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Modernity and the Construction of National Identity in Vladimir Putin's Speech between 2012-2022: A Critical Discourse Analysis

Masteroppgave i European Studies

Veileder: Dr Tobias Schumacher

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Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet
Det humanistiske fakultet
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Kunnskap for en bedre verden

Abstract

Rooted in the methodological approach of critical discourse analysis and the discourse-historical approach, this longitudinal study aims to explore key issues regarding the modern need for national identity expressed in the case of Vladimir Putin's speech between 2012-2022. Focusing on Russia's engagement with its historical past and the strategic use of this past in Vladimir Putin's identity construction, the research examines key aspects such as historical memory (including primordialism and the Great Patriotic War), ethnicity, and anti-modern attitudes (based on the discourse of "The Russian Idea") in the president's discourse. The conceptual framework focuses on existing research, important elements of Russian history, and the data at hand. Instead of further categorising and conceptualising ideology in speech, it aims to uncover the relationship between the chosen aspects, reflected in Vladimir Putin's language. This approach offers a broader commentary on modernity and nation-building, highlighting the complex interconnection of different discourses in the president's speech. The study advocates for a deeper understanding of the evolving nature of nationalist movements, emphasizing the necessity of finding essential consensus on constructivist features of nation-building.

Sammendrag

Basert på tilnærmingene innen kritisk diskursanalyse og diskurs-historisk analyse, tar denne studien sikte på å utforske komplekse sider ved det moderne behovet for nasjonal identitet slik det kommer til uttrykk i Vladimir Putins taler fra 2012 til 2022. Studien ser spesielt på hvordan Russland forholder seg til sin historie og hvordan Putin bruker denne historien for å bygge sin identitet. Vi ser nærmere på temaer som historisk minne (inkludert primordialisme og Den store fedrelandskrigen), etnisitet og anti-moderne holdninger (basert på diskursen om 'Den russiske idéen') i presidentens taler. Den konseptuelle rammeverket fokuserer på eksisterende forskning, viktige elementer av russisk historie og tilgjengelige data. I stedet for å kategorisere og konseptualisere ideologi i tale, har det som mål å avdekke forholdet mellom de valgte aspektene, slik de gjenspeiles i Vladimir Putins språk. Denne tilnærmingen gir en bredere kommentar om modernitet og nasjonsbygging, og understreker den komplekse sammenhengen mellom ulike diskurser i presidentens tale. Studien argumenterer for behovet for å bedre forstå utviklingen innen nasjonalistiske bevegelser og viktigheten av å finne enighet om hvordan nasjonsbygging konstrueres.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Tobias Schumacher, for his belief in my project, his support along the way and his sincerity and openness towards me, which enabled me to grow not only academically but also as a person.

My gratitude also extends to my family, who provided me the time, space, and support for the realisation of this study and my academic degree as a whole.

Finally, I am grateful for the moral and intellectual support given by my dear friends Simeon and Nora, who helped me to organize my thoughts and believe in my ideas.

Anna Skiba, Trondheim, 14.11.2023

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1. Introduction

"[A] national culture is a discourse – a way of constructing meanings which influences and organises both our actions and our conception of ourselves [...]. National cultures construct identities by producing meanings about 'the nation' with which we can identify; these are contained in the stories which are told about it, memories which connect its present with its past, and images which are constructed of it." (Hall, 1992, p.292f.)

This thesis is about language and how language is being used in order to construct nations, represented through the case of Vladimir Putin's speech between the years 2012-2022. Nations and national identity are an appendage of modernity (Hall, 1992, p.291; Neumann, 1996, p. 25) and this does not only affect Russia and Vladimir Putin, but the globalised world as a whole. Given that nations continue to serve as the primary entities in the international arena, examining this modern phenomenon remains significant - particularly in times of globalisation, intensified nationalist sentiments and, debates around new world orders (Ash et. al, 2023), re-challenging us once again to engage thoroughly with the produced meanings that underly nations. The current war Vladimir Putin rages against Ukraine calls upon nationalist scholars "with a concrete opportunity to reflect on the role of nationalism theory in contemporary politics." (Maxwell, 2022b, p.97). Here Maxwell (2022b, p.97) also warns against the standardisation of nationalist flag-waving rhetoric, particularly the taken-for granted use of primordialism, by politicians, media, and scholars – even in times of needed support (Maxwell, 2022a, pp.162-165). Concurring with Maxwell, we must refrain from embracing nationalist rhetoric, even for support, as doing so places us in the realm of justifying figures like Vladimir Putin from the outset and makes us forget the fact, that a nation should hold representation amongst its people, and not according to selective approaches on history. Therefore, we must critically seek to dismantle some of the features inherent in national identity construction, for the dangerous potential they can bare to endlessly divide the European continent and for that matter, the global order as a whole.

The modern nation state was initially a European project and since the 18th and 19th century it was seen as the superior form of organising society than non-national, pre-modern ways of living, that, in the old discourse, were seen as trapped in warfare and the fight for constant survival (Graeber&Wengrow, 2021, p.29f.). Parts of today's Europe are also supranational, which does not mean that nations itself have no power, history or meaning as single entities. Therefore, modern nations and what constitutes them affect us all, and no matter how different a political entity might be nowadays, investigating meanings behind the construction of national identity calls upon our responsibility to constantly re-negotiate these meanings. Nations are part of our European heritage and our choice of ways to organise ourselves – also established for the sake of collaboration and peace. Referring to the opening quote of Stuart Hall, investigating complex aspects of constructing meanings for nations involves looking at stories and memories that shape it. Through Soviet Communism, Russia undertook its own high-speed modernisation project as a reaction to the accelerated demands of modern life (Nolte, 2012c, p.226, 242). This naturally means, that Russia as a former hegemon of the Soviet project, and with this Vladimir Putin, must embody significant stories from the remembrance of the past to shape this understanding of Russia as a nation today. Here, historical memory will be one of the key features for nation building I would like to investigate. It will include themes such as primordialism in Vladimir Putin's speech, following Maxwell's (2022a, p.153) appeals to study primordialism and nationalism against the backdrop of the current Ukraine war. Furthermore, historical memory research in today's Europe includes most often the

engagement with remembrance strategies and politics around the Second World War (Rupnow, 2009, p.71; Assmann, 2009, p.35). Therefore, the Great Patriotic War and its remembrance will take ample room in my analysis. Added to this, I will also include the aspect of ethnicity and how it is represented in Vladimir Putin's speech. Ethnicity historically and today, holds a significant role in nation building and self-determination (Kostagiannis, 2018b, p. 185f., referring to Ozkırımlı¹), particularly in political entities which do not have strong civic traditions, such as Russia (Sherr, 2010, p.164).

Language very much reflects a nation's understanding of itself (Wodak, 2016, p.8) and how mature it is on its path to tackle the modern challenge of nation building. My study is based on the discourse-historical approach (DHA) of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which offers me the possibility to look at relationships in language, steeped in the post-structural notion of Michel Foucault, that power expresses itself in *how* aspects relate to each other (Filardo-Llamas&Boyd, 2018, p.314).

The broader question that this study therefore aims to answer is "*how does Vladimir Putin's discourse in his speech acts relate to the historical context of Russia's construction of national identity and its path to modernity?*"

Since my research question starts with "how", it indicates that I will more look at relationships between the chosen aspects, rather than making conclusions about ideological undercurrents or classifications of what Russia is as a nation. This leads to further questions that are included in the research question: *how* does Vladimir Putin argue historical memory in his speeches for the construction of a national identity? *What* is it the Russian ought to remember according to Vladimir Putin and *how* do these aspects interact with each other? *What* role does ethnic belonging play in Vladimir Putin's remembrance, and does it relate to the past Soviet style of handling ethnic belonging? *How do all these factors interact with each other* and what bigger picture do they show that can be interesting for nationalism research and the necessity of engaging with constituents of nation building? Furthermore, I will also add a more context-specific and interdiscursive lens and look at the foundational tenets of Russian anti-modernity which arouse from Russia's 19th century discourse on national identity and role in the world order. *How* much of Russia's initial anti-modern visions are to be found in Vladimir Putin's speech and *how* do they function in the contemporary context?

The results in this study hope to speak for themselves and in this to contribute to seriously reconsidering the constructivist meaning of modern nations, some of its elements on which consensus is essential, and other aspects that are being re-radicalized, disrupting peace in Europe.

For this, I provide a comprehensive research design, where I initially start out to explain the time-line selection, review the existing literature and further explain the conceptual lens of modernity, its relevance, and the chosen aspects it entails as outlined above. The chapter outlining key concepts will be accompanied by necessary historical and empirical context, to serve the research objective and to do justice to the comprehensive longitudinal timeline. My methodology chapter outlines the DHA approach, touches upon the Data and the coding process and how I applied my methodology in the selected speech extracts.

¹ Ozkırımlı U. (2005), *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A Critical Engagement*, Palgrave Macmillan.

2. Research Design

The chosen time period (2012-2022) encompasses significant political shifts for Vladimir Putin, such as his return to office in 2012, the annexation of Crimea in 2014, attempts to restore the Molotov-Ribbentrop-Pact followed by an EP-resolution in 2019 (Walker, 2019, para.7) to condemn it, alterations to the Russian constitution extending his presidency in 2020 (Russell, 2020), and a full-scale war against Ukraine in 2022. Scholars have emphasized the pivotal nature of these years starting with 2012/2013, claiming Putin's rhetoric took a "conservative turn" (Kiryukhin&Shcherbak 2022, p.13) marked by neo-revisionist attitudes (Sakwa, 2020c, p. XII). Plokhly (2017a, p.332) points out, that Putin's speech in July 2013 at a conference demonstrates his first public announcement of Russians and Ukrainians as "one people" (p. 332) and marked a shift in his general rhetoric towards Ukraine and the relations with the political West. Historical and cultural references, especially regarding the Great Patriotic War, increased significantly after the third term (Marples, 2012, p. 288). The period after 2012 witnessed intensified efforts to institutionalize history and historical memory, as evident in legislations and the establishment of historical societies, analysed by Pakhaliuk (2021, p. 289ff.). As Kiryukhin&Shcherbak (2022, p.18f.) assert, Vladimir Putin enjoyed broad national popularity as a leader between 2000-2008. Nevertheless, his presidency between 2012-2019 had several popularity low-points, due to the president not being able to provide enough economic growth and stability within Russia and therefore increasingly retrieving to rhetoric around "patriotic mobilization" (p.17). Concurring, Richard Sakwa has explored Russia's modernization challenges, arising from events like the global financial crisis in 2008 and geopolitical conflicts such as the Georgia crisis in August 2008 and the Libyan crisis in 2011 (Sakwa, 2017a, p.89, 96). These obstacles, combined with growing disillusionment and hostility toward the West, propelled Putin's agenda to restore Russia's global power status after his return to power in 2012 (Sakwa, 2017b, p.106). This period, from the 1990s until the Ukraine Crisis in 2014, was characterized by Sakwa (2023, p.12) as a "Cold Peace", marked by Russia's exclusion from broader European security frameworks. The resulting lack of trust deepened tensions between Russia and Western powers, leading to Putin's hardened stance against NATO and escalating the geopolitical rivalry, referred to by Sakwa as "Cold War II" (Sakwa, 2023a, p.12,16). Overall, named authors and more, agree that after the third tenure, Vladimir Putin increasingly worked towards stronger legitimisation of his regime (Kiryukhin&Shcherbak, 2022, p.32; Shlapentokh&Arutunyan,2013, p.; Pakhaliuk, 2021, p.288f.; Sakwa, 2020d, p.57; Zyuzina 2019, p.86; Shlapentokh&Arutunyan 2013b, p.156). Based on all this, the timeline should also provide more likely polemic and contentious formulations in Vladimir Putin's language to better serve my research objective.

Having referred to important events and examined the scholarly significance of the selected timeline, the research design will carry forward an overview over the existing literature and justify the relevance of my research objective.

2.1. Literature Review

Since the methodology for my master thesis encompasses mainly the methodological approach of the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyse political speeches, the literature review will primarily concentrate on exploring the works of other researchers who have applied similar language and discourse analytical methods to the study of political speech, with a particular emphasis on the analysis of Vladimir Putin's speeches. The rationale behind my exclusive focus on these articles can

be further explained by the fundamental tenets of DHA and CDA, as they are chiefly devoted to interweaving language with a broader historical and ideological context, substantiating language as a potent form of social practice (Flowerdew&Richardson, 2018, p.1; Reisigl&Wodak, 2018, p.51). DHA is a very comprehensive and interdisciplinary method which requires an in-depth knowledge of the historical and cultural context inherited in the speaker's repertoire (Reisigl&Wodak, 2018, p.45). Therefore, including language analysis of political speech acts made by other politicians, in a completely different context, will take only a very limited space in this review and are mainly utilised to underline my research objective. Furthermore, incorporating non-linguistic analytical works into the review would go beyond the scope of the paper and are rather utilised to strengthen the relevance of my research objective inside the conceptual chapters of the study.

All in all, the literature review shall serve to give an overview over the current status of research and connect the research objective of my thesis to it, thereby demonstrating that the thesis shows academic relevance.

2.1.1. CDA and Vladimir Putin's Speech

Employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in political speeches is not an originality in itself, but there is only a limited amount of published analyses² of Vladimir Putin's speech, which comprises less than twenty articles. CDA is more often employed in analysing media discourse (Phelan, 2018, p. 286), as conducted by Beloshitckaia (2019) and the Russian anti-immigration discourse, but the data is inherently different, and the polemics of the language are not comparable with the speech acts of a politician. Other CDA analyses do not look at his speeches but at a combination of media outlets and Russian school books, as conducted by Kukshinov (2021).

CDA is always concerned with structures of power distribution and power appropriation (Flowerdew&Richardson, 2018, p.1). This is a common denominator in all conducted speech analyses of Vladimir Putin. Szymula (2020) is very linguistically oriented and concerned about the micro-level of the language analysis in Putin's speech. This can give a good overview over recurring words and speech patterns as a leverage point when trying to zoom out of the micro-level. Nevertheless, this analysis is very "technical" applying linguistic tools and categories on language and does not integrate the broader context of history or culture, which makes the article less interdisciplinary. A growing awareness of the weaknesses of purely linguistic analysis evoked new academic strands in discourse analysis, which were relevant for the establishment of CDA (Phelan, 2018, p.286). Here models by Fairclough and van Dijk were applied to the analysis of Putin's speeches. Both authors try to create a more macro-levelled outlook on language looking at the overall structure of the speeches and analysing the speeches more regarding its context (e.g., event, jubilee, war etc.) and the underlying ideology and power relations (Phelan, 2018, p.287). Puspita et al. (2019) and Alzobidy&Naser (2022) use Van Dijk's approach in analysing Putin's speeches. Nevertheless, both analyses are short and based on single speech events and allow only a small outlook on the matter. Puspita et al. (2022) use Fairclough's approach to look at the ideological underpinning of the language. The analysis is very short and concerned with only a few selected parts of speeches in the year 2018. Puspita et al. (2022) describe Fairclough's theory comprehensively and provide an understandable, broadly termed definition of ideology. Nevertheless, it did not become

² Several other discursive analyses on Vladimir Putin's speeches were neither published nor peer reviewed (Master theses; PhD theses) and therefore are not discussed in the literature review.

clear how the authors later arrived at the sudden conclusion that there is post-communistic ideology in the words of Vladimir Putin's speech (Puspita et al., 2022, p.19948f.) – without a more differentiated definition of a post-communistic ideology or some historical context to underly the claim. Filipescu (2022) looks at one speech in 2014, after the Crimea annexation, which again makes the study very short. Her definition of ideology stems from Fairclough's synthetic personalization which means that Putin addresses the audience seemingly neutral, while in fact having underlying ideological meaning in his words (Filipescu, 2022, p.442). Ferreira (2019) analyses the ideological undercurrent of Vladimir Putin's speech acts in the foreign policy area according to Van Leeuwen's categories of political legitimisation. These are authorization, moral evaluation, rationalization and mythopoesis (Ferreira, 2019, p.3). This paper gives a good idea over the reoccurring themes in Vladimir Putin's speech acts and verifies the often-articulated premise of many Russia scholars namely, that Vladimir Putin's political agenda represents a legitimisation strategy for his own regime. Van Leeuwen's categories greatly aid in obtaining insightful information about how themes of legitimisation are interconnected and ultimately, how these themes can comprise legitimisation itself. However, the categorisation is very generic and therefore could be applied to any (mostly right-conservative) politician that uses polemic language to justify his attitudes and actions. Therefore, while Ferreira's (2019) article can give important information about the reoccurring themes of Putin's legitimisation strategy and unravel the simplistic nature of legitimisation ideology, the theoretical framework of Van Leeuwen makes the result not context specific. Overall, it is absolutely congruent with a classical CDA analysis, that mainly concerns ideology and power imbalances.

Further, there is a range of articles analysing Putin's discourse and speech without indicating CDA as their given method. Nevertheless, the research objectives and the analytical tools are similar. Koteyko&Ryazanova-Clarke (2009) look at the ideological underpinning of Putin's speeches between 2000-2007, which makes this study already outdated. Nevertheless, they analyse Putin's military obsession and fake democratic state building, focusing on metaphors in his speech, which shows a more micro-levelled approach. Another interesting article from Tchapanian (2016) introduces a rhetoric discursive analysis by comparing speeches of Vladimir Putin and Barack Obama, applying Aristotle's Ethos, Pathos and Logos. It is a method that is based on a philosophical and rhetorical approach that follows certain rules auf argumentation. In this, the method is more concerned with the consistency of the rhetorical approach and less how aspects in his argumentation interact with each other. Another interesting comparative discursive analysis was conducted by Pavković (2017). The author analyses the religious concept of "sacralisation" in the speeches of Vladimir Putin and Slobodan Milošević. It is an approach that already points towards a historical approach since it is concerned with the history of religion and how religion justifies the 'right to the land' in the argumentation of both presidents (Pavković, 2017, p. 498). Nevertheless, since it is also a comparative study, only a small part is dedicated to the speeches of Vladimir Putin. The short article by Slade (2007) seems to bear some thematic similarities to my thesis, as it delves into Vladimir Putin's ideology in his 1999 Millennium speech. Employing a classical discourse analysis with mostly micro-analytical elements, the article contextualizes the speech extracts by also drawing from the concept of *The Russian Idea*. However, it is essential to note that this article is now outdated and only focuses on one early speech from the beginning of Putin's tenure. Consequently, it fails to assess Vladimir Putin's ideology and rhetoric in more recent times. This is reflected in how Slade's (2007, p.47) article attempts to

demonstrate how Putin's ideology in 1999 may have appeared more liberal and leaning towards the West.

DHA Analyses in the Literature

The discourse historical approach (DHA) conceptualised by Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl for over a decade to analyse anti-Semitic discourse, is a specific approach within CDA which focuses on the historical context of discourses and how language can relate to the past (Wodak&Meyer, 2016, p.31). So far, I have not been able to find a peer-reviewed article which uses the DHA approach in regard to Vladimir Putin's speech acts. While there is a published DHA analysis of Iraqi politician Haider al-Abadi's discourse on the Basra Crisis by Hasan (2020) – the provided context of this specific discourse and how it is utilised does not relate to this study. Furthermore, Hasan (2020) included the whole analysis into the methodology chapter, without indicating where the transition from methodology and analysis occurs. Therefore, this paper comprises a rather misleading example of engaging with the craft of the DHA approach. Much more helpful in learning what DHA is all about, has proven to be Wodak's (2016) DHA analysis of David Cameron's "Bloomberg speech". Here the scholar provided context to the specific event, to British Euroscepticism and to the political and public discourse around Brexit. Wodak (2016, p.8) also engaged with the concept of nationalism and explained different discursive strategies that are particularly designed to investigate the argumentative construction of national identity in a politician's discourse.

Based on Wodak (2016) I found another older article from Wodak et al. (1999) which initially conceptualised these important discourse strategies for DHA, as they help to categorise discourse and language regarding the *construction of national identity* in Austria. The article analyses different snippets of speech acts by Austrian politicians and carved out different argumentative strategies of how language can *construct, justify, transform, and deconstruct* national identity in discourse. By quoting Anderson (1983)³, Wodak et al. (1999, p.153) assert that nations are "imagined political communities" constructed through national identity again insisting (p. 156), that language is a social practice. They further provide contemporary and historical context to the speech snippets to showcase how to apply the strategies.

Additionally, there are again several articles that do not claim to use the DHA approach directly but apply very similar methods to serve the research objective of connecting the language closer to its historical or momentous context. Kumankov (2023) analysed speech acts of Vladimir Putin in February 2022, connected to the beginning of the war in Ukraine. He differentiates between political, legal, and moral arguments in Putin's rhetoric and arrives at the conclusion, that most arguments supporting the Ukraine war were of moral nature, using Russia's Great Patriotic War as a legitimisation strategy. Although this paper deals only with a limited amount of speeches, the historical and contemporary context in the article provides helpful insight for the ways how the Russian president instrumentalises history. The longitudinal study (1999-2019) of Putin's speech acts by Kiryukhin&Shcherbak (2022) attempts to work out a definition of "Putinism" (p.10) – which shall represent a conceptualisation of Putin's eclectic ideology and how it changes over time. This comprehensive study contains a lot of meaningful contextual knowledge and is very helpful in trying to understand how Putin's ideology has changed over a period of twenty years and the reasons for the changes involved. In their analysis they arrived at concluding, that

³ Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Revised and extended edition ed.). Verso London.

"Putinism" as an ideology is characterised by conservatism with an anti-liberal stance, political pragmatism, global assertions of power, emphasis on state sovereignty and the importance of historical Russia. Vladimir Putin has been present on the political stage for a very long time, studies analysing his ideology are numerous and frequently cited in this paper. Therefore, although comprehensive contemporary and historical context is provided, the results of their speech analysis mainly confirm what has been said about Vladimir Putin many times prior and, by now, can be read frequently in media outlets. Analysing Vladimir Putin's ideology as a core research objective can be increasingly difficult for generating novel results and contributes only marginally to the current state of research. Pakhaliuk (2021) mainly conducts a semiotic analysis on Vladimir Putin's public appearances between 2012-2018. Semiotics also count as discourse analysis, and is included into CDA (Flowerdew&Richardson, 2018, p.3). Pakhaliuk (2021) reveals, how Vladimir Putin and his government institutionalised their idea of history and historical memory over the last decades, by creating educational material, conducting specific public appearances and performances, creating committees and websites, and giving out laws, which indirectly affect the public perception of historical memory and its connection to national security. Further, Pakhaliuk (2021, p.298) concludes that Putin wants to convince everyone of his new Russian state by borrowing more and more from pre-revolutionary history. Thereby Pakhaliuk (2021, p.287) uses additionally a philosophical post-fundamentalist approach⁴. He draws the argument, that Putin attempts to create an "ontological basis" (Pakhaliuk, 2021, p.287) to instrumentalize history, coming from the desire to found a polity or state. The ontological, politicised foundation shall be served through history and values that shall create a completely new Russian state, opposing Western and liberal values (Pakhaliuk, 2021, p.292). All this serves to fill the moral and political post-Soviet vacuum, which cannot be served through hollow institutions and representatives, claiming that state building needs an underlying normative fundament, people can understand and relate to (Pakhaliuk, 2021, p.297f.). This semiotic study is very short, based on a philosophical approach, using a minimum of speech-text examples. Nevertheless, through the semiotic aspect it also reveals that there are serious actions to Vladimir Putin's rhetoric concerning history and historical memory. It points to the Great Patriotic War and pre-revolutionary history as main factors to construct his historical memory and analyses how Vladimir Putin attempts to present it in the most neutral and natural way to cater the foundational myths for his new Russian state.

2.1.2. Objectives of the Research

This paper will attempt to build on the aspects brought forward by Pakhaliuk (2021) touching upon the instrumentalisation of history and historical memory for political and legitimisation purposes. While he conducts a semiotic analysis of Vladimir Putin's appearances and in this delves into the institutional aspects of history and historical memory for national identity, it lacks extensive insights into how these aspects are utilised for the *construction of national identity from a linguistic perspective*. He points to the civilisational aspects of his discourse, the revival of language around spiritual foundations and primordality, but how does this connect to the past of the Russian polity? Pakhaliuk proves, that the past is the foundation, and he proves some of the circumstances that

⁴ Here Pakhaliuk (2021) clarifies: "Unlike the antifundamentalists (Franklin Ankersmit, for example), the postfundamentalists acknowledge the impossibility of uniting society on a single foundation (as totalitarian regimes have attempted) without denying the existence of these foundations, concentrating on how the ruling elites attempt to conduct the process of "founding," that is, to sediment social structures, to present them as something natural, and to halt the growth of semiotic differentiation. Post-fundamentalism arose as a result of the analysis of societies in crisis, where political structures had barely taken shape, which makes this theoretical approach especially useful for studying contemporary Russia." (p.288)

make the “past-as-foundation-approach” operate, but what is it really that the Russian’s ought to remember in history? Is anyone truly remembering the Kievan Rus or pre-revolutionary history? and how does this function to exercise power and to justify political actions? Presenting history as neutral facts, cannot be the only strategy that justifies the long tenure of the Russian president and has also been claimed an argumentation strategy by Filipescu (2022, p.442). However, using assertions around the need of an ontological basis for polities with weak structures (Pakhaliuk, 2021, p.288), stems from the modern necessity around “founding” nations (Neumann, 1996, p. 25) and will therefore also find some application in the conceptual chapter and the analysis, attended by a focus on historical memory, pre-revolutionary and primordial history. I consider these aspects chosen by Pakhaliuk (2021) as important for Vladimir Putin, since as his article has shown, there is considerable material evidence embodied in laws and institutions, proving their significance in Vladimir Putin’s current polity.

Additionally, the study will use Wodak et al.’s (1999) conceptualisation of argumentative strategies for the construction of national identity, to *demonstrate the linguistic dimension of national identity construction* through the DHA approach. More detailed explanation will be provided in the methodology chapter.

Looking at the existing literature that deals with the ideological aspects of Vladimir Putin’s speech acts, such as Ferreira (2019), Kumankov (2023) or Kiryukhin&Shcherbak (2022), there is little to find which show new insight into the president’s rhetoric and politics. Most results represent aspects that are already known about the president and can be even find in many journalistic articles today. The problem might lie in using theories that are based on assumptions which are generic and through this create results that have already been expressed frequently before – even without analysing Putin’s speech as the main data. Ferreira (2019) using Van Leeuwen’s approach, already determines a certain eyewear that can be applicable to most political speech, since the polemics are operating exactly for reasons of persuasion, manipulation, and power. Kiryukhin&Shcherbak (2022) provide important historical context and acknowledge that Vladimir Putin’s anti-liberalism is a current, global phenomenon (p.29), not necessarily providing any answers what would make Vladimir Putin different from other right-conservative and nationalist politicians. Eventually, the further aspect of authors ceaselessly conceptualising and classifying ideologies reaches its end inevitably, since Vladimir Putin’s “conservative turn” in 2012 might have intensified over the years, what new can be said and ranged about it? There are just so many ways to be conservative, and again, on a certain point, all conservatives somehow resemble each other.

As a solution to this I would like to attempt, to use a more open than predetermined conceptual lens when analysing the data, but still providing enough empirical and historical context to let the analytical results speak for themselves and make the research more context specific. Naturally, the aspect of revealing power structures is an important feature of CDA and will not be neglected in the analysis. Nevertheless, the concept of modernity and its implications are vast, providing both a structured framework and ample room to explore without necessary classify or repeat what already has been said. Instead, my aim is to examine how the different, chosen aspects of modernity in his speech interact with each other and how they enter into a relationship. The DHA and CDA approaches encourages using different conceptual and theoretical lenses, the post-structural rational behind it, invites the researcher to still have an open mind when going into the data and just see, what one can find and what seems prevalent (Wodak&Meyer, 2016, p.16f.). The idea is to be receptive to what emerges from the data and to critically analyse the multiple

meanings and discourses that may be present, rather than being restricted by predetermined theories or frameworks.

Therefore, the next chapters will discuss the concept of modernity and what it means for Russian national identity, based on literature about these topics. It will build on Pakhaliuk's (2021) assertion, that historical memory plays a significant role and connect the concept of historical memory with modernity and national identity. Furthermore, a modern state also often includes discourses about ethnicity, which caught my attention in Maxwell's (2022b, p.98) article citing Rogers Brubaker's work about "groupism" and the connections to nationalism in the post-Soviet era. Therefore, an article of Brubaker (1994) will provide the necessary empirical background for the chapter about ethnicity. Lastly, making an even further case for using a non-generic eyewear for going into the data, I will include a chapter about Russian anti-modernism, conceptualised by McDaniel (1996). McDaniel's (1996) work assert, that the advent of modernity is inextricably linked to Russia's need and specific way of constructing a national identity. Here providing empirical and historical context will help to see the results emerging from the data as more context-specific in Russia's path to modernity, meaning that the case is not to prove that there is an ideology and what ideology it is, but rather to see how the language interacts with the past. Overall, this balanced approach allows me to maintain the rigor of my research and add a different angle, while embracing the complexity of the subject matter and answer more the question about *where* Russia and Vladimir Putin are on their path to modernity, rather than *what* Russia and Vladimir Putin are.

Lastly, I acknowledge that the angle I am taking is still limited, not considering other decisive factors such as economy, institutions, policies, attitudes of elites, and contextual, historical and political specifics that are inherent in e.g., the Ukraine-Russia relations or relations with other actors.

2.2. Key Concepts for Analysis

These chapters aim to explain important concepts which relate to my research objective and have been crucial in giving meaning and context to the findings in my analysis. Moreover, the concepts and empirical context presented in these chapters serve as a theoretical foundation, since I applied them in my approach to analyse the data. This will be elaborated upon further in the methodology chapter.

The following chapter will give a general definition of modernity as a concept and related concepts. The further chapters discuss the scholarly and contemporary relevance of this concept and connect it to national identity. Proceeding, I will explain modernity and national identity in a separate chapter, emphasising history, historical memory and ethnicity as chosen aspects of modernity in Vladimir Putin's speech acts. Further, I will discuss the relevance to engage with the concept of anti-modernity in Vladimir Putin's speech acts and give comprehensive empirical context to this issue.

2.2.1. Modernity as a Concept

Modernity is the broader concept that encompasses both *modernism* and *modernisation*. Modernisation started with the era of Enlightenment and intensified through industrialisation and the creation of nation states (Todorova, 2013, para.6; Kostagiannis, 2018, p.2f., Graeber&Wengrow,2021, p.29). Todorova (2013, section para.7), referring to Giddens (1990)⁵, explains that *Modernity* refers to the larger societal and historical shift toward contemporary ways of life, encompassing changes in various aspects of society

⁵ Giddens, A. (1990). Chapter II. In *The Consequences of Modernity* (pp. 55-70). Polity Press.

including culture, politics, economics and technology. *Modernism* is the cultural reaction to the demands posed by the modern state, characterized broadly by features of *modernisation* like industrialisation, urbanisation, and the rise of a market-driven industrial economy. Further named can be the advancement of centralized and cohesive state establishments and bureaucracy (Todorova, 2013, para.4,5; Nolte, 2012c, p.226f.). Here, the modern landscape is also politically shaped by diverse models of popular governance, party systems, political mass participation and the secularisation of political power (Todorova, 2013, para.4,11). Ethnosymbolists assert that a cultural continuum exists connecting historical polities with modern nations, challenging the clear demarcation between the modern and pre-modern eras (Kostagiannis, 2018a, p.2). However, Kostagiannis (2018a, p.2) argues, that it's important not to overlook the significant qualitative distinctions between traditional and modern communities. The stability of "natural communities" (p.2), well-defined social roles, and predictability found in traditional societies gave way to the dynamic, social mobility, and uncertainty prevalent in modern societies. Shlapentokh&Arutunyan (2013c, p.10ff.) and Hedlund (2011, p. 131f.) state, that the rule of law, private property rights, mechanisms for political accountability and civil rights are also significant features of modernity and statehood and that they appear very obfuscated or plainly absent when looking at contemporary Russia and other historic versions of Russia, such as the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) or the Russian Empire. Todorova (2013, para. 4,5) also suggests that *modernism* can be understood as a commentary to modernity, originating from the "periphery" (para.4) of the Western world. It serves as a response to the influence of Western European modernity from countries that either did not experience the same degree of modernisation or underwent a distinct form of modernisation compared to the founding countries. This an important factor to consider, when looking at almost every created state in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, since they represent the closest "periphery" to Western Europe (Todorova, para.5). In essence, modernism is a cultural reaction and commentary to modernity, while modernization pertains to the broader socio-economic changes characteristic of modernity.

2.2.2. Modernity and its Scholarly and Contemporary Relevance

Modernity, modernism, and modernisation are all interconnected concepts and undoubtedly experience a certain level of overstrain. It has come to my attention due to involvement with other disciplines during my studies, such as sociology, anthropology, and history. Furthermore, I noted that there are contemporary voices in the literature of political sciences and IR, which have recently advocated for a revitalisation of modernisation theory and the conceptual use of these terminologies (Maxwell 2022a, Magalhães 2022, El Amine 2016, Todorova 2013, Sakwa, 2023a). Maxwell (2022a) writes:

"Modernization theory attracted critics, but has mostly deprived primordialism of its intellectual legitimacy. Hardly any nationalism theorists espouse primordialism. [...] most political scientists and historians have concentrated on other themes. Unreconstructed primordialism remains widespread among non-specialists since, as Gellner⁶ rightly noted, "commonsense popular belief is on the side of the antiquity of nation" (p. 153)

Magalhães (2022) further notes that there is a need for

"a mature and nuanced theory of modernity, capable of withstanding the antimodern challenge and gaining an intellectual horizon where we are not torn between the simple alternative of returning to the absolute truth of a natural law or accepting that our normative preferences are ultimately arbitrary and rationally unjustifiable" (p.12)."

⁶ Gellner, E. (1997) *Nationalism*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

This finds support in another article by El Amine (2016). The scholar declares that “[F]irst, we should reconceptualize the history of political thought such that we move from an East/West division to a modern/pre-modern division” (p. 103). In her article, El Amine (2016, p.103) questions the common belief in Comparative Political Theory that highlights differences between Western and non-Western traditions, reinforcing clear East-West divides. Instead, the scholar suggests seeing modernity as a shared condition found in the modern state, with its key features like institutions, territory, sovereignty, centralization, and participation in global affairs. This perspective emphasizes similar ways of protecting citizens from state power, leading to shared values in Eastern and Western societies (El Amine, 2016, 110ff.). Sakwa’s (2023a) continues to note that “the struggle is no longer between socialism and capitalism and not even between democracy and autocracy, but between models of world order and paths to modernity” (p.18). His and El Amine’s (2016) statements gain even more significance against the backdrop of the results in a recent EU-funded global public opinion poll by Ash et al. (2023), which investigated attitudes towards Russia’s war against Ukraine. The poll highlights, amongst other things, that citizens in the chosen non-Western countries (China, India, Turkey) and Russia see the emergence of a multipolar world order as more probable than bipolar arrangements (Ash et al., 2023, p. Bullet Point 4). It is concluded that this contrasts with Western perceptions (Ash et al., 2023, para.2). The study suggests that while the West is united in its response to Russia's aggression, this consolidation occurs in an increasingly divided “post-Western world” (Ash et al., 2023, Bullet Point 3). Citizens in countries such as India and Turkey insist on their own “free-floating sovereignty” (Ash et al., 2023, para.22) and role in the global order, which will mainly serve their own national interests (Ash et al., 2023, para.6, 30f.). These results resemble to some extent conditions present in Europe between the two world wars but are now on a global scale. E.H. Carr (1945/2021, p. 15ff.) described it as the “Third Period” between 1870-1914 onwards, where economic grievances and the desire to maintain domestic structures of social welfare and economic stability led to the mentality of interests over values, an exacerbation of nationalist sentiments and mutual protectionist isolation amongst countries. Cox (2021) cites Carr in “Foundations of the Moral Order” (1949): “A world divided between a multiplicity of sovereign states presents difficulties for the creation of world order which have to be frankly recognized” (p. xxii). Arguably, the global conditions are not nearly transferable to the conditions of pre-war Europe. Nevertheless, one can look at what Ash et al. (2023) explain in their poll referring to India, Turkey and Brazil, revealing a more interest driven mindset rather than a normative one:

“These countries do not represent some new third bloc or pole in international politics. They do not share a common ideology among themselves. Indeed, they often have divergent or competing interests. They know they do not have the global influence of the US or China. But they are certainly not content to adjust to the whims and plans of the superpowers. And their publics support such an approach, as demonstrated, for example, by their reluctance to consider problems relating to Ukraine to be any of their business.” (Section 6)

Today, many countries in the Global South are mainly responsible for the high interdependence between the continents. Globalisation has improved modernisation efforts in non-Western countries (particularly Asia), created a middle-class with expectations and made their governments more confident (Bonnet&Kolev, 2021). The assertiveness of these countries on their own distinctiveness through e.g., the main focus on sovereignty (Ash et al., 2023, para.22, 30), isolated from others can be interpreted as resistance to transcend nationalist sentiments and enhance protectionist efforts (World Bank, 2023). If everyone asserts only their own interests, constructive dialogue will be difficult. Sakwa (2011) argued:

“Russia considered itself one of the few truly sovereign countries in the world, together with the USA, India and China, each with the ability (and right) to sustain an independent civilisational world view. This understanding generated a pluralistic understanding of ‘the international’ and sustained a neo-revisionist foreign policy and a distinct representation of national identity” (p. 971).

Consequently, as mentioned frequently, the idea of the nation and nation state is connected to the advent of modernity. This is expressed through nationalism and the need for a national identity since this is constitutive to the modern, constructivist nature of a nation state. Kostagiannis (2018a), referring to Gellner (1997)⁷, concludes: “As Ernest Gellner noted, it is irrelevant whether a nation has a genuine “navel” that connects it to the past or whether it must invent one: what matters is “the need for navels engendered by modernity”. Nationalism, then, is a distinctly modern phenomenon” (p. 3).

All this mentioned, the thesis naturally aims not to set up a new modernity theory, but take different aspects related to modernity and investigate those in Vladimir Putin’s speeches. National identity affects many modern nations that also share other modern attributes, as El Amine (2016) emphasised. Here, it is crucial to consider what Vladimir Putin employs to meet the modern need for a national identity and will be part of next chapter.

While agreeing with Magalhães (2022) and El Amine (2016) about the fact that looking at nations through the eyewear of modernity should result in finding common and constructive denominators, since modernity and its consequences affect everyone in the contemporary world. Nevertheless, I also regard that it is still important to provide necessary historical context and make necessary historical connections that also emphasize the idiosyncratic part of a state’s journey to cope with modern challenges. This seems particularly important for Russia, since Russia undertook an own Socialist project of state, which still stems from the engagement of modernity, but also made the Russian polity as a hegemon in this project differ significantly from other European countries. Overall, I tried to seek out concepts that affect Europe as a whole and are meaningful for Russia and Vladimir Putin at the same time. Fortunately, the concept of modernity is so overarching, that my analysis will naturally also provide a general commentary on utilising history for national identity construction and nationalism as a whole. This approach, as already outlined in chapter 2.1.2, is undertaken to sidestep the pitfalls of creating generic results, generate further classifications or omit a context-specific approach. The next chapter aims to explain how modernity and national identity are connected through the key aspects investigated in this study.

2.2.3. Modernity and National Identity

McTague (2022, para.13) referring in his article to Cambridge professor Helen Thompson (2022)⁸, remarked, that while nationalism in the political West is seemed to be held in low esteem, many people forget that nation states are still the foundational entities in the arena of international relations and of democracies – also in the political West. Thompson suggests that we should take seriously what defines states, and it might be unrealistic to assume that most countries in the world have moved beyond historical narratives in favour of universal values (McTague, para.9, 14). The consent in nations has to be built on something and even then, people can always change their minds (McTague, para 18). In

⁷ Gellner, E. (1997) *Nationalism*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

⁸ Thompson, H. (2022). *Disorder: Hard Times in the 21. Century*. Oxford University Press

this, McTague (2022) also refers to Historian Allan Allport, asserting that it does not matter if “whether historical narratives are true, but whether they are functional.” (Section 24). McTague (2022) concludes: “History matters, then, because it shapes how we think about the world and our place in it. And the principal way we understand history is through the history of nations. As such, national histories are necessarily stories, not scientific studies” (Section, 23). Consequently, how are history and national identity connected together and why is history functional? Gusevskaya&Plotnikova (2020, p.1028) argue that history and national identity are often connected through *constructing a historical memory* about certain events that have been crucial in the past of a nation or group. Moreover, historical memory impacts all individuals in Europe and can be regarded as an integral component of modern nationhood that everyone must contend with. Having identified a common denominator among modern nations in the concept of historical memory, *my analysis will explore, how does Vladimir Putin argue historical memory in his speeches for the construction of a national identity?*

Additionally, if modern nation building was not based on civic principles, it tended to be based on ethnic considerations. Moreover, it is the most common distinction in IR (Kostagiannis, 2018b, p.185f. referring to Ozkirimli, 2005). Concurring with Kostagiannis (2018b, p. 185f.), most nationalisms cannot be neatly pigeonholed in dual categories of civic and ethnic. Indeed, most nationalisms can have different aspects of e.g., history, religion, language etc., and cannot be normatively assessed in terms of gracious/civic and evil/ethnic. As Kostagiannis (2018b, p.185f.) pointed out, civic nationalism can e.g., lead to authoritarianism, and ethnic nationalism can e.g., lead to enhance rights for minority groups. Historically, Russia is generally lacking a strong civic tradition and institutions truly based on civic values (Sherr, 2010, p.164). This can also generally be identified when looking at Russian history of the past 100-150 years, exhibiting autocratic rule, lack of democratic institutions, lack of a tradition for civic associations – currently expressed through labels such as “foreign agents” or “undesirables” (Russell, 2022). The Russian constitution formally resembles civic norms but fails practically – lacking the modern “spirit of innovation” (Sakwa, 2020c, p.3). As often emphasized, the process of state and nation building becomes significantly challenging in the absence of a normative foundation. Similarly, establishing a civic state devoid of any significant civic tradition appears to be an exceptionally formidable task.

Having said all this, I would also like to investigate the role of ethnicity in Vladimir Putin’s speeches, since ethnicity plays a significant role in various conflicts in Eastern Europe⁹ and was handled fundamentally different in the Soviet Union, than anywhere else in Europe (Brubaker, 1994, p.50). *How is ethnicity treated in Vladimir Putin’s argumentation and how does it relate to historical memory?*

The following chapter will provide essential background information on both concepts, further consolidating its significance for this thesis.

Historical Memory and National Identity

Assmann (2009, p.35) and Gusevskaya&Plotnikova (2020, p.1026) point out that many modern nations after the Second World War needed a connection to and remembrance of their own history to overcome past trauma and/or to create a new national identity. The modern conception of historical memory came about when researchers and activists of the last century studied how to process the Holocaust (Assmann, 2009, p.35;

⁹⁹ e.g., the Transnistrian conflict, the current Ukraine war, Nagorno-Karabakh war

Gusevskaya&Plotnikova, 2020, p.1027). But processing the past did not stay within this framework only and soon became more instrumentalised for ideological, political, and strategic objectives (Ensink, 2009, p.169) Gusevskaya&Plotnikova, 2020, p.1029; Malinova, 2021, p.1004). In this, historical memory is not only distributed and imposed from above, but also deals with the remembrance of individuals and individual groups. This makes historical memory not only an ideological tool but also the part of a living experience of people (Malinova, 2021, p.1004).

Gusevskaya&Plotnikova (2020, p.1026), assert that historical memory and identity are closely intertwined, as the preservation of memory is essential for the self-determination of individuals and the unity of social groups. In this they point out, that historical memory, especially when manipulated for political purposes, as it is the case in Russia, can influence group identity (Gusevskaya&Plotnikova, 2020, p.1029). All in all, national identity is constructed through understanding a nation's history, its current position, and future prospects. The manipulation of historical memory can lead to the distortion of national identity, which, in turn, affects social cohesion. Therefore, remembering history and memory politics can be a very tense issue, particularly when it is so dramatically tied to the *ratio essendi* of a state, as Pakhaliuk (2021) pointed out. This is also endorsed in the concept of *ontological security*, as outlined by Malinova, (2021, p. 1004) and Rumelili, (2018, p.281). Ontological security expands the scope of security studies beyond material security concerns (Malinova, 2021, p. 1004) and is defined as "the security of Being premised on certainty and continuity of a sense of Self", (Rumelili, 2018, p. 281). It emphasizes the importance of memory in shaping a nation's identity, as political memory can form the core of how states define themselves (Malinova, 2021, p. 1004). Therefore, constructing national identity and nationalism do have an ontological component, which also often stems from how history is reconstructed and remembered.

All this is particularly meaningful for Russia and other former SU countries. The remembrance of the Second World War in Eastern Europe is a complex and contentious matter, requiring sensitive and nuanced approaches. The Soviet Union's victory in the Second World War solidified its position as a global superpower (Marples, 2012; p.286f.; Shlapentok&Arutunyan, 2013b, p.156). Soviet propaganda, led by figures like Stalin and Brezhnev, presented a somewhat "sanitized version" (Mann, 2020, p.510) of the victory about the Second World War (Marples, 2012, p.286; Mann 2020, p.510). Meanwhile, countries like the Baltic states and Poland remember the Soviet occupation, while Russia and Belarus emphasize their role in defeating the Germans, highlighting that Eastern Europe would have been otherwise defeated by the Germans (Marples, 2012, p.288). Ukraine's remembrance of the war is intricate and varies by region. Southern and Eastern Ukraine align more with the Soviet version, while Western Ukraine sees it from the perspective of the occupier (Marples 2012, p.289). Tensions have also arisen between Ukraine and Poland, especially concerning the rehabilitation of figures like Stepan Bandera, who is viewed as a hero by some Ukrainians but considered a war criminal by the Poles (Marples, 2012, p. 290f.). Also inside Russia, the memory of the Second World War is not entirely monolithic. Here Sakwa (2023b) asserts:

"Just as no inclusive pan-European security order was established after Cold War I, so the space of memory is fragmented and feeds into the security dilemmas dividing the continent. Memory disputes also divide the Russian polity, raising the fundamental question about who is entitled to draw the balance between Soviet achievement (notably industrial modernisation and victory in the Great Patriotic War) and its price (wasteful and incompetent use of human lives accompanied by Stalinist mass murder). There is a vigorous debate in

Russia and beyond between historians on these issues, but politicisation of the question distorts analysis" (p.13).

Utilising historical memory, particularly on the Second World War (Great Patriotic War (GPW)), has also been prevalent during the Soviet Union and matters now in Vladimir Putin's politics. The commemorative narrative around the Second World War and history as a whole, was largely overlooked during Boris Yeltsin's tenure but experienced a revival under Vladimir Putin (Mann, 2020, p.512), particularly after his third presidential term when his popularity began to abate (Marples, 2012, p.287f.). Therefore, it is believed that Putin revitalized this historical event for legitimacy reasons (Shlapentok&Arutunyan, 2013b, p.156). Here, Sakwa (2020b) further explains that the GPW played a significant role in forming "Putin's political character" (p. 7), given that his family was directly impacted by the war. In the context of Russia's relations with the EU, US and Ukraine, this matter has acquired significant importance and can be perceived as a contest for the right interpretation of history. After the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Vladimir Putin and his government passed a resolution to the UN to condemn "Nazism". This resolution was rejected by Ukraine, Canada and the US and assessed sceptically by many EU states – although most of them abstained from taking a clear position (Gardner, 2014, para.1). The issue intensified after the Russian government tried to present a more favourable interpretation of the 1939-Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in 2019 (Walker, 2019, para.7). This was followed by a 2019 EP resolution condemning Soviet war crimes under Stalin and left Vladimir Putin to believe, that the EP resolution was equating the German Nazi regime with the Soviet Union (Walker, 2019, para.5; Sakwa, 2023b, p.13). This shows, that the implications of a country's interpretation of history are crucially important in domestic politics and become even more volatile when interpretations are accepted or contested in the international arena (Rupnow, 2009, p.70ff.).

As argued, nations are modern, and national identities depend on historic narratives made by people who represent a nation. Utilising history for this purpose is modern itself. The remembrance of Russia's primordial history in Soviet history was complex and seen through the lens of Soviet propaganda, to e.g., mobilise support for wars or persecute ethnic minorities (Brunstedt, 2021a, p. 13f., 29). Certainly, narratives around the 1917 revolution have played a bigger part in creating national coherence. After the war period, primordialism had not enjoyed a lot of attention (Brunstedt, 2021a, p. 38), but however complex Soviet primordial remembrance has been, it was surely not justified with religious feelings. The Soviet oppression of religious revivals amongst people after the Second World War (Brunstedt, 2021b, p.163) and general knowledge about Soviet prohibitions of religious expression naturally leads to this assumption.

Finally, Rupnow (2009, p.72f.) pointed out, that post-Soviet successor states such as Lithuania, were forced to remember history in a more differentiated setting together with the European Union. In applying for EU membership, the EU set up an "International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania". Rupnow (2009, p.73) further explains that the commission aimed to create a narrative that unifies Lithuanians and the EU by acknowledging and reconciling the traumatic aspects of their shared history. However, what if the necessity of remembering history is not happening together, but in Russia's gradual isolation of the last years and for the purpose of regime legitimisation, as outlined by Sakwa (2023b, p.13)?

Taking together everything presented in this chapter, I would like to analyse how the factor of historical memory is argued in Vladimir Putin's speeches looking at narratives around the GPW, primordiality and Ukraine and how can it be connected back to Russia's history.

How is the ontological dimension constructed in his language, if it can be read out at all? Analysing all this, what could be concluded about historical memory and its meaning for the Russian polity in the contemporary context? Finally, can historical memory also connect to ethnicity and how? The importance of ethnicity will be discussed in the following subchapter.

Ethnicity and National identity

The role of ethnicity in the Russian-Soviet past was fundamentally different to the one in most parts in Western Europe (Brubaker, 1994, p.50; Plokhy, 2017c, Xf.). The Soviet principle of uniting nations was rooted in the vision of a united proletariat, transcending ethnic divisions. However, the reality of ethnonationalist sentiments was already established in Eastern Europe, and it required Vladimir Lenin to acknowledge these sentiments (Brubaker, 1994, p.53f. Trenin, 2019, 55f.). Thus, the Soviet Constitution granted countries the right to secede from the Union based on their own will (Brubaker, 1994, p.52). This provision aimed to appease nationalist aspirations, especially given the significant ethnic diversity in many regions (Brubaker, 1994, p.53; Plokhy, 2017f., pp.213-217). Brubaker (1994, p.65f.) further asserts, that the provisions allowed administrative representation for the ethnic majority on a territory, enabling the possibility for that administrative unit to peacefully secede from the Union if it wished to do so. Ethnicity primarily determined the right of the majority to hold administrative functions within a specific territory, but people weren't granted rights and privileges based solely on ethnicity. Naturally, these administrative units were also established to hold contact with the Communist Party, which was exerting control over them. All in all, ethnicities ought to be treated equally, but this didn't always align with practical realities and became particularly apparent through e.g., deportations of Jews, Poles, Crimean Tatars, Baltic populations under Stalin (Plokhy, 2017d, p.267f.). Celebrating cultural heritage and language was not officially prohibited but it always had to align with and be subjected to the norms of the Communist party (Brubaker, 1994, p.60; Trenin, 2019, p.56). Consequently, the approach to nation-building based solely on ethnicity was relatively new for many post-Soviet Eastern European countries (Brubaker, 1994, pp.61-63). Here one can add, what Rupnow (2009) remarks, namely, that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union most Eastern European countries were "sanitizing authoritarian regimes of the inter war and war period as ideals of nationalistic politics and milestones on the way to independence" (p. 70). Here Brubaker (1994, p.68) explicates, that during the Soviet era, Russians benefited from their "public status, linguistic privilege, and cultural facilities" (p. 68) across the entire Soviet Union. This widespread advantage led Russians to consider the entire Soviet Union as their national territory, rather than just the Russian Republic. In contrast, other nationalities attached greater importance to their respective republics than Russians did to theirs. Therefore, Brubaker (1994) assumed already early after the Soviet dissolution, that the future of parts of Eastern Europe will be shaped by ethnic conflict:

"With the loss of this wider home territory, Russians living in territorially concentrated settlements in the successor states are likely to seek to redefine areas of the successor states in which they form a local majority or plurality as "their own" territories by demanding some form of territorial autonomy in those areas (including, most significantly, northern and eastern Kazakhstan, Moldova east of the Dniester River, northeastern Estonia, and parts of Eastern and Southern Ukraine, notably Crimea)" (p. 68).

Extended by remarks of Plokhy (2017c):

"Russia today has enormous difficulty in reconciling the mental maps of Russian ethnicity, culture, and identity with the political map of the Russian Federation. In other words, it has a major problem in responding to the key demand of modern nationalism, famously defined

by Ernest Gellner¹⁰ as “a political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.” Do Russia’s present-day political borders coincide with the borders of the Russian nation? The answer depends on the way in which Russian political and intellectual leaders and Russians in general imagine their nation. The question of Russian identity and its geographic extent is of more than academic interest, as it influences issues of war and peace along Europe’s eastern frontiers today and will influence them for generations to come” (p. X).

When ethnicity was united under a Soviet Communist narrative, ethnicity certainly must have also been united under Soviet memory politics since memory was filtered through Soviet ideology – as explained in the previous chapter. Therefore, and against the backdrop of the Ukraine war, it must be assumed that the ways how ethnicity is framed plays a significant role in Vladimir Putin’s speech acts and in his historical memory. This will further connect his construction of national identity to Russian history and its engagement with modernity.

2.2.4. Anti-modernity and National Identity

The concept of modernity, as every concept, has to withstand certain critique to prove its own relevance. Paradoxically, in the case of modernity, the modernist critique itself proves that there must be at least some truth to the existence of the modern phenomenon. To elaborate deeper on this issue, it is important to make a distinction between *modern ideology* and the traditional ways of organising social and political life. Here Kostagiannis (2018a) clarifies:

“[...] the concept of a modern ideology broadly understood as a system of ideas offering both explanatory statements about the world and prescriptions about how it ought to be. The feature distinguishing modern ideology from its traditional counterpart is that it does not seek its explanations outside social reality and is therefore secular rather than metaphysical. Nationalism as an ideology thus contains **both descriptive and prescriptive elements** [emphasis added]: the world is divided into distinct nations, loyalty to them should trump all other loyalties, and nations should be politically independent” (p.3).

According to Latour (2018, p.26f.), anti-modernist critique seems opposed to modernity but through their very own critique they reproduce modernity itself. Modernity is often opposed to traditionalism, without recognising that this constructed traditionalist critique is an aspect of modernity itself, reproducing the *prescriptive element* of modern ideology. Hylland-Eriksen (2013) notes:

“Indeed, as decades of research on collective identification has shown, intensified identity management and the assertion of group boundaries is a likely outcome of increased contact and the perceived threat to group integrity. The standardisation of identity witnessed in e.g. nationalism and religious revivalism is a feature of modernity, not of tradition, although it is frequently dressed in traditional garb” (p.2).

Therefore, resurrecting and exalting bygone eras is a modern phenomenon (McTague, 2022, para.26). This is e.g., reflected by looking at Vladimir Putin’s primordial rhetoric. In this context McTague (2022) asks confrontationally:

“How many times do we make this mistake, of misinterpreting malign products of modernity with leftovers from the past? [...] Putin, then, is a modern man, reacting to the modern world, using modern methods in an attempt to make something new. He is conjuring up the spirits of the past in his service, dressing up his aggression in time-honored disguise. Yet we

¹⁰ Gellner, E. (1997) *Nationalism*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

should not be fooled by the old costumes and slogans; the reality is new and real. Putin is trying to bury the old world, not re-create it" (para. 6, 26).

Although, the previous chapter has already agreed with McTague's (2022) view on the fact that Vladimir Putin's objectives are modern, this paper will also argue that Putin's anti-modernity is an anti-modernity Russian style. Despite acknowledging that history matters, McTague (2022, para.1-3), in his article, makes the common deficient assumption, that all anti-moderns such as Islamist terrorists, Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin are essentially the same. This perception mostly arises from the simple fact that all anti-moderns try to oppose the same phenomenon: modernity. And it is the complexion of the phenomenon itself which makes their critics appear wearing the same, "traditional garb" (Hylland-Eriksen, 2013, p. 2) - and admittedly, there can be intersections. However, the historical context remains crucial, and it's essential to recognize that the context of Donald Trump or an anti-modern Islamist terrorist differs significantly from that of Vladimir Putin. In my thesis research, I discovered that Russian anti-modernity raises following question: Is it a reaction to modernity, like many other current anti-modern movements, or has it long since become the only *status quo*?

To fully understand this, it requires a deeper examination of the empirical and historical context, exploring the origins and reasons behind Russian anti-modernity, and the factors that contribute to its current vitality. The next chapters will be dedicated to this subject matter.

Cultivating "The Russian Idea"

The following chapters will intensively utilise the McDaniel's (1996) work "The Agony Of The Russian Idea". His work provides provoking insights about how a set of principles served as a *repeated lens* in Russian political culture, to assess itself and others. It is known as *The Russian Idea* and it caused historical dilemmas within Russian society, triggered through Russia's need to create a nation and position itself in the international arena (McDaniel, 1996b, p.11, 22). McDaniel (1996) applied this set of principles to the pre-revolutionary, Soviet, and partly post-Soviet (ending with Boris Yeltsin) era to show their relevance and significance in terms of social practice.

While it is the current modern tendency to go beyond culture and to find common denominators that transcend the differences amongst people, this Enlightened universalistic attitude is not necessarily innate to the Russian world view, deriving from Russia's engagement with the advent of modernity (McDaniel 1996a, p.25; Engelstein, 2001, p.131f.; 137). But what is meant by culture? Here it can be interesting to look at a quote from Geertz (1973) used by Neumann (1996a, p.6) referring to Max Weber: "Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (Geertz, 1973, p.5). Consequently, everyone constructs their own meanings, and these meanings are subject to interpretation by others. When similar ways of conduct meaning emerge in different contexts over a certain period of time, it may be appropriate to characterize it as a culture or imply a sense of *continuity* (Pipes, 1996¹¹, as cited in

¹¹ Pipes, R. (1996) 'Russia's Past, Russia's Future', *Commentary*, 101, 6, pp. 30-38.

Hedlund, 2006, p.779) *historical legacy* as proposed Wittenberg (2015) and Hedlund (2011) or *path dependency* (Hellie, 2005¹², as cited in Hedlund, 2006, p.780).

The research objective aims to connect Putin's speeches with Russia's historic path towards modernity and the spillovers into national identity. Here one has to go back in time to understand when the political culture about state and nation took place in Russian discourse and how much of it might have survived into the present time. This discourse is represented in *The Russian Idea*.

Historical Context

According to McDaniel (1996a, pp.22-24) *The Russian Idea* represents Russia's discourse on its national identity starting from the 19th century until today. McDaniel (1996b, p.28) furthers, that *The Russian Idea* represents a set of anti-modern attitudes developed through the necessity to create a modern nation.

Russia's pursuit of identity has for a long time been intertwined with its close proximity and relationship to unfolding events in Europe (Neumann, 1996a, p.9). Neumann (1996a, pp.8-11) conjectures, that in terms of world order, Russia entered the stage already in the 15th century, when it declared itself as the "Third Rome" and the heir of the fallen Byzantine Empire and of Eastern Christianity - Russia's first counter hegemonical doctrine against Europe. The essence of Russian identity, encompassing its history, culture, and role in the global order, would be inconceivable without Russia's persistent "gaze" towards Europe (Neumann, 1996a, p.1). Just as Europe cultivated its own identity, it remained subject to ongoing interpretation by Russia – not only intellectually but also in terms of social practice (McDaniel, 1996a, p.2).

The first modernisation efforts took place under Peter I in the 18th century and are a matter of controversy amongst scholars, since there is no agreement on how effective, substantial, or transformative these reforms initially have been for Russia. Nevertheless, scholars agree (Scharf, 2010, p.169f.; McDaniel, 1996c, p.76; Hedlund, 2006, p.786) that the Petrine reforms were introduced forcefully on the Russian population, and due to the missing Western European context, they have been misunderstood and perceived sceptically by a vast part of society (McDaniel, 1996c, p.76f.; Hedlund, 2006, p.785f.)¹³ McDaniel (1996a, p.29) furthers, that by refusing to align with the Western way, fractions of the elites proposed to build an own distinct Russian path – often based on mythopoeic values.

Peter I. made significant changes to the Muscovite system by centralizing power, granting property rights to the nobility, establishing some accountability mechanisms, implementing legal reforms, and shifting the state's ideology towards secularization and Westernization (Hedlund, 2006, p.786f.). Nevertheless, no matter how modern Peter I. tried to appear, his autocratic rule remained unchanged, since the formal adaption of reforms and legislations were still generally inferior to the rule of the tsar and therefore did not represent real mechanisms of accountability and rule of law. (Hedlund, 2006,

¹² Hellie, R. (2005). The Structure of Russian Imperial History. *History and theory :Studies in the philosophy of history*, 44(4), 88-112.

¹³ Assessing Peter I., McDaniel (1996) furthers: "Holding old Muscovite ways in contempt, Peter the Great, with all his enormous energy, sought to break the hold of Muscovite religion on his subjects, especially the elite, and inculcate new cultural values based on Western pragmatism. His was the first "cultural revolution" from above in modern history. His efforts were the source of one of the great schisms that afflict Russian history. State and people; educated classes and the peasantry; adherents of the old and new cultural systems: these were some of the gaps that were opened up by Peter's reform" (p. 27)

p.787).¹⁴ Delving into an in-depth analysis of why the Petrine reforms had limited impact on the Russian population would exceed the scope of this chapter. Yet, as pointed out by McDaniel (1996a, p.27), these reforms unintentionally amplified the preexisting divide between the broader, largely rural populace and the governing elite. This longstanding gap had already been substantial during the Muscovite era, with the boyars seen as self-interested and corrupt (Hedlund, 2006, p.783). However, this prevailing sentiment of resistance against the elite was further intensified throughout Russian history. Those seen as responsible for causing discord and difficulties were attributed to "higher" sources, resulting in a rejection of everything linked to them (McDaniel, 1996c, p.74).

The predecessor of *The Russian Idea* is the "debate on Europe" (p. 13), as Neumann (1996d) calls it. According to Neumann (1996d, p.13f.), the Russian debate about Europe refers to the ongoing discussions and intellectual exchanges within Russian society regarding Europe and its influence, arising during the springtime of nations, the Napoleonic Wars and the Decembrist Uprising. As Neumann (1996d, p.13f.) furthers, the debate encompassed various factions and ideologies within Russian society, each expressing their perspectives on Russia's relationship with Europe. The primary groups included conservative nationalists (1) who favoured traditional European enlightened absolutism, romantic nationalists (2) who drew inspiration from German Romanticism and emphasized cultural heritage and the distinctiveness of nations, particularly through a Christian Orthodox lens, and constitutionalists (3) who sought to adapt Western political and economic models to fit Russian conditions. Neumann (1996d, p.26f.) further notices that the brutality of the Napoleonic wars and the Decembrist Uprising (an event that was staged by Russian military personnel to enforce the need for Western, constitutional reforms) led the discourse to overhang to the position of the Romantic nationalists and the need for an own national identity. The position towards Romantic nationalism was further exacerbated through "the springtime of nations" (Neumann, 1996e, p.40) in Europe in 1848. All this eventually led to the establishment of The Russian Idea in the second half of the 19th century (McDaniel, 1996a, p.24), which was focused on defining an own Russian national identity – opposed to Europe (McDaniel, 1996q, p.27,29).

During the advent of modernity and the emergence of nations in the 18th and 19th century Russia did not have a pronounced and distinct culture to oppose modernity and to eventually integrate it into their own culture such as it happened in China, Japan or the Middle East (McDaniel, 1996a, p.25f). McDaniel (1996a) writes: "From its early flowering, then, The Russian Idea will in part be a kind of antibody to modernity, incubated in Europe but grown much more potent in its Russian environment" (p. 25). Russia was vastly empty of culture, empty of that very distinct "other" (McDaniel, 1996a, p.38) to contrast modern global Western European influence. This was also admitted in the public discourse of Russia in the 19th century (Neumann 1996c; McDaniel 1996a). In this discourse, the elite saw this cultural void mostly as an absence of "high culture" and the persistent influence of religiosity amongst the Russians (McDaniel, 1996d, referring to Russian 19 century philosopher Pyotr Chadaev, p.162). Figures such as Dostoyevsky (Neumann, 1996d, p.63f.) and Tolstoy (Alston, 2014, p.128,132) saw this religiosity as a critique to modernity,

¹⁴ Based on Pipes and Hellie, Hedlund (2006, 2011) introduced the concept of the "Muscovite Matrix," an ancient institutional framework rooted in the Muscovite rulership of historical Russia. This matrix includes elements like autocratic rule, suppression of private property rights, lack of political accountability, limited legal apparatus, and ideological control through entities like the church. Hedlund argues that these mechanisms persist in Russian politics and were reinforced by Putin's government, shaping a unique political culture known as the "service state" (Hedlund, 2011, p.118). This historical legacy, as Hedlund terms it, is incompatible with the demands of modernity and representative political structures (Hedlund, 2011, p.137).

others in turn, as an obstacle to achieve it (Neumann. 1996d, p.24). Examining Russian history, especially the initial endeavours of modernization under Peter the Great in the 18th century and during the "springtime of nations" in the 19th century, one cannot help but sense that this "gaze" towards Europe fostered this perception of cultural void in Russia, subsequently shaping Russian culture itself (McDaniel, 1996a, p.28f.). Ultimately, this process gave rise to the first and most resilient culture of anti-modern sentiment that, presumably, endures to this day.¹⁵

Misconceptions in "The Russian Idea"

McDaniel (1996) conceptualised the main values of *The Russian Idea*. Those were ultimately seen as true within the Russian discourse about nation and modernity and which, according to McDaniel (1996a, p.30), survived the several systemic breakdowns of the Russian polity. But McDaniel (1996a, pp.24-32) also challenged certain misconceptions that have been persistent in the discourse of *The Russian Idea*, namely assumptions about *exclusivity, uniformity, and abstractness*. These misconceptions of *The Russian Idea* were held by individuals and groups who were part of or influenced by the discourse.

As outlined, Russian *exclusivity* derives from the historical context in Europe. German Romanticism holds the origins of Romantic Nationalism in Russia, therefore, the purpose of *The Russian Idea* in itself is not *exclusively* Russian but has significant European influence (McDaniel, 1996a, pp.24-29). This again goes back to the argument, that Russian anti-modernism, despite its resistance to modernity, is inherently tied to modernity itself and may inadvertently reproduce some of its aspects. Overall, the emergence of modernity necessitated the development of a Russian national identity and Russia's national identity is therefore not inherently Russian.

McDaniel's (1996a, pp.29-31) further discredits the assumption that *The Russian Idea* was a monolithic concept, representing a *uniformed* perspective. Moreover, *The Russian Idea* was contested and debated among different competing visions throughout Russian history. This is demonstrated throughout McDaniel's (1996) book. The second chapter explains, how Westernizers (successors of the constitutionalists, *vide supra*) challenged the claims of the Slavophiles (former Romantic nationalists, *vide supra*) and questioned the celebration of communal traditions based on serfdom. The third chapter elaborates, how, under the Soviet regime, dissidents challenged the ideological claims and excessive egalitarianism. Parallel debates took place within government circles, where some favoured representation of interest groups and capitalist development, while others emphasized cultural harmony and a special Russian path. McDaniel (1996a, p.30) and Neumann (1996b, p.179) agree that the liberal tradition in Russian political culture mostly occupied a rather marginal and short-lived position, as seen e.g., in the Decembrist Uprisings and Gorbachev's presidency. On the whole, there has been always a shared unity

¹⁵ McDaniel (1996a) formulates it as follows: "The consequences for The Russian Idea were of incalculable importance. From the start it was not an organic reaction of the leaders of a traditional culture against Western values on **the basis of that culture but was itself largely a rejection of Western values** [emphasis added] (p. 27). [...] The Russian Idea is not utterly distinct from similar cultural trends in much of the rest of the non-Western world, it is more fundamentally oriented toward a negative self-definition than elsewhere. Herein, too, lies much of the tragedy of modern Russian history: **the attempt to delineate a separate Russian path according to these prescriptions would create multiple dead ends in Russian historical development** [emphasis added]. In rejecting the West, advocates of a separate Russian path would seek to construct on the basis of semimythical values, ones that were unable to substitute for the organic cultural foundations undermined by Peter and his successors. The Russian Idea was a result of schism; and, when incorporated into government modernization policy, it was also the source of further schism in the society." (pp. 28-29).

in rejecting the Western path in favour of “a harmonious and egalitarian Russian society based on a higher form of belief” (McDaniel 1996, p.32).¹⁶

Conclusively, McDaniel’s (1996a, p31f.) insisted, that *The Russian Idea* was not only an *abstract* conception, but it was embedded into *political and social practice*. *The Russian Idea* consisted of the persistent institutional qualities like the Orthodox Church, the tsarist state, and the peasant commune (McDaniel 1996a, p.31). As McDaniel (1996a, p.32), the peasant commune was ideologically interpreted as a superior alternative to Western individualism, emphasizing egalitarianism and harmonious relationships. However, these interpretations often ignored the realities of former serfdom and the potential for exploitation within these closed communities (McDaniel, 1996a, p.32). Despite its inaccuracies, the myth of the idyllic peasant commune, shared even by Tolstoy and the Tolstoyan social movement (Alston, 2014), became influential and was also embraced by landowners, government officials, and even revolutionary populists (Neumann, 1996c, p.72). All in all, the credibility of *The Russian Idea* lies in its partial correspondence with the social practices from which it emerged, shaping the perception of a distinct and superior Russian path to modernity.

Persistent Principles of “The Russian Idea”

In this chapter I will finally outline those set of principles in *The Russian Idea* that are seen as surviving every societal and political breakdown in Russia, according to McDaniel (1996a).

Ultimate Values and The Government of Truth

McDaniel (1996a, pp.32-40; pp.51-55) discussed that there is a Russian *need for ultimate values and higher truths* and that Russian society was always deeply concerned about a higher moral goal. Society and government therefore were also expected to be based on a higher vision to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the Russians. McDaniel (1996, p.51f.) suggests that the Russian people are not interested in politics but seek to live according to (spiritual) higher values guided by a government that embodies these values. If the ideal is politically accepted, so McDaniel (1996a, p. 52), rules and means to achieve these ideal become secondary. This attitude is supported by emphasising “belief and enthusiasm” (p.37) rather than calculating rationality and the view that bad means can be used to pursue a higher end. This led naturally to binary oppositional thinking (we vs. them), lacking will to compromise and the rejection of formal relations in favour of a pursuit for the ultimate truth. (McDaniel 1996a, p. 35, 52f.)¹⁷

Reactionist and revisionist role taking according to a higher goal is at the heart of Russian political culture, thereby attempting to create a “Government of Truth” (McDaniel, 1996, p. 52) – a regime that has to live up to the highest ideals posted by the elites and society. The government of truth is opposed to the Western government of law – again in terms of

¹⁶ McDaniel (1996a) explains more detailed: “Why, then, do I emphasize The Russian Idea rather than any of these competing tendencies? [...] For no matter how complex and plural the cultural and political undercurrents of tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, until Gorbachev **the victory was always to those who advocated a special Russian path oriented around a separate set of values and founded on a different pattern of institutions** [emphasis added]. These claims may have been empirically false or ethically deficient, but they nonetheless shaped social change decisively.” (p. 30)

¹⁷ McDaniel (1996a) explains further: “Truth is unitary and compulsory: this is the terrible political principle implicit in The Russian Idea. Individuals and groups will have a legitimate place and voice in the country to the extent to which they conform to this truth, whether it be Orthodoxy or Communism. The community must also be unitary. Opposition and diversity is falsehood and therefore deserves no hearing. **Government must be an expression and protector of this community based on a uniform commitment to truth. Unfortunately, much of government policy under both the tsars and the Communists can be understood in terms of these assumptions** [emphasis added]. (p. 35).”

binary opposition. The narrative can be expressed as 'They have law, but we have the truth'.¹⁸ Further, in Russian history adherence to higher truths was also expressed through "Russian Messianism", as the name of Duncan (2000)'s prominent book. Russian Messianism comprises the idea that the Russians see themselves as a *chosen people* and therefore have a specific role to play in the wheelings and dealings of the world (Duncan, 2000, p.6) and in this higher likely to take up revisionist roles. This was historically expressed in e.g., the Third Rome doctrine but also in Soviet Communism.

Naturally, while an individual feels the strain to live up to higher ideals, a government can impossibly achieve this goal. This constantly creates the need for a justification for regime legitimacy. led to repeated historical schism and systemic collapses soon to be replaced by another government of truth (McDaniel, 1996a, p.52) – a historical legacy that can be seen as interlinked with Russia's ontological need for creating a coherent national narrative, assessed by Pakhaliuk (2021). Here McDaniel (1996a, p.52f.) further discusses that the vision of the "Government of Truth" naturally creates hopelessness and hostility amongst people towards governments in general. Governments again and again had forsaken the truth and barley created a Potemkin village. The solution therefore always lied in initiating a revolution and starting anew. According to this reasoning, McDaniel (1996, p.52f.) furthers, all institutions merely exist as shadows without true legitimacy or substance. They are temporary placeholders, destined to be replaced by the embodiment of a new ideal. Throughout history, Russians have perceived the government as an external and antagonistic force, rendering moral criteria irrelevant to it. Therefore, McDaniel (1996a, p. 53) elaborated, that the political vision of *The Russian Idea* is intrinsically tied to division and strong polarization. The belief in governing the entire community based on an absolute truth often leads certain groups to perceive the government as operating on false premises.¹⁹ The clash is between "belief and incentive", "ideology and interest", "enthusiasm and economic constraints" (McDaniel, 1996a, p. 39). The entire matter is again presented in a manner of binary oppositions, leading to false choices and genuine dilemmas. As a result, the Russian concept, as a counterreaction to Western rationality, poses significant barriers to economic and social change based on rational choices (McDaniel, 1996a, p.55).

Communal Vision and Egalitarianism

McDaniel (1996a, pp.40-51) further elaborated that the principle of *community* was always central to *The Russian Idea*. It has been an antithesis to Western individualism but also used as a nostalgic, mythological image projected on the Russian peasant commune. When it comes to Russia's modernisation, the peasantry was one of the crucial aspects that made

¹⁸ McDaniel (1996a) further clarifies: "Heroes" ruled in the Government of Truth, not just average people; and they ruled on the basis of religious zeal, not materialistic strivings. **For this it was necessary for them to act on the basis of a "ruling idea," based on religion, that would give a moral foundation to political life and inspire people with belief** [emphasis added]. The life of the people would be guided according to this "ruling idea" generated by political heroes. Truth, the community, and the government would form an organic whole all united by adherence to these principles" (p. 52).

¹⁹Here McDaniel gives a short historical overview: "For contrary to the hopes of rulers, the claim to represent and the effort to impose truth will always fail. Under the tsars, the exercise of autocratic power inevitably created semi-oligarchic elite camarillas engaged in self-protection. In society at large, workers and peasants managed to create self-enclosed micro worlds quite impermeable to autocratic control. Stalin battled against these same mechanisms of self-defense against centralized authority. But his successors, unwilling to engage in mass purges, had to confront the reality of closed elite groups subverting party intentions, as well as of popular sectors living their lives in only formal and external conformity to official norms. In this regard, too, The Russian Idea of politics, celebrating truth and harmony over the diversity of modern society, inevitably gives rise to processes that subvert it" (p. 53).

the modernisation process difficult and extremely different from Western European modernisation. This appears already significant when looking at Russia's late abandonment of feudalism in 1861 and the big differences inherent in Western feudalism and feudalism in the Russian Empire and during the Muscovite era.²⁰ Naturally, the peasantry was extremely suspicious towards nobles, lived isolated in very obstinate family groups and tight-knit communities and accepted the legitimacy of a ruler or tsar only as long as the church was holding up the ruler's legitimacy (McDaniel, 1996a, p.43,48). All in all, the origins of Russian anti-establishment lies in the peasant commune, which for many centuries lived in a strong disconnect with the ruling political government. The insular family-like communities clashed with the demands of modernity, which emphasized personal freedom and standardized social relations (McDaniel, 1996a, p.43f.). This sense of community was rooted in local contexts and excluded outsiders, leading again to the dualistic view of "we" versus "them" or "black-and white judgments" (McDaniel, 1996a, p.35).

In the pre-revolutionary era, according to McDaniel (1996a, p.34f.), the discourse of *The Russian Idea* was utilised by the elites. Modernity and its Western bearers were seen as materialistic and self-serving, while Russians were presented as a community for the greater good, according to their Christian ethos. Since the advent of modernity, Russia was always seen as lacking behind in political, societal, and technological means, due to its stubborn adherence to religiosity (Scharf, 2010, p.169). Russian intellectuals in the 19th and 20th centuries started to own up to the image of the pious Russian and mythologized it as the main pillar in their anti-modern sentiment (Engelstein, 2001, p. 137f.). Ideals of religiosity, purity, and community were praised by Nikolai Danilevsky and Nikolai Berdyaev (Engelstein, 2001, p.142, 148), Russian 19th century philosophers. The latter is frequently mentioned in the speeches of Vladimir Putin, as the provided speech extracts will demonstrate. By idealising the peasant commune and ignoring factors such as bad living conditions and a strong limitation to political rights within the peasantry, the elite quasi *translated this local aspect of community into political practice* (McDaniel, 1996a, p.47; 1996b, p.14). Here, "abstract, formal relations based on contract or interest were always held to be inferior to the more embracing emotional relations of Russian society" (McDaniel, 1996a, p.40).

Further, concepts such as "rod" and "sbornost" were utilised in political rhetoric to create an oppositional Russian identity (McDaniel, 1996). "Rod" means primarily "kin" and binds an individual human being to his antecedents, descendants, and the whole community – a timeless contract and eternal obligation (McDaniel, 1996a, p.40f.). Russian philosophers of the 19th century added the Orthodox concept of "sbornost" to this understanding, which represents a harmonious cohesion "among individual, family, and society, in which all elements contributed to the development of each other" (McDaniel, 1996, p.41). Here again it is important to point out that the way to construct these narratives stem from German Romantic Nationalism, that entrenched political meaning to words "Gesellschaft" (society: formal, mechanical, soulless) and "Gemeinschaft" (McDaniel, 1996a, p.41). Nostalgic idealisation of the peasant commune was also expressed through words such as

²⁰ Feudalism was mostly organised in a very centralised way, serfs had almost no rights, were bound to the land with no options of enfranchisement and kept rarely contact with the nobility, since the nobility often did not reside together with the serfs (McDaniel, 1996a, p.40) Feudalism was inherently different in Western Europe and abandoned significantly earlier. Feudalism was more decentralised, and the highly educated nobility lived closed to its serfs, which led to the spillover of better education and labour force in rural areas (McDaniel, 1996a, p.40;1996c, p.63). Russia's implementation of serfdom abandonment was highly criticised at the time and despite the official Emancipation Manifesto in 1861, many aspects of the old feudal system were kept in place (Neumann, 1996d, p.47).

"narod" ("people"), which implied a strong normative attitude.²¹ Ultimately, the inability to reconcile the communal vision with the demands of a changing world ultimately played a role in shaping the tragic events in Russian history.

Lastly, one has to mention McDaniel's (1996a, pp.46-51) analysis of *The Russian Idea* in terms of *egalitarianism*, another value that has been persisted, inherited, and translated into Russian political culture. The Russian strive for equality is more in terms of *equality of outcomes*, not of opportunity (McDaniel, 1996a, p.46). Equality of outcomes, according to McDaniel (1996a, p.46f.), emphasizes that the material conditions amongst people should not differ greatly. Equality of opportunity demands to acknowledge that people are different therefore results can be different too – the one with the greatest merit wins the game (McDaniel, 1996a, p.48). In this, higher emphasis on the individual rather than on the group and the aspect of rule obedience are contrary to the other values already discussed by McDaniel (1996a, p.47f.). As analysed in McDaniel's (1996) book, all this was again expressed in all historical time periods of Russia, particularly around the concept of private property – a true historical legacy. This was also closer assessed for the post-Soviet era, by Shlapentokh&Arutunyan (2013).²² In the peasant commune the discord and hostility between nobility/ landowners and the peasants led to the image of wealthy individuals being generally malevolent and private ownership an attack to the solidarity of the peasant community. ²³The concept of individualism was alien to the peasants and the idea of earning the fruits of one's hard work was nonsensical (McDaniel, 1996a, p.49).

McDaniel (1996) always stresses that *The Russian Idea* is not just a mental concept, but it became embedded into institutional, social, and political practice in Russia, in this representing Russian political culture. Keeping in mind the general scholarly consensus on Vladimir Putin's urge to provide legitimisation for his regime and Pakhaliuk's (2021) findings of Putin's institutionalisation of history, historic interpretation, and remembrance I set out to understand *how much of The Russian Idea, the initial set of anti-modern visions and their misconceptions, can be found in Putin's speeches?* The Russian Idea came about during the development of nationalism in Europe in the 19th century and it was that part

²¹ McDaniel (1996a) exemplified: "Particularly in the eyes of the intelligentsia, the narod was a moral category: it was the common people, unsullied by the usurpation of land or by bourgeois contamination. The "bourgeoisie," which came to be a blanket term for anyone who did not belong to the "people," was corrupt, the people pure and blameless. The "people" were relatively homogeneous, living a life free of materialist grasping and the pursuit of inequality (p. 49)."

²² In the immediate post-Soviet era in the 1990s the never before experienced right to private property completely devastated Gorbachev's hope for a new, better Russian society (Shlapentokh&Arutunyan, 2013c, p.10). The inaugural Russian constitution, while acknowledging the main civil rights, such as human rights and private property rights, lacked the true essence of modern constitutionalism (Sakwa, 2020c, p.3). Its implementation, unfortunately, proved rather ambiguous, as it 'did not restrain the access of anybody in the party apparatus from the acquisition of big property' (Shlapentokh&Arutunyan, 2013c, p. 22). Therefore, many people of the former Soviet nomenclature acquired big parts of the former state property and started to exert their own control over it (Shlapentokh&Arutunyan, 2013c, p.22f.). Shlapentokh&Arutunyan (2013d, p.5) declare therefore, that the unregulated introduction of private property led to the revival of feudal structures in Russia's political system that are still present today. In the public discourse of the 1990s this was exacerbated again by the peasant notion that these iniquitous influences come from "others" and from "outside". This again fuelled the binary opposition against the capitalist West and its free market economy, which eventually was assessed as being even worse for Russia in the discourse of the 1990s (McDaniel, 1996b, p.3f.).

²³ McDaniel (1996a) illustrates: "God, and so to the community as a whole, and therefore could not be appropriated by private landowners. **Private ownership was an act of usurpation. Landowners had no legitimacy in the eyes of the peasant, particularly as they were regarded as outside parasites who played no productive role in the village** [emphasis added]. Relations between the peasantry and the nobility were thus based on a fundamental discord that could not be healed, but only exacerbated, by reform. Villagers never accepted the social hierarchy that they felt had been unjustly imposed upon them. The landowner's status was little different from that of a foreigner occupier" (p. 48).

of the public discourse that contributed to the Russian understanding of state and nation and that part, which, according to McDaniel, survived again and again despite of any political turmoil afflicting Russian society.

The next chapter aims to outline my methodology, whose establishers, such as Ruth Wodak or Norman Fairclough, were convinced that language itself is also a social practice (Wodak et al., 1999, p.156f; Flowerdew&Richardson, 2018, p.1).

2.3. Methodology

The preceding chapter has suggested a diverse array of concepts and approaches that serve as the prism through which I examine Putin's speeches. The following methodology chapter has the purpose to describe the discourse analytical method I use for my analysis and further demonstrate how I connect the concepts and the historical context from the previous chapter to the methodology.

As Wodak (2016, p.2) points out, political speech is influenced by the social and political context in which it is produced. The culture and history of a polity shape how they are constructed, influencing the language and revealing ideologies and power structures prevailing in society and the state (Wodak, 2016, p.1). Speakers often deploy certain rhetoric strategies, arguments or keywords that are charged with meaning interpreted by a public audience (Charteris-Black, 2018a, p.11). It can influence public opinion, react to public sentiment, legitimise regimes or wars, respond to important events, rally for national support and reveal thoughts and assessments of the speaker about their perception of political events (Charteris-Black, 2018a, p.11f.).

This all already signifies, that the language of political speech is not a research object that revolves solely around itself, having no attachment to social and political reality. Therefore, political speech should not be taken lightly, but should also be treated as rather polemic utterances, than scientific ones. Showing the link between language, ideology and the historical and societal context is embedded in the research objective of this paper and therefore this chapter will describe the methodology corresponding to it.

2.3.1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

According to the comprehensive "Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies" the CDS (Critical Discourse Studies) and the CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) approach is an

"inter-disciplinary approach to language in use, which aims to advance our understanding of how discourse figures in social processes, social structures and social change. CDS [...] seeks to develop a critically contextualised approach to linguistics which identifies issues of ideology, power and inequality as central to our field of studies [...] and aims to uncover hidden features of language [...] **to make the implicit explicit in language use**" [emphasis added] (Flowerdew&Richardson, 2018, p. 1)

CDA is therefore problem oriented (Wodak, 2016, p.3), acknowledging that seeing the linguistic dimension of a text represents only a part of the analysis. In doing so, it recognizes that language is an integral component of *discourse*—explained as a space of communication that encompasses the exchange of ideas, ideologies, and cultural or social practices (Flowerdew&Richardson, 2018, p.2). As Flowerdew&Richardson (2018, p.2) further, within this communicative space, discourse reveals the interplay of historical narratives, social dynamics, ideologies and power relations. It is shaped by multiple

different actors and represents different perspectives. Discourse is analysed *critically*. In this, "critical" does not mean "to criticise" but rather, the recognition of how the relationship between context and language reinforces social, cultural, and political hierarchies (Wodak&Meyer, 2016, p.3) This also constitutes the theoretical underpinning of CDA, which *ipso facto* is widely acknowledged as a theory and a method (Wodak&Meyer,2016, p.3). Furthermore, language is seen as a form of social practice (Wodak et al., 1999, p.156f.) and, as Luke (2002) suggests, "CDA involves a principled and transparent shunting back and forth between the microanalysis of texts using varied tools of linguistic, semiotic and literary analysis, and the macroanalysis of social formations, institutions and power relations that these texts index and construct" (p. 100). The question a CDA researcher asks is "What conceptual tools are relevant for this or that problem and for this and that context?" (Wodak, 2011, p. 3). In simpler terms, as Wodak (2011, p.3f., 10f.) explains, researchers should focus on understanding the different signs or symptoms of a problem and how they relate to each other. In this, researchers should also prioritize using practical and relevant concepts to address specific problems instead of trying to develop a grand theory. The interdisciplinarity of CDA and its focus on discourse and the *relationship* between language and the world enables to analyse complex issues, "inter-personal, institutional, socio-cultural and material contexts" (Flowerdew&Richardson, 2018, p.1) beyond causal models, since these have shown themselves as not sufficient to understand the eclectic nature of the modern world (Wodak, 2011, p.2f.). Therefore, a CDA approach is also multimethodical and multitheoretical, utilising several different theories, methods and models into describing the problems revealed in the analysis (Wodak, 2011, p.3). The next chapter will discuss the Discourse-Historical approach which emerged from the field of CDS and emphasizes further important aspects that are complementary with the research objective of this paper.

2.3.2. Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)

While CDA is primarily concerned with revealing hidden power structures, inequalities, and ideologies in language the DHA approach takes the historic dimension of discourse more into account. (Wodak, 2016, 2f.). This means, that discourse is analysed over time and across different historical periods. In this it recognises the relationship between the discourse with other discourses, with its historical period and the social and cultural practices and attitudes prevalent in the respective period (Wodak, 2011, p.4). The analysis can also be more diachronic, investigating shifts in meaning and language over time (Wodak, 2016, p.3)

There are "three dimensions of critique" which were specifically conceptualised for the DHA approach and therefore require some further explanation, adapted from (Reisigl&Wodak, 2009, p. 88):

1. Discourse immanent critique: This includes examining internal structures of the text or discourse. Here one can investigate inconsistencies, contradictions, paradoxes, and dilemmas within the language and the discourse.
2. Socio-diagnostic critique: Here one departs beyond the internal text structure and engages in the "demystifying exposure of the – manifest or latent – possibly persuasive or 'manipulative' character of discursive practices" (p.88). This means that the researcher consults different social theories and knowledges about the specific context thereby interpreting the discourse along a bigger picture of society, politics, culture, processes, and circumstances.

3. Prospective critique: The last dimension serves to employ the findings into the real world by creating guidelines to change and better the communication within different public institutions and media organisations.

Therefore, multimethodical and multitheoretical approaches are necessary to interpret and analyse today's complex phenomena. DHA researchers follow the principle of triangulation "which implies taking a whole range of empirical observations, theories and methods as well as background information into account" (Reisigl&Wodak, 2009, p. 89) Here the importance *context* is further explained. Wodak (2016, p.3) lines out four levels of the triangulation that I modified according to my study:

1. the immediate language or text-internal co-text, e.g., Vladimir Putin's speeches and interviews with journalists
2. the intertextual and interdiscursive relationships between utterances, texts, genres, and discourses, e.g., references to other speeches, discourses, and events in history and how they fit into a broader trend of discourse
3. the extralinguistic social variables and institutional frames of the specific "context of situation", e.g., political climate, social norms, power dynamics, and institutional structures surrounding Putin's speeches, social and cultural codes that explain and interpret certain argumentations
4. the broader sociopolitical and historical context which the discursive practices under examination are embedded in and related to, e.g., references to other historical discourses debating similar topics and issues or employing similar argumentations, singling out argumentations, terms and phrases that are related to historical and cultural reoccurring pathways; references to historical changes in the Russian polity that could have influenced the discursive trends

Triangulation is employed recursively, and the analysis is conducted by switching back in forth between the empirical data and the theoretical superstructure (Wodak, 2016, p.3).

After lining out the important understanding of *discourse* and *context* it is also sufficient to explain the form of *text*. As Reisigl&Wodak (2009, p. 89f.) point out, that texts are fragments of discourses and they can be written, spoken or visual. They serve as manifestations of language being used to express thoughts, ideas, or communicate messages. Texts make spoken or written words last longer by capturing and preserving them beyond the immediate moment of speech or writing and the moment of reception. Wodak&Meyer (2016, p.4) explain further that texts are "polyphonic" and in this, they include different voices or perspectives. Texts also have different styles or 'genres' that match specific social activities, like how we use language in different situations (Reisigl&Wodak, 2016, p.4f.). One example would be, when Vladimir Putin uses formal language during a public speech but more casual language during an interview.

By employing DHA, one takes into consideration how different texts, genres and discourses can relate to each other. By exploring these relationships, we can observe how discourses, genres, and texts evolve in response to sociopolitical changes. One aspect in DHA is called *intertextuality* and looks at how texts relate to each other, whether in the past or present (Wodak, 2016, p.4). This connection can happen in various ways: by directly mentioning a topic or a key figure, referencing the same events, subtly alluding to something, or sharing core arguments from one text to another, as defined by (Wodak&Meyer, 2016, p.4). This process of transferring text or discourse fragments to new contexts is known as

recontextualization. When an element is taken out of its original context, it undergoes *de-contextualization*, and when it is inserted into a new context, it undergoes *recontextualization*. This process can lead to the element acquiring new meanings since meanings are shaped through usage (Wodak&Meyer, 2016, p.4). As example: The act of referencing historical events, figures, and cultural symbols within a speech involves recontextualizing these elements within the specific context of the speech. By doing so, Vladimir Putin is able to shape the discourse on national identity and history.

There is also the other aspect *interdiscursivity*, which means that various discourses and discourse topics can be connected to each other in different ways. Discourses are dynamic and evolve all the time, creating new topics and intersect with new discourses. (Wodak, 2011, p.5). This is e.g., achieved through connecting different discourse topics within Vladimir Putin's speech with each other or comparing Vladimir Putin's contemporary discourse with McDaniel's (1996) persistent principles of *The Russian Idea*.

2.3.3. Applying DHA, Data, and the Coding Process

Applying the analytical toolkit of DHA means following a three-dimensional approach, as explained by Reisigl&Wodak (2009, p. 13f.). The initial step is to conduct a first content analysis and to carve out the main *discourse topics* of the analysed speech acts. In the second step I investigate the *discursive strategies* oriented on the discursive strategies for the construction of national identities as outlined by Wodak et al. (1999), to better serve the research objective. These will receive more detailed explanations in the subsequent chapter. The third step of analysis explores the *linguistic devices* that are used to realise these discursive strategies. Linguistic devices are put second place in the analysis of this paper, since I only deal with the English versions of the speech acts and not the Russian ones. Moreover, linguistic devices are a very technical and micro-analytical aspect of a language analysis and are conducted best when looking at the native language itself. A general overview of strategies and devices can be found in **Annex 1, Table 1**.

DHA strategies for the construction of national identity

As already mentioned, to enable a relationship between the people and the material institutionalisation of history and attitudes, one has to look at the construction of a nation and national identity from a linguistic perspective. For this purpose, I orient on the strategies introduced by Wodak et al. (1999, p.160f.) and their case study on the construction of national identities in Austria, such as *constructive strategies, perpetuation and justification strategies, and transformation strategies*.

Constructive strategies according to Wodak et al. (1999) "encompass those linguistic acts which serve to 'build' and establish a particular national identity. These are primarily linguistic procedures which constitute a national 'we-group' [...]" (p. 160). Additionally, *perpetuation and justification/ justification and legitimisation strategies* aim to uphold, reinforce, and maintain national identities. They are used to emphasize the importance of continuity and stability and are primarily employed to defend and preserve a problematic narrative of 'national history' which refers to controversial acts or events of the past" (Wodak et. al., p. 161). Therefore, these strategies serve to legitimize and justify the existing social order. By the means of *transformation strategies*, it is possible to engage in discourse with the aim of altering the interpretation and understanding of a widely accepted element of national identity and replacing it with a different meaning or perspective. *Destructive strategies* are employed to demolish existing national identities or disrupt the status quo.

Charteris-Black (2018b, p.154) points out that the word strategies in "discourse strategies" implies a conscious intention of the speaker. However, Wodak et al. (1999, p.160) clarified that "strategies" can vary in terms of complexity and intentionality. Strategies can range from unconscious to conscious considerations of the speaker and are influenced by various factors, such as the causes and origins of the discourses.

Data – Vladimir Putin's Speech Acts

The analysis in this thesis relies on the digitally available speech acts of Vladimir Putin on the website of the Kremlin between May 2012 (start of Putin's third tenure) and the end of December 2022. This includes public speeches of Vladimir Putin, speech acts from interviews and press conferences and written speech acts. Due to the scope of the paper and the time at hand, I focused entirely on the English versions of the speeches. In the beginning of the speech selection, I compared random speeches in the Russian version with the English ones and did not detect any significant deviations in the translations, either linguistically nor in terms of omitting or adding certain information.

I selected the speeches either cursory by overflying the headlines or, if a headline seemed to be adequate, I overflowed the whole speech/interview to further investigate the relevance for my research. The rationale here was, that ideological and polemic aspects in speech are more given in speeches and interviews connected to important events, people, or media appearances. Therefore, speech acts such as e.g., Meeting with Minister of Agriculture Dmitry Patrushev (Putin, 2019), were not regarded as important. Viewing the website every time for analysing a single speech seemed cumbersome and this also inhibits using language analytical software to analyse and dissect the speech acts for the analysis. Furthermore, the Kremlin's website is equipped with a very good protection system and initially, it was not easy to retrieve the respective speeches by using e.g., programs that download website material. Ultimately, I just used the "print-option" and saved the documents as PDF arriving at 882 documents, sorted by year, that encompassed the provisionally relevant speeches for my analysis.

Usually, analysing this amount of data and eliminating the necessary speech extracts, requires some digital analytical tool to assist and support the analysis (Lynggaard, 2019, p.58). Since it is rather impossible for the given time at hand to go through each speech separately, I used the desktop version of the software ATLAS.TI. The software enabled me to look for relevant terms and formulations, code them and save some notes relevant to a specific code, word, or section. I arranged all the speech acts in three period bundles in the ATLAS.TI software, so the programme can run smoother, and I can have a better overview over the respective years and their speeches. The first period bundle encompasses the years 2012-2014, the second 2015-2018 and the third 2019-2022. Part of my analysis will provide speech extracts from every period bundle to underline the relevance of the timeline. After coding the speeches, I ultimately arrived at 52 speech extracts from 46 speeches to conduct the analysis. The next sections and the last chapter aim to bring further transparency about how I arrived at these speech extracts.

The Coding Process

According to Lynggaard (2019, p.57f.), to perform a structured content analysis, creating a "codebook" is essential. A codebook refers to the specific words or phrases in the empirical material that will be examined in detail or analysed closely. Creating clear codes for specific sections in the speeches and analysing the occurrence of particular words and phrases provided valuable insights into the significance of a specific subject in Vladimir Putin's

speeches. This aspect proved to be the most beneficial feature of the ATLAS TI. for my research.

By and large, I coded according to topics, such as *history* or *ethnicity* – which corresponds with the modern aspect of national identity, described in the research design. This already allowed me to cover the *discourse topics*, which are part of the three-dimensional approach. Initially, I browsed for certain terms in the speeches and read every section showing these terms, such as “history/historic/historical” or “ethnicity/ethnic/multiethnicity/interethnic” or, I coded e.g., primordial history according to historical events, that Vladimir Putin picked up such as the Kievan Rus, the Time of Troubles, or historical characters such as Vladimir I. Most of these topics are touched upon during ceremonies or anniversaries that celebrate a certain occasion in history, Vladimir Putin wants to emphasise. The titles of speeches held on ceremonies therefore were already indicating the kind of information that I would be able to receive. Later on, when looking at which primordial aspects of history Vladimir Putin emphasises as historical memory and how he uses them to construct national identity, I could just open codes such as “Kievan Rus” or “Byzantine/Third Rome” to access the sections where Vladimir Putin used these historical events or referred to these historical aspects. Coding according to topics enabled me furthermore, to connect different topics with each other such as *history* and *truth* or *history* and *state* or *ethnicity* and *war*, since often several topics were present within one single speech. This further allowed me to find patterns of argumentation, applying the other two steps from the three-dimensional approach, namely *discourse strategies* and the *linguistic devices* to form the analysis. The images in **Annex 1, Image 1/2** show examples of two separate speeches that I coded in ATLAS.TI. The green marked aspects to the left are the codes and the pink ones underneath are notes I have taken for the respective code or section. Moreover, when looking for the anti-modern aspects I focused on words such as *truth*, *values*, *culture*, *private/public property*, or *the people* and connect it to what I have already investigated regarding modernity and national identity. The coding process enabled me to minimise down the speeches I would potentially use to demonstrate my analysis for this thesis. Overall, I chose those extracts and speeches which would most clearly demonstrate the patterns of topics and argumentations I have elaborated during the coding process. The next chapter is dedicated explaining how I applied the *discursive strategies* for the construction of national identity according to Wodak et al. (1999) and the *linguistic devices*.

As mentioned, I used speeches from every period bundle to underline the relevance according to the timeline. I also chose speeches in each bundle, which would show most clearly the patterns, strategies, and linguistic devices, so I can mark them accordingly in the table. In this I am aware that I left out a significant amount of speeches and I also do not present a significant amount of analysed speeches. Nevertheless, the scope of the paper and the time at hand allowed me to choose only those speeches and extracts that were relevant to apply the conceptual lens, the methodology and to consolidate the chosen patterns I have found in my analytical process.

Applying DHA Strategies and Using the Conceptual Lens

After coding several speeches in every period bundle according to topic I already established a certain pattern in his speeches and in his argumentation when it comes to modernity and national identity. The discursive strategies used in Wodak et al. (1999) and Wodak (2016) are based on cases in Austria and the United Kingdom. Therefore, I had to contemplate about the historical-contextual dimension of the discursive strategies of Wodak et al. (1999), that would make most sense for the Russian context of my thesis.

There I had to ask myself what *construction, justification and perpetuation* and, *transformation* of national identity means in Vladimir Putin's discourse and in the context of Russian history. As already mentioned in the contextual chapter of the research design, primordial history was not cherished during the Soviet Union. The Soviet era was seen as a new beginning for the Soviet Russian Republic and therefore, everything reminding of the earlier past did not play into significance, particularly because open religiosity was prohibited and Russia's primordial past builds extensively on Russia's Christianisation. Therefore, it seemed logical, to mark speech sections including the primordial and pre-revolutionary past as a *constructive strategy* according to Wodak et al. (1999), since the primordial narrative in post-Soviet Russia was something novel again. Consequently, argumentation strategies that can be clearly linked to the Soviet past, are assessed as *justification and perpetuation strategy*, since past narratives are being *perpetuated* in the present. The same strategy of *justification and perpetuation* has also been applied to everything concerning a war-and-threat rhetoric as *to justify* threat and legitimise war. One could argue that I can use the *transformative strategy* here as well, claiming that Vladimir Putin *transforms* Soviet identity into the new nationalist, primordial identity. To claim this, would be a bit far-fetched, since from the year 2012 it should be assumed that most Russians do not think of themselves as Soviet citizens any longer, including Vladimir Putin. Thus, when addressing Crimean, Luhansk, and Donetsk citizens I generally classify it as a *transformation strategy*, since the identity of these people is being *transformed* rhetorically into belonging to Russia. This acknowledges, that before the conflict these people had another identity that is now wilfully altered by Vladimir Putin. If I would use e.g., the *constructive strategy* here to describe his argumentation, I would omit that Crimean, Luhansk, and Donetsk people had an identity as Ukrainian citizens before the conflict. The destructive strategies are left out and seen as belonging to the transformation strategies. Once a national identity is altered/destroyed, usually something new is offered instead, which counts as transformation. Destructive strategies can also be used for disrupting the status quo, what in the case of Putin does not go together with his legitimisation attempts, mentioned earlier. Any exceptions from this scheme will be explained in the analysis.

The strategies as I have explained in this chapter are also applied when it comes to the anti-modern aspects of a national identity in Vladimir Putin's speech acts. However, my approach regarding the anti-modern aspects was less open since I aimed to trace back those anti-modern principles as they have been outlined by McDaniel (1996a). This means, I already looked for more specific words (truth, private property, people, community, culture etc.) and patterns to see how much of Russia's anti-modern discourse is still present in his speeches and apply information from the research design. Therefore, modernity and anti-modernity are analysed in two separate chapters. By applying the above strategies, I nevertheless connected the modern and anti-modern aspects together to sustain the coherence of the thesis and still deliver a less generic and more context-based angle on his speeches.

Linguistic Devices are the means of the speaker to execute a certain argumentation (formulations, enumerations etc.) and run secondary in this thesis, although they are not completely absent and will be explained in the analysis if necessary.

3. Analysing the Modern Aspects in National Identity

The analysis will follow the structure of the Research Design and start with those aspects of Vladimir Putin's speech acts that concern historical memory, proceeding with ethnicity and the anti-modern aspects of *The Russian Idea*.

3.1. Historical Memory: The Argument of Continuity

As the speech extracts in this analysis will show, Vladimir Putin openly admits to tie history and historical memory to the construction of national identity. But what kind of historical memory is he essentially promoting? What is it the Russians should remember? Authors such as Shlapentokh & Arutunyan (2013a, p.41), Plokhy (2017a, p.336) and Sakwa (2020a, p.22f.) agree, that Vladimir Putin is not using one linear strand of thought in his political position, but rather picks from different sources depending on what he can utilise best in a given situation. Therefore, looking at his speeches trying to classify them into a certain ideology would also be less accurate and bears the dangers to contradictions. Consequently, I rather focused on which overarching principles Vladimir Putin focuses on in his argumentation, principles that somehow underly the inconsequence of his political position. Further, how are they related to the Russian past? Here, I realised that such overarching principles are the underlying current themselves. Vladimir Putin's discourse always looks for overarching principles that transcend and homogenise everything that marks differences amongst people or amongst historical periods. This chapter will investigate one of these dominant overarching principles, namely *the principle of continuity*. According to Siromahov et al. (2020, p.859f.), the continuity principle in nationalism is a common strategy to create national identity and coherence. The correlations according to my research question looks as follows:

Modernity necessitates → National identity through → history and historical memory, achieved through → the argument of continuity

This chapter will show that arguing *continuity* of Russian history, the Russian polity and more, is one of the main pillars of Vladimir Putin's strategy to narrate and remember history for the construction of national identity. He aims to prove that the Russian polity is an ancient polity and therefore needs to be preserved. It caught my attention after investigating which historic events and personalities Vladimir Putin is particularly repeating and emphasising in his speech acts and it seemed like continuity was always the underlying theme.

Continuity can be classified as a *discursive topic*, a *discursive strategy*, and a *linguistic device*, following the three-dimensional approach of (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009) and Wodak et al. (1999):

Discourse topic: Continuity of a topic (e.g., history) can connect to continuities of other topics (e.g., threat).

Discursive strategy: Arguing continuity usually counts as a *perpetuation and justification* strategy according to (Wodak et al., 1999, p.161) which shall bring about the audience to believe that there is a sense of continuity and stability in the Russian polity and therefore the government's legitimacy is supported. This can mean *perpetuating* a version of history or legitimising wars and threat. But the continuity argument can also be a *constructive and transformative strategy*. Vladimir Putin, when claiming continuity, constructs national identity not based on recent history, but on much earlier historical events and on religious values. These are primordial arguments using primordial or/and pre-revolutionary history and therefore are classified as a *constructive strategy*, since Soviet historical narration did

not cherish primordial history. Strategies that can be traced back to a Soviet context will be classified as a *perpetuation strategy* for national identity. Arguing continuity of e.g., history and thereby addressing Crimean, Luhansk and Donetsk citizens is assessed as a *transformation strategy*, since the identity of these people is being rhetorically *transformed* into belonging to Russia. The qualifications will become more clearer through the analysis in the tables attached as annexes.

Linguistic Device: How is Vladimir Putin arguing continuity? Either by using *direct* formulations, such as using the word continuity or inflections of it or *indirect* formulations through numbers (e.g., 1000 years) or arguing a long flow of time. These devices will be marked red and analysed only in **Annex 2, Table 1 and 2**.

3.1.1. What is Continuity in Vladimir Putin's Speech?

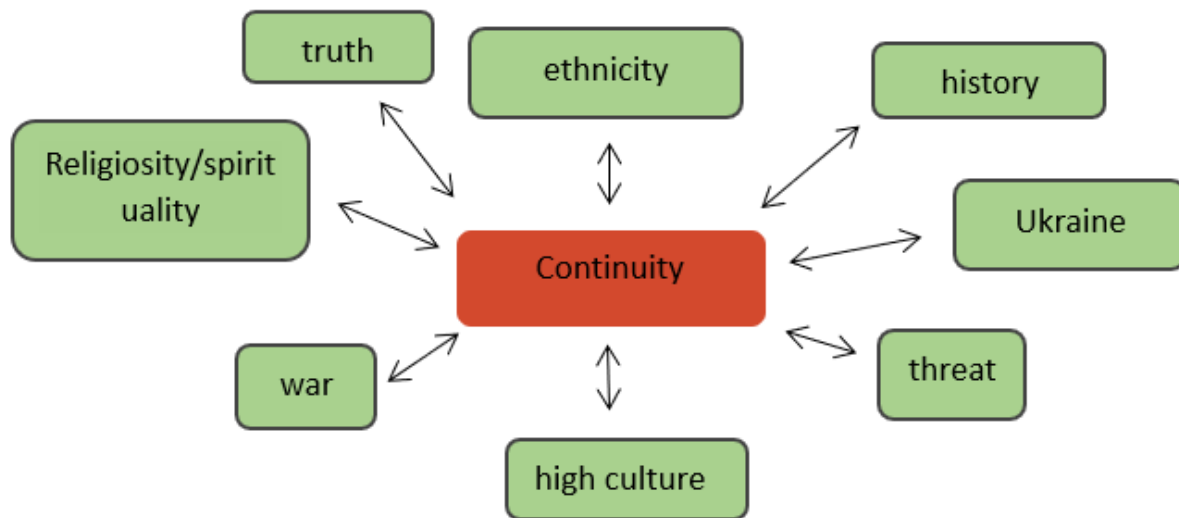
The first section of the analysis aims to emphasize the significance of the continuity principle in Vladimir Putin's speech acts. It also investigates what definition of continuity according to Vladimir Putin can be carved out of the speech acts, the associated topics he links to this concept, how he argues and how he uses this concept – through direct or indirect formulations. The relevant extracts for this chapter, with the tabular analysis, is found in **Annex 2, Table 1**. These extracts are respectively provided from each period bundle (2012-2014;2015-2018;2019-2022) in ATLAS.TI, as described in the research design. Following is the written- out part of the analysis:

Linguistic Devices: Extract 1 and 6 show *directly* that the awareness of Russia's continuity is *constructed* as an important element of national identity.

His *indirect* formulations as in extract 1,2,3,5,6,7 linking the continuity of the Russian state back to the "Baptism of the Rus" – Russia's Christianization during the Kievan Rus in 988, which will be examined in the next subchapter.

Discursive topics: The 6th column usually shows related *discursive topics* that can be carved out in the extracts and are illustrated through Concept Map 1. This map will be referred to through the entire analysis in this thesis. Continuity, as a central *discourse topic* itself, can be easily connected to other discursive topics, which are identified through working out what themes he touches upon in his speeches. When he talks about historical events, historical memory or historical importance, *history* will be the attached discourse topic. When he antagonizes the West or other actors, the discourse topic is usually *threat*. Further, when he speaks about military glory, the discourse topic attached will be *war*. Looking at the columns and the speech extracts, the classified discursive topics are relatively self-explanatory. The connection to other discursive topics can give an overview of the recurring themes in these speeches and give a better idea of the argumentation strategies involved. Often certain discursive topics are connected to certain strategies, as explained in the following section.

Concept Map 1 – How continuity connects to other discursive topics



Source: own elaboration

Argumentation: Vladimir Putin’s historical continuity principle is *constructed* in an essentialist manner, where the Russian polity must be upheld regardless of its form, means and circumstances:

Extract 1): Here Vladimir Putin is using the historic numbers 1917 and 1990 in one breath, making in essence no difference between Russia in 1917 and Russia in 1990. The fact that it “just existed” seems to carry the whole weight of the argument.

Extract 2,5,6,7): The essentialist understanding is emphasized by Vladimir Putin repeatedly connecting the continuity of the Russian state with the continuity of “timeless values” such as spirituality, tradition, victory, ancestry, and progeny.

Extract 3): Vladimir Putin uses a semi-mythical formulation of an “internal nuclear reactor” essentially inherent in people, which helped to sustain the Russian polity over time.

Extract 4): Here timeless values themselves are continuous and essential and upheld as a part of historical memory.

Extract 6): In this example continuity of history and timeless values are directly tied to national identity and statehood, Russian history must be upheld as paramount despite the “controversial periods”.

Extract 7): Here essentialism is expressed through using the word “truth”, indicating some undefined, abstract essence underling the continuous Russian state and its history. Towards the end, he even uses biological essentialism in referring to the genetic code of the Russian people.

All in all, his essentialism expresses that there are inherent and unchanging qualities that define Russians and the state over a thousand-year period.

Strategies: Every time Vladimir Putin uses continuity of thousand-years formulations, it can be inferred that he relates to primordial history. Therefore, it is marked as a *constructive strategy* in the column.

Extracts 7 and 6 demonstrate that his continuity is also attached to the remark, that Russia should never be taken over by another hegemon. According to the president, Russia has always been able to assure its independence by combating threat. This victory over continuous threat is part of the historical memory (extract 6). Therefore, to ensure the continuity of Russian statehood, threat must be combated again, and again and is assessed as *perpetuation and justification strategy*.

In extract 5 Vladimir Putin *transforms* the historical memory of the Luhansk and Donetsk people about being Ukrainian citizens into them belonging to “more than a thousand years of Russian statehood”. He uses the term “Motherland” (родина/rodina), which is an emotionally and affectionally charged term (Chykaeva, 2017, p. 95), underlining the Crimean people’s belonging to Russia.

Extracts 4,5,6,7) Here, upholding the importance of ancestors and generations reveals a common kin-group-rhetoric where “dead relatives govern from their tombs” and therefore *perpetuates* a historical memory based on the life-losses of the past which essentially contributed to the *continuous* existence of the Russian state. Heroism for the state as part of remembering history has a long legacy in Russian political culture according to McDaniel (1996a, p. 38, 52) and Ploky (2017e, p. 253). Therefore, hero and kin-group rhetoric are assessed as a *perpetuation strategy*.

Overall, Vladimir Putin uses continuity in an essentialist manner where continuity itself seems to exist in a mythological space and is the only goal, no matter the the condition of the Russian polity. The continuity principle is very eclectic and attached to continuity of timeless values (spirituality, tradition, ancestry, progeny). Furthermore, the continuity claim of Russian history and its statehood would not work without the claim of continuous threat, based on Vladimir Putin’s remarks, that Russia’s independence can only be assured when threat is combated. Based on these findings **four discursive topics** of continuity in his speeches are present and repeated consequently:

the continuity of history,

the continuity of the Russian state,

the continuity of war and threat,

the continuity of timeless values

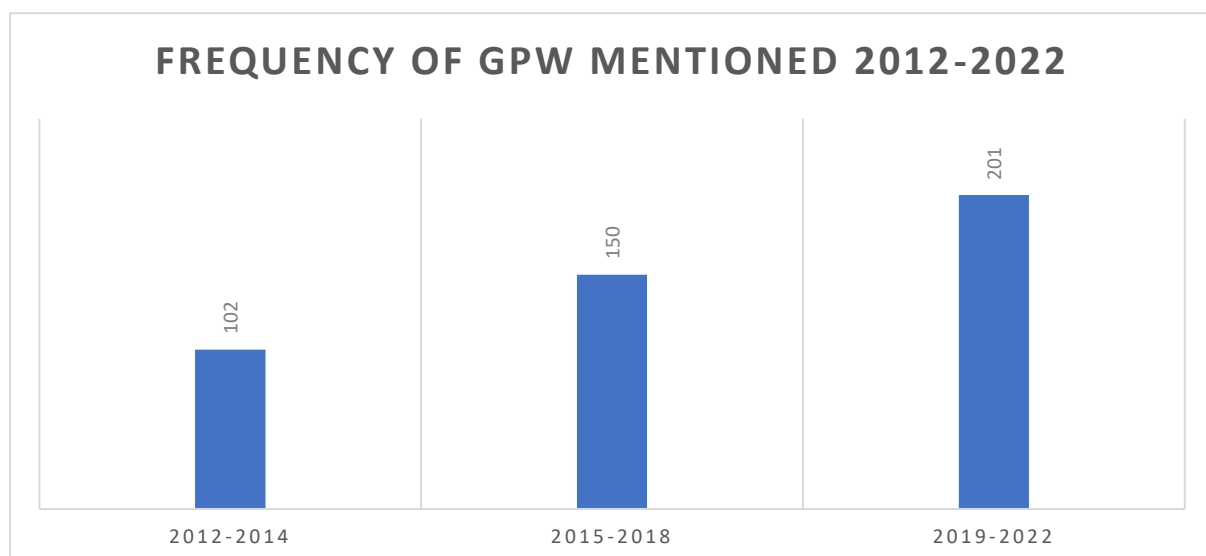
State is not marked as an own discursive topic in Concept Map 1, due to the essentialism – the state can be and include essentially anything that there is and has been there. If any of the mentioned continuities continue, the state continues naturally – all continuities are inextricably bound. Nevertheless, to assure a clear analysis, arguments including direct terms such as statehood, patriotism, nation/national and everything concerning independence/sovereignty can be assessed to **the continuity of state** as a discursive topic. The findings in this chapter will be applied in the following chapter as well. This all demonstrates that arguing continuity bears significance for Vladimir Putin’s argumentation about national identity.

3.1.2. Continuity argued through Historic Events

The second part of the analysis will further enquire the historic dimension of the continuity principle and connect it to historical memory. As a matter of general knowledge, the most recent turning points for the Russian polity are the years 1917, 1945 and 1990. But Vladimir Putin goes much further back in time, utilising historic events such as the "Time of Troubles" in the 17th century or the "Baptism of the Rus" in the 10th century, when Christianity was introduced to the Russian people and became the official state religion. As the extracts for the analysis will show, he often mentions several different historic events all in one breath, sometimes in chronological order. Enumerating historic events serves to express *indirectly* the continuity of the Russian polity over time and is again a *linguistic device*. All historic events he focuses on were pivotal in Russian history and have been overcome with the victory over a threat. Therefore, enumerating such historical victories means he attempts to prove continuity in his argumentation. As outlined in the analysis of extracts 6 and 7 – Vladimir Putin employs history in such a way that a sense of threat is *perpetuated* for the continuity of the state. By focusing solely on victorious events, Vladimir Putin may highlight the ability to overcome challenges and adversaries, but he also inadvertently *perpetuates* a sense of vigilance or concern about potential future threats. This can be seen as a form of historical memory that *perpetuates and justifies* the narrative of external challenges and conflicts alive in the national consciousness. Due to the scope of the paper, I cannot incorporate all historic events Vladimir Putin mentions. Therefore, I will focus on those extracts, which show the enumeration of historic events and primordial history such as the "Baptism of the Rus".

The analysis of recent historical events will mainly focus on Russia's role in the Second World War, known as the "Great Patriotic War" (GPW). As discussed in the research design, the concept of historical memory and the GPW has significant importance for Russia. The importance of the GPW for Vladimir Putin has also numeric significance: In the speech bundles, comprising 882 speeches, the ATLAS.TI program has calculated that Vladimir Putin's use of the Great Patriotic War in his speeches nearly doubled between 2012 and 2022, illustrated in the chart below. In the period from 2012 to 2014, he mentioned it 102 times, then 150 times between 2015 and 2018, and 201 times between 2019 and 2022. The GPW is also connected to the continuity principle and various other discourses in Putin's speeches, as my analysis will demonstrate.

Source: own elaboration



The Cycle of Historical Memory

The "Baptism of the Rus" is used by Vladimir Putin as a marker for the beginnings of the Russian statehood and refers to the thousand-years formulation in the previous subchapter. Therefore, Russian Orthodox Christianity justifies the historic existence and continuity of the Russian state in Vladimir Putin's discourse. The enumeration of different historic events is *indirectly* expressing continuity of the Russian state in his rhetoric and can therefore be seen as an expression of continuity itself. This will be marked in thick red letters. In the yellow column "Continuities", I will apply all the continuities that I have analysed in the previous chapter: **continuity of history, continuity of state, continuity of war/threat and continuity of timeless values**. Longer extracts are now divided into smaller sections, so the analysis will be easier to follow. Strategies are explained below the analysis table. Extracts are provided under **Annex 2, Table 2** from each ATLAS.TI period bundle to underline the relevance during the examined time period. Enumerated historic events and indirect formulations of continuity are marked in red letters.

Linguistic Devices: Extracts 8,11,12 and 13 and 14 all show the *enumeration of historic events* as an indirect expression of continuity. This indirect expression again bears a certain essentialism, since it implies that the Russian polity in essence was the same in these years and "just existed" in itself. The strategies for these extracts are explained in the following sections.

Topics and Strategies:

Extract 8): The continuity of history is a *constructive strategy* since pre-revolutionary historic events are mentioned. All events mentioned are portrayed as victorious to also perpetuate the continuity of war and threat. The continuity of history and threat/war are connected to the continuity of timeless values. These values are expressed again through a kin-ship rhetoric, where the heroes ought to be remembered for preserving "national and ethnic" traditions. Therefore, it is also assessed as a perpetuation and justification strategy.

Extract 11): a +b) Vladimir Putin connects enumerated historic events again directly with military heroism and war, both marked as a *constructive strategy* (pre-revolutionary historic events are mentioned) and perpetuation strategy (only events of victorious military actions are enumerated, including GPW, which was part of Soviet historical memory). Vladimir Putin now uses the term "Fatherland" (отечество/otechestvo), which has the same literal meaning as "Motherland" in Extract 5 but is more often used in connection to military achievements and the cultivation of a national identity (Chykaeva, 2017, p. 93, 95). This underlines the notion that war/threat are to be continued. At the end of b) timeless values of family, religion and tradition are emphasised. As in previous extracts, it is marked as a *perpetuation and justification strategy*.

In c) Vladimir Putin uses words such as "patriotism" and "citizens" which refer to statehood and therefore are marked as the continuity of the state. Vladimir Putin includes all religions and ethnicities into the continuity of the state and therefore also into the previous continuities of history, war/threat, and timeless values. All the different groups helped to sustain the Russian polity over time. This can be assessed as a *perpetuation and justification strategy* as it presents war, battles as a uniting component for all different ethnic and religious groups inside the Russian polity. Everyone is part of the history, the battles and the timeless values of Russia, individual markers are a subsidiary matter.

Extract 12): a) Here continuity is expressed through enumerating negative events, not victorious ones. This serves not only to *perpetuate* war and threat but also to *justify* that Crimea is Russian, since Russians have a painful historical memory in Crimea, connected to the Civil War after the revolution. This can be investigated in b), when Vladimir Putin refers to the emigration wave in 1920, due to the Civil War, where Crimea, back then still Russia, served as a departure point for many Russians who had to leave their country and build a life somewhere else. Here *he justifies*, that the historical memory present in Crimea gives Russians the right to call Crimea "Russian". This is underlined by his formulation "most of them were Russian patriots". The term "Russian patriot" can mean any ethnicity and therefore is connected to the continuity of the state. Here again, Vladimir Putin making the implicit claim, that Russian statehood is based on patriots of any background, and they all share the historical memory of that place.

Looking back at 12a), I was not sure which strategy to apply here, and decided the *transformation strategy*, although with reservations. Historical memory around the 1917 revolution was mixed over time. During the Soviet Union it was mostly perceived as a positive event and celebrated every year on the 7th of November (Miller, 2018, p.3). Under Yeltsin and later under Putin (in 2005) the holiday was renamed eventually into "the National Unity Day" and set to the 4th of November, where Russia's victory in during the Time of Troubles and multiethnicity are emphasised (Yasmann, 2005, para.1). The remembrance of the revolution today is rather downplayed (Miller, 2018, p. 5), and as evident through this extract, expressed by Vladimir Putin as a disintegrative event in Russian history. Therefore, one can say that the positive remembrance of the 1917 revolution is *being transformed* into a negative one. Since the speech was held in 2021, one has to assume that there is only a limited amount of people within the population, that would find it still *transformative* to downplay the revolution. Nevertheless, any other strategy seemed not suit the complex historical context surrounding this event. In 12 c), Vladimir Putin further *justifies* Russia's right to call Crimea Russian through the remembrance of wars and battles fought on the peninsula. War, battles, and suffering are perpetuated and linked to a negative memory.

Extract 13:) In a) Vladimir Putin picked these two events, since they were shaped by overcoming hostile takeovers, according to his rhetoric. The Times of Trouble were shaped by a takeover attempt from the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Nolte, 2012a, p. 69), and during the Civil War, many different foreign parties tried to intervene into the conflict (Nolte, 2012b, p. 178f.). Therefore, he *perpetuates and justifies* a continuity of history and war/threat through this passage. By referring to the Time of Troubles he relates to pre-revolutionary history, and this is again assessed as a *constructive strategy* as well. Furthermore, mentioning the colonial practices of Western Europe he also *perpetuates* the notion, that threat to Russia comes from the West (of Russia). Through 13a+b), Vladimir Putin again *transforms* the Lugansk and Donetsk people's identity into belonging to the continuity of Russian history and state and additionally, reveals a geopolitical dimension to his rhetoric. Vladimir Putin constructs Russia's position in the international arena as belonging to an anti-colonial movement, which challenges Western hegemony. Here he also *transforms* again the Lugansk and Donetsk people's identity into being part of this political position. This also demonstrates that Vladimir Putin's argumentation strategy about historic continuity is used for geostrategic purposes, instrumentalising a narrative that advocates unity in adversity. Finally, it also serves as a *justification strategy* for the war in Ukraine.

Extract 14:) After glorifying Russian uninterrupted history and continuous state with Pathos in a) *and justifying* fighting for it, Vladimir Putin goes on in b) to enumerates different historic persons and different forms of Russian polities and connects them eventually in d) to the Baptism of the Rus and the thousand-year existence of the Russian state. In b) and c) Vladimir Putin names un-controversial and controversial historic personalities and ultimately declares, that all of them are part of Russia's continuity and glory. This extract is a prime example of my previous analysis, since continuity is the overarching principle that unites everything in his historical memory again in a very essentialist manner. When mentioning saints and religious personalities, the continuity of timeless values is also added, since as marked before, religiosity/spirituality are often seen as a timeless value that hold the continuity of the state together throughout history. Therefore, no matter the difference between Peter I., Stalin, or Nicholas II., the Soviet Union or the Tsardom of Muscovy – all of them contribute to continuity of history, statehood, timeless values, threat, and war as the paramount argument. Again, war/threat coincides mostly with the *perpetuation and justification strategy*. When mentioning pre-revolutionary history, the *constructive strategy* is applied.

Finally, extracts 9 and 10 serve to demonstrate how Vladimir Putin defines the thousand-year statehood of Russia by referring to the Christianisation of the Rus in the 10th century.

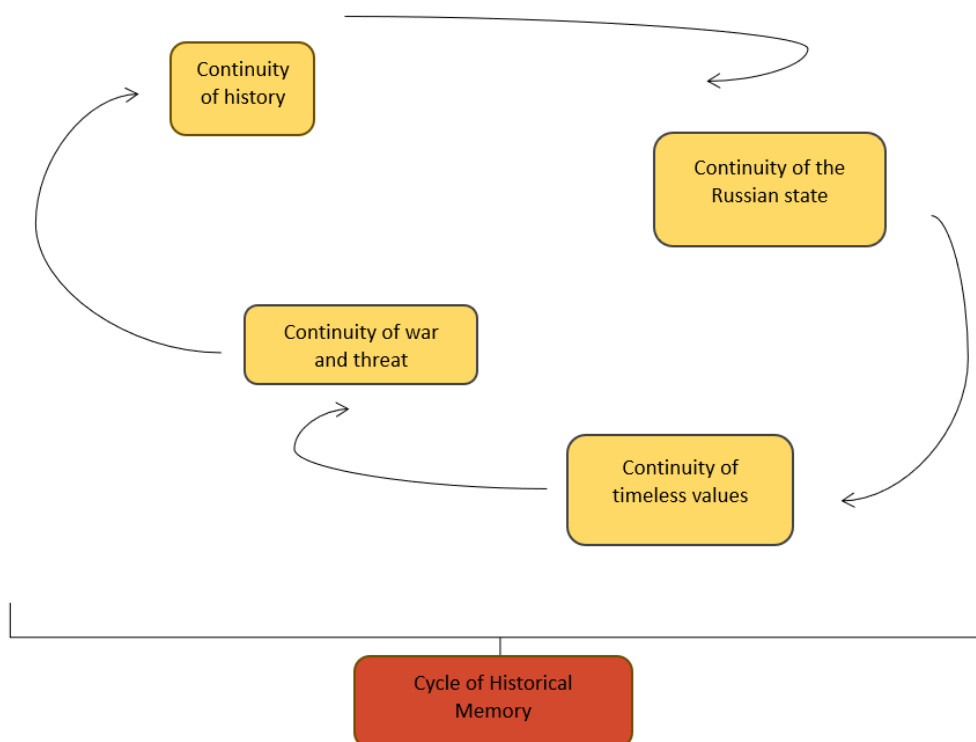
In extract 9a) he directly mentions the connection between the Baptism of the Rus and the continuity of history, which is saturated with the timeless values of Orthodox Christianity. Mentioning an "equal footing between East and West" could point to Vladimir Putin referring the "Third Rome" doctrine, mentioned in the research design, since this marked the first assertion of power status by a Russian political entity on the global stage – as the heir of Eastern Christianity. Therefore, he *constructs* a national identity based on the continuity of Russian Christian Orthodoxy. It serves to underline the historic continuity, since the Russian state in his narrative would not have been continuous without Russian Orthodoxy. Once again in b), he includes all ethnicities and religions into the religious and historical continuity of the Russian state, particularly emphasising the Christian Orthodox bond between Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. This serves once again the purpose to *construct* historic continuity as the overall superior and homogenising argument, which stands higher than territorial, ethnic, and religious belonging. It also aims to *transform* the identities of Ukrainians and Belarusians into them belonging to Russia's image of collective destiny and being inextricably bound to Russia and everything this entails: The continuity of state, values, chosen historic events and the wars that enabled to sustain everything. Through this argumentative subordination, Vladimir Putin *justifies and constructs* the Ukrainian and Belarusian existence through a chosen historical memory leaning on Russian hegemony. Any move by Ukraine (and potentially Belarus) to distance itself from Russia could jeopardize the foundation of this narrative. If historical memory based on primordialism, as we have seen through the Baptism of the Rus, *justifies the existence (ontology)* of the Russian nation, it robs Ukraine and Belarus of choosing their own historical memory and therefore, *to justify their own existence*.

In extract 10), Vladimir Putin uses a quote of 20th century Eurasianist and historian Lev Gumilev to once again, *justify and construct* a thousand-year history based on the Christianisation of Russia. One can again find all aspects of continuity and timeless values in his formulations. It is of paramount importance to heed Vladimir Putin's pronounced emphasis on the Baptism of the Rus, recognizing that it specifically points to the historical entity known as Kievan Rus. This emphasis serves as a *constructive strategy* to validate Russia's historical assertion of influence in Ukraine. Further in extract 10), Vladimir Putin

overtly underscores the Baptism of the Rus as an integral component of Russian national identity.

This chapter has shown that all continuities from the previous chapter relate to each other and most of them are present in almost every speech extract. It also has shown how continuities, discursive topics and strategies relate to each other, which themes reoccur, and which themes often come together in his discourse. All the different continuities mutually confirm each other and build a Cycle of Historical Memory illustrated in *Concept Map 2*:

Concept Map 2 – How the discursive topics around continuity establish a Cycle of Historical Memory



Source: own elaboration

What is it the Russians ought to remember? The audience ought to remember, that Russian history has proved (continuity of history) → that the state is glorious and always existed in different forms (continuity of state) → saturated in timeless values (continuity of timeless values: religion, family, ancestry, victory etc.) → maintained through battles and wars (continuity of war and threat) → which make the history continue and start again a struggle for survival and independence (continuity of history, continuity of state).

Through the interrelation of the different continuities that represent historical memory, Putin's construction of national identity reveals an *ontological dimension*. As particularly demonstrated in extract 9 and 13, or those extracts generally discussing Ukraine and ethnicity, groups encompassed within Putin's historical memory are intricately linked to Russia and assume an existential risk to Russia if they are separated from or attempt to detach themselves from Putin's narration on national identity. Any endeavour to disrupt this perpetual cycle jeopardizes his national identity rooted in a selective historical

memory, posing an existential threat. The magnitude of this will be further assessed in the next chapters about the GPW and ethnicity.

Continuity and the Great Patriotic War

This chapter analyses how the Great Patriotic War (GPW) is used in his speeches to feed into creating a historical memory that consist of the continuation of history, war and threat, the state and timeless values. Some of the extracts were chosen to show how Vladimir Putin connects the GPW with the continuity of Russian history and then eventually, uses the remembrance of the GPW to construct a geopolitical strategy in the international arena. Extracts can be found in **Annex 2, Table 3** and are again provided from each period bundle. The discursive topics from *Concept Map 1* are now substituted with the **four continuities**, since the analysis has shown that most of the discursive topics are included in the continuities. Important sections in the extracts are underlined in **teal colouring**, to follow better the written-out part below.

First and foremost, the historical remembrance of the GPW belongs in Vladimir Putin's discourse to all **the continuities** outlined in *Concept map 2* and analysed through the 5th column:

1. The GPW is part of the continuity of thousand-years of Russian statehood and expression of Russian religious values (extracts 15,19),
2. the GPW is part of historical continuity and the continuity of pivotal historic events (extracts 15 ,16,19,22,24,26),
3. the GPW is expression of the continuity of timeless values, religious and other (15, 17,18,19,23),
4. the GPW is historical lesson to the continuous threat coming from the West of Russia and the GPW is lesson about Nazi collaboration (15,16,17,18,19,20,23,24,25,26).
5. Lastly, the GPW is evidence for the military glory of Russia and a justification for continuous war (15,16,17,18,19,20,23,24,26). Justifying war with emphasising the GPW becomes a geopolitical strategy when
 - a. it starts to mark the fraternity with others against a common enemy (16,17,20,22,23) AND
 - b. it is used to satisfy the ontological need behind the construction of national identity (15,16,17,18,19,20,24), namely modern Russia exists only because of the GPW.

The following written out sections will analyse the extracts according to these bullet points.

Topics and **Strategies:**

Starting with bullet point 1.)

the GPW, in extracts 15) and 19), is directly connected to Russia's primordial history and its Russian Orthodoxy. In extract 15a) Vladimir Putin quotes Vyacheslav Molotov and Josef Stalin during the World War and contrasts their statements. While it seems that Molotov uses a more formal wording, Stalin's wording is more emotional and familial. Vladimir Putin interprets Stalin's wording as him referring to the spiritual and religious foundation of the Russian people that supersedes the Soviet Union and goes back to the Ancient Rus. According to Vladimir Putin, Stalin used these words to call unto people's unity during the GPW. As already resulted in my analysis in the previous chapters, Russian orthodox spirituality is one of the timeless values of Russian statehood and makes Russia appear to

be “static” and “existent” no matter the regime, ideology, or historical period. Through this, he *constructs* the national identity of Modern Russia with its primordial roots, fulfilling the ontological dimension of national identity through religion (as it has been analysed in the former chapters as well). Furthermore, the section 15a) is also marked as a *transformation strategy*, since remembering Josef Stalin as somebody who appeals to Russians’ religiosity, can be seen as *transforming* the usual image about Josef Stalin. Extract 14) has previously shown, that no matter how controversial a political character might be in Russian history, Vladimir Putin rewards all of them *essentially* for the continuity of Russian history and the Russian polity – including Josef Stalin.

Extract 19a) also shows how the GPW is connected to thousand-year of Russian statehood and the essence of spirituality. Here the president connects modern Russia after 1945 with primordial Russia, presenting the GPW as the pivotal moment for Russia’s continuity in modern times. Referring to primordiality is again assessed as a *constructive strategy*. The continuity of timeless values expressed through spirituality helped the Russians to be victors in the GPW. It is also marked as a *transformation strategy*, because again, celebrating the GPW under the light of religious support and unity has certainly not been common during the Soviet Union.

Selected extracts under bullet point 2.)

represent how the GPW is also named in the same breath with other historical events, underlying its significance in the continuity strategy. The Russian state continued and continues due to all these historic events, including the GPW. If pre-revolutionary and primordial events are named, it is assessed again as a *constructive strategy*.

Moving forward to bullet point 3.)

The GPW and what caused its victory is always underlined by timeless values, which reinforces the essentialist aspect of Putin’s historical memory to construct national identity. This is poignant in extracts 15) and 19a) where religious values are named as the essential qualities that caused victory during the Second World War. These values are coined as “true values” in 19a) to underline its essence. This is further exacerbated in extract 18a), where the “historical truth” about the GPW is named as a “spiritual foundation and basic values for development”, again underlining that the GPW was a spiritual event. Vladimir Putin rhetorically merges spiritual values and militarism, which can be seen as an ultimate *perpetuation and justification strategy* for war. Extracts 23b and 17c), show again a kinship rhetoric as timeless values, where once again the dead govern from their tombs and *justify* military action and vigilance.

Bullet point 4.)

Although the framing of adversaries as nazi collaborators is present in almost all selected speech extracts, the extracts 25) and 26) serve as particularly good examples:

In 26 b+c) Vladimir Putin verbally rewards the Russian forces for their actions in the current war against Ukraine and compares their deeds in 26c) with the heroism of both world wars and Russia’s war against France in 1812. This *perpetuates and justifies* the ongoing war, framing it as a similar threat that was present in the other wars named. By naming these wars and framing NATO as an adversary in 26a), Vladimir Putin *perpetuates* the threat coming from the West of Russia and *justifies* the ongoing war.

Extract 25) follows a similar pattern. Vladimir Putin antagonises the West and compares their Russophobia to antisemitism by the Nazis during the Second World War. This serves to *justify* the ongoing war and portraying Russians as the victims against the common Western enemy. Here it seems that Western countries are generally equated to be Nazis.

Bullet points 4.) and 5.) will be now taken together, since his Nazi narrative mentioned in 4.), will be assessed as a geopolitical strategy against the political West in the further analysis.

By thirst looking at 5a) I will investigate how the fraternity aspect is expressed. Vladimir Putin's underlying argument seems to say that, since Russia was the Soviet Union during the GPW everyone who fought for the Soviet Union during the GPW is part of Russia, Russian history, Russian continuities (Concept Map 2) and most important: Russian historical remembrance of the GPW.

This is prominent in extract 17a) when the president lists countries and ethnicities in fighting together during the GPW, and again in extract 20b), when mentioning the contribution of the Russian "multi-ethnic family" for the continuity of the Russian state during the GPW.

In Extract 22b) he also addresses Belarusian president Aleksander Lukashenko and mentions how the remembrance of the GPW connects and unites Russia and Belarus.

Vladimir Putin applies a similar strategy to Ukraine. In Extracts 16) 18) 20) 23), it becomes evident that Vladimir Putin portrays Ukrainians and Crimean people in a way that implies they should still consider themselves Soviet citizens in terms of remembrance. Paraphrased: Crimean and Ukrainian identity is being *transformed* into belonging to wars and battles under either Russian or Soviet leadership and *therefore has no value and acknowledged existence without Vladimir Putin's selective historical memory of these battles.*

This is further particularly expressed in extract 16), where Vladimir Putin calls upon Russian historians to emphasise in the history textbooks, that Crimea and particularly Sevastopol are Russian territory and have always belonged to Russia due to the shared remembrance and sacrifices in the GPW.

In extract 20a), Vladimir Putin admits that the people of Crimea were not part of Russian statehood during the GPW. However, he integrates them into the broader narrative of historical continuity and continuity of the state when they were fighting in the GPW. Therefore, whether Crimea was formally part of the Russian state at that time becomes less important in his argumentation. What holds more weight is, their inclusion in the overarching history of Russia and the Soviet Union, particularly their involvement in the continuity of Russian and Soviet wars and battles. The GPW, being a Soviet war, connects everyone involved, along with their ancestors who sacrificed, to Russia. This connection shall persist regardless of the SU dissolution. All in all, this *perpetuates war and justifies* Russian influence in the region, due to common historical memory.

Connecting to this, extract 23b) demonstrates that denying Putin's remembrance of the GPW is coined a "betrayal" to the fallen soldiers, and again, is the ultimate *justification* for war and *perpetuation* of a threat-anticipating-mindset. Crimean and Ukrainian identities are *transformed* to belong to the historical memory on GPW. Every Ukrainian that did betrayal during the GPW, as mentioned in 23a) is equated to be a Nazi and the "rightful" memory for Ukrainians about the GPW has been "erased". Every Ukrainian that was on

Russian side during GPW in 23b) is seen as a hero. Therefore, no matter what a Ukrainian person today decides to believe, it has to be in accordance with Vladimir Putin's narrative about the GPW which trumps Ukrainian right for an own Ukrainian historical memory on this event.

The remembrance of the GPW is often framed as the remembrance of the core adversary, the Nazis. The title "Nazis" and "Nazism" gain a meaning beyond its historical context and is apparently given to anyone who collaborates against Russia and Putin's interpretation of the Second World War and the Russian victory. This is particularly evident in extracts 18) and 23). Everyone (particularly Ukrainians) who upholds a more Western leaning narrative about historical remembrance of the Second world war betray the timeless values of fallen ancestry in the war, as shown in 23b). Therefore, they are equated as Nazis, xenophobes and radicals, as shown in extract 18c). The logic of adversity in 18b+c) expressed through "Nazi", "Nazism" and the betrayal of GPW remembrance automatically *perpetuates and justifies* war. All in all, the fraternity aspect is attempted to be achieved by having a common Nazi enemy.

Bullet point 5b):

When a politician attempts to fulfil the ontological dimension of a nation's identity, it means they are focusing on the fundamental aspects that define the essence and existence of that nation (Pakhaliuk, 2021, p.288). As already implied in 5a), reviving the GPW for national identity has an ontological dimension, since Vladimir Putin argumentation here reveals, that modern Russia (including other countries) would not exist without the victory of the GPW. As outlined in the research design, the victory not only solidified the Soviet Union's standing on the global stage, but its remembrance was deeply ingrained in the fabric of Soviet society. Consequently, the revival of the Great Patriotic War appears to be a calculated geopolitical strategy. This strategy not only aims to resurrect Russia's former post-war status but also serves as a *justification* for military actions, *perpetuating* a historical narrative that is not foreign to the nation's consciousness. Fulfilling the ontological dimension with primordiality has already been assessed as a *constructive strategy*, in this chapter (extracts 15,19) and earlier. Nevertheless, revitalising the GPW (without the primordial connection), as decisive for Russia's values and existence, in the context of 2012-2022, can also have the component of a *constructive strategy*. Marples (2012, p. 288) explained, that Putin's third term started out with an intensification of the Soviet GPW narrative, which has not been present during Yeltsin and not so pronounced in Putin's earlier years. Therefore, it is not only *perpetuated* for an older generation but most probably *constructed* for a new generation.

This is particularly important in extract in extract 24 a+b). Vladimir Putin connects the remembrance of the victory in the GPW again to the continuity of the Russian state in 24c), essentially saying that modern Russia would not exist without the GPW's military glory, since this glory has built the "foundation" (24c) for further generations. This again is *constructing* the ontological need for national identity through historical memory on this event.

The extract 17b) also shows the existential dimension, when Vladimir Putin declares that the GPW was a war "for the future of the entire humanity" – which awards the Soviet Union and Russia a global role as a victor in this war. This statement frames the GPW as deeply existential to the continuity of Russia and humanity as whole. This can be seen as a *perpetuation and justification strategy* since it serves to build national identity on the continuation of war and threat. Wars have served Russia's political success before, and

their honourable remembrance underlines that wars could happen again in case of threat. Furthermore, it is again also marked as a *constructive strategy*.

In Extract 18a), the existential threat embodied by the GPW's victory takes on the significance of "truth"— so it should be regarded as unquestionable. Any attempts to challenge this narrative are depicted as potentially causing division, even on the international stage in as 18c) demonstrates. In this context, Vladimir Putin's framing of historical remembrance surrounding the GPW serves to *construct and perpetuate* Russia's status as a global power, underscoring its indispensable role in shaping the post-war world order and emphasizing an ontological dimension—the notion that both Russia and the global order after the war *owe their existence* to Russia's military glory in the GPW.

In extract 20a) Vladimir Putin makes a comparison between the GPW and the conflict in Sevastopol and Crimea, thereby essentially portraying the battles in Crimea as having the same relevance as the GPW. This is even more proven through the fact that the conflict in Crimea and Sevastopol in 20b) is also again coined through the undisputable term "truth". Here the geopolitical dimension of the conflict is very clearly expressed and the GPW is instrumentalised to underline this strategy. If the GPW is conventionally presented as addressing the fundamental ontological need of Russian national identity, then in this case, the remembrance of the GPW is also utilized to bolster the *construction* of the existence of the Russian nation in the context of the Crimean conflict. Consequently, the Crimean conflict gets an existential dimension for Russia's national identity through the historical memory of the GPW. Ukrainians are generally included into the remembrance of the GPW (e.g., extracts 16 and 23), and since the GPW fulfils an ontological dimension, resistance against Vladimir Putin's historical memory threatens the existence of the Russian nation in his argumentation.

Lastly, as already mentioned, between 2019 and 2022 the usage of the GPW in his speeches has doubled as compared to the years between 2012 and 2014. Therefore, I would also like to draw attention to extract 21) and 22) more closely, since these examples represent Vladimir Putin mentioning the GPW in seemingly random occasion, making it clear that he would not leave out a chance to mention the GPW, persisting almost mantra-like on its significance.

In extract 21), we have a short speech segment from the president's annual news conference in 2020, which coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic. The speech commences by recalling the commemoration of the GPW. Further into the speech, Vladimir Putin explicitly characterizes mobilization during times of threat as a defining feature of Russian national identity. Consequently, even in the midst of the global pandemic, the challenges faced during the GPW are linked to the challenges posed by the pandemic, reinforcing the sense of solidarity in times of threat as a fundamental aspect of Russia's national identity. This is marked as a *perpetuation and justification strategy* for threat.

Extract 22) focuses on a speech segment from a meeting with Belarusian President Aleksander Lukashenko. In this speech, the initial discussion centres around agriculture and food-related matters. However, Vladimir Putin abruptly introduces the topic of culture, the GPW and Belarusian participation in it, and subsequently, shifts to an entirely different subject, namely Belarusian students in Russia. This pattern reveals that Vladimir Putin frequently references the GPW in seemingly unrelated contexts, often without a clear connection to the ongoing discussion.

The following chapter will focus on Vladimir Putin's use of ethnicity in his speeches, connect it chapter 2.2.3. and consolidate further the findings introduced in the previous chapters.

3.2. Ethnicity and National Identity

The former chapter has shown that ethnicity is one of the discourses that is also connected to continuity (*Concept Map 1*), since Putin's discourse shows, that he either generally mentions Russia as a multi-ethnic state or he includes different former Soviet ethnicities into all continuities. Nevertheless, since his definition the state is generally essentialist, it automatically disputes diversity. This makes Putin's discourse on historical remembrance a hegemonical one, and also showcases the crux with the modern nation concept. Although he acknowledges the multi-ethnic nature of the current and historic Russian polity, the ethnic belonging is still presented as subservient to the discourse around the continuity of the Russian history and the other continuities. Creating overarching themes to transcend ethnicity has also been a strategy during Soviet times (unity in the proletariat, not in ethnic or religious belonging), as described in 2.2.3. In the first part, the chapter aims to consolidate the findings about ethnicity in the previous chapter. Furthermore, the second part of the chapter aims to investigate how Vladimir Putin frames ethnicity around the Ukraine conflict, again referring to what has been described in the research design about the role of ethnicity during the SU era.

3.2.1. Ethnicity and Historical Memory

In these extracts, I aim to underscore the points I made in the previous chapter regarding how Vladimir Putin subordinates ethnicity to the continuities and its Soviet legacy. The columns and the colouring follow the same principle as in the previous sub-chapter. Strategies are abbreviated now: constructive started (CS), perpetuation and justification strategy (PJS) and transformation strategy (TS). All extracts can be found in **Annex 3, Table 1**.

Extract 27) demonstrates how ethnicities are included into the continuity of the history, state, and timeless values. Here in 27a), Vladimir Putin also awards the Russian Orthodox church for the continuity of a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state, congratulating all of them in 27b) with the Baptism of the Rus. Therefore, while he acknowledges Russia being multi-confessional and multi-ethnic, it is inferior to the Russian Orthodox state and its values. These are rewarded for being essential to the state's existence (27a+b). References to primordiality make it again a *constructive strategy*. Hence, his argumentation can also be valued as a *perpetuation and justification strategy* since it was also common during Soviet times to transcend ethnicity for the state and its goals or ideologies.

Extract 28-33) all additionally include the continuity of war/threat into the argumentation, again superior to ethnicity.

In extract 28b) Vladimir Putin again names the Time of Troubles in Russian history, declaring that many different ethnicities were part of these events and therefore contributed to the continuity of the state. Referring to the old historic event is again marked as a *constructive strategy*, while referring to war and battles is seen as a *perpetuation and justification strategy*.

Further, in extract 29), Vladimir Putin responds to a questioner from Ufa, a city in the Ural Mountains within the Republic of Bashkortostan. In his response, he immediately acknowledges the questioner's ethnicity by swiftly recounting various historical conflicts, notably the GPW, in which the Bashkir people participated. Here, Vladimir Putin seizes what may appear as an arbitrary opportunity to reinforce his narrative, emphasizing the collective contribution of all ethnicities to the state. Consequently, his rhetoric underscores the notion that the state represents a shared project, with ethnic identity taking a subordinate role within this narrative. It is again marked as a *constructive* strategy for using pre-revolutionary events and as a *perpetuation and justification strategy* to use war and threat for justifying his version of historical memory for the Bashkir people and the Soviet legacy of the argument.

That the state project and its history transcend ethnicity is also *constructed* in extracts 27) 30) and 33) by Vladimir Putin again connecting the Kievan Rus and Russia's Christianisation as the origins and underlying values of the Russian state – but shaped and fought by everybody.

This is further verified by extract 31). Here Vladimir Putin is including the people from the Caucasus as contributors for Russia's military glory and statehood. It is marked as a *perpetuation and justification strategy*, due to the referring to war and threat and the Soviet legacy of the argument.

Extract 32b) shows a speech taking place at a famous hill in Moscow, called Poklonnaya Gora, as named in the extract. The location for this speech and the attached war museum and victory park that is present there, underlines the continuity of war/threat and the fact that Moscow is the seat where this power lies. It is marked as a *perpetuation and justification strategy* for that reason. All the continuities are present in this speech and the different ethnicities are all again included into them in 32b). In 32a) he mentions the geographic dimensions of Russia based on cities, including Sevastopol and Crimea. This is marked as a *transformation strategy*, due to Crimea being in fact Ukrainian territory.

Extract 33) follows a similar pattern as extract 31), where Vladimir Putin includes several different ethnicities into his historical memory narration of the continuities. All in all, these extracts demonstrate how the state, a common history, values and fought battles are superior in the argumentation to ethnic belonging.

Overall, the people within the current Russian polity have no special rights according to their ethnicity and are united in the symbolism of the state, the history, wars, and values. Again, the previous chapters have analysed that the continuities are utilised to fulfil an ontological need for national identity – which means that every other discourse connected to it *must be* inferior. Transcending ethnicity through common "higher" denominators is framed as being the make-up of the Russian state and the argumentation strategy itself can be seen as having its roots in the Soviet Union. This will be further exemplified through the extracts 34-37) below. The continuities are left out for this table since it serves only to carve out the Soviet legacy of his argument. Extracts are available under **Annex 3, Table 2.**

Extract 35a) underlines my analysis from the previous chapter, namely that the historical memory of the GPW is framed as a Soviet memory and therefore gives Putin the argumentative tool to include all former Soviet ethnicities into the remembrance of the GPW and his *perpetuation and justification* of national identity based on it. In 35b) one can again see a common kin-ship rhetoric that is often connected to war and threat.

Extracts 34) and 36) directly link his multi-ethnic rhetoric to it being a positive Soviet legacy. As both extracts show in 34a) and 36b), Vladimir Putin acknowledges and cherishes ethnic diversity in the Russian state but includes it into being an attribute of the Russian state, rather than granting them an independent existence. Independence attempts are seen as disintegrative for the Russian state, as in extract 34b).

Extract 36a) starts with Vladimir Putin's comparison of the US melting-pot with the Russian melting-pot, essentially saying they do not differ greatly, but again referring to the antiquity of Russia's melting-pot attributes and this being also part of the Soviet Union. Therefore, it is marked as a *perpetuation and justification strategy* from Soviet times. In extract 36b), Vladimir Putin balances the good and bad things about certain attitudes that prevailed in the Soviet Union. The Soviet "melting-pot" is assessed as something positive, but Vladimir Putin denigrates the Communist ideological superstructure that was holding it together and the lack of private property. He sets it against the historic Ancient Rus 36a) and spiritual values in 36b), *constructing* that this is the new superstructure people should rely on, since it also included multi-ethnicity as much as the Soviet Union did. The necessity of an ideology or superstructure based on history is here clearly showcased.

Furthermore, Vladimir Putin constantly referring to the melting-pot as a historic tradition beyond the SU reflects a lack of nuanced understanding regarding the advent of modernity, its nation state appendage, and its significance, either for ideological purposes or by assumption, that it became such a matter of fact to think about nations in these terms, less in terms of representation. The latter thereby would certainly require different arguments for national identity.

According to extract 37), one has to assume that Vladimir Putin's definition of Russianness again transcends beyond ethnic belonging and even territory and geography. This reflects Brubaker's (1994) assertion, that Russian's living on post-Soviet territory are disconnected from the new territorial post-soviet division and Vladimir Putin embracing this factor, reveals a quite radical attitude about dominance and being part of some ideal, nebulous Russian world. It also corresponds with Plokh'y's (2017, p.20 of chapter 2.2.2.) quote, namely that Russian elites interpret what Russia is – and this leads to a general disconnection between the "mental" and "political" map of Russian-ess. It also raises the question, if Russianness does not depend on ethnicity, territory, and geography, what is Russianness in Vladimir Putin's view?

Again, I venture to answer, that according to my analysis so far, Russianness as an identity is expressed through alle the continuities illustrated in the Cycle of Historical Memory – which, as it seems, is the only limitation to Putin's Russianness and Russian national identity. When it comes to the GPW and ethnicity, the historical memory he constructs seems to be Soviet. It was the Soviet Union that provided people a national identity which was not based on ethnicity. Before the Communist Revolution national identity did not play a distinctive role since Russia was still an autocratic monarchy. The modern need for a Russian national identity centred on historical memory primarily stems from the Soviet strategy, sidelining ethnic factors for all individuals and emphasising the victory of the GPW. Vladimir Putin's novelty lies in the religious, primordial, and pre-revolutionary aspects of his historical memory, including historic events that go back to the Kievan Rus. Since the historic Russian state was also multi-ethnic, it provides another superstructure to transcend ethnicity for national identity, as it is very well demonstrated in extract 36).

3.2.2. Ethnicity in the Ukraine Discourse

The next two extracts aim to demonstrate how these findings about transcending ethnicity play out in Vladimir Putin's discourse around the Ukraine war. The first extract is from a speech shortly given after the Crimean annexation in 2014. The second extract is from a speech shortly given after the beginning of the full-scale war against Ukraine in 2022. Again, extracts are available under **Annex 3, table 3.**

Extract 38a) shows again many enumerations that ought to underline the continuous historical legacy prevailing for the Russian state in Crimea according to Vladimir Putin's *constructive strategy*. It is constructive because it uses pre-revolutionary history. Enumerating historic battle locations such as there have been in Balaklava or Kerch serves also as a *justification and perpetuation strategy* for the conflict and Crimea's dependence on Russia. All in all, this serves again to create a superstructure that includes everyone on Crimea, no matter the ethnicity, to be part and parcel of the Russian state and the geopolitical conflicts.

Extract 38b) clearly shows that Vladimir Putin now openly frames the conflict in terms of ethnicity, claiming Russians are forcefully assimilated and robbed of their historical memory. Furthermore, Vladimir Putin talks down the past and current Ukrainian government as being self-serving and corrupt. Here he wilfully constructs a national identity that is vilifying Ukraine and its own decisions on their government and historical memory. He goes even further as calling them oppressive to ethnic Russians on the Crimean territory and Ukraine in general. Portraying Ukraine as unstable serves to create a contrast to the "stable" Russian state, as he expresses in 38d).

Extract 38c) demonstrates how Vladimir Putin makes a comparison of Germany's reunification with the reunification of Crimea with Russia. There he sets the importance of the conflict into the light of the cold-war era, which can be assessed as a *perpetuation and justification strategy*. This also underlines the geopolitical dimension of the conflict.

Extract 38d) Vladimir Putin again acknowledges that Crimea is a multi-ethnic territory but insists, due to the superiority of the historical memory on the island, enumerated in 38a), and due to Russia's "stable sovereignty", the peninsula can only belong to the Russian state. Basically, everyone, no matter the ethnicity is allowed to live there but has to accept his continuity of the Russian state, history, wars, and historical memory. Putin also refers to controversial historical figure Stepan Bandera during the Second World War. The whole Ukrainian government is framed as being of his kind since they do not support Vladimir Putin's narrative about historical memory. Referring to Bandera shows that it is the historical memory about the GPW that is weaponised by Vladimir Putin to construct an antagonistic and xenophobic picture of Ukraine.

Extract 38e) By using primordial arguments, Vladimir Putin declares the Russians to have state-rights on the Ukrainian territory in Crimea. It is almost formulated as a threat. If the rights of the Russian ethnic group on this territory are not accepted, Ukraine's stability is endangered. All in all, historical memory about the GPW in 38d) and primordial historical memory in 38a) serve to bound people together on the Crimean territory and outdo the post-cold-war decision on territory in this area. This narrative is paramount for Vladimir Putin and holds the whole fundament for his version of historical memory and how he instrumentalises it. If Russia ought to give up Crimea, it ought to give up its whole existence, since the continuity of the state would not exist without Crimea and Russian's historic right on the Kievan Rus, and all the other continuities present on this territory.

As mentioned before, the whole speech can also be assessed as a *transformation strategy*, since the Crimean identity of being Ukrainian citizens is attempted in *being transformed* into the historical memory narrative of Vladimir Putin and his construction of national identity. The existence of the different ethnicities is not defined by certain rights according to law, but only by historical memory. It implies: All you ethnic groups, you would not exist today as you are, without acknowledging all the battles you thought for the historic Russian state and all the soldiers you sacrificed during GPW for the Soviet state. The Ukraine conflict embodies an existential, ontological threat to Vladimir Putin's construction of national identity and therefore gives ultimate *justification* for war in his discourse. This viewpoint reinforces the idea that Crimea is an integral part of Russian identity and losing it would undermine the entire historical narrative.

Extract 39) underlines the findings in extract 38) and makes his argumentation strategy even clearer. Putin reveals the simultaneous expression of unity and diversity *within* Russia while promoting division and negative stereotypes when discussing the Ukraine conflict – *outside* of Russia. It suggests a mixed message regarding inclusivity and cooperation among different ethnic groups and neighbouring nations. This contradiction only bears logic against the backdrop of historical memory, as he again instrumentalises the GPW in this extract and – wars and primordialism in e.g., extract 38.

3.3. Final Remarks

The analysis has revealed that Vladimir Putin's primordial argumentation serves to establish a narrative about the continuity of Russian history and statehood, linking Modern Russia, beginning with the GPW, to pre-revolutionary, primordial Russia. Looking at *Concept Map 2*, the query can be worded as follows: How did Russian history continue? Through the continuity of the Russian state. How did the state continue? Through everyone embracing the continuous timeless values of spirituality and honour to fallen ancestors. How was the continuity of history, state and values achieved practically? Through continuously combating threats and fighting wars. What happened when a war was won? History can continue in the same pattern. Russia's independence is ensured. This is what Vladimir Putin wants Russians to remember.

Who has to participate in this continuity cycle of historical remembrance? The Ukrainians and everyone who fought in the GPW or somehow was part of Russian's history, wars, and battles – either Soviet or tsarist. When it comes to Russian statehood his rhetoric appears to be inclusive of ethnic differences, all subservient to the umbrella of continuities. Hence, this does not go together well with the essentialist, ontological dimension in the construction of national identity, as it was best shown in the discourse around Crimea (extract 20). Since Vladimir Putin's narration on historical memory subordinates Crimea as being part of this remembrance, any attempt of breaking out of his narration would disrupt his continuity. Crimean people could claim not to follow his narration about the GPW → modern Russia would not exist as is does now according to Putin. Crimean people could claim not to follow his narrations as being included into the heritage of the Kievan Rus → the continuity of Russia's 1000-year existence would crumble, according to Vladimir Putin. Therefore, the ontological dimension has been politicised for geopolitical purposes – the antagonism against the West and the framing of the Ukrainian government as a Nazi collaborator. The geopolitical dimension of the Ukraine conflict for Vladimir Putin reveals a rhetoric which is solely focused on ethnicity, more clearly Russian ethnicity on Ukrainian territory. This also verifies Brubaker's (1994) early assumption, presented in the research design, that armed conflicts based on the argument of Russian ethnic self-determination, will be part of the future in post-Soviet Eastern Europe.

I hope the analysis has effectively shown the complicated nature of modernity's prevalent vice on national identity in Europe – and in this case, for Russia. A modern state in Europe cannot exist without the historical memory on the Second World War, Russia cannot be excluded from this. Recalling Gellner in chapter 2.2.2., it does not matter if the version of a history is true, it matters that there is a need for a version. This also refers to Allan Allport in chapter 2.2.3, claiming that a version of history in national identity is purely "functional". Here I venture to say, that it cannot be functional, if there is not some memory and familiarity about it inherent in people. While an external observer might call it just propaganda for the sake of power, it is not as harmless and simplistic, since it docks onto something that is real within human experience (Malinova, 2021, p.1004). Moreover, Vladimir Putin must be aware of the division in Ukraine's remembrance on this event (Marples, 2012, p.289) and therefore it serves him as a tool to further fracture the country in the ongoing conflict. Conclusively, historical memory is of key importance. The recent and ongoing instrumentalization and manipulation of historical memory by Vladimir Putin, coupled with its elevation to a national identity and its use as a geopolitical weapon, are currently having devastating effects on security in Europe and on East-West relations in general.

According to recent research on nationalism, group dynamics and identity the continuity principle has been identified as a common strategy to create national or group coherence (Smeeke&Verkyuten, 2014; Siromahov et al., 2020; Malinova, 2021; Roth et al., 2017). Roth et al., (2017, p.321) investigated how the belief in a continuation of one's own group can exacerbate a feeling of threat when the group's history is presented as negative. Once it is presented as positive, continuity helps to create social coherence within a group. These findings show that the continuity principle coupled with history is a powerful tool for propaganda but also for polarisation. Smeeke&Verkyuten (2014, p.663) differentiate between

1. The cultural essentialist representation of continuity: This concept focuses on maintaining the essential aspects of a group's identity throughout its history or a longer period of time.
2. The historical narrative representation of continuity: This involves showing how different events in the group's history are connected to each other.

The narrative approach is more focused on constructing a flexible and evolving narrative of identity, while the essentialist approach seeks to maintain a fixed core identity. Both of these aspects can be found in Vladimir Putin's continuity discourse. He has essentialist elements such as enumerating historical events and emphasising Russia's "bare existence" through these events, not matter under which conditions. Furthermore, the continuity of timeless values enables the president to always create a moral and spiritual essence that underlies Russians and the Russian state over time. The historical narrative element comes more into play when Vladimir Putin connects the GPW with Russia's primordial history and the war in Ukraine, showing how certain historic events, wars and threats have always been part of the Russian experience and have to continue - otherwise Russia ceases to exist. Siromahov et al. (2020, p.860), concluded in their research how continuity in nationalism fulfils an ontological need for a nation's or group's identity.

All of this corresponds with Pakhaliuk's (2021) research on Putin's institutionalisation of history and historical memory to substitute Soviet ideology for the Russian nation. While my research has also demonstrated that there is an ontological dimension to Putin's construction of national identity and that he instrumentalises historical memory, I have

not focused on the institutional aspects, but gave a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic sphere and relationships inherent in it, expressed in the Cycle of Historical Memory and applied to ethnicity. In this, I carved out the importance of the overarching principle of continuity in his speeches and how it supports Vladimir Putin's construction of national identity based on his historical memory.

Addressing Maxwell's (2022a; 2022b) concern regarding the acceptance of primordialism in academia and media, Putin's case has shown that primordialism is utilised to create a continuous history that justifies a nation's existence. Furthermore, such historical narratives around a nation's existence are effective rhetoric to justify wars and acquiring of territory. Primordialism offers not only history and justification for a nation's existence, but also delivers values. Since history and values for a nation can only be re-imagined, they can never substitute real values, which *can be experienced* in a strong polity with strong, functioning institutions and genuine representation. Conclusively, if primordialism in a nation's rhetoric is seriously propagated, one could contemplate about legitimacy issues and the actual functioning of the respective government.

The next part of the analysis will deal with the anti-modern aspects in Vladimir Putin's speech acts based on The Russian Idea outlined by McDaniel (1996). The analysis will refer to some of the extracts already chosen in the first part and provide further ones if necessary.

4. Analysing Anti-modern Aspects in National Identity

This analysis serves to make a connection between Vladimir Putin's speech acts and Russia's discourse on its national identity represented in *The Russian Idea*, as outlined in the research design. Additionally, if *The Russian Idea* constitutes the discourse on Russian national identity, it can be assumed that Vladimir Putin, knowingly or unknowingly, draws on the principles of it. This aims to prove, that understanding the legacy of *The Russian Idea* can help to decode certain aspects in his speeches according to the historical and cultural context of Russia and further proof that it is a *culture, still repeated* in the current discourse. The analysis will use many of the speech extracts already provided in the previous chapter, also for the purpose to make a connection between both analytical chapters. Strategies will be assessed generally and therefore will not show up in the table. Important sections are underlined grey in **Annex 1-3** and teal in **Annex 4**.

4.1. Antimodern Misconceptions

The discourse of The Russian Idea, as explored by McDaniel (1996), has been associated with three misconceptions. These misconceptions pertain to the belief that Russian national identity is *exclusively* Russian without influences from outside, the notion that it is unified under a *monolithic, uniform* school of thought, and the idea that it is a *mere, abstract conception* without practical implications. I have found in the speeches, that Vladimir Putin indeed tries to carve out Russian essence for his construction of national identity, which falls under *exclusivity*. As explained in chapter 2.2.4., Russian national identity was prompted by the emergence of modernity and is not inherently Russian. Looking at the historical context in chapter 2.2.4., German Romantic Nationalism was in fact the birth giver²⁴ of the understanding of a (Russian) national essence, intrinsic to

²⁴ Here Neumann (1996) writes, that [...] "only the advent of German idealism and the Romantic nationalism it inspired in Russia could have elevated 'nationality' to the status of a separate pillar of official Russia, distinct from Orthodox religion. In other words, although official nationality partially contradicted the main thrust of

national identity. German Romantic Nationalism also introduced concepts of national heritage, naturalism, the search for a nation's roots in history (Smith, 2010, pp.55-57) and the eternal connection between *the land and the people*, that supersedes the importance of state (Neumann, 1996f, 32).

The misconception of *exclusivity* lives further in Vladimir Putin's discourse, directly expressed in extract 15) [Annex 2, Table 3], highlighted in grey colouring. Taking from the historical context, one can claim that Vladimir Putin indeed is a Romantic Nationalist in current times. Extract 15 b+c) shows, that Vladimir Putin alleges that there is something "natural" to Russians looking for their roots and in this, choosing the values in Orthodox Christianity. Upholding an essence of naturalism and looking for heritage roots are all ideas from German Romantic Nationalism. Using religion as alternative values in 15a) is also a vestige of the discourse on *The Russian Idea* (chapter 3.4, p. 34), that is evidently being revived by Vladimir Putin.

A specific naturalism is also expressed in extract 7) [Annex 2, Table 1]. Vladimir Putin talks about self-determination and exclusivity as part of Russians' *genetic code*, exemplifying an essentialist position of biological heritage, framed as natural.

From the previous chapters extract 9b) [Annex 2, Table 2], extract 31) [Annex 3, Table 1], along with additional ones in Annex 4, Table 1 (A, B, C), consolidate Vladimir Putin's Romantic nationalist position and connect it to the previous analysis. He inextricably links *the land to their people*.

Extract 9b): Here Vladimir Putin mentions *the people* of Ukraine and Belarus and how they are connected to *the multi-ethnic land* and Russia, Christianised during the Baptism of the Rus (grey colouring).

Extract 31): In this extract Vladimir Putin points out the connection of the *Caucasus people to their land* and to the common Fatherland Russia (grey colouring).

Extract 9, 31 and A) and C) connect the land to people through pointing out their ethnic and national belonging and it's meaning on this land, which in A) and C) bounds them together in a community of fate. Ethnicity is once again surpassed - this time by *land*.

The narrative of a community of fate on the land is connected to war and threat in B). The bond between people and land *perpetuates and justifies* protecting the land against intruders and reminds of the threat. It is an ultimate *justification* for war.

In essence, my previous findings regarding ethnicity, historical memory and primordality, and the principle of continuity, as discussed in the preceding chapter, can also be viewed as manifestations of Romantic Nationalism within Vladimir Putin's speeches. The construction of a continuous stream that intertwines history, the state, values, and wars serve to bolster narratives concerning heritage, the homeland, and the nation for the sake of national identity.

The first part of analysis effectively demonstrated that Vladimir Putin is drawing on the discourse of *The Russian Idea*. His rhetoric shows the misconception of *exclusivity*, by emphasizing the uniqueness of Russian national identity, its historical continuity, and its connection to the land and heritage. By doing so, I have illustrated how Putin's speeches

modern political discourse by denying the principle of popular legitimacy, it was a move which could only have been made as part of modern discourse, and no other" (p. 25).

reflect and reinforce this aspect of *The Russian Idea's* discourse, even if he may not explicitly acknowledge it as such.

Once again, we confront the dilemma of reconciling national identity, history, and historical memory. National identities found in history can potentially give rise to dangerous nationalist sentiments reminiscent of 19th-century German Romantic Nationalism. Considering Pakhaliuk's (2021) examination of how Vladimir Putin institutionalized historical memory and semiotics, the manifestation in the president's language demonstrated in this study, along with Wodak et al.'s (1999, p.156) assertion that language is a social practice, it becomes evident that narratives of *exclusivity* are integral components of social practice rather than *abstract* concepts. This connects to another of the misconceptions outlined by McDaniel (1996).

The issue posed by the *exclusivity* of anti-modernism, as evident in Vladimir Putin's speeches, lies in the act of *prescribing*²⁵ certain attributes to a nation. Such an approach can never encompass everyone and everything, making it inherently selective and prone to manipulation. It is also challenging to conceive of a framework or concept that genuinely includes everyone. Nevertheless, parties involved can collectively determine what they wish to agree upon, again, possibly through a shared remembrance of history that is not the *exclusive* domain of a single individual, institution, or faction.

4.2. Principle of "Ultimate Truths"

In my research design, I have noted that a key aspect of Russian political culture over time has been the use of proclaiming higher truths and goals to justify regime legitimisation. McDaniel (1996b) called it the *Government of Truth* which can never uphold its high-reaching ideals and due to this, inevitably faces legitimisation pressure and ultimately a breakdown. Further consequent features of such a government are binary, antagonistic attitudes since there is usually not much room for nuance and compromise when upholding an ultimate truth. Moreover, oppositional attitudes are present throughout all the persistent values outlined in the research design (ultimate truths, community, egalitarianism) and therefore will be analysed throughout the whole chapter, representing *linguistic devices*. In the international arena, this also connects to Duncan's (2000) "Russian Messianism", which means Russia's unique role in the world and urge to be always at the forefront of a leading, revisionist movement. The government, by positioning itself as a bearer of ultimate truths and embracing a messianic worldview, seeks to legitimize its actions and assert its influence internationally. The first part of the analysis serves to demonstrate indications of "Russian Messianism". Proceeding, I try to carve out what Vladimir Putin's *Government of Truth* entails generally and more for the domestic audience.

Revisionist "Russian Messianism"

The aspect of messianism and binary opposition are inextricably linked, already when looking at Russian historical tendency to oppose itself against the West or proclaiming a special, unique role for Russia in the world. So, while proclaiming a revisionist position, there will be always the "other" who needs to be feared of and fought against. This is generally assessed as a *perpetuation and justification strategy for threat and war* and conclusively for *perpetuating* a state based on threat and war and, a history that has known nothing else than threat and war. To Vladimir Putin it is unquestionably clear that

²⁵ Referring to Kostagiannis (2018) definition of prescriptive elements of modern ideology in chapter 2.2.4. of the research design

Russia is unique and has a unique role to play at the forefront of a world-wide movement. This is evident in the following extracts:

Extract 9a) [Annex 2, Table 2]: As already mentioned, Vladimir Putin still uses a modified form of the 15th century “Third Rome” doctrine, where Russia’s role as protector of Eastern Christianity legitimised Russia to own a decisive position in the international stage.

Extract 12c) [Annex 2, Table 2]: Vladimir Putin declares Russia to be at the forefront of an anti-colonial movement that is resisting centuries old oppression of Western colonialists and underlines, that Russia has not been colonised by them. These statements are also made as he is talking about the Luhansk and Donetsk people’s choice to join Russia, which clearly gives a geopolitical dimension to this revisionist message, based on binary opposition.

Extract 17b) [Annex 2, Table 3]: The Soviet victory in the Second World War is here declared as a “battle for the future of the entire humanity”, which elevates Vladimir Putin’s historical memory of this event to a messianic level.

In extract 28b) [Annex 3, Table 1] Vladimir Putin mentions the “spiritual and cultural uniqueness” of Russia, consequently citing philosopher Berdyayev, which reminds of civilisational rhetoric. The president is referring to the Times of Trouble in the 16th century, connecting it to the *continuity of history and threat* and directly mentioning the uniqueness and significance of Russia in the world, which ought to be still relevant today, based on this historical experience. The last sentence of the whole extract demonstrates that Vladimir Putin sets Russia as having an international role of a *truth* bearer.

Extract N) [Annex 4, Table 3] This section is a parade example of messianic revisionism and *exclusivity* (German Romanticism) accompanied by religious references (*The Russian Idea*) and strong binary opposition. Similar as in 12c), Vladimir Putin sees Russia as being part of a global majority opposing the “dictatorship of the Western elites”. He names it “Satanism” and argues with a bible verse. Exclusivity is expressed in Vladimir Putin’s support for a multipolar world, where everyone can celebrate their distinction – from others, based on own interests. This corresponds directly with the opinion poll conducted by Ash et al. (2023), discussed in Chapter 2.2.2.

Overall, Vladimir Putin’s *Government of Truth* on the global stage entails not only meaning within the Russian polity, but his *truth* extends further in his revisionist, geopolitical goals.

Government of Truth

According to McDaniel (1996a) *truth* is an inherent Russian cultural value in itself. It recognises that values are more important than deeds and gives unquestioned authority to those who are acknowledged to speak for this *truth*. This chapter will outline which “truths” can be read out in his speech acts and which overall picture about Putin’s *Government of Truth* derives from it. As already mentioned in the research design, the significance of *truth* for Russian political life has been present during tsarist and during Soviet times and therefore can be generally assessed as a *perpetuation and justification strategy*. Additional extracts are provided in **Annex 4, table 1 (D, E, F)**.

Starting with D), Vladimir Putin, quite literally, states that embracing ultimate truths is at the core of a Russian person’s character. Furthermore, he also uses the formulations “a person of the Russian world”, which again indicates being Russian is beyond any concrete belonging, it rather means belonging to some ordained world, which exists in itself and follows this code of “highest moral designation”. *Truth* therefore becomes also one of the

overarching principles, such as continuity, to transcend differences and essentially create a homogenising effect, again very *functional* for constructing a national identity. He also opposes Russian values against Western values, which shows binary opposition.

Following extracts 10) and 15b) [Annex 2, Table 2+3], Vladimir Putin connects *truth* to religious values and Eastern Orthodox origin (grey colouring). This aligns with the *continuity of timeless values*.

When it comes to the continuities, Extracts 1) and 7) [Annex 2, Table 1] indicate that *truth* is somehow connected to *the continuity of Russian history and state* (grey colouring). Particularly in extract 7, the *truth* about the continuous history is elevated to a significant feature of Russian national identity, due to the special occasion of the event and again, through the repetitive claim, that Russia will never surrender to another hegemon (binary opposition).

Passing over to extract E), shows a primary example of Vladimir Putin's *historical truth* which is often used in connection to the remembrance of the GPW. Binary opposition can again be read out in a very clear way, which also indicates that outside of Russia are those enemies, who want the *historical truth* to be polluted, again implying a geostrategic dimension. Additionally, the extreme assertions regarding Nazism found in this passage and in numerous preceding excerpts within the GPW chapter, underscore McDaniel's (1996a) argument, that a regime rooted in the proclamation of absolute truths tends to resort to unnuanced statements and black-and-white thinking. This inclination arises from the intense pressure to legitimize their version of the truth, compelling them to adopt an extreme defensive stance.

Historical truth is further expressed in 12c), 18a), 19a), 20b) [Annex 2, Table 3; grey colouring] and 35b) [Annex 3, Table 2; grey colouring] all connect *truth* not only to the overall *continuity of history*, but particularly to the remembrance of the GPW. Extracts 12c), 18a) and 35b) are all examples for the repetitive usage of *historical truth* in his formulations when talking about Russia's victory in the GPW and the claim (12c), that everyone who participated in this victory, including Crimeans, are part of this *historical truth* and again, *the land* (35b). Evidently, Vladimir Putin always connects this *truth* with themes about heroism and military glory, which also aligns with the *continuity of threat/war and history* and with McDaniel's (1996a) analysis that "'Heros' ruled in the Government of Truth" (p. 52). *Historical Truth* can generally be assessed as a *perpetuation and justification strategy* for war and the uncritical continuity of history, while also used *transformatively* towards Crimeans.

Finally, passage F) is particularly interesting as it illustrates Vladimir Putin *projecting* his own and The Russian Idea's interpretation of truth onto "the other." While he doesn't explicitly specify the identity of the "dominant state," given the historical context about the 1980s, and the fact that the speech was delivered on the day the Ukraine war began, it can reasonably be inferred that he is referring to the US or, more broadly, the political West. His own version is projected in the detail, that he implies the "dominant state" legitimised itself after the Cold War through assuming its own historical dominance - reflecting a logic Vladimir Putin applies himself, as shown in this thesis. Below, I list the points representing the ultimate truths projected from The Russian Idea's version of truth, referring to the underlined section in the speech extract. Vladimir Putin asserts that the West is

- exhibiting intolerance toward any dissent from the proclaimed ideal
- disregarding the rule of law in pursuit of its own agenda
- employing military power to achieve its objectives

Additionally looking at his formulations about historical truth and the last extract F), one angle can be taken here, which seems not too farfetched: Since Vladimir Putin uses the context auf the Cold War in F), the geopolitical dimension of his argument becomes again, very clear. His *truth* is not the truth of those who handled the (territorial) division immediately after the end of the Cold War. His *historical truth* is, how Russia's standing was after the Second World War (GPW), and this standing ought to be revitalised today in Russian national identity. He will correct the wrongs of the post-Cold-War era and restore his *truth*. This aligns with Sakwa (2023b; p. 13) and Pakhaliuk (2021; p. 291), that memory politics and security politics complement each other.

Considering everything that has been said in this chapter, outside of Russia, Vladimir Putin's *Government of Truth* has a revisionist and messianic function, partly argued with primordial history. Moreover, by examining his use of the term *historical truth* one can infer that he efforts to restore Russia in alignment with a glorified historical memory of the GPW. Inside of Russia it aligns with the "Cycle of Historical Memory" in *Concept Map 2* of the previous chapter. All the continuities are present and reflect his version of *truth*. Furthermore, D) demonstrates that he openly admits to the Russian citizens, that aspiring *truth* is an inherent, essential trait of Russianness and in F) he projects his and *The Russian Idea's truth* back onto his opponents. Several examples have clearly demonstrated binary opposition and antagonistic reasoning in this argumentation, which is also a core element of the *Government of Truth*. Essentially, Vladimir Putin's *Government of Truth* is a revisionist and messianic regime that enforces his version of historical memory, both within and beyond Russia's borders. Its primary objectives include shaping a homogeneous national identity, legitimising power, and pursuing a geopolitical strategy vis-à-vis the political West and Ukraine.

4.3. Communal and Egalitarian Ideals

The ideals of community and egalitarianism, as explained in chapter 2.2.4., are products of a transferral of local attitudes into politics, taken up by the elites who participated in the discourse about Russian national identity. Communal living and egalitarianism have been dominant attitudes in Russia's rural areas that have been ruled by patriarchal hierarchies, mistrust to outsiders and the state, and the reliance on religious beliefs. Looking at the dominant features of the Soviet Union provided through communism, such as collectivism and no rights for private property, it seems very plausible that Vladimir Putin still recognizes some of these features *functional* for the construction of Russian national identity and his anti-modernism.

As outlined in 2.2.4., when it comes to egalitarian values, the term of "people", becomes important and how it is approached by Vladimir Putin in his rhetoric. Again, since I do not analyse the Russian speech acts, I have to look more at the meaning and relationship the president undertakes with "the people" he talks to. Connecting again to the historical context given in the 2.2.4., autocratic rulers frequently projected an image of themselves as champions of *the common people*, appealing to their communal and egalitarian attitudes. Various platforms and mechanisms existed to enable ordinary individuals to voice their concerns. Furthermore, the concept of the proletariat during the Soviet era and the evident disdain for intellectuals are well-known aspects of that period. Vladimir Putin,

in a similar vein, presents himself as a defender of the average citizen, primarily due to his own working-class background (as he mentions himself in one of the following extracts). Thereby he takes occasions to directly attack the elites, domestically and outside of Russia. All this will be exemplified in the following extracts. All additional extracts can be found in **Annex 4, Table 3 (G-N)**.

Looking back at the previous chapter and the extract D), one can identify Vladimir Putin contrasting Western individualism with Russian collectivism, which would align with the community value inherent in The Russian Idea. Furthermore, he relativises success and wealth in the last part of the extract, which can be ascribed to the egalitarian value.

The platform "Direct Line with Vladimir Putin" in the occasion column of the table (also seen in e.g., extract D)) is an annual live television and internet broadcast event in Russia where Vladimir Putin answers questions from the Russian public and citizens around the world. This platform is a direct expression of the tradition in Russian politics, where the ruler shows himself seemingly accessible to the people. This is thematised in extract L

) during one of the Direct Line events in 2019, a viewer asked what the biggest regret Vladimir Putin has in life, and his answer demonstrated a dramatic pathos Vladimir Putin uses to "humanise" himself towards his audience of common people. He emphasises that his service, is the service to the people.

Extract H) shows another example of Vladimir Putin trying to appeal to a rather anti-establishment narrative through communal and egalitarian values. The question by the journalist in this interview revolved around the elites who are close to Vladimir Putin and their recent contestation with Vladimir Putin's decision around the Crimean annexation. Vladimir Putin rhetorically denies that elites in the classic sense exist in Russia, but that there are the common, maybe even poor, people who hold the country together.

In section G and H), Vladimir Putin also presents himself as someone who aligns with the communal values he associates with Russian people, as he expresses in section D). These values revolve around the idea that a Russian person is not driven by the pursuit of personal fame but, instead, diligently dedicates themselves to the betterment of their community in a selfless manner.

In Extract 36b) [**Annex 3, Table 2**] Vladimir Putin claims that the "spiritual dimension" of the Russian people always supersedes the "material" one, indicating again that he appeals to the egalitarian attitudes (grey colouring). Since the question of the journalist revolved around the concept of "Homo Sovieticus", Vladimir Putin in 36a) again makes the argument that the inherent egalitarian attributes of the Soviet times were actually something "spiritual", so clearly of religious origin, that was still present despite the dominant Soviet ideology (grey colouring). While acknowledging the bad sides of egalitarianism during the Soviet Union, he indicates that it has good sides that people took with them. After the given extract in 36b) the same speech continues now in I) [**Annex 4, Table 3**], with him mentioning his own working-class background to attach a personal connotation. He also further talks about advantages he personally received from Soviet egalitarianism, expressing positively equality of opportunity, and downplaying the equality of outcomes, as described in chapter 2.2.4.

Framing the communal value as a spiritual one is also expressed in K). This according to Vladimir Putin, has sustained the Russian polity and people over time, no matter the condition of the polity.

Extract 38b) in the previous chapter and the two extracts L) and M) demonstrate, that Vladimir Putin uses the disdain against wealthy people and elites in his rhetoric concerning the Ukraine war and against the Ukrainian government, essentially claiming that they enrich themselves through the conflict and that corruption of the Ukrainian elites led the people setting up the Maidan protest movement. Through this he also puts himself as the representator of the common people, applies binary oppositional rhetoric, and *perpetuates* the schism people vs. elites (projected historically: peasants vs. boyars).

Extract N) shows that Vladimir Putin assess a multipolar world, based distinction and focused on interests, as "harmonious" basis. Proclaiming harmony as a superior trait of Russians towards the West is very much inherent in the discourse of *The Russian Idea*. Referring to what has been said in 2.2.2. about enhanced protectionism and interest-based politics, assessing a multipolar world order as "harmonious" requires critical scrutiny.

As mentioned in the research design, words such as "rod" and "sbornost" are indicators for emphasising the communal values. Since I did not conduct the language analysis for the Russian language, I was not able to look exactly at these words. Nevertheless, the meaning of "rod" can often also align with "kin", and this connects to the often-referred kin-ship-rhetoric as a *perpetuation and justification strategy* and the *continuity of timeless values* (e.g., analysis of extracts 4 -6 in [Annex 2, Table 1](#)).

While it can be generally assessed, that proclaiming communal and egalitarian values is a *perpetuation and justification strategy*, underlying them with religious origin can be seen as *transformational*, since the Soviet interpretation of these values has certainly not referred to religion.

This chapter has attempted to show that the values of community and egalitarianism are still present in Vladimir Putin's speech acts. His speech tries effectively to portray himself in a more personal manner of a simple man from a simple background, who ought to be more relatable for his audience. He openly appreciates spiritual and communal values over materialistic ones and declares them as part of being Russian. In this he also admits that these values have been present during Soviet times, but actually go much further back in time. In the conflict around Ukraine, he feeds into the common Russian attitude based on historical experience, that wealthy people are only those who enrich themselves on the cost of others and ought to be condemned.

4.4. Final Remarks

The Russian alternative has always been anti-modernism, as McDaniel (1996) analysed it for tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union and in some respects also for the Yeltsin government. The last chapter has shown that there are significant traits of The Russian's idea's anti-modernist principles in his speeches, most clearly expressed in the misconceptions and the ultimate truths. Now, one might pose the following query: How does Vladimir Putin's anti-modernism differ from that of figures like Donald Trump or other right-conservative political leaders? Examining McDaniel's (1996) description of Russian anti-modernism one can answer this question by asking back: In the United States, often regarded as the hub of political libertarianism, were there viable alternatives to Donald Trump within the current political landscape, and have there been alternatives throughout U.S. political history? Is Donald Trump, so far, a reaction or the *status quo*? Conversely, within the current Russian political landscape, are there genuine alternatives to Vladimir Putin, and has Russian history ever witnessed the emergence of successful, long-standing alternatives to anti-modernism based on a different set of values? Furthermore, Trump and Putin are not only the sum of their parts, and while there are parallels, they can mean something completely

different when given the historical context and its current ramifications. While in the 19th century Russian anti-modernism was still a *reaction* to modernity, in today's context it is already a *long-standing culture* based in modernity. My analysis has hopefully strengthened this impression. One begins to understand anti-modernism Russian-style and becomes even more staggered, about the degree of impasse this causes for the future of the contemporary Russian polity.

5. Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to answer the question of “*how does Vladimir Putin's discourse in his speech acts relate to the historical context of Russia's construction of national identity and its path to modernity?*” Vladimir Putin's discourse shows a hegemonical and selective approach to historical memory, utilising religious primordialism, pre-revolutionary history, and a continuation of the Soviet version of the remembrance on the Second World War. This serves Vladimir Putin to elaborate a narrative of continuity of the Russian state, its history, its values and its wars and threats – expressed in the Cycle of Historical Memory. In this remembrance he focuses on including all ethnicities that have been part of Russian history, Soviet and tsarist. On the one hand this is ensured, through Vladimir Putin employing the former Soviet strategy to offer something that transcends ethnic belonging for a bigger vision and on the other hand, by tying ethnicities to the foundations and the continuity of the Russian state and everything this entails. If one of the included groups, particularly the Ukrainians, decide to adapt an own remembrance of history and thereby to break out of Vladimir Putin's narration, it would automatically threaten the existence of the Russian state according to Vladimir Putin's argumentation. This ontological dimension has been instrumentalised for geopolitical purposes.

Vladimir Putin's anti-modern attitudes draw on the initial-antimodern visions of Russia as a nation (often quite literal), represented through the discourse of *The Russian Idea* – as demonstrated in this thesis. Since McDaniel (1996) has shown, that these attitudes prevailed both in tsarist and Soviet Russia, despite of its grave differences, Putin's anti-modern attitudes are a continuation of a political culture, that so far, has been the only ever viable, practiced alternative in Russia's engagement with modernity and nation-building. Therefore, anti-modernity Russian style is not a reaction, but a continuation of the *status quo* – which makes Russian anti-modernity particularly fateful.

David Graeber's and David Wengrow's (2021) book “The Dawn of Everything” provokes with the assessment, that while people throughout history inhibited multiple ways of organising themselves, the world of the 21st century has lost its imagination and creativity for new ways of organisation, adaption and problem-solving. One of these aspects mentioned by Graeber&Wengrow (2021, p.29f.) lies in the fact that the “nation state” for a long time has been seen as the only way of organisation. This dilemma has already been one of the pivotal themes in the work of realist pioneers such as E.H.Carr (1945/2021) and supranational arrangements already attempted to solve somehow the dilemma of multiple political entities, based on an own definition, striving for own interests. I believe, the process of finding further solutions of organisation is far from complete and might not necessarily entail the elimination of nation states. As investigated in this thesis, the relationships between all the mentioned aspects of national identity construction in Putin's argumentation reveal a picture that is important for nationalism research as a whole. It shows that one has to be clearer aware of what constitutes nation states and which aspects are re-radicalized in times of crisis or weak representative governmental structures. Once these aspects are carved out, there ought to be no compromise in the allowance of re-radicalising these aspects, but instead negotiating its meaning in collaborative manner.

This is the case for historical memory and everything it can entail, as shown in the case of Vladimir Putin. Primordialism, reminiscent of German Romantic Nationalism, should never justify wars or the existence of a state. Naturally, the Christianisation of a country can be celebrated, but not politicised. And – are people truly remembering the Kievan Rus, as part of who they are today, although they have never been present during such historic periods? It is completely re-imagined and should not serve as a foundation for a polity, justifying wars and acquisition of territory. And since we cannot envision a post-war global landscape without historical memory on the Second World War, I venture to conclude that, to reduce future conflicts between Eastern and Western Europe, we need to establish an institutionalized, obligating framework for historical memory – beyond EU accession or other conditions (as it was in the Lithuanian case). In such a framework, countries can collectively remember the past, preventing the isolated use of historical narratives and primordialism for (geo-)political purposes. If we ignore, that primordialism and historical memory plays a significant role in constructing national identity, we ignore the basic qualities of a modern nation state, namely that it cannot exist without some version of history and the connected national coherence and common denominators people must agree on. This is part of its design but should not stay in the way of enabling viable representative functions. If we want to go beyond the nation state and are genuinely universalist - aid, trade, and economic ties will not be enough. Globalisation also challenges us to see how we are interconnected in our past. The international framework has to take more into account this political and social aspect of globalisation expressed through a collective remembrance of the past and everyone having the right to remember it.

However, Russian anti-modernity and its impasse, pushes me to agree more with Graeber&Wengrow (2021). Based on this, foreseeing a future for the current Russian polity that will approximate a viable social democracy, requires more than imagination and imagining *again* a completely different structure, reminds too alarmingly much of Alexander Herzen's "disorder saves Russia" (Herzen, 1905, as cited by McDaniel, 1996b, p.20). Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine and his support for an interest-based multipolarity does not help this sense of pessimism.

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ANNEX 1**TABLE 1**

(The table is adapted according to Reisigl&Wodak (2009, p. 95), Reisigl&Wodak (2018, p. 52), Aune (2022, p. 14f.))

Examples of discursive strategies	Questions related to discursive strategies	Examples of linguistic devices
Referential nominations: Representation of actors, objects, events, phenomena, processes and actions in the discourse	How does the speaker refer to persons, events, objects, actions etc.?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of pronouns, nouns and verbs to refer to group membership, justify actions, processes and events etc. - Use of tropes, metaphors, metonymies and synecdoches
Predications: Characterisation of actors, objects, phenomena, events, actions and processes in the discourse	What specific characteristics and qualities are attributed to social actors, objects, events etc.?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of negative or positive attributes - Rhetorical devices - Predicative nouns and adjectives - collocations
Argumentations: Specific claims and justifications of truth and normative rightness	What arguments are that are used in the discourse?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What could be different topoi ? Are there fallacies?
Perspectivization: Point of view of the speaker and how are involvement, distance or neutrality formulated	What is the perspective from which nominations, characterisations and arguments are formulated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What deictics? - Where is direct, indirect, or free indirect speech? - Where are quotation marks, discourse markers/ particles? - What metaphors? - Which animating prosodies?
Intensification/ mitigation: Modifying the illocutionary force and thus the epistemic or deontic status of utterances (Reisigl, 2018, p. 52)	Are the respective utterances articulated overtly; are they intensified or mitigated? (Reisigl, 2018, p. 52)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of diminutives or augmentatives - Use of (modal) particles, tag questions, subjunctive, hesitations, vague expressions, etc. - Use of hyperboles, litotes - Use of indirect speech acts (e.g., question instead of assertion) - Use of verbs of saying, feeling, thinking, etc.

Image 1 (source: own elaboration)

Reception to mark 1000 years since the death of St. Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles

A gala reception was held at the Kremlin on behalf of the President in honour of the 1000th death anniversary of St. Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles. At the reception were representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, public and political figures.

July 28, 2015 16:15 The Kremlin, Moscow

In 2015 Russia marks the 1000th death anniversary of St. Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles. The church equals the deeds of St. Vladimir the Evangelizer of Russia to those of Christ's Apostles. In the early 14th centuries the Russian Orthodox Church proclaimed Prince Vladimir a Saint Equal to the Apostles. The day of his veneration is the Day of Russia's Christianization.

* * *

Address at the gala reception

Vladimir Putin: Your Holiness, esteemed guests, colleagues, friends,

These days Russia and the entire Orthodox world are celebrating the Christianization of Rus'.

It is impossible to over-estimate the significance of this event – the acquisition of faith and spiritual support. Christening clearly became a turning point in the history of Russia, in the statehood of this country. It is our common duty to honour this momentous stage in Russia's development. Gathered here today are representatives of bodies of power, civil unions, the Russian Orthodox Church hierarchs and representatives of all the traditional religions of Russia, which as a state was built on a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional basis.

The Christianization of Rus' has become embedded in the church tradition and the people's memory alongside the name and deeds of St. Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles. His 1000th death anniversary is another opportunity to perceive the scale of his personality as an outstanding creator of Russia, the significance of his decision for generations to come, to perceive the continuity of our age and the unbreakable bond to the legacy left by our ancestors.

Prince Vladimir was destined to become a great ruler. His choice was discerning and extremely responsible and became the source of Russia's development as a unique country and civilization.

The adoption of Christianity was based on Prince Vladimir's deep love for his Fatherland, on his serious spiritual reflection, on his search for a single baseline that could unite the people and the lands.

The Russian Primary Chronicle says, "The amount of good he did for Russia by Christening it is amazing". By putting an end to feuds and rebuffing outside enemies Prince Vladimir launched a single Russian people; he actually paved the way towards a strong centralized Russian state.

Rus' became strong, gaining power and authority among its neighbors near and far, communicating on an equal footing with peoples both East and West of it.

The Prince's decision reflected the striving of our people to the lofty ideals of goodness, truth and justice, to fraternal unity and solidarity the world over. Fyodor Dostoyevsky called this 'overall

The great Prince Vladimir became a true builder of his land, the founder of its cultural and economic development, a wise and far-sighted ruler of Russia. He remained that way after the holy city at the ancient city of Khersones, or Korsun. These spiritual sources continue to nourish the fraternal peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

We remain true to the choice made by Prince Vladimir. We value peace and accord in our multi-ethnic land, working together for its flourishing, treating the traditions of all its people and traditions of Russia with respect.

Allow me, once again, to congratulate you, Your Holiness, and all those present on Russia's Christening Day, on Prince Vladimir's Memorial Day. I wish you success in your diverse spiritual and important and responsible service to the people of Russia.

Thank you for your attention.

- 4182 Byzantine/Third Rome/Holy Ru...
- Culture and Religion connected
- Kievan Rus
- Third Rome Byzantine Empire

- 4183 Church Ontology
- Culture and Religion connected
- Distinction Europe
- Kievan Rus
- Religion and Ethnicity
- Putin makes Connection betw...
- Russians are all how belong to...

Image 2 (source: own elaboration)

Concert to mark the fifth anniversary of Crimea's reunification with Russia

Vladimir Putin attended Crimean Spring: Five Years at Home Harbour concert held to mark the fifth anniversary of the 2014 Crimean referendum and Crimea's reunification with Russia.

March 18, 2019 19:30

President of Russia Vladimir Putin: Friends,

I would like to speak to those present here, on this square in Simferopol, as well as to all people of Sevastopol and Crimea who are not here but whose hearts are with us.

I would like to congratulate you on the fifth anniversary of Crimea and Sevastopol's reunification with Russia. This event has become part of our lives, our perception and our history as the Crimean Spring. And this was possible thanks to the referendum that took place five years ago, where all of you took part and voted for this historic decision.

You know, I will dare to make a certain historical comparison. The actions of the people of Crimea and Sevastopol remind me of the actions of Red Army soldiers during the first tragic months after the breakout of the Great Patriotic War, when they tried to battle through to join their comrades and carried their field flags close to their hearts. You have also kept your love for our Fatherland, Russia, for many years and even decades, although you were not part of Russian statehood. Thank you.

Friends,

The events five years ago resulted in an incredible growth of patriotism across Russia and also demonstrated the great power of truth and justice. This is why Russia opened its heart and soul and embraced you into its huge multi-ethnic family with joy and happiness.

We have done a lot over the last five years, but there is still more to do. We have only created the basic conditions for development so far. But we will do everything we need to do, achieve all of the goals we have set and solve all of our tasks, because of this one condition: we are together.

I congratulate you. Thank you very much. I wish all of you good luck and happiness. I give all of you a hug!

8121 You know, I will dare to ma...

- GPW geopolitical strategy
- Legitimise war
- Truth and history
- Crimean people were not alwa...

ANNEX 2

TABLE 1

N	Year	Occasion	Extracts	Formulation	Related discursive topics	Argumentation strategies
1	2012	Addressing Federal Assembly	“In order to revive national consciousness, we need to link historical eras and get back to understanding the simple truth that Russia did not begin in 1917, or even in 1991, but rather, that we have a common, continuous history spanning over one thousand years , and we must rely on it to find inner strength and purpose in our national development.” (Putin, 2012)	direct and indirect	truth history	constructive strategy
2	2016	Monument to Vladimir the Great opened in Moscow on Unity Day	“And our duty today is to work together to confront modern challenges and threats, while relying on spiritual covenants and the invaluable traditions of unity and harmony, and to preserve the continuity of our thousand-year history as we move forward.” (Putin, 2016)	direct and indirect	religiosity /spirituality history	constructive strategy
3	2017	National open lesson Russia Focused on the Future	“Hence, the question: if we have existed for over 1,000 years now , and are actively developing and growing stronger, that means that we have something that is helping us do so. This something is our internal” nuclear reactor,” which propels us. This passionarity, which Gumilev spoke ²⁶ about in his own time, keeps pushing our country forward.” (Putin 2017)	indirect	history	constructive strategy

²⁶ “Passionarity”, according to the Eurasianist Lev Gumilev, means an inner force or drive that makes people, belonging to group, adapt to change and transform, beyond their personal identities and for the sacrifice of the group’s well-being (Shnirelman&Panarin, 2001, p. 10).

4	2022	Meeting of Russian Pobeda (Victory) Organising Committee ²⁷	<p>“Continuity of generations, loyalty to traditions and high moral and spiritual guidelines remain the foundation of our national identity. They are reflected in and supported by culture, creative arts and all areas of daily life. As you know, we have recently approved the Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values. They most certainly include historical memory.” (Putin, 2022a)</p>	direct	<p>religiosity /spirituality</p> <p>high culture</p> <p>religiosity/ spirituality history</p>	perpetuation and justification strategy
5	2022	Signing accession treaty to Russia for Luhansk and Donetsk	<p>“[...] behind these words stands a glorious spiritual choice, which, for more than a thousand years of Russian statehood, was followed by many generations of our ancestors. Today, we are making this choice; the citizens of the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics and the residents of the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions have made this choice. They made the choice to be with their people, to be with their Motherland, to share in its destiny, and to be victorious together with it.” (Putin, 2022b)</p>	indirect	<p>religiosity/ spirituality</p> <p>history</p> <p>Ukraine</p>	<p>constructive strategy</p> <p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p> <p>transformation strategy</p>
6	2022	Meeting with historians and representative of Russia’s traditional religions	<p>“The history of our country is continuous, a constant stream. We must consider it in its entirety, with all its extremely complicated and even controversial periods. [...] After all, Russian history and culture are the basis of our national identity, our mentality, traditional values, the upbringing of the younger generations and, most importantly, the foundation of our Russian statehood. Our position on the preservation of historical memory and thus our sovereignty irritates some countries in the West. As a matter of fact, this has been the case for centuries. And today there are ongoing attempts to pull the ground from under our feet. These attempts, of course, cannot change the past; they are doomed to fail. It is impossible to deprive our country of the victories our ancestors achieved.” (Putin, 2022c)</p>	<p>direct</p> <p>indirect</p>	<p>history</p> <p>threat</p>	<p>constructive strategy</p> <p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p>

7	2022	Video address on National Flag Day	<p>“The national flag symbolises our faith in our traditional values that we will never give up – truth and justice, solidarity and mercy, and respect for Russia’s centuries-long uninterrupted history, the achievements and victories of our ancestors that inspire us to care for and defend our Motherland and never permit any foreign hegemony or diktat. The desire to live according to our own will, to choose our own path and to follow it, has become part of our people’s genetic code.” (Putin 2022d)</p>	indirect	truth history war threat	constructive strategy perpetuation and justification strategy
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ANNEX 2

TABLE 2

N	Year	Occasion	Extracts	Continuities	Related discursive topics	Argumentation strategies
8	2012	State Decorations Award Ceremony at the Kremlin	<p>“We see examples of this spirit in the heroic events of 1612 that ended the Time of Troubles, and in the Patriotic War of 1812. We are marking the anniversaries of these great historic milestones this year, and this gives further reason to speak of the unbroken flow of our history through the centuries, and the importance of treating its every page with respect, remembering our common heritage, treasuring the names of our country’s heroes and achievers, and preserving our national and ethnic tradition.” (Putin, 2012)</p>	<p>continuity of history continuity of war/threat</p> <p>continuity of history continuity of timeless values</p>	<p>history war/threat</p> <p>history ethnicity</p>	<p>constructive strategy</p> <p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p>
9	2015	Reception to mark 1000 years since the death of St. Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles	<p>a)” The Christianization of Rus’ has become embedded in the church tradition and the people’s memory alongside the name and deeds of St. Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles. His 1000 th death anniversary gave us another opportunity to perceive the scale of his personality as an outstanding creator of Russia, the significance of his decision for generations to come, to perceive the continuity of our age-long history and the unbreakable bond to the legacy left by our ancestors.[...] Rus’ became strong, gaining power and authority among its neighbors near and far, communicating on an equal footing with peoples both East and West of it [...].</p>	<p>continuity of history</p> <p>continuity of state</p>	<p>history religiosity/spirituality</p>	<p>constructive strategy</p>

			<p>b) The great Prince Vladimir became a true builder of his land, the founder of its cultural and economic development, a wise and far-sighted ruler of Russia. He remained that way after the holy Christening at the ancient city of Khersones, or Korsun. These spiritual sources continue to nourish the fraternal peoples of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. We remain true to the choice made by Prince Vladimir. We value peace and accord in our multi-ethnic land, working together for its flourishing, treating the traditions of all its people and traditional religions of Russia with respect.” (Putin, 2015)</p>	<p>continuity of history</p> <p>continuity of timeless values</p>	<p>history</p> <p>Ukraine</p> <p>ethnicity</p> <p>religiosity/spirituality</p>	<p>constructive strategy</p> <p>transformation strategy</p> <p>justification and perpetuation strategy</p>
10	2018	1030th anniversary of Baptism of Rus celebrations	<p>“Baptism was the starting point for the development of Russian statehood, the true spiritual birth of our ancestors, the definition of their identity, the heyday of national culture and education, as well as the development of multifaceted ties with other countries. [...] Russian historian and philosopher Lev Gumilyov said, “Baptism gave our ancestors a higher freedom – the freedom of choice between good and evil, and the victory of Orthodoxy gave Russia a thousand-year history.” The peoples that embraced Christian truths as their own achieved unprecedented heights in politics, art, literature, science and economic activity, received colossal experience of unity, which more than once saved, strengthened and supported our Motherland in the most severe historical turmoil.</p> <p>This greatest spiritual legacy is timeless. It is our sacred duty to preserve and to enhance it for future generations. “(Putin, 2018)</p>	<p>continuity of state</p> <p>continuity of timeless values</p> <p>continuity of history</p> <p>continuity of state</p> <p>continuity of war/threat</p> <p>continuity of timeless values</p>	<p>history</p> <p>truth</p> <p>religiosity/spirituality</p> <p>high culture</p> <p>history</p> <p>war/threat</p> <p>religiosity/spirituality</p>	<p>constructive strategy</p> <p>perpetuation and justification</p>

11	2020	Meeting representatives of religious associations	<p>a) “This state holiday has been timed to coincide with the heroic events of the early 17th century when the Russian people put an end to the tragedy of the Time of Troubles. [...]</p> <hr/> <p>b) There have been many examples of our people standing up for their country. It happened in 1812 and again in the unprecedented trials of the Great Patriotic War. The courage of the defenders of the Fatherland did not know national distinctions. They were inspired by the love for their families, children, home, and the feeling of brotherly camaraderie – the moral values that underlie the culture and tradition of all our peoples, our traditional religions.</p> <p>c) Patriotism and unity of our citizens, common moral ideals continue to unite our society, our huge, multinational, multi-confessional country. “(Putin, 2020)</p>	<p>continuity of history continuity of war/threat</p> <hr/> <p>continuity of history continuity of war/threat</p> <p>continuity of timeless values</p> <p>continuity of the state</p>	<p>history</p> <p>history war/threat</p> <p>spirituality/religiosity</p> <p>ethnicity</p>	<p>constructive strategy perpetuation and justification strategy</p> <hr/> <p>constructive strategy perpetuation and justification strategy</p> <p>perpetuation and justification strategy perpetuation and justification strategy</p>
12	2021	Greetings on the National Unity Day concerning Sevastopol and Crimea	<p>a) “However, there have also been periods when historical challenges undermined the unity of our people. This was the case with the 1917 revolution and the new, terrible time of troubles – the Civil War – that came after it.</p> <hr/> <p>b) In 1920, not far from here, steamboats were departing these shores taking with them those who left their Motherland and emigrated. Of course, most of them were Russian patriots and loved Russia in all sincerity, just like those who stayed behind to build a new country and what they hoped would be a better life.</p> <hr/> <p>c) Covered in the blood of Russian soldiers, the Crimean soil remembers the pain of these events and will serve as an eternal</p>	<p>continuity of history continuity of war/threat</p> <hr/> <p>continuity if state</p>	<p>history war/threat</p> <p>history</p> <p>Ukraine history</p> <p>truth</p>	<p>perpetuation and justification strategy transformation strategy</p> <p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p>

			symbol not only of the tragic fratricidal conflict, but, even more importantly, the reconciliation that followed and the triumph of historical truth and justice.” (Putin, 2021)	continuity of war/threat continuity of history		
13	2022	Signing accession treaties for Lugansk and Donetsk	<p>a) “There were numerous plans to invade Russia. Such attempts were made during the Time of Troubles in the 17 th century and in the period of ordeals after the 1917 revolution. All of them failed. The West managed to grab hold of Russia’s wealth only in the late 20 th century, when the state had been destroyed. They called us friends and partners, but they treated us like a colony, using various schemes to pump trillions of dollars out of the country. We remember. We have not forgotten anything.</p> <p>A few days ago, people in Donetsk and Lugansk, Kherson and Zaporozhye declared their support for restoring our historical unity. [...]</p> <p>b) An essentially emancipatory, anti-colonial movement against unipolar hegemony is taking shape in the most diverse countries and societies. Its power will only grow with time. It is this force that will determine our future geopolitical reality.” (Putin, 2022a)</p>	<p>continuity of history continuity of war/threat</p> <p>continuity of history</p> <p>continuity of war/threat</p>	<p>threat history</p> <p>threat</p> <p>Ukraine</p> <p>history threat</p>	<p>perpetuation and justification strategy constructive strategy</p> <p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p> <p>transformation strategy</p> <p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p>
14	Sept 2022	Gala concert devoted to 1160 th anniversary of Russian statehood	<p>a) “During more than a millennium, our statehood has lived through many eras, including cruel enemy invasions, disunity and the tragedies of feuds, but each of these difficult periods invariably ended with the revival of the Fatherland. The heroic generations of our people overcame difficulties and adversities, withstood the trials. They created and expanded the grandeur of our Fatherland and covered their names with glory.</p> <hr/> <p>b) We remember and cherish these truly outstanding people: Rurik and Prophetic Oleg, Princess Olga and Svyatoslav Igorevich, Prince Vladimir and Yaroslav the Wise, Vladimir Monomakh</p>	<p>continuity of state continuity of history continuity of war/threat</p> <p>continuity of history</p>	<p>history threat war</p> <p>history</p>	<p>constructive strategy perpetuation and justification strategy</p> <p>constructive strategy</p>

			<p>and Alexander Nevsky, Dmitry Donskoy and Sergius of Radonezh, Ivan III and Ivan the Terrible, Yermak, Minin and Pozharsky, Dezhnev and Bering, Peter the Great and Catherine the Great, Lomonosov and Pushkin, Suvorov and Ushakov, Alexander II the Liberator and Alexander III the Peacemaker, Brusilov and Denikin, Zhukov and Rokossovsky, Kurchatov, Korolev and Gagarin.</p> <hr/> <p>c) These and many other of our compatriots were larger-than-life, complex and occasionally controversial historical figures. Some of them saw Russia's future differently and were even on the opposite sides of the barricades. You know, when drafting this text, I scribbled in and crossed out names like Nicholas II, Lenin, Stalin. Apparently, not enough time has passed since then from a historical point of view for us to give comprehensive and objective assessments that are free from the pressure of ongoing political developments. However, all of them, including statesmen, workers, warriors, pioneers, scholars, ascetics and saints and, most importantly, all our people made Russia a great global power and determined its future.</p> <hr/> <p>d) To reiterate, it all began here, in Veliky Novgorod, and Novgorod's Cathedral of Saint Sophia, just like other ancient Russian cathedrals, will forever remain a sacred symbol of our historical unity. Modern Russia is the heir to Ancient Holy Rus, just as it is the heir to the Tsardom of Muscovy, the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, which were the great eras of our uninterrupted thousand-year history that we are proud of." (Putin, 2022b)</p>	<p>continuity of timeless values</p> <p>continuity of history continuity of war/threat continuity of state</p> <p>continuity of history continuity of state</p>	<p>religiosity/spirituality high culture</p> <p>history war/threat religiosity/spirituality</p>	<p>constructive strategy</p> <p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p> <p>constructive strategy</p>
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ANNEX 2

TABLE 3

N	Year	Occasion	Extracts	Continuity of ...	Argumentation strategies
15	2013	Interview on the documentary "Second baptism of the Rus"	<p>a) "I think the lesson to be learned is quite simple. At all the most critical moments in our history our people look to their roots, to their moral foundations and religious values. We all know how when the Great Patriotic War began, the first to announce the start of war to the Soviet people was Molotov, who addressed the nation using the word "Citizens". But when Stalin then addressed the nation, despite his hardline if not brutal stance against the church, he chose a completely different form of address: "Brothers and sisters". There was tremendous significance in this choice of address. These were not just words but an appeal to people's hearts and souls, to their history and their roots, so as to bring home the enormity and tragedy of the unfolding events, and to rouse people, mobilise them to rise in defence of their homeland. It was always this way when the country faced difficulties and hardships, even during the years of state atheism, because the Russian people could not survive without these moral foundations.</p> <p>[...]</p> <hr/> <p>b) But when even this simplified moral code disappeared people found themselves caught in an immense moral and spiritual vacuum, and the only way to fill it was to return to authentic, true values. These values were inevitably religious in nature.</p> <hr/>	<p>history</p> <p>timeless values</p> <p>war/threat</p> <p>state</p> <p>timeless values</p>	<p>constructive strategy</p> <p>transformation strategy</p> <p>constructive strategy</p>

			<p>c) There is therefore nothing surprising in the fact that people started looking to their roots, to faith and spiritual values. This was a natural revival process for the Russian people. They did this spontaneously, without prodding from outside, from the authorities or from the church. The church was hardly in a state to be able to prod anyone at that time. It was in a lamentable state. On the material side of things, the Soviet authorities had robbed it probably more thoroughly than they robbed anyone, but on the organisational and spiritual side it was also in a very serious situation. It was a spontaneous movement from the people themselves to turn back to their roots.” (Putin, 2013)</p>	timeless values	
16	2014	Meeting with core members of Russian Popular Front	<p>“Granted, Russians can be happy that their children were not studying according to Ukrainian textbooks, which are totally rubbish. For example, they got rid of the term ‘Great Patriotic War’ and replaced it with ‘World War II,’ and nothing at all was written about Sevastopol and its heroic deeds, or maybe just half a line was included.</p> <p>But that is not what we are discussing now; what we ask for is that the Russian historians, who will be working on this common textbook, do not forget that Sevastopol and Crimea are now Russian regions. They shouldn’t forget the role that Sevastopol and Crimea played in history, in the fate of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union and, I suppose, modern Russia. We are very familiar with this part of Sevastopol’s fate; we have never forgotten about the Great Patriotic War.</p> <p>We know our heroes well, and history cannot be without names and heroes. We know the names of gunners, snipers, brigade commanders, Red Navy sailors, the names of those who, while bleeding in the bunkers, signed their names in blood leaving us their messages that were very simple: defend Sevastopol. And we read those messages very carefully, and we have always carried them in our hearts.” (Putin, 2014)</p>	<p>history</p> <p>war /threat</p> <p>war/threat</p>	<p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p> <p>constructive strategy transformation strategy perpetuation and justification strategy</p> <p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p>
17	2015	Speech at military parade to mark the 70 th anniversary	<p>a) “We welcome today all our foreign guests while expressing a particular gratitude to the representatives of the countries that fought against Nazism and Japanese militarism.</p>	<p>history</p> <p>war/threat</p>	<p>perpetuation and justification strategy (constructive strategy?)</p>

		of Victory in the 1941–1945 Great Patriotic War	<p>Besides the Russian servicemen, parade units of ten other states will march through the Red Square as well. These include soldiers from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.</p> <p>Their forefathers fought shoulder to shoulder both at the front and in the rear. [...]</p> <hr/> <p>b) These parade ranks include grandsons and great-grandsons of the war generation. The Victory Day is our common holiday. The Great Patriotic War was in fact the battle for the future of the entire humanity.</p> <hr/> <p>c) Our fathers and grandfathers lived through unbearable sufferings, hardships, and losses. They worked till exhaustion, at the limit of human capacity. They fought even unto death. They proved the example of honour and true patriotism.” (Putin, 2015)</p>	<p>war/threat</p> <p>war/threat timeless values state</p>	<p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p>
18	2017	Meeting at the Pobeda (Victory)Organising Committee	<p>a) “Work to preserve and defend the historical truth about World War II and the traditions and spirit of alliance in the fight against Nazism plays a great role here. In our view, this is above all a moral and human concept, a moral and human duty to the generation of victors, to those who fell for their motherland, and to those who revived and developed the country after the Great Patriotic War. This historical truth cements society and provides a spiritual foundation and basic values for development and for giving people of various generations the sense of being part of a truly united nation.</p> <hr/> <p>b) At the same time, we pursue open discussion of even the most controversial aspects of history, not only from the World War II period, but from other eras too. We take the view that no matter how difficult and contradictory history may be, it is there not to make us quarrel, but to warn us against mistakes and help us to strengthen our good neighbourly ties.</p>	<p>war/threat</p> <p>timeless values state</p> <p>war/threat</p>	<p>constructive strategy</p> <p>perpetuation and Justification strategy</p> <p>constructive strategy</p>

			<p>Sadly, there are other approaches to history too, of course, which attempt to turn it into a political and ideological weapon. We see the risks that arise from a cynical approach to the past. We see how falsification and manipulation of historical facts create division between countries and peoples, draw new dividing lines and create supposed enemies.</p> <hr/> <p>c)The line that some countries now follow, and which elevates Nazism to heroic status and justifies the Nazis' accomplices, is particularly dangerous. Not only does it insult the memory of the victims of Nazi crimes, but it feeds nationalist, xenophobic and radical forces.</p> <p>I want to emphasise too that historical revision opens the road to a revision of the very foundations of the modern world order and the erosion of the key principles of international law and security that took shape following World War II. We have said before what great risks this could have for everyone today." (Putin, 2017a)</p>	<p>war/threat</p> <p>war/threat</p>	<p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p> <p>constructive strategy</p>
19	2017	Meeting at the Russian orthodox church bishop's council	<p>a) "Life puts everything in its place and clearly separates what is superficial from what is true. True values and patriotism displayed their power and served as a support for our soldiers in the Great Patriotic War, the defenders and inheritors of Russia and its thousand-year history. At that time all churches conducted prayer services and clergymen asked for "the bestowal of Victory on the warriors of our Fatherland." The Russian Orthodox Church and representatives of other religious organisations raised funds for the needs of the front, supported with words, and deeds those who worked on the home front, who lost their families and friends, those who were in besieged Leningrad or in occupied territory. The rout of Nazism was truly not just a military victory but a moral, spiritual triumph.</p>	<p>timeless values</p> <p>war/threat</p> <p>state</p> <p>timeless values</p>	<p>constructive strategy</p> <p>transformation strategy</p>
20	2019	Concert to mark the fifth	<p>a) "You know, I will dare to make a certain historical comparison. The actions of the people of Crimea and Sevastopol remind me of the actions of Red Army</p>	<p>history</p>	<p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p>

		anniversary of Crimea's reunification with Russia	<p>soldiers during the first tragic months after the breakout of the Great Patriotic War, when they tried to battle through to join their comrades and carried their field flags close to their hearts. You have also kept your love for our Fatherland, Russia, for many years and even decades, although you were not part of Russian statehood. Thank you.</p> <hr/> <p>b) Friends, The events five years ago resulted in an incredible growth of patriotism across Russia and also demonstrated the great power of truth and justice. This is why Russia opened its heart and soul and embraced you into its huge multi-ethnic family with joy and happiness. "(Putin, 2019)</p>	war/threat state state	transformation strategy constructive strategy perpetuation and justification strategy
21	2020	Vladimir Putin's annual news conference	<p>"Finally, this outgoing year is also associated with major national events, such as the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War. Despite all the difficulties caused by the pandemic, we nevertheless celebrated it properly, with the Victory Parade on Red Square; [...]</p> <p>But most importantly, there is something else I definitely need to mention now, and I would like to thank the citizens of our country for it: even in the most difficult circumstances, we have once again reaffirmed what underlies the Russian identity – people rallying together in the face of a threat." (Putin, 2020)</p>	war/threat history state	perpetuation and justification strategy
22	2021	Meeting with president of Belarus Aleksander Lukashenko	<p>a) "We are also working hard in our traditional markets, including agriculture. Foodstuffs from Belarus enjoy great popularity in Russia as they are invariably of high quality and normally fresh and affordable.</p> <hr/> <p>b) Of course, we have strong relations in culture. There is actually no need to list our contacts. We are a very close as people and nations. Culture, language, religion, a shared history which is rooted not only in the fairly recent and heroic</p>	 history war/threat	perpetuation and Justification strategy

			<p>past during the Great Patriotic War, but also goes back centuries, this is what unites us. And it is good that we are encouraging these efforts today as well.</p> <hr/> <p>c) I am happy to note that many young people in Belarus choose Russian universities and colleges to study for their careers and get a good profession.” (Putin, 2021a)</p>		
23	2021	Vladimir Putin’s article on “The Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians”	<p>a) “I think it is also natural that the representatives of Ukraine over and over again vote against the UN General Assembly resolution condemning the glorification of Nazism. Marches and torchlit processions in honor of remaining war criminals from the SS units take place under the protection of the official authorities. Mazepa, who betrayed everyone, Petliura, who paid for Polish patronage with Ukrainian lands, and Bandera, who collaborated with the Nazis, are ranked as national heroes. Everything is being done to erase from the memory of young generations the names of genuine patriots and victors, who have always been the pride of Ukraine.</p> <hr/> <p>b) For the Ukrainians who fought in the Red Army, in partisan units, the Great Patriotic War was indeed a patriotic war because they were defending their home, their great common Motherland. Over two thousand soldiers became Heroes of the Soviet Union. Among them are legendary pilot Ivan Kozhedub, fearless sniper, defender of Odessa and Sevastopol Lyudmila Pavlichenko, valiant guerrilla commander Sidor Kovpak. This indomitable generation fought, those people gave their lives for our future, for us. To forget their feat is to betray our grandfathers, mothers and fathers.” (Putin, 2021b)</p>	<p>history war/ threat</p> <p>war/threat</p> <p>state</p> <p>timeless values</p>	<p>transformation strategy</p> <p>constructive strategy</p> <p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p>
24	2021	Adress on her heroes of fatherland day	<p>a) “The defenders of the Fatherland, our soldiers and officers showed exceptional courage even in the face of the biggest and most merciless threats. They did so during the 1812 battles and during the First World War. In the years of the Great Patriotic War, sweeping, nationwide heroism became an insurmountable obstacle</p>	<p>state</p> <p>war/threat</p>	<p>constructive strategy</p>

			<p>to the enemy. That heroism overturned and destroyed the invaders' plans and the illusion that our country can be conquered.</p> <hr/> <p>b) The Soviet people demonstrated unprecedented courage, unity and strong will. We bow to the memory of those who stopped the enemy and routed him in battles near Moscow 80 years ago, in December 1941. We bow to those who brought about the Great Victory and selflessly defended our homeland without regard for their own lives. Every one of them is a hero. [...]</p> <hr/> <p>c) It is extremely important that young people can see and are aware of this continuity, and that love for our country, our native land and our people become a reliable and solid foundation in their lives." (Putin, 2021c)</p>	<p>war/threat</p> <p>state</p> <p>state</p>	<p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p> <p>constructive strategy</p>
25	March 2022	Meeting on socioeconomic support for regions	<p>"In many Western countries, people are subjected to persecution just because they are originally from Russia. They are being denied medical care, their children are expelled from schools, parents are losing their jobs, and Russian music, culture, and literature are being banned. In its attempts to "cancel" Russia, the West tore off its mask of decency and began to act crudely showing its true colours. One cannot help but remember the anti-Semitic Nazi pogroms in Germany in the 1930s, and then pogroms perpetrated by their henchmen in many European countries that joined the Nazi aggression against our country during the Great Patriotic War." (Putin, 2022a)</p>	<p>war/threat</p> <p>history</p>	<p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p>
26	December 2022	Meeting of Defence Ministry Borad	<p>a) "It is well known that the military potential and capabilities of almost all major NATO countries are being widely used against Russia.</p> <hr/> <p>b) Still, our soldiers, sergeants and officers are fighting for Russia with courage and fortitude and are fulfilling their tasks with confidence, step-by-step. Without</p>	<p>threat/war</p>	<p>perpetuation and justification strategy</p>

		<p>a doubt, these tasks will be fulfilled in all territories of the Russian Federation, including the new territories, and a safe life for all our citizens will be ensured. Our Armed Forces' combat capability is increasing day by day, and we will certainly step this process up.</p> <hr/> <p>c) I would like to once again thank everyone who is fulfilling their combat duty today, including tank crews, paratroopers, artillerymen, motor riflemen, sappers, signalmen, pilots, special operations forces and air defence troops, sailors, military topographers, logistics support specialists, National Guard personnel and other formations for the way you are fighting. You are fighting – you know, I am not afraid to use these comparisons, and these are not some turgid words – like the heroes of the War of 1812, the First World War or the Great Patriotic War.” (Putin, 2022b)</p>	<p>history threat/war</p>	
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ANNEX 3

TABLE 1

N	Year	Occasion	Extract	Continuity of	Strategies
27	2013	Meeting with representatives of different Orthodox Patriarchates and Churches	<p>a) “Over many centuries, Russia was built and matured as a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state. It draws strength and confidence from this diversity, always being open to and respectful of other ethnic group and cultural traditions, championing the principles of solidarity, freedom and responsibility, respecting the rule of law and morality, and protecting traditional values. These are necessary conditions, the foundation for sustainable, progressive development, the guarantee for an equitable world order in the 21 st century; the position of the Orthodox Church in advancing these principles is invariably steadfast.</p> <hr/> <p>b) Today, we are especially in need of efforts to prevent conflicts between civilisations – conflicts fraught with the most serious of consequences. Russia is prepared to share its extensive experience in establishing and supporting interfaith peace and harmony. [...] Please allow me to once again congratulate everyone here on the Baptism of Rus holiday. I wish you peace, prosperity, longevity, new successes in your selfless service in the name of affirming the high Christian ideals of kindness, charity and justice, and in the name of strengthening mutual understanding and trust between peoples.” (Putin, 2013)</p>	<p>history state</p> <p>timeless values</p> <p>history state</p> <p>timeless values</p>	<p>CS PJS</p> <p>CS PJS</p>
28	2015	State decorations awarded for foreign citizens	<p>“Today’s holiday also commemorates events that go back many centuries now but remind us of the great civic feat of people of different social and ethnic groups, who put an end to the tragedy of the Time of Troubles and ended their country’s division, betrayal and humiliation. The people decided Russia’s fate, defended its independence, cleansed it of infighting, discord and pretenders, restored lawful power and paved the way to rebuilding a powerful sovereign state. This and many other feats by our people to save our country were and are sacred examples of genuine patriotism. They are an example of how we should understand and defend our country’s national interests, the important values of human rights, freedom and democracy. At times like ours today, we are acutely aware of the significance of our historical road and of our spiritual and cultural uniqueness.</p>	<p>history state war/threat</p> <p>state timeless values</p> <p>history</p>	<p>CS PJS</p>

			The great Russian thinker Nikolai Berdyayev, for example, said that “Russia is the Great East-West, an entire huge world in itself.” Essentially, he spoke of Russia’s mission as a strong and independent country that would defend truth and justice and that seeks to bring a spirit of harmony and partnership to relations between people of different cultures and traditions.” (Putin, 2015)	state	
29	2016	Vladimir Putin’s annual news conference	“As for patriotic sentiments – you are from Ufa, aren’t you? – we know well the sentiments in Bashkiria. It has always been this way by tradition in Bashkortostan, even in olden times. Let me recall that during the 1812 Patriotic War, Bashkiria armed, mounted on horses and sent to the front its entire male population starting from age 16. It did the same in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945. We should certainly be proud of this and support this.” (Putin, 2016a)	state history war/threat	CS PJS
30	2016	Unveiling monument for Vladimir I.	“This is a major, significant event both for Moscow and the entire country and for all Russian compatriots. It is symbolic that the opening is being held on Unity Day here, in central Moscow, by the walls of the ancient Kremlin, the very heart of Russia. The new monument is a tribute to our prominent ancestor, an especially revered saint, national leader and warrior, and the spiritual founder of the Russian state. Prince Vladimir went down in history as a unifier and defender of Russian lands, and a far-sighted politician who created the foundations of a strong, unified, centralised state, which eventually united different peoples, languages, cultures and religions into one big family.” (Putin, 2016b)	history state	CS
31	2019	Meeting on the Presidential Council for Interethnic Relations	“I am sure many will agree that overall, the North Caucasus has great significance for all of multi-ethnic Russia. For centuries, representatives of many ethnicities have been living here side by side and every one of these groups is unique and authentic; they are rightly proud of their history, language, culture, their heroes, hard workers and athletes. It is a region where people cherish the traditions of hospitality, respect for parents, the elderly and family. Of course, the people of the Caucasus have proven their love for their native land many times and their willingness to stand as one and defend our common Fatherland, defend Russia. These patriotic values unite all of Russian society and lie at the heart of the interethnic peace and interfaith accord that form the fundamental and indisputable conditions for the sustainable development of Russian regions, the consistency of our legal framework, education and cultural domains.” (Putin, 2019)	state war /threat timeless values the state timeless values	PJS
32	2020	Russia Day presentation of the	a) “For each of us, Motherland means family and our parents’ home, our native land, from Kaliningrad to Kamchatka and the Kuril Islands, from the northern Arctic seas to Sevastopol and Crimea. Our	state timeless values history	TS

		Hero of Labour medal	<p>millennialong history has been made on these endless expanses, filled with pages of great glory and pride, the unsurpassed courage of our ancestors, their faith in and love of the Fatherland. The clear innermost feeling of Motherland has always, at all times, helped our people to endure all tribulations, to persevere and preserve themselves in harsh ordeals, and respond to any challenges.</p> <hr/> <p>b) Here, on Poklonnaya Gora we recall heroes who defended the Fatherland, its freedom and independence, and this memory is common and sacred for all generations, for the whole multi-ethnic people of Russia. We have a common historical code and moral foundations. Respect for the working person and the defender of the Fatherland, traditions and culture, preservation of the memory of our ancestors, respect for one’s parents and family, love for our land and the inviolability of our borders have an unconditional value for us.</p> <p>These are the foundations that determine the character and destiny of our people, the progress of the country both today and in future. It is therefore natural that suggestions were voiced that these fundamental and cornerstone principles be included in the Russian Constitution. I am sure that the absolute majority of our citizens share and support this position.” (Putin, 2020)</p>	state history timeless values war/threat	PJS
33	Sept , 2022	Gala concert devoted to the 1160th anniversary of Russian statehood	<p>“Veliky Novgorod, Rurikovo Settlement, Staraya (Old) Ladoga and Izborsk are the cradle of Rus, the source of our civilisation and our state, our culture and education.</p> <p>It is from here, from the north, that the guards of the first Russian Rurik dynasty started their campaigns, that merchant caravans travelled – “from Varangians to Greeks,” and that Rus, Europe’s largest state at that time, was created. It united Slavic, Finno-Ugric, Turkic and other tribes. It gathered them under its strengthening wings from Ladoga and Baltic, Novgorod and Pskov to Kiev and Chernigov, Azov, the Black Sea and Crimea.</p> <p>During more than a millennium, our statehood has lived through many eras, including cruel enemy invasions, disunity and the tragedies of feuds, but each of these difficult periods invariably ended with the revival of the Fatherland. The heroic generations of our people overcame difficulties and adversities, withstood the trials. They created and expanded the grandeur of our Fatherland and covered their names with glory.” (Putin, 2022)</p>	state history state war/threat	CS PJS

ANNEX 3

TABLE 2

N	Year	Occasion	Extracts	Strategies
34	2012	Meeting of Council for Interethnic Relations	<p>a) “Let me say that nostalgia for the past is perfectly explainable. We must take into account the positive experience built up over past decades. I add — given that I myself have made public reference to the Soviet period — that we must take care at the same time not to idealise anything, and this includes the Soviet Union’s interethnic relations policies. Looking back at the project to forge a “new historic community” – the “Soviet people”, we can say that this project was never completed, and not everyone accepted it. There will never be complete and total agreement on such issues.</p> <p>But the most important thing of all, on which we should focus today, is the need for qualitatively new approaches that take into account modern developments in society, in government, in our country and the world. Of course it is not possible to mechanically reproduce something from the past, and sometimes it is counterproductive to try to do so. Whatever the case, the result will not be effective. But we must nevertheless assess the past for the positive experience it offers and take this into account. [...] Russia’s unified territory has been built over the course of centuries, as I have already stated twice today. However, the values of interethnic harmony were not a gift from our ancestors that will last forever. Such traditions must be constantly maintained. Moreover, life moves forward; new challenges, risks and threats arise. [...]</p> <hr/> <p>b) Let me stress that we do not have the right to ignore any negative tendencies that occur in this sphere, and we must understand that conflicts may not only weaken the state, but also destroy its very foundations. Today, more and more often, under the guise of developing democracy and freedom, various nationalist groups are raising their heads. They participate in rallies, work on the Internet and among teenagers and students, using slogans of “Russian,” “Tatar,” “Caucasus,” or other “regional” nationalism. In essence, they are all pushing and provoking separatist tendencies inside our nation. It is important to suppress this dangerous influence. And together, we must make tolerance, respect toward the culture and way of life of other individuals, other peoples, other ethnicities one of the key notions in our society.” (Putin, 2012)</p>	PJS
35	2020	Unveil Rhzev memorial for Soviet soldier	<p>a) “Step by step, day after day, the battles near Rzhev brought closer the triumphant outcome of the Battle of Stalingrad and the long-awaited breaking of the Leningrad Siege, the liberation of Byelorussia, Ukraine and Baltic countries – and the final and critical change in the course of the entire Second World War.</p> <p>We will always remember the high price the Soviet people paid for the Victory, the brunt borne and repelled by the Red Army where representatives of all Soviet republics and ethnicities fought side by side. More than 8.5</p>	PJS

			<p>mentioned, including family ones. But negative things in the life and destiny of the Soviet Union also stuck to the Soviet people. Thus, they were deprived of property as such. Private property was embodied in a household plot, but this is quite a different category. Hence, their attitude to labour, the one-size-fits-all approach and so on. [...]</p> <p>You know, what is typical of Russia, something you can find in all historical documents: when expanding its territory Russia never made life difficult for the people who became part of the united Russian state. This applied to religion, traditions and history. Look at the decrees of Catherine the Great who issued her instruction in clear terms: treat with respect. This was the attitude towards those who preached Islam, for instance. This has always been the case. This is a tradition. In terms of preserving these traditions, the new community of the Soviet people had nothing bad about it except the ideologisation of this melting pot and the results of its functioning.” (Putin, 2021)</p>	PJS
37	Sept, 2022	Meeting Protected Territory National Environmental Youth Forum	<p>“You said that this is where Russia begins. In fact, Russia begins with people wherever they live. However, geographically, I think we should speak about Kamchatka. In fact, our neighbours – Japan and the Japanese – are called the Land of the Rising Sun, but I think Kamchatka or Sakhalin lie even further east than Japan. Yet further east is New Zealand, and to the east of New Zealand is Chukotka.</p> <p>And the strait is only 60 kilometres wide, and that is it, next there is the American continent. In this sense, the Land of the Rising Sun is Russia. But, as I have already said, Russia, of course, begins with people, no matter where they live, no matter what territory they live in.” (Putin, 2022)</p>	PJS

ANNEX 3

TABLE 3

N	Year	Occasion	Extract	Continuities of...	Strategies
38	March , 2014	Adress by the president of the Russian federation	<p>a) “Everything in Crimea speaks of our shared history and pride. This is the location of ancient Khersones, where Prince Vladimir was baptised. His spiritual feat of adopting Orthodoxy predetermined the overall basis of the culture, civilisation and human values that unite the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The graves of Russian soldiers whose bravery brought Crimea into the Russian empire are also in Crimea. This is also Sevastopol – a legendary city with an outstanding history, a fortress that serves as the birthplace of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet. Crimea is Balaklava and Kerch, Malakhov Kurgan and Sapun Ridge. Each one of these places is dear to our hearts, symbolising Russian military glory and outstanding valour. [...]</p> <hr/> <p>b) However, we expected Ukraine to remain our good neighbour, we hoped that Russian citizens and Russian speakers in Ukraine, especially its southeast and Crimea, would live in a friendly, democratic and civilised state that would protect their rights in line with the norms of international law. However, this is not how the situation developed. Time and time again attempts were made to deprive Russians of their historical memory, even of their language and to subject them to forced assimilation. Moreover, Russians, just as other citizens of Ukraine are suffering from the constant political and state crisis that has been rocking the country for over 20 years. I understand why Ukrainian people wanted change. They have had enough of the authorities in power during the years of Ukraine’s independence. Presidents, prime ministers and parliamentarians changed, but their attitude to the country and its people remained the same [...]</p> <hr/> <p>c) Let me remind you that in the course of political consultations on the unification of East and West Germany, at the expert, though very high level, some nations that were then and are now Germany’s allies did not support the idea of unification. Our nation, however, unequivocally supported the sincere, unstoppable desire of the Germans for national unity. I am confident that you have not forgotten this, and I expect that the citizens of Germany will also support the aspiration of the Russians, of historical Russia, to restore unity. [...]</p>	<p>history timeless values war/threat state history history</p>	<p>CS PJS TS PJS</p>

			<p>d) I want you to hear me, my dear friends. Do not believe those who want you to fear Russia, shouting that other regions will follow Crimea. We do not want to divide Ukraine; we do not need that. As for Crimea, it was and remains a Russian, Ukrainian, and Crimean-Tatar land. I repeat, just as it has been for centuries, it will be a home to all the peoples living there. What it will never be and do is follow in Bandera's footsteps! Crimea is our common historical legacy and a very important factor in regional stability. And this strategic territory should be part of a strong and stable sovereignty, which today can only be Russian. Otherwise, dear friends (I am addressing both Ukraine and Russia), you and we – the Russians and the Ukrainians – could lose Crimea completely, and that could happen in the near historical perspective. Please think about it. [...]</p> <hr/> <p>e) Kiev is the mother of Russian cities. Ancient Rus is our common source, and we cannot live without each other. Let me say one other thing too. Millions of Russians and Russian-speaking people live in Ukraine and will continue to do so. Russia will always defend their interests using political, diplomatic and legal means. But it should be above all in Ukraine's own interest to ensure that these people's rights and interests are fully protected. This is the guarantee of Ukraine's state stability and territorial integrity." (Putin, 2014)</p>	<p>history state war/threat</p> <p>history state</p>	<p>PJS</p> <p>CS</p>
39	March , 2022	Meeting with permanent members of the Security Council	<p>"I am a Russian. As they say, all my relatives are Ivans and Marias. But when I see heroes like this young man, Nurmagomed Gadzhimagomedov, a resident of Dagestan and an ethnic Lak, and our other soldiers, I can hardly stop myself from saying: I am a Lak, a Dagestani, a Chechen, an Ingush, a Russian, a Tatar, a Jew, a Mordovian, an Ossetian... It is impossible to name all of the more than 300 nationalities and ethnic groups that live in Russia. I think you can understand me. I am proud to be part of this world, part of our powerful and strong multinational people of Russia. At the same time, I will never abandon my conviction that Russians and Ukrainians are one nation, even though some people in Ukraine have been intimidated, many have been duped by nationalist Nazi propaganda, and some have consciously decided to become followers of Bandera and other Nazi accomplices, who fought on Hitler's side during the Great Patriotic War." (Putin, 2022)</p>	<p>history state war/threat</p>	<p>PJS</p>

ANNEX 4

TABLE 1

Let.	Year	Occasion	Speech extract
A	2018	Reception marking the 25th anniversary of the Constitution	“As a result, the supreme legal act, which is often called the Constitution of new Russia, was created and adopted. But this is the Constitution of the same Russia, our same country, whose history dates back centuries. The idea of such continuity is explicitly underscored in the preamble to the Fundamental Law, which clearly states that the existing state unity needs to be preserved, while warm and poignant words are said about the multi-ethnic people of Russia united by a common destiny on their land. ” (Putin, 2018)
B	2019	Reception to mark Victory Day	“Seventy-four years have elapsed since the spring of 1945, several generations have grown up, but the memories are still vivid of the war and the valiant defenders of the Motherland who annihilated Nazism at the cost of immeasurable sacrifices and losses. The enemy was defeated not only with the power of equipment and military might. The key was that the weapons were in the hands of an unyielding tight-knit people, united in defending its own, dear, native land – both on the war front and home front. ” (Putin, 2019)
C	2022	Concert marking the anniversary of Crimea’s reunification with Russia	“On our land, united by common fate. This is what the people of Crimea and Sevastopol must have been thinking as they went to the referendum on March 18, 2014. They lived and continue to live on their land, and they wanted to have a common fate with their historical motherland, Russia. They had every right to it, and they achieved their goal. Let’s congratulate them first because it is their holiday.” (Putin, 2022)

ANNEX 4

TABLE 2

Let.	Year	Occasion	Speech extract
D	2014	Direct Line with Vladimir Putin	<p>“So what are our particular features? We do have them, of course, and I think they rely on values. <u>It seems to me that the Russian person or, on a broader scale, a person of the Russian world, primarily thinks about his or her highest moral designation, some highest moral truths.</u> This is why the Russian person, or a person of the Russian world, does not concentrate on his or her own precious personality. Of course, in everyday life we all think about how to live a wealthier and better life, to be healthier and help our family, but these are still not the main values. <u>Our people open themselves outward. Western values are different and are focused on one’s inner self.</u> Personal success is the yardstick of success in life, and this is acknowledged by society. The more successful a man is, the better he is. This is not enough for us in this country. Even very rich people say: “Okay, I’ve made millions and billions, so what next?” At any rate, everything is directed outward, and oriented toward society.” (Putin, 2014)</p>
E	2016	Meeting of the Russian Pobeda (Victory) Organising Committee	<p>“I would like to note another important thing. <u>We must consistently uphold the historical truth; we often talk about this. It is vital to cut short any attempts to besmirch and falsify the past, including [attempts to] belittle our country’s decisive role in routing Nazism.</u>” (Putin, 2016)</p>
F	2022	Adress by the President of the Russian Federation	<p>“In the late 1980s, the Soviet Union grew weaker and subsequently broke apart. That experience should serve as a good lesson for us, because it has shown us that the paralysis of power and will is the first step towards complete degradation and oblivion. We lost confidence for only one moment, but it was enough to disrupt the balance of forces in the world. As a result, the old treaties and agreements are no longer effective. Entreaties and requests do not help. <u>Anything that does not suit the dominant state, the powers that be, is denounced as archaic, obsolete and useless. At the same time, everything it regards as useful is presented as the ultimate truth and forced on others regardless of the cost, abusively and by any means available. Those who refuse to comply are subjected to strong-arm tactics.</u>” (Putin, 2022)</p>

ANNEX 4

TABLE 3

Let.	Year	Occasion	Speech extract
G	2012	Adress to the Federal Assembly	<p>“It is painful for me to say this, but I must say it. <u>Today, Russian society suffers from apparent deficit of spiritual values such as charity, empathy, compassion, support and mutual assistance. A deficit of things that have always, throughout our entire history, made us stronger and more powerful; these are the things we have always been proud of.</u> We must wholeheartedly support the institutions that are the carriers of traditional values, which have historically proven their ability to pass these values from generation to generation” (Putin, 2012)</p>
H	2014	News Conference with Vladimir Putin	<p>“Now about the elites. You know, there is elite wine, there are elite resorts. <u>There are no elite people. You know what the Russian elite is? It’s a worker. A farmer. Someone who carries our entire country on his shoulders. Has been carrying it for centuries and will carry it for centuries to come. All other levels, including elites and others, are absolutely groundless.</u>” (Putin, 2014a)</p>
I	2014	Vladimir Putin answers journalists’ questions on the situation in Ukraine	<p>“Incidentally, I understand those people on Maidan, though I do not support this kind of turnover. I understand the people on Maidan who are calling for radical change rather than some cosmetic remodelling of power. <u>Why are they demanding this? Because they have grown used to seeing one set of thieves being replaced by another.</u> Moreover, the people in the regions do not even participate in forming their own regional governments. There was a period in this country when the President appointed regional leaders, but then the local legislative authorities had to approve them, while in Ukraine they are appointed directly. We have now moved on to elections, while they are nowhere near this. And they began appointing all sorts of oligarchs and billionaires to govern the eastern regions of the country. No wonder the people do not accept this, no wonder they think that as a result of dishonest privatisation (just as many people think here as well) people have become rich and now they also have been brought to power.” (Putin, 2014b)</p>
K	2018	Answers to media questions following the G20 Summit	<p>“What especially troubles me is that analysis of recent events, this incident or the provocation in the Black Sea, or what we see in Donbass, <u>suggests that the current leadership of Ukraine is actually not interested in resolving this crisis, let alone by peaceful means. They are a party of war, and while they remain in power, all these tragedies and the war will continue. Why? Because during any kind of hostilities, with provocations similar to the one in the Black Sea, it is always easier for oligarchic authorities to pursue a policy aimed at plundering their own people and their state.</u> This is the case when the situation both in our country and in Ukraine can be described by this proverb: “War makes some people rich”. This is the first reason why the current government is not interested in a peaceful settlement.” (Putin, 2018)</p>

L	2019	Direct Line with Vladimir Putin	<p>“It was in the early 2000s; I travelled a lot. The country was going through a very difficult time. So we flew to one of the regions. It was the end of the working day, late in the evening and dark. It was autumn, and there was slush and mud everywhere, and I was to walk some distance, walking in this slush to the car. Suddenly, an elderly woman appeared in front of me, said something indistinctly and suddenly fell to her knees, and gave me a note. I promised her to read it. I took it, gave it to the assistants, and it got lost. I will never forget this. I am still ashamed of that. So now I try to carefully study everything that is sent or given to me. You know, it’s not always possible to resolve problems. Some are unsolvable. I am pretty sure, even certain, as to what was written in that note, having read dozens of such notes by now. Surely, something about helping a son who is in prison, or something like that. But this is not the point; the point is that it has been lost.” (Putin, 2019)</p>
M	2021	Valdai Discussion Club Meeting	<p>“As for me, like the overwhelming majority of people of my generation, I faced the problems of that period, but I also remember its positive features that should not be forgotten. Being from a family of workers, yours truly graduated from Leningrad State University. This is something, right? At that time, education played the role of a real social lift. <u>On the whole, the egalitarian approach was very widespread, and we encountered its negative impact, such as income levelling and a related attitude to work, but a lot of people still used the preferences of social lifts I mentioned.</u> Maybe, it was simply the legacy of past generations or even cultivated in the Soviet Union to some extent. This is also important.” (Putin, 2021)</p>
N	2022	Signing of treaties on accession of Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics	<p>“Let me repeat that the <u>dictatorship of the Western elites</u> targets all societies, including the citizens of Western countries themselves. This is a challenge to all. This complete renunciation of what it means to be human, the <u>overthrow of faith and traditional values, and the suppression of freedom</u> are coming to resemble a “religion in reverse” – pure Satanism. Exposing false messiahs, Jesus Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount: “<u>By their fruits ye shall know them.</u>” These poisonous fruits are already obvious to people, and not only in our country but also in all countries, including many people in the West itself. The world has entered a period of a fundamental, revolutionary transformation. <u>New centres of power are emerging. They represent the majority – the majority!</u> – of the international community. <u>They are ready not only to declare their interests but also to protect them. They see in multipolarity an opportunity to strengthen their sovereignty, which means gaining genuine freedom, historical prospects, and the right to their own independent, creative and distinctive forms of development, to a harmonious process.</u>” (Putin, 2022)</p>

