author

Second, an outbreak of a "protective" narrative occurred in 2016 amid accusations of Russia interfering in the US presidential election. Besides the expected protrusion of "Misrepresented" and "Responsive" characteristics, the emphasis was increased on the "strong hand" narrative (Figure 7). This is largely due to the comparative demonstration of the stability and effectiveness of the Russian government in comparison with the competing US parties. The other two narratives, in turn, rebelled against the unfair and "irrational" (narrative of "others") behavior of foreign players.

5.2. The Construction of "Others"

The discourse on Russia as in the case with any other country consists of different combinations of narratives about not only "self", but also about "others". That is because identities are constructed by the differentiation between self and the surrounding world, which includes tangible and intangible threats. As noted above, the description of "others" is represented by 21 narratives with four positive and 17 negative characterizations (Table 21). The characterization is visibly more negative with only 47 mentions of positive narratives, which is 13, 5% of the total (Table 21). Accordingly, the negative characterization contains 301 units, or 86, 5%. A more precise description of each narrative is given in the Methodology section (Narrative Description 2.1.3).

Table 26. “Others”-describing Narratives

Character	Narrative	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Sum
Negative	US Criticism	5	5	11	4	5	0	2	2	34
	Precarious	2	2	7	7	5	3	2	1	29
	Pawns	0	5	8	3	5	3	0	2	26
	Harsh Criticism	0	0	2	4	10	5	0	3	24
	Politically Weak	2	7	3	2	2	3	3	2	24
	Betrayal	3	2	2	4	7	1	2	2	23
	Irrational	0	2	2	0	5	6	6	2	23
	Non-interacting	0	0	0	5	3	3	2	8	21
	Imposition	0	4	3	3	2	1	0	4	17
	Need of Enemy	2	0	1	1	4	3	2	2	15
	Double Standarts	0	0	2	5	2	4	0	0	13
	Bad Governments	0	3	1	2	2	3	0	0	11
	Overestimated	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	3	10
	Threat	0	1	0	2	3	0	2	2	10
	Economically Weak	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
	Indirect domesic criticism	1	4	0	2	0	0	1	0	8
	Conflictual	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	2	5
Positive	The Public	0	0	0	7	4	1	1	3	16
	Partners	0	5	0	2	3	0	2	2	14
	Inside Allies	0	4	1	1	2	0	0	2	10
	Allies	1	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	7

Source: Author

Table 27. “Others” Narrative Characterization

Characterization	Amount	%
Positive	47	13,5
Negative	301	86,5

Source: Author

The limited positive description of "others" consists of four main narratives. The first “Allies” concerns building "self" through the demonstration of common interests, values, and goals with countries that can be considered "allied". In this context, Russian principles are justified or reinforced by building a system of like-minded states. Compared to many Western countries or ASEAN, which reinforces and receives discourse support from their formal and informal organizations, Russia rarely does this. Despite the existence of the BRICS and SCO, Russia does not use the narrative of its "allies" to strengthen its positive image to a significant extent.

Three narratives refer to the internal and external sides of “others”. The most direct one is “Partners”, which simply consists of a positive description of the West, appreciation of cooperation, and highlighting their achievements. The “The Public” narrative reflects a larger discourse on Russian understanding of democracy and therefore on Russia’s type of governance. Russian political elites understand democracy in its traditional forms as a rule of a majority with no regard to how this majority appeared and why it supports a certain government. As Putin stated “Democracy is the will of the people, people wanted to live the way they voted.” In that context, this narrative refers to the position that only people should decide the future of their own countries. For example, “this is absolutely none of our business, this is the business of the people of Great Britain.”; “we proceed from the premise that the Cypriots themselves must resolve these issues, without outside interference.” This narrative also reinforces positive self-descriptive narratives of the “Strong hand”, “Sovereign Rights” and “Inclusive”.

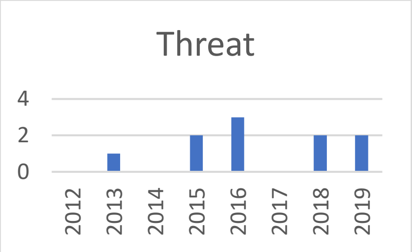
The related narrative of "Inside Allies" is contrasted with the negative narrative of "Bad Governments." They both create a narrative that it is not the people who want bad relations with Russia, but their governments. This helps to reduce the share of criticism from the population or nation and personify criticism of the current government. Moreover, the narrative is used to highlight the existence of positive opinions about Russia inside Western countries. For example, “Part of the American society and people treat Russia kindly or lovingly”; “It's good that there are people who sympathize with us in these our ideas about traditional values.”

The narrative of “Bad Governments” refers to the opposite situation: certain governments maintain negative tendencies to Russia, which is often against the interests of their people. For example, “I think that ordinary US citizens have absolutely nothing to do with it, they do not understand what is happening”; “To all residents and citizens of Ukraine. We have no enemies there. I repeat once again: Ukraine is a friendly state.” Therefore, the people could make positive changes to which Russia will respond. This position is supported by a “Cooperative” self-describing narrative, which reflects Russia's willingness to cooperate even under harsh criticism.

The majority of narratives about "others" are negative. However, it does not necessarily mean that Russia sees other actors negatively overall. The responsive and self-concern character of Russia's self-presentation does not require having positive connections with others by highlighting shared values, norms, and other features. Consequently, the image of others is used to emphasize Russia's positive characteristics by counter positioning. However, when it comes to PD messages a variability of interpretations should be as limited as possible because different discourses have an opportunity to translate negative characterization of "others" as an aggressive rather than intended self-concern policy.

Partly because of that Russia's negative characterization is dominantly directed at the West, with a tendency to concentrate on the US in recent years, rather than on "others" in general. The negative narratives include four major groups. The first group is a "threat" narrative, which surprisingly received low interest in general with growing mentions after not the Crimea crisis itself, but after continuous criticism and sanctions for Russia's involvement in it (Figure 8). As mentioned before, the Crimea involvement represented controlled policy and did not directly require having an emergence of a "threat" narrative. The narrative generally covers Russia's perception of NATO as a "threat". For example, "We are not concerned about the advancement of democracy to our borders - we are concerned about the advancement of military infrastructure to our borders."

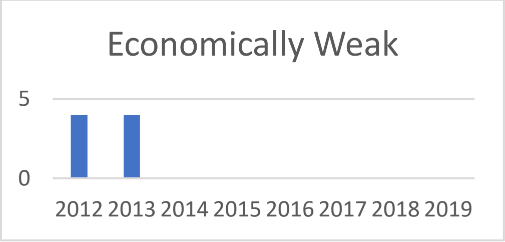
Figure 8. The "Threat" Narrative



Source: Author

The other narratives describe Russia's vision of the economic, political, and moral weaknesses of the "others". Putin highlighted Western economic weakness because of the lasting influence of an economic crisis in 2008 on Russia's economy. The "Economically Weak" narrative directly praised Russia's economy over the Western by highlighting again the "Strong Hand" narrative. According to the narrative, a centralized government could do more effectively and trustworthy with investments. For example, "And the crisis in several European countries has demonstrated this. The keyword here is inefficiency"; "On the contrary, to a certain extent I am even glad of this because it showed all the insolvency and all the unreliability of investments in Western financial institutions." However, with high political discussion activation that the Crimea crisis brought to the table the "Economically Weak" narrative disappeared (Figure 9).

Figure 9. The "Economically Weak" Narrative

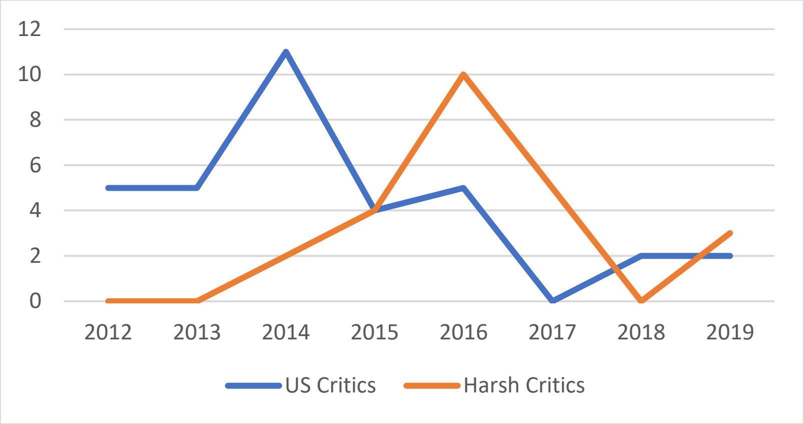


Source: Author

The "Politically Weak" narrative concerns the political characterization of "others", including domestic and foreign policies. Although, domestically directed narratives like "Bad Governments" and "Indirect Domestic" critics are rare in comparison. As noted, the US is a major actor for criticism. Russia's negative and responsive attention to the US through the "US Criticism" narrative was constantly present during the stated period with a spike after the Crimea Crisis in 2014 (Figure 10).

At the same time, Russia has started to use an intense criticism or "Harsh Criticism" narrative, which differs from the previous one in the degree of emotionality of the phrase, or in the content, especially negative intonation. Besides, the narrative includes not the only US but increased attention to the West. For example, "They wanted to reign. Sit on this throne. So, what is next?"; "So how did NATO allies react? Everyone is nodding like Chinese idiots, not analyzing anything that is going on"; "Then they destroyed Iraq, destroyed Libya, almost destroyed Syria, rocked Egypt, Tunisia to a terrible state". The narrative also demonstrated a spike in 2016 following previously noted differences in responsiveness between 2014 and 2016 (Figure 10).

Figure 10. The "US Criticism" and "Harsh Criticism" Narratives



Source: Author

Both critics are also supported by a range of narratives, which should reinforce the narratives by highlighting the moral characteristics of the West and the US in general. It helps to construct a discourse around the “others” through pictures that are more complete and easy to comprehend. The “Morally Weak” narratives provide underlying features or motivation of “others” to conduct certain negative actions against Russia. That includes narratives about the character, “Conflictual”, “Overestimated” and “Irrational”, and about the motivations, “Need of Enemy” and “Double Standards”. For example, “It would be more correct to ask this question to the USA and the EU, whose logic is difficult to understand”; “The current administration and the leadership of the United States Democratic Party are trying to blame all their failures on external factors”; “Our partners decided that they did not need this alternative point of view. This is their decision.”

However, the key narratives that criticize the "moral" side of "others" are two interrelated narratives “Precarious” and “Betrayal”. The first narrative reflects Putin's generally negative attitude to the intentions of his Western partners. It constructs a morally unacceptable image of behind-the-scenes intrigues that, if not directed against Russia directly, do not include it. For example, “About democracy. Freedom is usually spoken about by the ruling classes to fool those over whom they rule”; “The question arises: is there a desire to reignite the war and provoke hostilities?”. Compared to the “threat" narrative, which presupposes the presence of certain indicators, the narrative “Precarious” appeals to a conspiracy-like approach to characterization.

This narrative is connected to a high degree to the “Betrayal” narrative, which lays out certain expectations from “others”. The basis of this narrative is laid in the recurrent example of NATO expansion in the 1990s. At that time, American politicians, in personal conversations with the Russian leadership, promised not to expand NATO to the post-Soviet countries. Echoes and direct reflections of the consequences of this betrayal are directly reflected in narratives today. However, the narrative refers to actions of “others”, which, in contrast to “Precarious”, are made openly in violation of any rules, including both international law and diplomatic. For example, “we have always strived for open, partner relations with the United States, but in return, we received various reservations and attempts to interfere in our internal affairs”; “Regarding whom to believe and who not to believe and whether it is possible to believe at all: no one can be trusted.”

Separate but extremely important narratives paint a picture of countries that share the US position. The "Pawns" narrative effectively deprives other countries of the right to make independent decisions if they are consistent with US decisions. As mentioned above, the main criticism falls on the United States, while the rest of the Western countries are not criticized directly, but through their collective identity. Thus, German acceptance of a decision is most often seen as decision-making by the West. The West, in turn, is the chessboard of the United States, on which they move "pawns" as they want. Coupled with the Imposition narrative, the actions of the US allies are presented as a forced follow-up of the leader, rather than sovereign decisions. For example, “So how did NATO allies react? Everyone is nodding like Chinese bobbleheads, not analyzing anything that is going on”; “Germany has a very strong foreign influence on the media, primarily from overseas”; “Such a unipolar, unified world does not need sovereign states, it needs vassals.”

5.3. The Construction of “the World”

The perception of the world, as well as “others”, is a key to the understanding of the discourse on Russia, how Russia sees itself, and wants others to see it. Five narratives with one positive, three negative, and one neutral characterization describe the World (Table 23). Among them, only 18% are positive and 9% have neutral characterization with a dominant 72, 7% of negative (Table 24). A more precise description of each narrative is given in the Methodology section (Narrative Description 2.1.4).

The “World Inclusion” narrative presents a vision of changing the international configuration, which could allow Russia and other states to restore their “Natural Place”. The narrative does not present the idea of challenging the West, but rather that inclusion is an inevitable fact. In comparison, the “World

Changing" narrative picture a more unpredicted development, which may or may not change Russia's positions, therefore, it presents a neutral characterization.

Table 28. The World-describing Narratives

Character	**Narrative**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**Sum**
Negative	Instability	5	10	8	3	2	2	1	3	34
	World Crisis	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	2	8
	World Unstable	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	6
Positive	World Inclusion	2	3	6	0	0	0	1	0	12
Neutral	World Changing	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	6

Source: Author

Table 29. "The World" Narrative Characterization

Characterization	Amount	%
Positive	12	18
Neutral	6	9
Negative	48	72,7

Source: Author

The "World Unstable" implies that changes would undermine the system of international relations, which leads to negative results. For example, "Unfortunately, the international situation is becoming less and less predictable"; "You know, the world, in general, is always and in our time woven from contradictions." Partly at odds with the desire to embrace change, these narratives present a pessimistic picture because of their interconnection with the "Instability" narrative. This narrative covers an existing fear of domestic crisis, mostly caused by opposition forces taking to the streets and overthrowing the government. For example, "The question about Ukraine has already been raised here. Do you want dozens of these, excuse me, Saakashvili to run around the squares?"; "It is known what the situation in Libya has led to. The disintegration of the country, murder of diplomats, including the American ambassador. Chaos, in short." High attention to the "Instability" narrative is explained by the possibility to undermine one of the major features of its self-presentation through the "Strong Hand" narrative. In general terms, it also creates a threat to the stability of Russia or Russia's political elites specifically. Seen as a threat, the

“Instability” narrative is actively used for emphasizing the need for more centralized/ authoritarian political behavior.

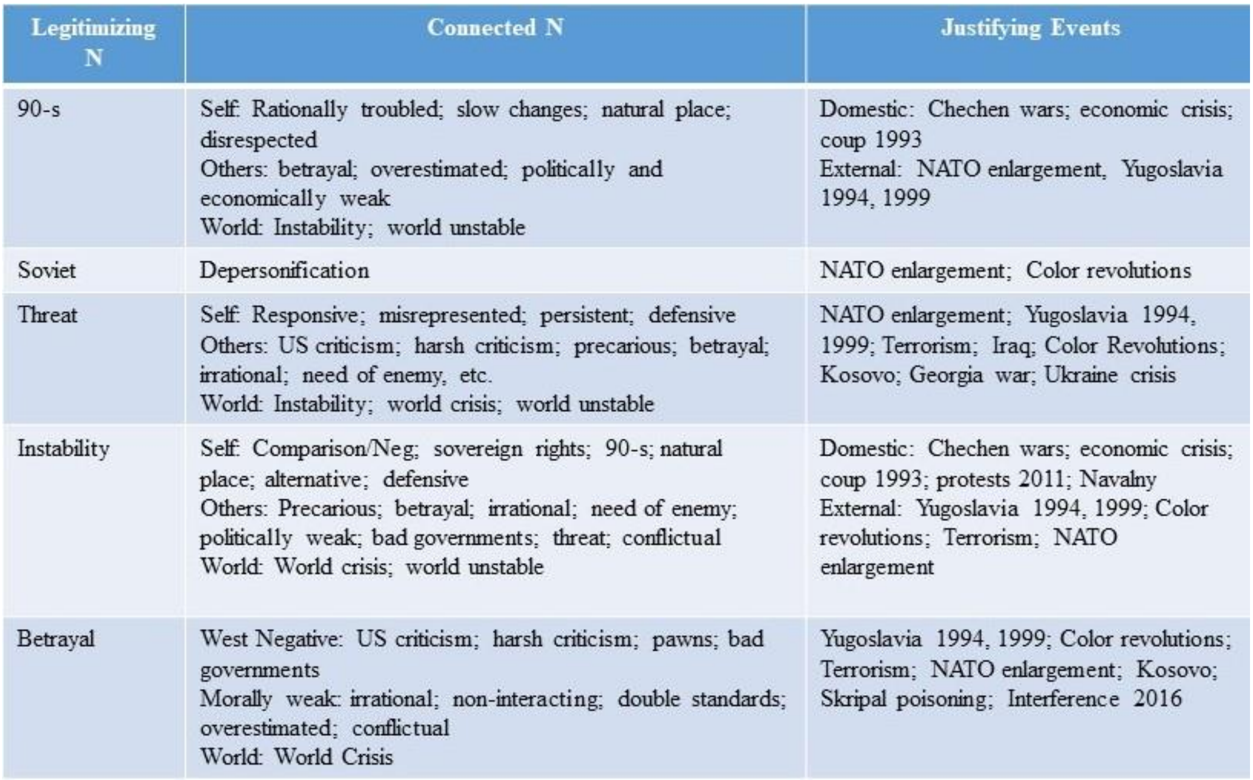
The “World Crisis” narrative emerges after the Ukrainian Crisis, largely as a supportive narrative for a new milestone in Russian foreign policy behavior. If the “World Unstable” narrative implied the existence of different paths of development, including positive, or uncertainty, the “World Crisis” highlights that Rubicon between international norms and anarchic behavior has been crossed. Consequently, this pessimistic certainty emphasizes the need to combat the threat, reinforced by the narratives of “Irrationality” expected from “others”. Moreover, the use of the “World Inclusion” and “Law Obedient” narratives decreased since the Ukrainian crisis, damaging Russia's positive image. As Putin noted, “Right now, there seem to be no rules at all” or “The future does not call, it scares”.

5.4. Intertextuality and Effectiveness

By referring to the concept of intertextuality this research argues that presented narratives should be viewed within the social context in which they are enacted and in close interrelation with each other. This allows not only to access the intended meaning behind narratives, which are most commonly ignored in the literature but also to understand the process of meaning/knowledge legitimization. Although many narratives were distinguished, the central “strong hand” narrative was selected to demonstrate how discursive practices enact knowledge and narratives to create a wider discourse (Table 25). The importance of this narrative is reflected from the beginning of Putin’s first term. The call for a “strong hand response” (Russel, 2002) during the Chechen wars, with which he had to deal with, played a crucial role in the legitimation of Putin as a president.

The narrative refers to certain characteristics of Russia, which could be described as ideas of an authoritarian/centralized government that possesses the power to conduct an independent, sovereign policy directly and assertively. This narrative is one of the key ones for describing Russia because it embodies the model of both external and internal behavior. Its main purpose is to demonstrate Russia's sovereignty, independence, integrity in decision-making, adherence to principles, effectiveness, and more importantly, the stability that it provides. To ensure all this, a strong hand is needed to guide the country's development and foreign policy. Nevertheless, especially from the position of liberal democracies, those narrative seems ineffective withing tacking into account historical and socio-cultural context.

Table 30. The Strong Hand Narrative



Legitimizing N	Connected N	Justifying Events
90-s	Self: Rationally troubled; slow changes; natural place; disrespected Others: betrayal; overestimated; politically and economically weak World: Instability; world unstable	Domestic: Chechen wars; economic crisis; coup 1993 External: NATO enlargement, Yugoslavia 1994, 1999
Soviet	Depersonification	NATO enlargement; Color revolutions
Threat	Self: Responsive; misrepresented; persistent; defensive Others: US criticism; harsh criticism; precarious; betrayal; irrational; need of enemy, etc. World: Instability; world crisis; world unstable	NATO enlargement; Yugoslavia 1994, 1999; Terrorism; Iraq; Color Revolutions; Kosovo; Georgia war; Ukraine crisis
Instability	Self: Comparison/Neg; sovereign rights; 90-s; natural place; alternative; defensive Others: Precarious; betrayal; irrational; need of enemy; politically weak; bad governments; threat; conflictual World: World crisis; world unstable	Domestic: Chechen wars; economic crisis; coup 1993; protests 2011; Navalny External: Yugoslavia 1994, 1999; Color revolutions; Terrorism; NATO enlargement
Betrayal	West Negative: US criticism; harsh criticism; pawns; bad governments Morally weak: irrational; non-interacting; double standards; overestimated; conflictual World: World Crisis	Yugoslavia 1994, 1999; Color revolutions; Terrorism; NATO enlargement; Kosovo; Skripal poisoning; Interference 2016

Source: Author

The meaning behind the narrative acquires its legitimation in close interrelations with others. As demonstrated in Table 25, there are several narratives that directly and indirectly affect the construction of the “strong hand” narrative. First, Putin uses Russia’s experience throughout the 1990-s to illustrate the necessity to combat existing instabilities by implementing a firm and comprehensive policy. In that context, political systems in countries of “others” are given as an example of a volatile decision-making process, which comes with democratic institutions and reelections that could change the entire policy. The policy of former U.S. President Donald Trump gave more justification for this narrative by illustrating how the struggle between parties can damage policies. Russia’s political system despite its authoritarian tone is presented in line with the old-style democracy of the majority ruling. At the same time, since Russia’s political elite also counter positions the country’s “self” to the “soviet past”, the narrative of “depersonification” helps to mitigate the authoritarian tone.

It also implies that “others”, especially the ones with volatile policies, could present a “threat” to Russia or IR. Since those actors rely on the U.S., which pursues imperialistic policies, they need an enemy and “misrepresent” Russia to justify their policies. Thus, Russia has to be “persistent” and “defensive” to be prepared or combat incoming threats. On the other hand, such discursive practices as addressing the morality of “others” help to explain their behavior based on intrinsic characteristics if rational/strategic justification is less convincing. For example, while NATO expansion is easy to present as a strategic threat, various sanction policies could be presented through the desire of “others”, especially the ones that are not directly affected by ceratin Russia’s policy decisions, to engage in conflict. In addition to that, the world is presented as changing or in crisis, which creates an additional, undefined, and vague perception of a threat coming from the world or IR itself.

It also follows that the discourse and narratives are embodied in history or contemporary events, which provide them with intersubjective meanings. Practically all mentioned crises provide legitimation for the “strong hand” narrative in one way or another. While some of them endanger domestic situations, others present external threats. Since the volatility of IR is raising, it could be expected that authoritarianism that follows alongside with “strong hand” narrative will also be increasing. In addition, the more “threats” exist or are discursively constructed, the “stronger” the hand should become. It is visible in the example of changing “the world” narratives, which gradually shifted discursive practices from presenting a window of opportunities, to being in crisis.

It also follows that the positive character, adaptability, or acceptance of a given narrative will depend on how well its elements reproduce the narratives of the target society. In other words, countries that view the West as a cunning schemer and the world as unstable are more likely to appeal to a strong hand narrative. This applies to third-world countries that perceive the state of the international system as unfair, authoritarian governments that are losing power, and individual groups within the country that are unhappy with the decision-making system. On the other hand, since the legitimacy of narratives depends on specific historical and socio-cultural rather than on international context, their acceptance as part of intersubjective knowledge by a targeted society is limited. The international context would mean utilizing discursive practices to construct and legitimize meanings of narratives through predominantly internationally significant events. For example, while Arab Spring or the Iraq war could rely more on intersubjective international knowledge, the Chechen wars are intrinsically Russia’s history.

Conclusions

The period from 2012 to 2019 became a consolidating, although never final, stage of a long process of Russia’s identity construction/reconstruction. This consolidation allows approaching discourse and discursive practices that reflect Russia’s self-presentation and foreign policy in modern times and make conclusions on how meanings about “self”, “others” and “the world” are created. According to the data collection and analysis carried out, the most visible element in the projection of discourse on Russia is the low emphasis on positive self-characterization. Although no empirical studies establish a “decent” or “necessary” amount of positive narratives that should be present within the construction of the discourse, 55.9% is only slightly above half of all narratives mentioned in eight years.

The second element is that a part of positive narratives is built on the principle of opposing qualities to “others”. The “otherness” plays an important role in the construction of Russian discourse, as it allows legitimizing and elevating positive narratives at the expense of the “others”. The positive form of comparison seeks legitimization by collective identification, or “we are like them”, while the negative relies on legitimization from the opposite, or “we are not like them”. At the same time, “others” also include two past or historical forms of “self”: the Russia in 1990-s and Soviet Russia. Those past forms also allow to compare contemporary Russia to what it had been or could be.

The third element is an accent on “strong hand”, which represents Russia as a centralized sovereign state that has a certain leading role to play in IR. This narrative represents one of the more comprehensive features of Russia’s discourse. It allows not only to present a unique characterization of Russia, such as “sovereign democracy”, the need for which is legitimized through historical and socio-cultural elements of Russia’s discourse. Thus, with the strengthening of identity, the justification for a “strong hand” also increases. Due to the close interconnectedness of narratives with each other, a general positive discourse concerning Russia will be formed taking into account the extent to which the audience's view of the world corresponds to Russia’s construction. The more conjugate narratives satisfy the equation of the discourse construction, the more likely it is that the result will be accepted. The “strong hand” narrative demonstrates intertextuality that significantly affects discourse. It heavily relies on a specific Russia-centered intersubjective knowledge, deriving its explanatory discursive power from Russia’s past and recent history. At the same time, this narrative is formed domestically for arguable domestic purposes since it does not act as a self-sufficient alternative to the Western system within the “alternative” narrative.

Chapter 6. Case Study of Russia-Japan

Introduction

The case study of Japan is significant for understanding how power, intersubjective knowledge, and identities contribute to PD practices. While it is important to analyze how Russia describes itself concerning the foreign public in general, it does not reflect how various historical and socio-cultural constructed aspects of state-to-state relations affect PD communications. On the other hand, since Japan besides having its own identity, also maintains the identification with various collective identities, it provides an opportunity to analyze PD practices in a unique setting. First of all, it aims at discovering understudied PD communication between Russia and countries in Asia. Second, it exposes how Russia narrates itself toward a country outside of the "traditional" West but simultaneously has a strong association with it.

Since the end of the Cold, War Russia concentrates its foreign policy and PD efforts on the European part of the international sphere spending a huge amount of finances to influence the Western, mostly American and European, societies. Rawnsley (2015, 284) noticed that the biggest Russian broadcasting service Russia Today (RT) mainly involved in the "information Cold War with the US", which reflects disproportional financial attention to the Western part. In 2019, RT and the second-largest broadcasting service Sputnik claimed to have received $440 million from the budget (RT, 2019). This amount is likely to rise because both RT and Sputnik expand the availability of their information in different countries and languages.

Concerning Japan, the creation of Sputnik Japan in 2014 demonstrated Russia's interest in transmitting more information directly to Japan's public. Moreover, two official Facebook pages were established in 2013 (Russia's Embassy in Japan) and 2016 (Rossotrudnichestvo/Russkiy Mir), highlighting the importance of the chosen period from 2012 to 2019. In other words, Russia established channels of direct interaction and information transmission with the Japanese public as opposed to translated information by local news agencies, which often impose their interpretations. Therefore, this period demonstrates a visibly different stage in how Russia interacts with the Japanese public through PD channels. This area remains heavily understudied with an exception of a recent James Brown publication (2021), whose recent work examines the range of strategic communication tools Russia uses concerning Japan. In contrast to that, this study examines the highest level of Russia's political elites, whose position informs and forms the reality on the ground.

Moreover, in May 2016 Shinzo Abe promoted a "new approach" toward Russia, which concentrates on improving bilateral relations by expanding the number of interactions on different levels, including economic cooperation, cultural and educational exchanges, defense ministries officials' consultations, etc. In addition, the parties agreed on joint economic activities in the disputed territories, which reintroduced an old and highly ambitious goal from the 1990-s. The signed Eight-Point Cooperation Plan fostered a people-to-people connection with the cross-cultural years, increasing the level of exchanges and other PD-related activities. The "new approach" initiatives created a significant amount of empirical data for the analysis of PD efforts between countries.

At the same time, Russia-Japan relations are complicated by the existence of the US-Japan alliance, which implies not only the US military influence but also collective discursive barriers. As noted above, collective identities impose control on a "discursive" dimension of the relevant community, which combats incoming or existing within the group's alternative discourses. For example, it produces/reproduces, disciplines, and polices the interpretations of various narratives, stories, or facts, thus, creating discursive obstacles. Despite Japan is not a "Western" country by its history, judging by its commitments, values, and followed norms, it is a Western-lining country or at least perceived as such by various international actors, including China and more importantly Russia. Therefore, Russia's attempts to transmit its discourse collide with not only Japan's "local" discourse but associated/imposed/adopted Western discourses on Russia.

Therefore, this study analyses Russia-Japan relations to gather a unique set of available empirical data on how the two main figures in Russian PD, the president, and foreign minister, create meanings about the self and bilateral relations through various discursive practices. This study aims to understand practices of meaning-making, which Russia utilizes to construct knowledge of, or discourse on, its bilateral relations policy towards Japan. At the same time, before doing so, it is necessary to understand how discursive practices were constructed through recent historical interactive contexts. This will allow us to not impose meanings of practices and narratives but derive them directly from interactions.

6.1. The Historical Overview of Russia-Japan Relations

6.1.1. Russia-Japan Relations in Soviet Retrospect

After the end of the Second World War, the relations between Russia and Japan were rarely depicted as a separate let alone important direction of Soviet's foreign policy. Because of the Cold War ideological and political confrontation between USSR and the West as a "significant other", scholars mostly disregarded Japan as an independent player (Petrov, 1973; Stephan, 1974; Neu, 1975). Without a necessary discussion level of sovereign rights, as Kimura Hiroshi (1980, 711) noted, Moscow continued to appeal to the concepts of maintaining the status quo and strategic defense in relations with Japan. On the other hand, Japan "has ignored, or pretends to ignore" (ibid) the USSR's position and political/strategic aspects of the territorial dispute. Consequently, because of the impetus Soviet scholars rarely mentioned the territorial problem between countries (Semenov, 1975), while the Japanese side concentrated on the discussion of legal aspects (Nakagawa, 1981, 19) and "valuable marine resources" (Omori, 1970, 18-26).

At the same time, Western researchers constantly pointed out the military, strategic and economic importance of Japan, including the disputed islands, for the US-USSR confrontation (Stephan, 1974; Falkenheim, 1979). Although the US-Japan alliance presented an obstacle, some researchers noted that economic cooperation might be the way for the USSR and Japan to cooperate (Petrov, 1973; Neu, 1975) even with the presence of territorial issues (Stephan, 1974; Hirasawa, 1975). As Hiroshi Oda noticed that the territorial debates affected USSR-Japan trade only in an indirect way (Hiroshi, 1985, 105). In addition, James Simos (1974, 169) argued that both Japan and the USSR were extremely interested in the development of Siberia, postponing the resolution of the territorial issue for an "appropriate period". Nevertheless, a continuation of the US-USSR confrontation and the existence of the US-Japan alliance damaged the ability of countries to cooperate on a large range of issues.

The US-Japan relations represent not only a military partnership. An influence of the postwar U.S. deployment of soldiers in Japan and a Western-managed administration, which reflected the U.S. dominance, had a long-term consequence on the discourse about USSR in Japan. The US developed capitalism system presented a powerful incentive against the USSR and its political system. It even led to a divergence of the Japanese Communist Party from the Soviet discourse, which resulted in its steady decline in influence (Kim, 1976). In other words, the party that could have played the role of redistributor for the Soviet discourse and narratives had distanced itself from it.

In addition, as Kimura (1980, 712) noticed, low interest in diplomatic and interstate interactions led to a formation of the "psychological" and "symbolic" significance of the long-existing territorial problem. Despite successes that Japanese diplomacy made across the globe, a prevailing American influence negatively affected Japan's efforts to cooperate with socialistic countries (Svetlov & Hohlov, 1975). Fuji Kamiya attributed the Japanese government's inability to formulate a clear position on the USSR to the post-war "liaison" type of diplomacy, which affected attempts to communicate with the world as a newly independent nation (Fuji, 1983, 25) with its voice and position. Consequently, the Japanese government, as well as the public, acquired "strong anti-Soviet feelings" (Falkenheim, 1979, 621), which was in part a result of adherence to the Western discourse about the USSR.

At that time, USSR recognized the importance of PD as one of the ways to project the discourse to countries under Western influence. As the Comptroller General, or the director of the U.S. Government Accountability Office, noticed in the report to the U.S. Congress in 1979, the Soviet Union "evidently invested more in PD than any other country in the world" (Report to the Congress of U.S., 1979, 25). However, its top-down approach had a significant set of limitations. For example, China's PD was seen as being more effective than the Soviet, because of a direct two-way "people's diplomacy" between the Chinese government and policymakers in Japan (Park, 1976, 483; Kimura, 1980). At the same time, despite the U.S. influence, the public connections between USSR and Japan were in a good shape, because of mutual interest in everyday life, culture, and sport (Latyshev, 1984, 1171).

At the end of the Cold War, the last USSR leader Mikhail Gorbachev introduced principles of "new political thinking", which started to shape how the Soviet Union and consequently Russia perceived "self" and "others". Rather than just being a way of administrative or political reconfiguration, it had far-reaching goals of introducing new values and norms of political behavior (Checkel, 1993, 271-272). In other words, to reconstruct identity following comparatively limited economic and political capabilities of the declining USSR. The first and the most important point proclaimed the end of the confrontation between the USSR and the "West", which played the role of a "significant other". This meant recognition of the right of other political systems to exist and, accordingly, the rejection of the class struggle (Gorbachev, 1987, 143). In many ways, this provision was the unofficial end to the Cold War, which also marked changes in relations with other countries.

The proclamation of the “new thinking” did not result in the instant progress of USSR-Japan bilateral relations because of two main factors. Firstly, because of unresolved historical issues and a settled political distrust between nations that through decades influenced discourse and discursive practices of the bilateral relations. Secondly, the Soviet government under Gorbachev perceived Japan as a source of credit (Chernyaev, 2006, 683) since that was the most important issue to address. While a series of visits by official and unofficial delegations to Japan, including Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, initiated positive changes, economic cooperation remained the main issue of discussions. Gilbert Rozman argued that despite the new turn toward Asia, Gorbachev’s administration did not yet fully recognize the importance of Japan as a political actor (Rozman, 1988, 273-274), which negatively affected the range of issues for discussion. Some researchers noticed, that both sides avoided other areas because of the territorial problem (Young, 1988, 327). However, in line with constructivists’ argument, Nossov argued that even a little “friendly gesture” on the part of the USSR could have initiated a dialogue (Nossov, 1989, 261) even if the resolution of the territorial issue is postponed until better times.

Despite the step away from the bloc view of international politics, the presence of the military forces in countries such as South Korea and Japan in the United States continued to play an important role in the Soviet Union and Russia’s foreign policy. Despite that, in a speech in Krasnoyarsk in September 1988, Gorbachev showed an interest in a more active conversation with Japan. He expressed expectations that Japan could become a country with significant political power (Kimura, 1991, 799), which illustrated Gorbachev’s belief that this will mean existence from the sphere of US dominance (Chernyaev, 2006, 687). Based on that new vision, in December 1988, the sides discussed the territorial dispute and economic cooperation. They decided to establish a permanent working group under the representation of deputy foreign ministers to work on the issue of a peace treaty and the territorial settlement.

The main expectation of the Japanese side was that the Soviet government would retreat from its intransigent position, or at least acknowledge the existence of a territorial problem between the two countries. After entering the post of prime minister, Noboru Takeshita proposed the concept of the so-called “extended equilibrium” (Kimura, 2008, 105), which expressed Japan’s intention to systematically improve relations even in the absence of progress in resolving the territorial dispute. This signaled an actual retreat from previous long-held Japan’s position of tying the economy to politics. Moreover, some researchers and politicians from both sides started to discuss the return of two islands, Shikotan and Habomai (Slavinsky, 1993: Menon, 1996), instead of all four.

On the other hand, economic issues remained the main concern for the Soviet side. The rapprochement with Japan was expected to facilitate the integration of the Soviet Union into the economic sphere of the Asian-Pacific region, join international economic organizations, as well as receive large-scale economic assistance. To achieve a turnaround in bilateral relations, Gorbachev decided to visit Japan in April 1991. The analysis of Japanese newspapers during 1991 showed significant attention to USSR and Gorbachev (Dunham, 1992, 35-50), which created a precondition for possible changes. Despite not moving forward on territorial or even economic issues, the Soviet-Japanese summit crossed a historically significant Rubicon between the stagnation of the Cold War period and a new approach to cooperation. The important changes also happened in discursive practices of the Soviet Union that emphasized dependence on Japan from the U.S. and the issue of great power competition. In contrast, the Senior Advisor of the President of the USSR Alexander Yakovlev stated, “The greatness of the state must now be about other criteria - the criteria of morality, peaceableness, the desire to cooperate, and so on” (Alexander Yakovlev Archive, 1991). In other words, new discourse implied a possibility to cooperate with Japan even with the continuing presence of the U.S. forces on its territory. However, some groups in Russia did not agree with these discursive changes and argued against the “sale of territories” (Song, 1992, 124).

The 1991 summit demonstrated that USSR political elites started to communicate with Japan directly without referring to the US as a silently or indirectly present counterpart of negotiations. As Joseph Nye argued after the end of the Cold War “more independent Japan will follow its interests” (Nye, 1992, 113), which was noticed by USSR’s political elite as well. As an example of an expressed increased independence, both USSR and Japan issued a joint statement on the Iraq crisis in 1990 (Takayama, 1991, 35). Consequently, USSR had less reason to perceive Japan as negatively predisposed to “other” because of its alliance with the U.S. and more as an “independent/normal”, as Shinzo Abe called it, country.

Concerning PD, both Japan and the Soviet Union did not fully recognize the significance of public opinion (Hasegawa, 1992, 76). On the one hand, researchers noticed three major features in Gorbachev's approach to diplomacy that ultimately affected still not differentiated from its PD: he reshuffled "old" diplomatic structures with new appointments, paid specific attention to public presentations of foreign policy, and expanded levels of cooperation from ministerial to local levels (Lynch, 1987). On the other hand, his policy continued to concentrate on the Western direction without real engagement with other parts of the world, which reflected how the USSR underestimated the importance of Asia while dealing with Europe and the U.S. (Matveyev, 1992, 89). In other words, PD toward Japan during the last years of the Soviet Union and throughout the 1990-s was functioning based on residual effect rather than being flexible independent policy direction.

Although a desire to improve public opinion about USSR was not recognized as a PD but rather simply being part of the diplomacy, the Japanese public appreciated Gorbachev's initiatives. It was reflected not only in the public discourse but in pop culture as well. For example, in 1991, Japanese video game makers released "Gorubi no Pipeline Daisakusen" (ゴルビーのパイプライン大作戦), in which a little girl dressed in Russian national clothes interconnected pipes, which was a metaphor for Gorbachev's policy of strengthening relations with Japan. Music in that game was made under influence of Russian folk songs that during the soviet period maintained a positive perception toward Russia among the Japanese public (Minoru, 1992, 179).

One more game with the name "Ganbare, Gorubi!" (がんばれゴルビー!) reflected the effect that Gorbachev's policy had on Japanese public opinion. It presented Gorbach as a corruption fighter that distributes goods among its citizens. Other examples, such as the Japanese farmers who gave the name "Gorubi" (Gorbachev) to a grape variety, showed an unprecedented level of positive attitude towards the new Soviet policy, which does not require any direct financial incentives through PD. This and other examples led American newspapers to state that Gorbachev almost became "an idol" for Japanese people, highly raised interest in the East block literature, and affected tourism (Koshida, 1990). The initiative to reconstruct the state identity, values, and norms received the name "Gorby fewer" (Hasegawa, 1992, 75). In a sense, it did more for the Soviet image than a direct government, thus, more doubtful its intention, the policy could achieve.

Thus, Gorbachev's new political thinking had not only political and economic consequences. Despite the remaining political and economic obstacles, public opinion in Japan responded positively to domestic tendencies in the USSR and the improvement of bilateral relations. Opinion polls at that time demonstrated an increase in "favorable" perception of the Soviet Union from 18 percent in 1989 to 42 percent in 1990 (Bridges, 1991, 56). Moreover, the historically established discourse on Soviet identity diverged from the discourse on a new policy of the USSR and consequently Russian identity, which made it possible in the future to enjoy a positive surge initiated by Gorbachev. As Semen Verbitsky analyzes the attitude of the Japanese towards the USSR noted that the Japanese public distinguished two identities: it associated Russia with positive features and the USSR with negative ones (Verbitsky, 1990, 153-154). Consequently, Russia's public image obtained fertile soil to grow. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia-Japan relations demonstrated a certain range of possibilities for a new emerging Russia to reconstruct its international image and transmit the discourse of a newly emerging country decoupled from the ideological past.

6.1.2. Russia-Japan Relations from 1991 to 2000

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia-Japan relations received an impulse to improve bilateral dialogue. Despite the main focus of new Russia's political elites continuing to be on the Western direction during the first Boris Yeltsin term, some indicators of changes are worth noticing. For example, Yeltsin's meeting schedule during a visit to New York in 1992 demonstrated the rising importance of the Asian region: 10 minutes were allocated for the meeting with the President of France, 20 minutes with the Prime Minister of Hungary, and 30 minutes for the meeting with each leader of China, Japan, and India. On the other hand, the meeting with the Chinese delegation was right after the UN secretary, while Japan did not receive the importance of positioning.

Understanding Russia's desire for investments, Japan adhered to the promise of "uncertain prospects" of economic assistance in exchange for concessions from Russia (Gelman, 1994, 51). It implied a link between economic assistance and the solution of the territorial issue. Newnham (2001, 248) characterized this policy as "Specific linkage…a gift with very visible strings attached-that is, linked to an immediate political demand". Despite Kimura (1994, 50-52) stating that Japan's provision of financial assistance was of great importance, it contributed only part to the economic and political recovery of Russia.

Moreover, acting within its international collective identity Japan had to provide financial assistance. Miyashita (2001, 49-50) noticed that G7 members put serious pressure to achieve that. G7 and particularly the U.S. understood the necessity of stabilizing Russia to avoid the danger of its possible political and economic collapse. Consequently, Japan had to adhere to its collective commitments to financially contribute to the recovery as a developed country. At that time even New York Times showed support to Russia instead of Japan and reacted with understanding to the cancellation of Yeltsin's plan to visit Japan in September 1992. It was a result of the unwillingness of the Japanese government to take a step toward the discussion of territorial claims without economic coercion (*The New York Times*, 1992).

Concerning foreign policy, Japan preferred to act pragmatically and steadily. As Newnham argued, "Japan must be seen as a friend who can be trusted with the additional territory" (Newnham, 2001, 258), which the Japanese government seemingly understood as becoming a friend as a necessary precondition for the dialogue. During that period, it demonstrated a certain level of sovereignty in the discussion of events important to Russia's emerging identity. This in part was allowed by the U.S., which tried to avoid expressing its position toward the territorial dispute between Russia and Japan. When the U.S. Ambassador in Russia Thomas Pickering supported Japanese claims over the islands, he was nearly recalled (Elleman, et.al, 1998-1999, 503). In addition, Bill Clinton was promising to do anything to help Russia and Japan to cooperate (Clinton Digital Library, 2018a).

Consequently, the Japanese government held a position of non-intervention during the First Chechen War. As stated during the press conferences, the situation in Chechnya is a "domestic matter" of Russia (MOFA of Japan Press Conference, 1995a). Moreover, in opposition to its colleagues from the EU and OSCE, the Japanese government did not accuse Russian Federation of violating the law (MOFA of Japan Press Conference, 1995b). Despite Japan did not proclaim Russia to be a "friend" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1996), it also tried to avoid unnecessary complications even at the expense of not sharing collective interpretations with its allies.

On the other hand, Russia did not have an official position on what to do with the territorial issue, mostly because of domestic political confusion after the collapse. Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time Andrei Kozyrev called for a compromise solution that implied a gradual transfer of the two islands over 10–15 years (Buszynski, 1993, 52). In response, Russian parliament representatives demanded to cancel future visits and find other scenarios (*Izvestia*, 1992). The Social Democratic Party of Russia held a more radical position: the return of the islands or the condominium (Pribylovsky, 1993, 124). Thus, what course of action to take or what discourse to project was not defined by the competitive powers. At that time the Russian government was not able to establish discursive control similar to the contemporary well-managed system of communication/propaganda.

In addition, it was unclear what will be the future role of Japan in Asia and how it could contribute to the restoration of Russia's international political power. Several researchers argued that Japan could act as a source of major impetus for Russia in the Northeast Asia region (Anikina, 2005; Korolev, 2016). Others suggested that Russia and Japan could balance expanding China's influence (Mandelbaum, 1995; Kuhrt, 2007). Evgeniy Primakov (1996) in an article stated that the new world order is based on the sovereignty of countries in foreign policy decision-making. He argued that as Japan's political weight grows, the alliance with the United States will weaken. It signaled that the previously existed question about Japan's sovereignty and ability to act independently to agree on any serious strategic partnership with Russia remained a significant issue.

The cornerstone of Russia's expectation was economic assistance, which Japan could provide not for a restoration of the economy and more specifically for the development of the Far East region. Although researchers often exclude Russia from the Northeastern Asian economic sphere (Chang-Jae, 2000; Amnian, 2006), the resource potential of the Far East was significant for the region. Some researchers from Japan (Okada, 2002) and Russia (Shkuropat, 2002; Trenin & Miheev, 2005; Petrunina et.al., 2018) noticed the resource potential of the Far East and the prospects for its development through investment partnerships. The growth of publications on this subject was also facilitated by the creation of research centers, such as the Institute of Economic Research for North Asia (ERINA). At the same time, as the Russian newspaper Kommersant (1993) noticed after Yeltsin visited Japan in 1993, Japanese companies were in no hurry to make investments because of an unstable political and economic situation in Russia.

On the other hand, Russia's political elite made several important steps in terms of communication with the Japanese public and elites. As newspapers like Nezavisimaya Gazeta (1993) and Rossijskaja Gazeta (1993) argued that Yeltsin's apologies to prisoners of war imprisoned after the end of World War II had a great impact on bilateral relations. Yeltsin himself wrote in his autobiography that after the apologies brought, “the very tone, the direction of the dialogue” changed in a positive direction (Yeltsin, 1994, 100). Kimura (1994, 54) also agreed that the apologies improved the Japanese public perception of Russia as a “normal country”. Moreover, as a result of the visit in 1993, both sides signed the Tokyo Declaration (Tokyo Declaration on Japan-Russia Relations, 1993), which reflected the recognition of the territorial problem that the Soviet Union denied. In addition to positive changes in perception of Russia’s image, Boris Yeltsin tried to build ties with Japanese leaders on a personal level, which allowed him to present Russia and Russia’s leaders from a more “friend” side, thus, substituting PD efforts, while the policy still did not obtain a feasible from.

Second Yeltsin’s term was more productive in almost every direction partly because of Japan’s pronounced willingness to cooperate. According to Prime Minister of Japan Ryutaro Hashimoto (1996-1998), strengthening relations with Russia was “without doubt one of the most important issues” (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 1997). This statement was supported by a new “multilevel approach concept” (Malashevskaya, 2016, 101), which encouraged a complex interaction with Russia on major economic and political issues. This approach opened a “new era” with the emphasis on “long-term” perspectives, rather than on expectations of an instant solution to the territorial problem (Shimotomai, 1999, 17). Rozman (1999, 28) noted that this policy change was partly due to increased cooperation between Russia and Japan achieved during the previous years. Consequently, both sides concentrated on the implementation of the Tokyo Declaration, the final goal of which was a peace treaty agreement.

At that stage, interpersonal diplomacy gains momentum. In 1997, The Japan Times noted that the Japanese government set a goal to build trust between Ryutaro Hashimoto and Boris Yeltsin through fishing and visiting a sauna together. This implied the possibility of creating “friendly” relations between the two leaders, similar to what U.S. presidents Bill Clinton and Yeltsin had (*The Japan Times*, 1997). It also included a meeting “without ties”, or in an informal atmosphere, on November 1, 1997. The parties signed several agreements, summarized under the name of the Yeltsin-Hashimoto Plan, which allowed Russia to secure Japan’s support for APEC membership (*CNN*, 1997). In addition, the parties began to call each other “friends” (“friend Boris” and “friend Ryu”), and Yeltsin promised to *podbrosit' skipidarčiku* (“throw turpentine”, lit. “to speed up”) to the peace treaty discussion (*Kommersant*, 1998).

As for the Japanese position on issues important to Russia's identity reconstruction, it maintained a neutral stance. In the context of NATO enlargement in the 1990s, despite a statement that the expansion of NATO should bring stability and maintain peace in Eastern Europe, Japan also hoped that both sides would find an appropriate solution that will satisfy both sides (Press Conference by Spokesman for the Delegation of Japan Hiroshi Hashimoto P-8 Discussions, 1996). In the case of the Yugoslavia bombing in 1999, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its "understanding" of NATO's actions but did not declare support. Former Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said that they (Japan) have their "own considerations" concerning the controversy between the positions of NATO and Russia/China (Press Conference by the Press Secretary, 1999). Taking into account the U.S.-Japan alliance, the statement showed an attempt to avoid confrontation with Russia even at the expense of discourse discrepancy. In addition, the second Chechen War from the position of the Japanese Government remained "the internal affairs of Russia" (MOFA of Japan Press Conference, 1999).

In addition to an increased volume and productivity of political talks, Russia and Japan expanded PD initiatives. As Zinberg (1995, 97) argued, besides traditional approaches, "unofficial diplomacy" could play a role as a bridge between nations, "influence public opinion" and include the population into the dialogue for an impetus of negotiations. During this period, Ziegler (1999, 19) noted the growth of cooperation between various social groups of Russia and Japan, including "local officials, business groups, and cultural associations" that played a role in "better understanding" of each other. At the same time, because Russia was not able to adopt the concept of PD, it lacked "professional sophistication" in how to establish a long-term policy (Matveyev, 1992, 82). Despite a more active engagement in political dialogue, both Russian and Japanese politicians misconducted communication with the public(DeVillafranca, 1993) since it was not involved in the dialogue or not fully utilized to achieve a breakthrough. Some researchers also noted that Russia's diplomacy, in general, was negatively affected by the old-fashion perception of the U.S.-Japan alliance as a "threat" and "misperception of Japanese policy" due to that (Blank, 1993, 149-155).

The new Prime Minister of Japan, Keizo Obuchi (1998-2000) attempted to maintain the momentum. In his Policy Speech on November 27, 1998, he declared "the first official visit by a Japanese Prime Minister to Russia in 25 years" (Policy Speech by Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi to the 144th Session of the

Diet, 1997). This visit was supposed to confirm the desire of both sides to move toward a peaceful treat conclusion by making it historical. However, further negotiations slowed down because of Yeltsin's poor health (Daniels, 1999, 32) and opposition in government (Okuyama, 2003, 40). While mainly affecting his political power and influence, Yeltsin was also not able to maintain discursive power to reach a consensus on seeing Japan as a friend to cooperate.

In conclusion, the two Yeltsin periods were not similar to each other in their impact on the negotiations overall. Having a weak self-identification and damaged political and economic systems after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia lowered its foreign policy initiative, which blurred its stance on Japan. While both the U.S. and Japan avoided a confrontation with emerging Russia during the first period, with a growing understanding of "self" and an increased presence in the discussion of the international agenda, Russia decoupled from the West once again on the issues of NATO enlargement and Yugoslavia, increasing risks of confrontation for the forthcoming period. Since the position of Japan on international issues remained relatively neutral, it facilitate a continuation of negotiations. In addition, despite missing knowledge about PD, Russia managed to improve its public image, including among the Japanese people. The increased numbers of exchanges, media coverage, and cultural initiatives positively affected long-existing stereotypes about Russia.

From the constructivist perspective, it can be argued that the 1990-s complicated bilateral relations rather than moved them forward. The constant discussion of "failures" of the peace treaty negotiations and expectations of the Japanese public that Russia will return to the disputed islands, led to the formation of the "false hope syndrome" (Polivy & Herman, 2002). As political psychologists argued expectations are one of the important parts of identity construction (Edelman, 1988; Brewer, 2001, 117; Asher, W. & Hirschfelder-Ascher, B., 2004). Therefore, a low engagement of the Japanese public and the inability of Russia to present its official position on the territorial issue through PD had significantly more negative consequences on the negotiations. In other words, the discourse was created by the media and political elites that expected easy and fast connections but Russia was not able to present its position, partly because it was not clear what to present.

6.1.3. Russia-Japan Relations from 2000 to 2012

During the first two terms of Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev from 2000 to 2012, Japan played a role of a unique alternative actor, which could help Russia to pursue its reemerging foreign policy goals. On the one hand, it represented a developed nation with significant economic capabilities to assist the development of Russia's Far East region. On the other hand, despite a certain level of commitment, Japan could not be characterized by the Western identity, with which Russia saw an increasing number of complications. As Yukio Okamoto (2002, 70) argued "Japan has a role to play as a less concerning representative of the West and as an example of non-Euro-U.S. democratic tradition". Similarly, Russia also redefined and introduced its type of power-concentrated political system – "sovereign democracy" (Lipman, 2006; Okara, 2007; Orlov, 2008). Although not identical, the two concepts had a lesser level of differences in proclaimed values than between Western and Russian understanding of democracy. It also meant that both sides have some alternative interpretations of democracy from the Western collective understanding.

In addition to that, the first foreign meeting of the Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori was scheduled with the new Russian president Vladimir Putin on 29, September 2000 rather than with any other leader. The meeting itself lasted for seven hours in total with the Japanese counterpart calling for the prevention of Russia's isolation as the result (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2000). In response, Russia supported the necessity to reform the UN structures and include Japan as a permanent member. During consequent meetings, Putin and Mori announced shared positions on international issues, which signaled an attempt to align discourses about them.

Both leaders were interested in using and expanding the previously practiced "personal diplomacy". Mori's father Shigeki Mori contributed to the construction of the Soviet Union's image in Japan by organizing visits of children and adults in the USSR and developing close cooperation with the town of Shelekhov (Russia), where he consequently bequeathed to bury part of his ashes. Similar to Gorbachev's period, Mori's father acted to the benefit of Soviet PD by familiarizing the Japanese public with Russia. On the other hand, Putin actively used his experience in the sport to promote "Judo diplomacy", which cultivated a more positive perception of new Russia and Russia's leaders in Japan. Despite the BBC agency ridiculing Putin for allowing two Japanese children to put him on the mats during sparring (*BBC*, 2000), it demonstrated a closeness between the Russian president and the Japanese public. One of the famous judo practitioners, Yamashita Yasuhiro, praised Putin’s deeds and personality, suggesting that judo is one of those phenomena that creates a sense of community (Yamashita, 2003) or a sense of a common identity.

In April 2001, Yoshiro Mori gave up his post to Junichiro Koizumi (2001-2006), who did not manage to establish close relationships with Vladimir Putin. Despite his claim about establishing a personal friendship with the Russian president in early 2003 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2003a), during an interview with the Russian TASS on May 30, 2003, Koizumi avoided the question about his relations with Putin. In addition, he did not reply to the question about how personal connections between leaders affect international relations (*TASS*, 2003), which reflected his preferences for a more pragmatic, old-fashioned, and conservative policy (Xinbo, 2005, 122). It also marked an end of a “friendship diplomacy”, which was similarly reflected in Japan-China relations (Self, 2002, 78).

The document signed by the leaders in 2003 covered a range of international issues (terrorism, North Korea, Iraq), but reflected certain changes in Koizumi’s rhetoric (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2003b). In the document, the Japanese side depicted two historical events: one reflected the story of how the Japanese government properly treated Russian prisoners of war and another how Japanese prisoners of war in Russia died because of improper treatment. The Japanese prime minister through discursive practices positioned Russia in a negative form to highlight the existing power imbalance in Russia-Japan relations. Simultaneously, it signaled a more aggressive policy toward Russia. As Ferguson (2008) noted, the memory of war and the prisoners’ treatment had a significant negative effect on the perception of Russia in Japan, which the latter attempted to utilize.

By counterpointing two events, Koizumi also highlighted differences in norms and values, which Russia and Japan share, rather than bringing countries together. In addition, Japan's stance on the territorial dispute gradually shifted from the steady peace treaty discussion toward a necessity to return the four islands followed by the peace treaty, while only two of which were included in the Joint Declaration of 1956 (Japan spurns Russian initiative 2004). This agreement provided for the transfer of Habomai and Shikotan from Russia to Japan after the conclusion of a peace treaty but did not say anything about the other two islands.

In addition to a nationalistic orientation of the new Japanese government, some changes happened regarding its position on international issues. Japan continued to support Russia’s fight against terrorism, considered the second Chechen War an “internal affair of Russia” (MOFA of Japan Press Conference, 2000), and provided financial and other assistance to the war victims (MOFA of Japan Press Release, 2006). At the same time, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 showed a significant differentiation from Russia's position. Koizumi decided not only to support the U.S. actions but also sent the Self-Defense Forces to provide humanitarian and technical support to the allied forces led by the United States. Although Koizumi openly supported the position of U.S. President George W. Bush, Japan did not take part in offensive maneuvers and did not share the definition of an "axis of evil" (MOFA of Japan Press Conference, 2002). The "axis of evil" played a role of a common enemy for the Western identity, strengthening connections among its members. Koizumi reflected his nationalistic desires to ensure more active participation of Japan in international events, which was followed by a different, closer level of engagement with the Western identity.

The reaction of the Japanese government to a new wave of NATO enlargement in 2004 reflected a new turn in Japan's self-identification. In contrast to previous periods, official statements from Japan rarely mentioned the call of Russia and NATO to agree. Oppositely, Japan made several claims that the expansion of NATO leads to the spread of freedom and values shared by Japan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2007), thus, adopting the Western discourse. The Japanese government also indirectly supported armed intervention in Libya (MOFA of Japan Press Conference, 2011). Consequently, some scholars such as Nishihara Masashi (2006) argued that thanks to common values and interests, Japan could in the future strengthen cooperation with "global NATO" while Russia under Putin was denied the possibility to have a necessary "specific set of values" (Baker, 2002, 97; Ikegami, 2007). Thus, these actions led to the formation of new discrepancies in discourses and identities between Russia and Japan.

John Miller (2004, 78) argued that "Koizumi's main challenge is not to "resolve" the Northern Territories issue, but rather to maintain sufficient progress toward a territorial settlement". However, in September 2004, Koizumi traveled by boat near the disputed territories making a demonstrative gesture of nationalist-driven changes (Scanlon, 2004). Although some commentators argued that Koizumi's nationalism consisted of "empty gestures" of symbolic significance (McCormack, 2004), it affected Russia's position. The following year, Vladimir Putin stated that Russian sovereignty over the four islands was a "result of the Second World War" and that this fact would not change (President of Russia, 2005), which meant that Japan should accept Russia's sovereignty over the islands before any further actions would be taken. Due to the change of political elites' position regarding the territorial issue, in subsequent years both governments reduced efforts to determine a reasonable solution to the dispute.

On the track of Russia's foreign policy, some changes were reflected in the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation of 2008. The wording "Russia will continue the search for a mutually acceptable solution to the design of an internationally recognized border between the two states" (National Security Concept of the Russian Federation, 2000) has been replaced with "inherited problems of the past" will continue (Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2008). It highlighted the position that Russia does not have territorial disputes, but unresolved problems, which roots are traceable to the past. In the context of Japan, it meant the results of World War II, which reflected that Japan gives up on the Kuril Islands.

The strengthening of Russia's recognition of its own identity and role in international relations, which was famously reflected in the Munich Speech in 2007, aggravated differences between Russia and the West. The Russo-Georgian conflict in 2008 marked sharp changes in how two sides see each other, exposing discrepancies in how Russian political elites and the West see future Russia's role in the world. In that context, Japan actively aligned its position within the framework of the G8, along with six other members condemning Russia's actions and arguing it to act as a "responsible" member of the G8 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2008). Nevertheless, Russia continued to claim that it did not violate international law and acted within the framework of the "responsibility to protect" (Evans, 2009, 25).

On a more positive side in terms of maintaining a certain level of cooperation, during the 2000-2012 period, the Russian government did not view a military-political alliance between the United States and Japan as a threat or a "rival". The official position of Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to a large part remained stable and not conflictual, although some Russian diplomats expressed an opinion that the strengthening of the alliance could provoke China and destabilize the situation in the region (Rangsimaporn, 2008, 219). Domestic discourse also was not that predisposed against NATO. Russian scholars even argued that Russia's political elites' vision of the American-Japanese alliance, as a direct threat, is a "vestige of the Cold War" (Amirov & Mikheev, 2009, 7-9) rather than a legitimate concern. In other words, while Japan began a closer association with the Western discourse, Russia had not yet viewed it as a part of its increasing rivalry with the West.

At the same time, further complications appeared when the approval by the Upper House of the Japanese parliament of amendments to the law on “Special measures to form a solution to the problem of the Northern Territories” on July 3, 2010 (*RIA Novosti*, 2009), which were considered by Russia as unnecessary and public-directed measures. Previously, Russian authorities’ response was limited to a condemnation of Japan’s attempts to promote their position, for example, within the framework of the G8 summit in 2008 (President of Russia, 2008). However, after the new amendments, Dmitry Medvedev conducted an official visit to the Kuril Islands, which led Japan to take a turn in condemnation of Russia’s actions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2010). The Russian government responded that Japan does not have a right to dictate the route for Russian presidential visits to Russian territories (President of Russia, 2010). In other words, both sides took a conflictual stance, which was complicated by the growing divergence between Russian and Western identities.

6.1.4. Russia-Japan Relations from 2012 to 2019

Despite the discourse on the territorial issues have remained the same since 2005, at the begging of Putin’s third and Abe’s second terms in power, both sides took symbolic steps toward each other. Regarding the position of Russia on the resumption of negotiations, Vladimir Putin stated in 2012 that the two sides had a chance to solve the problem of the territories “based on a mutually acceptable compromise” or “sekiwake.” Some researchers have misinterpreted the notion of “hikiwake” as a “draw” in Japanese, or 50/50 (Hirose 2018, 3), or have attached extreme importance to it as the sign of a new Russian policy toward Japan (Richardson 2018a, 18). Although important, this phrase had a symbolic meaning as part of “judo diplomacy” and was detached from significant political changes. In a similar symbolic response, the Japanese side used “puppy diplomacy,” and presented an Akita puppy to the Russian president (*Sputnik International*, 2012). The first steps and “hikiwake” did not affect the division of the four islands into two equal parts but reflected the willingness of both sides to highlight the similarities that could supposedly create a sense of shared values.

In 2012, Abe Shinzo became prime minister of Japan for the second time and managed to consolidate relative political stability in the country. This opened up the possibility of resuming the negotiation process with Russia. Without diminishing Abe’s personal involvement, it must be noted that he did not initiate the refreshment of bilateral relations with Russia. The previous prime minister, Noda

Yoshihiko, also intended to visit Russia and renew the conversation, but he did not manage to obtain a new term in power (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2012).

During the election campaign, Abe Shinzo stated his desire to resolve the territorial disputes of Japan with China, Korea, and Russia. However, asserting that he placed an equal focus on each conflict would be a mistake. The bulk of the attention went to the territorial dispute with China over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Abe utilized the conflict with China before his election (Harlan, 2012) and immediately afterward (Sieg, 2012) and continued to focus on the Senkaku Islands as a tool to attract public support (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2012a). The dispute with Korea over the Dokdo/Takeshima Islands came second in terms of importance, as presented by The Japan Times in the Abe cabinet profile (The Japan Times, 2012). There was no mention of Russia in Abe’s official speeches in December 2012 and January 2013. However, at a press conference, Vladimir Putin confirmed that his administration had received a message from the Japanese side about intensifying dialogue with Russia through diplomatic channels after the election (President of Russia, 2012).

The first official statement on Russia occurred during Abe’s Policy Speech at the 183rd Session of the Diet on February 28, 2013 (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2013). Abe Shinzo expressed the hope to visit Russia and gave new meaning to bilateral relations. At the same time, he used specific patterns to describe the territorial problem. The previous prime minister, Noda Yoshihiko, used the expression “based on the principles of law and justice” concerning conflict resolution with Russia (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2012b). In the above-mentioned speech, however, Abe Shinzo described the situation around the territorial conflict with China with the statement that countries should act by international rules. However, the prime minister did not use the same wording for the Russia-Japan conflict. An appeal to international law would not have been conducive to negotiations, given that the territorial conflict between Japan and Russia is based on a divergence of interpretation of the 1951 San Francisco Treaty. This choice showed the new Japanese government’s desire to achieve progress in the negotiations with Russia by changing the narratives around the issue.

The second step taken by Japan towards Russia was the exclusion of questions about the territorial dispute during press conferences from January to April 2013, ahead of Abe’s trip to Russia. Even when a discussion about the meeting with Vladimir Putin was opened, journalists did not ask questions about the territorial issue (MOFA of Japan Press Conference, 2013a). The situation repeated itself in May 2013, following a meeting between Putin and Abe (MOFA of Japan Press Conference, 2013b). The Japanese government once again did not publish information about the meeting on the official page for Russia-Japan relations. Taking into account the fact that questions about Russia-Japan relations were actively asked during the same period of the previous year, it is clear that the Japanese side tried to avoid discussing upcoming meetings and negotiations with Russia in the press. This decision coincides with the position of the Russian government. As Togo Kazuhiko noted after the meeting, if Abe was not "able to preserve confidentiality, the negotiations [could] hardly be productive" (Kazuhiko, 2013). Therefore, the second step was to reduce public discussion of the issue.

The Japanese side's choice to rely on Abe's personal diplomacy and interpersonal contacts with political leaders constituted the third step. Before Abe's official visit, former Japanese Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro, with whom Vladimir Putin established strong personal relations during the short period of 2000-2001 (Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, 2020), arrived in Russia. Mori was supposed to set the stage for Abe's visit. In an interview with news agency RIA Novosti, the former prime minister declared that he wanted to "restore the old friendship with President Vladimir Putin" and "hand over a personal letter from Prime Minister Abe" (RIA Novosti, 2013). This approach recreated the positive narratives which existed under Mori, who called for preventing the isolation of Russia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2000).

A significant event for Russia-Japan bilateral relations took place on April 29–30, 2013. Putin and Abe reached an agreement on strengthening cooperation in the energy sector and accelerating the process of drawing up a peace treaty. Following the visit, the leaders signed more than fifteen documents, including a joint statement by the president of the Russian Federation and the prime minister of Japan on the development of the Russia-Japan partnership (President of Russia, 2013a). The document is one of the most important manifestations of the attempt to conjugate the positions of the two countries on fifty-three points, including the Iranian nuclear program, the kidnapping of Japanese citizens, Afghanistan, Palestine, and Syria. The joint statement outlined the values and norms shared by Russia and Japan, thus creating a connection between identities in the international arena.

On many issues addressed in the document, Japan expressed a clear position correlated with Russian stances, which did not directly manifest in the international arena. For example, the document stated that a solution to the Syrian conflict must be found “through dialogue between Bashar Assad’s government and various opposition groups following the provisions of the Geneva communique of June 30, 2012.” This position connects with Russian and Chinese statements, but not with the stance of Western countries (Meo, 2012), including the US (The White House, 2011), which highlighted the need for Bashar al-Assad to renounce power. Thus, Japan expressed a “non-Western” position as a way to achieve progress with Russia. Therefore, the fourth step before starting a dialogue on the territorial issue was to bring the countries’ positions together to represent “collective” narratives.

Despite these positive initial steps, the Ukrainian crisis and increased military clashes in Syria challenged the further development of bilateral relations. Both cases held foremost importance for Russia, not only because of the military and economic weight of both regions (Allison, 2013) but also because of their connection with its collective identities. The Ukrainian crisis represented a significant challenge to Russia’s identity. One of the leading American constructivists, Tedd Hopf, wrote: “Ukraine was becoming an increasingly intrinsic constitutive part of the Russian Self, one whose separation from Russia was increasingly understood as unnatural, unthinkable, and, indeed, dangerous” (Hopf, 2016, 248). In the case of Crimea, Russia had two options to choose from regarding the type of identity it would adhere to, that of a responsible international actor or the center of the Russian world. As it followed, Russia preferred to receive legitimization of its action from the domestic sphere, resurrecting nationalistic ideas of a common destiny of the Russian people.

In the Syrian case, Russia used different narratives to represent a wide range of collective identities. The first narrative centered on Russia’s intent “to fight against terrorism” (TASS, 2015) as a responsible international actor, a narrative that was in large part formulated during the Chechen Wars and after 9/11. The second narrative concerned “protecting international law” (Putin, 2013), which Putin invoked in an op-ed published in the New York Times. As the territorial conflict with Norway demonstrated, the Russian authorities used a narrative presenting Russia as a norm-following country, standing in contrast to the US. The Syrian conflict also reflected this fundamental difference in Russian and US approaches to international law and the principle of intervention (Charap, 2013, 36). In the fight against terrorism, the difference lay in the fact that Russia had prepared in advance a legal basis for its actions, having received an invitation from the official authorities of the Syrian state and signed the corresponding agreement. One may argue that

Russia used a “respect for sovereignty” narrative and allied with “authoritarian” identities (Heydemann, 2013; Leenders and Kholoud, 2018).

As part of the ongoing negotiation process with Russia, Abe Shinzo found himself in a difficult situation, stretched between the political gains associated with alignment with Russia, on the one hand, and alignment with its collective led by the US, on the other hand. During the Winter Olympics in Sochi, the Japanese prime minister decided to attend the opening ceremony (Walker, 2014), while many Western countries refused to participate—although the reason for this decision was not, officially, related to the situation in Ukraine (Epstein, 2014). Therefore, in a relatively non-confrontational pre-Ukraine crisis environment, Abe awarded political points to Putin by acknowledging the self-promotion and power demonstration efforts represented by the costly Olympic Games.

However, after the eruption of the Ukrainian crisis, the Japanese government did not recognize the legitimacy of the referendum held in Crimea (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2014a) and opposed Russia’s violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty, alongside other G7 members (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2014b). G7 positions were particularly important as an example of “collective actions” and discursive practices. In addition, Japan suspended negotiations with Russia on several investment agreements and imposed a ban on issuing visas to twenty-three Russian political figures.

Researchers generally agree that sanctions had a demonstrative “signaling” effect, rather than acting as a visible, effective tool to curb Russia’s ambitions (Koike, 2014; Kitade, 2016, 3; Brown, 2016). However, this description of the sanctions fails to measure the perceptional dimension of their impact. For Russia, the issue of state sovereignty remains one of the key factors in international politics, which is also enshrined in the SCO documents. As formulated by Lavrov in 2016, Japan tried to make excuses for Russia for joining the sanctions, which outlines the inevitability of Japan's decision to follow the United States (RIA Novosti, 2016).

During the Valdai discussion in 2018, Putin expressed an emotional position regarding the Japanese sanctions, with visible notes of outrage: “[t] he is a step towards increasing confidence, do you think? Where is Syria, where is Crimea, where is Japan? Why did you do this? To increase trust?” (President of Russia, 2018). In another statement, Putin highlighted that sanctions raise doubts about Japan's ability to make independent decisions (President of Russia, 2016). From Russia's perspective, Japan has a low influence on global issues, and the sanctions affirm its commitments to the Western collective. Therefore, despite their limited implications, the sanctions have reaffirmed Russia's concerns about Japan's sovereignty.

Regarding events in Syria, Japan supported the joint efforts of the US and Russia to resolve the conflict (Paramonov and Puzanova, 2018, 681). In addition, according to reports by Russian officials, Japan did not support the position of the G7 countries in Syria (TASS, 2016). However, this attempt to maintain neutrality in the Syrian conflict preceded Putin's 2016 visit. This situation revealed the low efficiency of Japan's short-term attempts to adopt a neutral stance in the context of a general long-term policy of commitment to the Western collective.

Consequently, during a meeting in December 2016, Putin and Abe released a joint statement in which they noted that an important step toward a peace treaty could be the start of consultations on the joint economic activities of Russia and Japan in the South Kuril Islands. The parties entered into sixty-eight agreements, with a total investment from the Japanese side of 300 billion yen (US$ 2.8 billion), with no success on the central issue.

In two interviews, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov highlighted the importance of Japan's commitments to the Western collective. In the first interview, he asserted that to build friendly relations, Japan and Russia need "to remove all irritants," referring to the US's influence on Russia-Japan bilateral relations (The Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2018). In contrast to realism, which concentrates on the military dimension of the alliance between the US and Japan, constructivism focuses on the discursive aspect of their relations. In this case, the problem of sovereignty relates not only to independent political decision-making but also to compliance with discourses. The most neutral position adopted by Japan concerned the Yugoslavia conflict in 1999, when former Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada declared that Japan had its "own considerations" on the issue (Press Conference by the Press Secretary, 1999), thus rejecting alignment with NATO's position and controversial statements against the Chinese and Russian stance.

During the second interview, Lavrov stated that Japan's current support for the sanctions and concerted actions with the US at the UN contradicts the agreements reached in 2016 (Russian Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, 2019d). Despite “the new approach” that Abe offered to Russia, long-term commitments continued to lean “west.” As James Brown (2020) noticed, Japan made the “promise that no US troops would be permitted on the transferred territory. However, commitments to Western identity undermine Japan’s ability to act independently and to gain the trust of Russia’s government. So do Japan’s alignments with the Western block, which Russia perceives as untrustworthy due to broken promises on the issue of NATO enlargement in the 1990s. As Iwashita (2019, 131) noticed, because of that Putin will not trust any promises that Japan could make about the possible establishment of the US’s military bases on the disputed territories in the future.

Alexander Wendt argued, that if one side of the discussion shows a willingness to cooperate, the other side is expected to respond to “[change] the intersubjective knowledge in terms of which their identities are defined” (Wendt, 1994, 390). However, collective identities impose certain intersubjective knowledge shared by members about the “others.” Japan’s commitments to imposed discourses ensure its legitimacy among the members of the Western collective, which provides discursive protection or support at the international level. In contrast with military support, discursive support relies on a tribal distinction between the “good” (members of a group) and the “bad” (members of the opposite group). Consequently, a state does not need to be directly involved in a “bad” state’s wrongdoings to criticize it or support other members of its collective against it.

Despite the achievement of certain results, Russia-Japan relations between 2017 and 2019 did not bring the two countries any closer to the issue of the territorial dispute. An increase in the number of mutual exchanges in various spheres (youth, education, arts, etc.), the easing of the visa regime, and the discussion of joint development of the disputed territories represented, without a doubt, important changes. They were aimed at gradually constructing a positive image between the nations, which can take a significant amount of time. During this process, a sense of collectivity, or at least a decrease in the indifference characterizing the Russian attitude toward Japan, may arise. However, the crucial question remains to what degree the Russian population will be able to influence their government’s decisions.

From a positive perspective, Japan has continued to make two important steps to lower the intensity of its collective identity commitments. First, recent Japan-Russia summit meetings have consistently demonstrated the interest of both sides in security cooperation. It includes “2+2” defense ministers' meetings, joint anti-piracy drills, and dialogue between coast guards. Although it still does not include the U.S., the crucial part of Russia-Japan relations, in the dialogue, less public and more traditional security-oriented talks help to slow down the erosion of trust. Second, Japan continued a discussion of Russian rejoining the G8, which indicates an attempt to bring Russia back into some form of collective identity.

At the same time, Japan's attempts to support collective Western discourse with reduced levels of interference have largely ended. Unlike during the previous period, Japan fully supported the joint resolution of the G7 in 2018, which condemned Russia's actions in Ukraine and Syria (G7 Foreign Ministers Joint Communiqué, 2018). Japan also demonstrated the uncertainty of its position in the Skripal case. On March 4, 2018, several Western countries accused Russia of involvement in the alleged poisoning of the Skripal family and expelled Russian diplomats. Japan initially called for a full and credible investigation to be carried out before jumping to conclusions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2018c), but eventually joined the other G7 states for fear of being isolated from its collective (Brown, 2018, 3). Furthermore, the country sided with G7 critics of Russian actions in the Kerch Strait (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2018a) and with the G7's position on Venezuela (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2018b) and the Softbank espionage incident (Furukawa, 2020).

To conclude, from 2012-to 2019 Japan's positions on international issues crucial for Russia's identity shifted toward a significant divergence. Except for terrorism and nuclear proliferation, on which Russia, Japan, and the West agreed, the discourse of Japanese political elites did not correspond with what Russia tried to promote. Leaning more toward Western identity, Japan made bilateral relations with Russia directly dependent on the development of relations between Russia and the West, or between Russia and the United States. In this situation, the Russian PD faced significant challenges in convincing the Japanese public of the correctness of Russia's discourse on "self". Thus, it is necessary to understand how Russia narrates "self" to the Japanese public and whether identities, values, and norms play a role in this policy.

6.2. Vladimir Putin's Construction of Russia-Japan Relations

There were four major characteristics of Russia's self: global, regional, economic, and cultural. Through these spheres, Putin highlighted not only national interests but also the benefits that bilateral cooperation would bring to Japan. The global and regional spheres described the reach of Russia's political and geopolitical power, which could be useful for advancing Japan's interests at the United Nations (UN), resolving issues related to North Korea, and expanding possibilities for strategic cooperation beyond the United States. The economic sphere referred to Russia's successful economic development and its ability to accommodate foreign capital, especially through investments in the Russian Far East (Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, 2012b). The cultural sphere was a standard aspect of PD that accommodated various forms of exchanges between the populations. The four spheres represented Russia's national interests, the defense of which are crucially important to the presentation of the self as a sovereign and powerful country.

Putin also created a discursive practice of devaluing the role of Japanese political elites to pursue an independent foreign policy. He acknowledged Japan's role in regional affairs and its right to create alliances but retained the right to retaliate (Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, 2016a). Concurrently, Putin treated every move by Japan's political elites to support US policies as a demonstration of limited sovereignty (Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, 2019). He depicted Japan as a 'vassal' of the United States with limited ability, rather than a limited desire to abandon the obligations of its alliance.

In general, this discursive practice was just a reflection of the general practice of othering between Russia and the West, with the United States occupying a central role. This othering did not begin after the 2014 Ukraine crisis or the alleged US election interference in 2016 but it significantly accelerated, including in relations with Japan. The othering reflects the practice of expressing verbally the distinction between Russia and countries that are presumed to follow the United States. It also assists Russia in constructing a positive image through counter positioning practices. Putin often argues that a unipolar world does not imply the existence of sovereign states but vassals, where members of institutions like NATO are considered playing along "Chinese bobbleheads" (Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, 2017a). Since Japan is considered a vassal, this discursive practice is projected and reapplied to Russia-Japan relations.

Consequently, issues of trust define what type of action Putin chooses – cooperative or responsive (President of Russia, 2013b; Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, 2016b). The trust issue stems from distrust of the West, and the United States in particular, after promises to not expand NATO eastward made during the 1990s were abandoned. Since this promise was only verbal, without any legal confirmation, this created a long-simmering grievance with Russia's international partners. This grievance is also partly reflected in

Putin’s desire for Russia and Japan to conclude a legally binding document guaranteeing mutual obligations, where trust is enshrined as a legal agreement (Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, 2018).

Therefore, depending on the state of bilateral relations between Japan and the United States, Russia will pursue cooperative or responsive policies. Regardless, Russia’s willingness to engage cooperatively, even while occurring and reoccurring conflicts, should not contradict its widely defined national interests. On the question of territorial disputes, Putin argued that it is Japan that has a problem (Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, 2016a), noting that ‘the washer is on their side’ (Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, 2014a; Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, 2015), which meant Japan had to make the first move. Putin’s discourse corresponds with a necessity to avoid domestic public outrage over any concessions and to maintain public support, which makes the proclaimed openness to cooperation with Japan more fragile in nature. On the other hand, a responsive policy is a reaction to perceived aggression towards Russia, defined as Japan following US political decisions such as sanctions or publicly assigning blame (Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, 2017b).

In this regard, discursive practice is centered on the transfer of blame from Russia to others by simultaneously highlighting a willingness to cooperate. Japan is required to initiate the first step and show that it is ready to negotiate, with Russia occupying a stronger position as a sovereign state (Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, 2014b). To put it bluntly, Russia does not ask but waits, ready to cooperate to the extent that it does not encroach on its interests. However, Russia’s denial of Japan’s sovereign rights makes Russia's national interests more important, devaluing the cooperation policy and overpowering the limited outreach of its responsive alternative.

Putin’s presentation of Russia to Japan and his discursive practices could be described as responsive cooperation. The major problem that Putin’s discourse reflects in his presentation of the self is a lack of positive self-description, which is substituted by a reflection of the Russia-United States confrontation. In this case, cooperation is conditional or depends directly on how Russia positions Japan: as a regional power with sovereign actions or as a vassal of the United States. With Japan pursuing an independent policy and its own national economic interests, the level of trust between the two countries should grow and ensure broader cooperation. However, independent policy indications are dependent on whether Japan follows US political decisions.

Putin's perception of sovereign value as the main attribute of a strong country allows him to position Russia above Japan in terms of political weight. Consequently, despite the aim of PD to project a cooperative message, Putin’s discursive practice negatively affects the communication strategy and fails to promote the intended discourse. The tendency to deprive Japan of the authority to conduct an independent policy creates a confrontational rather than cooperative bilateral relations atmosphere. This makes full-scale cooperation conditionally dependent on whether Japan follows US policy toward Russia, which defines one of the central issues of Russian trust. While Putin does play a role as a defender of national interests, which fits domestic needs, the chosen discursive practices limit – and often negatively affect – the PD communication strategy concerning Japan.

6.3. Sergey Lavrov’s Construction of Russia-Japan Relations

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has a major role in Russia-Japan bilateral relations and PD functioning. The second in line in the conduct of foreign relations, Lavrov has held the position since 2004, establishing and asserting discursive power in Russia’s foreign policy. Since Russia’s public image is directly associated with Putin, the foreign minister’s role in constructing discourse at the local level is often neglected. From the results of the second data set, 65 documents from 2012 to 2019 were collected. Despite promoting the same PD narratives on Russia and Japan, the discursive practices of Putin and Lavrov diverge in several respects.

First, the foreign minister’s discourse was more straightforward and less diplomatic in its language. In contrast to Putin avoiding the proclamation of an unyielding stance on the disputed territories, Lavrov directly stated that Russia will not give up the Kuril Islands and does not require economic assistance in exchange for a peace treaty. The president, although equally and unapologetically against any concessions, maintained relative flexibility and emphasized the continuation of talks. The foreign minister, on the other hand, highlighted the need for Japan to recognize the results of World War II, which implied recognition of Russia’s sovereignty over the disputed territories as an ‘indisputable fact’ (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019b).

The foreign minister’s discursive practices relied more on the position of power from which Russia, as a great power, communicates with countries that presumably do not exercise sovereign rights. The

Russian concept of sovereignty involves "upholding non-bloc security" (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012a) and resolving bilateral issues without "internationalization" (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014) of the dialogue. Since "bloc approaches to maintaining security have outlived themselves" (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015), cooperation between the United States and Japan was narrated as the loss of sovereignty.

As a result, Japan is presented as a dependent actor, who must nevertheless take the initiative to ask for continued dialogue. As Lavrov stated, "It was Japan that invited us to visit and Russia did not force itself on Japan" (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016a), as well as "are we begging Japan to sign a peace treaty?" (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016b). In this way, Lavrov discursively emphasizes the power difference between a sovereign nation that maintains control over disputed territories and a nation that is a dependent actor.

Second, to reinforce Russia's position of power, Lavrov projected an emotional sub-construction around Japan's actions. Since Russia considers its political system to be more effective than others and promotes this narrative through PD instruments, the Japanese decision-making system was discursively characterized as ineffective due to its overreliance on public opinion and its diversity of political opinions. Accordingly, Lavrov painted a certain emotional, even irrational, characterization of the public onto the Japanese government. In several interviews, he criticized Japanese political elites for having an "overly emotional reaction" (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012b) and called for dialogue "without emotional outbursts or public polemics" (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012c; Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). In addition to Putin depriving Japan of its sovereign rights, Lavrov's discursive practices classify Japan as a junior partner.

Third, Lavrov significantly emphasized the separation of bilateral interactions from public discussion. Based on Russia's perception of political power and Lavrov's traditional view of diplomacy, the interference of the public in ongoing negotiations is seen as an obstacle, often characterized as emotional and irrational. Moreover, Japan's need to share information about the peace negotiations with the public is seen by Russia as a deliberate attempt to score political points, raising the possibility that the public will be dissatisfied with the results (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012d). Lavrov's traditional diplomatic discursive practices also devalue the role of the public in bilateral relations.

Fourth, while the issue of trust dominates Putin's discursive practices, Lavrov relies more on the threat that the United States represents to Russia. In contrast to Putin's emphasis on history and the people living on the disputed islands, Lavrov positioned the territory as "borders" (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016a) or possible areas of future militarisation (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019a). From 2012 to 2019, the foreign minister rarely – if ever given – the issue of trust significant attention. He allowed for economic and cultural cooperation to be considered as a path for strengthening trust, separate from the global dimension, where trust is measured in terms of military capabilities. Since the ministerial level also regards Japan as having a lack of sovereignty, US influence is considered the main obstacle to full cooperation, resolution of territorial disputes, and conclusion of the peace treaty (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019c).

6.4. *The Fourth Data Set Content Analysis*

Russia's Embassy in Japan is a local executive branch of the government that plays a crucial role in the transmission of Russia's PD discourse about "self" to the Japanese public. Its main role is to serve as a channel between domestic discourse creators or creating elements and the targeted audience. However, despite not having the autonomy to affect the main discourse a locally recreated discourse have specific elements based on different forms of interactions that embassies, the president, and the foreign minister have with the public, media, and politicians. Thus, an amount of attention to certain features that the Embassy decided to focus on define the local version of the discourse.

As follows from the data collection and coding, the description of "Self" occupies 63% of all posts followed by the "Advocacy" section with 21% and the "RJR" section with 16%. Thus, the Embassy's focus corresponds with the main discourse about Russia with extensive coverage of "self", but differs in the way it describes it. If Putin's discourse about Russia reflected certain qualities of the country directly, the Embassy does it indirectly. Because the Embassy is an instrument of PD rather than a person with a discursive power, an approach to characterization is theme-based. For example, the theme "Culture" can be taken as a characterization of "Russia is culturally rich", the theme "Military" as "Strong, powerful", the theme "Nature" as "Russia is beautiful", etc.

Following Russia's PD responsibilities distribution, embassies are responsible for cultural diplomacy, which is supported by the way "Culture" occupies 41% of all "Self" codes and 26% of all codes. Among this subsection, 20% is occupied by "Sport" which refers more to "sports culture", because of extensive concentration on values and norms, thus, is taken as a part of the code "Culture". The four codes "Music" (18%), "Art" (7%), Food (6%), and "Literature" (4%) concentrate on describing the traditional culture and tend to ignore recently produces pieces of art, novels, and so on. This represents a problem with describing "Self" because an accent is made on historical Russia rather than on the contemporary state of cultural development. It can create a false equivalence about what Russia is, oversimplifying the complexity of contemporary life and the significance of its culture. In other words, this approach describes what Russia was, not what Russia is.

The code "Cinema" (10%) is to a certain extent different. Despite heavily referring to the Soviet film industry, it covers newly produced movies, including animation. At the same time, a focus on war and history is also distinguishable. Opposite that, two codes "Ballet" (3%) and "Theater" (2%) are directly connected to traditional culture, but at the same time include modern interpretations and theatrical performances. The last code "Religion", which occupies only 1%, challenges once again an assumption that Russia is a religious country. Similar to the main discourse on Russia, religious issues do not receive extensive attention as a part of the discourse on "Self".

Similar to past-dependent codes, "History" (6%) and "War" (4%) also reconstruct Russia's "self" based on previous forms through prolongation of its historical achievements. These two codes directly related to the "Military" (7%) highlighting Russia's extensive orientation on war-related pages on its history rather than on a wide variety of issues. The code "Cosmos" (2%) also covers mostly Soviet achievements in space engineering. At the same time, the Embassy level does not counter position current Russia's "self" to the Soviet Union but describes certain aspects of it, which could be considered to be neutral or positive. In contrast to past-related codes, the code "Contemporary" (7%) describes Russia's everyday life, events, habits, etc. In addition, "Tourism" (5%) and "Nature" (7%) focus on the current representation of Russia's visual attractiveness by often utilizing photos in posts and descriptions of cities or people.

Four codes "Economy" (11%), "Tech" (4%), "Education" (2%), and "Science" (1%) cover the self-representation of Russia as a modern state with a developed economy and a system for supporting technological development. Although “Tech” is mostly devoted to the Soviet space program, these codes in general create economic attractiveness for financial and human resources. On the other hand, only two last codes “Eco” (1%) and “Humanitarian” (1%) focus on a moral characterization or attractiveness.

The second major role of PD that corresponds with codes is “Advocacy” (21%), which refers to descriptions of Russia’s position on major international issues or actors. It also contains the major source of “othering” that comes from distinguishing Russia’s actions or position from “others”. Four codes concentrate on events, which are “Syria” (21%), “Terrorism” (6%), “Kuril” (5%), and “NK” (5%). They refer to areas of major Russia’s interest and involvement that require keeping the Japanese public to be updated on Russia’s view. It is important to note that the “Kuril” advocacy most of the time takes place as a response to Japan’s official statements or actions rather than being initiated by Russia. As noted above, Russia is trying to limit public participation in the negotiations, thereby avoiding the escalation of unnecessary tensions.

Three codes, “US” (14%), “UK” (7%), and “NATO” (2%), express disagreement that Russia has with these actors. It usually concentrates on judgment or condemnation of “others” by highlighting the differences in values, norms, and identities. Mentioning of “US” increased since 2016 after the alleged Russian interference in the US elections. Similarly, the “UK” code appears in 2018 as a response to Skripal’s case and the condemnation of Russia by the UK. The last code “Ukraine” seems to have two reflections: as a situation and as an actor. From the begging of the Ukrainian Crisis in 2014, the code mostly referred to Ukraine as a situation, but after a new government came to power in Ukraine, the judgment started to be applied to it.

In contrast to both presidential and minister levels, the Embassy does not focus on the “othering” part. The “Advocacy” code summarizes 21% of all codes, which is 5% lower than the “Culture” and three times lower than the “Self”. Moreover, the US or “significant other” covers only 3% of all codes. It shows that the local level does not reproduce a high concentration on defining “self” through contrast to “others” and plays a more significant role as a PD channel.

The last part section is “RJR” which is 16% of all codes. As noted above, the diplomatic relations between Russia and Japan continue to be limitedly affected by the public. Thus, the Embassy reflects this approach by devoting only 16% to bilateral relations. At the same time, notions of Russia-Japan cooperation also are indirectly reflected across other codes. Only three codes directly focus on bilateral relations, 61% of which reflect diplomatic actions between politicians and the public, and 33% are devoted to various exchanges. Despite the construction of RJR by Putin and Lavrov, the embassy also does not make the development of bilateral relations directly dependent on the United States.

Conclusions

During the stated period from 2012 to 2019, Russia's position on the territorial issue demonstrated certain changes since 2005. Despite the continued claims of exclusive sovereignty over the islands, the discourse about Russia-Japan relations shifted. The negative emphasis on the territorial conflict's political significance for domestic affairs, for the overuse of which the Russian leadership blamed Japan, gradually shifted to focus on foreign policy. The main reason for Japan's refusal to cooperate is perceived by the Russian elites to be US pressure or intervention in Japan's foreign policy decision-making. Thus, there has been a noticeable decline in the level of sovereignty that Russia recognizes for Japan.

Consequently, despite some researchers positively evaluating seemingly changing Abe's stance on the territorial issue following the "two plus alpha" formula in November 2018 (Kireeva, 2019, 89), an analysis of the discursive changes is crucial to understanding Russia's foreign policy in that direction. Russia's refusal to reciprocate positively by softening the position shows a degreasing influence of concession, which Japan could make to contribute to the negotiations. It follows that Russia's perception of Japan as a part of the Western collective affects the influence of positive signals, which Wendt emphasized as important preconditions for improving relations. Japan's present and future positive signals will unlikely overcome the influence of growing negative interactions between Russia and the West. Japan's belonging to the West, which is assumed by Russia's political elites, will limit the initial theoretical possibility of positive signals penetrating through the wall of distrust. Consequently, the breaking of the cycle of distrust, which involves collective identities, will require collective mutual signals of trust and friendliness instead of bilateral.

According to Russia's Foreign Policy documents (Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, 2016), there is a "struggle for dominance in the formation of key principles for the organization of a future international system." It implies a struggle between the systems of values and identities, which is largely underlined in the literature on Russia-Japan relations. Researchers noticed that the New Cold War will feature values-based confrontation rather than take on an ideological character (Legvold, 2014; Karaganov, 2018; Polyakova, 2019). In this regard, the discrepancy between "self/we" and "others" and their importance is more acute to understand contemporary post-Cold war IR. As noted above, collective identities bind their members with discursive power and form specific interpretations of social reality through narratives and discourses. From Russia's perspective, Japan's positions on the international stage are linked to its commitments to Western identity rather than the result of its sovereign actions. Consequently, Japan's adherence to similar positions as the West on international issues, its use of the same discourse, and commitment to joint statements construct a negative image of Japan's state identity in the of Russia's political elite.

The 2012–2019 period shows that Japan's government initially tried to avoid expressing discourse that differs from Russia's on the various issues but eventually shared the Western discourse. However, without constant or patterned discursive practices and commitment such actions will not lead to a change in perception. The "other" or "otherness" is constructed in a long process of interactions between identities through history and discursive practices. Thus, an established negative perception cannot be rewritten simply through limited demonstrative actions. As Putin constantly reminds Japanese reporters, more than forty years were necessary to build strong ties between China and Russia, with constantly reassured neutrality or support, and to achieve a level of trust at which major steps seem possible.

Regarding PD, the current settings of Russia-Japan relations directly affect the way the countries are positioned within discourse through various discursive practices. At the same time, there are several elements that empirical evidence reveals. Since Putin and Lavrov's discursive practices have established a certain regime of truth that devaluates Japan's sovereignty, the international and regional dimensions of cooperation have become entwined with the growing Russia-US confrontation. Even though the main role of PD is to establish a positive image of the country, Russia's persistent discursive practices rely on demonstrating Russian political power and sovereignty over Japan.

Despite differences in discursive practices both Vladimir Putin and Sergey Lavrov construct Russia, Japan, and bilateral relations through the prism of Japan's relationship with the United States. The United

States, a significant “other”, embodies an identity, values, and interests that often diverge from Russia. Since the deterioration of relations between Russia and the United States after the 2014 Ukraine crisis, the tension between the Russian and US identities increased, leading Russia to consider the United States as an element hindering the development of bilateral relations with Japan. In a sense, the discursive practices that were developed for the United States are being extrapolated to Russian relations with other countries, including Japan. Despite the possibility of interaction in the economy, cultural exchanges, and diplomatic negotiations, the achievement of “real” cooperation necessary to resolve the territorial conflict is becoming unattainable.

Moreover, both Vladimir Putin and Sergey Lavrov represent old-fashioned closed-door diplomacy and do not act by PD standards when it comes to Russia-Japan relations. As noted in the data analysis of Chapter 4, Putin’s presentation of Russia does make an accent positive self-descriptive narratives such as “cooperative”, “inclusive”, and ‘respectful”. At the same time, those narratives are limited concerning Japan. The perceived position of power significantly hinders the effectiveness of PD because Japan is treated as a junior partner for lacking sovereignty, while the Japanese public is regarded as a disruptive force, which lowers the need for positive self-presentation.

Moreover, since Russia and Japan belong to different political systems and have different identities, how their respective domestic publics define state power significantly diverges. Russia’s political elites emphasize the role of sovereignty as the main determining feature of political power, and its projection through PD corresponds with domestic meanings but does not have the same legitimizing effect on the Japanese or the international public. Since Japan upholds democratic principles and a multiparty system, its public relies on a different set of meanings than the Russian discourse on the state and power, significantly undermining the practices of Russian political elites.

Ultimately, these discursive practices demonstrating the strength of Russian political elites, as well as the rigidity of Russian leaders, mainly serve the purpose of domestic legitimation. Using bilateral relations with Japan to demonstrate power is beneficial for maintaining domestic support but it is counterproductive as a part of PD. These practices also limit the likelihood of Russian political elites making, and Russian people accepting, a territorial concession to a constructed enemy or vassal of an enemy.

In contrast to analyzing PD practices as epiphenomenal, PT considers performative characteristics and effects on knowledge/discourse construction; in particular, how various discursive practices contribute to the establishment and normalization of certain knowledge about the self and others. Discourse is based on certain intersubjective knowledge shared by the social group with a discursive power, ranging from political elites to the democratically empowered public. When projected through PD, discourse inevitably faces the intersubjective knowledge of others, resulting in a sort of durability test of the intended message within the target society. Instead of breaking, PD might well reinforce the circle of distrust among nations.

A thorough understanding and careful selection of discursive practices help form an effective PD strategy and communication in general. It also opens up the possibility of understanding the possible causes of failure. The role of discursive practices in establishing a regime of truth is heavily dependent on the level of legitimization the public provides to the main actors using these practices. Since Putin and Lavrov possess domestic legitimization, their discursive meaning-making practices wield significant influence over the establishment of a regime of truth. On the other hand, these practices do not correspond with the Japanese public's intersubjective knowledge. As shown in this study, one of the major reasons behind this mismatch is a perceived power misbalance, which Russian political elites uphold. Regarding the long-term effects of discursive practices on the formation of knowledge, it remains questionable whether a peace treaty or the settlement of territorial issues will be possible, even with changes in government.

At the same time, the Embassy level does not recreate the same US-dependent discourse of bilateral relations. The Embassy is more concerned about presenting various aspects of Russia in a positive light to the Japanese public, which is also not based on "othering" Russia's identity from the identities of others. The "Advocacy" part that partly represents Putin's counter positioning of identities is relatively minor in comparison with constructing positive discourse through Russia's "self". The disadvantage of this approach is the noticeable concentration of discourse through historical parallels between what Russia is and what it once was. Despite the need to use traditional culture as part of the PD, the emphasis on the current state of a country or culture loses in many respects to the historical reconstruction of "self".

Chapter 7. Conclusions

Despite attempts to introduce the theory of PD, they have been largely scattered and unsuccessful. Those theories and debates around them made an important step toward a more inclusive understanding by pointing out that the effectiveness of PD depends on the socio-cultural and political context. However, since the study of IR is dominated by positivism, it is defined by the prevalence of liberal and Western social, cultural, and political ideals in the field, suppressing differing knowledge from a position of equivalent significance. In the context of Russia's unique identity, this problem predisposes a certain understanding of Russia, its foreign policy, and PD communication strategies. As a result, this negatively affects the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological positions of scientists regarding the analysis of non-Western empirical data. Thus, this study addresses the problem of positivism in PD studies by the reintroduction of constructivism to the field, developing conceptual and methodological operationalization, and analyzing how identity contributes to PD.

7.1. Theoretical implication

There are several contributions that constructivism makes to the study of PD, its practices and theoretically measuring effectiveness. First, it views PD, as well as other forms of communications, as products and producers of discursive practices that form discourses and knowledge by narratives. Intertextuality that appears in the process, affects such issues as attraction or effectiveness of communication making it close interconnected with the social context in which interactions between states and/or the public take place. It means that the effectiveness of narratives would be directly affected by the ability of PD actors to seek or utilize the existent legitimizing and avoid delegitimizing connections within the foreign public. The study points out that this requires an understanding of how intersubjective knowledge is formed and how to interact with them to avoid possible discrepancies between meanings/interpretations.

Second, constructivism brings collective identities into the discussion of PD. It highlights that collective identities produce/reproduce, discipline, and police intersubjective knowledge, which predisposed shared understanding of reality. On the one hand, it makes it easier for states that are members of collective identity, to communicate since pre-established meanings behind narratives are similar. On the other hand, if the collective identity, its values, interests, and norms, diverge from other collectives or individual states, it will create discursive barriers, or obstacles, to the legitimization of incoming/external knowledge, discourse, and narratives. By addressing the issue of identity, constructivism allows us to have a better understanding of how knowledge is formed, legitimized, and practiced within a particular historical and socio-cultural context, which has a direct implication for PD communication strategies.

Third, constructivism points out that the discussion of power and discursive power should not be omitted since it affects the understanding of PD practices and communication. In itself, PD represents an exercise of power over the construction of knowledge whether it is done for “good” (resolving conflicts, increasing mutual trust) or “bad” (black propaganda, disinformation) purposes. Since the world, states, and social groups consist of various collective and individual identifications with diverging intersubjective knowledge, PD, its discourse, and narratives will inevitably cause a discursive struggle over meanings. Despite scholars trying to distinguish propaganda from PD by highlighting that the former involves derogating practices, PD is conflictual in itself if divergent knowledge is involved in the process of communication.

7.2. Identity and Narratives

Concerning Russia’s identity, the collapse of the Soviet Union not only caused various political, social, and economic problems but significantly damaged ontological security, or the continuation of “self” preservation and continuation, of Russia. New political elites had implemented various successful and unsuccessful steps throughout the 1990-s to establish or define some stable form of identity. At the same time, international events, which to some extent reconstruct a “social environment” for states, significantly challenged the process of identity consolidation. Since those events presented a challenge that needed to be addressed, political elites had to act following some values, interests, and norms, that eventually acquired more or less defined forms at the end of the 1990-s. Among them were newly redefined Russia’s national interests such as collective integration with near abroad and Asia, the importance of near abroad, and an accent on domestic and international stability that devalues adventurism.

More importantly, with as the political elites’ understanding of the country's identity grew, so did the ability to determine what message Russia wants to convey to the world and the foreign public. At the same time, during the first two terms of Vladimir Putin, Russia’s political elites had tried to position the identity within some form of collective engaging in conversation with NATO, EU, SCO, and other international organizations. It helped to receive a seal of legitimation for its discourse as a growing power intended to acquire its rightful place within great powers. However, the Munich speech marked changes in Russia’s discourse about “self” since the necessity to define its identity through “others” had decreased. Consequently, Medvedev’s term in power from 2008 to 2012 presented various discrepancies in discourse between Russia and the West expanding the potential of the conflict.

Through an analysis of how various forms of this identity were reflected as a result of reactions to significant events, this thesis outlined pre-existing knowledge about the Russian “self”, “others” and “the world”. This analysis also reflects how discourse and various narratives have been formed in the profession and as a result of reactions. The period in question (2012-2019), is an important part of Russian history, reflecting the transition from a relatively passive or verbal expression of identity to an active one. In turn, this expression, or rather its discursive-informational support, is associated with the formation of webs of meanings that positions Russia's actions through interconnected narratives. Consequently, identity analysis is a prerequisite for understanding PD narratives, their meanings, and their influence on domestic and foreign publics.

7.3. Discourse and Different Levels of PD

Concerning PD, the period from 2012 to 2019 became a consolidating, although never final, stage of a long process of Russia’s identity construction/reconstruction. This consolidation allows approaching discourse and discursive practices that reflect Russia’s self-presentation and foreign policy in modern times and make conclusions on how meanings about “self”, “others” and “the world” are created. According to the data collection and analysis carried out, the most visible element in the projection of discourse on Russia is the low emphasis on positive self-characterization. Although no empirical studies establish a “decent” or “necessary” amount of positive narratives that should be present within the construction of the discourse, 55.9% is only slightly above half of all narratives mentioned in eight years.

The second element is that a part of positive narratives is built on the principle of opposing qualities to “others”. The “otherness” plays an important role in the construction of Russian discourse, as it allows legitimizing and elevating positive narratives at the expense of the “others”. The positive form of comparison seeks legitimization by collective identification, or “we are like them”, while the negative relies on legitimization from the opposite, or “we are not like them”. At the same time, “others” also include two past or historical forms of “self”: the Russia in 1990-s and Soviet Russia. Those past forms also allow to compare contemporary Russia to what it had been or could be.

The third element is an accent on “strong hand”, which represents Russia as a centralized sovereign state that has a certain leading role to play in IR. This narrative represents one of the more comprehensive features of Russia’s discourse. It allows not only to present a unique characterization of Russia, such as “sovereign democracy”, the need for which is legitimized through historical and socio-cultural elements of Russia’s discourse. Thus, with the strengthening of identity, the justification for a “strong hand” also increases. Due to the close interconnectedness of narratives with each other, a general positive discourse concerning Russia will be formed taking into account the extent to which the audience's view of the world corresponds to Russia’s construction. The more conjugate narratives satisfy the equation of the discourse construction, the more likely it is that the result will be accepted. The “strong hand” narrative demonstrates a mutual legitimating connection that significantly affects discourse. These connections heavily rely on a specific Russia-centered intersubjective knowledge, deriving its explanatory discursive power from Russia’s past and recent history. At the same time, this narrative is formed domestically for arguable domestic purposes since it does not act as a self-sufficient alternative to the Western system within the “alternative” narrative.

Concerning Japan, during the stated period from 2012 to 2019, Russia’s position on the territorial issue demonstrated certain changes since 2005. Despite the continued claims of exclusive sovereignty over the islands, the discourse about Russia-Japan relations shifted. The negative emphasis on the territorial conflict’s political significance for domestic affairs, for the overuse of which the Russian leadership blamed Japan, gradually shifted to focus on foreign policy. The main reason for Japan's refusal to cooperate is perceived by the Russian elites to be US pressure or intervention in Japan’s foreign policy decision-making. Thus, there has been a noticeable decline in the level of sovereignty that Russia recognizes for Japan. From Russia’s perspective, Japan’s positions on the international stage are linked to its commitments to Western identity rather than the result of its sovereign actions. Consequently, Japan’s adherence to similar positions as the West on international issues, its use of the same discourse, and commitment to joint statements construct a negative image of Japan’s state identity in the of Russia’s political elite.

The current settings of Russia-Japan relations directly affect the way the countries are positioned within discourse through various discursive practices. At the same time, there are several elements that empirical evidence reveals. Since Putin and Lavrov's discursive practices have established a certain regime of truth that devaluates Japan’s sovereignty, the international and regional dimensions of cooperation have become entwined with the growing Russia-US confrontation. Even though the main role of PD is to establish a positive image of the country, Russia’s persistent discursive practices rely on demonstrating Russian political power and sovereignty over Japan.

Despite differences in discursive practices both Vladimir Putin and Sergey Lavrov construct Russia, Japan, and bilateral relations through the prism of Japan's relationship with the United States. The United States, a significant “other”, embodies an identity, values, and interests that often diverge from Russia. Since the deterioration of relations between Russia and the United States after the 2014 Ukraine crisis, the tension between the Russian and US identities increased, leading Russia to consider the United States as an element hindering the development of bilateral relations with Japan. In a sense, the discursive practices that were developed for the United States are being extrapolated to Russian relations with other countries, including Japan. Despite the possibility of interaction in the economy, cultural exchanges, and diplomatic negotiations, the achievement of “real” cooperation necessary to resolve the territorial conflict is becoming unattainable.

Moreover, both Vladimir Putin and Sergey Lavrov represent old-fashioned closed-door diplomacy and do not act by PD standards when it comes to Russia-Japan relations. As noted in the data analysis of Chapter 4, Putin’s presentation of Russia does make an accent positive self-descriptive narratives such as “cooperative”, “inclusive”, and ‘respectful”. At the same time, those narratives are limited concerning Japan. The perceived position of power significantly hinders the effectiveness of PD because Japan is treated as a junior partner for lacking sovereignty, while the Japanese public is regarded as a disruptive force, which lowers the need for positive self-presentation.

Moreover, since Russia and Japan belong to different political systems and have different identities, how their respective domestic publics define state power significantly diverges. Russia’s political elites emphasize the role of sovereignty as the main determining feature of political power, and its projection through PD corresponds with domestic meanings but does not have the same legitimizing effect on the

Japanese or the international public. Since Japan upholds democratic principles and a multiparty system, its public relies on a different set of meanings than the Russian discourse on the state and power, significantly undermining the practices of Russian political elites. Ultimately, these discursive practices demonstrating the strength of Russian political elites, as well as the rigidity of Russian leaders, mainly serve the purpose of domestic legitimation. Using bilateral relations with Japan to demonstrate power is beneficial for maintaining domestic support but it is counterproductive as a part of PD. These practices also limit the likelihood of Russian political elites making, and Russian people accepting, a territorial concession to a constructed enemy or vassal of an enemy.

7.4. Practical Implication and Effectiveness

The question of effectiveness remains vital for PD analysis since it establishes a connection between research and practice, which is essential for the relevance of the study. The practical implication of this research comes from constructivist epistemology applied to PD and communication. Since the theory recognizes social reality as a constructed enterprise, it allows taking into account how various intersubjective knowledge contributes to the formation of unique webs of meanings. While most PD researchers assume that effectiveness depends on factors such as financial and institutional conditions and/or professional education, constructivism goes further, arguing that they are not determinative. By acknowledging the possibility of divergent ideals, values, and norms to be mutually effective/attractive, the constructivist view of PD paves the way for the need to approach, analyze and understand them.

This study argues that the effectiveness of PD is historically contextual, power-driven, and knowledge-dependent, which is reflected/reveal in intertextual connections. Regarding history, the pre-existing knowledge about a certain country/nation/culture will inevitably affect whether the PD of this particular country is effective. For example, British culture that spread over the centuries through colonial connections, trade, and media could cause both negative and positive pre-established associations. In the context of Russia, the history and foreign policy of the Soviet Union predispose a certain negative attitude toward Russia within the West.

Regarding the power-driven character of PD, various institutions and actors produce/reproduce, discipline, and police the discourse. The power to perform these functions depends directly on its legitimization within a particular social group ranging by their size from families, and electoral districts to states. Not always, but foreign states and media have less legitimacy within foreign publics, which creates a pre-existing challenge for PD to increase the legitimacy to consequently increase the effectiveness. In contrast to the dominant majority of PD studies that take the society of a particular country as being homogeneous, constructivism demonstrates that some groups within a particular society will be more inclined to believe foreign narratives over domestic ones. That groups, for example, provide less legitimacy to the domestic government, which means that it essentially has less power over them, and is pre-disposed to believe narratives that criticize it. Consequently, the rise in financing PD programs or educating the staff, while theoretically increasing exposure and proficiency in communication, does not change the discursive power balance overall.

Regarding knowledge dependence, it highlights the consequences of historical context and the power-driven character of effectiveness. Both history and power, although not limited to that two, influence the construction of intersubjective knowledge of social groups. Once history has established pre-existing meanings, power can maintain or change meanings by reproducing or eliminating them from discourse. It means that the importance of a particular historical event is not objective but depends on how and whether it is reproduced as a part of intersubjective knowledge. For example, through educational institutions. The knowledge dependence means that the meanings behind narratives will not necessarily correspond with the foreign public since the intersubjective knowledge behind them could diverge to a significant extent.

At the same time, all this does not mean the inevitable effectiveness or inefficiency of this or that discourse/narrative in influencing the foreign public. A thorough understanding and careful selection of discursive practices help form an effective PD strategy and communication in general. It also opens up the possibility of understanding the possible causes of a failure to communicate. The role of discursive practices in establishing a regime of truth is heavily dependent on the level of legitimization the public provides to the main actors using these practices. Since Putin and Lavrov possess domestic legitimization, their discursive meaning-making practices wield significant influence over the establishment of a regime of truth. On the other hand, these practices do not correspond with the Japanese public's intersubjective knowledge. As shown in this study, one of the major reasons behind this mismatch is a perceived power misbalance, which Russian political elites uphold. Regarding the long-term effects of discursive practices on the formation of knowledge, it remains questionable whether a peace treaty or the settlement of territorial issues will be possible, even with changes in government.

At the same time, the Embassy level does not recreate the same US-dependent discourse of bilateral relations. The Embassy is more concerned about presenting various aspects of Russia in a positive light to the Japanese public, which is also not based on "othering" Russia's identity from the identities of others. The "Advocacy" part that represents Putin's counter positioning of identities is relatively minor in comparison with constructing positive discourse through Russia's "self". It means that discourse projected through the embassy is less likely to cause discrepancies in intersubjective knowledge because of its relatively uncontroversial character. The disadvantage of the embassy's approach is the noticeable concentration of discourse through historical parallels between what Russia is and what it once was. In a long run, this communication strategy is not aimed at increasing the understanding of what modern Russia is since it relies on pre-established knowledge about historical more culture-focused "Russia".

Consequently, there is a way governments can improve practices of PD by bringing constructivism into the discussion. The recognition of intertextuality and socially constructed meanings behind narratives brings a more diverse and comprehensive understanding of communication that allows for modification of policies following the social context. While it is less applicable for the global level of PD, which is not focused on specific social groups, local levels should take charge of defining how and what narratives to construct. It means that they should be able to take a step away from non-contextual practices of the state and adopt a message to the foreign public's intersubjective knowledge, which should aim at causing less friction between the foreign and domestic meaning-making systems.

7.5. Limitations of the Study

This study while aiming at a comprehensive introduction of constructivism theory into the discussion of PD inherits several limitations of its epistemological and methodological positions. First, since the study adheres to postpositivism, it inherently questions such issues as the "trustworthiness" of scientific research in a traditional sense. This study does not deny the importance of ensuring the objectivity of its research, but rather, acknowledging the author's own biases and shortcomings, invites criticism. While the author views objectivity claims in the social sciences as a possible, and not necessarily as such, discourse control tool, the best way to ensure that research is open to question is to provide a comprehensive description of its epistemology, methodology, and data collection/analysis process. Thus, the study provides a step-by-step description of the process, as well as tables of collected and coded events.

Second, the study focuses on the implications of discourse analysis for approaching data, which is inevitably related to how scholars understand a particular discourse. Even in the case of interviews, this issue exists because the researchers use the interpretations they believe are correct without confirming their understanding with the interviewees. Using discursive analysis, the author recognizes a personal connection with the Russian society in which they lived for a long time. This has advantages for analyzing and understanding the discourse but also implies a *certain* understanding. Thus, the study recognizes interpretivism at its core, which is also open to criticism and debates.

Thirdly, concerning understanding Russian identity, one study cannot cover all the important events that affect the process of building the identity of states. Not only because scientists themselves define “importance”, but also because the formation of intersubjective knowledge in society is an oversimplification in any form. This means that “society”, as we define it, is made up of many smaller social groups and individual identities influenced at the societal level, which includes a spectrum of peers and agents of socialization (parents, close friends, teachers, etc.). This study draws a parallel between the events that it considers important for the construction of Russian identity and how these events influence/create the meanings that underpin the narratives. Tot all events that influence the construction were mentioned, which includes domestic events such as the Beslan school siege in 2004 and the protest in 2011. The study has focused mainly on international developments as it reconstructs the “social” environment for the state, as the study of individual identities, from which constructivism borrowed the concept, analyzes how the “self” is formed based on interaction with “others”. To solve this problem, the author aims to continue the research to steadily cover more and more events to include them in a comprehensive overview of the construction of Russian identity.

Last but not least, this study contains certain methodological shortcomings. Despite using a postpositivist/poststructuralist approach, the author has attempted to reconcile scientific paradigms through a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. As a result, the potential of some methods has not been fully explored. The author of the thesis hopes to continue work on improving the relationship between critical and conventional approaches to scientific research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. List of Events for the Data Set Q1

Name	Date	Link
2012		
Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-итальянских переговоров	23.07.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/16047
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам российско-сербских переговоров	11.09.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/16465
Интервью телеканалу Russia Today	06.09.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/16393
Пресс-конференция Владимира Путина	20.12.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17173
Саммит «большой двадцатки»	20.06.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/15698
Совместная пресс-конференция по итогам российско-германских межгосударственных консультаций	16.11.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/16852
Совместная пресс-конференция с Премьер-министром Люксембурга Жан-Клодом Юнкером	25.09.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/16533
Пресс-конференция по итогам форума АТЭС	09.09.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/16432
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам встречи с Президентом Финляндии Саули Ниинистё	22.06.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/15722
Совместная пресс-конференция с Председателем Европейской комиссии Жозе Мануэлом Баррозу и Председателем Европейского совета Херманом Ван Ромпёем	04.06.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/15541
Совместная пресс-конференция по итогам встречи на высшем уровне Россия – Европейский союз	21.12.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/17178
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам встречи с Премьер-министром Турции Реджепом Тайипом Эрдоганом	18.07.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/16014
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам встречи с Президентом Армении Сержем Саргсяном	08.08.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/16180
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по завершении заседания Российско-Украинской межгосударственной комиссии	12.07.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/15945
Петербургский международный экономический форум	21.06.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/15709
Заседание Совета по межнациональным отношениям	24.08.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/16292
Встреча с участниками международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»	25.10.2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/16717
2013		
Интервью южнокорейской телерадиокомпании KBS	12.11.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19603
Интервью Первому каналу и агентству Ассошиэйтед Пресс	04.09.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19143
Интервью немецкой телерадиокомпании ARD	05.04.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17808
Интервью информационному агентству «РИА Новости»	12.06.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18338
Интервью информационному агентству ИТАР-ТАСС	22.03.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17723
Пресс-конференция Владимира Путина	19.12.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19859
Молодёжный форум «Селигер-2013»	02.08.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18993
Посещение телеканала Russia Today	11.06.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18319
Прямая линия с Владимиром Путиным	25.04.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17976
Заседание Совета по межнациональным отношениям	19.02.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17536

Name	Date	Link
2013		
Пресс-конференция по итогам рабочего визита в Германию	08.04.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/17846
Пресс-конференция по итогам заседания Совета сотрудничества высшего уровня между Россией и Турцией	22.11.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/19677
Пресс-конференция по итогам заседания Высшего Евразийского экономического совета	24.10.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/19485
Пресс-конференция Владимира Путина по итогам саммита «Группы двадцати»	06.09.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19168
Пресс-конференция по итогам встречи глав государств и правительств «Группы восьми»	16.06.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/18361
Пресс-конференция по итогам встречи на высшем уровне Россия – Европейский союз	04.06.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/18253
Пресс-конференция с Федеральным канцлером Германии Ангелой Меркель	21.06.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/18386
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам российско-нидерландских переговоров	08.04.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/17850
Пресс-конференция Президента России по итогам рабочего заседания глав государств и правительств стран – участниц Форума стран – экспортёров газа	01.07.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/18441
Пресс-конференция с Президентом Финляндии Саули Ниинистё	25.06.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/18407
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам российско-японских переговоров	29.04.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/18000
Пресс-конференция по итогам переговоров с Президентом Франции Франсуа Олландом	28.02.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/17597
Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-армянских переговоров	02.12.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/19741
Заявление для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по окончании саммита АТЭС	08.10.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/19382
Российско-итальянские межгосударственные консультации	26.11.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19701
Встреча с Премьер-министром Великобритании Дэвидом Кэмероном	16.06.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18350
Заседание международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»	19.09.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19243
Ответы на вопросы журналистов	31.08.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19113
Ответы на вопросы участников Петербургского экономического форума	21.06.2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/18387
2014		
Интервью информационному агентству ТАСС	24.11.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47054
Интервью Владимира Путина радио «Европа-1» и телеканалу TF1	04.06.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/45832
Интервью немецкому телеканалу ARD	17.11.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47029
Интервью турецкому информационному агентству «Анадолу»	28.11.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47104
Интервью информационному агентству ТАСС	14.11.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47009
Интервью российским и иностранным СМИ	19.01.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20080
Интервью индийскому информационному агентству PTI	09.12.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47209
Интервью ведущим китайским СМИ	06.11.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46972
Интервью газете «Политика»	15.10.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46806
Интервью ведущим СМИ Китая	19.05.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/21031
Интервью в преддверии Паралимпийских игр в Сочи	05.03.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20374
Интервью представителям телеканалов «Первый», ВГТРК, НТВ, РБК	25.02.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20336
Интервью российскому информационному агентству ИТАР-ТАСС	15.07.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46218

Name	Date	Link
Интервью латиноамериканскому агентству «Пренса Латина» и российскому агентству ИТАР-ТАСС	11.07.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46190
Интервью российским и иностранным СМИ в преддверии Паралимпиады	06.03.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20384
Заявление для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам саммита «Группы двадцати»	16.11.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47027
Владимир Путин ответил на вопросы журналистов о ситуации на Украине	04.03.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20366
Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина	18.12.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47250
Совместная пресс-конференция с Президентом Турции Реджепом Тайипом Эрдоганом	01.12.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47126
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам российско-сербских переговоров	16.10.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/46813
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам российско-австрийских переговоров	24.06.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/46060
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам встречи с Президентом Швейцарии, действующим председателем ОБСЕ Дидье Буркхальтером	07.05.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/20973
Саммит Россия – Европейский союз	28.01.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20113
Ответы на вопросы журналистов	17.07.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46236
Петербургский международный экономический форум	23.05.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/21080
Заседание Международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»	24.10.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46860
Ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам визита в Китай	21.05.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/21064
Прямая линия с Владимиром Путиным	17.04.2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20796
2015		
Интервью Владимиру Соловьёву	12.10.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50482
Интервью американскому журналисту Чарли Роузу для телеканалов CBS и PBS	29.09.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50380
Интервью швейцарским СМИ	27.07.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50066
Интервью итальянской газете Il Corriere della Sera	06.06.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49629
Интервью ВГТРК	23.02.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47730
Интервью информационным агентствам «Интерфакс» и «Анадолу»	13.11.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50682
Интервью информационным агентствам ТАСС и «Синьхуа»	01.09.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50207
Интервью телеканалу «Россия»	09.05.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49454
Интервью ежедневной египетской газете «Аль-Ахрам»	09.02.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47643
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам встречи с Президентом Франции Франсуа Олландом	26.11.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/50792
Заседание Международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»	22.10.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50548
Ответы на вопросы журналистов	29.09.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50394
Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина	17.12.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50971
Заявление для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов	30.11.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50850
Пресс-конференция Владимира Путина по итогам саммитов БРИКС и ШОС	10.07.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49909
Совместная пресс-конференция с Председателем Совета министров Италии Маттео Ренци	10.06.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49677

Name	Date	Link
Совместная пресс-конференция с Президентом Финляндии Саули Ниинистё	16.06.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49714
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам встречи с Федеральным канцлером Германии Ангелой Меркель	10.05.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49455
Пресс-конференция по итогам переговоров с Премьер-министром Греции Алексисом Ципрасом	08.04.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49220
Заявления для прессы по итогам заседания Высшего Государственного Совета Союзного государства	03.03.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47775
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам российско-кипрских переговоров	25.02.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/47739
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам российско-венгерских переговоров	17.02.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/47706
Встреча с главами ведущих мировых информагентств	19.06.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49740
10-летие вещания Russia Today	10.12.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50911
Прямая линия с Владимиром Путиным	16.04.2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49261
2016		
Интервью международному информационному холдингу Bloomberg	05.09.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52830
Интервью Владимира Путина телекомпании «Ниппон» и газете «Иомиури»	13.12.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53455
Интервью китайскому информационному агентству «Синьхуа»	23.06.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52204
Интервью немецкому изданию Bild. Часть 1	11.01.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/51154
Интервью немецкому изданию Bild. Часть 2	12.01.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/51155
Интервью Владимира Путина МИА «Россия сегодня» и информагентству IANS	13.10.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53082
Интервью Азербайджанскому государственному информационному агентству «АзерТАдж»	05.08.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52650
Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина	23.12.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53573
Заседание Международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»	27.10.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53151
Восточный экономический форум	03.09.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52808
Владимир Путин ответил на вопросы журналистов	16.10.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53103
Ответы на вопросы французских журналистов телеканала TF1	12.10.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53081
Встреча с руководителями международных информагентств	17.06.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52183
Пленарное заседание Петербургского международного экономического форума	17.06.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52178
Пресс-конференция по итогам переговоров с Президентом Турции Реджепом Тайипом Эрдоганом	09.01.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52673
Пресс-конференция по итогам переговоров с Президентом Армении Сержем Саргсяном	10.08.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52684
Совместная пресс-конференция с Премьер-министром Греции Алексисом Ципрасом	27.05.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52024
Пресс-конференция по итогам саммита Россия – АСЕАН	20.05.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/51954
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по завершении российско-израильских переговоров	07.06.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/52125
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам российско-финляндских переговоров	22.03.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/51551
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам российско-финляндских переговоров	01.07.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/52312

Name	Date	Link
Пресс-конференция по завершении российско-венгерских переговоров	17.02.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/51352
Совместная пресс-конференция с Председателем Совета министров Италии Маттео Ренци	17.06.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/52181
Прямая линия с Владимиром Путиным	14.04.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/51716
Ответы на вопросы журналистов	23.11.2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53317
2017		
Интервью Владимира Путина французской газете Le Figaro	31.05.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54638
Интервью американскому телеканалу NBC	05.06.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54688
Интервью телерадиокомпании «Мир»	12.04.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54271
Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина	14.12.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56378
Заседание Международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»	19.01.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55882
Совместная пресс-конференция с Президентом Финляндии Саули Ниинистё	27.07.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55175
Пленарное заседание Петербургского международного экономического форума	02.06.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54667
Пресс-конференция Владимира Путина по итогам саммита БРИКС	05.09.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55535
Пресс-конференция по итогам саммита «Группы двадцати»	08.07.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55017
Совместная пресс-конференция с Президентом Франции Эммануэлем Макроном	29.05.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54618
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам встречи с Федеральным канцлером Германии Ангелой Меркель	02.05.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/page/96
Заявления для прессы по итогам встречи с Президентом Италии Серджо Маттареллой	11.04.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54267
Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-турецких переговоров	03.05.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54444
Совместная пресс-конференция с Президентом Турции Реджепом Тайипом Эрдоганом	10.03.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54023
Совместная пресс-конференция с Президентом Киргизии Алмазбеком Атамбаевым	28.02.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53964
Совместная пресс-конференция с Премьер-министром Венгрии Виктором Орбаном	02.02.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53806
Совместная пресс-конференция с Президентом Молдовы Игорем Додоном	17.01.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53744
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам российско-итальянских переговоров	17.05.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54511
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам российско-словенских переговоров на высшем уровне	10.02.2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/53861
2018		
Интервью американскому телеканалу Fox News	17.07.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58019
Интервью Медиакорпорации Китая	06.06.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57684
Интервью австрийскому телеканалу ORF	04.06.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57675
Интервью американскому телеканалу NBC	10.03.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57027
Интервью телеканалу Russia Today	11.11.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59091
Пленарное заседание Восточного экономического форума	12.09.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58537
Международный форум «Российская энергетическая неделя»	03.10.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58701
Совместная пресс-конференция Владимира Путина и Реджепа Тайипа Эрдогана	03.04.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57192
Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина	20.12.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59455
Совместная пресс-конференция с Премьер-министром Греции Алексисом Ципрасом	07.12.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59349

Name	Date	Link
Пресс-конференция по итогам встречи лидеров России, Турции, Германии и Франции	27.10.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58935
Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-итальянских переговоров	24.10.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58889
Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-венгерских переговоров	18.09.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58586
Пресс-конференция по итогам встречи с Президентом Ирана Хасаном Рухани и Президентом Турции Реджепом Тайипом Эрдоганом	07.09.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/58483
Совместная пресс-конференция с Президентом Финляндии Саули Ниинистё	22.08.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58347
Пресс-конференция по итогам саммита БРИКС	27.07.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58119
Пресс-конференция по итогам переговоров президентов России и США	16.07.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58017
Совместная пресс-конференция с Президентом Франции Эммануэлем Макроном	24.05.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57545
Совместная пресс-конференция с Канцлером ФРГ Ангелой Меркель	18.05.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/57497
Совместная пресс-конференция Владимира Путина и Реджепа Тайипа Эрдогана	03.04.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57192
Пресс-конференция по итогам встречи президентов России, Турции и Ирана	04.04.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57201
Совместная пресс-конференция с Федеральным канцлером Австрии Себастианом Курцем	28.02.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56952
Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-болгарских переговоров	30.05.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57608
Пресс-конференция по итогам переговоров с Федеральным канцлером Австрии Себастианом Курцем	03.10.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58715
Переговоры с Президентом Австрии Александром Ван дер Белленом	05.07.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57678
Ответы на вопросы российских журналистов	15.11.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59131
Заседание дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»	18.10.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58848
Интервью телеканалам Al Arabiya, Sky News Arabia и RT Arabic	13.10.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61792
Интервью газете The Financial Times	27.06.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60836
Интервью Владимира Путина Межгосударственной телерадиокомпании «Мир»	13.06.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60741
Интервью Оливеру Стоуну	19.07.2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61057
2019		
Интервью информационному агентству ТАСС	21.10.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61858
Интервью монгольской газете «Одрийн сонин»	02.09.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61414
Интервью газете «Коррьере делла Сера»	04.07.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60912
Интервью китайскому изданию «Жэньминь Жибао»	25.04.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60344
Интервью сербским изданиям «Политика» и «Вечерние новости»	16.01.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59680
Пресс-конференция Владимира Путина	29.06.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60857
Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина	19.12.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62366
Встреча с главами мировых информагентств	06.06.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60675
Пленарное заседание Восточного экономического форума	05.09.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61451
Совместная пресс-конференция по итогам встречи в «нормандском формате»	10.12.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62277
Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-сербских переговоров	04.12.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/62240
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам трёхсторонней встречи глав государств – гарантов Астанинского процесса содействия сирийскому урегулированию	16.09.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/61542

Name	Date	Link
Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-турецких переговоров	27.01.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61388
Совместная пресс-конференция с Президентом Финляндии Саули Ниинистё	21.01.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61349
Президенты России и Франции сделали заявления для прессы и ответили на вопросы журналистов	19.08.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61336
Пресс-конференция по итогам переговоров с Федеральным президентом Австрии Александром ван дер Белленом	15.05.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60527
Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-турецких переговоров	08.04.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60247
Пресс-конференция по итогам встречи президентов России, Ирана и Турции	14.02.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59830
Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-турецких переговоров	23.01.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59718
Совместная пресс-конференция с Президентом Сербии Александром Вучичем	17.01.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59693
Совместная пресс-конференция с премьер-министром Италии Джузеппе Конте	4.07.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60920
Пресс-конференция по итогам рабочего визита в Китай	24.04.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60396
Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-северокорейских переговоров	25.04.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60370
Российско-венгерские переговоры	30.10.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61936
Ответы на вопросы журналистов	28.02.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59914
Заседание дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»	03.10.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61719
Пленарное заседание Международного арктического форума	09.04.2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60250

Appendix 2. List of Events for the Data Set Q2A

Name	Date	Link
Пресс-конференция по итогам форума АТЭС	9/9/2012	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/16432/work
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Ёсихико Нодой	6/19/2012	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/15693/print
Участникам, организаторам и гостям Фестиваля российской культуры в Японии – 2012	7/10/2012	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/letters/15616
Встреча с главой МИД Японии Коитиро Гэмбой	7/28/2012	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/16069/photos
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Ёсихико Нодой	9/8/2012	http://www.kremlin.ru/catalog/persons/286/events/16422/photos
Поздравление Синдзо Абэ с избранием на пост Премьер-министра Японии	12/26/2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17190
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам российско-японских переговоров	4/29/2013	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/18000
Совместное заявление Президента Российской Федерации и Премьер-министра Японии о развитии российско-японского партнерства	4/29/2013	http://www.kremlin.ru/supplement/1446
Начало встречи с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	4/29/2013	http://www.kremlin.ru/catalog/keywords/82/events/17998
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	9/5/2013	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19157
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	10/7/2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19377
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	2/8/2014	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20184/photos
Участникам VI Российско-Японского инвестиционного форума	3/19/2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/letters/20610
Участникам и гостям «Фестиваля российской культуры в Японии – 2014»	6/2/2014	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/letters/45819

Name	Date	Link
Встреча с руководителями мировых информагентств	9/24/2014	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/comminity_meetings/21090
Ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам визита в Италию	10/17/2014	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46827
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	11/9/2014	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46985
Ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам «Прямой линии»	4/16/2015	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49264
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	9/28/2015	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50392
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	11/15/2015	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50693
Ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам «Прямой линии»	4/14/2016	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/press_conferences/51718/photos
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	5/6/2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/51884
Участникам и гостям одиннадцатого Фестиваля российской культуры в Японии	6/17/2016	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/letters/52172
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	9/2/2016	http://www.kremlin.ru/catalog/persons/356/events/52803
Ответы на вопросы журналистов	9/5/2016	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52834
Пресс-конференция по итогам саммита Россия – АСЕАН	9/20/2016	http://kremlin.ru/catalog/keywords/114/events/51954
Заседание Международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»	10/27/2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53151
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	11/20/2016	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/53279
Ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам встречи лидеров экономик форума АТЭС	11/21/2016	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53284
Интервью Владимира Путина телекомпании «Ниппон» и газете «Иомиури»	12/13/2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/interviews/53455
Начало встречи с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	12/15/2016	http://www.kremlin.ru/catalog/keywords/82/events/53468
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	12/15/2016	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53467
Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам российско-японских переговоров	12/16/2016	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/53474/print
Российско-японский форум деловых кругов	12/16/2016	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53477/audios
Заявления для прессы по итогам российско-японских переговоров	4/27/2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54391
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	4/27/2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54388
Встреча с руководителями международных информационных агентств	6/1/2017	http://www.kremlin.ru/catalog/keywords/82/events/54650
Участникам и гостям Фестиваля российской культуры в Японии – 2017	6/7/2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/letters/55000
Ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам «Прямой линии»	6/15/2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/press_conferences/54794
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	7/7/2017	http://www.kremlin.ru/catalog/countries/JP/events/55008
Заявления для прессы по итогам переговоров с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	9/7/2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55555
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	11/10/2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56040
Бизнес-диалог Россия – Япония	5/25/2018	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57559
Российско-японские переговоры	5/26/2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57564
Заявления для прессы по итогам российско-японских переговоров	5/26/2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57566
Приём по случаю открытия перекрёстных годов России и Японии	5/26/2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57569
Открытие перекрёстных годов России и Японии	5/26/2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57567
Участникам и гостям «Фестиваля российской культуры в Японии – 2018»	6/12/2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/letters/57728
Заявления для прессы по итогам российско-японских переговоров	9/10/2018	http://www.kremlin.ru/catalog/countries/JP/events/58511

Name	Date	Link
Начало встречи с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	9/10/2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/58510
Заседание дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»	10/18/2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58848
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	11/14/2018	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/59125
Ответы на вопросы российских журналистов	12/1/2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59290
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	12/1/2018	http://www.kremlin.ru/catalog/persons/356/events/59287/photos
Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина	12/20/2018	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59455
Переговоры с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	1/22/2019	Переговоры с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ
Заявления для прессы по итогам переговоров с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	1/22/2019	Заявления для прессы по итогам переговоров с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ
Встреча с главами мировых информагентств	6/6/2019	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60675
Церемония закрытия перекрёстных годов России и Японии	6/29/2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60858
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	6/29/2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60859
Заявления для прессы по итогам российскояпонских переговоров	6/29/2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60860
Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ	9/5/2019	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61449
Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина	12/19/2019	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62366

Appendix 3. List of Events for the Data Set Q2B

Name	Date	Link
Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова японскому информационному агентству «Киодо Цусин», 26 января 2012 года - Выступления Министра - Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации	26/01/2012	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/173330
Ответы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на вопросы СМИ в ходе пресс-конференции по итогам деятельности российской дипломатии в 2011 году Москва, 18 января 2012 года	18/01/2012	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/174490
Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В. Лаврова японской газете «Никкей», 27 января 2012 года - Выступления Министра - Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации	27/01/2012	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/172954
Стенограмма выступления и ответов Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на вопросы СМИ в ходе пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии К.Гэмбой, Токио, 28 января 2012 года	28/01/2012	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/172890
Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова японской телерадиовещательной корпорации «Эн-Эйч-Кэй», Токио, 28 января 2012 года	29/01/2012	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/172826
Выступление и ответы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на вопросы СМИ в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии К.Гэмбой, Сочи, 28 июля 2012 года	28/07/2012	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/148170
Выступление Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в МГИМО (У) МИД и ответы на вопросы студентов, Москва, 1 сентября 2012 года	1/09/2012	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/145330
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе встречи с Секретарем Совета национальной безопасности Японии С.Яти, Москва, 12 марта 2014 года	12/03/2013	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/71050

Name	Date	Link
Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Ф.Кисидой, Токио, 1 ноября 2013 года	1/11/2013	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/89678
Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров министров иностранных дел и обороны в формате «два плюс два», Токио, 2 ноября 2013 года	2/11/2013	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/89590
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на встрече с Премьер-министром Японии С.Абэ, Токио, 2 ноября 2013 года	2/11/2013	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/89622
Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на пресс-конференции по итогам деятельности российской дипломатии в 2013 году, Москва, 21 января 2014 года	21/01/2014	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/79890
Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Эстонии У.Паэтом, Москва, 18 февраля 2014 года	18/02/2014	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/maps/ee/-/asset_publisher/mo1LgbIkJbRf/content/id/76062
Брифинг Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова для представителей иностранных и российских СМИ, Москва, 28 июля 2014 года - Украина - Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации	28/07/2014	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/maps/ua/-/asset_publisher/ktn0ZLTvbbS3/content/id/676597
Приветствие Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова участникам Второго Российско-Японского форума «Точки соприкосновения: Бизнес. Инвестиции. Культура»	10/09/2014	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/671291
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Ф.Кисидой, Москва, 21 сентября 2015 года	21/09/2015	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/1760292
Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Ф.Кисидой, Москва, 21 сентября 2015 года	21/09/2015	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/1760488
Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова СМИ Монголии, Японии и КНР в преддверии визитов в эти страны, Москва, 12 апреля 2016 года	12/04/2016	Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s interview with Mongolian, Japanese and Chinese media ahead of his visits to these countries
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Ф.Кисидой, Токио, 15 апреля 2016 года	15/04/2016	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2236936
Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова по итогам переговоров Президента России В.В.Путина с Премьер-министром Японии С.Абэ, Сочи, 6 мая 2016 года	6/05/2016	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2269213
Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова газете и радиостанции «Комсомольская правда», Москва, 31 мая 2016 года	31/05/2016	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/meropriyatiya_s_uchastiem_ministra/-/asset_publisher/xK1BhB2bUjd3/content/id/2298019
Приветствие Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова участникам Собрания российской и японской общественности, посвященного 60-й годовщине подписания Совместной декларации между СССР и Японией	17/06/2016	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2501092

Name	Date	Link
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Ф.Кисидой, Москва, 3 декабря 2016 года	3/12/2016	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2544360
Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Ф.Кисидой, Москва, 3 декабря 2016 года	3/12/2016	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2544447
Комментарий для СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова, Ямагути, 15 декабря 2016 года	15/12/2016	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2563470
Выступление и ответы на вопросы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе «Правительственного часа» в Государственной Думе Федерального Собрания Российской Федерации, Москва, 25 января 2017 года	25/01/2017	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2610167
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе встречи с Министром иностранных дел Японии Ф.Кисидой, Бонн, 17 февраля 2017 года	17/02/2017	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2647367
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Ф.Кисидой, Токио, 20 марта 2017 года	20/03/2017	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2697492
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе российско-японских консультаций в формате «два плюс два» с участием министров иностранных дел и обороны, Токио, 20 марта 2017 года	20/03/2017	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2697506
Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе пресс-конференции по итогам российско-японских консультаций в формате «два плюс два», Токио, 20 марта 2017 года	20/03/2017	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2697887
Ответы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на вопросы читателей газеты «Аргументы и факты»	29/03/2017	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2709721
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Коно, Нью-Йорк, 18 сентября 2017 года	19/09/2017	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2866133
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Коно, Москва, 24 ноября 2017 года	24/11/2017	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2964846
Выступление и ответ на вопрос СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Коно, Москва, 24 ноября 2017 года	24/11/2017	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2964975
Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова для программы «Действующие лица с Наилей Аскер-заде» на телеканале «Россия 1», Москва, 11 февраля 2018 года	11/02/2018	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/meropriyatiya_s_uchastiem_ministra/-/asset_publisher/xK1BhB2bUjd3/content/id/3070334
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Коно «на полях» Мюнхенской конференции по вопросам политики безопасности, Мюнхен, 16 февраля 2018 года	16/02/2018	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3078169
Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова вьетнамским и японским СМИ, Москва, 16 марта 2018 года	16/03/2018	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3126672

Name	Date	Link
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Коно, Токио, 21 марта 2018 года	21/03/2018	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3132417
Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Коно, Токио, 21 марта 2018 года	21/03/2018	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3134000
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Коно, Москва, 31 июля 2018 года	31/07/2018	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3310323
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе российско-японских консультаций в формате «два плюс два», Москва, 31 июля 2018 года	31/07/2018	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3310444
Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова радио «Комсомольская правда», Москва, 17 декабря 2018 года	17/12/2018	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/meropriyatiya_s_uchastiem_ministra/-/asset_publisher/xK1BhB2bUjd3/content/id/3448023
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Коно, Москва, 14 января 2019 года	14/01/2019	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3471623
Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Коно, Москва, 14 января 2019 года	14/01/2019	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3472147
Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе пресс-конференции по итогам деятельности российской дипломатии в 2018 году, Москва, 16 января 2019 года	16/01/2019	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3476729
Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе пресс-конференции по итогам деятельности российской дипломатии в 2018 году, Москва, 16 января 2019 года	16/01/2019	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/meropriyatiya_s_uchastiem_ministra/-/asset_publisher/xK1BhB2bUjd3/content/id/3476729
Выступление и ответы на вопросы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в Российско-Таджикском (Славянском) университете, Душанбе, 5 февраля 2019 года	5/02/2019	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/meropriyatiya_s_uchastiem_ministra/-/asset_publisher/xK1BhB2bUjd3/content/id/3501226
Ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова «на полях» Мюнхенской конференции по вопросам политики безопасности, Мюнхен, 16 февраля 2019 года	16/02/2019	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/meropriyatiya_s_uchastiem_ministra/-/asset_publisher/xK1BhB2bUjd3/content/id/3520504
Выступление и ответы на вопросы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе встречи с Ассоциацией европейского бизнеса в Российской Федерации, Москва, 21 февраля 2019 года - Мероприятия с участием Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации	21/02/2019	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/meropriyatiya_s_uchastiem_ministra/-/asset_publisher/xK1BhB2bUjd3/content/id/3536538
Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова газете «Московский комсомолец», Москва, 3 апреля 2019 года - Новости	3/04/2019	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3599717
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров министров иностранных дел и министров обороны России и Японии в формате «два плюс два», Токио, 30 мая 2019 года	30/05/2019	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3663645

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Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Коно, Токио, 31 мая 2019 года	31/05/2019	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3664247
Заявление Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Коно, Токио, 31 мая 2019 года	31/05/2019	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3664553
Выход к прессе Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Коно, Токио, 31 мая 2019 года	31/05/2019	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3664577
Ответы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на вопросы СМИ «на полях» встречи «Группы двадцати», Осака, 28 июня 2019 года	28/06/2019	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3706531
Выступление Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на Всероссийском молодежном образовательном форуме «Территория смыслов», Солнечногорск, 15 августа 2019 года	15/08/2019	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3756067
Ответ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на вопрос участника Всероссийского молодежного образовательного форума «Территория смыслов», Солнечногорск, 15 августа 2019 года	15/08/2019	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/maps/jp/-/asset_publisher/zMUsqsVU9NDU/content/id/3756029
Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова газете «Труд», 13 сентября 2019 года - Япония	13/09/2019	https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/maps/jp/-/asset_publisher/zMUsqsVU9NDU/content/id/3785238
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе встречи с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Мотэги «на полях» 74-й сессии Генеральной Ассамблеи ООН, Нью-Йорк, 25 сентября 2019 года	25/09/2019	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3807589
Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Мотэги, Нагоя, 22 ноября 2019 года	22/11/2019	https://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/3909601
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