

# The EU, Russia and the Eastern region: the analytics of government for sustainable cohabitation

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## Abstract

This paper applies the Foucauldian premise of governmentality and the 'analytics of government' framework to demonstrate how *exclusive* modalities of power – of the EU and Russia – and their competing rationalities relate, intersect and become, counter-intuitively, *inextricable* in their exercise of governance over the eastern neighbourhood. This particular approach focuses on *power as a process* to gauge the prospects for compatibility and cohabitation between the EU and Russia. Using original primary evidence, this paper contends that cohabitation between these two *exclusive* power modalities is possible and even inevitable, if they were to legitimately exert influence over the contested eastern region. It also exposes a fundamental flaw in the existing power projection systems, as demonstrated so vividly in the case of Ukraine – that is, a neglect of the essential value of *freedom* in fostering subjection to one's authority, and the role of '*the Other*', hitherto missing in EU-Russian power relations in the contested region.

World count: 8,825

**Key words:** eastern neighbourhood, EU-Russia relations, governmentality, analytics of government, incompatible rationalities

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## The EU, Russia and the Eastern region:

### the analytics of government for sustainable cohabitation

#### Introduction: *incompatible* rationalities?

The past few years have seen a torrent of political events in Eastern Europe which has the potential to profoundly alter the practice and the theory of international relations. One way or another they all centre on Ukraine, which has become a referent object of international relations to expose the unstable and reverse nature of power politics, and more specifically, to interrogate the very essence of the European Union (EU) and Russia's commitments to the eastern region. The events in and around Ukraine took many by surprise especially in terms of the pace and the depth of the occurring change, within and beyond the country. Domestically, the regime of President Yanukovich, in power since February 2010, was forcefully swept into oblivion, leaving Ukraine politically divided and enduring substantial human, economic and territorial losses. At the regional level, the EU's reputation and legitimacy in the eastern neighbourhood have been considerably tarnished by its miscalculated pronouncements, retarded actions, and most crucially, the lack of vision for the region (House of Lords, 2015). Conversely, Russia's leadership has enjoyed a spurt of popularity at home, while conducting an adventurous and militaristic foreign policy in Crimea and eastern Ukraine and mocking the imperfections of the international system (Giles *et al*, 2015; Haukkala, 2015). At the same time, these domestic afflictions may be short-lived, considering the consequences of the disrupted status-quo and the progressive effect of international sanctions on Russia (Emerson, 2014; Rutland, 2014).

Internationally, some wider corollaries are also emerging. First, one would now struggle to identify stable 'macro-security constellations', or indeed enduring international 'collectivities sharing in securitisation' (Buzan and Waeber, 2009:264), with an agreed and *coherent line* of argument on how to manage a new eastern threat, and the disrupted global order. The EU seems to be perpetually in crisis when it comes to defining its strategy towards Russia (Liik, 2015); while global leadership of the G7, the UN and the OSCE are either stagnant or sabotaged (Friedman, 2014). In a short period of time Russia, single-handedly, succeeded in driving a wedge into the heart of the international system, with long-term implications for its governance and credibility.

Second, after recent events, the narrative of competition between the EU and Russia for governance and some would even argue, for purposeful region-building (Delcour and Wolczuk, 2014; Delcour and Kostanyan, 2014; Korosteleva, 2015) is finally in the open, following some years of rhetorical restraint, after the Russo-Georgian war in 2008. One would now

struggle to envisage a harmonious way of reconciling the apparently *exclusive* identities,<sup>1</sup> especially in application to the contested eastern region. The genie has been let out of the bottle, and a ‘contained status-quo view of ‘the Self’ without universalist pretensions’ may no longer be feasible (Buzan and Waever, 2009: 262). The pace of events is simply staggering. If in 2010 the political narrative centred on fostering EU-Russia ‘partnership’, in an effort to modernise the region for the benefit of all (Council, 2010), three years on, the language of relations has become that of antagonism and condemnation. Notably, in 2013 the regional efforts of both powers entered ‘high politics’ by declaring parts of their respective projects – the Eastern Partnership Initiative (EaP) on the EU side, and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) on Russia’s side – incompatible (Füle, 2013b). By 2014 relations became fully securitised, bringing NATO, Russian troops, Ukrainian belligerent forces, and the entire international community into dispute. As Buzan and Waever would argue, ‘the only way in which an [exclusive] universalist identity can reach stability is if it succeeds in taking over the whole system’ (2009:263).

Third, the struggle within and over Ukraine has also revealed a glaring lack of reckoning with ‘the Other’ – not simply with and between the main protagonists of the war of ‘universalisms’<sup>2</sup> – but rather with third parties, the very ‘objects’ of those wars, whose voice has been neglected and sometimes even betrayed for the sake of ‘ever-expanding range and degree of control over others’ (Ibid: 263). Indeed, if anything, the significance of Ukraine as a ‘referent object’ of the continuing conflict is precisely in demonstrating that the ‘speech-war’ over Ukraine was *not* at all about Ukraine but rather about the ‘clash of the titans’ and their governance ambitions over the region. The emergence of the Ukraine’s crisis demonstrated just how inherently unstable the balance of power was, and how calculated rationalities of the third parties could either disrupt or support a contained status-quo between the expansionist ‘Selves’.

In light of the above, the pressing issue now is to examine and understand the logic of these exposed ‘universalist’ identities of the EU and Russia, and especially whether, first, they can be contained again, and second, whether their expansionist power intentions can be brought into *coexistence* with, and recognition of, the region. **The focus of this paper is therefore on reviewing the calculated rationalities of the EU and Russia vis-à-vis the eastern neighbourhood and developing an understanding of the possible ‘exit strategy’ for the current *political impasse*.** These relations, as mentioned earlier, tend to be seen in binary terms only: as ‘coexistence’ of self-limiting and self-determining cohabitation (Jackson 2000) or as a ‘hierarchy’<sup>3</sup> of ever-expanding control and influence, inculcating a permanent threat into the

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<sup>1</sup> As Buzan and Waever argue, *exclusive* identities could relate to each other in two basic ways: *coexistence or hierarchy*. If the latter, they can be understood in terms of ‘social Darwinism, where international relations are seen as a ruthless game of survival of the fittest, and where “fittest” can be understood as “most powerful”’ (2009:262-63)

<sup>2</sup> Referring to the projection of the ‘Self’ as superior to ‘Others’ and where often the needs of ‘the Self override the rights of Others,... involving an ever-expanding range and degree of control over others’ (Ibid: 263)

<sup>3</sup> Both terms have been borrowed from Buzan and Waever’s discussion of the forms of cohabitation between exclusive identities (2009)

international system. While the former is no longer possible, and the latter is unacceptable, could there be a compromise?

In order to reflect and indeed rethink the relational meaning of EU-Russian relations in their inter-regional dynamics, it is essential to adopt a conceptual perspective which may help untangle the complexity of the disrupted status-quo and the accelerating discourse of a new Cold War order in Europe. This may be done by speaking to the reciprocal nature of the EU and Russia's external governance projections in their management of security and/or 'conduct of the peoples' conduct' (Foucault, 2007) in the common neighbourhood, in an attempt to expose power as a process and the interface of these calculated rationalities. This implies transcending the conflict and reaching out to the 'other' by embracing the meanings of what and who are to be governed, and how to make governance, as the form of one's domination, legitimate.

For this purpose, this paper will exploit the Foucauldian premise of governmentality (2007) in the context of EU-Russian relations (Prozorov, 2006; Sending and Neumann, 2010; Astrov et al, 2011), and the emergent framework of the 'analytics of government' (Dean, 2010; Death, 2013) in order to understand how different modalities of power – of the EU, Russia and the EaP region - relate and intersect. This is *not* a problem-solving analysis, rather it is an analytical exercise in trying to understand and expose the complex interdependencies of the EU and Russia's *exclusive* power modalities in the process of expansion of their respective universalist orders. Despite the overwhelming complexity of the Foucauldian framework, the major advantages of particular relevance here are threefold.

First, by focusing on the practices of discourse, technologies (instruments), subjectivities (actors) and practices – the key notions of the framework – the 'analytics of government' interprets *power as a process*, that captures every stage of its production: from the moment of utterance and the use of instruments and agents to solicit the course, to the emergence of structures and engineered behaviours which may enable a new cycle of influence-building in the process of power transmission. This approach is different to some alternative visions (e.g. Langbein and Börzel, 2013; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig 2009), as it embraces the process in its entirety, drawing on the scholarship of international practices (Adler and Pouliot, 2011) and also defining power as a *continuum* of interdependencies rather than a series of confined and purposeful actions.

Second, the 'analytics of government' considers power as a *relational process* thus revealing the need to render space for the inclusion of 'the Other' as a complementary part to 'the Self'. To this end, the framework helps to uncover levels of interaction between rationalities of major power contestants, and link them to one another vis-à-vis the third parties they contest over, in order to unpack power as a correlated process of subjection, resistance and control, where '*othering*' becomes an intrinsic part of power transmission. This exposure of power inter-relatedness, especially in the contested

space, may be particularly instructive for our understanding of the (in)compatible and dependable nature of power dynamics in the EaP region.

Third, the construction and exertion of control and authority in seeking to shape human and institutional conduct invariably entail struggle and *resistance*. The ‘analytics of government’ is premised on the ontology of power as resistance and aims to expose the fragility and contestability of governance as a process of acceptance of one’s authority. As Merlingen argues:

Foucault’s ‘analytics of governance and its peculiar conceptualisation of the linkage between domination and people’s capacity for self-control makes the theory well-suited for bringing into focus the tensions and opposition between the government of others and self-government and for adding a new perspective on the diverse and often inconspicuous ways in which citizens resist being enrolled in government projects of order’ (2006:190).

Once again, an implicit reference to *resistance* as rejection of one’s authority attested f by the case of Ukraine and other EaP partners, is particularly instructive for understanding the boundaries of contesting political orders, and their explanatory value for the disrupted practices of international cooperation.

Finally, the fundamental premise of the framework is that it highlights the essential value of *freedom* of the to-be-subjected individuals (Prozorov 2006). If viewed as a form of calculated rationality, an individual’s voluntary and justified choice between the available options would, as a rule, generate commitment, which subsequently would make the choice enduring and governance sustainable. Freedom to choose, especially in the context of competing rationalities, presumes a process of internalisation and recognition of the authority of others by individuals, which always requires time, incentives and even leadership by example. Successful absorption of governance by others evinces allegiances and may even generate advocacy on behalf of the system, thus perpetuating a moment of sustainability for new power arrangements. Therefore, it could be said that at the heart of governmentality is the understanding that power can only work through the *practices of freedom*, and as the process of interacting with ‘the other’. For Rose (1999:4), for example, ‘to govern is to presuppose the freedom of the governed’, while Miller and Rose (2008: 53) argue that ‘power is not so much a matter of imposing constraints upon citizens’ but rather ‘making up citizens capable of bearing a kind of regulated freedom’.

Let us explore the notions and meanings of control and freedom by way of triangulating the practices of the EU and Russia via their respective regional projects – the EaP and the EEU – in their ‘shared’ neighbourhood. First, we should unpack the key tenets of the ‘analytics of government’ framework, to consider theoretically options for the possible coexistence of the now overtly competing ‘exclusive identities’. Second, we can then apply this conceptual thinking onto the cases of the EU and Russia vis-à-vis the eastern region, by tracing the origins and impact of power discourses (and

language especially), as well as the use of technologies (Instruments), subjectivities (agents) and fields of visibility (practices) between the competing power modalities. The purpose of this exercise is to locate power centres, vis-à-vis their referent objects, on the politics-security nexus, to consider whether the discourse and the pertaining machinery of actions could be defused and shifted to a zone of stability, to normalise relations in and beyond the region.

## The analytics of government: a framework

In order to understand the extent of interrelatedness of the competing power modalities, and interdependence of such binaries as the Self and the Other, domination and freedom, rationality and emotion, in the exercise of governance, it is imperative to emphasise their *complementarity*: one cannot exist without the other, and power can only be exercised, in a sustainable and legitimate manner, over free subjects (Foucault 2007). This may sound counter-intuitive, especially in the context of what is now seen as the open and 'exclusive' competition between the EU and Russia in the eastern region, which stabilisation is claimed to be only possible through their further expansion into the contested territories, once on the 'path of war' (Buzan and Waever, 2009). This tenet of seemingly incompatible 'universalisms' of power advanced by the Copenhagen School of thought however, as Williams contends (2003: 528), must be placed in 'social contexts and complex communicative and institutional processes of securitization at work', to gauge its validity. Contextualisation of international relations helps to observe how fluid and relational the process of power is; and how swiftly competition for power could develop both ways – by escalating into a language of threat, or unwinding into a mode of self-containment. Foucault argues (2007:2) that 'power is not founded on itself or generated by itself'; power is a process, which could be seen as 'a set of mechanisms and procedures that have a role or function, even when unsuccessful, of securing power'. Power as a co-interactive process is instructive: after all, the ontology of relationship between 'exclusive' identities has proven them inter-dependable in terms of fostering knowledge and more sophisticated forms of governance, to stay in competition.<sup>4</sup> Hence, studying these 'exclusive' identities in their interaction and inter-relatedness, especially at the point of application, might shed light on the prospects for their convergence and normalisation, rather than a rigid fixation on their dispute.

A feasible way forward could be that, while contesting shared space for influence, the colliding powers ought to be aware that they do not shape the targeted domain unilaterally, rather they are locked in a *nexus* of rationalised and subjectivity-driven exposure which may or may not induce commitment from the people they target. They should be guided by their reciprocal actions vis-à-vis each other and especially towards their referent objects, to measure the desired effect of engagement and degrees of control they induce. This nexus of subject-object-subject relationship, as a key tenet of the

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<sup>4</sup> For more conceptual discussion see Foucault (2007, especially Lecture 3, pp. 55-65); for practical application see Kurki (2011)

'analytics of government', underscores both the relational value of power modalities and the importance of *othering* in the process of power extension and control. How does *othering* matter? As noted, for stable cohabitation to occur – especially in the contested space of the eastern neighbourhood – *freedom* should be the premise of relations, availing the third party of an *opportunity* of legitimated choice, necessary for survival in contested power zones. The true 'conduct of people's conduct' (Foucault, 2007) would only take place in the circumstances of generated interest, exposed reciprocities and motivated partnerships, which could only endure with the spirit of ownership and rationalised (and as a rule incremental) acceptance of the order of others. These are the premises for effective power arrangements: a relational nature of power and the value of freedom. Let us explore these tenets through the variables of the framework and apply them to the process of con/di-vergence of the EU and Russia's power modalities in the EaP region. These will encompass an analysis of the protagonists' discourses of knowledge; deployed technologies (instruments); forms of subjectivity (including agents); and purported fields of visibility (practices), to enable our assessment of the prospects for sustainability of EU and Russia's governance in the contested region.

### Discourses of knowledge

The 'analytics of government' is particularly attuned to the rationalities at work in varied and often competing regimes of governance (Death, 2013). It focuses on power relations, which are calculated, planned and justified (for example, as is in the case of Russia), 'rather than more arbitrary, subconscious or unconsidered' (Death, 2013:773), and where forms of legitimation are particularly central to the way in which governance is practised: 'to govern is to seek an authority for one's authority' (Rose, 1999:27). In the circumstances of competing power modalities it becomes even more instructive to de-centre the authority away from the power-bearing polities towards the political microcosms of the recipients, in order to expose them to the benefits of the government of others and to foster their interest and subscription. Hence, pitching the prevalent discourse of knowledge to the level of needs and perceptions of third parties is essential.

Effectively, the discourse of knowledge is a reflection of its dual nature: the projection of 'the Self' and its representation to 'the Other', which under this rubric takes a rhetorical form, a speech-act, or the utterance of 'the Self' in application to 'the Other'. Speech-act is regarded by various scholars (Waever, 1995; Diez, 2005; Flockhart, 2006; Manners 2014) as an important manifestation of 'the Self', and especially of its knowledge of the referent objects, and their external environs. It is essentially about naming or articulating this knowledge in a form of action – a policy, a high-politics intention and/or a security act. In this case, as Waever argues (1995:55, italics original) 'the utterance *itself* is the act. By saying it, something is done... By uttering "security", a state-representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it'. In this context it would be useful to

briefly trace the trajectories of ‘political utterances’ by the EU and Russian political establishments in the rollercoaster of their relational power modalities over Ukraine and the EaP region more broadly.

Political utterances - discourses of knowledge – invariably render an end-product, ‘an act’, which may induce new rules/norms of behaviour and render new structures to support them (Adler and Pouliout, 2011; Korosteleva *et al*, 2014). In this sense too, it is instructive to study discourses of knowledge, to understand whether and how, especially in their structured forms, these utterances connect and are internalised, but also, could be defused and de-securitised through the actions of powerful protagonists. Foucault (2007:63), for example, argues that a distinction should be made between ‘normalisation’ – that is, subjecting others to one’s norms – and ‘*normation*’ as an ‘interplay between different distributions of normalities in an attempt to bring most unfavourable in line with the most favourable’. Yet again, it is necessary to explore whether there are prospects for this kind of convergence – as space for *normation* – between the EU and Russia’s discourses, at the point of their application in the contested neighbourhood.

### Technologies of power

The ‘analytics of government’ utilises various means as manifestations of power relations at the point of their application. Technologies - instruments, budgets, partnerships, roadmaps, development plans, benchmarking, association agreements, etc. – bring into being particular subjectivities (self-knowledge), and enable them to induce system change. Interestingly, both power-centres – the EU and Russia – are rather sophisticated in application of their technologies of power (Noutcheva, 2014; Casier *et al*, 2013); however their ability to generate allegiances in target countries is dependent on the levels of the latter’s structural openness and degree of freedom and reciprocity, built into the panoply of instruments. For example, while the EU has become particularly sophisticated in generating interest using a ‘more for more’ matrix of enablement at all levels of society, with a particular emphasis on ‘civil society’ as an instrument (Delcour, 2011), its effectiveness is often disputed owing to the practical and often asymmetrical modalities of policy implementation and endurance (Pace, 2014). Conversely, Russia enjoys structural advantages predicated by pre-existing normative/cultural ties with the neighbourhood and institutional/transactional bias to enable swift public engagement and subjection. At the same time, Russia’s use of these instruments can also backfire, exposing corruption, coercion, lack of transparency and fixed rules as a premise for partnering neighbours, thus invariably provoking the problem of the *unfreedom* of choice and resistance (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013).

### Subjectivities

The ‘analytics of government’ approach highlights the production of new circuits of knowledge by third parties (e.g. NGOs, business interests, education units etc.) and their interaction with the power centres, which subsequently enables



them to accept or reject their respective authority. These new, plural and multiple free subjects, essentially become the *agents of power*, and are instrumental for internalisation and dissemination of the authority of others as part of their 'self-knowledge'. Effectively, generating multiple subjectivities/agents at all levels is a prime objective of external governance – to engender commitment to the new order of others, and 'self-knowledge' for the purpose of its reproduction. Both the EU neighbourhood and Russia's Eurasian projects are particularly sophisticated at yielding specific agents of power: the former seems to achieve it largely through a complex machinery of 'more for more' compelling and partners' technocratic socialisation in international norms (Korosteleva 2015); while the latter – through shared normative/cultural affinities, memories, coercion and strong propaganda machinery, once again curtailing the 'freedom of choice' (Noucheva, 2014). Ultimately, one's subjectivity becomes one's subjection through the process of internalisation of knowledge and positioning. In this regard, it is particularly instructive to study whether coexistence of dual subjectivities in the eastern neighbourhood, where presently they receive almost an equal footing in public perceptions, may be possible as much as it is desirable by the people themselves in the region.

### Fields of visibility

Finally, the fields of visibility, in simplistic terms, denote 'practices' – areas of governance which are perceived to be the most connected and effective in their 'conduct of the peoples' conduct'. They are instrumental for generating narratives of success and instigating a sense of allegiance and voluntary following/subjection amongst the individuals. In some sense, it is a form of branding referring to the products of future reciprocity (Keohane 1998). The governmentality approach is particularly attuned to the clashes between competing rationalities, gaps and fractures of the government method: it works by sharing the narrative of success as a means of persuasion, and it captures and protects the visibility spaces which a given authority has gained control over: 'to govern it is necessary to render visible the space over which government is to be exercised' (Rose, 1999:36).

These distinctive features of governmentality, or in this case, 'the analytics of government', allow a more detailed analysis of the complex interrelationship between the three differing modalities of power in their realisation – of the EU, Russia and the recipient EaP region. Furthermore, the conceptual framework will be tested by empirical findings drawn from research conducted in 2008-11 (ESRC 061-25-0001) and 2013/14 (ODB/SIDA and SAK), across the eastern region, including Russia.<sup>5</sup> Both research projects used the same methodology and methods, and included nation-wide surveys, focus groups, interviews and youth essays.

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<sup>5</sup> For 2008-11 results please refer to the ESRC project (RES-061-25-0001) available at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/interpol/research/research-projects/europeanising-securing-outsiders/>; and for 2013/14 – to the results available at: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/politics/gec/research/index.html>

## The EU and Russia: to securitisation and back in the 'shared' neighbourhood

When scrutinised, the EU and Russia are *not at all dissimilar* in their ambitions and practices under their respective regional projects – the EaP and the EEU – for the shared eastern neighbourhood.<sup>6</sup> Both see themselves as global normative players (Tocci, 2007), and both have 'universalist' pretensions over the shared neighbourhood, since these countries' declaration of independence. Delcour and Wolczuk (2014)<sup>7</sup> would go even further and argue that both power centres have tacit but determinate intentions of region-building in the neighbourhood: not as 'stand-alone' but rather dependent entities along the core-periphery relational nexus. This implies, for example, in the case of the EaP a creation of the Neighbourhood Economic Community, locked via Deep and Comprehensive Trade Agreements (DCFTA), onto the EU single market; whereas in the case of EEU, trade commitments to Eurasian space. Their competing rationalities may not have been explicit from the start (Fischer 2010), but have evolved from their initial normative *juxtaposition* to their eventual geopolitical *opposition* to designate two distinctive, *exclusive* and now openly competitive identities underpinned by differing sets of norms and values, institutional structures, and strategic visions. They may deploy differing tactics, and mechanisms of influence (Noutcheva, 2014; Delcour and Wolczuk 2014b), but at the same time, they exercise increasingly similar intentions of domination and control over the EaP region. In particular, they both come to enable biased subjectivities and generate fields of visibility which would advocate for their respective preferential outcomes. Both regard exerting governance over the EaP region as a priority for their foreign policies, with credibility and legitimacy of their regional projects being at stake. Both project similar rationalities to justify the course of their engagement in the neighbourhood, by referring to the benefits of extended trade and economic cooperation, as well as modernisation of common pan-European space (Averre, 2009).

### Discourses of knowledge

Until recently both power centres had successfully *coexisted* in their exclusive, 'self-determining' and 'self-limiting' rationalities 'seeking the right to maintain and reproduce itself', and 'making no claims' against one another 'except that they allow it the necessary degree of self-control to do that' (Buzan and Waever, 2009: 262). Their adaptive governance, nevertheless, centred on a 'normalisation' (as opposed to 'normation') strategy – that is, an EU attempt to bring Russia in line with the accepted international (and EU) norms and patterns of behaviour to induce 'shared values' and 'joint ownership'.<sup>8</sup> The stakes in their discourses were placed on 'partnership for modernisation', for the benefit of all (Council 2010). Consequently, both the EU and Russia have enjoyed a peaceful period of coexistence while incrementally

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<sup>6</sup> For more ontological analysis of EU-Russian relation in the neighbourhood (especially of Russian-Georgian war in 2008), from the lens of governmentality, see Prozorov, 2006; Sending and Neumann, 2010; Astrov et al, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Also refer to Korosteleva 2014 for further exploration of the competitive nature of EU and Russia's region-building intentions.

<sup>8</sup> For example, EU strong support for Russia's membership in WTO attested to the logic of 'normalising' Russia, in an effort to bring her into the fold of international community

procuring interest in the neighbourhood, via either promised transactional and institutional opportunities of the future on the part of the EU, or more immediate economic benefits on the part of the Eurasian Customs and now Economic Union (EEU) (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013). More specifically, since 2009 the Commission has been working painstakingly to empower Ukraine and other EaP partner-countries in developing their commitment towards the EU, by way of upgrading from Action Plans and Association Agendas, to legally binding Association Agreements (AA) in their entirety. At the same time, Russia entertained a vision of fostering a single economic space by enticing and compelling ex-Soviet states into the Eurasian Union.

The governance ambitions of the EU and Russia had hitherto succeeded at working around some conflicting issues of legitimacy and future, avoiding aggrandisement and where possible, allowing partners to develop respective subjectivities as necessary.<sup>9</sup> This tense but nevertheless reconciliatory discourse of coexistence was severely disrupted in the summer of 2013.

As previously mentioned, rhetorical pronouncements or speech-acts of major players could potentially be treacherous, as the act of utterance *de facto* forms a real action, which could disrupt or reinforce stability. Consequently, and precisely through utterance, by suddenly declaring essential parts of their respective regional projects (trade agreements – DCFTA and ECU codes) *incompatible*, the relations between the EU and Russia immediately became politicised. This was initiated with the EU's moderate but miscalculated campaign to accelerate or arguably compel Ukraine to sign the AA at the Vilnius summit in autumn 2013: 'It is crucial to define a vision for the coexistence and mutual enrichment of the regional projects as not to end up with two different sets of rules in the European Union economic space and in the Customs Union' (Füle, 2013a). Russia's authorities followed suit immediately by impressing the alternative choice on Presidents Yanukovich of Ukraine and Sargsyan of Armenia.<sup>10</sup>

The EU's politicisation campaign intensified in the autumn 2013 responding to Russia's growing pressure on the neighbourhood. Two regional projects were declared fully dichotomous and the expression of 'choice' and 'allegiances' was required from partner countries:

It is true that the ECU membership is not compatible with the DCFTAs which we have negotiated with Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia. This is not because of ideological differences; this is not about the clash of economic blocs, or a zero-sum game. This is due to legal impossibilities... It may certainly be possible for members of the Eastern Partnership to increase their cooperation with the ECU, perhaps as observers; and participation in a

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<sup>9</sup> The EU's intervention into the Russo-Georgian war serves as evidence of this reconciliatory approach (Astrov et al 2011)

<sup>10</sup> For more information see <http://www.russianmission.eu/en/news-and-events>

DCFTA is of course fully compatible with our partners' existing free trade agreements with other CIS states (Füle, 2013b)

The consequences of these politicised utterances have been debilitating for the region and the maintenance of the existing global order. While Ukraine refused to sign a deal with the EU at the Vilnius summit, it lost control over its own population, resulting in the Euromaidan and the ousting of Yanukovich. From that moment, EU-Russia relations became fully securitised, following Russia's annexation of Crimea, and the continued threat of intervention into eastern Ukraine. Securitisation also left the EU and the international system incapacitated. While drafting NATO troops to Ukraine's western borders, with Russian troops stationed on high alert on Ukraine's eastern border, the global actors lost control over the possibility of deliberations over a common strategy vis-à-vis Russia. Russia's annexation of Crimea provoked a highly securitised discourse between the EU and Russia, which had dominated the EaP landscape for the following period, while the region itself desperately sought the reduction of tension and moves towards reconciliation.

In light of the above developments, one would question the meaning of the 'good governance' (EU) and 'good neighbourhood' (Russia) discourse by the respective protagonists, as realised through their 'speech-act' rhetorical applications in the contested neighbourhood. Two particular manifestations become apparent.

First, in their Self-centred projections, both the EU and Russia have explicitly disregarded each other's rationalities over the contested region. The EU focused on the default assumption that the exposure of Ukraine and others to the future benefits of the EU, and the promise of a 'well-governed ring of friends' (centred on the EU) would enable recipients to unequivocally legitimise the European course. This was clearly an error of judgement, not only in terms of the timing to harvest allegiances, but also, more essentially, in failing to factor Russia into the EU's expansionist normative *modus operandi*. Furthermore, Russia's Eurasian vision, in discursive terms, appeared far more arresting, inclusive and outreaching, pledging economic stability for the entire continent by way of creating *single economic space* – 'integration via integration'<sup>11</sup> – from Brest in France to Vladivostok in Russia. As Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, aptly stated (2013): 'Don't wave the red rag of a new cold war bloc against the bloc. We must work for a union of unions, an alliance of the EU and the Eurasian Union. Naturally, this cannot happen overnight. But we must have the courage to set a long term goal in developing relations with Russia and its Eurasian partners'. This vision might have gained momentum in the neighbourhood – so captivating and relevant the promise was – if it were not for Russia's actions to destabilise Ukraine, and the region. As of 2013, two cohabitating universalist identities rocketed into contestation, and their coexistence momentarily was replaced by the drive to impose a binary choice on the region, irresponsibly driving the latter to implosion.

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<sup>11</sup> Incidentally, the term was coined by President Lukashenko. Please see <http://news.tut.by/politics/371348.html>

Second, and most significantly, both powers evidently failed to understand the region itself and its historical urge for complementary rather than dichotomous relations with the wider Europe. Notably, as our extensive empirical evidence suggests, both powers tend to yield similarly appealing subjectivities in the eastern neighbourhood, which, instead of mobilising binary loyalties, foster an ambivalence of choice for the peoples in the region. For example, in 2013/14 opinion polls revealed that a healthy plurality (40 per cent on average) of the respondents across Belarus and Moldova expressed their strong preference for both regional projects – the EaP and EEU – and indicated their growing concern over the rivalry between two power centres (30 per cent on average). Furthermore, our cross-temporal comparison premised on 2009/10 and 2013/14 evaluations of nation-wide opinion polls, suggests that both powers are of equal appeal to the residents of the region, albeit in their own and *very complementary way*, thus making the binary choice between the EU or Russia, even harder to contemplate. In particular, while the EaP and the EU have stronger clout in promoting functional government and effective sector-specific cooperation; the EEU is seen as relevant and instrumental for providing energy security and trade (Korosteleva 2014b). Enforcing a dichotomous choice on the region, not yet ready for making these commitments through their internalised and calculated rationalities, testifies to the profound lack of understanding ‘the Other’ – the partner countries – including their needs and aspirations. The error of judgement by the EU and the loss of control by Russia are, in an equal measure, the causalities of the decision-making process which occurred in the vacuum of correlated knowledge, resulting in unnecessary politicisation and subsequent securitisation of the contestable narratives, as the case of Ukraine has lately demonstrated.

The bigger question here, however, is whether and how the EU and Russia’s discourses could be demobilised and de-securitised in their rhetorical furnishings, to return to a zone of relatively peaceful coexistence, in order to stop the profligacy of the false choice for the neighbourhood. Our comparative research indicates (Korosteleva 2014b), while the normative framing of EU and Russian discourses continues to conflict in a profound way, their opposition may not necessarily be insurmountable. Notably, both powers profess and are associated with differing and yet complementary sets of values, which in turn may engineer fruitful synergies of behavioural patterns and expectations, especially if embedded into the frame of international norms aiming at stability and economic cooperation. More specifically, as our cross-temporal data of 2009 and 2014 reveal, the EU, in public perception of the eastern region, is clearly associated with a *liberal democratic model*, premised on the values of democracy, human rights, market economic, and the lack of corruption. This spatial survey analysis also indicated relative endurance of this model in people’s mind-sets. At the same time, the EEU and Russia, in the respondents’ eyes in the eastern neighbourhood, offer a mix of qualities, a hybrid case, which could be referred to as a *social democratic model* (Kurki, 2010:372), and which, while retaining some cultural uniqueness of association, is also driven by the values of economic stability, prosperity, and social security

(Korosteleva2014b). The 2014 findings in particular indicate that there is more proximity and scope for convergence alongside these values than had been publicly purported in the earlier days of the EaP, five years ago, which could avail some prospects for economic cohabitation, if ‘normation’ as ‘optimal space’ between mutually agreed rules were to be considered.

As the crisis matured, the EU toned down its tactics in the EaP region, by engaging into technical and staggered signing of the AAs with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia through the course of 2013/14 (Commission, 2014). It will be interesting to see whether this effort to depoliticise the agenda, as well as the accompanying measures to explicate the prospects for co-existence between the DCFTA and the EEU,<sup>12</sup> could contribute to engendering ‘normation’ between the competing projects. A more decisive step on both sides, however, would be a verbal validation of and engagement with both economic projects – the DCFTA and the EEU in particular – to ensure they will evolve towards mutual recognition and even complementarity.

### Technologies of power

While the intended outcomes of power modalities may be similar – to establish effective governance over the contested space – power transmissions utilising a multitude of actors, instruments, actions, levels, and budgets, are different in their respective technologies of power in each individual case. While the EU primarily stakes on institutional/legal framing of public behaviour in the neighbourhood; Russia, through its Eurasian project, is more intent on shaping public preferences using the material and structural incentives.

The EU has been perfecting its technologies of power since the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004, responding to the lack of legitimation and commitment on the side of the partner countries. IN particular, it has explicitly moved away from operating exclusively at the executive level and exercising ‘disciplinary governance’, based on the enlargement-light model of ‘the permitted’ and ‘the prohibited’ and strict conditionality. It trialled more ‘deliberative’ forms of governance, which opened up tracks for multi-lateral engagement and networked or sectoral cooperation (Korosteleva 2013). From 2011, the EU has pioneered various forms of adaptive governmentality – by governing from a distance, enabling local initiatives, diversifying stakeholders of the process by speaking to all levels of society, and inducing self-censorship and the ‘optimal space’ between ‘the permitted’ and ‘the prohibited’ (‘normation’), without narrowing it to a list of unilaterally prescribed norms and values (Casier *et al*, 2013).

Most recently, efforts to ease partners’ entrance into the EU’s area of rules and regulations included the EU’s unprecedented move to allow the signing of the AAs in several stages as is in the case with Ukraine, a significant step

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<sup>12</sup> For more information see [http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id\\_type=2&id=758#theAA](http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id_type=2&id=758#theAA)

away from the hitherto 'take-it-or-leave' logic of restrictive conditionality; or indeed contemplating an a la carte approach with Armenia, now a member of the EEU, and Azerbaijan, with more interest in energy cooperation than political reforms. Notably, the EU had successfully negotiated Visa Liberalisation Action Plans (VLAPs) as part of the AAs with Moldova and Georgia, and the political part of the AA with Ukraine separately, preceding the official signing of the rest of the document in late June 2014 (Commission, 2014). Possibly, learning from the earlier rejection by Ukraine, the EU also encouraged discussions and an analysis of the economic parts of the AA – the DCFTA – to stimulate public debate but also expose potential stakes of the process. Currently, it goes through a consultation process involving all relevant stakeholders across the eastern region (except Russia) and the EU, with view to reinvigorate its strategy towards the neighbouring countries (COM 2015). To sum up, the EU is evidently at work to officiate a distinctive and potentially powerful formula of enablement – a 'deepened' more for more approach - to lock participants, through their voluntary compliance, into a perpetual mode of expanding the benefits of cooperation and reciprocal learning. The emphasis is clearly 'technical', on the creation of institutional and legal order – norms and rules of behaviours – to induce specific attitudes and aspirations, in line with European identity.

Russia's Eurasian technologies, have also been evolving, aiming to emulate legal-institutional settings of the EU operations (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013) but more importantly to reproduce its distinctive space of identification – almost resembling the fraternal cultural identity of the former Soviet Union. Russia has concentrated its efforts on locking existing and prospective partners in to an economic/trade mode of immediate reciprocities to stimulate new behavioural demands and enforce new level-dependencies, which would prevent partners from 'shopping' elsewhere (Noucheva, 2014). In normative terms to reinvigorate cultural affinity with the region, Russia's assertiveness have sky-rocketed across the region, especially at the times of political and military stand-off over Ukraine, skilfully using all means of Russian propaganda to counter EU influence in the region. The scale of this campaign for 'historical affinity', 'fraternal unity' and moral integrity of the 'nation' standing to defend interests of all Russian-speaking people, has been overwhelming, as the case of Crimea attests:

Crimea offers a unique blend of cultures and traditions of different peoples. And in this it resembles a larger Russia, where despite its diversity, throughout centuries, not a single ethnos lost its cultural identity and uniqueness... We understand what is happening today, and that a lot of actions are directed against our fraternal relations with Ukraine, and against the Eurasian integration. And this is when we sincerely offer our dialogue to the West, to reinforce our trust, and ensure equality, fairness and openness. However we do not see reciprocity to our call, and it is time for us to act (Putin, 2014).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> For the full version of Putin's speech visit: <http://www.kp.ru/daily/26207/3093029/>

This kind of statement makes geopolitical dichotomy between the West and the East extremely tangible, compelling even ‘the converted’ – Belarus and Kazakhstan – to revisit their loyalties to their chosen direction.

Is there a scope for ‘normation’ in the region between the competing rationalities? Technologies (budgets, instruments, roadmaps, agreements etc) by definition are designed to serve a larger purpose of social engineering and ordering public behaviours. It is the discourse and subjectivities that make them a tool of politics and security. They could offer an optimal space for diffusing the rhetoric of high politics, by simply enabling the recipients to make informed choices for the subsequently binding decisions. The EU’s technical and apolitical engagement with Belarus is one example, which yielded incremental Europeanisation of the nation (fn6; Korosteleva 2015b). The EU’s staged signing of the AAs, but more so, the acceptance of the EEU as a fact and equally attractive regional alternative for the neighbours, may prove useful tools of resolving the problem of dichotomous choices – as long as it engenders adequate inducements triangulated with other regional power contestants.

### Subjectivities of power

Yielding subjectivities is essentially the purpose of effective governance: carefully framed self-knowledge becomes a powerful tool for turning individual subjectivities into a voluntary subjection to one’s authority. Generating subjectivities refers both to the production of actors who could advocate on behalf of one’s governance; but also to the process of knowledge-internalisation and fostering of new norms to ‘conduct the people’s conduct’.

In terms of engineering multiple-level actors to promote new types of knowledge, the EU currently operates a wider outreach, speaking to all levels of society – from business communities, local authorities, educational circles and civil society, to government-level officials and civil servants (Casier *et al*, 2013). As the EU roadmaps for the EaP region indicate, sector and agent-focused cooperation measures are all-inclusive in their design and application. Their effectiveness, to a degree, is captured by progress reports which detect growing levels of practices, rendering new structures and shaping new needs-based flagship initiatives. Furthermore, when operating through a mass of rules and complex funding criteria for these initiatives, the EU also appears effective at pre-selecting candidates capable of applying EU narratives to practice (Kurki, 2011).

Conversely, Russia’s Eurasian project is mainly confined to government-level officials at the elite level in their targeting of wider population by way of media campaigns and centralised decision-making (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013). Agency-production is organised in a top-down manner, utilising an executive mode of fostering awareness and building commitments. In variance to the EU, Russia is not averse to applying all means necessary – from negative conditionality to military actions – to compel elite and public behaviour to the binary choice (Noutcheva, 2014). Furthermore, the Eurasian project is driven by Russia’s vision, and heavily relies on Putin’s own credibility as a strong and pragmatic leader.



Therefore, large-scale and politically-noisy actions are often seen as conducive to Russia's identity-shaping as distinctive and exclusive.

In terms of yielding equally effective subjectivities of knowledge, as Noutcheva argues (2014:14), both powers display mixed results: 'Both the EU and Russia succeed to a varying degree in transferring ideas and norms and in appealing to the citizens of their common neighbourhoods'. At the same time, both fall short of inducing *divisive logics* and generating *dichotomous allegiances* to shape voluntary spaces of freedom and foster loyalties. As our surveys indicate, the EU has been effective in generating greater awareness and higher levels of cognizance about its organisation, key policies and benefits, which in a longer term are more likely to enable internalisation and acceptance of its governance. It has also succeeded in making some systemic changes tangible and perceivable to the wider population, as aptly summarised by the respondents of focus groups in Moldova: 'I can really feel change, in education, in justice and in our lives'; 'I see the light at the end of the tunnel, and that light is the EU; 'I see achievements, decent living, prosperity for our youth without the need to abandon their homes for income' (see fn6). The European direction appears to be firmly on the agenda even amongst more reluctant EaP participants like Belarus (ibid), whereby the Russian course is no longer seen as a default and only option for future development.

At the same time, Russia's Eurasian project remains of equal if not greater priority for the peoples in the neighbourhood. Despite its recent launch, the EEU in particular commands an unprecedented degree of awareness (87 per cent on average), interest (about 65 per cent) and relevance of Russia itself (about 80 per cent). The majority of respondents across the neighbourhood see the EEU as effective and sustainable way to address pressing issues of economy, employment, energy security and trade. All respondents indicated that they wanted to see healthy and balanced relations with Russia/EEU and the EU: 'we need stability, safety and welfare, with all our neighbours'; 'being one-sided would be detrimental for our country' (ibid).

Perhaps one of the more instructive corollaries of power contestation in the region is the rise of self-awareness in all partner countries. Many felt that prioritisation of domestic reforms to build a strong and independent nation, to resist external pressure amongst other issues, was of utmost urgency. This once again testifies to a limited understanding the power centres actually have about the practicalities of governance, and the need – at least for now – to balance and develop rationalised choices of the future. From this perspective, the EU explicitly fails to project a more adaptive form of governance, when demanding principled conditionality or indeed politicising cooperation, as the cases of Belarus or Ukraine signify. Russia, while availing direct requirements, imposes tacit expectations and unilateral constraints (in the form of embargoes and technical disputes) which are only resolved when its own interests are served (Korosteleva 2012).

Under these circumstances, is there space for 'normation'? Surprisingly, there is, given the quantity and quality of agencies produced, and the level-game internalisation of choice by the wider population.

### Fields of visibility

Finally, as our surveys (fn6) indicate, there is a clear recognition and differentiation amongst the respondents of pertinent and successful fields of visibility for both powers. The EU is seen as more effective and enduring in the areas of economic reforms, social protection, effective governance especially in developing a system of independent institutions and fair judiciary – all these areas are identified as the trademark of the EU. At the same time, the Eurasian project is perceived as bringing more trade, energy security and economic performance, and is regarded as a quick-fix solution for stability and prosperity. The areas of convergence are clearly identifiable – of economic prosperity, market-regulated economy and energy security – however, the paths that that may lead to fostering synergies are distinctly different. On the part of the EU, it would require a systemic overhaul and full modernisation; while on the part of Russia's Eurasia it envisages creating stronger dependencies and *ad hoc* solutions (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2013).

When associating future prosperity and stability with the EU, uncertainty and the increasingly negative anticipation of change prevail. These are primarily driven by the fear of job loss, deteriorating living conditions, costly reforms, political uncertainty, and more essentially – less visible change in practice. The Eurasian Union offers a more recognisable and socially satisfactory model, with immediate benefits, and some stability, which while limiting the prospects of fundamental reforms to make economies self-reliant and competitive, instead brings security of jobs, and income to ensure survival.

Presenting calculated rationalities of the future, on the part of the EU, to economically impoverished countries may win their 'minds', but the 'hearts' will always be driven by more emotive thinking dictated by a simple logic of survival. The convergence of two power projects in this particular domain therefore may only seem possible, when modernisation becomes popularly associated with stability and future prosperity. This however may be a distant prospect, which realisation would depend on the legitimacy outputs by the competing powers.

### Conclusion: the EaP region as a missing referent-subject

This paper has examined the projections and connectivity of power modalities by the EU and Russia, at the point of their application to the eastern neighbourhood. By deploying governmentality and 'the analytics of government' framework it aimed to ascertain conditions for their sustainable and peaceful coexistence, at the apex of their highly securitised relations with the region, and globally. From this perspective, power was seen as interconnected and essentially inter-relational process, which requires recognition and learning about the boundaries of others – *othering* – to understand

causes for resistance and ways to induce cooperation. Freedom of individuals to voluntarily submit their subjectivities to one's authority was posited here as a fundamental principle to enable effective and sustainable governance, engendered by the subjects' calculated rationality, alongside their growing sense of self-awareness.

This paper has argued that contestation between the EU and Russia in their hitherto rhetorically-restrained ambitions over the region is now in the open, revealing their exclusive identities, and the ambitions to shape the conceptions of normal, for the recipient parties. The analytics of government helped to expose the treacherous use of 'speech-acts' by power centres, which could momentarily convert the language of uncomfortable yet peaceful coexistence into a 'tug-of-war' between the exclusive universalisms. This becomes even more dangerous, when accompanied by the whole machinery of instruments, agencies and emergent structures, which could lock the participants into a vicious circle of reproducing the logic war, until inclusive domination is achieved.

Hence the main question that guided this analysis was to establish whether the return to coexistence, furnished as 'normation', may at all be possible, in the region sore with conflict and instability. The application of the 'analytics of government' has shown that domination 'as a ruthless game of survival of the fittest' (Buzan and Waever, 2009:262) in the case of EU and Russian competing identities, may not necessarily be the *only* solution, and that complex relations of interdependency and rising self-awareness of 'the Other' should be taken into consideration.

Although present circumstances seem to testify to the conspicuous failure of both parties to recognise one another's ambitions for the region, and also reckon with the region itself, the lessons seem to begin to sow. The continuing conflict between the EU and Russia has explicitly demonstrated the urgency, inevitability and need to engage in the process of mutual recognition and learning, especially between the competing power modalities. The EU and Russia have yet to learn the art of acknowledging and indeed partnering 'the other' – both at the strategic level of reckoning with one another, but also at the practical level of harnessing resistance and yielding voluntary compliance and allegiance. Acknowledging third party's interests in validation of their governance ambitions is utterly imperative. It is important in the process of power contestation to maintain a situation of rational choice to allow the recipients sufficient time to voluntarily internalise thrown at them subjectivities for the purpose of their endurance and structuration. Freedom and rationality of choice predicate effective governance, and so far both the EU displayed a less agile cohabitation strategy by politicising its discourse over the region.

The EU technologies and subjectivities rendered to exert control over the EaP region and Ukraine in particular, are undoubtedly sophisticated and potentially more enduring. At the same time, Russia outplays the EU in terms of the knowledge and grand vision for the pan-European/Eurasian project, as well as pre-existing normative affinity it naturally

enjoys with its 'near abroad'. Fields of visibility, although contested, seem to be more complementary than initially purported, and display the potency for convergence of interests and practices.

In all instances of power projection, the legitimacy dimension, which could broadly render the conduct of peoples' conduct tangible, was explicitly under-acknowledged, with recipients indicating preferences for cooperation with both power centres, and instead, being bullied into a situation of security dilemma, which removes freedom and rationality of decision-making from the process, and generates resistance and potentially, implosion from within. Hence, despite all the rhetorical or practical efforts, the prospect for sustainable cohabitation for now remains limited, instead producing and effectively securitising competing and conflicting rationalities for the so called 'shared' but very much 'ungovernable' neighbourhood.

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