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Securitisation's effects on military planning: the case of the Chechen wars

Master thesis

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

This thesis was written by me, independently. Major arguments and works by other authors used in it have been appropriately referenced.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a case study of Russia's securitisation of Chechnya, undertaken for identifying the effects of it on military planning. In particular, it aims to determine if securitising narratives in the military are a factor in the choices made by military commanders in the design of operations to be executed. The case of Chechnya is chosen because of the wealth of secondary literature that has been produced various decades after the wars ended, and also to build upon Julie Wilhelmsen's inquiry (2017) on the same topic (Russia's securitisation of Chechnya). The theoretical basis for this work is securitisation theory, particularly the Copenhagen school. This strand of international relations theory has its interest in speech, discourse and how they result in a country's society threat-perception. Hence it enables a theory-first, qualitative inquiry that stands at the intersection of Security Studies, Strategic Studies and international relations theory. The narrow focus on Chechnya and the methods chosen make this an inquiry with an Area Studies component.

Drawing from Wilhelmsen's previous work on the topic, my interests are narrower. Even though our inquiries aim at seeing what securitisation does, mine does not look at how war becomes legitimate or tolerable, but at how securitisation affects decision-making among the military. Also, while her case study is the second Chechen war, mine addresses both the first and the second Chechen wars. I believe that the comparison helps to generalise the results of the inquiry. Furthermore, while we both share the methodology of discourse analysis, I bring content analysis to offer further evidence on the changes in narratives. Finally, her attention is on discourse in society as a whole, while mine is exclusively on how discourse evolved among the Russian military. Hence various aspects overlap, but overall both my theory-building aims and my empirical work are different.

In theory building, my aim is to suggest a possible line of inquiry which regards a connection between society's discourse about a conflict and the choices made by military commanders once said conflict results in war. As it can be said that many 'external' conditions have an effect on military planning (ideology, historical legacies, among other tangible and intangible circumstances), my aim is not to suggest which has

the highest weight; my aim is to suggest that the hegemonic narrative on the conflict among the military is a factor that must be taken into consideration when analysing its decision-making processes. Moreover, I suggest that this factor may be traceable from the strategic level of decision-making, to the mission design down to the chosen tactics for the operation.

In its empirical component, my inquiry thoroughly analyses the different narratives present in the military's main newspaper, the *Krasnaya Zvezda*, thus bringing evidence of how this segment of society articulated its views on Chechnya and those who would become their opponents in combat. The sample was gathered from the newspaper's archive for the years 1993, 1994, and 1998, 1999, precisely one year each before each conflict began. Discourse analysis and deductive coding for identity representations (Self, Other, measures) was made to identify the characteristics of each narrative. For identifying which narrative became determinant in the military's planning, hegemonic, content analysis was used on the sample, looking for keywords associated to each narrative. Finally, secondary literature on the wars in Chechnya was consulted to assess what assumptions the Russian military had before each war. I argue that the results of these methods under the securitisation framework suggest that discourse exerts a short-term influence over military planning by informing the assumptions held by the military commanders.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Between 1994 and 1996 the Russian Federation engaged *de facto* independent Chechnya in war, with the goal to reintegrate its erstwhile federal entity back into the country. However, the campaign quickly proved to be a disaster, as the Chechen force demonstrated to have the ability and resolve to resist the Russian invasion, and to compel Moscow to the negotiation table. The first decisive Russian defeat in December 1994 demonstrated how misplaced were the expectations of the Russian forces regarding their opponents, and demonstrated their need to adapt during the fight. As the war ground on, other shortcomings of the Russian army became more evident, such as the lack in materiel and personnel. The eventual end of hostilities in 1996 did not end the conflict, as in 1999 a second war erupted, triggered by the intrusion of Chechen rebels into neighbouring Dagestan. The ensuing fight demonstrated not only the experience gained in previous years and the improvement of the armed forces during the interwar period, but also a new disposition to engage the Chechen republic using brute force and fielding larger forces against the rebels.

In both cases, the Russian armed forces demonstrated different understandings of the opposing force which translated into different means to engage them. In the first war (1994-1996) it was believed that the Chechen rebels were a disparate group of bandits, which made Russian commanders believe they could defeat them by intimidation and a show of force. This misplaced confidence ended in the disastrous defeat of the Russian armed forces in December, 1994. In the second war (1999-2009) the rebels were seen as a real, imminent threat, which was confronted with extreme means and intense use of force. This dissertation builds on Julie Wilhelmsen's (2017) argument that part of this change in assessment had its origin not only in the change of material circumstances and the experience of the first war, but also in how these circumstances were *talked about*, particularly by the military. In this sense, the subject matter of this dissertation relates to the discussions on Chechnya the Russian military had behind closed doors. Do peacetime 'subjective' understandings of conflicts affect

how military operations are conducted when war breaks out? Are forceful measures adopted by the military chosen on the basis of the military's understanding of what will be seen as legitimate by society? Can said understanding be considered as part of society's overall (world)view of the war? These questions are broadly addressed in this dissertation, and may be summarised as *did the operational conduct of the Russian armed forces exhibit an influence of a particular hegemonic securitising narrative?* The answer I argue for in this dissertation is that, indeed, before each war a particular securitising narrative became hegemonic among the military, which made military actions take a particular character down to the operational and tactical levels. While this was not the exclusive determinant, it cannot be excluded as a factor affecting military planning before each war.

The topic of this dissertation lies at the intersection of strategic studies, security studies and the study of Russia's Chechen wars, although its research question primarily aims to discuss within the former two fields. Because of its aims and methods, it can be said that it is an International Relations dissertation with an Area Studies component. In the broadest sense, the use of securitisation theory places my inquiry in the 'expansionist' school of security studies, which seeks to find the limits of what security implies beyond the Cold War-era, state-centric paradigm (Cavelty, Mauer, 2010, 1-2). In regards to strategic studies, my inquiry aims to contribute to the speculative study of military planning, particularly on the factors that constrain planner's decisions in designing operations in peace time. Regarding the Chechen wars, it offers a look into the military's perspective of the conflict as captured by its main newspaper, the *Krasnaya Zvezda* ('Red Star', KZ). An extensive secondary literature, historical distance, and the central place the wars had in Russian society at the time make the Chechen wars a useful case study for this dissertation's aims. While this case study focuses on a 'small war', the findings are relevant to both 'small', asymmetrical wars, and 'continental', conventional wars. On the basis of Angstrom and Widen (2015, 36-41), my inquiry offers a parsimonious account of the factors intervening in military planning, and sets out to inquiry about one of them, the immediate, non-context driven, non-material *a priori* assumptions. To further narrow this account, this inquiry looks exclusively into the lower levels of planning and execution, namely the operational and tactical levels, as these capture the most 'subjective' dimension of military planning (see Klein, 1991, 11-12), more isolated from the political drivers of the war at the strategic

level. In this sense, it focuses more narrowly on manoeuvres, tactics and the implementation of plans, than on the production of military doctrines and national defence strategy. The dissertations' methodology is designed for theory development and can be considered 'theory-first'. Its primary research method is discourse analysis through coding. It also has quantitative content analysis as an auxiliary method. Moreover, by looking into both Chechen wars, a diachronic comparison is attempted, as each instance can be seen as a test, assessing the regularity of securitisation affecting military planning. This methodology and theoretical framework is an adapted version of Wilhelmsen (2017) and Lowth (2011). While my inquiry draws heavily from Wilhelmsen's, it has different goals, which necessitate an adaptation of her framework. While the goal of her 2017 book is to analyse society-wide audience acceptance, my inquiry focuses narrowly on the military, which is conceptualised as a significant audience itself. It must be said that her work acknowledges the multiplicity of discursive terrains according to professions and segments of society (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 33). Moreover, my framework further distinguishes itself from Wilhelmsen's by the introduction of Lowth's (2011) agent-based account of securitisation's effects on strategic thought, which enables this work to speculate on the Russian commanders' view of the conflict. As my interest is exclusively in securitisation and its effects, my framework omits the distinction of texts as securitising and de-securitising (2017, 52). Finally, while her inquiry focuses solely on the second Chechen war, mine incorporates both Chechen wars as instances for diachronic comparison, in order to further support the generalisation of my findings. Wilhelmsen's findings regarding the second Chechen war will be discussed.

In chapter one, a more detailed introduction to the subject will be offered, with the goal of narrowing the focus of this research. The rest of the chapter will be dedicated to defining the theoretical framework of this work. As in the case of Wilhelmsen (2017), my research is informed by securitisation theory, as it constitutes the theoretical underpinning of this inquiry. Different models of this theory will be discussed, and a particular model, adapted from Wilhelmsen (2017) and Lowth (2011) will be used. My intention is to develop a particular aspect of securitisation theory, by means of solving a puzzle regarding a different subject, that of factors intervening in military planning. A portion of the chapter is dedicated to introducing the case of the Chechen wars.

Chapter two introduces the research methodology and the concepts bridging

the research aims, the framework, and the concrete methods used. The main method of research is discourse analysis based on the work of Teun van Dijk (1997). Its core premise is that of the social impact of texts, and the intentionality behind messy layers of communication. This chapter also describes the way the sample was gathered, and narrowed. In total, 471 texts from a particular newspaper, the *Krasnaya Zvezda* ('Red Star', KZ for short) newspaper, were analysed. They were then coded for representations of identity, particularly the Russian 'Self', and the opposing Chechen 'Other', as well as for descriptions or suggestions of measures to be taken against the Chechen threat. The results were mapped as prescribed by Wilhelmsen (2017), and the emergent categories of codes were systematised, resulting in mapping and identifying the securitising narratives; their patterns were quantified and interpreted.

Chapter five offers a summary of the findings, with a step-by-step account of the logical and causal chain, connecting the findings to the theoretical framework. Then, it offers a detailed account of the main limitations and weaknesses of this inquiry. Now these may be summarised as being those of an interpretative methodology, and of the design of its sample. Moreover, the various assumptions made throughout the inquiry complicate the generalisation of the findings. Nevertheless, my inquiry brings evidence regarding the military's 'subjective' understanding of the Chechen wars before they happened and it shows how their discourse on Chechnya changed as the conflict approached. By suggesting the possibility of a causal link between discourse, securitisation and military operation design, the result is an account of how discourse affects military operations.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Introduction

To address a research question on the factors that impact military planning, I offer a speculative approach. In this sense, I do not look into Russian military planning in its methods and procedures, or at Russian strategic narratives or military thought. Instead I offer a framework that enables a methodic inquiry on how Russian military planning would have been conducted provided a certain set of factors. I attempt to discern the connection between a particular factor (securitising narratives becoming hegemonic) and military planning, as evinced through the military manoeuvres and tactics taken by the Russian army in the first and second Chechen wars. In other words, I see military planning as a black box, securitising narratives as an external factor that impacts the military's planning processes, and manoeuvres as the output. In the first phase of this research, I address the characteristics of this particular external factor (securitising narratives), and in the second phase I assess the output inasmuch it reflects the aforementioned external factor. The main goal of this dissertation relating to theory is to attempt to advance the understanding of what securitisation *does*, particularly relating to the concrete ways the military behaves when something is securitised.

This inquiry intends to build upon a particular aspect of the work of Wilhelmsen (2017) and Lowth (2011), regarding securitisation and warfare. The dissertation tasks itself with the study of the connection between hegemonic narratives and military decision-making at the operational level. As the emphasis of this dissertation is placed on connecting meaning in texts and material reality, it can be considered as belonging to a post-structuralist framework (see Wilhelmsen, 2017, 7). The link written word and choices made by military commanders is provided by a version of securitisation theory, which sees securitisation not as an end-state, but as an open-ended process, which may both consolidate and unravel. It replaces the focus from a single speech-act to a

securitising narrative, which offers an account of what to securitise, why and through which means. It also incorporates a larger array of relevant actors, so that instead of a sole securitising actor attempting to place something under a security frame, there is a multiplicity of voices involved. Each of these compete for having their narrative to become the hegemonic one, defining the use of the security framework according to their narrative's representations. Once a narrative becomes hegemonic, it 'frames' the military planners' thinking about the decisions to take in order to pursue objectives in war. While this framing effect may be present at all levels of military decision making (strategic, operational, tactical), this inquiry will focus on the operational one as it is a salient level in Wilhelmsen's work, but not fully explored as an object of study *per se*.

This framework will be applied to the two Chechen wars (1994-1996 and 1999-2009) with the intension of comparing change and continuity in the *a priori* conceptions in the military about the conflict, which are seen as shaped by discourse. This case is relevant as it involves a salient difference of featured narratives espoused by the Russian state between both wars; from fighting separatism and nationalism to fighting international terrorism and jihadism (see Hughes, 2007). In each case, different narratives were hegemonic at the start of each war, which, according to the framework to be described, should have been a factor in deciding the way to use force in Chechnya.

1.2. Background on the Chechen wars

For most of the decades of 1990, the Russian Federation was engaged in a conflict with on of its federal entities, the *de facto* independent Chechen Republic. This conflict erupted into out-right war twice, once in 1994 under the presidency of Boris Yeltsin, and another in 1999 under Vladimir Putin. The conflict lasted nearly two decades as Chechen rebels fighting Moscow and loyal Chechen forces had an intimate knowledge of the terrain and benefited from the republic's mountainous geography, conductive to effective guerrilla warfare (Galleoti, 2014, 7). It also had lasting consequences for the small Caucasus republic. Because of people fleeing the republic and civilian casualties (estimated to have been between 40 to 50 thousand), the conflict shrank Chechnya's population from one million to 700,000 (Kramer, 2005, 6). In the end, the second Chechen war ended Grozny's conflict with Moscow, and produced over

5,000 dead Russian soldiers (Kramer, 2005, 10). This struggle, and the lack of definition in Chechnya's belonging to Russia would also be among the elements informing the narratives analysed below.

Contemporary, acrimonious relations with Grozny began during the collapse of the Soviet Union. By the end of the decade of 1980, and early 1990, the Caucasus became ensnared in various conflicts among and within former Soviet republics, many of them ongoing to this day. While the collapse of the Soviet Union involved mostly peaceful separation and conflict resolution, for the Caucasus conflict often became violent, exploding into various wars. As King argues (2008), there was nothing necessary in these developments, as they obeyed to patterns in Soviet governing structures and their withdrawal, and in nationalist movements and their fight to consolidate power (King, 2008, 211). Eventually, the post-Soviet international order in the region was determined by the secessionists movements that were best tolerated by the international community, successfully gaining recognition and *de jure* independence (King, 2008, 219). Hence, some of them managed to acquire *de facto* independence, but never gain recognition. Such was the case of Chechnya.

For Chechnya, as in the Baltic states and elsewhere in the Soviet Union, Gorbachov's reforms also involved the rise of a local nationalist movements advocating for greater autonomy for the republic, with some even aspiring to independence (King, 2008, 232). Eventually, in the wake of the August 1991 coup attempt in Moscow, Dzokhar Dudaev, a Chechen retired airforce general of the Soviet armed forces and advocate of independence, took initiative and commanded upon the takeover of Grozny's governing institutions. This move led to the proclamation of independence of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in November 1991, with Dudaev as the head of the republic (King, 2008, 233). Therefore, previous to the first war, Chechnya, while *de jure* part of the Russian Federation, was *de facto* independent, exerting its own laws, foreign policy, and actively pursuing international recognition. This separation did not mean isolation from Russia, as trade and some shared tasks of law enforcement continued, but the relationship was described as the Chechen 'problem', in the need for 'normalization'.

In December 1994 Russia's armed forces entered Chechnya with the aim to topple Dudaev's regime. However, this first attempt failed, and by 1996, Russia withdrew from Chechnya. This defeat involved the great shock coming from the

Russian armed forces' defeat in Grozny, in their doomed assault on the rebels' capital on December 1994. Not only did the Russian armed forces privilege a conventional use of force, adequate for fighting a 'regular' enemy (i.e. not reliant on guerrilla warfare), but they underestimated the Chechens' force and numbers (Galleoti, 2014, 36-37). The outcome of the war was a continuation of Chechnya's *de facto* independent status until the end of the second Chechen war (1999-2009). Triggered by an invasion by Chechen rebels on Dagestan on August 1999, the outcome of the second war was the establishment of control throughout Chechnya's territory.

In each fight, the Chechen side employed both conventional and unconventional manoeuvres to defend against the invading Russian forces, moving onto the second mode of fight in the later stages of each war. The Chechen rebels fought with the Soviet-era equipment left by the Soviet forces in the republic at the time of their withdrawal in the early 1990s (Lambeth, 1996, 368). The Russian armed forces faced numerous hurdles. Not only was the political system in disarray due to the recent collapse of the Soviet Union and the coup attempt in 1991, but the Russian armed forces were also in disrepair. Understaffed, undermanned, underfunded and demoralized, the Russian forces faced significant challenges in their organization and in their lack of materiel in both wars. Only some modest improvements would take place by the time of the second war (Galleoti, 2014, 22-25).

1.3. Relevance, Research Question and Hypothesis

The object of interest of this dissertation is the Russian military planning for the first and the second Chechen wars. Particularly, it is interested on the *a priori* (that is, prior to experience, namely battlefield experience) conceptions of the war which shaped the Russian military planning previous to combat experience. Planning for war is a task which deals with uncertainty, as the circumstances of the wars to be fought can only be object of *speculation*, and involves the preparation of forces for war and the pursuit of objectives beyond war itself (Imlay, Toft, 2006, 249).[1] This dissertation is interested in how discourse shapes this speculative work. This section introduces the need to address the subjective, immediate and non-material factors that determine the assumptions of

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[1] The distinction between military and strategic planning is not employed here as the interest is limited to the military inasmuch it pursues strategic interests.

military planners before engaging in planning (Table 1).

Military planners often conceive their work as requiring them to be isolated from *a priori* judgements about the conflict they are to prepare for. In this sense, there is an aspiration to have an 'objective' perspective about their opponent, the theatre of operations, and all relevant factors of the war. In other words, they see no 'epistemological conundrum' in military planning (Klein, 1991, 7). Another way of thinking of the epistemological challenge implicit in military planning is through the concept of (un)certainty. The attempt to try and address a mission's plan under the most 'objective' conditions can be seen as a way to reduce uncertainty by reducing elements to take into consideration. However, seemingly 'objective' assumptions surface and can be considered as the basis for misplaced certainty among Russia's leadership. Looking into the Chechen wars case, the 1994 defeat can be seen as the product of misplaced certainty, in which Russia's leadership bet that a mission based on intimidation would suffice, without being aware of this decision being a bet (Mitzen, Schweller, 2011, 21). The operation of the second Chechen war was conducted on a different ground, hence different assumptions and outcomes in terms of military manoeuvres.[2]

To capture this process, I propose a reductive conceptual model for military planning, which I simplify to the input of information on resources, goals, and output of plans to be executed. In general, armed forces' strategy is not solely determined by the resources available, or their technological level of development, but other inputs are taken into account in producing strategy (see Angstrom, Widen, 2015, 41). However, this account has an important limit: it reduces military planning to rational calculation, involving a narrow notion of the inputs (resources, objectives) and outputs (operational plans) involved in military planning. Other factors, among them 'irrational' and 'subjective' ones, are also at play. As indicated by Angstrom and Widen (2015, 36), a country's history, geographical situation, economy, technology, political system, and ideology are among the factors that define the external context in which planning for war is made. Some of these are contingent and historically-defined (i.e. ideology), and others are embedded in contextual circumstances that may not be altered (i.e. geography). They are not 'material' in the sense that they either deal with intangible things (history) or with tangible things that cannot be reduced to materiel, equipment or

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[2] This connection to the topic of certainty is presented here in an illustrative manner, as the epistemological grounds of this dissertation are different from those of Mitzen and Schweller (2011, 23, 27).

personnel (geography, technology). Incorporating these factors broadens the perspective of what conditions are taken into consideration by military planners, and what factors, such as ideology, shape their *a priori* understanding of the situation for which they are planning. However, more non-material factors may also be identified in more immediate, less context-determined conditions, namely in the immediate period before the launch of a new operation. This instance is when a priori *assumptions* (that is, assumptions that are held previous to the launch of the operation) have the biggest impact in military planning. This is when planners consider the assumptions made before, introduce or remove techniques and tactics, and to revise the assumptions involved in the operations launched (see Oliker, 2001). In other words, these assumptions may be understood as pre-judgements made about the operation to be launched that planning is made for. These decisions (and omissions) reflect thinking and conscious choices about the use of resources available, as well as about the type of combat which the armed forces will pursue in the future.

Assumption by origin	Description	Examples
Material	Assumptions based on a calculation of material resources available.	Concerns about equipment, terrain, personnel number, economic capacity.
Contextual, non-material	Assumptions based on an interpretation of non-material contextual factors.	Concerns born from a reading of the country's history, of the history of the conflict, 'ideological' concerns.
*Immediate, non-material ('*a priori*')*	Assumptions based on interpretations of the immediate circumstances	Concerns regarding the morale and character of the leadership of the opposing side.

Table 1. A categorisation of military assumptions. Source: adapted from Angstrom, Widen (2015).

To summarize, this dissertation's object of study is the Russian military's *a priori* assumptions at the outset of the Chechen wars. My particular interest is in how they reflect immediate (that is, non-context determined), non-material pre-judgements about the military operations they are planning for. Formulated as a puzzle, it may be said that the interest of my inquiry is to explain the origin of these 'immediate, non-material' assumptions, and to identify whether they have an impact in military planning. Therefore, the goal of this dissertation is to identify whether it is possible to attribute an

influence of discourse on the *a priori* assumptions held by the Russian military planners previous to each Chechen war. As a question, it may be formulated as: *do the operational decisions made by the Russian army in the first and second Chechen wars reveal* a priori *assumptions attributable to hegemonic securitising narratives among the military?* The hypothesis is that, indeed, the 'worldview' contained and transmitted by the hegemonic securitising narrative is reflected in the military planning of the Russian armed forces by way of them acting upon assumptions informed to some identifiable extent by this narrative. In the following sections the theoretical framework, as well as the terms of the hypothesis will be defined.

1.4. Securitisation: from threat perception to threat construction

Following Lowth (2011) and Wilhelmsen (2017), I regard securitisation theory as a viable framework to account for the aforementioned 'immediate, non-material pre-judgements' or simply *a priori* assumptions. I will argue that these *a priori* assumptions can have their origin attributed to securitisation, namely that they are a result of it. Not only does securitisation theory feature a mechanism to conceive threat perception as an inter-subjective process, but also offers an account of the conditions for the use of force (emergency measures) in dealing with an imminent threat. This enables an explanation for change in threat perception in short time frames, beyond the contextual factors mentioned above as accounted by Angstrom and Widen (2015, 36). This section will present a basic model of securitisation theory (on the basis of Buzan et al., 1998; Waever, 1995; Balzaqc, 2002, 2011), which could be considered a simplified version of the 'philosophical' school of securitisation theory, and I will term this the *securitisation model one*. In the following section this model will be problematised.

Securitisation theory is a frame of analysis of international relations which was developed in the context of the widening of the security agenda following the end of the Cold War (Waever, 1995; Buzan et al., 1998, 2-5). It does this based on the premise that there is no essential nature of threats, as these are socially constructed; moreover, 'security' itself becomes contested, as a widening of the concept opens the possibility for a diversity of perspectives on what it implies. These shifts in the concept of security placed it into uncertainty in the post-Cold War era (see Balzaqc, 2003, 34; Balzaqc,

2011, 1; Buzan, 1991, chapter 1). Hence, instead of focusing on 'objective' threats, securitisation theory focuses on the processes that result in something being regarded as a threat (i.e. the process of *securitisation*), compelling extra-ordinary security measures. Its interest is analytical, as securitisation theory does not offer normative statements, but an understanding of why countries pursue emergency measures when they do (Buzan et al., 1998, 30, 207). (This contrasts with the epistemic optimism of the military planners mentioned above.)

While there is variety in the theories falling under the study of securitisation, the focus remains in that threats are inter-subjectively constructed, either by discursive processes or by sociological ones (Balzaqc, 2011, 1). Hence, this 'subjective' aspect of security must not be regarded as the 'subjective' nature of states' perception in the sense of Jervis (1976). Instead, the diversity in society's conceptions of security and multiplicity of security agendas suggests the need to think of it as an inter-subjective construction. The variant of securitisation theory that places the securitisation dynamic on the basis of discourse is based mostly on the developments of Waever (1995), and has been called the 'philosophical' school, or the Copenhagen school of securitisation theory, as it is premised on the linguistic turn of post-structuralist philosophy. Meanwhile, the school of securitisation theory that focuses on the social structures in which the securitisation process is embedded, and has been called the 'sociological' variant (Balzaqc, 2011, 1-2). While these two should be seen as ideal types (see Balzaqc, 2011, 3), my inquiry falls in the school of thought that centres the process of securitisation on discourse.

In either case, securitisation theory frames its analysis on the crucial relationship is that between society-at-large, and those who aim to advance a particular security agenda to the rest of society, with the aim of its priorities be considered as the most urgent ones. This is the *securitising move*, which, following the philosophical variation of securitisation theory (Balzaqc, 2011, 1), may be considered as a finite, Austinian speech-act[3] (Austin, 1975; Buzan, et al., 1998, 26, 32-33; Waever, 1995). This already suggests the units of analysis for this theory: those who utter 'security', i.e. the securitising actor, the audience that the securitising message is directed to, and the contents of the message, including that that has to be protected (the referent object) and

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[3] An Austinian speech-act is an instance in which the division between words and actions becomes blurred, in a 'once said, then done'. Concrete examples are declaring war, making a promise, christening a boat. In this sense, these acts are not statements of truth, but they 'do' things (see Balzaqc, 2011, 1).

the threat (Buzan, et al., 1998, 36; Waever, 1995). The *securitising actor* is those who make the securitising move, and are often politicians, lobbyists, and others in positions to influence politics (Buzan, et al., 1998, 40). The threat is portrayed as necessitating an extra-ordinary response in the form of *emergency measures*, as well as that what has to be protected; both things may be anything that the securitising actor makes them to be (Buzan, et al., 1998, 36). Finally, the audience, those who the actor attempts to persuade that something is a threat, may or may not be convinced by the securitising move (Buzan, et al., 1998, 41). If successful, the actor's account of the threat, of what to protect and the measures to take will shape the audience's threat perception, and hence the state's security priorities. If unsuccessful, the move will be ignored, or resisted. Because of this, the process of securitisation may never be simply imposed (Buzan, et al., 1998, 25; Waever, 1995), as the reaction of the audience is essential to it. Therefore, for an analyst, securitisation theory enables the understanding of why something emerged as a threat at a given point (for a discussion of the role of the analyst in regards to securitisation theory in the Copenhagen School, see Eriksson, 1999, 316-317).

Finally, securitisation may be seen as a process that results in 'security' being enacted. It is initiated by the securitising actor's speech act, which, upon being accepted by the audience, places the referent object above normal politics. This means that the object has been 'securitised', and implies two things: 1) it is not to be dealt within the normal bounds of everyday politics, and 2) it requires the normal rules to be broken or suspended in order to deal with it. These are the emergency measures deployed to address the threat (Buzan et al., 1998, 23-24). This casts audience acceptance in a different light: not only will the audience see the breaking of rules or of the normal political procedures as necessary, but as *legitimate* (Buzan, et al., 1998, 25). For an analyst, this aspect allows an understanding of how something can *become* a threat when before it was seen inside the normal field of everyday actions, or of a field or normal political discussion. In turn, this also offers an understanding of when are security measures introduced.

For the case of the Chechen wars, it can be said then that in each war the extraordinary use of force against the rebels was grounded on Chechnya being successfully articulated as a threat. Moreover, the relevance of *securitisation model one* as a frame of analysis can be seen in the transition from the first to the second Chechen war. This was done by Wilhelmsen (2017), as in her account the second Chechen war

was a case of re-securitisation, albeit from a modified frame of reference from that of securitisation as understood from the framework of Buzan et al. (more on this below). The shift in popular opinion between the wars may be seen as a case of (re-)securitisation, as the Russian general public became receptive to the message of Chechnya being an existential threat, thus becoming an audience consenting to war (Wilhelmsen, 2017). This enabled the political choice of launching a war, and the (re-)introduction of a security frame to address the 'Chechen threat' (2017, 45). However, this model does not offer a bridge between securitisation and a characterisation of concrete emergency measures, nor of the impact of securitisation on military manoeuvres as a component of emergency measures against Chechnya. In this sense, it does not offer a mechanism for conceptualising an 'impact' of securitisation in the character of the emergency measures beyond them being 'extraordinary'.

1.5. Limits to Securitisation

Three main limitations of the *securitisation model one*, also termed negative securitisation (term adapted from Charrett, 2009), regarding the aims of this inquiry are identified to be the following: 1) it does not account for alternatives; 2) it does not characterise the effects of securitisation beyond the imposition of extra-ordinary measures; and 3) it reduces the audience to a passive source of legitimacy. These shortcomings are identified by Charrett (2009) and Wilhelmsen (2017), and are discussed here in light of their applicability for the research question at hand. My interest in this section is to account for the limits of *securitisation model one,* adapted from Buzan et al. (1991, 1998), on the premises of the 'philosophical' variant of securitisation theory (particularly based on Wilhelmsen, 2017). A more thorough critique of it from the perspective of the 'sociological' variant of the theory can be found in Balzaqc (2011). The next section will present a model of securitisation based on Lowth (2011) and Wilhelmsen (2017), that accounts for each of these elements.

Lack of conceptualization for alternatives. The securitising move, as defined by the *securitisation model one*, is presented as a singular instance, without incorporating into its framework the possibility for alternative referent objects present at the same time (Charrett, 2009, 25). Instead, alternatives may be understood in the possibility of

diverse securitising moves, each failing until one is accepted by the audience. While there is a broader normative concern beyond the aims of this dissertation (Charrett, 2009, 30), the issue of alternatives is crucial, as indeed this model does not offer a way to understand how securitisation moves relate to one another, aside from one referent object replacing another.

   Lack of characterization of securitisation's effects. As mentioned above, securitisation theory assumes that it is an unproductive phenomenon to be conceived in negative terms, and as a trigger for other actions to take place. securitisation as a frame of analysis indeed rarely looks into what securitisation *does*. Indeed, in Buzan et al. (1998), the emergency measures are characterized only inasmuch they relate to the normality produced by norms, that is, them operating outside of or in contraposition to them. What securitisation implies for the *positive* selection or preference of measures by authorities, and decision-makers in civilian and military milieus is not made clear. Borrowing from just war theory terminology, negative securitisation proposes a *jus ad bello*, which determines under what grounds is just to launch a war, without suggesting the ways to conduct warfare (Lazar, 2017). This calls for a framework that is capable to characterise the nature of the security measures adopted beyond their 'extraordinary' quality (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 9) in order to account for the specific case of Russian military planning before the Chechen wars.

   Audience passivity and lack of definition. As mentioned by Charrett (2009, 20) securitisation theory offers an instance for the interpellated audience to accept or reject the securitising move, but its role is exhausted in this function. However, to limit this interpellation to a single instance reduces securitisation to a single moment where an undefined audience defines its position in binary terms: approval or disapproval of extraordinary measures. This is problematic for normative reasons (Charrett, 2009, 13), but also because, in assigning an active role to the audience that is limited to a single acceptance/rejection moment, the inter-subjective nature of securitisation is 'lost' (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 22). This calls for a framework that places the centre of analysis not on a single instance, but on a referent that is better able to capture the inter-subjective nature of securitisation and audience acceptance (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 10) in order to account for a specific sub-section of society, namely the Russian military. Moreover, for my inquiry, securitisation's effect on the aforementioned immediate, non-material assumptions would limit the military's agency to a passive recipient of the securitising

actor's referent objects.

These three issues with *securitisation model one* limit the possibility for its applicability to the case of military planning before the Chechen wars. And these three concerns are addressed by Wilhelmsen as part of the need for a second generation securitisation theory, within a post-structuralist framework (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 8-10). A different model of securitisation may be able to capture the inter-subjective threat emergence and audience-securitising actor relations without the shortcomings mentioned above.

1.6. A Post-Structuralist Formulation of Securitisation Theory

To better understand the bounds of the ordinary for emergency measures to take place, my inquiry remains within the 'philosophical' branch of securitisation theory. In this section, Wilhelmsen's post-structuralist version of securitisation theory will be presented and adapted as the theoretical basis for my inquiry. In short, I see in her model a way to characterise the 'effect' of securitisation in regards to emergency measures that both remains within the understanding enabled by speech (or rather discourse), and offers a different account on the relevant components of securitisation.

In order to simplify the categorization of where this framework fits *vis-à-vis* the aforementioned *securitisation model one*, Wilhelmsen's framework will be adapted into *securitisation model two*. The basis for this model is securitisation considered as the effect resulting from securitising narratives becoming hegemonic in society's discourse, by being accepted (actively or passively) by a broad segment of society and by the government. This acceptance is not the outcome of a single instance of deliberation, but the result of a cumulative though unstable consensus around the narrative's proposed measures and accompanying significant representations. *Securitising narratives*, *hegemonic narratives, significant representations,* and *audience acceptance*, all terms here adapted from Wilhelmsen (2017), which will be addressed throughout the chapter.

The central feature of *securitisation model two* is its concept of securitising narratives, and their presence in society. These are not to be confused with 'strategic narratives'. While there might be some overlap, specially regarding the effectiveness in promoting their acceptance by audiences and the ensuing tolerance for casualties (see

Ringsmose, Børgesen, 2011, 512-515), securitising narratives are different. First, they are not the product of an organization, nor do they necessarily emerge as a means to an end. In my framework, securitising narratives replace the Austinian speech-act of the *securitisation model one*. They are referred to by Wilhelmsen (2017, 26) as narratives, for their different representations are articulated in the form of a sequence, offering an 'internally consistent' account of the identities and the relations with one another (more on this below). Securitising narratives can be understood as being present in society on two related levels: a tangible, inter-textual level, and an abstract, inter-subjective level. On the first level, securitising narratives are a constellation of texts which share a common narrative that intends to redraw the borders that define the legitimate use of force. This is the 'material' aspect of the narratives. This constellation is made up of texts (broadly understood to also include speeches, and other verbal articulations) which are reproduced in various domains, and are connected by the central argument they have in common regarding the emergency situation they address (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 22). On the abstract, inter-subjective level, these narratives are embedded into a discursive level of society; discourse is seen by Wilhelmsen (2017, 22; adapted from de Saussure, 1974, cfr. Wilhelmsen 2017, 22) as a structural level (also see van Dijk, 1997), in which inter-subjective processes are connected through their shared language and shared representations (see methodology chapter). A consequence of this is that, in the aggregate, there is a diminished role for securitising actors; as the narrative is repeated, the original securitising actor may be lost as they are no longer the sole (re)producer of the pattern of argumentation of the securitising narrative, and may not have control on how the narrative is echoed. In spite of this separation between inter-textual and inter-subjective levels, securitising narratives are one single phenomenon, as one level informs and changes the other in an open-ended process. The result, is that securitising narratives, though identifiable, are unstable, and subject to change. As Wilhelmsen mentions (2017, 21), while in the Copenhagen school securitisation model the securitising actor is regarded as the driving force, in Wilhelmsen's account the securitising actor is also constituted by the securitisation process. In short, the *securitisation model two* is more focused on the structure while *securitisation model one* is on the securitising actors.

The inter-subjective and inter-textual qualities of the securitising narratives necessitate a different way to address the 'content' of the securitising move. Instead of

focusing on a single object (i.e. the threat), securitising narratives are made of *significant representations*, each of which assign significance to different elements concerning the securitising move. In other words, a securitising narrative is made of a representation of the threat (i.e. the Other), of what to protect (i.e. the Self), what measures to take, and the point when action is needed (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 24-26). In this sense, concrete securitisation narratives may be identified by the representations they re-iterate and share; hence a securitising narrative is a 'pattern of argument' (Wilhelmsen, 2014, 24) found in multiple texts. These representations, when accepted by an audience, become part of the building blocks that construct the social realities in which individual subjectivities are embedded (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 22). Hence it can be said that each of these narratives is a coherent 'worldview'. In the context of a conflict, these representations, when accepted, change the *a priori* view of the conflict, i.e. the view of the conflict previous to the extra-ordinary security measures being implemented (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 37-38). Therefore, in this framework, identifying these patterns of argumentation and the representations that are the content of the securitising narratives is essential for accounting for all intervening factors in the *a priori* assumptions of Russian military planners. It is not sufficient to identify them, but necessary.

The elements of *securitisation model two*, namely the securitising narrative and the significant representations necessitate a different understanding of audience acceptance and of securitising actors. In short, the inter-textual, inter-subjective condition of these narratives dislocates the securitising actors, or, rather, turn the narratives themselves into securitising 'actors'. In this sense, *securitisation model two* is not actor-centric, and the securitising process is no longer actor-driven. This change also implies the introduction of a different dynamic involving securitisation attempts. This competition has the iteration of the securitising narrative's significant representations in various texts as its main mechanism: the more widespread a narrative is, and the more it is repeated, the more it progresses towards becoming hegemonic. Hence, accumulation is the basic mechanism defining the ways to success for a narrative; success itself is reaching the position of defining policy, precluding other options (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 23-24). This change in the framework is justified in the inter-subjective nature of securitisation, which Buzan et al. (1998) already suggested (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 22).

Replacing the Austinian speech-act with securitising narratives also allows for a more sophisticated understanding of audience acceptance. Indeed, instead of

securitisation attempts launched directly into society, they are mediated by the already existing representations and narratives with which it must 'compete' for *hegemony*. In this sense, a securitising narrative emerges into a 'discursive terrain', which includes other narratives about the same thing (i.e. conflict), with different representations, understandings of what to protect, threats conceived and measures suggested (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 33-34). Audience acceptance is hence conceived in terms of power: a securitising narrative that is sufficiently recognized and accepted by society becomes 'hegemonic', which implies the exclusion of alternative narratives and measures, and the legitimation of the measures proposed by the securitising narrative (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 35). In becoming hegemonic, the narrative does not acquire a more stable condition; not only are its representations capable of change, but securitisation overall remains unstable, and vulnerable to unravel (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 36). Moreover, legitimation does not need to be considered as popular support, but may also suggest tolerance and acquiescence to the extra-ordinary measures and norms being broken (2017, 34; see Buzan et al., 1998, 24). Moreover, legitimation is not a blank check. On the basis of Foucault, Wilhelmsen argues (2017, 28) for the necessity of securitisation theory to address the connection of words and acts, and of discourse and material practices. In this sense, legitimacy in the sense mentioned above, offers decision-makers a 'range' of options (emergency measures) that would be seen as legitimate by the accepting audience. Hence, the securitising narrative does not *determine* the measures that are ultimately chosen, but its significant representations *condition* which measures may be chosen *and* be seen as legitimate. This redefines securitisation as a 'discursive process of legitimation' (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 21, 28).

For the case of Russian decision-makers on the eve of the Chechen wars, *securitisation model two* would suggest that a particular securitising narrative became hegemonic at some point before the war, which enabled addressing the Chechen threat through particular measures and operations in war. Inasmuch discourse is a factor in military decision-making, the measures were chosen *because* a particular narrative became hegemonic, and hence offered a range of measures that could be seen as legitimate by the audience. The wars not only were launched as legitimate endeavours, but their planning and execution involved measures that were conditioned by a range of legitimacy offered by the audience. In the case of the first Chechen war, military action was portrayed and articulated as being part of a fight against crime (Wilhelmsen, 2017,

87-91), which may be said to have precluded options for the Russian military to use force in a larger scale and rely on force and not on intimidation in December 1994 (as it may have done against a perceived threat to national security). In the case of the second Chechen war, as Wilhelmsen concludes, the representations of the hegemonic narrative at the outset of the second Chechen war enabled the military to pursue the war using much more force and with a disregard to human rights (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 204).

However, even though Wilhelmsen's conclusion regarding the ruthlessness of the Russian army in Chechnya already suggests something about the kind of assumptions Russian military planners had regarding Chechnya and the war, her account does not offer an insight into military planning *per se*, but of the conditions in which it took place. In other words, *securitisation model two* suggests that, once a securitising narrative becomes hegemonic its accompanying worldview (that is, the one constructed by means of its significant representations) is accepted, but the impact of this worldview upon the perception of decision-makers is not further conceptualized.

1.7. Bridging Securitisation And Military Planning: 'Framing'

In order to move from the logical chain of securitisation happening at a societal level (as described by Wilhelmsen) to conceptualizing its effects among a narrow portion of society, namely that of military planners, further conceptual tools are needed. These are found in Lowth (2011), who precisely conceptualizes the effects of securitisation among strategic planners through the concept of 'framing'. In this sense, both Lowth (2011, 3) and Wilhelmsen (2017) are concerned with what securitisation does. However, Lowth's reflexion is based on a framework similar to that of the *securitisation model one*, so it is necessary to bridge his work with that of Wilhelmsen through the characterisation of military planners as an audience of the hegemonic securitising narrative. This 'bridge', as well as Lowth's work on securitisation and strategic thinking, may be considered as *agent-focused securitisation model two*.

Like Wilhelmsen, Lowth is interested in the question of what securitisation does, particularly of what effect it has on strategic thinking. For Lowth, strategic thinking is the subjective process that defines and decides upon strategy (2011, 3). (It is assumed then that this also involves military planning.) For Lowth, securitisation has an effect of

introducing a security gaze upon strategic thinking, which, for decision-making is conceptualized as 'framing'. Borrowed from linguistics, 'framing' suggests the existence of a particular ideational context (i.e. frame) which shapes how things are perceived and interpreted. It does so by establishing definitions of descriptive terms that limit the understanding of the phenomenon perceived. Hence framing impacts decision-making indirectly. Such frames unfold in a social manner, as they depend on words, terms and other verbal articulations which express the definitions particular to that frame (Lowth, 2011, 2). The origin of said frames can be political, and securitisation is one of the processes which may introduce decision-makers to address a topic under a particular 'frame'. On these terms, it reinforces Wilhelmsen's conclusion (2017, 204), that how a conflict is talked about (i.e. what representations are featured in the hegemonic securitising narrative) influences how the war can be waged.

Framing, as conceptualized by Lowth, bears similarities to Wilhelmsen's securitising narratives, as these also consist of terms (the significant representations) which define a particular worldview. However, Lowth focuses (2011, 2) more narrowly on the cognitive level of the individual, placing emphasis on securitisation's effect on the decision-makers' *a priori* assumptions. This is incompatible with Wilhelmsen's society-wide understanding of securitisation's enabling effect, which places emphasis on legitimate actions and on the social construction of reality through the securitising narratives (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 22), and not on the impact of the narrative on an individual's subjectivity. While acknowledging the possibility of discursive terrains based on the multiplicity of segments in society (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 33), an agent-based account of inter-subjective processes enables a logical bridge between these two different concepts of securitisation. This implies a way to connect the significant representations of the hegemonic narrative with the *a priori* assumptions of the military planners which are born from accepting said narrative. This bridge would also establish the theoretical basis for this inquiry's methodology.

The way to solve this is by considering military planners as a segment of the accepting audience, which also engages with securitising narratives, both capable of offering input to them, and of having their worldview change on the basis of the narrative and its significant representations. Treating the military as a specific part of the audience would imply the existence of a particular 'discursive terrain' of the armed forces (see Wilhelmsen, 2017, 33), on which the emergent securitising narratives would

have to adapt in order to gain acceptance. On the inter-subjective level, this discursive terrain would not be isolated from the rest of society, meaning that the competing securitising narratives found elsewhere would also be present in it. However, the securitising narratives present in the military's discursive terrain would have to adapt to the military's particular, already present representations in order to gain acceptance from the military audience. Otherwise, the narrative would be ignored or explicitly resisted. In regards to military planners, it can be then assumed that their acceptance of a securitising narrative would be mediated by the discursive terrain in which military planners are embedded. The inter-textual level would offer the tangible evidence of securitising narratives adapting to the military's discursive terrain, as texts produced by the military iterate the narratives present in society, albeit in a way that can be assumed to be adapted for its military audience, hence assuming that the military has a particular way to articulate the narrative's significant representations. In other words, by considering the military as a sub-group of society, it is possible to conceptualize its own 'spin' on the securitising narratives present in the rest of society.

To summarize, the concept of a distinct military discursive terrain, and of military planners as an accepting audience bridges the gap between Wilhelmsen's society-wide conception of securitisation and Lowth's agent-focused account of securitisation's effects. The logical chain of the *agent-focused*, *securitisation model two* stands as follows: as the military accepts the hegemonic securitising narrative, it can be assumed that individual subjectivities that are part of the military's inter-subjective discursive terrain will incorporate the narrative's significant representations into their worldview (something which is assumed in the model as described in a previous section). By doing so, their perception and interpretation of security threats becomes mediated by the narrative's representations, and hence their thinking becomes 'framed'. As this frame shaped some of the *a priori* assumptions of the military planners, it can be assumed that it also had an impact in military planning and execution. Whether it had or not an impact is what my inquiry sets out to discover.

1.8. The operative and tactical levels of military planning

As mentioned above, in order to move forward into an analysis of the concrete cases of 'framing' it is necessary to define precisely what kind of military planning is to be analysed. This choice will narrow the inquiry, as analysing all the manoeuvres of the Russian army in the wars would be an ambitious enterprise, beyond the objectives of the research.

From a frame of analysis of military organisation in planning and command (such as Jones, 1988) we can think of military planning within a chain of decision-making, which corresponds to an army's hierarchy and needs (see Freedman, 2013, xii). These are the strategic-operational-tactical levels of analysis. Typically, a military will be connected to the political goals of a country at the strategic level, which is the broadest level that frames defence policy (Angstrom, Widen, 2015, 35). In it, the definition of political goals to be achieved by the war, as well as the basic nature of the operations are defined, and as such it is a conceptualization stage in war planning (Klein, 1991, 10). Regarding the Chechen wars, the strategic goals of the Russian campaign, both in regards to the change in leadership in the RF, to the international political environment that enabled the course taken, have been the object of study of various works (for instance, Dannreuther, March, 2008; Kramer, 2005; Pilloni, 2001; Russell, 2007, 74). In short, it can be said that the strategic goal of the Kremlin in Chechnya was to have Chechnya become again a subject of the RF, to prevent other republics from seceding and to reduce the risks coming from an independent, misgoverned and potentially disruptive Chechnya. While this statement can be problematised, to further discuss the strategic/political level is beyond the scope of this inquiry.

The other two levels, the operational and tactical, are the real interest of this inquiry. Among the three, the most isolated level of military decision-making is the tactical level. This corresponds to the 'micro' level of military planning, which focuses on the concrete application of force, the individual battles, and generally involves a short timeframe, consisting of particular encounters with the opposing side and the rules and means of engagement. In between these two, there is the operational level, which is tasked with a time frame of whole operations, with the overall objective that, at the campaign's end, the strategic aims will be fulfilled. This requires the translation of the

political and strategic concepts into logistics, mission assignments, and force composition (Klein, 1991, 11; Angstrom, Widen, 2015, 58, 64 ; Jones, 1988, 5-9). However, plans may change as the operation unfolds, and the assumptions made in the planning stage are revised and confronted with the realities on the ground. This is why this dissertation is interested in military planning before the experience of each war took place, particularly in the *a priori* conceptions of the conflict. As mentioned by Klein (1991, 11-12) it is in the operational level that the subjective component of military planning is most visible. For this inquiry, the assumptions made in the operational and tactical levels of military planning will be assessed through secondary literature (see methodology in the next chapter) to try and attribute certain assumptions to Lowth's 'framing' effect of securitisation. I find in Wilhelmsen's book not only a basis for this dissertation's framework, but also for its methodology, as it allows for securitisation theory to be fruitful methodologically (see Buzan, 2010, 59).

1.9. Conclusion

To conceptualise a relationship between discourse and military planning, a parsimonious model of military *a priori* assumptions was suggested on the basis of Angstrom and Widen (2015). This model categorised military assumptions according to their possible origins: material (i.e. calculation of resources available), non-material context-driven (history, ideology), and non-material immediate assumptions (Table 1). Attention throughout this dissertation will focus on the later one. I attribute the origin of this type of assumption to discourse, in particular to the framing effect that hegemonic securitising narratives have on military commanders. Hence, it was argued in this chapter that discourse has to be incorporated into an explanation of how the Russian military decided upon its war plans in Chechnya. The role discourse played is portrayed not as particularly salient, as no benchmark was offered to compare it to other factors, but it is suggested to be *unavoidable* in understanding the sources of the choices made in planning for the war. The involvement of discourse is necessary as it explains the origin of some of the *a priori* conceptions of the conflict of the military planners. These conceptions had a role in planning for the wars, more saliently for the operations conducted at the early stages of the campaign, before combat experience began to

prompt changes in course.

The next chapter will introduce the methodology, which is designed to pursue three primary tasks: to identify the significant representations of the hegemonic securitising narratives, to determine which narrative was hegemonic at the outset of each Chechen war, and to assess whether the significant representations of the hegemonic securitising narrative were reflected in the secondary literature on the Russian military's operations in the Chechen wars.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction

As mentioned in the introduction, this dissertation's empirical work offers a speculative approach to Russian military planning in the first and second Chechen wars. To illustrate, it can be said that the basis of this speculative argumentation is that, at some point before the failed December 1994 assault on Grozny or the September 1999 assault on Chechnya, Russian military commanders met to discuss the operations that would take place and traced a plan to carry them out. As I do not have access to them, it this is a speculative approach. Nonetheless, according to the *agent-based securitisation model two*, the tone, way and content of the discussions in these meetings should have reflected the patterns of argumentation of the hegemonic securitising narrative. In particular, as the commanders are assumed to be a segment of the accepting audience of the hegemonic securitising narrative, they should have carried over the *a priori* assumptions implicit in the framing caused by the securitising narratives. Therefore, to identify the connection between discourse and these hypothetical discussions that took place in the Russian military (or any other military), it becomes necessary to identify the securitising narratives through their significant representations, and to provide evidence that there was a congruence between the military operations and the securitising narratives. As with the theoretical framework, my methodology is also adapted from Wilhelmsen (2017) in that it also uses discourse analysis on open sources on the Chechen case. However, there are some variations in the methodology, chief among them the narrow focus on a segment of society (the military), while Wilhelmsen addressed the whole societal level.

The empirical research is divided in two main phases composed of eight stages in total. The first phase is meant to capture the inter-textual level of the securitising narratives through text-based research methods. The second phase addresses the

connection between the securitising narratives, framing, and assumptions identified in the second Chechen war. The first phase is enabled by what the *agent-based, securitising model two* describes as the inter-textual level of the securitising narratives; as texts registered and reproduced the patterns of argumentation and significant representations of the securitising narratives, it is possible to identify them. Since the securitising narratives were introduced to the military's discursive terrain, they entered the open-ended process of adapting to the terrain, which implied adjusting the words and verbal articulations used to transmit the narrative's significant representations. This makes the publications of the Russian military prior to each Chechen war a source of information of their discursive terrain, and a way to identify which representations characterised the narrative that eventually became hegemonic. As the military planners are assumed to be part of the accepting audience, albeit belonging to the particular discursive terrain of the military, it can be then assumed that them accepting the hegemonic securitising narrative also implied them having their strategic thinking frame by the narrative's significant representations.

This logic chain enables the first phase of empirical research, namely identifying the securitising narratives that were present in the military's discursive terrain prior to the war, and that were in a position to shape the military planners' *a priori* assumptions of the war. However, a second phase of research (Table 2) is necessary to see whether the Russian armed forces acted upon these assumptions, to identify whether they actually acted as assumptions in planning. While the actual plans are not available for researchers, their assumptions have been characterised by researchers before on the basis of what is known of the manoeuvres and tactics of the Russian army in Chechnya. Therefore, the second phase of empirical research will be 'outsourced', and will be limited to a revision of accounts of the Russian military in the Chechen wars. In reading them, attention is placed on the secondary sources' interpretation, often inductive, of the assumptions the Russian military had at the start of the war. The assumptions identified by the literature will be then assessed to evaluate their relationship to the significant representations of the hegemonic securitising narrative (see Table 2). The next chapter will present the results, and the step-by-step account of the causal link. The following chapter will address the findings in light of the broader literature.

Stage #	Phase #	Task	Description
1	1	Sample-making	Retrieval of texts by keywords.
2	1	Sample-making	Filtration of texts by relevance (narrow the sample).
3	1	Data gathering	Coding for identity, representations, measures, threats.
4	1	Data gathering	Review of the secondary sources on the Chechen wars, retrieving the assumptions of the Russian military identified by them.
5	1	Data analysis	Categorization of codes of stage 3 into discrete 'narratives'.
6	2	Data analysis	Categorization of assumptions identified in stage 4, to single out the immediate, non-material assumptions.
7	2	Data analysis	Connecting the narratives identified in stage 5 with assumptions identified in stage 6 (result: identify hegemonic narratives).
8	2	Data analysis	Quantitative analysis of the sample on the basis of keywords to identify hegemonic narratives.

Table 2. Summary of the methodology per stages.

2.2. The First Phase: Tracing the Discursive Terrain of the Russian Military

With the goal of capturing the inter-textual level of the securitising narratives present in the military's discursive terrain, the premise for this inquiry's methodology is that texts have a social impact. The basis for this first phase is Discourse Analysis on the basis of van Dijk's (1997) conceptualization of the social impact of texts, and its main method is adapted from Wilhelmsen (2017, chapter 4). Going back to the inter-textual and inter-subjective dimensions of the securitising narratives, the impact of texts is registered at the inter-subjective level, involving the production of meaning, namely what van Dijk refers to as 'discourse'. This premise may be understood as one operating in two layers: the contextual level of text emergence, and the social role of the text. The contextual level is here approached in light of van Dijk's work (1997, 19, 21); it is the structure that shapes how messages are produced and received. As such, it must be seen as a level of analysis that focuses on the broader social processes in which text-production is embedded. This layer then involves not only how the receiver of the text interprets it, but how the act of interpretation which is based on previous knowledge. As

this is the layer which directly addresses the cognition involved in interpreting a text, it reveals not only the structures of the mind that interpret a text, but also the variation of representations produced by the text's receiver. Between these two layers, there is *sociocultural cognition*: the repertoire of socially-produced representations available that, together with cognition *tout court*, produces representations (1997, 17), which for our inquiry may be more narrowly understood as the interpretation of texts. In short, by introducing van Dijk's terminology, I differ from Wilhelmsen's concept of 'discourse' (2017, 21), narrowing its meaning to the structure where securitising narratives are socialized.

In her study, Wilhelmsen does not dwell on the dynamic that connects the strategic use of terms in producing a speech and the decoding of them. The above mentioned layer of analysis of individual text interpretation is crucial for this inquiry's methodology; it focuses on what texts attempt to *accomplish* (that is, beyond any stated aim) *through the cognitive process of interpreting the text*. While it is the receiver that interprets the text, the sender can employ strategies for the text to induce the reader to have certain thoughts or images. Hence, when producing a text, intentionality of the sender is 'added' into it through to the strategic choices involved in its constitutive process (writing, enunciating, or otherwise articulating). However, this may not necessarily be done through a direct 'infusion' of intentionality, aiming at conveying an image 'directly' (i.e. explicitly stating). For them to become performative, the texts, aside from their actual content, employ various strategies which tap into functions that are contextually defined, and as such escape clear-cut observation, and thus may be seen as inherently 'messy' (1997, 13-17). For this inquiry, these strategies are crucial in revealing the performative aspect of the texts (i.e. their broad policy recommendations, which may not be explicitly stated), and represent the inter-subjective nature of discourses. Because of this, this messiness will be interpreted as part of the communicative strategies of the texts, used in pursuit of the goals they seek to accomplish. These strategies are identified in the use of substantives, adjectives, and other verbal structures that are used to refer to the securitising narrative's main representations (Self, Other, measures) in spite of their lack of precision. These strategies are conceived by me (on the basis of Wilhelmsen, 2017, chapter 4) as conveying the significant representations of the securitising narratives. For example, the catch-all, rhetorically charged use of the term 'bandit' to refer to the Chechen guerrillas

is 'messy', in that it 'adds' a 'messy' layer which does not contribute to the comprehension of the Chechen guerrillas through a precise description, but by the use of an evocative term. Another example is the conspicuous use of the word 'civilisational' in describing the conflict.

In order to make a summative assessment of the individual instances of textual analysis, this level of analysis will not be 'scaled up' to analysing the contextual discursive level mentioned above, i.e. the one that addressed the whole of society as a significant audience. Instead, it will be assumed that the narrative identified as hegemonic in the discursive terrain of the military is the military's version of the securitising narrative that is hegemonic in society overall. As narratives aim to gain acceptance through accumulation, the competing securitisation narratives may be empirically identified in the individual texts that repeat the narrative's content, and, most crucially, rhetorical strategies. As elaborated above, the 'messy' use of substantives, adjectives and other verbal structures constitute the narrative's strategies to shape the reader's perception of the conflict (Lowth, 2011, 2-6; Wilhelmsen, 2017, 34-38). On these terms, this dissertation's method's purpose is to identity the narratives, through identifying their rhetorical strategies that were present in the military's discursive terrain before the wars were launched. This 'version', as mentioned above, has its origin in the adaptation of the securitising narrative to the military's discursive terrain. Hence my aim is to 'scale up' only up to the level of the military's *a priori* conceptions of Chechnya, which reflect the conditioned range of actions that are legitimate for them to pursue. In this sense, this inquiry attempts to make an inductive assessment of the Russian armed forces inner discussion of the Chechen wars.

In sum, the method to be employed is Discourse Analysis (DA) as used by Wilhelmsen (2017, chapter 4), but based on van Dijk (1997) in its gathering of data, retrieving of representations and mapping. Table 2 summarizes the main aspects of this dissertation's empirical research. The methodological assumptions are based on van Dijk's (1997, chapter 1) work on the inter-subjective production of meaning, and on the social impact of the text. These methodological aspects reflect the inter-subjective nature of securitisation (Buzan et al., 1998, chapter 2).

2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

With the focus of interest on the military's *a priori* conceptions of the conflict in Chechnya, it is assumed that these were reflected in the process of accumulation of the securitising narratives in the military's discursive terrain, as these are repeated in the military's main newspaper. The sample of texts analysed consists of a selection of texts from the main newspaper of the Russian armed forces, *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Krasnaya Zvezda or KZ for short), as it is assumed that it would reflect the securitising narrative espoused by the armed forces in regards to Chechnya. A text was be selected if it had Chechnya or the North Caucasus as its subject. The sample covers one year of the newspaper's publications, from 11 December 1993 to 11 December 1994, and 26 August 1998 to 26 August 1999, in each case before the wars began. Data was accessed through the 'Current Digest of the Russian Press' online database, which offers access to researchers to fully-digitized, text-only versions of various Russian publications. This was important, as it enabled the content analysis method described below. According to the framework, the texts in the KZ newspaper about Chechnya repeat securitising narratives about the conflict, which can be assumed to be present in the rest of society, either competing for hegemony or already as hegemonic. The reason for covering a complete year is to have an opportunity to identify the consolidation of a narrative as hegemonic at the outset of the war, and to have the opportunity to account for alternative explanations (see next section).

Before each war, the KZ newspaper followed the events in Chechnya as they unfolded, but also offered extensive coverage of the Russian-Chechen relationship and intra-Chechen events before each war. The way relevant articles were identified and incorporated into the sample was by a word search; articles containing the word 'Chechnya' and 'Caucasus' were included, but also those that had the word 'terrorist', 'Wahhabi', 'separatist', and 'nationalist'. The aim of such method was to ensure that the sample included not only articles about Chechnya and the conflict, but also articles with a different overall subject that touched upon the Chechen situation. While the keywords were selected in a purposive manner, to diminish the possibility of bias a large sample of texts was made. The resulting pool of articles consisted of 471 texts, among them interviews, news reports, long-form narratives about the life of soldiers, and analysis pieces. The period which explored the first war narratives began in 2 December, 1993

(edition number 278) and finished in 30 November, 1994 (edition number 275), with 162 articles in total. This is the first part of the sample. The second part covers the remaining 309 articles that correspond to the second war, and cover the year before main operations took place, from 1 August, 1998 (edition 171) to 31 August, 1999 (edition 188). In analysing the sample, a sorting method was used to further narrow the sample, and three categories were established for purposive sampling (Berg, 2001, 32): articles with no relation with the topic, to be removed, articles that are relevant (i.e. that have a topic other than Chechnya as their main topic, but do address Chechnya however briefly), and articles that had Chechnya as their main subject. This narrowed the sample to 226 texts, both relevant and on the subject of Chechnya, 91 in the first war, and 135 for the second one. On them, the mapping of representations was made, according to the charting method adapted from Wilhelmsen (2017, 46).

The purposive sampling and then mapping methods involved various decisions about which articles to include and to exclude, and about which words and phrases constituted representations of the actors and situations in the conflict. This implied the use of judgement beyond a precise algorithm, introducing my subjectivity in assessing each article. This makes this inquiry an interpretative one. However, many articles included in the sample but then removed did not elaborate a narrative about Chechnya and Russia, but mentioned the republic only in a tangential manner; this was overwhelmingly present in the second year of the sample, when many articles mentioned veterans of the Chechen war, or offered chronicles of the first war, both of which offered no description of the contemporary events unfolding in Chechnya at the time. Moreover, many articles that eventually did remain in the sample did not contribute clearly to any narrative, such as short news reports from Chechnya which do not feature any representation of the actors, threats and solutions (although most did contain the use of the keywords 'bandit' and 'criminals'). This means that, in spite of the large number of texts in the sample, the final number of texts referenced to in this chapter is only a fraction, consisting of those pieces that best represent and articulate the narrative's components. Finally, the results are expected to produce imprecise but complete accounts of the narratives present in the run-up to each war. In general, all narratives observed suggested a diagnosis of the Chechen situation, and suggested possible solutions, either mentioned concrete measures to be taken, or by expressing their vision of the eventual *dénouement* of the Chechen problem.

The data collected is meant to reflect the narratives's main significant representations of the Chechen conflict. In concrete terms, the data is composed of descriptions of the primary actors in the conflict, the immediate situation, and the proposed measures to take, either from a technical or a normative perspective. For analysing this data, a two-stage approach is taken. First, the texts of the sample were deductively coded for the necessary elements of the securitising narratives in a grid. On the basis of Wilhelmsen (2017, 46) categories in this grid sort the representations present in the 471 texts as representations of the 'Self' (i.e. what the military ought to protect), the 'Other' (i.e. the enemy, the Chechen rebels, the 'bandits'), the measures proposed, the threat and the immediate situation. The 471 articles identified as related to the wars were coded deductively for representations of Self, Other (Chechnya and the source of threats), the threats, the immediate situation, and of actions to be taken (Annex 1). Two rounds of coding were made. The resulting categories were grouped and are considered to be the discrete securitising narratives that were present throughout the period in the military's discursive terrain. A thorough description of these categories (i.e. the securitising narratives) is the desired output of the first stage. Under these parameters, the military's continuous use or abandoning of certain ways to refer to the Chechens, Russia, or the measures that must be taken, is significant, as it indicates changes in the elements of the hegemonic narrative, or, where the changes more comprehensive, a complete replacement of narratives. A narrative will be recognized as hegemonic when it will demonstrate to be stable, exhibiting a consistent range of defined representations. The existence of non-securitising narratives is not contemplated in the framework, but a way to think of this distinction is that securitising narratives seek to address the existence of a threat, and the necessity to take action against it.

To identify what narratives are hegemonic, two criteria are used. First, as Wilhelmsen suggests (2017, 52) there is a process of accumulation of statements which reproduce the hegemonic narrative's threat representation; this suggests the necessity of incorporating a quantitative component on the basis of keywords decided upon the terms conveying the significant representations of each narrative. For this purpose, content analysis is used. As Berg mentions (2001, 242), content analysis is a method useful for retrieving information from the texts and to offer the researcher an insight into the worldview of the authors collected in the sample. This is consistent with the inter-subjective level of analysis introduced in the previous chapter, as it identifies the

securitising narratives as contributing to the construction of the audience's social realities. This study used the AntConc software, particularly its 'Concordance plot' tool in order to graphically illustrate the results.[4] It is assumed that the hegemonic narrative will be more present by the end of the sample (i.e. close to the war) as it became hegemonic, and as it displaced alternative securitising narratives as mentioned by Wilhelmsen (2017, 36). The keywords selected and the results are presented in the next chapter. Crucially, before each war, the keywords of a single securitising narrative should appear more than the keywords of other, competing securitising narratives. The sample upon which these keywords were searched for is the version that includes 471 articles in total, divided by those of the first part (1993-1994) and the second part (1998-1999). Second, on the basis of further findings (see next section), a comparison between the structure of the narratives and the assumptions of the military will allow to further make the case for one securitising narrative status as hegemonic.

2.4. The Second Phase: Identifying and Assessing the Assumptions

The second phase of the empirical research aims to identify the assumptions that the Russian military had, and to assess whether they reflect the 'framing' effect of securitising narratives, as described in the previous chapter. As access to primary sources is restricted, this will be pursued primarily through secondary sources. The broad literature on the Chechen wars offers various observations made by researchers on the basis of induction, interviews, and fieldwork, some of which involves assessments of the assumptions that the Russian military had while entering to the conflict. As mentioned above, special attention will be given to the middle and lower levels of military planning, namely the operational and tactical levels. While this is an imperfect method to assess the place of the Chechen war in the 'worldview' of the Russian military, it is consistent with the aim of assessing the impact of said worldview, inasmuch it was reflected in the actions planned and taken by the Russian military. Following the framework, the manoeuvres taken at the start of each war should reflect to some extent the proposed solutions found in the narrative that was hegemonic by the start of the war. The intention is to identify whether discourse had an impact or not, and

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[4] An open-source software by Lawrence Anthony for text analysis. URL = www.laurenceanthony.net

not to assess how much weight did it have *vis-à-vis* the other factors determining military planning.

Even though it is assumed that war was launched on the basis of the range of options conditioned by the hegemonic securitising narrative, a comparison between the assumptions and the narratives will be made. Having identified the immediate, non material assumptions (see Table 1) of the Russian military concerning the operational and tactical levels, it will be assessed whether they reflect the prescriptions of the narratives identified in the previous phase, and of which one in particular. As the status of hegemony of a securitising narrative implies the exclusion of alternative narratives (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 22), it is expected that only one of the narratives identified will be reflected on the assumptions of the military.

By addressing both wars, a form of diachronic comparison is made, albeit limited to the two episodes of the securitisation of Chechnya among the military. This does not constitute a separate stage of research, but is the result of the design and inclusion of both wars in this study. The comparison of narratives and assumptions of each war can be seen as a test for casual inference, albeit a 'weak' one (in a sense similar to the tests in process tracing as described by Collier, 2011, 825). In concrete terms, it accomplishes three things towards the fulfilment of the research question: if passing, the continued relevance of discourse affecting military assumptions in the same conflict (in spite of there being two wars) can be inferred; and it accounts for the diversity of securitising narratives that are in competition for hegemony. It does not show causality between one discourse being adopted as hegemonic in one war having an impact in the second, nor does this 'tracing' constitute the core of the causality of my argument, but adds leverage to it by showing the continuous relevance and impact of discourse in Russian military planning in the cases considered.

2.5. Conclusion

The methodology suggested here, adapted from Wilhelmsen (2017), but with input from van Dijk (1997), is meant to offer the grounds for a possible contribution to securitisation theory, regarding what securitisation does to military planning. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the hypothesis on which this methodology

is grounded is that Russian military planners' discussions on military plans and manoeuvres were at least in part informed by hegemonic securitising narratives, which implies that the choices made by military commanders reflect this influence. For carrying out a research on the connection between said choices and discourse it was not possible for me to bring in new evidence or do fieldwork, so non-intrusive, remote methods are used. The methodology proposed two stages. First, a stage that aims at capturing the significant representations of the securitising narratives, determining the hegemonic status of one of them. Discourse analysis grounded on van Dijk, deductive coding for identity representations and quantitative content analysis on keywords are used in that stage. For the second stage, the broad contours military manoeuvres in each war are addressed, with the goal of recompiling what the secondary literature on the war says about the assumptions Russian military commanders held at the outset of each war.

The following two chapters present the results from phase one and phase two of the research, and are then followed by a discussion and final remarks.

3. PHASE ONE: IDENTIFYING THE SECURITISING NARRATIVE'S

3.1. Introduction

The empirical research of this inquiry is presented in two chapters. The first one addresses the discursive dimension of the dissertation, and the second one offers an interpretive account of the 'empirical' war, and a discussion of the findings. While the main contours of the Chechen wars were already addressed in previous sections, a brief background and description of the conflict will be offered in this section, to contextualise the narratives described later in the chapter.

The central aim of this chapter is to present the results from the analysis of narratives present in the KZ newspaper. In describing the narratives, the intention of this chapter is not to capture the discourse at the society level at the time the samples were gathered (as mentioned in the previous chapter, it could be said that that was Wilhelmsen's empirical research, owing to the broader sample gathered in her 2017 work), but only the state of the military's discursive terrain. Although this inquiry's focus is on the hegemonic narratives, competing narratives will be presented as well, as their comparison and distinction enables a better understanding of the alternatives present. The relationship between the hegemonic narratives and the operations on the ground will be addressed in the next chapter. This chapter's conclusion will offer a summary, without yet offering concluding remarks. These will be made in the next chapter, following the next stage of data analysis, namely the analysis of the manoeuvres made by the Russian army previous of the first and second wars, and the contextualisation of the findings (discussion section).

3.2. Narratives

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the significant representations identified in the texts were categorised into discrete securitising narratives. Among these, variety is found in terms of their significant representations, threats identified and measures proposed, which give the basis for their compartmentalisation. Narratives that did not include the description of a threat and a prescription of actions to be taken against it were removed from the sample as irrelevant. Therefore, all narratives referred to here are securitising narratives even when referred to just as 'narratives'.

As described in the previous chapter, the securitising narratives identified in the KZ newspaper were considered not as isolated texts about the war, but as narratives taking part in the broader, society-wide *discourse* about the war (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 44; van Dick, 1997, 19). However, the methodology of this inquiry is not capable to address their connection to the broader debate, which has to be bracketed for this inquiry: the narratives present in the KZ newspaper represent not isolated interpretations of the events in society, but represent the military's assessment of those events and narratives. Because of this, some narratives presented below are to be considered just as brief 'echoes' and repetitions of narratives present in Russian society at the time (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 111). Nonetheless, throughout the sample 'main' narratives were observed, each of them evolving as the events in the Caucasus unfolded, but with one eventually becoming hegemonic. An important note is that the mention of a securitising narrative's significant representations does not imply that the article necessarily endorses that narrative; an case expanded upon later on mentions a narrative solely as a straw man, and as an alternative telling of the events which should be (according to the author) dismissed. The names of the narratives were decided upon the main argument or central component of it. The narratives identified are listed in alphabetical order; as the intention is not to re-create the competition between narratives and the consolation of the hegemonic narrative.

3.3. Narratives Identified For The First War

In the sample of texts corresponding to the first war, four securitising narratives were identified: the *abandoning the empire narrative*, the *civilisational narrative*, the *Dudaev narrative*, and the *legal narrative*. Of these, only the last two were present throughout the sample of texts, and the *Dudaev narrative* is identified as the one that eventually became the hegemonic securitising narrative at the outset of the war.

Securitising narrative	Focus
Civilisational	Irreconcilable, 'civilisational' differences between Chechnya and Russia destine both to intractable conflict.
Dudaev	A narrative focused on the regime in Grozny, and its disposition to cooperate with Moscow. (This is the narrative that eventually became hegemonic.)
Final withdrawal	Isolationist narrative, advocating for the exit of Russia from Chechnya, and the Caucasus in general.
Legal	Law enforcement and stability in Chechnya, and its leadership's willingness to pursue criminals.

Table 3. Narratives present in the KZ newspaper previous to the first Chechen war (period of the sample: 2 December, 1993 to 30 November, 1994).

3.4. Civilisational narrative

This narrative emphasizes the 'civilisational' differences between Chechnya and Russia, elevating them to the origin of threats to Russia coming from the republic. It sees as the main threat coming from it the possibility of a new, protracted 'Caucasus war', on the lines of the one fought by the Russian empire in the region in the mid ninetheenth century. Nonetheless, facing this threat, Russia considers itself as a protector of the peoples of the Caucasus, who benefited from Moscow's rule and civilisational mission, and that at the time relied on the Russian military for stability (40/94/78Apr08; 44/94/88Apr20; 111/94/192Aug23)[5]. Moreover, in the Caucasus,

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[5]

Moscow advances its geopolitical interests, which amount to an incentive for continuing its presence there (44/94/88Apr20). In regards to the question of Chechnya's belonging to Russia, it sees it as a non-controversial issue: the republic, in spite of its *de facto* *s*eparation, remains part of Russia (111/94/192Aug23).

This narrative bifurcates on the future of the relationship between Russia and the Caucasus, and the possibility of continuing together. An 'optimistic' version sees the possibility of reconciliation and the benefits from Russia's continued presence in the Caucasus (44/94/88Apr20). Another solution in the same vein is based on the possibility of a preventive strike, and of the educational nature of a new 'disciplinary' war effort in the Caucasus (111/94/192Aug23). A pessimistic assessment acknowledges the possibility of such proactive approach to the region, but does not see an easy way ahead for Russia's continuing presence (100/94/178Aug06).

Although this narrative did not feature prominently in the sample, some of its representations were shared with the other narratives, such as Chechnya's lack of governance and inherent instability (111/94/192Aug23).

The way the articles from the sample are referenced is through the following coding: number of the article in the sample/year of the article/edition number followed by the month and day of publication. In the reference section the all details are included. For easier understanding, the higher the first number is, the later it is in time; when the number is beyond 162, the portion of the sample corresponding to the second war begins.

Civilisational narrative	Main components	Representations	Articles
Actors	Russia	Protector of people in the Caucasus.	44/94/88Apr20
		Benefiting from its continuous involvement in the Caucasus, looking for its national interest there.	111/94/192Aug23
	Russia (alternative version)	Involved in a costly and thankless civilisational task in the Caucasus, of which it cannot withdraw.	100/94/178Aug06
	Caucasus	Slipping back into medieval times.	100/94/178Aug06
	Chechnya	Lacks stability, unruly.	111/94/192Aug23
	Dudaev	Contributing to Chechnya's division and strife.	111/94/192Aug23
Threats	'Caucasus war'	Opponents to Moscow's presence in the Caucasus are keen on engaging Russia in a protracted war.	100/94/178Aug06; 111/94/192Aug23
Solution	Continued involvement	In spite of difficulties, Russia and the Caucasus benefit from Moscow's involvement in the region.	44/94/88Apr20; 111/94/192Aug23
	Preventive strike	As Moscow remains an important actor in the region, it should allow itself to intervene if threats are mounting. War would 'educate' the Caucasus.	100/94/178Aug06; 111/94/192Aug23

Table 4. The main components of the *civilisational narrative*.

3.5. The Dudaev Narrative

This narrative sees the origin of Chechnya's instability in the Grozny regime, particularly in Dudaev's leadership. It focuses on his (alleged) disposition and volition to cooperate or frustrate peace, negotiate with Moscow and with the internal Chechen opposition to Dudaev (among others, the Chechen militias rebelling against Grozny), his ambitions to pursue regime consolidation and Chechnya's independence, and ability and willingness to combat crime in the Chechen republic. In this sense, this narrative assigns a highly personalistic nature to the Chechen authorities and government, concentrating its decision-making in the figure of the President. (Some of these aspects would also repeat themselves in the second war in regards to Maskhadov and his regime.) Throughout this narrative, Chechnya's place in Russia is not clearly defined, though its *de facto* separation is acknowledged in general (162/94/275Nov30). It can then be said that, statements regarding Chechnya's belonging to Russia were undermined by the recognition of Moscow's lack of reach into it, and by the necessity to negotiate with Dudaev for establishing relations with the republic (120/94/207Sep09).

The *Dudaev narrative* saw many different solutions to the Chechen problem, though all of them focusing on its regime. By the start of the sample, this narrative mostly espoused the solution of normalisation: a bilateral agreement between Moscow and Chechnya's leadership that would allow some sort of 'normality' in the relationship. The agreement with Tatarstan made in that time was mentioned as an example of how the relationship may improve (59/94/122Jun01). For this reason, it represents Dudaev as the crucial Chechen actor, which has the ability to decide whether to place the relationship with Moscow in a path towards normalization. In such view, Russia is represented as desiring the agreement 'enough' ('Со стороны Москвы, по-моему, этого желания достаточно', 62/94/124Jun03) for it to be pursued. Moreover, it sees the use of force against Chechnya as an undesirable option to be avoided (149/94/248Oct27). However, Chechnya in general is represented as divided, with divisions being driven by Dudaev's leadership (10/93/292-3Dec18). And, as events in Chechnya evolved, a peaceful transition was seen as less viable, as Dudaev's character and goals were seen as incompatible with normalisation. While early on in the sample he was represented as willing to fight against crime (74/94/148Jul02), Dudaev is increasingly represented as 'paranoid', irrationally suspicious of Moscow's intentions

(61/94/123Jun02), even fearing an invasion later in the sample (125/94/216Sep20), and of the 'internal enemy' (107/94/187Aug17), which are seen as impeding Dudaev to further cooperation with the 'Federal centre', and have control of the republic in general (108/94/188Aug18). In one case, he is represented as an obstacle for Chechnya and Russia to cooperate together in solving the economic and law crisis in the republic (120/94/207Sep09). Once the intra-Chechen fight intensified, it was attributed to the Chechen opposition to Dudaev the solution of him stepping down from power (116/94/200Sep01). This was not thought at first as necessitating the use of force; even references to Czechoslovakia's 'velvet revolution' were made (97/94/176Aug04; 105/94/184Aug13), but eventually forceful regime change became the sole admissible solution (153/94/259Nov10). For this narrative, the threat to Russia emanating from Chechnya is born from the inter-Chechen conflict, between Dudaev and the Chechen opposition against him; it is suggested that this conflict could spill over and affect the rest of the country (152/94/254Nov03).

Dudaev narrative	Main components	Representations	Articles
Actors	Dudaev	Suspicious of Moscow and of the opposition; sees 'mythical threats'.	61/94/123Jun02; 125/94/216Sep20 ; 130/94/224Sep29
		Chechnya's 'main problem'	116/94/200Sep01
		Willing but unable to fight terrorism and crime.	74/94/148Jul02
		Obstacle for Chechen and Russian peoples coming together	120/94/207Sep09
	Moscow	Well-wishing	62/94/124Jun03
		Unwilling to use force.	149/94/248Oct27
	The opposition	Excluded from the political dialogue with Dudaev.	116/94/200Sep01
Solutions	Agreement, normalization	Patient Moscow, paranoid Dudaev	62/94/124Jun03
	Replacement of Dudaev I	'Velvet revolution' (Czechoslovakia)	97/94/176Aug04; 105/94/184Aug13
	Replacement of Dudaev II	Overthrow led by the opposition, regime change to prevent larger, regional conflict.	116/94/200Sep01; 153/94/259Nov10
Threats	De-stabilization	Conflict inside of Chechnya threatens regional stability and Russia.	153/94/259Nov10
		Inter-Chechen conflict transferring unto the rest of Russia.	152/94/254Nov03

Table 5. The main components of the *Dudaev narrative.*

3.6. The Final Withdrawal Narrative

This narrative is reproduced once in an article, but does so referring to it as an inadmissible option. That article, I identify as belonging to the *civilisational narrative* (111/94/192Aug23), which also contributes to the understanding of that narrative. The *final withdrawal narrative* is roughly described as one that characterizes Russia as an unwilling participant in the Caucasus (uses the trope of Russia as a 'кавказская

пленница'), for which the best option is for Russia is an 'finalizing, irrevocable 'withdrawal' from the Caucasus' ('окончательного, бесповоротного "ухода" России с Кавказа'). In concrete terms, this narrative suggests that continuing Russia's involvement in the Caucasus has inflicted great costs, and that leaving the Caucasus if for Russia necessary to free itself from those commitments, and to 'lock the border of the Caucasus' ('запрем границу с Кавказом на большой замок').

That this narrative is mentioned once, in a dismissing way, and making reference to its 'supporters' ('сторонники окончательного, бесповоротного "ухода" России с Кавказа'), and even if used as a straw man argument, suggests that this narrative existed beyond the KZ newspaper. In this sense, it could be said that this brief appearance in the KZ newspaper is a limited example of an 'echo' of a narrative on the basis of its repetition, even if it is in the context of its rhetorical refutation. Its inclusion of a threat, a solution, and a characterisation of the Self qualifies it to be included as a securitising narrative. Its lack of success in the military's discursive terrain is evinced by its mention as a inadmissible option.

Final withdrawal narrative	**Main components**	**Representations**	**Articles**
Actors	Russia	A 'prisoner of the Caucasus'	
Solutions	'Exit' the Caucasus	'Lock' the Caucasus away from Russia	111/94/192Aug23
Threats	Costs	Freeing Russia from the Caucasus	

Table 6. The main components of the *final withdrawal narrative*.

3.7. Legal Narrative

This narrative has its focus on the Chechen leadership's ability to ensure governance in the republic. While not proposing a solution *per se*, it emphasizes the need for law enforcement to take place, and assigns responsibility for it to the republic's leadership (96/94/176Aug04). In this sense, its connecting thread is not so much a complete account of the conflict on the terms suggested by the methodology, but its

concern with the threat posed by crime and terrorism, and not quite by Chechnya's internal politics, or by a 'Caucasus war'. In other words, it reduces the Russian-Chechen conflict at the time to the enforcement of the rule of law in the republic, giving no attention to the politics behind it. Because of this, its main components reflect a concern with Chechnya's 'lawlessness' and sees it as a factor of 'instability' for the broader north Caucasus. This overlaps with other narrative's way to conceive of the threat to Russia in Chechnya, but does not elaborate further. An international dimension is acknowledged, suggesting that Chechnya belongs to a broader lawlessness problem in the Northern Caucasus (50/94/106May13), and it is seen as an issue where international cooperation is seen as necessary (47/94/91Apr23). As this narrative looks at the conflict in terms of law enforcement, it does not acknowledge Chechnya's *de facto* independence, and rather emphasizes the legal principle of their unity. In this sense, it provides Chechnya with a clear place inside Russia's polity. Finally, this narrative places Russia's fight against terrorism in an international context, indicating Russia's need to cooperate with countries abroad to fight against it, particularly those neighbouring Russia (47/94/91Apr23). However, it does not conceive the threats associated with Chechnya as having a prominent international dimension, instead focusing on cooperation with the authorities in neighbouring countries in the Caucasus and beyond.

Legal narrative	Main components	Representations	Articles
Actors	Chechnya	Refuge for criminals, their place of origin	11/93/296Dec24; 50/94/106May13; 57/94/119May28; 60/94/122Jun01
	Other countries	Source of support	47/94/91Apr23
Threats	Chechnya's lack of governance	Lack of control	1/93/278Dec02
		Crime	33/94/59Mar17
		'Plague' of terrorism	57/94/119May28
Solutions	Enforcing the laws	In the face of crime, threats, 'amnesty' is inadmissible.	30/94/49Mar04

Table 7. The main components of the *legal narrative*.

3.8. Summary of the Findings on the Narratives of the First Part of the Sample

Narratives of the first war saw the relationship between Chechnya and Russia as a source of conflict, and all of them, save the *legal narrative*, acknowledged Chechnya's *de facto* separation from Russia. In all of them, the threat of crime and terrorism coming from Chechnya are emphasized, and understood in terms of being the result of insufficient governance in Chechnya, and by the inability (*legal narrative*, *civilisational narrative*) or lack of will (*Dudaev narrative*) of the authorities in Grozny to exert control in the republic. All narratives focus on the relationship between Russia and Chechnya, articulating it as the relationship between the 'federal centre' and a *de jure* subject of the federation. The threat of the collapse of the Russian Federation was mentioned solely once (138/94/232Oct08). Significantly, only the *final withdrawal* and the *legal narrative* offer concrete accounts on what is Chechnya's status in the Russian Federation, either as a stranger that is better to abandon, or as an integral component of the Russian polity. The *civilisational narrative* offers an account on the Chechen-Russian relationship but does so in light of a civilisational project, reducing the current status to an incomplete task. The *Dudaev narrative* reduces the question of Chechnya's belonging to Russia to the *de facto* mechanisms of centre-periphery relations: the cooperation (or lack thereof) between Grozny and Moscow. This focus on inter-federal relations reduces the international dimension of the conflict, as well as underplays the role of other federal entities. No narrative considered the international dimension of the conflict as an important component, however, all narratives acknowledged it in different ways. The *legal narrative* represented it as a source of opportunity for improving Russia's position to fight against terrorism, and the civilisational narrative did so in terms of Russia's enhanced geopolitical position stemming from its presence in the Caucasus. The *Dudaev narrative* saw the international dimension as a possible source of complications, but did not dwell on it. Another form of acknowledgement of the international dimension was through the context of the instability in the Caucasus at the time. This meant emphasizing the new 'border' condition of the North Caucasus Military District, necessitating a new approach to its security, and with new implications for national security overall (28/94/43Feb25; 72/94/147Jul01; 86/94/168Jul26). The

political opposition to Dudaev was not generally a feature of any narrative except the *Dudaev narrative*, in the sense that its aims, and motivations were not considered important beyond the conflict between them and Dudaev. As all narratives shared the terms of 'bandits' and 'criminals', the limits of the legal narrative were not clearly defined, as it could be interpreted as the narrative that echoed structural, discursive elements (van Dick, 1997, 19, 21) the most. In other words, all narratives were informed by meta-narrative features of the discourse, which was defined by these 'law-and-order' terms when addressing the topic of Chechnya.

3.9. Narratives Identified for the Second War

The narratives identified for the second war reflected the enduring problem of Chechnya's belonging to Russia, and the enduring problem of its 'instability'. In addressing these issues, more components were brought in, featuring a larger role for the conflict's international dimension. The main securitising narratives identified are the *justice narrative,* and the *Maskhadov narrative.*

3.10. Justice Narrative

This narrative is referred to as 'justice' narrative because of its emphasis not only on law enforcement [similar to the *legal narrative* of the first war], but in a sense of injustice grounded not only in the law. Instead, this sense of injustice is based in a less tangible victimisation of Russia in the hands of 'criminals', who find refuge and are enabled by Chechnya's lawlessness. This is the central feature of the narrative, and it became heightened in the outcome of the incursion of Dagestan from Chechnya in August 1999. This narrative eventually became hegemonic, and, similar to the *Dudaev narrative* of the first war, it also evolved according to the developments on the ground, albeit in a faster pace.

In general, Russia is represented as 'well behaved', and generally unwilling to pursue the path towards war (307/99/60Mar18). However, beset by international challenges and rivals (NATO, the West), who exploit Russia's weaknesses (Chechnya),

Russia is seen as in need to consolidate its own strength (419/99/167Jul31), in order to avoid the chaos associated with de-modernization, which, for Chechnya, is represented as a collapse into 'neo-feudalism' (421/99/168Aug03). A particular account in this narrative stresses the need for Russia to do this via its own path, without importing any modernization model from abroad (421/99/168Aug03). The risks from failing this modernization project are seen as threatening Russia's national security. In particular, the possibility of a Yugoslavia-style NATO operation inside Russia via Chechnya, was mentioned as a possible threat to Russia's integrity (343/99/86Apr17). In terms of the immediate victimisation in regards to Chechnya, the border areas between Chechnya and the rest of the region, particularly Stavropol *krai*, are mentioned often as being targeted by 'bandits', who pursue larger goals such as destabilizing the region (351/99/99May05).

Inter-Chechen intrigues are not mentioned in this narrative, which instead focuses on guarding from menaces stemming from inside Chechnya. Emphasis is given to the safety of the border zone. Criminals and terrorists take refuge there and there is little cooperation with Grozny, which is more keen on pursuing independence (this is an overlap with a version of the *Maskhadov narrative*) (191/98/210Sep17), or simply uninterested in pursuing a cooperative relationship with Russia (453/99/183Aug24). Against this, force, namely the Russian army, is needed. Even though the survival of the state is said to be at stake, it is hoped that drastic measures will not be necessary. Even during the war in Dagestan, the solution to Chechnya-Russian relations was still conceived in terms of the need for 'regularization' as late as August 14th (439/99/177Aug14). However, two crucial differences are introduced: the need to take the fight to the 'criminals' (i.e. into Chechnya) without referring to it as an invasion against the republic (458/99/185Aug26).

As for solutions, a recurrent representation is of Russia's need to consolidate strength to overcome its challenges, rivals abroad, and weaknesses inside. In this sense, Chechnya is considered as a weakness *inside*; while it is open for Western intervention and international crime and terrorism, the republic's place in the federation is considered evident (280/99/29Feb09; 419/99/167Jul31; 421/99/168Aug03). In more concrete terms, solutions range from negotiation (280/99/29Feb09) to the use of force. However, as time went on, negotiations with Chechnya under any circumstance, either in an hypothetical rescue of hostages or for the broader 'Chechen problem', became

inadmissible, and increasingly considered counter-productive to law enforcement (413/99/164Jul28). This would eventually culminate with the call to persecute criminals wherever they are, as mentioned above.

By the time of the invasion in Dagestan, the opposing side is characterized more fully. In this narrative, the 'bandits' are characterized as fighting for money, being payed from abroad, particularly by international criminal networks (435/99/176Aug13; 444/99/179Aug18). Ideologies espoused by the Chechen rebels, such as Wahhabism, separatism or Chechen nationalism are not addressed as ideologies *per se*, but as labels to acknowledge that the opposing side has a distinct way to view the conflict. In this sense, they are used in an interchangeable manner (similar to 'bandit', and 'criminal'), and not as a driving force or as an enabling condition for the rebellion. For instance, in the case of 'Wahhabi' as a label to the enemy fighters, it was used throughout the sample in a similar way to 'bandits' (for instance 443/99/178Aug17). Moreover, it was emphasized that 'Wahhabism' has no relationship with religion at all, and Islam in particular (444/99/179Aug18; 453/99/183Aug24).

Justice narrative	Main components	Representations	Articles
Actors	Russia	Victim, needs strength not to be victimized	419/99/167Jul31; 421/99/168Aug03
		Well intentioned towards Chechnya	307/99/60Mar18
		Wishing to avoid the use of force	307/99/60Mar18
	Wahhabi, bandits, terrorists	Driven by profit, intent on derailing Chechnya's normalisation	444/99/179Aug18; 458/99/185Aug26
		Unrelated to Islam, in spite of the 'Wahhabi' label.	444/99/179Aug18
		Bound to international sponsors	343/99/86Apr17; 444/99/179Aug18
	The West	Pursuing Russia's collapse, opportunistic	280/99/29Feb09; 343/99/86Apr17; 460/99/186Aug27
	Chechnya	Refuge for terrorists, criminals	306/99/60Mar18
		One of Russia's weaknesses	280/99/29Feb09; 419/99/167Jul31; 421/99/168Aug03
Threats	Instability	Driven by lack of strength and reach from the centre.	351/99/99May05; 421/99/168Aug03
	Caucasus war	An undesired, protracted war, echoing the first Chechen war.	444/99/179Aug18; 460/99/186Aug27
		A war fought against Russia's integrity.	444/99/179Aug18
Solutions	Action needed	The possibility of negotiations is scorned as counter-productive.	413/99/164Jul28
	Consolidating state strength	Russia's weaknesses are exploited by opportunistic forces inside and outside of the country.	280/99/29Feb09

Table 8. Components of the *justice narrative*.

3.11. Maskhadov Narrative

This narrative focuses on Chechnya's incapacity to deal with crime and political opposition, and the risks that entail Chechnya becoming a 'black hole' in the Northern Caucasus. For this narrative, the condition of instability has two causes: Maskhadov's leadership and economic degradation in Chechnya. Russia is seen as generous, offering economic cooperation and as willing to alleviate Chechnya's public security crisis. But Maskhadov is seen as manipulated by his advisors -characterized as incapable to offer effective management (219/98/246Oct29)-, unwilling to cooperate, and distracted in the pursuit of independence, driven by his own personal ambitions (216/98/241Oct23). Alternatively, he is seen as cooperative, even as the only one capable to do so, but frustrated by 'bandits', who exploit 'temporary economic and social difficulties' ('используя временные экономические и социальные трудности') to drive the republic into conflict (210/98/233Oct14).

The economy plays an important role in this narrative. Not only was the 1998 economic crisis a recent event affecting the whole region, but also the problems facing Chechnya are particularly understood under a lens of its decaying economy. More broadly, institutions in Chechnya are seen as dysfunctional (246/98/279Dec10). Not only the institutions relevant to 'normal' life, but even the armed forces are described as 'criminals' (255/98/287Dec22). Moreover, economic crisis in Russia is seen as a driver for Chechnya's leadership to look away from Moscow, specially from 'their' money, as the rebels are represented to have sponsors from abroad, particularly muslim-majority countries (349/99/96Apr29). The economy is also seen as driver for the conflict, as people are driven into crime because of unemployment and wide-spread poverty in the republic (224/98/250Nov03). Finally, Russia is represented as both patient and generous, willing to cooperate with Chechnya's leadership (305/99/59Mar17), specially for addressing its developmental issues, particularly unemployment and poverty. This stress on the economic viability of the republic is presented as a pragmatic basis for further cooperation between Grozny and Moscow. However, this approach to the relationship suggests the necessity to engage with Chechnya's leadership in through incentives and negotiations, and not through 'normal' procedures. In such way,

Chechnya is represented as being both beyond the governance of Moscow, but unable to have a future without Russia (305/99/59Mar17). Therefore, its position is seen (again) as undefined and undecided.

Maskhadov Narrative	Main components	Representations	Articles
Actors	Maskhadov	Ambitious, manipulated, incapable, suspicious of Moscow	216/98/241Oct23; 246/98/279Dec10
	Opposition against Maskhadov	Pursuing regime change, opportunistic, exploiting economic crisis	210/98/233Oct14; 260/99/8Jan12
	Chechens	Uncooperative	168/98/176Aug07
	Chechnya	Separated from Russia, but cannot go on without Moscow	305/99/59Mar17
		A 'black hole' of endemic crime, poverty	224/98/250Nov03
Threats	International terrorism	Chechens actively cooperating with international terrorism (Kosovo)	349/99/96Apr29
	Instability	Driven by economic crisis	210/98/233Oct14
Solutions	Economic cooperation	Poverty in Chechnya as a driver for crime, economic incentives to normalization	169/98/180Aug12; 224/98/250Nov03
	Normalisation	Establishing a 'normal' relationship between Grozny and Moscow to cooperate further.	169/98/180Aug12

Table 9. Components of the *Maskhadov narrative*. Source: dataset.

3.12. Summary of the Findings on the Narratives of the Second Part of the Sample

Variety within the two main narratives identified allowed to reduce all representations to two competing accounts of the conflict. While they both share various representations, and solutions, they differ in three crucial aspects: 1) the importance of the administrative borders of Chechnya; 2) the importance of Chechnya's domestic politics; 3) the centrality of the threats coming from abroad. Of crucial importance, the

representation of NATO and international terrorism as an inter-connected threat was central in the *justice narrative*, while peripheral in the *Maskhadov narrative*. In sum, Maskhadov appears at the beginning of the sample of the second war as a pivotal actor, but, as the *justice narrative* acquires a hegemonic position his role is diminished. Not only are intra-Chechen politics left aside, but henceforth the internal affairs of Chechnya are overall ignored. Only by the time of the Dagestan war they receive a modicum of attention, but limited to the ongoing war.

3.13. General Similarities and Differences Between the Narratives of Each Period

Tropes, and continuity from one war to the other. In spite of happening with various years of difference, the first and second Chechen wars were framed in similar narratives, articulations, and representations in the KZ newspaper. Even in the periods previous to a narrative becoming hegemonic, some 'meta-narrative' elements were prevalent throughout the sample gathered. Indeed, tropes such as the prevalence of 'bandits', the fight against 'bandit formations', and 'criminals', Chechnya as a refuge for criminals, and the leader of the Chechen Republic as 'ambitious', and suspicious of Moscow, among other similar representations, were present in the KZ coverage of the events prior to each war. This affirmed a degree of continuity in how Chechnya was securitised in Russia's discourse, and it also made more salient the differences in the hegemonic narratives.

Some salient features of the military's discursive terrain. The most salient similarity between the discourses identified in the KZ newspaper about both wars was the prevalence of terms referring to a 'law-and-order', as observed in the *legal narrative*. The recurrent use of terms such as 'bandit' and 'criminal' throughout the sample suggests that this 'legal' frame of reference is a feature of the military's discursive terrain. This discursive terrain may be characterized on the basis of its focus on governance, the assurance of 'stability', and the imperative of the fight against criminals. In this sense, both Dudaev and Mashkadov were judged according to their ability and willingness to combat crime in Chechnya, and their disposition to involve the 'federal centre' in law enforcement tasks. A particular feature of the military's discursive terrain is the changing way Chechnya's borders were represented in each

war. While its administrative borders were continuously represented as the threshold crossed by criminals to find refuge in Chechnya, their place as a vector for instability changed. During the first war, Chechnya's borders were thought of as part of a new border region, one thought of in the context of the various conflicts happening at that time (the Prigorodnyi conflict, the Abkhaz war), and therefore present in an area of 'instability'. In other words, the southern, international border of Chechnya was seen as another possible source of instability. In the second war, the borders of Chechnya were seen in a different light; its administrative borders are more often mentioned as the origin of attacks against the populations in the areas colliding with the republic (187/98/203Sep09; 216/98/241Oct23). The plight of the Russian-majority Stavropol *krai* is mentioned saliently in later articles (405/99/158Jul20). This suggests that for the period leading up to the second war, the administrative borders were seen as vector for instability to transmit, and not the southern, international border.

Change within the securitising narratives. Throughout the narratives observed, it is possible to see change in them across time and happening in response to 'real-world' events. In the run-up to the first war, the *Dudaev narrative* was already established, but within it changes to its proposed solution happened as events inside Chechnya evolved. For the second war, both main narratives evolved, albeit mostly in regards to their proposed solutions, particularly from the invasion in Dagestan onwards.

The international dimension. As mentioned above, the international dimension of the Chechen-Russian conflict was not ignored in either period analysed, but it became a central feature of the narratives only in the section of the sample corresponding to the second Chechen war. In spite of this, nearly all representations of international actors overlap, excluding that of international cooperation as important (as seen in the first war). In the first war, the international dimension was considered in various ways by the different narratives identified, but in none of them it was construed as a threat *tout court*. Meanwhile, in the second war, the international dimension appears as more salient as it is conceived as an enabler of threats (sponsor of Chechen terrorists and enabler of the republic's independence claims), or as a threat *per se* (NATO and Western military planners wishing to exploit the Chechen-Russian conflict to expel Russia from the Caucasus). While in the *Dudaev narrative* the focus was on Chechnya's internal politics, the *justice narrative* assigned a greater role to the alleged international connections of the 'bandits', such as their financing, their ideology, and

some of their members. Moreover, the West, while not entirely absent in the narratives of the first war, played a larger role in the second, culminating with it being inculpated with the conflict in Dagestan as part of a strategy to produce Russia's collapse.

3.14. Identifying the Hegemonic Narratives: Quantitative Analysis

As mentioned in the previous chapter, two criteria are used to determine the hegemony of certain narratives. First, a quantitative method, and second a comparison of the assumptions and the structure of the narratives. This comparison will be made after presenting the assumptions of the Russian military planners before each Chechen war as identified in the literature consulted on the topic.

Quantitative assessment. This quantitative method, text analysis by keyword search, is meant to illustrate how certain keywords reflect the accumulation of iterations of the hegemonic securitising narrative. As mentioned in the previous chapter, accumulation here implies that the keywords associated to the securitising narrative will appear more often by the end of the sample period if the narrative is indeed hegemonic. The aim is not to establish a threshold of iterations for confirming the hegemonic status of a particular narrative. Instead, the status of hegemony will be attributed by the exclusion of other securitising narratives, which is identified by Wilhelmsen (2017, 36) as a characteristic of hegemonic narratives. In other words, the hegemony of a particular securitising narrative will be confirmed as its significant representations are overwhelmingly represented vis-à-vis those of other securitising narratives. In selecting the keywords for this stage, attention was given to the discrete significant representations featured in each narrative that had as less overlap with other narratives as possible. Hence, the keywords selected aim to capture the most representative term of the narrative *vis-à-vis* the other securitising narratives, and are mostly related to identity formation in each securitising narrative (i.e. their terms associated for the Self, the Other).

For the first year of the sample, the keyword[6] associated to the *civilisational*

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[6] To account for the case system of the Russian language, many keywords were searched for using the asterisk function, which informs the search motor to include only words that begin with the letters placed as input. So, for example, when looking for 'terrorist' and 'terrorism', the word 'террори*' was placed, producing results that include derived words such as 'террориситами', 'террористов', among other cases.

narrative was 'civilisation', as this was the central theme of the narrative (Chart 1). For the *Dudaev narrative*, the keywords associated were 'Dudaev', and 'opposition', as the inter-Chechen conflict was a feature of this narrative not shared by the other ones (Chart 2). For the legal narrative, the keyword associated was 'criminals', as the narrative focused on law enforcement (Chart 3). Finally, the *final withdrawal narrative* is omitted as it was invoked solely once, many months before the actual war began, precluding the possibility of it being hegemonic at that time.

For the second part of the sample, the two main securitising narratives identified also had some keywords associated to identify them in the sample. The keywords associated with the *Maskhadov narrative* were 'Maskhadov', and 'opposition', as the inter-Chechen conflict was a central feature of this narrative (Graphic 4). For the justice narrative, the keyword associated was 'wahabbist', as this word was used in the sample as a way to capture the ideological underpinning of the internationally-oriented terrorists operating in Chechnya (Graphic 5).

Chart 1. Appearance of the keyword 'civilisation' in the first year of the sample. Source: dataset, made with AntConc 'Concordance Plot' tool.

Chart 2. Appearance of the keywords 'Dudaev' (above) and 'opposition' (below) in the first year of the sample. Source: dataset, made with AntConc 'Concordance Plot' tool.

Chart 3. Appearance of the keyword 'criminal' in the first year of the sample. Source: dataset, made with AntConc 'Concordance Plot' tool.

Chart 4. Appearance of the keywords 'Maskhadov' (above) and 'opposition' (below) in the second year of the sample. Source: dataset, made with AntConc 'Concordance Plot' tool.
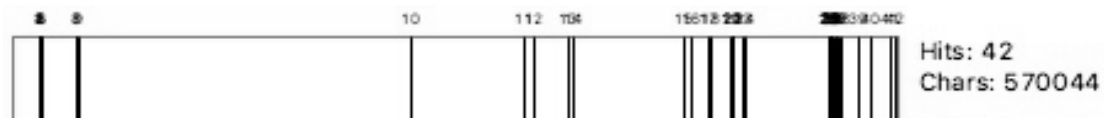

Chart 5. Appearance of the keyword 'Wahhabi' in the second year of the sample. Source: dataset, made with AntConc 'Concordance Plot' tool.

As Chart 4 shows, the civilisational narrative has a minimal presence overall, with no iterations by the end of the period. Chart 5 shows the terms 'Dudaev' and 'opposition' having a widespread presence in the second half of the sample onwards, pointing to their relevance at the outset of the war. Chart 6 shows crime-related terms appearing throughout, but mostly focused on the middle of the sample, with only a few appearances by the end. These results suggest the importance of the significant representations of the *Dudaev narrative* at the outset of the first Chechen war, offering evidence of the hegemonic status of that securitising narrative among the military.

In regards to the second Chechen war, a keyword search reveals the prevalence of certain significant representations over others. As Chart 7 shows, 'Maskhadov' and 'opposition' both are iterated in various instances throughout the year two of the sample, but are overwhelmingly concentrated in the first half of it, suggesting that the *Maskhadov narrative* was not hegemonic at the outset of the war. Graphic 8 shows how 'Wahhabi' was seldom mentioned at the start of the sample and gained importance by the end of it, suggesting the hegemonic status of the *justice narrative* at the outset of the second Chechen war.

This brief quantitative assessment offers some evidence towards attributing a hegemonic status to the *Dudaev narrative* and the *justice narrative* at the outset of each respective war. A further test, a comparison between the securitising narratives

identified and the assumptions, will be used in the second phase to further evaluate whether a hegemonic status can be attributed to these securitising narratives among the military. This will be done by introducing further evidence, on the basis of the assumptions evinced by the choices in the manoeuvres of the Russian armed forces in the early stages of each war. By bringing more evidence registered on a different, non-textual level (i.e. the evaluation of the assumptions of the Russian military at the outset of each Chechen war), it is expected that this attribution will be further confirmed or complicated.

	The *Dudaev narrative*	The *justice narrative*
Primary actors	Russia; Dudaev; the opposition	Russia; Chechnya; external actors
Representation of Chechnya	Its *de facto* independence makes Dudaev a necessary intermediary between Chechnya and Russia.	Its *de facto* independence is a result of Russia's weakness.
Primary threat	Instability harming Russia's state integrity.	Russia's weakness inviting Chechen rebellion, which itself invites Western intervention.
Solutions	Negotiation; regime change	Negotiation; anti-criminal operation inside Chechnya

Table 10. Comparison of the narratives which were hegemonic in their respective wars, at the start of the operations of the Russian armed forces in Chechnya. Source:

3.15. Conclusion

This chapter offered an account of the securitising narratives found in the KZ newspaper of the Russian armed forces. The goal was to identify all main securitising narratives, their significant representations, and to suggest which of them eventually acquired a hegemonic position in the military's discursive terrain.

On the basis of the sample taken from the KZ newspaper, two securitising narratives, labelled the *Dudaev narrative* and the *justice narrative*, were identified to have hegemonic status at the outset of the first and second Chechen war respectively. According to the framework, particularly to the *agent-based securitisation model two* introduced in the previous chapter (adapted from Wilhelmsen, 2017 and Lowth, 2011),

it can be implied that these narratives had an impact in shaping the military's decision-making as they informed the military planners worldview and *a priori* assumptions about the war as they turned strategic aims into operative and tactical means. However, in order to offer a stronger account, and make a reference to the material practices enabled by the securitising narratives, the second phase of the empirical research will introduce further evidence to assess whether it can be said that discourse (i.e. the securitising narratives) have an impact in military planning.

4. SECOND PHASE: ASSUMPTIONS IN THE CHECHEN WARS AND THE RELEVANCE OF DISCOURSE

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to identify the behaviours enabled-as-legitimate by the hegemonic narratives at the time of the start of the war, identified and analysed in the previous section. In the previous chapter, on the basis of a discourse analysis method adopted from Wilhelmsen (2017), I identified the securitising narratives echoed in the KZ newspaper up to a year previous to the first and second Chechen wars. Not only were their main representations described, but also their proposals for action, along with their ways to understand the threat coming from Chechnya. Then, it was argued which narratives were hegemonic at the time of the start of the war, namely the *Dudaev narrative* and the *justice narrative*. In the present chapter, under the assumption that these hegemonic narratives informed the bounds for legitimate political objectives pursued in each war, a description of the early manoeuvres in each war will be made.

On the basis of a review of the secondary literature on the Chechen wars, this chapter will make a summative revision of the works evaluating the Russian army manoeuvres in the first and second Chechen wars. The aim is formulating operational characterizations of the first manoeuvres of the Russian armed forces in each conflict, and to induct the assumptions that Russian military planners had while preparing for the operations. Crucially, their exhibited and stated assumptions in planning will be considered as the most relevant information for this inquiry, as these -according to the framework adapted from Lowth (2011) and Wilhelmsen (2017)- reflect their *a priori* concepts about the challenges, enemies and obstacles in the operations ahead, and thus may reflect the representations found in the RS newspaper. Therefore, these assumptions will be assessed vis-à-vis the representations observed in the previous chapter. Following Lowth's (2011) framework, these assumptions have a link to

military planners' decisions, as they frame their understanding of the emergency situation, and thus are reflected in their planning. In this sense, an inductive assessment is made on the basis of the evidence offered by the operational level of decision-making in the war.

4.2. Assumptions of the Russian military at the start of the first Chechen war

At the outset of the first Chechen war, the strategic goal of the Russian campaign was to capture the republic, and this goal was translated into the operative aim to gain as much territory from the rebels and to return it to federal control (Miakinkov, 2011, 658). This operational goal carried with it a sense of optimism regarding the capacity of the Russian forces to accomplish their goals. For conceptual clarity, this sense of optimism is split into two core assumptions regarding the forces involved, which, on the basis of Oliker (2001), as well as Billingsley (2013), Cassidy (2003), Galeotti (2014), Lambeth (1996), Miakinkov (2011) and Pilloni (2000, 47) can be characterised the following way: 1) that the Russian forces would be strong enough to intimidate the rebels into submission, and 2) that the Chechen forces would be poorly prepared and disorganized. These are summarized in Table 12. As the fighting began and the first Russian assault on Grozny was repelled, military commanders had to change their planned manoeuvres, and soldiers had to adapt 'under fire' (Oliker, 2001, 22). The timeframe chosen for identifying these assumptions was between the beginning of the campaign and the first battle for Grozny, and is meant to capture the first stage of the operation before tactics adapted to the real requirements of the battlefield (Miakinkov, 2011, 653).

Overestimating Russia's forces. Optimism and confidence on the Russian part in their own forces *vis-à-vis* the rebels seems to have been a component of both the planning and execution of the Russian campaign in Chechnya, up to the failed assault on Grozny. As Oliker mentions (2001, 5), launched on December 31st, 1994, and beaten back on January 3rd, 1995, the storming of Grozny was conceived under the assumption that Grozny would not be well defended, and that a show of force would suffice to intimidate the enemy forces into submission, and capture the city. This believe was present in various levels of the Russian military, as commanders instructed their subordinates on the ground not to expect a fight at all (Oliker, 2001, 9). Even the

Minister of Defence, General Pavel Grachev thought of the operation in terms similar to those of the Soviet intervention in Prague, 1968, implying that resistance against the Russian forces would be minimal (Oliker, 2001, 9). As Pilloni mentions (2000, 46-47), Grachev declared that the operation would be limited, and mostly focus on disarming 'bandit gangs'. This assumption defined the ambitious timetable for the operation, which prescribed the capture of Grozny to be accomplished in four days total (Oliker, 2001, 10). It was only 'under fire' that the Russian military realized the shortcomings in their armed forces, their lack of manning and staff, inadequacy of their equipment, and the limits to the effectiveness of their airforce in combat (Oliker, 2001, 14-16).

Underestimating the Chechen rebels. The second assumption was that Chechen forces were composed of small, irregular bands, unable to mount a defence against a modern army. Cassidy observes (2003, 29) that the Russians saw in the opposing side a disorganized force, unable to draw popular support. Hence, the Russian armed forces did not expect Grozny to be well defended, and the Chechens to be able to challenge their force. As Miakinkov argues (2011, 658), this believe amounted to a mistaken conceptualisation of the fight the Russian forces had ahead, which prepared the Russian forces to fight against a disorganized, improvised force, instead of a centralized, well-equipped and sufficiently coordinated guerrilla force, which the Chechens turned out to be. Oliker mentions this mistaken assumption was present in many levels of the Russian armed forces before the war, and that it would take the initial failures of the campaign to change the mind of the Russian commanders about their opponents and adapt their tactics accordingly (Oliker, 2001, 22, 72). The supposed disunity of the Chechen forces also informed the timeframe of the campaign. As Galeotti mentions, the Russian leadership believed that the Chechen rebels would surrender and negotiate when Grozny fell to the Russians (Galeotti, 2014, 35; also see Cassidy, 2013, 44; Lambeth, 1996, 379), which also suggests that the Russians underestimated the rebels' resolve to continue the fight beyond Grozny. A concrete case where this assumption is best exemplified is in the original plan to capture Dudaev's presidential palace as part of the initial thrust into the city; not only were the city's defences underestimated, but also the rebels resolve to fight for their leadership (see Oliker, 2011, 12-13; Pilloni, 2000, 44).

A priori assumptions	Description
Unwarranted optimism about own forces	Showing force would suffice to subdue the rebels ('shock and awe'). Significant combat would not be faced overall. Also, in spite of the material and staff shortcomings, the state of the armed forces is adequate enough for the operation.
Assuming weaknesses in the opposing side	Dudaev's regime would be unable to put up resistance, and its defence would be immediately undermined by its lack organization and popularity.

Table 11. A priori assumptions identified in the war planning for the first Chechen war. Source: made on the basis of Billingsley (2013), Cassidy (2003), Galeotti (2014), Lambeth (1996), Miakinkov (2011), Oliker (2001), and Pilloni (2000, 47).

Overall, the Russian forces entered Grozny with the intention to make a show of force, and not to engage in any meaningful combat. In particular, they underestimated the numbers of Dudaev's supporters, their equipment, their unity and coordination, and their resolve. Moreover, they overestimated the fighting capacity to their own forces and the impact of their technological advantage. These assumptions, present among various levels of Russia's military leadership previous to the operation, had an impact in the manoeuvres and tactics chosen to confront the Chechen rebels.

4.3. Assumptions of the Russian military at the start of the second Chechen war

The early stages of the second Chechen war were conducted under a different set of assumptions than those of the first Chechen war. As Oliker mentions (2001, 36-38, 42), the Russian campaign was planned on the basis of the lessons learned in the first war and Russia's military history. It was overall a better planned and executed mission, although it ended up being just as bloody. Nonetheless, it followed a similar structure: a first advance towards Grozny from various angles, followed by the capture of the city and the establishment of a loyal government, and then proceed to pacify the rest of the republic (Galeotti, 2014, 62). In contrast to the first Chechen war, the literature does not dwell on the pre-judgements of Russian commanders previous to the second Chechen War. However, two assumptions are consistently mentioned as present among Russian

military commanders at the outset of the second Chechen war, particularly when making a contrast between the first and the second Chechen wars: 1) the Chechen rebels are seen as an effective threat to Russia; 2) operations will be conducted with less civilian oversight. Various authors attribute to these two assumptions various choices made by Russian military planners and commanders, establishing their relevance as basis for the design of the Russian campaign in the second Chechen war.

Chechen rebels as an effective threat. In contrast to the first Chechen war, the Russian armed forces were decidedly more cautious in the second Chechen war in regards to combat. Not only did they prepare their forces (relatively) better before operations began, but also engaged the rebel forces artillery-first. As Oliker observes (2001, 58), artillery in the second Chechen war played a major role from the start, 'preparing' cities before the entrance of Russian forces in them. This was particularly clear in the battle for Grozny, which involved a long siege before forces would enter. This is in contrast to the first Chechen war, when Russian forces believed that they would be able to enter the republic without being challenged by the rebels. The lesson drawn, argues Oliker (2001, 38), was to avoid urban combat altogether. Moreover, the whole campaign was conducted in a more methodical manner in comparison to the first Chechen war. As Galeotti comments (2014, 55), the first stages of the second Chechen war involved sealing the administrative borders of Chechnya, and conducting a bombardment campaign previous to any major Russian advance. Another outcome of this different appreciation of the Chechen rebels as an effective fighting force was a boost in morale among Russian forces. As Oliker mentions (2001, 51) the Russian forces fought during the second Chechen war with a sense that their efforts were for the good of the country. I interpret this as stemming from the perception that Chechens were a threat to thwart through the use of force, because, as Russell argues (2007, 70), Russian attitudes towards Chechnya had galvanized in favour of war. However, in spite of this assumption, according to Oliker (2001, 82) the Russian forces once again underestimated the rebel's force at the start of the second Chechen war, albeit to a much less disastrous extent as they did in 1994.

Less civilian oversight. In planning for the operation, Russian military planners assumed that there would be less civilian oversight, and less concerns over the use of force by the Russian military. When translated into operational and tactical means, it meant that the Russian civilian public would be more tolerant to the blunt use of force

by the Russian armed forces. In other words, the political context in which the military made its plans for the second war was different, as, in general, the military received more freedom to operate in the second war than in the first, having more opportunity to define the course of the war on their own terms. As Dannreuther and March mention (2008, 100), the Kremlin gave the Russian military carte blanche for their operation planning and execution, as long as the Russian armed forces managed to secure victory. A consequence of this position was the rule of not to pursue negotiations with the rebels under any circumstance, as the military commanders felt less pressure from the civilian leadership to achieve a clean end to the war (Dannreuther, March, 2008, 100). As Miakinkov concludes (2011, 675), this was a factor that led into an over reliance in the use of force, and led to the brutalisation of the conflict. But, not only was civilian leadership in the Kremlin more permissive, it was also interested in managing public perception about the conflict in order not to lose consensus for the war. This later aspect meant that, in contrast to the first war, the second Chechen war was conducted in a less transparent way, with journalists facing more restrictions to report from the battlefield, and to access the rebel side. As Oliker mentions (2001, 62-65), engaging in public relations with the press was one of the Russian armed forces and the Kremlin's lessons from the first war, and from NATO's Kosovo campaign. This media control was detrimental to the rebels, as it precluded any sympathetic view towards them to be expressed (see Dannreuther, March, 2008, 101), and also meant less coverage and record of the forceful means used by the Russian armed forces (Russell, 2007, 78). As Miakinkov argues (2011, 666), for the Russian armed forces, media control both politically isolated the zone of operations, and disconnected Russian audiences from Chechen suffering.

In sum, in the second Chechen war, the Russian forces assumed that they would face a capable opponent, and that there would be no need to keep restraints in the use of force against it.

A priori assumptions	Description
A real Chechen threat	The Chechen rebels represent a real fighting force, capable of resisting the Russian advance and pose a threat to the country. Not only does this justify the operation, but also the intense use of force.
Civilian oversight	Civilian oversight over the use of force by the Russian forces reduces their fighting effectiveness. Diminished civilian oversight then means improved conditions for carrying out operations.

Table 12. A priori assumptions identified in the war planning for the second Chechen war, on the basis of Dannreuther and March (2008), Galeotti (2014), Miakinkov (2011), Oliker (2001), and Russell (2007).

4.4. Summary of the Assumptions Observed of the First and Second Chechen Wars

On the basis of the secondary literature on the Chechen wars, a total of four *a priori* assumptions were identified to have had an impact in Russian military planning for each war in Chechnya (that is, two assumptions per war). In both Chechen wars, the Russian armed forces based their plans on certain pre-judgements about the fight they were going to face in the republic. Hence this assumptions' focus on the force of the Chechen rebels (weak or strong), and the kind of operation that will accomplish a Russian victory in Chechnya (intimidation through a show of force or intense use of force under little civilian constraints). These *a priori* assumptions can be seen as connected, as they each of them offer an account of an aspect relevant to military planning: Russia's forces relative to the Chechen rebels, and the constraints to action (i.e. its own capacity and external constraints).

4.5. Conclusion

As indicated in the previous chapter, on the basis of the evidence of the KZ newspaper, it is possible to attribute to the *Dudaev narrative* and the *justice narrative* a hegemonic position in their respective time periods among the military audience. To further assess this connection, further empirical data was brought in, in the form of the *a*

priori assumptions identified above. The aim is to establish whether the *a priori* assumptions identified reflect the worldview of a particular securitising narrative, or at least of some of its significant representations. In doing this, what is looked for is consistency with the worldview of each securitising narrative, as account for in the previous chapter.

In regards to the first Chechen war, the optimistic, *a priori* assumption of the sufficiency of a show of force to intimidate the Chechen rebels can be seen as a representation of the Russian forces, particularly in regards to their fighting capacity and effectiveness relative to those of the Chechen rebels. In other words, it sees the Russian forces as capable enough to be in a position to reach Grozny and intimidate the rebels into submission. For the *civilisational narrative* and the *Dudaev narrative*, Russia is represented in position capable of action. For the *civilisational narrative*, it is desirable for Russia to continue to continue to be involved in the Caucasus, while for the *Dudaev narrative*, Russia is portrayed as capable of restraint, and offering patience. However, in the case of the *civilisational narrative*, Russia's involvement in the Caucasus is portrayed as arduous, framed in a civilisational clash. The representation of Russia implicit in the *a priori* assumption that is optimistic about Russia's capabilities can be seen as consistent with the significant representation of the *Dudaev narrative* of Russia as capable of helping Chechnya if Chechnya is willing to cooperate.

The second *a priori* assumption identified for the first Chechen war, the *a priori* assumption of an ineffective, divided and weak Chechen rebel force can be interpreted as a representation of the Chechen rebel forces. This representation defines the Chechen side not as a coherent group, driven by a single, unifying goal, but as a collection of groups, incapable of a unified, joint effort. This representation can be seen as consistent with the worldview of the legal and Dudaev securitising narratives identified in the previous chapter. While the *civilisational narrative* suggests a monolithic Chechen/Caucasian other, both the *legal narrative* and the *Dudaev narrative* emphasise the lack of a central authority in Chechnya, leading to its factional break-up. However, it is the *Dudaev narrative* that places the divisions in Chechen society at the centre. This is illustrated by how the narrative represents the Chechen threat: not as an imminent attack coming from a unified Chechen force, but by the conflict between Dudaev and his generals spreading into Russia. Therefore, it can be said that the a priori assumption of a weak Chechen force is consistent with the representations featured in the *Dudaev*

narrative.

In regards to the second Chechen war, two main *a priori* assumptions were identified: the Chechen rebels seen as a real fighting force, and an assumption that less civilian oversight over the use of force meant increased effectiveness of the operations, reducing constraints to the use of force in the pursuit of the operation. The first *a priori* assumption, that of the Chechen rebels as amounting to a real threat, can be seen as a representation of *de facto* independent Chechnya as a real direct threat to Russia. While both main securitising narratives of the second war see a threat coming from Chechnya, only the *justice narrative* sees the threat as 'direct'. The *Maskhadov narrative* sees in Chechnya the instability of the republic as menacing, but the threat to Russia is understood only in terms of public security, namely (international) crime. Meanwhile, the *justice narrative* sees a threat in terms of national security: the integrity of Russia itself is threatened by Chechnya's lack of rule. While it can be said that either of these representations can be consistent with the representation of Chechens as an effective fighting force, the sense of fighting for the good of Russia mentioned in the description of this *a priori* assumption, renders it closer to the *justice narrative,* which places Russia's security at the centre of its narrative.

The second *a priori* assumption identified for the second Chechen war, the assumption of there being little civilian oversight over the operations of the Russian armed forces, can be seen as a representation of the measures proposed. Namely, it sees the use of force as the desired measure to turn the strategic goals of the operation into tactical means. This emphasis on the use of force is consistent with the *justice narrative* as it suggests action as necessary, and, more tellingly, precludes the possibility and usefulness of negotiations. The *Maskhadov narrative,* on the other hand, sees normalisation and cooperation as the desired measures to be taken; implicit in both of them is negotiation, or at least dialogue, which is not an option implicit in the *a priori* assumption analysed.

To summarize the observations of this chapter, checking against and comparing the securitising narratives controlling for alternative attributions, the hegemonic status of the *Dudaev narrative* at the outset of the first Chechen war, and the hegemonic status of the *justice narrative* at the outset of the second Chechen war, are consistent with the *a priori* assumptions identified in the secondary literature about the wars.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Introduction

The research question of my inquiry, '*did the operational conduct of the Russian armed forces exhibit an influence of a particular hegemonic securitising narrative?*' was addressed through a theory-first, qualitative study, with an auxiliary quantitative method. Its primary research aim is to engage a possible way securitisation theory may be related to military planning. In this sense, my interest is on what securitisation *does*, particularly in regards to the concrete behaviours enabled by it. As addressed in the previous two chapters, a non-intrusive research attempted to discern whether discourse had an impact in planning. And, indeed, the operative choices made by the Russian armed forces in Chechnya exhibited assumptions of their mission that reflect the significant representations of the corresponding hegemonic securitising narrative.

In this concluding chapter, the findings of the dissertation will be summarized, and the limitations to this inquiry will be presented. Next, the contextualisation of this inquiry will look into both the broader literature, and into Wilhelmsen's 2017 book. Finally, some areas for further study will be suggested.

5.2. Findings

This dissertation argues that there is a casual chain from a securitising narrative becoming hegemonic to military planners adopting concrete measures. By assuming that the non-material, immediate, *a priori* assumptions involved in military planning are primarily driven by discourse (among other factors, this is an input), and are then reflected in the concrete choices made by military commanders at the early stages of an operation (output). In the case of the Chechen wars, this was evinced in the early stages

of each operation, before facts on the ground made commanders change their view of the conflict. In the case of the first war, the impact of securitisation was present in the assumption that the opposing side is a disparate group of criminals, 'bandits', and that a show of force would suffice to coerce them. In the case of the second war, the assumption that the opposing side is a threat and that the Russian military has support/tolerance from the civilian government encouraged a campaign that relied heavily on the use of force. It is important to recall that my research objective is not to gauge the importance of securitising narratives as a factor defining military planning, but to establish their impact in it, however 'strong' (or 'weak') it may be.

Regarding its methodology, adapted from Wilhelmsen (2017), this dissertation contributes to the study of particular newspapers and publications as fora where securitisation takes place. In particular, it attempted to focus not on securitisation in society in general, but focused its interest in the military and its reception of securitising narratives, as captured by the sample design for the first phase of the dissertation. My intention was not to innovate in the use of discourse analysis with this particular theoretical framework, but to bracket Wilhelmsen's proposed methodology to only a particular segment of society, in order to evaluate its discursive terrain and interaction with hegemonic securitising narratives. The second phase of the research was limited to a revision of secondary literature on the topic of the Chechen wars, which is also an adaptation from Wilhelmsen's methodology, particularly of her 'empirical chapters'. However, this was, again, done with a more limited scope, focusing solely on the operational and tactical levels and on the first stages of each war, before tactics and manoeuvres changed and evolved. Moreover, the use of a quantitative method to attribute a hegemonic status to particular securitising narratives, checking the narratives and the assumptions, as well as analysing both wars to suggest a broader pattern beyond a single event, as well as the particular focus on the military, distinguish my inquiry's methodology from Wilhelmsen's (more on this below).

As the quantitative method showed in the previous chapter, one year before the start of the first Chechen war there were three securitising narratives present in the military's discursive terrain. These were identified as the *civilisational narrative*, the *Dudaev narrative*, and the *legal narrative*. Each of them offered different significant representations of Russia, the Chechen rebels and Chechnya, the threat emanating from Chechnya, and the measures to be taken against this threat. Their presence in the

military's discursive terrain was attributed by the repetition of their significant representations, of which these narratives are composed, in the KZ newspaper. It is assumed that their presence in the KZ newspaper implies their existence beyond the newspaper, as the military is considered a sub-group of the significant audience which these narratives have to gain acceptance from in order for securitisation to take place.

Between one year before the start of the war and six months before the start of the war it can be said that none of the three securitising narratives had a hegemonic position among the military audience. In this period, the narratives changed (as exemplified by the the *Dudaev narrative*) and exhibited different versions (see the *civilisational narrative*), but remained identifiable by the iteration of their significant representations. It can be said that these changes and variety of versions correspond to the process of adaptation of these narratives to the military's discursive terrain. This does not mean that the narratives had agency, but that the open-ended interaction of the military with the significant representations of these securitising narratives resulted in their progressive change according to the narratives and representations already present in the military's discursive terrain. As suggested in the previous chapter, said discursive terrain can be characterised as one featuring a law-and-order terminology, hence an understanding of threats in terms of law enforcement, illustrated by the conspicuous use of words such as 'bandits', and 'criminals'.

Eventually, six months before the start of the war, the significant representations of the *Dudaev narrative* became more frequent in the sample, and representations of the other securitising narratives identified became less frequent. This suggests that the *Dudaev narrative* became hegemonic during this period, at least among the military. In other words, this implies that this securitising narrative, the *Dudaev narrative*, gained the acceptance of the military audience. A similar pattern was observed in the run-up to the second Chechen war, when the *justice narrative* became hegemonic.

As introduced in chapter one, audience acceptance according to the *agent-based, securitisation model two*, a model adapted primarily from Wilhelmsen (2017) and Lowth (2011), implies the imposition of a particular worldview on the accepting audience. In regards to decision-makers, audience acceptance can be seen as the adoption of a particular 'frame', which places constraints in the ways they may think of a threat in the form of *a priori* assumptions. This has an impact in how military planners prepare for operations, as it corresponds to the immediate, non-material assumptions

introduced in chapter one. The aforementioned 'frame' can be seen as producing these 'immediate, non-material assumptions'.

In order to assess whether these *a priori* assumptions were indeed present among military planners, a review of the secondary literature on the Chechen wars was made. Particular attention was given to those assumptions most connected to the design of the operation, and the choice of tactics, these levels of military decision-making are more reflective of the subjectivity of military planners as they turn politically-determined strategic objectives into operational means (see Klein, 1991, 11-12). In doing this, two broad and main assumptions were found for each war, each of which could be summarized as a statement regarding the overall capacity of Russia's forces, the forces of the Chechen rebels, and regarding the kinds of means necessary to accomplish the mission (little use of force, or much use of force). For the first Chechen war, the *a priori* assumptions were that the Chechen rebels were a disjoint group, and that the Russian forces were strong enough to intimidate them into submission. For the second Chechen war, the *a priori* assumptions were that the Chechen rebels were a capable fighting force, and that the intensive use of force would be permitted.

To further test the impact of the hegemonic securitising narratives in military planning, checking the structure of the narratives against the assumptions, with the aim of suggesting a connection between the securitising narratives identified in the first phase of the empirical research, and the *a priori* assumptions identified in the second phase of the empirical research. To do this, each of these assumptions was interpreted as a representation of their object, namely the Russian forces, the Chechen rebels, and the measures needed to face the rebels. Then, it was judged whether these representations are consistent with the aforementioned worldview of the securitising narratives. For the first Chechen war, the *a priori* assumptions of a divided Chechen force, and of a Russian force capable of intimidating them, are seen as consistent with the *Dudaev narrative*, as this narrative represents the Chechens as divided, and the Russians as capable. For the second Chechen war, the *a priori* assumptions of a capable Chechen force, and of the permission to use force against them are seen as consistent with the representations of the *justice narrative*, as this narrative represents the threat coming from Chechnya as a direct threat to Russia's integrity, and emphasizes the need for action to be taken, precluding the possibility of negotiations. The other securitising narratives identified for each period were not judged to produce such consistent matches

with the *a priori* assumptions identified. Therefore, these observations offer further evidence for attributing a hegemonic status to the *Dudaev narrative* at the outset of the first Chechen war, and to the *justice narrative* at the outset of the second Chechen war. Moreover, it also offers evidence that the hegemonic narratives had an impact in military planning previous to each war.

In gaining audience acceptance and becoming hegemonic, these securitisation narratives changed the limits of what measures taken by the Russian government in regards to Chechnya may be seen as legitimate. In this sense, they did not determine the actions taken by the Russian armed forces, but placed limits on them, encouraging more or less reliance on force. In the case of the first Chechen war, the limits were such that the operation could only be planned as a brief fight against criminals, relying on intimidation. In the second Chechen war, the limits were such that the operation could be planned as war against a threat to the state, relying on heavy use of artillery.

By considering both Chechen wars, a diachronic comparison is made; in this sense, the process is the acceptance of securitising narratives among the military audience, and the presence of these narratives' significant representations in the *a priori* assumptions of the military planning. As the impact of securitising narratives in military planning appears to repeat in both cases considered, it can be said that securitising narratives are adopted by military audiences, and have an impact in their planning. In other words, incorporating both wars allows some degree of generalisation of the findings, as they are not reduced to a single event.

The findings of this dissertation show that the case of the Russian army in the Chechen wars offers evidence that hegemonic securitising narratives contributes to a worldview which informs military decision-makers in the process of designing military operations. While other factors can have a larger impact in shaping military planning, the impact of discourse is unavoidable in considering the factors involved in determining military planning.

5.3. Limitations

The claims of this dissertation have various limitations, owing to the subjective, interpretative nature of its methodology, the assumptions made throughout the inquiry,

and the design of its sample.

The framework has two main limitations, namely its assumptions on the military as an audience. While securitisation theory prescribes audience acceptance as a phenomenon that happens only at the level of the whole of (significant) society, my inquiry limited itself to the military. In this sense, it framed the military as a sub-group where securitisation takes place, and focused solely onto it, assuming that the patterns of securitising narratives happening in the military are reflective of those of the rest of society. Such 'echo', while grounded upon the theory introduced in chapter one, might not be the case.

The second limitations is regarding the way narratives are dealt with in the framework. Instead of offering an account of securitising and de-securitising narratives (as Wilhelmsen does), this inquiry only conceptualised the narratives that introduce a threat, a notion of Self (Russia) and Other (the Chechen rebels), and the measures to be taken, as securitising narratives. A more sophisticated approach could have introduced de-securitising narratives, but as these would not translate into assumptions for the use of force by the military, it was not incorporated.

Various stages of the methodology involve interpretative stages which are inherently subjective. The first phase involved coding, which introduced subjective assessments in two discrete stages: the application of codes to certain texts and their mapping, and the categorisation of these codes (Berg, 2001, 254). Also, as I am not a native speaker of Russian language, I had to focus on large patterns and explicit articulations, precluding the option of any form of close reading. Moreover, a quantitative approach to content analysis has inherent limitations regarding the choices made for the operationalisation of its categories (Berg, 2001, 241). For my inquiry, this was most important in the translation of the abstract 'significant representations' to specific keywords in the quantitative method used in phase one. As the selection of words for the search of patterns involved a judgement of the words most suitable to capture the recurrent significant representations, it cannot be generalised to a specific, methodic word-choice procedure. For the second phase, although my focus was on explicit mentions in the literature consulted of the assumptions of the Russian military, in some instances the retrieval of the *a priori* assumptions also involved some use of my personal judgement.

Finally, sample design had two main limitations. First, the choice of focusing on

a single newspaper instead of involving a wider range of publications of the military. Having brought in more military publications could have improved the generalisation of the claims regarding the hegemonic nature of the securitising narratives. This was not attempted due to the length of the periods covered (two years in total). The second limitation is regarding the sampling method. While the first stage of sample design involved a keyword-based method for retrieving the texts, the second stage, involved purposive sampling, which involved judging which articles are relevant for the sample and which not. This method of sampling introduces further limits to generalisation of the findings (Berg, 2001, 33), in this case to the claims regarding the hegemonic status of certain securitising narratives.

5.4. Contextualisation of the findings

This inquiry's findings belong to two main contexts. First is the one that is defined by securitisation theory and its development. This is the context for this dissertation's theoretical framework and methodology. Second, is the field of study of military planning, which is the context of the research question. The findings of this dissertation have relevance for each of them.

For securitisation theory, the findings show the possibility of designing empirical research on particular accepting audiences as sub-groups of society and their own securitisation processes. In particular, it allowed for making visible the process of adaptation of securitising narratives in light of their acceptance or refusal by a sub-group of society. This line of inquiry can be adjusted and replicated among other milieus as long as they are framed as both audiences and particular discursive terrains. Moreover, the inquiry on the effects of securitisation on planning, as captured in phase two of the research, may be also adjusted beyond the military milieu. Regarding strategic studies, this dissertation's parsimonious categorisation of military assumptions may be used as a ground for further research on the 'fog of peace' and the subjective factors of military planning.

As this inquiry adapted its methodology and incorporated substantial portions of Wilhelmsen's (2017) book, a discussion with it is necessary to both assess this inquiry in light of its 'replication' of Wilhelmsen's results, and of the added value of its

theoretical and methodological features.

Three crucial differences between Wilhelmsen's inquiry and the present one can be emphasized for comparison: first, the analysis of the hegemonic narrative of first Chechen war, which receives only a brief mention (2017, 87-91); second, this inquiry focused exclusively on the military's repetition and adaptation of narratives assumed to be originating from elsewhere in Russian society, while Wilhelmsen's work aimed to capture the society-wide normalisation process; and third, this inquiry sought to find an imprint of the representations of the hegemonic narrative in the armed forces pre-war assumptions in order to suggest the possibility of a discursive explanation to at least some of the decision-making in the Russian armed forces. In contrast, while Wilhelmsen also sought to explore the connection between discourse and the legitimate use of force, her focus was on the enabling role of the narratives for the increased use of violence (2017, 151).

Differing with Wilhelmsen (2017, 64), in the period sampled, the KZ newspaper does not reproduce as hegemonic a narrative about a clash of civilisations in the second war. However, the trope of a new 'Caucasus war' was indeed mentioned as a threat, which may indeed suggest the relevance of that frame in the military. In contrast to Wilhelmsen's inquiry, the observations made in this chapter point not only to the military's larger freedom to pursue their objectives with a reduced concern for human rights in the second war, but connects this to the deliberation on urban combat (i.e. to use force to avoid it), the broader incorporation of lessons from the first war, and the assumption connecting the overwhelming use of force with achieving victory. Moreover, it also underscores the operational importance of the operation as a counter-terrorism one, as it de-emphasized the need for capturing and holding terrain, and emphasized the legal grounds (i.e. Chechnya's *de jure* union to Russia and the persecution of criminals) on which the operation took place.

Various observations in this inquiry agree with those of Wilhelmsen. First, regarding the operation to seal Chechnya (2017, 156) observes that the representation of Chechnya as a threat made logical the imperative to seal off the republic previous to military operations inside the republic. The international dimension of the hegemonic narrative of the second war adds an important component to this imperative: its isolation is not only intended to separate Russia from Chechnya, but also to cut off Russia from potential threats coming from abroad *through* Chechnya. Another observation is that the

measures taken to minimize casualties among Russian military personnel (i.e. reliance on bombing and the use of *kontrakniki*), reflects Wilhelmsen's (2017, 30) argument regarding the applicability of securitisation theory on non-democratic states. In spite of the possibility to impose the war on the population, the Russian government did seek to foster the population's consent by presenting a reduced number of casualties, promising a short fight, and by investing in public relations efforts, and in the narrative of the war as a counter-terrorism operation. All of these aspects were observed in the narratives and in the assessments made in the present chapter.

Finally, additional observations can be made about the place this inquiry has in regards to other tangential subjects, namely Russia's foreign policy reorientation under V. Putin's administration, and Russia's history of counterinsurgency. First, the shift in importance of the international dimension of the conflict, specifically of the West, from indifference to threat, echoes Snetkov's (2012) argument regarding Russia's exteriorisation of security concerns. However, the timeframe of Snetkov's argument suggests that this process became evident by 2007 (2012, 535), while the West was already perceived as threatening in the KZ newspaper by 1999. This could be interpreted as the hesitancy of the civilian leadership to adopt this representation, as their goal in the early 2000s was to approach the West (Snetkov, 2012, 528). Moreover, the rhetorical connection between international terror and Chechen rebellion in the second war, could be also seen as part of Snetkov's argument of Russia's internal de-securitisation, and not only of Russia's instrumentalisation of the 'war on terror' (2012, 525). As the conflict was no longer conceived as a conflict over Chechnya (the hegemonic narrative of the second war held no doubt that Chechnya is part of Russia), but as an operation to persecute crime, however threatening and ambitions their goals were. Finally, the comparison with NATO's operations in the Western Balkans is significant. As mentioned by Wilhelmsen (2017, 151), discursive articulations about the war are significant in relation to the concrete practices being implemented, as they belong to the discursive domain in which certain manoeuvres in war become legitimate.

Second, some findings are relevant to the study of Russia's history of counterinsurgency. The findings regarding the observed interchangeable use of the terms 'bandit', 'criminal', and later on 'terrorist', as well as 'Wahhabi' for the second war are consistent with previous observations. First, with Wilhelmsen's own inquiry, where the connection of Wahhabism to terrorism is observed, as well as the rhetorical

disconnection of Wahhabism and Islam (Wilhelmsen, 2017, 76). Second, the superficial treatment of these terms, devoid of nuance, and the disregard of the referred ideologies as drivers for the conflict, are consistent with Merati's observations about Russia's counterinsurgency tradition, which privileges said disregard, bracketing the opposing side's worldview as the 'terrorist ideology' not to be engaged with (2017, 135). Hence, this inquiry reinforces Merati's claim regarding continuity in Russia's regard to terrorists under a law-and-order gaze, and not through ideological conflict. As mentioned in the previous chapter, elements of the *legal narrative* were prevalent throughout the whole of the period covered. The definition throughout both wars of the opposing side in terms of their relationship to the law ('criminals', 'bandits'), suggests that this narrative may be seen as either a meta-narrative, or as a defining feature of the discourse in Russian society.

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