A POSTSTRUCTURALIST APPROACH TO RUSSIA’S NATIONAL IDENTITY AND FOREIGN POLICY DISCOURSE(S)

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Preface

This conference paper is a part of a more wider research paper that is being conducted the goal of which is to comprehend the role of national identity in Russia’s foreign policy discourse and the possible reasons behind why is the current Russia’s identity discourse the domineering one.

In this paper I begin with the basic notion of the theoretical approach used in my doctoral dissertation – poststructuralism - as described by Lene Hansen. This theoretical perspective best describes the constitutive relationship that identity and foreign policy have, and as I suggest, determine Russia’s both the identity and foreign policy discourses. Because foreign policies are legitimized with consideration to national interests, that reference to identity, which in turn is constituted through a formulation of foreign policy, I argue that Russia’s foreign policy choices can be explained, by analysing the national identity discourse within foreign policy discourse.

The main focus of this paper is to form an understanding of the poststructuralist perspective on identity and foreign policy discourse analysis and how can it be applied methodologically, when analysing the constitutive relationship of Russia’s national identity and foreign policy discourses.

Key words

Poststructuralism; Discourse analysis; The Self and The Other; Identity; Discourse; Foreign policy.

Introduction

Identity determines “who we are”, by the set of political, social, cultural and historical factors. And in the process of building a particular identity, countries determine their values, goals and interests, which in return influence its actions in the international community. By the same token the way that countries perceive and interpret the actions of other international actors and the way that its own actions are being perceived, is one of the key factors to the type of identity that a particular country assigns to itself.

Two dimensions or levels of identity can be distinguished: the international level or state identity and the domestic level or national identity. Regardless, each countries identity is unique, because it is rooted in the qualities that it possesses, that depend on the history, language, culture, political experience and the type of state rule. Identity consists of the particular states notions about its part and qualities in the

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international dimension, and is built based on both domestic and international factors that influence it. But we have to bear in mind that identity is not a fixed notion – it changes depending on different domestic and foreign factors, for example, changes in the political system or power representation, in society, for example due to migration, societies economic and social welfare and countries perspectives for development. More so – there can be more than one identity.

The question of identity and Russia’s policy has been at the forefront of political, academic and research debate over the course of the last few years. As the last 25 years show Russia is neither a predictable or stable international player. It’s daring has been underestimated and it has turned out to be a dangerous challenge to the international order once again. Russia’s foreign policy representatives, express the anti-western positions, thus influencing societies attitude towards Western politics, values and also identity. And this position has gained a level of support especially in the ranks of conservative and Russian speaking parts of society. These kinds of changes magnify Russia’s policy influence. In the context of the Baltic States and Eastern Europe, it is crucial to understand and to study, from all possible angles, the motivation and reasons behind Russia’s foreign policy.

The issue of identity has been at the centre of disciplinary debate for the past 15 years. In the 1950’s and 60’, such authors as Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz and others took upon the task of describing the ways to look at international relations, in a behavioural and positivist way. By the late 1970’s Kenneth Waltz’s Theory of international politics had become the main text for working to describe philosophical and political roots of International Relations as a discipline and a political practice, inspiring authors like Richard Ashley, Nicholas Onuf, Alexander Wendt, James der Derian and many other to come forward with their interpretation and understanding of the subject matter which was the content of international relations. Because the works in the area of poststructuralism were rather poorly represented its critics largely carried out the development of this theory.

Poststructuralism is capable of uncovering the link between foreign policy and identity and their constitutive, and those they can be studied through by applying the theory of discourse. In opposition to realism, poststructuralist and constructivist authors acknowledged the importance of identity, culture and norms, regimes and ideas.

Poststructuralists believe that language, through a social, political and an inherently unstable system of signs, is a way in which meaning is given and the spoken becomes existent and simultaneously identity and difference is being constructed. They see policy discourse as something that relies upon particular constructions of problems and subjectivities, which are also, constructed through the discourse in the first place. The concept of “discourse” incorporates material and ideational factors.

In poststructuralists analysis identity and policy are separated. In terms of foreign policy it is analysed how foreign policy discourse creates stability, however it does not reveal how the foreign policy is being decided upon. Empirically foreign policy decision-making usually does not separate the articulation of identity from the policy, but constructs identity and policy by mutually adjusting the two.

In her work book “Security as practice” Lene Hansen argues, that the poststructuralist discourse analysis, based on the works of Michel Foucault, Jacques

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2 From the beginning this group if authors were called “reflectivists” and only later on they divided into two groups – poststructuralists and constructivists, with epistemological difference being the main splintering point, but both focusing on non-material factors and their assessment.
Derrida and other notable poststructuralist writers, can be used to uncover the constitutive relationship of identity and foreign policies, that are formed by heads of states, governments, politicians, media and even the academics.3

The goal of poststructuralism is to study the ways in identities are formed and how they impact foreign policy, how do oppositional discourses present critical evidence to destabilize official policy discourse and how does the governmental discourse respond.

I begin with the description of how identity is being constructed. Poststructuralists believe that an identity or Self can be constructed only by reference to another identity – Other. In the case of Russia, its identity discourses have a wide variety of Otherness, ranging from the dangerous and threatening notion of the West, to a more friendly idea of Eurasia.

From there I continue with exploring the theoretical perspective of the constitutive relationship that identity and foreign policy have.

Finally, the focus comes to a more practical descriptions of what a discourse analysis and the complete research design has to be, when conducting the research in terms of poststructuralist discourse analysis methodology.

**The Self and the Other in identity construction**

In contrary to constructivists Alexander Wendts belief that there is an intrinsic pre-social state identity4, poststructuralists believe that identity is social in that it is established by using language through a set of collectively articulated codes and conventions.5 Therefore identity cannot exist on its own. For example, if a group of individuals were the only ones that existed, they would still construct identity in the realms of each other or by determining themselves against animals.

To understand the process of constructing an identity, one has to pay specific attention to the element of language. Language is ontologically significant and as noted in the introduction of this paper, it gives meaning and particular identity to objects, subjects, things, states, living beings and material structures. Language can be seen as political, for it produces and reproduces particular subjectivities and identities, while simultaneously excluding others.6

Jacques Derrida argues that language is a system of differential signs. It is his belief that meaning is established through a series of contrary signs where one element is valued over its opposite.7 Therefore a states identity construction is only possible through a description of something that is different or Other. Identity politics acknowledges the link between the construction of the Other and the understanding of the Self. For Russia the Other has undoubtedly come in the form of the West, more often United Sates specifically, which still stems from the international relationship between the two superpowers during the Cold War, symbolizing the on-going power struggle, more so from the side of the former superpower that is Russia. Although in the recent years it can be also applied to the Russia-EU relationship.

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6 Ibid., 16.
David Campbell argues that the state needs to articulate threats and radical Others to construct its identity, therefore national identity turns construction of difference into Otherness. Russia’s discourse is ridden with notions of the corruptive and dangerous values that the West promotes, therefore differencing Russian values as safe, acceptable and right. However, Russia’s identity is constructed as not just different from the Western, which is emphasized through articulating the unique qualities that it possesses – language, culture and political structure. Russian national identity discourse expresses the “rightness” of the signs that constitute it – religion, unique historical interpretations and conservative beliefs.

Russian political leaders on multiple occasions constructed other countries, immigrants, homosexuals, democrats and liberals as Others who are a threat to the security and the social order of the national Self. By doing so these political leaders create generalized resentment in their audience, by emphasizing the difference, contingency and danger, that comes from the Other. For example, how the embracement of homosexual relationships, as in the Western countries, will corrupt their children and cripple their family values.

Going back to the Christian thinking of Saint Augustine, D. Connolly, places the urge to construct identity as radical Otherness on two fundamental societal experiences. The first is the human experience of unfairness and suffering of life and the inescapability of death; a suffering that creates resentment and the desire that someone should be made responsible, therefore a demand rises for agents and/or agency to put the responsibility on. The second problem addresses this demand by situating responsibility in the Other by defining the Other that exposes weak links in ones identity as evil or irrational. This is a structural or ontological problem because it is built in to the doctrine of agency, responsibility and identity articulated from Saint Augustine onwards. This need for finding responsibility in the Other has been institutionalized at the individual as well as the collective or state level. However that identity has been constructed through a radical Otherness is not a necessity but rather a temptation.

For example, the concept of national security is a particular form of identity construction that articulates a radical form of identity. The construction of the national Self in need of protection against the threat that is the Other stems from presenting the national and the international as constructed as each other opposites or constitutive Other. In this view the states identity depends on security – threats and insecurities are what make up the state, because its identity has only been represented through its opposition against the radical and threatening Other. The discursive linkage of security and identity has been in the Russian realm of political discourse, suggesting and linking the threat of the Western identity to the national Self with the material offense that may come or has come in Russia’s interpretation from the Western countries, with the enlargement of NATO and EU.

However identities are not always constructed by the opposition against a radically different and threatening Other. The construction of identity can take various degrees of “Otherness” when difference between Self and Other is constituted through

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10 Ibid., 30.
geographical representations as well as political representations. Furthermore, the Other does not even necessarily have to be another state or even another political subject.

The identity of the Self can also be constructed through a variety of Selves - complimentary, contending, and negative and non-identities. What’s more is that foreign policy doesn’t need the Otherness. Countries might also construct themselves as favourably positioned between geographical and cultural boundaries. The Self can also be constructed through an identity that is articulated as both superior to the Self and as identical to it. However, discourses that involve a construction of the Other as outright superior to the Self are less frequent.

The discourses of the Self are trying to stabilize the Self’s identity. However identity is unstable and often contested and because language is both structured and unstable, discourses try to construct themselves as stable, though there will always be instabilities or what discourse analysis calls “undecidability” of any text.

The construction of an identity is not just a process that strictly bounded by the domestic realm of the state. Identity is constructed by taking into consideration both the domestic and international elements, making it a product of a spectre of elements. From the domestic perspective identity is constructed given the national element that are expressed in the national identity discourse. It also expresses a countries national interest and states its security boundaries. From the international perspective the identities of other countries have a profound influence on the identity of the state or the Self, by determining the difference between the Self and the Other, which often escalate to the descriptions of what type of Otherness should the states audience fear.

As we will see in the proceeding chapter identity itself also plays a constitutive role. Foreign identities and actors not only determine the Self and the countries disposition to the Other– the process is reversible. Foreign policy and identity are in a constitutive relationship, where affects the other. Therefore a pattern can be traced from the formulations or the discourse of identity to the actual foreign policy that a state is conducting.

The constitutive relationship of identity and foreign policy

Research projects that use poststructuralism as their theoretical point of reference put the main emphasis on the relationship between identity and foreign policy, in terms of their research.

To present a legitimate and enforceable foreign policy, the maker of it link identity and policy, to make them appear consistent with each other. The notion of identity is not discussed separately without taking into consideration of how policies can be pursued and vice versa- deliberations on foreign policy are not decided without the consideration of identity, which in turn is produced and reproduced through the

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12 Ibid., 36.
13 Ibid., 35.
14 Ibid., 39.
formulations of foreign policies. Identity and foreign policy cannot be viewed separately, because identity that implements foreign policy cannot exist outside of the discourse.

In terms of the poststructuralist approach foreign policy is understood as a discursive practice. Foreign policy discourses express and link material factors and ideas to the extent that they cannot be separated. Poststructuralists argue that representations of identity and policy are linked through discourse, but they do not stand in causal relationship with one another. Representations of identity are what constitute and are constituted through the articulation of policy, therefore there is no identity prior to or independently of foreign policy. We also cannot claim that policy is the one factor that makes up identity. If we hold on to such assumption it would mean that there is no feedback from articulating identities to foreign policy and that simply cannot be. Poststructuralists argue that identity and policy are inseparable, and that this best shows though discourse, therefore they cannot be in a causal relationship.

When a country loses its predictability and credibility in the eyes of other international players and becomes an unpredictable unit, it becomes increasingly difficult for other actors to cooperate with such a country on most matters, be that political, business, investments, social, or economic. A country is seen as a legitimate unit if its citizens consider themselves a unified nation that is loyal to its country.

National identity is a system of values and culture that enhances one’s feeling of belongingness – it is something that society has in common despite or because of ethnicity, religious or political beliefs. Language, culture, territory, geography, history – all make up national identity, however neither of these components ensure its unity. Foreign policy discourse can be viewed as a model that creates stable links between identity and policy. However it is impossible for discourse to reach a complete stability, a fixed condition, therefore no policy-identity links can ever be considered truly stable.

The stability of discourse is dependent of the articulation of identities – if it is internally inconsistent, then the discourse will be less stable. Because foreign policy is formulated within a social and political space, the internal stability of a policy-identity construction cannot be determined by not taking into consideration the broader social and political context within which it is situated. Since the dissolutions of the Soviet Union, which also marks the beginning of Russia’s search for a new national identity, the question of identity has been a key factor in many ways in determining Russia’s foreign policy, which has been subject to many rather dramatic changes over the course of the last 25 years. The Soviet identity became something of an unwanted association with the failed past, and was no longer supported by the official elites and government. In the 90’s mostly democratic and liberal ideas prevailed. This was a period of monumental efforts to becoming more western-like and developing a partnership with its western allies, especially with the United States, who had high

18 Ibid., 8.
19 Ibid., 9.
20 Ibid., 23.
21 Ibid., 24-25.
hopes of bringing democracy, to the once communist country. But along with the coming of the new millennium, the pro-Western discourse failed to gain support neither from leading politics, nor institutions and the society. Thus although the Western values were still popular in some parts of society, other identity discourses became more significant. Russia’s policy began to shift by the late 90’s, when Russia began attempting to balance the United States in the international system rather than fully cooperating with it and relying on it for guidance. This was largely happening because of the failure of democracy in Russia and was best illustrated in the Balkan conflict, where Russia at the time was at the opposite position of its partner.

The stability of the identity-policy link is dependent upon the internal stability and on whether the discourse is supported or criticized by other discourses. Given the fact that structure of language and therefore also of identity as its constitutive element is unstable, multiple discourses emerge and can exist at the same time. Because of the political context in which the identity and foreign policy are situated, competing discourses can try to undermine the dominant policy-identity model in order to bring about a different policy. With liberal ideas marginalized, and Boris Jeltsin out of the presidents’ office, Russia began searching actively and with determination for a way in which to define Russia both to the domestic and international audiences. Beginning the new millennia and with the ascendance of Vladimir Putin to the position as the president of Russian Federation, Kremlin’s politics took a reverse course, and was once again proving itself as a reliable partner to the USA and the western countries, especially, when supporting and cooperating its operations against terrorist groups. The year of 2004 Marks Russia’s and Western countries inability to cooperate on a growing set of issues and questions. And despite that EU and USA had their fair share of hope about enhancing their cooperation with Russia, during the presidency of Dmitry Medvedev, because of his moderately liberal and democratic rhetoric; there never was a long-term and sustainable development. Because of that it can be said that with the beginning of Vladimir Putin’s second presidency term in 2008, Russia’s relationship with the west has since been taking a bad turn, the culmination obviously being the war in Ukraine and now the escalation of the material foreign policy action towards the Western states.

If we look at this inconsistency, we can summarize that the question about Russia’s role and place in the international and regional contexts has been the subject of issue. Is Russia a part of Europe or Eurasia? On multiple occasions when things got unpleasant with its Western allies, Russia did not hesitate to associating itself with the “Eurasian world”. This on-going debate about what should Russia’s position and place be in the international system, is the consequence of an on-going situation for almost 20 years in the circles of Russia’s political and intellectual elites, where multiple national identity discourses have been present, each of them influencing Russia’s politics in different times For Russia, balancing between Western values and alliances, and its own specific national heritage and ambitions has never been easy, and it seems that every time it appears that Russia is getting closer to the West, it takes two steps away from it and decides in favour of such a foreign policy that best suits its foreign ambitions of returning at least some of its former glory in the international realm. This balancing clearly has shown the internal instabilities of the identity discourses. However beginning with the year 2000 and the ascendance of Vladimir Putin to the position of the president of Russia is when the Kremlin’s policy returned to attempting to prove itself to the West as a reliable and consistent partner but only a few years later the relationship between Russia and its Western partners began deteriorating once again. Though in the recent years the identity discourse in
Russia has become somewhat stable, with conservative national identity discourse, taking the upper hand.

However, it should not be suggested that other interpretations of identity do not exist. Identities can be doubted by engaging with the dominant construction of identity already in place. In most cases it can be achieved by attacking and rearticulating the construction of identity, by challenging the key representations of identity that are the base of the policy in question. Policy and the connection that it has with identity is also challenged by providing readings of different facts and events. The term key events refers to situations when important facts are manifested on the political agenda and/or in the media and influence the official policy-identity link or force the official discourse to respond to political opposition and media criticism. Oppositional discourse might also use new facts to destabilize the construction of identity or the proposed policy, thereby destabilizing the other part of the official policy-identity constellation as well. Governments have multiple choices on how to react to critical discourses. First, it can significantly change its policy-identity constructions. Second option, which is very commonly used, is for the official discourse to acknowledge facts but incorporate them within the discourse already in place. The third option is to not react to the comments if there is no possibility to use the other two options.

Because of the unstable and changing nature of discourse I would say that three main ideas have prevailed over time about “who” is Russia. The first two mark the constant battle between two value systems – the Western and the unique identity that Russia prides itself in. And of course there is the idea about Russia as a Eurasian country, spreading ideas about forming a Eurasian Union. But I do have to note that these ideas have always been used as a political tool or threat to balance against EU and US.

As shown in this section of the paper the instability of the language and the signs that it attaches to identity, result in not only a variable and multiple varieties of identity discourse, but therefore also constitute unstable foreign policy discourses. The lack of stability and its influence on foreign policy can cause a country to seem unstable in its foreign policy conduct. Therefore it is crucial for some discourses to prevail, even if competing notions of identity later undermine them.

Because poststructuralism argues that identity and foreign policy cannot exist outside of discourse, for analytical research to be conducted on these subjects, a discourse analysis has to be applied.

Poststructuralist discourse analysis

The conception of identity as both a precondition for and as constituted through foreign policy, implies that the author has to focus on the discursive construction of identity as a means by which foreign policy is being constituted and also as a product of this policy. The practical focus is also on how identities and policies are articulated.

Foreign policy discourses are analytical constructions through which the construction and linking of identity can be studied. From a deconstructivist perspective it can be argued that each individual text constitutes identity, therefore there are no two completely identical texts and that there are as many discourses as

25 Ibi., 29.
26 Ibid., 20.
there are texts. However, foreign policy is made up of individual texts that are grouped by common themes, certain constructions of identity and sets of policies that are considered viable, desirable or necessary. Foreign policy debates are bound together by a smaller number of discourses. This means that texts, being parts of larger textual and discursive context are not completely independent of each other, but are grouped together by similar elements that they poses. Therefore we cannot assume that each text is fully independent.

Because official foreign policy discourse is a part of larger discursive field foreign policy representations and the oppositional discourses from the media, academics and popular culture, has to be studied to acknowledge whether they reinforce or contest each other.

The methodical starting point for discourse analysis is the explicit articulation of identity within a web of signs. This can be viewed in aspect to the fact that not always is the Self, constructed as the opposite or the better version of the Other, although the Self is always determined by differentiation to the Other. Also taken into consideration has to be the fact that discourses can disappear over time, because they cease to be important, or the opposite can happen and identities that were previously not articulated might become important. The meaning of each sign is established through linking and differentiation that means that they are never the same. Instability might be explicitly articulated if the Other is constructed as radically different yet also as part of the Self, but discourse usually will avoids such blatant contradictions.

Political communities are thought of and argued through the concepts of space, time and responsibility. Methodologically spacial, temporal and ethical constructions are investigated through the analysis of linking and differentiation. However foreign policy discourses do not use the concepts of space, time and responsibility explicitly. Spatiality, temporality and ethicality are a way in which to look at and discover the important political substance of identity construction, not explicitly articulated signs. These dimensions are equal in their status, although particular texts might be more concerned with one of the three. The main goal of foreign policy discourse is to articulate the three elements in such a manner that they draw upon and reinforce each other.

To understand identity as spatially constructed is to argue that identity is constituted in relation to the Other and always involves the construction of boundaries. In Russia’s foreign policy this limitation is seen as centring on the national state, through national security discourse and concretely through the construction of the particular identities of other states, regions and peoples. Spatial constructions of identity are immediately identifiable in the construction of other countries, but representations of foreign policy will involve a more complex set of spatial identities drawing upon regional constructions.

Foreign policy discourse also evolves through articulations of temporal identity. Temporal themes such as development, transformations, continuity, change, repetition are crucial for understanding and analysing the construction of identity within foreign policy discourse, with religious, civilizational, political and other forms of progress can be distinguished between discourses. Political spaces and subjects are

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28 Ibid., 39-40.
29 Ibid., 41-43.
30 Ibid., 42-43.
31 Ibid.
constituted in time, which has different conceptions for what is considered politically feasible or morally necessitated. More specifically one can analyse how the temporality of the Other is constituted in relation to the temporality of the Self: if the Other is constructed with a temporal identity similar to the one of the Self or if it is articulated as an object in a time different from the one of the Self. If the latter is the case, is it constituted as less temporally developed or is it constituted as temporally superior to the Self and so as an object to be emulated in the search for progress and prosperity. If an Other is capable of transformation, it might transcend even radical Otherness to become like the Self, thus showing the difference between the current and the future identity of the Other. It has been suggested that identity construction does not need to involve the delineation of a spatial Other but can be used on the temporal construction of the Self. The past is important for understanding the present discourse on identity but it is not the only important construction of identity in play, nor is it disconnected from a spatial construction.³²

Turning to the construction of ethical identity, the goal of poststructuralist discourse analysis is to argue that foreign policy discourses always involve a construction of responsibility as applicable towards the national audience. For governments to legitimize their foreign policies as in the “national interest” is to articulate a responsibility toward the national body politics, which grants political leaders the authority to make far-reaching and authoritative decisions. It is also an articulation of responsibility, which is more important and binding than any potential claim to an “international responsibility”. The focus of discourse analysis on the discursive construction of ethics, morality and responsibility and with the moral force of particular representations and with the Self’s articulation of (non) responsibility toward the Other. All foreign policy discourses articulate construction of ethical identity yet some representations of identity invoke a particular moral force, that in response constitutes the spatial and temporal identities of those involved as well as those called upon to intervene.³³

When conducting a discourse analysis, the researcher should usually settle for two or three discourses identified within a debate, because the goal is to identify discourses that articulate different constructions of identity. It is important that basic discourses are based on the reading of a large number of texts, preferably from a wide variety of sources, genres and media, so that they can indicate to the main structural position within a debate.³⁴ Having established the basic discourses, a detailed study of the articulations of identity and policy and their place inside the context of the larger political debate, should be studied.

The next step once the key representations have been selected is to trace the constitution of the present concept back in history to understand when and how it was formed as well as how it succeeded in marginalizing other representations. A reading of history provides important knowledge on how constructions of identity have been argued in the past and thus is a good indication of where it might be located in the present.³⁵

While the discourse itself is the object of analysis in poststructuralist perspective, another key factor is just as important and that is the discourse agent.

³³ Ibid., 44-45.
³⁴ Ibid., 47-48.
³⁵ Ibid.
Poststructuralist discourse analysis argues that foreign policy decision makers are a part of a larger public sphere, and that their discourses are influenced by other representations, articulated by a larger number of individuals, institutions and media outlets. That implies that top politicians do not have a detailed knowledge about the issues that they are presented with and therefore rely upon their advisers, media coverage, and in some cases background literature to establish a representational framing of the policy that is supposed to be adopted. This however does not mean that there is a complete synchronization between official foreign policy discourse and representations that come from other sources. Politicians rarely reproduce information in the same form or a way that is been given to them. Official discourse also does not determine which representations other sources and agents, can argue, at least not in democratic societies. Politicians however take into consideration the representations found within a wider public sphere, when presenting their policies as legitimate to their voters.36

Because language is an unstable structure, discourses and the identities constructed within them become increasingly important. Foreign policies are particular directions in which actions are taken, whereas the construction of identity in discourse is seen more as a political practice.

Poststructuralists still affirm the material character of every discursive structure - both material and ideational factors cannot be viewed separate from each other. Therefore in the discursive approach to foreign policy the point is to not disregard material facts but to study how they are produced and prioritized, and incorporate both material and ideational factors in the process of analysis. The analytical intent is to understand the importance of ideas and materiality as constructed through a discourse that gives materiality meaning by drawing upon a particular set of identity constructions.

For foreign policy analysis an intertextual approach suggests the inclusion of a wider body of texts. Starting with official foreign policy and moving toward a wider conception of public debates, three research models for conducting intertextual analysis can be suggested.37

The first model is based on official foreign policy discourse and focuses on political leaders with official authority to sanction the foreign policies pursued as well as those with central roles in executing these policies for instance high-ranked military staff, senior civil servants and heads of international institutions. It identifies the texts produced by these actors including speeches; political debates, interviews, articles and books as well as the texts, which have had an intertextual influence on their discourse. The goals are to analyse the construction of identity within official discourse to, the way in which intertextual links stabilize this discourse and to examine how official discourse encounters criticism.38 The second intertextual research model looks beyond official discourse and its intertextual links, at major actors and arenas within a wider foreign policy debate - oppositional parties, the media and corporate institutions.39 In the third model the scope of analysis is still further expanded to include material not explicitly concerned with foreign policy: representations of foreign policy issues as they are articulated within “high” as well as “popular” culture (this includes the study of films, fiction, television, computer

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37 Ibid., 53.
38 Ibid., 53-54.
39 Ibid., 54.
games, photography and comic books), analysing how a particular region, country or person is represented; analysis of high culture is equally valid in showing how music, poetry, painting, architecture, and literature have been employed in constructing national and civilizational identities.

Discourse analysis as seen through a poststructuralist perspective focuses on very specific task, unlike critical discourse analysis, which can be applied to wider variety of issue analysing. The main focus of the discourse analysis as shown in this section of the paper is to focus on the constitutive relationship of identity and foreign policy, and how their features are articulated in the discourse. To successfully conduct discourse analysis on a broader scale it is stated that the foreign policy discourse should be viewed as constructed in space, time and according to ethics.

For foreign policy discourse analysis it is suggested to apply intertextual analysis models, which include the analysis of official foreign policy discourses, a broader foreign policy debate and foreign policy representations that are articulated in “high” and/or popular culture.

The next and final step in looking into a poststructuralist interpretation of identity and foreign policy debate is to understand the different research models that can be applied, when working to determine the constitutive relationship between Russia’s identity discourse and foreign policy.

*Poststructuralist research design*

Official foreign policies have always had a formal authority and therefore always been the subject of research in the foreign policy analysis. However while the official discourse is perceived as an undisputed definition and description of the issue, there is also a wider political field that needs to be taken into consideration. For example, the discourse of politicians in the opposition or the media, the contemporary and historical discourses, the differentiated nature of discourse and other fields like comparative literature, conceptual history, media studies and cultural studies.

Because of the diversity of the social life, building a good causal research design is often a more difficult task than it could be allowed in a controlled environment.\(^{40}\) Research design defines the focus of study through choices along the dimensions of intertextuality, Self\(^{41}\), time and events.\(^{42}\) In this section of the paper a more detailed look at research designs is being taken, concerning dimensions of intertextuality, time and events.

*Choosing the material*

The material for analysis should be chosen in accordance with two sets of considerations.

1. The majority of texts should be contemporary, but historical material, such as conceptual histories or critical genealogies\(^{43}\), should also be included, for it can

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\(^{41}\) A more detailed analysis of the dimensions of the Self can be found in the previous sections of the paper.


\(^{43}\) Conceptual histories and critical genealogies trace the dominant and marginal discourses of different periods of history through reading of key texts as well as larger body of general material, to identify a smaller number of historical discourses based on competing articulations of spatial, temporal and ethical identity as well as constitutions of the Other and its relationship to the Self.
provide important knowledge of the sedimentation of current representations as well as a critical means through which the so called objectivity and naturalness of these representations can be contested.\textsuperscript{44}

These historical discourses are important for defining the basic discourses within the primary study as well as for contesting the construction of history within contemporary debate.\textsuperscript{45} The way in which the contemporary material is being selected is determined by multiple key factors:

i. Articulation of identities and policies;
ii. Texts need to be widely read and attended to;
iii. Formal authority to define a political position.

Some types of texts meet all three criteria, like for example presidential addresses, while others score high on only one or two criterions (parliamentary debates, legislature, resolutions, and statements), which means that these texts are high on formal authority and in some cases might be highly attended to, but they are often not very explicit in their articulation of identities because the documents are products of negotiations between many actors for their interests. The more formal the text and the institution that it’s located in, the more implicit and circumscribed the constructions of identities are likely to be. In research these texts should be coupled with texts that articulate identity more directly and produce a full discourse.

2. The body of texts should include key texts that are frequently quoted and serve as links within the intertextual web of debate as well as a larger body of general material that also functions as a testimony to a quantitative identification of the dominant discourses. Poststructuralists discourse analysis gives priority to the study of primary texts, for instance presidential statements, speeches and interviews in the case of official foreign policy; parliamentary debates in the case of the political debate; and reportage and editorials in the study of the wider media discourse. Secondary sources – discussions of primary texts and broader presentations of a foreign policy issue – are also being used in discourse analysis and might itself become primary material, either by being repeatedly quoted in official discourse or wider public debate, which means that a text can be primary in some cases and secondary in others.\textsuperscript{46}

**Intertextuality and Intertextual models**

Poststructuralists believe that foreign policy is always based on both the historical and contemporary discourses with discursive agents positioning themselves as having authoritative knowledge about the policy and the problems that it strives to solve. It is achieved by referencing to “serious” academic analysis and reports, personal experiences and also non-scientific forms of text. The next widely used term therefore comes in place- intertextuality or the use of multiple genres of texts in foreign policy debate analysis.

The intertextual models provide a structured view of different locations for political debate, different types of actors and different forms of genre and produce two prominent sets of research questions. The first concerns the type of links


\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 75.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 74.
articulated in official foreign policy discourse and asks to what extent links to oppositional discourses and critical texts and authors are being made and the second moves from the links established within official discourse to the choice of a particular intertextual model.

1. Intertextuality

Texts are unique and united, with each of them making its particular construction of identity. All texts make references explicitly or implicitly to previous ones and in doing so they form new texts with meanings and the status inherited from the previous texts to which they refer to, and build their own authority by reading and citing them\textsuperscript{47}, therefore also constructing legitimacy for its own reading, simultaneously reconstructing and reproducing the classical status of older texts, however the new production of the text is not dependant on the older version used. That is because no quote or rendition of an original text is ever a complete reproduction of the original and the meaning of original texts will therefore always be read and re-read through new texts, which have different textual contexts.\textsuperscript{48} Language is a social epistemology composed by a set of linked codes, which implies that a particular concept does not necessarily articulate the same political meaning in all contexts and so without knowledge of a key political vocabulary and its conceptual history one would be unable to identify the precise meaning of the spoken word in the particular context.\textsuperscript{49} Reading of a text is performed through the central discourse of the present, thereby implying that texts are located inside an entirely new foreign policy discourse.\textsuperscript{50}

Julia Kristeva argues that any text is constructed of quotations. The full meaning is therefore never given in the one text, but rather it is a product of other texts and interpretations from which the construction of identities and policy is being made.\textsuperscript{51} This process can be identified when texts make explicit references to older works This also implicates that analytically, politically and empirically official foreign policy texts are not standing separately form wider societal discourses but are located within as larger textual web that includes journalism, academic writing and so on.\textsuperscript{52}

Because foreign policy consist of larger body of texts it is important to form an understanding of the genre that a particular text falls into. This means to understand texts not as identical in their language structures but as having a particular theme that shapes the structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style.

Poststructuralism defines that foreign policy texts fall into the main genres of policy documents, journalism, academic writing and literary non-fiction. These distinctions point to crucial differences in how texts establish not only identities and foreign policies and also in how they construct authority and employ forms of knowledge. This facilitates a study of how discourses engage each other on substantial political issues in that foreign policy debates are concerned with a similar

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 51.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 75.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 71.
issue across multiple genres. Foreign policy texts differ in how much emphasis they devote to the descriptions of either identity or policy; they also differ in their connection with the formal institutions of foreign policymaking. They all strive to establish themselves as having the authority to speak about particular foreign policy issue. Yet different genres employ different modalities of authority, depending on who delivers the discourse and what is his power status. All genres construct knowledge as important for the authority of a text, its author and its foreign policy discourse, but to be knowledgeable on a foreign policy issue is a position that can be constructed in a number of different ways: through objective forms of fact-finding or through subjective and personal encounters; through historiographical reading of long civilizational structures or abstract models of balance of power; through the explicit invocation of the voice and emotion of an author or the detachment of a distanced observer; through bestowing importance on cultural artefacts and traditions; or through a universal utilitarian subjectivity. However, for politicians to have authority is not only a matter of being knowledgeable – about a conflict, national interests or strategic capabilities – they must also have the ability to take responsibility and exercise power. Texts might also be considered as foreign policy texts even though they do not explicitly formulate policy. But while a texts might not formulate or logically imply a particular policy, it is empirically situated within a larger intertextual and discursive field that influences how identity constructions are being read.

Although most discourse analysis focuses on written or spoken text, the language doesn’t necessarily has to be verbal. For example body language of an individual or a state, or even material objects can be seen as an articulation of an identity. However it should be noted that states, as actors are profusely verbal entities that rarely communicate without using language. Therefore there is very little foreign policy action, both in the domestic and international realm that is non-verbal, because without verbal communication, the non-verbal foreign policies are being brought to the forefront.

2. Intertextual models

To produce a complete research design multiple choices have to be made: first, whether multiple (nations or other foreign policy subjects) or one Self are examined; second, whether the study focuses on one particular moment or a longer historical development (temporal perspective); and third whether the analysis is based on one event or multiple events. It is through a combination of choices along all dimensions that a concrete study is produced.

When expanding the number of Selves one possibility is to construct a comparative research design around different Selves responses to the same event or policy issue, however single-Self study can be the better choice when there is no clearly identifiable Other and hence no counter discourse to study; or when there is such a discrepancy in the Self’s ability to lay out discourse and policy for the Other, that the Other’s ability to respond is neutralized. Moving from official discourse to competing ones in intertextual models will likely result in finding re-articulations of the official national Self. The number and magnitude of theses re-articulations usually

54 Ibid., 59-60
55 Ibid., 52.
56 Ibid., 22.
57 Ibid., 67.
increases when the Self is not a national one but a regional or civilizational one, such as the West or the Balkans. Situating the constitution of the Self within a longer historical perspective, previously important representations that have been marginalized by contemporary discourse are usually uncovered, further complicating the singularity of the Self. Studies can select Selves based on what is the most common discourse or on what are the most radical ones. The comparative study of Selves addressing the same foreign policy issue or event constitutes one “multiple Self option”. Another possibility is a discursive encounter; rather than comparing Selves, the study can position the discourse of the Self with the Other’s discursive construction of it and what he considers the Other. The Other can be articulated as superior, inferior or equal. It might be constituted, as threatening but it might also be an ally, a stranger or an underdeveloped subject in need of help.58

Turning from the choice of Selves to the question of the temporal perspective foreign policy can be studied as it addresses events either at one particular moment of striking character and subject of intense political concern, like conflict or war, or through a longer historical analysis.59 Studies of one moment range from comparisons of a smaller number of events to extensive historical analysis that traces the evolution of identities across centuries. Research design can also be based on longer historical analysis that traces the evolution of discourse and identity, which brings more understanding to the formation of identities. Historical genealogies effectively argue that present “objective” identities are in fact contested, contestable and therefore politically decided. There is also a historical aspect to single-event and comparative-moments studies in that they should identify the basic discourse(s) of the foreign policy debate under study; and basic discourses are often centred on representations of identities with particular conceptual histories.60

Events61 are often studied through analysis of events within events, one or multiple. If one event is chosen it is logically set within a temporal one-moment study, whereas multiple event studies are constructed either at different times but related by issue, or be related by time in terms of the discursive construction of multiple issues within the same period.62

The poststructuralist approach to identity and foreign policy discourse analysis as developed by Lene Hansen offers an extensive outlook on how a researcher can structure or even formulate and set he boundaries for his/hers research and analysis. By taking into consideration the multiple dimensions and the wider context of textuality, it is applicable to almost any issue at hand.

Conclusions

Because of its concern with the constitutive relationship of foreign policy and identity, the understanding of language as a constitutive and unstable entity of identity construction, the Self’s reference to the Other and the linkage of foreign policy and identity, poststructuralist theory best applies to the issues that need to be addressed when researching Russia’s national identity and its role in foreign policy discourse.

59 Ibid., 69.
60 Ibid., 70-71.
61 The term “event” can include a policy issue as well as war.
Russia is a complex and multi-layered object of study, where multiple identities and unstable foreign policies make up the conduct of this country. The most striking elements and dimensions of Russian identity discourse is its undisputable opposition against Western values, and the emphasis on its own uniqueness, thereby differentiating itself from the outside world, by the elements of language, culture, historical interpretation and political conduct. Although the foreign policy discourse does not always follow suit, often discursively reflecting other, competing discourses, that stem from historical texts and a wider discursive context, that is being rearticulated by the discourse agents of foreign policy.

By applying discourse analysis and intertextual models as described by Lene Hansen, I believe that it possible to establish the existence of patterns in relation to identity-policy link and the ways by which the dominant national identity discourse is established.

Bibliography


