



Jagiellonian University in Kraków
Faculty of International and Political Studies
Institute of European Studies

Niall Marcus Gray

student ID number: 1169473

Field of study: European Studies

Kremlin Calling?: An investigation into the
geopolitical narratives of selected
European radical right parties regarding
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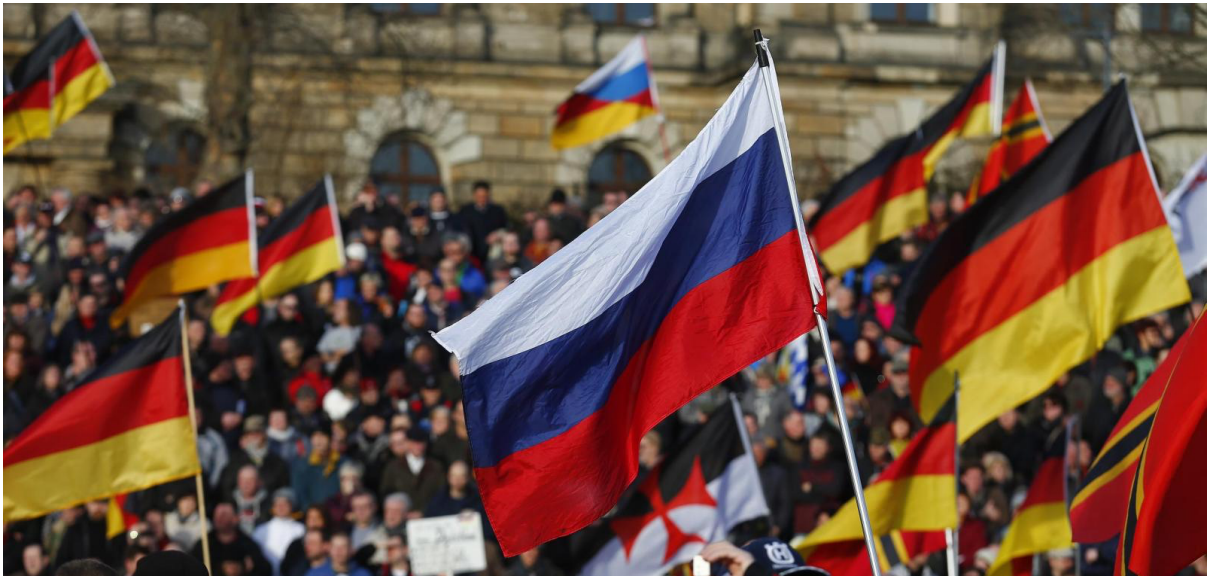
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Dr. Natasza Styczyńska

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Kremlin Calling?: An investigation into the geopolitical narratives of selected European radical right parties regarding Russia

Niall Marcus Gray

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Master's Thesis supervised by:

Natasza Styczyńska

Louis Wierenga

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International Master (IntM) in Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies: University of Glasgow, UK. Student Number: 2086519g

Master of Arts in Social Sciences (MA) in Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies: University of Tartu, Estonia. Student Number: B88456 - 39504110058

Magister (mgr) of European Studies (Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies): Jagiellonian University, Poland. Student Number: 1169473

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Niall Marcus Gray

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To whom it may concern,

I hope this letter finds you well. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, I have been advised by the IMCEERES Consortium to outline any issues I believe have affected my ability to carry out research for this dissertation project.

Firstly, due to recommendations imposed by the University of Glasgow following the outbreak, I have been unable to perform interviews with party spokesmen and academic experts as part of my work. Whilst this data would have allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter, it was ultimately decided by the university ethics board that any form of interview (even online) should be avoided if not absolutely necessary at this time. This was due to the already stressful situations faced by interviewees during this difficult period. At the same time, following the completion of an ethics form, I was also personally advised by Dr. Ammon Cheskin of the university's Central and East European Studies department, to focus on data already available to me on party websites and other online resources. This was due to an agreement that I could still pursue meaningful research using these resources whilst acknowledging its deficiencies in light of ongoing issues. For more information on these issues, please see the University of Glasgow's guidelines regarding the effects of coronavirus on academic research:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/news/coronavirus/faqs/>

Secondly, I believe that my work has been somewhat restricted due to the closure of the University of Glasgow library. Whilst I have been able to engage with a great amount of resources online, I believe that my research would have benefited from direct access to more obscure works only available in physical form at the library. For this study, this is particularly true with regards to Russian language resources and esoteric geopolitical writings by figures such as Alexander Dugin. Certainly, whilst I was able to access these works as I began my research last year, it has proven difficult to continue to engage with these first-hand resources following my impromptu return from Krakow to my family home in Glasgow in March. As a result, engagement with this body of work following my return was often reliant on secondary sources online.

Whilst it is clear that my work has been limited due to these unprecedented circumstances, I believe overall that I have still been able to pursue interesting and novel research. I hope you

enjoy my work and that it is clear that I have tried to remedy these issues to the best of my ability.

Best wishes,

Niall Marcus Gray

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I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my supervisors Natasza Styczyńska and Louis Wierenga, whose enthusiasm, suggestions and constant guidance have proven pivotal in the production of this dissertation. Their willingness to assist at all points throughout a research period of over a year ensures that any shortcomings remain solely my responsibility.

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Finally, it is of course impossible to ignore the enduring support offered by my friends and family throughout the writing of this dissertation. Their unremitting kindness and good humour regardless of geographic distance has consistently provided solace in a world now more than ever beset by uncertainty.

Abstract

Rising to prominence following the 2008 financial crisis, the European radical right has become a popular topic within both mainstream and academic debate. Now boasting a powerful presence in many European states, the political tradition has presented a myriad of existential threats to the continent's liberal status quo. Among these new challenges is a widespread desire to reassess relations with Russia. Also eager to take advantage of Europe's ongoing uncertainty, the Kremlin has shown great interest in engaging with radical right parties as part of its geopolitical resurgence. This relationship has drawn the attention of a fledgling body of literature, which has noted Russia's willingness to fund and support these groups. Despite this, research has yet to investigate why exactly many radical right parties have been willing to engage with Moscow. This is all the more surprising given the literature's discussion of a shared illiberalism, with studies continuing to focus solely on Russia's export of such beliefs. As such, this study attempts to rectify this issue by directly engaging with Russia policies found in the literature of four radical right parties. Such information is subject to a methodology embracing both critical geopolitics and narrative analysis, with radical right theory lending itself to an explicitly 'spatiotemporal' understanding of international relations. The study finds that rather than embracing sheer opportunism, the parties have incorporated Russia into vivid narratives bound by desires to "revolt against the modern world". Simultaneously, national circumstances ensure that this 'template' has been manipulated according to subjective needs, with party narratives now helping to challenge the seemingly 'inevitable' nature of the radical right-Russia relationship.

Key words and terms: Europe, Geopolitics, Narrative, Radical Right, Russia

To my Papa

capax infiniti

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Part One

Introduction

Described by Dan Dungaciu as a “perfect storm” of socio-economic factors, Europe’s ongoing political uncertainty has presented a persistent challenge to its liberal status-quo.¹ Originating in the 2008 financial downturn, these issues have been characterised by long-term market troubles that have affected the economic opportunities of large sections of Europe’s populations to a worrying degree.² Simultaneously, such lingering problems have been exacerbated by recent migration issues, with an influx of refugees and migrants, particularly from the Islamic world, challenging many nations’ societal cohesion.³ These issues have often been collectively discussed within academia through concepts such as the “crisis of neo-liberalism”.⁴ Now faced with growing dissatisfaction with the current continental system, many countries have witnessed a troubling rise in feelings of political alienation.⁵ This has resulted in events such as Brexit, which has now forced individuals to question the ‘inevitability’ of political norms.⁶ Due to this, it appears that the continent has now entered a new era of ‘reimagination’, reminiscent of the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe.⁷ This has seen individuals and groups renegotiate their identities and beliefs within a vacuum of values, thereby producing a wide variety of novel political outlooks.⁸ Such ideals are often striking when compared with the troubled status-quo, with

¹ Dan Dungaciu, *Perfect Storm in Europe: Towards a new way of understanding the European Crisis and its consequences* in *The Perfect Storm of the European Crisis* eds. Dan Dungaciu & Ruxandra Iordache (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), pp. 3-5

² Jon Erik Dølvik & Andrew Martin, *European Social Models From Crisis to Crisis: Employment and Inequality in the Era of Monetary Integration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 1

³ Andrey Makarychev, *Bordering and Identity-Making in Europe after the 2015 Refugee Crisis*, *Geopolitics*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (2018), pp. 747-748

⁴ Alessandro Bonanno, *The Legitimation Crisis and the Future of Neoliberalism: The State, Will Formation and Resistance* (New York: Springer Press, 2017) p. 231

David Featherstone et al., *In, against and beyond neo-liberalism: The “crisis” and alternative political futures*, *Space and Polity*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2015), p. 5

⁵ Philomena Murray & Michael Longo, *The Crisis-Legitimacy Nexus in the European Union* in *The European Union in Crisis: Explorations in Representation and Democratic Legitimacy* ed. Kyriakos N. Demetriou (New York: Springer Press, 2015), pp. 61-63

⁶ Catherine Haddon, *The Brexit Battle is fundamentally changing the constitution*, Institute for Government, 2nd September 2019 - <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/blog/brexit-battle-fundamentally-changing-constitution> [accessed 17th August 2020]

Aside from a wider interest in Russian foreign policy, the 2016 referendum, as well as the 2014 vote on Scottish independence, also played a pivotal role in my decision to pursue research on the European radical right’s geopolitical narratives regarding Moscow. These personal experiences of the continent’s latest clashes of identity profoundly impacted my thinking regarding the durability of the political status-quo, with nationalist forces now seemingly challenging the very concept of ‘Europe’ itself.

⁷ Alan Smith, *The Return of Europe: The Reintegration of Eastern Europe into the European Economy* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2000), p. 2

⁸ *Ibid.*

beliefs once relegated to the political fringe now the subject of popular debate. As Thomas Wright has argued, recent years have seen a rapid shift in the “Overton window” of European political thought.⁹

Amongst these ideas, the resurgence of geopolitics is particularly noteworthy. Involving the study of the interactions between politics and physical and human geography, the discipline in Europe has been dominated by a Euro-Atlantic orthodoxy since the Cold War’s end.¹⁰ Indeed, integration and cooperation in the European Union and NATO have often dominated state outlooks to the point that they are viewed as unquestionable.¹¹ This ideal broadly resembles Fukuyama’s ambitious “end of history” thesis, with governments surprisingly eager to accept beliefs regarding the demise of great power military confrontation and the inevitable acceptance of liberal norms across Europe and the world.¹² In light of aforementioned events, such ‘messianism’ is now receiving criticism from figures such as Walter Mead, who hail a “return of geopolitics”.¹³ This is exemplified by the myriad of new ‘mental maps’ currently taking hold in the continent, with the seemingly complacent or ‘hostile’ nature of the current geopolitical system and its elites, encouraging individuals to search for new norms.¹⁴ This has often resulted in discussion surrounding the world’s increasing ‘multipolarity’. For instance, it is interesting to consider China and Russia’s impressive rise, as well as their ability to offer alternatives to a troubled Western liberalism.¹⁵ Whilst the former, however, retains an uncertain, yet growing, presence in European affairs,

⁹ Thomas Wright, *The Opening of Europe’s Overton Window*, Brookings Institute, February 2019, pp. 1-2 - https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/FP_20190226_eu_democracy_wright.pdf [accessed 22nd May 2019]

¹⁰ Hal Brands & Eric Edelman, *America and the Geopolitics of Upheaval*, *The National Interest*, 21st June 2017 - <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/america-the-geopolitics-upheaval-21258> [accessed 20th May 2019]

¹¹ Eamonn Butler, *Assessing Accession: Power, Influence and Representation – Central and Eastern Europe in the EU*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (2014), p. 354

¹² Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History?*, *The National Interest*, No. 16 (1989), pp. 3-4

¹³ Walter Russell Mead, *The Return of Geopolitics: The Revenge of the Revisionist Powers*, *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2014 - <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2014-04-17/return-geopolitics> [accessed 20th May 2019]

¹⁴ Sam Brazys & Niamh Hardiman, *The ‘PIIGS’ acronym had a clear negative impact on the response of financial markets to the ‘PIIGS countries’ during the crisis*, London School of Economics – EUROPP, 12th December 2014 - <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2014/12/12/the-piigs-acronym-had-a-clear-negative-impact-on-the-market-treatment-of-the-piigs-countries-during-the-crisis/> [accessed 21st May 2019]

Andrea Székely & Balázs Kotosz, *From fence to wall? Changes in the mental space of border zones in Eastern Europe*, *Regional Science and Policy Practice*, Vol. 10 (2018), p. 270

¹⁵ Dieter Dettke, *Geopolitics in the Trump Era: The Dual Challenge of Russia and China for Europe and the Need for a New Containment Strategy*, American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, 22nd February 2019 - <https://www.aicgs.org/2019/02/geopolitics-in-the-trump-era-the-dual-challenge-of-russia-and-china-for-europe-and-the-need-for-a-new-containment-strategy/> [accessed 21st May 2019]

the latter has maintained an immediate and influential role within local geopolitical realities.¹⁶

Certainly, Moscow's eagerness to take advantage of the European order's current uncertainty is striking. This is exemplified by the increasingly assertive rhetoric of Vladimir Putin. Once describing the fall of the Soviet Union as a "major geopolitical disaster of the twentieth century", the Russian leader has seemingly embarked on a political project aimed at strengthening Moscow's 'great power' status in a multipolar world.¹⁷ This has translated into an increasingly confrontational foreign policy, with predatory ventures in Georgia and Ukraine challenging the relative, decades-long peace across the continent.¹⁸ At the same time, these actions have been complemented by an extensive "information war" against Western interests.¹⁹ Ranging from supposed electoral interference, to the promotion of 'fake news', this troubling campaign has promoted scepticism regarding the supposed ideological gulf between liberal ideals and practice.²⁰ As such, Moscow's recent geopolitical actions now also aim to control hearts and minds, with the Kremlin's burgeoning links with various radical political organisations also playing an essential role in this 'offensive'.

This often-unappreciated relationship with fringe groups follows a long history of interactions. This is evident with regard to the Cold War era, as Soviet authorities not only maintained fruitful relations with their Western European communist counterparts but also some fascist groups, who praised Moscow for its supposed traditionalism.²¹ This remarkable

¹⁶ Łukasz Sarek, *The "16+1" Initiative and Poland's Disengagement from China*, Jamestown Institute – China Brief, Vol. 19, Issue 4 - <https://jamestown.org/program/the-161-initiative-and-polands-disengagement-from-china/> [accessed 21st May 2019]

¹⁷ *Address by President of the Russian Federation*, President of Russia, 18th March 2014 - <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603> [accessed 21st May 2019]

Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, President of Russia, 25th April 2005 - <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22931> [accessed 21st May 2019]

Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club, President of Russia, 18th October 2018 - <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58848> [accessed 21st May 2019]

¹⁸ Eugene Rumer, *Russia and the Security of Europe*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2016, pp. 1-2

¹⁹ Marcel Van Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine: Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), p. 9

²⁰ *Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections*, National Intelligence Council - Intelligence Community Assessment, 6th January 2017, pp. ii-iii

Erik Brattberg & Tim Maurer, *Russian Election Interference: Europe's Counter to Fake News and Cyber Attacks*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 23rd May 2018 -

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/05/23/russian-election-interference-europe-s-counter-to-fake-news-and-cyber-attacks-pub-76435> [accessed 21st May 2019]

²¹ Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far-Right: Tango Noir* (Oxford: Routledge, 2018), p. 2

ability to appeal to various radical viewpoints is largely due to Russia's peripheral geopolitical position in Europe. Certainly, the state has often acted as a 'blank slate' for revolutionary imaginations.²² This phenomenon is true even today, as various groups have cast the country's geopolitical role through their own personal lens. For instance, it is often forgotten that many far-left parties now quietly view Moscow as a key partner in challenging Western capitalism.²³ Simultaneously, however, it should be noted that such interest is now dominated by Europe's ascendant 'radical right', with the movement's growing mainstream influence placing it at the forefront of modern pro-Russia discourse.²⁴

Emerging from various nationalist movements in the 1970s, as well as intellectual traditions such as the 'Nouvelle Droite', such groups have become the key beneficiary of Europe's existential crisis.²⁵ Characterised by a rejection of their fascist predecessors' abstentionism, radical right movements now consistently enjoy widespread electoral success at both national and European levels.²⁶ This surge in support is largely due to these parties' modern, populist brand of ethno-nationalism. Certainly, it is impressive how successful radical right movements have been in presenting themselves as representatives of 'silent national majorities', whose socio-economic misfortune can be directly linked to an 'unnatural' state of affairs, defended by the status-quo.²⁷ In contrast, these groups have promoted themselves as defenders of a historic 'Golden Age', demanding a 'return' to such 'organic' circumstances as part of their "revolt against the modern world".²⁸

Due to this, it may seem clear why many of these parties now seek close relations with a resurgent Russia. This is exemplified by the substantial funding that Moscow now provides to such movements, with material assistance helping to bolster their 'disruptive' political

²² Maxine David, *Exploiting Marginality: The Case of Russia in The Geopolitics of Europe's Identity: Centres, Boundaries and Margins* ed. Noel Parker (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), pp. 67-69

²³ Lóránt Győri & Péter Krekó, *Don't Ignore the Left! Connections between Europe's radical left and Russia*, OpenDemocracy, 13th June 2016 - <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/don-t-ignore-left-connections-between-europe-s-radical-left-and-ru/> [accessed 25th May 2019]

²⁴ Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far-Right*, pp. xxiii-xxv

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xxiii

²⁶ Terry Givens, *Voting Radical Right in Western Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 20

²⁷ Thomas Greven, *The Rise of Right-Wing Populism in Europe and the United States: A Comparative Perspective*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, May 2016, pp. 1-2

²⁸ Julius Evola, *Revolt against the modern world: Politics, Religion and Social Order in the Kali Yuga* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1995)

Matt Golder, *Far Right Parties in Europe*, Annual Review of Political Science, Vol. 19 (2016), p. 481

power.²⁹ However, it is unreasonable to believe that these links represent little more than a marriage of convenience. This is clear with regard to the strong ideological affinity both sides possess, with many radical right forces praising Putin's 'conservative revolution'.³⁰ Involving the institutionalisation of traditional conceptions of family, religion and society, the Kremlin's project has been viewed as a model by various nationalist movements.³¹ As a result, radical right groups now often view Russia as a key geopolitical partner in their struggle to 'return to the past'.³² These parties have often developed such ideas in great detail, with their natural predisposition to geopolitics' realist precepts encouraging the articulation of vivid alternative realities.³³ Indeed, whilst the groups share a common ideological inheritance, the details of these beliefs are fundamentally shaped by national circumstances. This has seen radical right groups incorporate Moscow into a variety of geopolitical 'stories', with these populist outlooks united by a tendency towards a nationalist "collective narcissism".³⁴ Despite this, there remains little direct engagement with this phenomenon within literature, with this study hoping to shed light on an important, yet understudied political trend.

Consequently, this study will investigate various European radical right groups' perceptions of Russia, focusing specifically on the 'geopolitical narratives' constructed around the resurgent power. In keeping with the ideal of geopolitics as a "boundary-producing practice" that creates global politics' space, 'geopolitical narratives' are conceptualised in this study as the subjective understanding of "imagined geographies" in relation to a nation's envisioned past, present and future.³⁵ Subsequently, the investigation will look at the 'mental maps' of various radical right parties who have profited immensely from the "crisis-driven present"

²⁹ Antonis Klapsis, *An Unholy Alliance – The European Far-Right and Putin's Russia*, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (2015), p. 59

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17

³¹ *Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club*, President of Russia, 19th September 2013 - <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19243> [accessed 26th May 2019]

Marlene Laruelle, *Introduction in Eurasianism and the European Far-Right – Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* ed. Marlene Laruelle (London: Lexington Books, 2015), p. xii

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Mark Bassin, *Between Realism and the New Right: Geopolitics in Germany in the 1990s*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2003), p. 350

Ian Klinke, *Geopolitics and the political right: Lessons from Germany*, *International Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 3 (2018), p. 498

³⁴ Antonis Klapsis, *An Unholy Alliance*, pp. 18-19

Hakki Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, *Identities – Global Studies in Culture and Power* (2020), p. 5

³⁵ Ian Klinke, *Geopolitical Narratives on Belarus in Russia*, *Perspectives*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (2008), p. 113
Gearóid Ó Tuathail & Simon Dalby, *Introduction: Rethinking Geopolitics – Towards a Critical Geopolitics in Rethinking Geopolitics* eds. Gearóid Ó Tuathail & Simon Dalby (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 2-3

that emerged during 2008's financial troubles.³⁶ These movements are the French Rassemblement National, Alternative for Germany, Hungary's Jobbik and Greece's Golden Dawn. This newfound influence is measured by these parties' impressive electoral performances, which have allowed for the expression of vivid, alternative foreign policies. Certainly, it seems sensible to understand parties as "the engine of foreign policy", with these groups' challenges to mainstream thought now making it all the more important to directly expose these surprisingly undervalued narratives.³⁷ It can also be argued that these parties allow for the articulation of various continental realities, as the four groups find themselves cast across various European socio-economic divides, such as North-South and East-West.³⁸ This diverse approach has been advocated by scholars such as Mudde and Minkenberg. For example, whilst the former has noted the need to "move on" from simply analysing the same non-parliamentary groups in Western Europe, the latter has noted the distinct peculiarities of groups across specific parts of the continent such as Eastern Europe.³⁹ Due to this, it ought to be said that the views of extra-parliamentary groups will not be discussed in this piece, as whilst they often possess a rich theoretical tradition, such groups retain a limited ability to directly influence their state's international outlook.⁴⁰ The study will consequently be based around the following research questions:

1. What are the key geopolitical narratives constructed by these various radical right parties regarding Russia?
2. How and why do these parties' narratives coincide or contrast?

This choice to examine political parties as foreign policy actors is also consistent with the tradition of 'critical geopolitics', which will play a key role in this investigation's conceptual framework. Stressing a need to expand geopolitical knowledge beyond the state-centric logic

³⁶ Hakkı Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, p. 14

³⁷ Akis Kalaitzidis, *The Odd Duck: Why Greece's Foreign Policy will not turn out to be a Swan!* in *Foreign Policy under Austerity: Greece's Return to Normality?* eds. Spyridon Litsas & Aristotle Tziampiris (London: Palgrave, 2017), p. 31

³⁸ Josef Janning, *Crisis and Cohesion in the EU: A Ten-Year Review*, European Council on Foreign Relations Policy Brief, February 2018 - https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR-245_-_Crisis_and_Cohesion_-_A_10_Year_Review_Janning_WEB.pdf [accessed 29th July 2019]

³⁹ Cas Mudde, *The Study of Populist Radical Right Parties: Towards a Fourth Wave*, C-Rex Working Paper Series, No. 1 (2016), pp. 4-5

Michael Minkenberg, *The Renewal of the Radical Right: Between Modernity and Anti-modernity*, *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (2000), p. 189

⁴⁰ Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far-Right*, p. xxv

of “wise men”, the theory advocates for investigating discourse among a diverse range of subjective ‘Selves’.⁴¹ Simultaneously, this complementary focus on the geopolitics of a thoroughly ‘nostalgic’ political tradition has encouraged an engagement with ‘chronopolitics’, which stresses the “temporality” of geopolitical discourse.⁴² As such, the investigation will expose these alternative national ‘Selves’ through the use of a qualitative methodology based on Emery Roe’s “narrative policy analysis”.⁴³ This approach emphasises the creation of overarching ‘metanarratives’ from raw data, with individual stories, “nonstories” and “counterstories” identified and compared in order to produce nuanced assumptions fit for policymaking.⁴⁴ Such a process will be applied to a myriad of documents, manifestos, speeches and interviews produced by the study’s four parties. These narrative rich sources will constitute the study’s sole source of information, as ongoing issues surrounding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have made methods such as interviewing, difficult to perform.⁴⁵

Furthermore, discussion of the radical right’s Russia narratives will be also supported by a myriad of theoretical literature. This will incorporate a variety of subjects, with the work of geopolitical scholars, such as Gearóid Ó Tuathail and John Agnew, complementing more directly related work. This includes Marlene Laruelle’s pivotal investigation into the popularity of ‘neo-Eurasianism’ among Europe’s radical right. Of course, it is important to note that this analysis will naturally be faced with various limitations, as researcher reflexivity remains a vital part of social science investigations.⁴⁶ These issues include available time, word count, as well as the more specific issue of language, with the international nature of the study encouraging the use of translation services, when deemed necessary.

This study will consist of two distinct sections, made up of a variety of chapters. The first part will introduce the thesis’ various methodological and theoretical underpinnings, thereby

⁴¹ Gearóid Ó Tuathail & Simon Dalby, *Introduction: Rethinking Geopolitics*, p. 3

⁴² Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics: a conceptual matrix*, *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 37, No. 5 (2013), p. 681

⁴³ Emery Roe, *Narrative Policy Analysis: Theory and Practice* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994)

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4

⁴⁵ Adam Jowcett, *Carrying out qualitative research under lockdown – Practical and ethical considerations*, London School of Economics Blogs, 20th April 2020 - <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2020/04/20/carrying-out-qualitative-research-under-lockdown-practical-and-ethical-considerations/> [accessed 21st June 2020]

⁴⁶ Jennifer Mason, *Qualitative Researching* (London: SAGE, 2002), pp. 78-80

placing the investigation within a wider social science context. This will begin with a thorough examination of the aforementioned literature connected to the topic, which will also include discussion related to the ways in which the piece hopes to build on this existing knowledge. Such analysis will be followed by an in-depth explanation of the study's methodology and its application within the research field. Finally, a brief history of the European radical right's relationship with Moscow will complete this section. This discussion will help to contextualise current circumstances within long-term historical trends.

Having set the foundations of the investigation, the second section will largely consist of four extensive chapters, which will be devoted to the discussion of each party's geopolitical narratives regarding Russia. These will be followed by a chapter discussing the similarities and differences of these parties' stories and what this may reveal regarding the overall process that produces radical right narrative. A conclusion will then follow, where proposals will be made regarding the future of related research. Certainly, Europe's ongoing existential troubles suggest that the radical right-Russia relationship is likely to endure, with this piece ultimately endeavouring to provide a detailed account of the beliefs powering an increasingly influential political axis, in a continent besieged by uncertainty.

Literature Review

This uncertainty facing Europe's status-quo is also mirrored within the debate regarding the very definition of its main challenger. Often used interchangeably with terms such as 'far-right', the term 'radical right' and its associated political tradition remains a loosely defined phenomenon.¹ Indeed, the concept has been used to describe organisations espousing beliefs ranging from right-wing populism to neo-Nazism, with this liberal understanding casting a distinct subjectivity over the topic.² This amorphous nature is further complicated by various geographical and temporal divisions, as academic scrutiny of the ideology has produced a wealth of perspectives regarding the exact definition of the term.³ In light of this study's focus, therefore, it seems pertinent to discuss such matters, with the radical right parties' perspectives on Russia, viewed by researchers as intricately bound to decades-long internal debate on the movement's purpose and desires.⁴

Whilst this investigation focuses on Europe, it ought to be noted that the first academic discussions of the 'radical right' occurred in America. This is made clear by Cold War-era researchers, such as Daniel Bell and Seymour Martin Lipset, whose work characterised the tradition as a form of fringe political conservatism.⁵ This preliminary appraisal would soon be bolstered by investigations into specific movements, such as the John Birch Society.⁶ For example, Philip C. Wander's study of the group's discourse helped establish many of the radical right's key traits, such as a spirited adherence to nationalism and traditionalism.⁷ Simultaneously, these general characterisations were complemented by more US-centric definitions, with the fundamental importance of anti-communism exposing the divisions

¹ David Art, *Inside the Radical Right: The Development of Anti-Immigrant Parties in Western Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 10

Jean-Yves Camus & Nicolas Lebourg, *Far-Right Politics in Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), pp. 1-2

² Tamir Bar-On, *The Radical Right and Nationalism* in *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right* ed. Jens Rydgren (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 24

³ Terry Givens, *Voting Radical Right in Western Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 18

⁴ Marlene Laruelle, *Introduction* in *Eurasianism and the European Far-Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* ed. Marlene Laruelle (London: Lexington Books, 2015), p. xi

⁵ Seymour Martin Lipset, *The Sources of the Radical Right* in *The Radical Right* ed. Daniel Bell (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1964)

⁶ Alan F. Westin, *The John Birch Society* in *The Radical Right* ed. Daniel Bell

Philip C. Wander, *The John Birch and Martin Luther King, symbols in the radical right*, *Western Journal of Communication*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (1971)

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14

between radical right literature in the country and Europe.⁸ Whilst there is a general consensus regarding ideological precepts, it is important to remember Thomas Greven's argument that these literatures remain focused on different subjects.⁹ This is exemplified by Charles Hawley's recent study of the American 'alt-right', with its focus on revolutionary White nationalism, clashing with its European counterparts' desire to work within state institutions.¹⁰ It seems, therefore, that, save for its historical contributions, this literature will likely remain of peripheral interest to this study.

Certainly, this adherence to democratic norms was quickly established as a key tenet of 'second wave' literature on Europe's radical right. Moving on from descriptive 'first wave' works such as Dennis Eisenberg's "The Re-Emergence of Fascism", these publications would ultimately provide the foundations for the tradition's 'theoretical framework' that exists today.¹¹ This is clear with regards to various researchers, including Hans-Georg Betz and his pioneering 1994 investigation.¹² Examining radical right ideology through the lens of modernisation theory, the author notes the movement's relative moderation in comparison to its fascist predecessors, who supported revolutionary struggle against the liberal status-quo.¹³ Certainly, whilst the radical right still embraced the need for a "revolt against modernity", this metaphysical change would now occur by electoral means.¹⁴ This study would soon be complemented by Cas Mudde's 1996 study into definitions of the radical right. Ultimately focusing on German developments, the investigation would note the tradition's strengthening role as militant nationalist actors that remained respectful of a political present dominated by "the free democratic order".¹⁵ This willingness to work within Western European norms is also reflected in preliminary studies regarding these parties' electoral appeal, with Jackman and Volpert noting a correlation between socio-economic deprivation and radical right support.¹⁶ Despite these essential additions, however, it should be noted that these works

⁸ Ibid., p. 8

⁹ Thomas Greven, *The Rise of Right-Wing Populism in Europe and the United States: A Comparative Perspective*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, May 2016, p. 1

¹⁰ Charles Hawley, *Making Sense of the Alt-Right* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), pp. 13-15
Michael Minkenberg, *The Renewal of the Radical Right: Between Modernity and Anti-modernity*, *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (2000), pp. 174-175

¹¹ Dennis Eisenberg, *The Re-Emergence of Fascism* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968)

¹² Hans-Georg Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 1994)

¹³ Ibid., p. 3

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 23

¹⁵ Cas Mudde, *The War of Words: Defining the Extreme Right Party Family*, *West European Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1996), pp. 230-231

¹⁶ Robert W. Jackman & Karin Volpert, *Conditions Favouring Parties of the Extreme Right in Western Europe*, *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (1996), pp. 501-502

appear to remain hampered by broad generalisations, thereby reflecting the theoretical infancy of the discipline at this time.

This lack of detail would soon be addressed by works belonging to the contemporary ‘third wave’, which began in the early 2000s. This new era of investigation would see the radical right become the subject of mainstream academic interest, with the literature evolving in theoretical rigour as parties gained popular support. Early pivotal works include Cas Mudde’s 2000 investigation, which would discuss the evolution of radical right party ideology.¹⁷ Certainly, a newfound popularity would see groups adopt fully-fledged electoral programmes, with ideals such as “law and order” and “welfare chauvinism” now integral to a xenophobic nationalism flourishing across Europe.¹⁸ This interest in the growth of the radical right as novel electoral actors would only increase with the 2008 economic crisis. For example, an investigation by Hernandez and Kriesi argued that a direct correlation existed between support for these new groups and the uncertainty brought by the crisis. This would see the researchers characterise radical right support as an “electoral punishment” aimed at a seemingly ineffective establishment.¹⁹

In relation to this study, works such as this mark a critical juncture in the literature, with the radical right now increasingly understood in an international context. Indeed, whilst Givens and Art’s pieces discuss the effect of global immigration issues on these parties’ national, populist beliefs, Norris and Inglehart openly conceptualise radical right parties as actors in a wider struggle for “authoritarian populism”.²⁰ Discussing pivotal events such as Brexit, the authors characterise the once-marginal movement as now representing the frontline of attempts to overturn the liberal “Silent Revolution”.²¹ Simultaneously, McDonnell and Werner’s 2019 investigation specifically notes the tradition’s growing tendency to engage in

¹⁷ Cas Mudde, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000)

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 170

¹⁹ Enrique Hernandez & Hanspeter Kriesi, *The Electoral Consequences of the Financial and Economic Crisis in Europe*, *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 55, Issue 2 (2016), p. 205

Hanspeter Kriesi, *The Political Consequences of the Financial and Economic Crisis in Europe: Electoral Punishment and Popular Protest*, *Swiss Political Science Review*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (2012), p. 519

²⁰ Terry Givens, *Voting Radical Right in Western Europe*, p. 20

David Art, *Inside the Radical Right*, p. 9

Pippa Norris & Ronald Inglehart, *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit and Authoritarian Populism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019)

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87

“transnational” cooperation within the European Parliament.²² This existential ‘battle’ has left profound effects on research, with Camus and Lebourg arguing that continued confusion surrounding the radical right is directly encouraged by political opponents.²³ In light of this, the authors discuss radical right self-understandings as ‘organic’ national movements, with their desire to ‘save’ their countries from a “liminal crisis” hinting at the tradition’s interest in narrative.²⁴ Of course, this novel outlook plays an essential role in this study, with the tradition’s interest in ‘saviours’ and ‘Golden Ages’ suggesting that this approach is long overdue.²⁵ Hakkı Taş’ 2020 study of populist ‘chronopolitics’ marks the first occasion that narrative has been directly used to understand radical right thought, with party conceptions of a “virtuous past” allowing these groups to influence national emotions across multiple temporalities.²⁶

This fledgling engagement with the politics of time within radical right studies seemingly complements debates within the tradition of geopolitics. Divided into ‘classical’ and ‘critical’ schools of thought, the field of study remains defined by debate surrounding the validity of Halford Mackinder’s belief that there exists a “formula” explaining the “geographic causation of history”.²⁷ Certainly, whilst traditional thinkers such as Nicholas Spykman support this positivist thesis through discussions of terrain and resources, critical researchers have argued that these beliefs merely justify state officials’ changing priorities.²⁸ This latter attitude is supported by modern thinkers such as Ó Tuathail and Dalby, who believe that the “geopolitical gaze” of the ‘Self’ attributes meaning to the spatial ‘Other’ according to subjective decision-making.²⁹ Questions arise, therefore, as to why ‘time’ is ignored as an essential fixture of this constant renegotiation, with Ian Klinke arguing that an artificial divide exists between the concepts in associated literature.³⁰

²² Duncan McDonnell & Annika Werner, *International Populism: The Radical Right in the European Parliament* (New York: Hurst, 2019)

²³ Jean-Yves Camus & Nicolas Lebourg, *Far-Right Politics in Europe*, pp. 1-2

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Hakkı Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* (2020), pp. 6-7

²⁷ Halford Mackinder, *The Geographical Pivot of History*, *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (1904), p. 421

²⁸ Nicholas J. Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace* (New York: Brace and Company, 1944)

Gearóid Ó Tuathail et al., *The Geopolitics Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998)

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 19

³⁰ Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics: A Conceptual Matrix*, *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 37, No. 5 (2012)

As such, it seems useful to engage with the often overlooked ideal of “chronopolitics”, which advocates for a “narrative understanding of temporality” within the framework of critical geopolitics.³¹ This seems all the more crucial given the fact that the European radical right’s nostalgic political tradition actively engages with realist geopolitical literature in which Russia plays a crucial role, thereby suggesting that the country is likely understood through a narrative lens. For example, Klinke has also noted the radical right’s distinct interest in the core tenets of classical geopolitical thought, as parties readily engage with discourse describing inescapable ‘battles’ for “power” within European geographic ‘realities’.³² At the same time, this tradition commonly places Moscow at the centre of these inescapable struggles, with such writing reflecting the hegemonic tradition of Anglo-American strategy. This is exemplified by the continued influence of Halford Mackinder’s pioneering “Heartland” thesis from 1904. Ultimately focused on bolstering British maritime control over the continent from a critical perspective, the piece outlines Russia’s natural position as an ‘eternal land enemy’ due to its ability to potentially organise vast resources against London.³³ This dichotomy has been built upon by other elite Anglo-American writers, with Zbigniew Brzezinski identifying control over post-Soviet Eurasia as vital to America’s post-Cold War struggle for global dominance.³⁴ This trope is also evident in Samuel Huntington’s wider civilizational approach, with Russia’s position as the “core state” of a unique Orthodox world dividing most of Europe between it and a Western rival.³⁵ Furthermore, it is interesting to note that this discourse has even affected thinking within Russia. This is exemplified by Alexander Dugin’s theory of neo-Eurasianism, which transforms this eternal ‘Otherness’ into a virtue through appeals to anti-Western traditionalism.³⁶ As such, it appears that these temporal and spatial connections involving both European radical right ideology and Russia represent a vital, yet understudied, intersection of theory, with such factors only now hinted at within related literature.

³¹ Ibid., p. 673

³² Ian Klinke, *Geopolitics and the Political Right: Lessons from Germany*, *International Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 3 (2018), pp. 498-501

³³ Halford Mackinder, *The Geographical Pivot of History*, p. 435

Halford Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction* (London: Holt, 1919), p. 150

³⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Perseus Books, 1997), pp. 6-9

³⁵ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations: The Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), pp. 45-46

³⁶ Alexander Dugin, *Osnovy Geopolitiki: Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rossii* [The Foundations of Geopolitics: The Geopolitical Future of Russia] (Moscow: Arctogaia, 1997), pp. 15-19

Certainly, discussions surrounding the political tradition's relationship with Moscow are only now taking place within an established body of work. This is exemplified by the fact that the literature was until recently still dominated by brief studies conducted by various think-tanks. The appearance of such work appears to directly correspond with Russia's resurgence on the global stage. For instance, the Political Capital Institute, led by Peter Kreko, was the first to examine the Eastern European radical right's growing links with the Kremlin in 2009, following Moscow's brief conflict with Georgia the previous year.³⁷ Advocating that ideology, rather than sheer monetary gain, was the key motivator behind this emerging affinity, the piece noted the radical right's growing understanding of Russia as an emerging geopolitical ally against a 'failing' Euro-Atlantic consensus.³⁸ This theme was later revisited by the group in 2014, which noted the appearance of a sophisticated continent-wide network of cooperation between the radical right and the Kremlin, just as the latter looked set to embark on military action in Ukraine and Syria.³⁹ Overall, such investigations have played a key role in mapping the emergence and practical purpose of this ever-strengthening relationship, which beforehand was largely the subject of sporadic journalistic interest. Antonis Klapsis' 2015 report, seemingly the most detailed of these preliminary studies, would perhaps encapsulate the importance of these novel connections best, with the radical right now influencing European opinion regarding pivotal geopolitical events, such as Russia's annexation of Crimea.⁴⁰

It would only be around this time, however, that this relationship would become the subject of traditional academic scrutiny, with pieces up to this point lacking any elaborate theoretical approach. This is clear with regards to Alina Polyakova's research, which investigated the alliance through the lens of social movement theory.⁴¹ Arguing that radical right parties have recently 're-framed' themselves as the champions of popular anti-EU sentiment, the researcher notes that this has naturally led to praise for Putin, whose populist illiberalism is

³⁷ *Russia's Far-Right Friends*, Political Capital Institute, 3rd December 2009 - http://www.riskandforecast.com/post/in-depth-analysis/russia-s-far-right-friends_349.html [accessed 1st August 2019]

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *The Russian Connection: The spread of pro-Russia policies on the European far-right*, Political Capital Institute, 14th March 2014, pp. 6-9

⁴⁰ Antonis Klapsis, *An Unholy Alliance: The European Far-Right and Putin's Russia*, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (2015), pp. 38-46

⁴¹ Alina Polyakova, *Strange Bedfellows: Putin and Europe's Far-Right*, *World Affairs*, Vol. 177, No. 3 (2014) Alina Polyakova, *Putinism and the European Far Right*, Atlantic Council, 19th November 2015

viewed as the antithesis of Brussels.⁴² This belief that a shared traditionalism operates as the foundation of the radical right's relationship with Moscow has now evolved into an essential element of the literature. Such an understanding is made particularly clear by Marlene Laruelle and her seminal 2015 work on the subject. Placing the aforementioned theory of neo-Eurasianism at the centre of this relationship, the piece was the first to directly identify links between the radical right and Anglo-American geopolitics that are so crucial to this study.⁴³ At the same time, the work's theoretical depth is matched by its breadth of cases, with discussions of the belief's fortunes in countries as disparate as France and Turkey, strengthening the basis of this investigation's international outlook. However, whilst the work provides a vital theoretical background for this study, its pioneering nature has left much to still be explored. For example, the study's focus on Dugin himself at times appears to obscure the piece's mainstream relevance, with the piece noting the fringe nature of his personal network.⁴⁴ It is this investigation's desire, therefore, to build on this study by examining how radical right parties actively use such ideals within their unique geopolitical outlooks.

Finally, it is also worth discussing Anton Shekhovtsov's important contribution to the literature in 2018, which also focuses on the relationship's Russian side. Stressing the Kremlin's leading role in relations, the piece offers an exemplary account of the ways in which Moscow has integrated the radical right into its resurgent foreign policy.⁴⁵ Despite this, such a focus on Russian actions often tacitly casts the radical right as less than autonomous. For instance, the characterisation of such groups as "front organizations" plays into a "useful idiots" discourse that may often be subject to over-exaggeration.⁴⁶ Of course, whilst the radical right's junior status cannot be ignored, it now appears worthwhile to actively engage with these parties' Russia policies in all their ideological detail. This will not only complement the extensive work done focusing on Moscow, but provide a more well-rounded

⁴² Ibid., pp. 4-6

⁴³ Marlene Laruelle, *Introduction*, pp. xi-xiii

⁴⁴ Jean-Yves Camus, *A Long-Lasting Friendship: Alexander Dugin and the French Radical Right in Eurasianism and the European Far-Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* ed. Marlene Laruelle, pp. 90-92

Nicolas Lebourg, *Arriba Eurasia?: The Difficult Establishment of Neo-Eurasianism in Spain in Eurasianism and the European Far-Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* ed. Marlene Laruelle, p. 125

⁴⁵ Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right: Tango Noir* (Oxford: Routledge, 2018), pp. 101-103

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 162

Alina Polyakova, *Why Europe Is Right to Fear Putin's Useful Idiots*, Foreign Policy, 23rd February 2016 - <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/23/why-europe-is-right-to-fear-putins-useful-idiots/> [accessed 5th August 2019]

Dr. Andrew Foxall, *Putin's Useful Idiots: Britain's Left, Right and Russia*, The Henry Jackson Society - Russia Studies Centre, Policy Paper No. 10 (2016)

understanding of the relationship as a whole, with Russia seemingly incorporated into a diverse range of radical right ‘stories’ in a Europe once again “in motion”.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ *What does Catalonia’s story tell us, Hungarians?*, Jobbik, 24th October 2017 - https://www.jobbik.com/what_does_catalonias_story_tell_us_hungarians [accessed 1st July 2020]

Methodology

Certainly, these aforementioned gaps in the literature will play a key role in informing this study's associated methodology. This is especially true with regards to the European radical right's seeming interest in classical geopolitical thought, with Russia's key role in these texts exposing a unique intersection of theory that is yet to be subject to full examination.

Questions arise, therefore, as to how to properly engage with this practice of labelling geographic space, in order to understand radical right perceptions of the country. Indeed, Ladis Kristof has noted that the very concept of 'geopolitics' is hard to define, with the practice now divided into various aforementioned schools of thought.¹ Of course, it may prove tempting to simply engage with this 'classical' form of the discipline. Stressing the objective, unchanging nature of physical geography and its effect on international relations, the outlook offers a unique perspective on realist understandings of world politics.² This geographic determinism has traditionally allowed the geopolitical "intellectual" to adopt a position wholly detached from bias, with conclusions presented in an 'indisputable' manner similar to the positivism of the natural sciences.³ Such thinking is exemplified by Halford Mackinder's all-encompassing claims as to the resource rich Eurasian "Heartland". Arguing that control of this region would allow a state to command world affairs, the theory argues for a decidedly 'natural' international system that is supported by the 'realities' of the soil.⁴ Due to this, it may seem appropriate to apply such thinking to the thoughts of Europe's radical right elites, whose 'objective' certainties regarding 'the nation' and its history, mirror that of the "closed" political environment that they supposedly inhabit.⁵

¹ Ladis Kristof, *The Origins and Evolution of Geopolitics*, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1960), p. 33

² Gearóid Ó Tuathail & John Agnew, *Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy in The Geopolitics Reader* eds. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby & Paul Routledge (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 79

³ Anita Sengupta, *Heartlands of Eurasia: The Geopolitics of Political Space* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009), p. 6

⁴ Halford Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction* (London: Holt, 1919), p. 150

⁵ Anita Sengupta, *Heartlands of Eurasia*, p. 6

Jean-Yves Camus & Nicolas Lebourg, *Far-Right Politics in Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), p. 22

Despite the potential utility of certain aspects of the outlook, however, this long-established method appears inadequate with regards to the goals of this research.⁶ This is due to its unwillingness to contemplate the potentially relativist role of human actors, who may colour their geopolitical outlooks in line with their unique circumstances and goals.⁷ As Ó Tuathail has bluntly stated, “Geography is about power”.⁸ At the same time, this concern seems all the more relevant due to the investigation’s focus on political parties, which by their very nature, compete to popularise their own unique worldviews.⁹ As a result, this investigation will assume the precepts of a school of thought described by Guzzini as the “interpretivist turn” in geopolitical studies.¹⁰ This is namely the aforementioned discipline of ‘critical geopolitics’. Criticising the “God’s eye” sanctity of political elites and their geopolitical theories, the approach has argued for the study’s conceptualisation as a myriad of discourses concerned with issues including sovereignty, space and location.¹¹ Therefore, it may be said that the discipline has broadened the definition of ‘geography’ within geopolitics to include more than all-encompassing, state-centric characterisations of territory and/or conflict.¹² As such, it argues for the acceptance of the “messiness of places in world affairs”, which contains a diverse range of multifaceted imagined geographies.¹³ Due to such subjectivity, the discipline suggests that geopolitical outlooks are ultimately constructed in order to address the connected and mutually reinforcing issues of spatial identity (The ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’) and foreign policy-making, within a social world.¹⁴ For example, George Bush’s 2002 “Axis of

⁶ Simon Dalby, *Geopolitics, Knowledge and Power at the End of the Century* in *The Geopolitics Reader*, p. 305

⁷ Egon Guba & Yvonna Lincoln, *Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research* in *Handbook of Qualitative Research* eds. Norman Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln (Los Angeles: SAGE, 1994), p. 110

⁸ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 1

⁹ Bertie Kaal, *Worldviews: Spatial Ground for Political Reasoning in Dutch Election Manifestos*, *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2012), pp. 1-2

¹⁰ Stefano Guzzini, *Which puzzle? An expected return of geopolitical thought in Europe* in *The Return of Geopolitics in Europe?: Social Mechanisms and Foreign Policy* ed. Stefano Guzzini (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 14

¹¹ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Introduction* in *The Geopolitics Reader*, p. 16

Ian Klinke, *Geopolitical Narratives on Belarus in Contemporary Russia*, *Perspectives*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (2008), p. 112

¹² Gearóid Ó Tuathail & Simon Dalby, *Rethinking geopolitics: towards a critical geopolitics* in *Rethinking Geopolitics* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 2-3

¹³ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Russia’s Kosovo: A Critical Geopolitics of the August 2008 War over South Ossetia*, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol. 49, No. 6 (2008), p. 672

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Ian Klinke, *Five minutes for critical geopolitics – A slightly provocative introduction*, *Exploring Geopolitics*, January 2009 -

https://exploringgeopolitics.org/publication_klinke_ian_five_minutes_for_critical_geopolitics_a_slightly_provocative_introduction/ [accessed 12th August 2019]

Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), pp. 18-19

Evil” speech drew clear boundaries between a ‘heroic’ America and its ‘villainous’ adversaries.¹⁵ Overall, such ideas appear especially useful for this study, with its focus on the geopolitical visions of non-traditional groups matching desires to move beyond the rhetorical dominance of the ‘omnipotent state’. Simultaneously, the piece’s desire to uncover the specific visions of radical right parties is also supported by the tradition, with Ó Tuathail stating that “critical geopolitics is sensitive to the importance of localized context and agency in world affairs”.¹⁶

In light of this focus on the constant renegotiation of knowledge between distinct identities and the forging of international outlooks within critical geopolitics, it must be emphasised that the discourse that is central to its studies ought to be viewed as a process of construction, rather than simply a justification for actions on the global stage.¹⁷ As Foucault has stated, discourse should be considered as “practices that systematically shape the objects of which they speak”.¹⁸ Due to this, this piece will examine one of these ‘practices’ that has been used to great effect by a variety of geopolitical researchers, under similar assumptions, namely ‘narrative’.¹⁹ This ‘practice’ has been specifically chosen for a variety of reasons. For instance, given the emphasis placed on subjective *renegotiation* within critical geopolitics, it ultimately proves difficult to ignore the integral role of ‘time’ in relation to this “spatial spectacle”.²⁰ The aforementioned “Axis of Evil” exemplifies this ‘temporality’ in various ways, with a Western geopolitical mind labelling the ‘Other’ as “barbaric” in direct response

¹⁵ *President Delivers State of the Union Address*, The White House – President George W. Bush, 29th January 2002 - <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html> [accessed 4th July 2020]

¹⁶ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Russia’s Kosovo*, p. 672

¹⁷ Martin Muller, *Text, discourse, affect and things* in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics* eds. Joanne Sharp, Klaus Dodds & Merje Kuus (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 55-56

Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (Oxford: Routledge, 2002), p. 54

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ An especial debt of gratitude should be expressed in this section to Ian Klinke, Associate Professor in Human Geography at the University of Oxford’s School of Geography and the Environment, whose email correspondence helped me greatly with my decision to analyse narrative in this study.

John Agnew, *Looking Back to Look Forward: Chinese Geopolitical Narratives and China’s Past*, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (2012)

Edwin Bacon, *Perspectives for Russia’s Future: The Case for Narrative Analysis in Ukraine and Russia: People, Politics, Propaganda and Perspectives* (Bristol: E-International Relations Publishing, 2015)

Ian Klinke, *Geopolitical Narratives on Belarus in Contemporary Russia*

John O’Loughlin, Gearóid Ó Tuathail & Vladimir Kolossov, *Russian geopolitical storylines and public opinion in the wake of 9–11: a critical geopolitical analysis and national survey*, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 37, Issue 3 (2004)

²⁰ Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics: A Conceptual Matrix*, *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 37, No. 5 (2012), p. 674

to the events of September 11th.²¹ As such, this study will engage with narrative through Ian Klinke's understanding of "chronopolitics". Arguing that the meaning behind spatial changes are ultimately derived from the time in which they occur, the outlook views narrative as the natural result of a moment deemed important by the geopolitical 'Self'.²² Certainly, this 'critical moment' naturally encourages the reorganisation of the actor's pre-existing ideals, as well as its ultimate goal, thereby neatly dividing relations with the 'Other' into a storyline.²³ These presuppositions therefore appear appropriate for a subjective examination of Europe's radical right. Enthused by historical 'Golden Ages', the tradition's ongoing desire to overturn a "liminal crisis" (often associated with the legacies of the 2008 financial downturn) showcases a tendency to promote a "Detached perspective of history that divides it up into neat periods".²⁴

Therefore, narratives appear to be useful in understanding these subjective geopolitical visions, with Ó Tuathail arguing that critical geopolitics ultimately aims to "emplot narratives" within discourse.²⁵ Described by Czarniawska as containing elements that help form a wider 'story', narratives help explain an actor's subjective visions of past, present and future events.²⁶ This subjectivity naturally deviates from the purely chronological order of proceedings or "fabula" as discussed by Bal, with actors manipulating events to construct 'stories' within text.²⁷ This is often achieved through the identification of "problem statements", which emphasise a causal relationship between issues akin to a plot.²⁸ This systematic approach complements the overall 'orderliness' of geopolitical narratives, with "polarized" ideals of heroes and villains presenting a subjective narrative that is ultimately "geared towards action" and eventual completion.²⁹ Simultaneously, these 'characters' may

²¹ Douglas Kellner, *Bushspeak and the Politics of Lying: Presidential Rhetoric in the "War on Terror"*, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (2007), p. 629

²² Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics*, p. 685

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 679

Jean-Yves Camus & Nicolas Lebourg, *Far-Right Politics in Europe*, p. 22

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Hanspeter Kriesi, *The Political Consequences of the Financial and Economic Crisis in Europe: Electoral Punishment and Popular Protest*, *Swiss Political Science Review*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (2012), p. 519

Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics*, p. 675

²⁵ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Russia's Kosovo*, p. 673

²⁶ Barbara Czarniawska, *Narratives in Social Science Research* (London: SAGE, 2004), pp. 17-20

Annick Wibben, *Feminist Security Studies: A Narrative Approach* (Oxford: Routledge, 2011), pp. 43-44

²⁷ Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 83

²⁸ Emery Roe, *Narrative Policy Analysis: Theory and Practice* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), p. 92

²⁹ Phillip L. Hammock, *Exploring the Reproduction of Conflict Through Narrative: Israeli Youth Motivated to Participate in a Coexistence Program*, *Peace and Conflict*, Vol. 15 (2009), p. 50

Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics*, p. 679

reflect a specific nation or abstract concept, thereby reflecting Wertsch's dual understanding of narrative.³⁰ Advocating for the existence of "schematic narrative templates" that are often shared by actors' "specific narratives", this abstraction will play a key role in comparing and contrasting radical right outlooks.³¹ Of course, whilst the parties' Russia narratives are likely coloured by their national circumstances, it is important to remember the abstract ideological ties that bind these groups.

In order to uncover these narratives, therefore, this study will utilise the qualitative practice of "narrative policy analysis" as pioneered by Emery Roe.³² Focused on producing overarching 'metanarratives' from raw data, the approach ultimately aims to provide stable assumptions that are suitable for political policymaking.³³ This is reliant on the discovery and refinement of what Yanow describes as "local knowledge", with this study hoping to uncover what is truly meaningful to radical right groups when faced with the Russian 'Other'.³⁴ This process will begin by uncovering a myriad of individual 'stories', which detail a traditional tripartite plot as well as its 'characters'.³⁵ Due to political parties' propensity for argument, it is useful to note that these stories may also take the form of "premises and conclusions".³⁶ This will be accomplished by disaggregating a textual corpus related to the 'party-protagonists' into its constituent parts.³⁷ Given the noted importance of causality within geopolitical narratives, these core parts are understood as the aforementioned 'problem statements'.³⁸ These statements describe the parties' individual issues raised in relation to Russia and their immediate consequences, which could be described as the potential metanarrative's basic unit of causality.³⁹ Following this, a thematic analysis of these singular statements will occur in order to identify 'clusters' of stories that discuss similar issues.⁴⁰ At

Felix Ciută, *Narratives of Security: Strategy and Identity in the European Context* in *Discursive Constructions of Identity in European Politics* ed. Richard Mole (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2007), p. 192

Martha S. Feldman & Julka Almquist, *Analyzing the Implicit in Stories* in *Varieties of Narrative Analysis* eds. James A. Holstein & Jaber F. Gubrium (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2015), p. 3

³⁰ Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics*, p. 679

³¹ James V. Wertsch, *Voice of Collective Remembering* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 60-62

³² Emery Roe, *Narrative Policy Analysis*

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 4

³⁴ Dvora Yanow, *Conducting Interpretive Policy Analysis* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2000), p. 5

³⁵ Emery Roe, *Narrative Policy Analysis*, p. 3

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics*, p. 679

³⁹ Emery Roe, *Narrative Policy Analysis*, p. 92

⁴⁰ Lorelli S. Nowell et al., *Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria*, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 16 (2017), p. 2

the same time, what Roe calls “nonstories” and “counterstories” will also be analysed in order to add nuance to the weight of these ideas within party discourse. The researcher describes a “nonstory” as possessing “no beginning, middle, and end of its own” and a “counterstory” as a fully-fledged story that runs counter to emerging “dominant policy narratives”.⁴¹

Having identified these competing ideas, it is anticipated that a refined ‘metanarrative’ will begin to emerge in relation to each party. This will be accomplished by identifying the temporal relationships between these aforementioned groups of stories according to the party-protagonist’s subjective understandings. Such a process will subsequently reveal a larger “chain of problems” connecting these smaller series of events.⁴² This approach will naturally help overcome the specific focus of individual party texts, with Maynard-Moody and Musheno noting that “themes and patterns are rarely developed in a single story”.⁴³ The four groups’ individual “policy narratives” regarding Russia will then be identified and presented within a traditional past, present and future format. This will help expose the underlying logic present within these groups’ foreign policy positions within a social world full of uncertainty.⁴⁴ At the same time, it is important to remember the need to constantly engage with the corpus even after the initial creation of a rough metanarrative. This will be achieved by means of “narrative smoothing”, with the data’s “raw edges” refined in order to reveal an even more stable, dominant discourse that runs throughout wider party beliefs.⁴⁵ Of course, this ongoing search for the metanarrative’s core beliefs will eventually result in data saturation, which will occur when the corpus reaches “informational redundancy” and no new ‘problem statements’ can be derived from the literature.⁴⁶

As a result, it is also important to discuss the data that will be subject to such analysis. This data is ultimately associated with this study’s “purposive sampling” of four radical right

⁴¹ Emery Roe, *Narrative Policy Analysis*, pp. 3-4

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 92

⁴³ Steven Maynard-Moody & Michael Musheno, *Stories for Research in Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn* eds. Dvora Yanow & Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (Oxford: Routledge, 2015), pp. 345-346

⁴⁴ Emery Roe, *Narrative Policy Analysis*, p. 5

⁴⁵ Jeong-Hee Kim, *Understanding Narrative Inquiry: The Crafting and Analysis of Stories as Research* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2015), pp. 191-193

⁴⁶ Margarete Sandelowski, *Theoretical Saturation in The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* ed. Lisa M. Given (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2008), p. 675

Greg Guest, Arwen Bunce & Laura Johnson, *How Many Interviews Are Enough?: An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability*, *Field Methods*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2006)

parties, whose nations' geopolitical legacies differ in spite of their shared ideological inheritance.⁴⁷ As a result, the corpus will consist of textual reports issued by these movements, such as news articles, manifestos, speeches and other connected documents. The vast majority of these articles will be taken directly from these parties' websites. This has been decided upon due to the tendency of these centralised sources to offer a unified and vetted 'party line', which may be distorted at times by individual members.⁴⁸ This is evident with regards to the works of former Jobbik MEP and Russian agent Bela Kovacs, whose radical pro-Moscow tendencies could potentially misrepresent the party's collective geopolitical 'Self'.⁴⁹ Simultaneously, preliminary examination of these sources suggests that they possess a wealth of information relevant to this investigation's aims, with articles ultimately saved in an aforementioned corpus to avoid potential expiration. It is worth noting, however, that the exceptions to this focus on official websites will be external texts produced by Russian state bodies and radical right leaders. Whilst the former may provide vital insights into the Kremlin's often friendly relationship with such groups, the latter's "charismatic" role within party agenda-setting informs, rather than potentially dilutes, group positions.⁵⁰

At the same time, it is also important to note the investigation's overall reflexivity. This seems especially pertinent due to the study's belief in subjective reasoning, which thereby requires an acknowledgement of the researcher's implicit effect on studies, through their own situation, thoughts and biases. As such, it seems important to highlight various deficiencies that may impact the rigour of this examination. Of course, practical issues, such as time, word count, aforementioned monetary restrictions and the ongoing pandemic will naturally influence this study in line with its primary function as a postgraduate thesis. At the same time, the tendency of critical geopolitical studies to simply describe and not practice subjectivity, as noted by Dalby, must also be acknowledged, with many investigations often

⁴⁷ Paul Oliver, *Purposive Sampling* in *The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods* ed. Victor Jupp (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2011), p. 245

Josef Janning, *Crisis and Cohesion in the EU: A Ten-Year Review*, European Council on Foreign Relations Policy Brief, February 2018 - https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR-245_-_Crisis_and_Cohesion_-_A_10_Year_Review_Janning_WEB.pdf [accessed 29th July 2019]

Michael Minkenberg, *The Renewal of the Radical Right: Between Modernity and Anti-modernity*, *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (2000), p. 189

⁴⁸ Asbjørn Følstad, Marius Rohde Johannessen & Marika Lüders, *The Role of a Political Party Website: Lessons Learnt from the User Perspective* in *ePart 2014 Proceedings* eds. Efthimios Tambouris, Ann Macintosh & Frank Edward Bannister (New York: Springer, 2014), p. 57

⁴⁹ Mitchell A. Orenstein & Péter Krekó, *A Russian Spy in Brussels?*, *Foreign Affairs*, 29th May 2014 - <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/hungary/2014-05-29/russian-spy-brussels> [accessed 19th August 2019]

⁵⁰ Roger Eatwell, *Charisma and the Radical Right* in *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right* (Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 250-254

replicating a problematic ‘intellectual objectivism’, found in the classical tradition.⁵¹ Due to this, a memo system will be employed throughout the investigation, in order to encourage the researcher to reflect on their own role within a social world.

Furthermore, the investigation’s international nature also suggests that issues surrounding language may impact the study. This is due to a reliance on English language documents released by Golden Dawn and Jobbik, as well as translation assistance with German-language AfD resources, which may result in the absence of certain themes and understandings.⁵² Certainly, language issues have been discussed at length within academia, with Van Nes et al. stressing that ‘meaning’ in translation may be retained through a ‘side-by-side’ cooperative process, between researcher and translator.⁵³ Simultaneously, Temple and Young have stated that such problems are inherently bound with the researcher’s own philosophical logic, with pieces professing objectivity ultimately hampered more by such problems.⁵⁴ It is this study’s contention, therefore, that these issues can be realistically controlled, as its precepts fully acknowledge the inherent flaws of subjective research. Indeed, it could be argued that if such problems were not accepted, ideals akin to a strong ‘Whorfianism’ could constrain researchers’ very desire and ability to engage with foreign and international issues.⁵⁵ In contrast, the aforementioned literature on which this piece relies stresses the need for widespread engagement, with various researchers employing the potentially troubling sources in their work.⁵⁶ Overall, this international focus is expected to expose a wide array of similarities and differences within the Russia policies of the European radical right, with a focus on narrative likely to reveal the peculiarities of each group’s geopolitical ‘Self’, within a wider tradition. As Patterson and Monroe have stated,

⁵¹ Simon Dalby, *Geopolitics, Knowledge and Power at the End of the Century in The Geopolitics Reader*, pp. 131-132

⁵² Donald E. Polkinghorne, *Language and Meaning: Data Collection in Qualitative Research*, *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2005), pp. 143-144

⁵³ Fenna van Nes, Tineke Abma, Hans Jonsson & Dorly Deeg, *Language differences in qualitative research: is meaning lost in translation?*, *European Journal of Aging*, Vol. 7 (2010), p. 315

⁵⁴ Bogusia Temple & Alys Young, *Qualitative research and translation dilemmas*, *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 4, Issue 2 (2004), pp. 163-167

⁵⁵ Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1956)

⁵⁶ Marlene Laruelle, *Eurasianism and the European Far-Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* (London: Lexington Books, 2015)

Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far-Right: Tango Noir* (Oxford: Routledge, 2018)

Antonis Klapsis, *An Unholy Alliance: The European Far-Right and Putin’s Russia*, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (2015)

The Russian Connection: The spread of pro-Russia policies on the European far-right, Political Capital Institute, 14th March 2014

Narrative is especially useful in revealing the speaker's concept of self, for it is the self that is located at the center of the narrative, whether as active agent, passive experiencer, or tool of destiny.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Molly Patterson & Kristen Renwick Monroe, *Narrative in Political Science*, Annual Review of Political Science, Vol. 1 (1998), p. 316

Moscow on the fringes: Russia and the 20th century European far-right

In order to fully understand the European radical right's contemporary visions of Russia, it is useful to discuss the unique roles bestowed on the country by its historical predecessors. Whilst the nation has undoubtedly become a topic of great intellectual interest for the tradition today, it ought to be remembered that this relationship is by no means a uniquely modern phenomenon. Certainly, groups and individuals across the centuries have also looked to Moscow as a fellow revisionist ally.¹ Simultaneously, these ideals have often resulted in the opponents of such subversive forces characterising the nation in a hostile manner, thereby placing the country and its foreign policy at the centre of vivid political disputes across the continent.² As aforementioned, this peculiar situation appears to have arisen as a result of Russia's unique geopolitical position. For example, Maxine David has stated that the Kremlin's position on the "margins of Europe", both in physical and rhetorical terms, has seen the country attempt to exploit its peripheral status, in order to gain power within the continent's traditional centres.³ Subsequently, this obscure position has seen the country viewed with great curiosity by insurgent voices, who have often incorporated the Kremlin into various grand and messianic political schemes.

This can be seen as early as the seventeenth century, in the work of Croatian priest Juraj Križanić. Often regarded as the first "pan-Slavist", the missionary's desire to unite both Catholic and Orthodox churches eventually encouraged the creation of a vivid geopolitical narrative. This envisioned "Great Russia" leading a continental struggle against the religious and military 'threats' posed by Germany and the Ottomans.⁴ This belief in the country's influence would also be expressed by the Greek nationalist organisation "Filiki Eteria",

¹ Marlene Laruelle, *Introduction* in *Eurasianism and the European Far Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* (London: Lexington Books, 2015), p. xi

² Maxine David, *Exploiting Marginality: The Case of Russia in The Geopolitics of Europe's Identity: Centres, Boundaries and Margins* ed. Noel Parker (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), p. 68

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-71

⁴ Victor Taki, *Tsar and Sultan: Russian Encounters with the Ottoman Empire* (London: IB Tauris, 2016), pp. 51-52

Dimitri Strémooukhoff, *Moscow the Third Rome: Sources of the Doctrine*, *Speculum*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (1953), pp. 97-99

Marshall T. Poe, *A People Born to Slavery: Russia in Early Modern European Ethnography, 1476-1748* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), pp. 181-188

which viewed Moscow as the harbinger of national independence and a restored Byzantine culture.⁵ Such instrumental usage of Russian power has proven to be a common trope amongst many of Europe's radical groups, as the country's various identities allowed for the tying of local circumstances to wider global issues.⁶ Due to this, it could be argued that Moscow has remained a 'tabula rasa' for many of the continent's upstart thinkers, with the communist period in particular witnessing a burgeoning of these understandings.

This growth in discussion appears to be due to the official establishment of the "maskirovka" strategic doctrine. Assembled from various pre-Soviet practices during the communist era, the concept was originally restricted to discussions regarding the use of deception and unorthodox tactics during traditional military conflict.⁷ Despite this, 'maskirovka' would soon evolve into a wider doctrine, which, according to former KGB archivist Vasili Mitrokhin, quickly recognised the utility of raising Moscow's profile amongst radical political groups.⁸ Of course, in light of the ideological underpinnings of the Soviet administration, it is only natural that this engagement was dominated by leftist organisations. Commonly casting the Kremlin as the Marxist world's geopolitical centre, these groups often viewed the country as essential to their own operations. This is evident as early as Lenin's rule, with Arthur MacManus, first chairman of the Communist Party of Great Britain, stating that the power of "Soviet Russia" would prove decisive to realising the group's "hopes and ideals".⁹ Furthermore, this close relationship would only grow in light of Cold War tensions. For instance, Eastern bloc communists, who were often thrust into power by Moscow following the Second World War, characterised Russia as the guarantor of European Marxism.¹⁰ As Romanian leader, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, argued, the Soviet military ultimately served "the interests of the common cause of the socialist camp".¹¹ Such

⁵ Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence, 1821-1833* (London: Batsford, 1973), pp. 41-49

⁶ Maxine David, *Exploiting Marginality*, pp. 68-69

⁷ V.A. Yefrimov & S.G. Chermashentsev, *Maskirovka* [Camouflage] in *Sovetskaya Voennaya entsiklopediya* [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Vol. 5 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1978), p. 175

⁸ Christopher Andrew & Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West* (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 360

⁹ Albert Inkpin & Arthur MacManus, *The Threatened War Against Russia – The First Communist Party of Great Britain Circular*, 5th August 1920, Marxists Online Archive - <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/sections/britain/circular/1920/08/05.htm> [accessed 30th August 2019]

Capitalist England – Socialist Russia, Executive Committee of the Communist International (1919) – Marxists Online Archive - <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/sections/britain/capitalist-britain.htm> [accessed 30th August 2019]

¹⁰ Christopher Andrew & Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, pp. 322-323

¹¹ *Letter of Reply, from Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, First Secretary of the CC of the RWP expressing agreement to the proposal made by the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from Romania*, 17th April 1958, Wilson Centre

consensus displays Russia's near omnipresent position within radical left thought during the twentieth century. Naturally, its status as the world's first socialist state encouraged many European communists to view the Kremlin as an indispensable ally.

Due to this enduring position as the 'lodestar' of communist thought, questions must be asked as to the historical origins of pro-Russia tendencies within the radical right. At first glance these sympathies clearly appear anathema to the ideological outlooks of the tradition's predecessors, who naturally envisioned the Soviet Union as a hostile force.¹² This is clear with regards to long-term trends amongst Europe's fascists, whose desire for national rejuvenation clashed with Moscow's rhetorical allegiance to proletarian internationalism.¹³ Such a dichotomy would see tensions rise during the interwar period, with Norwegian fascist Vidkun Quisling ultimately describing the Kremlin's geopolitical influence as "the main problem in world politics today".¹⁴ This ideological animosity would only increase in spite of Nazi Germany's demise, with French nationalist Jean-Marie Le Pen describing the Cold War as only an extension of "a war that communism has waged relentlessly against the world for fifty years".¹⁵ Certainly, this sentiment exemplifies the seemingly irreconcilable position of European fascism with the Soviet Union. Essentially functioning as a 'bête noire' for the twentieth century far-right, Moscow was perpetually viewed as an existential threat to the much-lauded traditions of 'European civilization'.¹⁶ Despite this, researcher Anton Shekhovtsov has noted the curious existence of a "minority faith" of pro-Soviet fascists during this time.¹⁷ Whilst the historical influence of this outlook should not be overstated, such sentiment appears essential for understanding the Russophile feelings of many modern radical right parties, with its historical adherents presenting an interesting synthesis of fringe ideas, now present within the mainstream.

It is interesting to note that this seemingly paradoxical perspective, ultimately finds its origin within Europe's Russian émigré communities, who came into contact with Germany's ongoing 'Conservative Revolution' as they settled across the continent.¹⁸ This is particularly

International History Digital Archive - <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110465> [accessed 30th August 2019]

¹² Roger Griffin, *Fascism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 6

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Hans Fredrik Dahl, *Quisling: A Study in Treachery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 294

¹⁵ Jean-Marie Le Pen, *Les Français d'abord* [The French First] (Paris: Carrère-Lafon, 1984), p. 32

¹⁶ Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 214-215

¹⁷ Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right: Tango Noir* (Oxford: Routledge, 2018), p. 1

¹⁸ Marlene Laruelle, *Introduction*, p. xi

evident within the works of the early ‘Eurasianists’, such as Petr Savitsky and Nikolai Trubetzkoy.¹⁹ Advocating for the existence of a traditionalist ‘Eurasian’ civilization centred upon Russia, the movement argued for an understanding of the country’s political events based on supposedly ‘fixed’ socio-economic characteristics, rather than the seemingly ‘fleeting’ nature of ideology.²⁰ This approach therefore allowed these thinkers to reconcile their own conservatism with the thoroughly revolutionary nature of the ongoing Bolshevik Revolution. For example, proponents of ‘Eurasianism’ would forecast that Marxism’s radical social ideas, ultimately the product of Western intellects, would prove incompatible with the natural predispositions of ‘Russia-Eurasia’.²¹ This would thereby lead to the creation of a state which was economically modernised, yet fully aligned with its traditionalist societal precepts.²² Such a unique vision would soon come to involve an active philosophical rejection of the Western world, which was perceived as incompatible with Eurasia’s inherent illiberalism.²³ It seems natural, therefore, that these ideals may act as the source of the sympathetic stance of today’s radical right, with this civilizational dichotomy potentially urging European traditionalists to fight for a more Russo-centric world.

Whilst these beliefs may be dismissed by critics as mere expressions of national exceptionalism, this unique combination of ideas would soon find support outside of the esoteric debates of Russia’s émigrés. This is particularly clear with regards to the tradition of ‘National Bolshevism’, which appeared during the political chaos of Weimar-era Germany.²⁴ Combining spirited calls for a fascist-style national rebirth with Bolshevik revolutionary economics, the amorphous movement would soon attract many former leftists to its cause.²⁵ This included Heinrich Laufenberg and Ernst Niekisch, who came to view socialism as unable to provide solutions for a troubled Germany alone.²⁶ Much like Eurasianism, therefore, National Bolshevism existed within a theoretical framework based heavily on ‘organic’ national characteristics, with its émigré inheritance endowing Moscow with a particularly messianic role. For instance, adherents characterised Bolshevik Russia as

¹⁹ Alexander Dugin, *Eurasian Mission: An Introduction to Neo-Eurasianism* (Budapest: Arktos, 2014), p. 17

²⁰ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire* (Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Centre Press, 2008), pp. 2-3

²¹ Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Origin of Russian Communism* (London: Geoffrey Bles Ltd., 1937), p. 6

²² *Ibid.*, p. 112

²³ Alexander Dugin, *Eurasian Mission*, p. 18

²⁴ Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right*, p. 4

²⁵ Erik Van Ree, *The concept of ‘National Bolshevism’: An Interpretative Essay*, *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (2001), pp. 289-290

²⁶ Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right*, pp. 6-8

pursuing a version of class struggle wholly attuned to its 'native circumstances'.²⁷ As such, the revolutionary state was viewed as a vital partner of the German nation, which was bound in a simultaneous conflict with the Versailles Treaty and Western capitalism.²⁸ This characterisation of Russia appears to be the first incidence of the country being portrayed as a radical vanguard by virtue of its 'natural' state, with traditionalists across the continent potentially able to match their own circumstances to this seemingly 'eternal' ally.

This fringe sympathy for the Soviet Union amongst Europe's far-right would face even more obscurity as the Cold War physically and ideologically divided the continent. Faced with an increasingly binary reality within international relations, the tradition's unique synthesis of ideas would prove unable to compete with the era's heated rhetoric.²⁹ This would result in the outlook being largely relegated to small ephemeral groups and individual thinkers, who, due to the seemingly inescapable fact of superpower conflict, began to frame such positive understandings within pan-European perspectives. The first expression of this view would occur amongst various Austrian and German 'neutralists', who viewed Moscow as essential to ridding the continent of American influence, regardless of its internal politics.³⁰ This continuing disregard for the Kremlin's socialism amongst a minority of fascists would soon be justified by increasing reference to geopolitics inspired by early Eurasianism. Such an approach is clear within Belgian fascist Jean Thiriart's work. Describing the Soviet Union as the geopolitical successor to Nazi Germany, the theorist viewed Europe's nations and Russia as an 'organic' geographical unit.³¹ As a result, continental unity was seen as necessary to facilitate the expression of the area's inherent traditionalism, in the face of US 'aggression'.³² It seems, then, that this flirtation with geopolitics appears to be the predecessor of more recent ideas surrounding Moscow's unique position, with this status 'naturally' binding the country in an inescapable conflict with outside forces, beyond mere political dogma.

Perhaps the most famous inheritor of these ideas is Alexander Dugin's theory of 'neo-Eurasianism', which fully embraced this supposedly 'special relationship' between Russia

²⁷ Ernst Niekisch, *Entscheidung* [Decision] (Berlin: Widerstands-Verlag, 1930)

²⁸ Karl Paetel, *Klare Fronten!* [Clear Fronts!], NS Briefe, 15th March 1930, pp. 299-301

²⁹ Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right*, p. 8

³⁰ Richard Breitman & Norman J.W. Goda, *Hitler's Shadow: Nazi War Criminals, U.S. Intelligence and the Cold War* (New York: US National Archives, 2010), p. 57

³¹ Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right*, p. 30

³² Jean Thiriart, *L'Empire Euro-Sovietique de Vladivostok à Dublin l'après-Yalta: la mutation du communisme: essai sur le totalitarisme éclairé* [Euro-Soviet Empire from Vladivostok to Dublin post-Yalta: the mutation of communism: an essay on enlightened totalitarianism] (Paris: Edition Machiavel, 1984)

and geopolitics.³³ Developed during the 1990s as the country came to terms with the Soviet system's collapse, the ideology claims to expose the underlying factors that brought about such events.³⁴ Interestingly, the thinker makes extensive use of Western intellectual traditions to explain this history, with the theory as much influenced by European imaginations as their Russian counterparts. For example, alongside the aforementioned influence of Anglo-American geopolitics, neo-Eurasianism also borrows heavily from the 'New Right' tradition.³⁵ This outlook is subsequently married with the interwar Eurasianists' belief that Russia-Eurasia's 'inherent' traditionalism is not a product of society but rather the nature of the land.³⁶ Due to this, the country is characterised as the epicentre of a conservative 'land' civilization, diametrically opposed to the Anglo-Saxon world's 'maritime' liberalism.³⁷ This esoteric understanding offers a vivid culmination of a century of fringe right-wing thought on Russia, with Europe's modern radical right displaying great interest in these ideas. Indeed, Laruelle and Shekhovtsov have noted Dugin's attempts to establish links with these parties since the 1990s, with subsequent interactions securing the ideology a permanent position within internal party discussions on Russia.³⁸

In conclusion, it seems that the radical right's interest in Moscow appears to be motivated by more than simple opportunism. Rather, such sympathies appear to be the product of long-term historical debate, with its understandings challenging established norms that have been used by other twentieth century radicals to explain the country. This is exemplified by the outlook's unique embrace of ideas from across the political spectrum, with associated discussion displaying a notable interest in the country's 'natural' characteristics. Due to this, Russia has been increasingly viewed as a non-changing entity, grounded in the traditions endowed to it by 'organic circumstances'. This view has been fully entrenched through reference to geopolitical theory, which has discussed the presence of an omnipresent Western enemy, opposed to Russia's 'revolutionary traditionalism'. At the same time, these core

³³ Alexander Dugin, *Osnovy Geopolitiki: Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rossii* [The Foundations of Geopolitics: The Geopolitical Future of Russia] (Moscow: Arctogaia, 1997), pp. 11-14

³⁴ Dmitry Shlapentokh, *Alexander Dugin's Views of the Middle East*, Space and Polity, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2008), pp. 251-254

³⁵ Alexander Dugin, *Osnovy Geopolitiki*, pp. 165-166

Jean-Yves Camus, *Alain de Benoist and the New Right in Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: Behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy* ed. Mark Sedgwick (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 73

³⁶ Alexander Dugin, *Eurasian Mission*, p. 19

³⁷ Alexander Dugin, *Osnovy Geopolitiki*, pp. 15-19

³⁸ Anton Shekhovtsov, *Alexander Dugin and the West European New Right, 1989-1994 in Eurasianism and the European Far Right* ed. Marlene Laruelle, p. 35

tenets have also been subject to instrumentalisation by various extreme right groups and individuals, with specific temporal and national interpretations of these ideas, building around the nation as a constant reference point. As such, it could be argued that Europe's modern radical right has been gifted a large set of rhetoric tools by such historical debate. This is especially true regarding the doctrine of neo-Eurasianism, with the socio-economic uncertainty currently facing Europe perhaps encouraging the radical right to contemplate seemingly 'objective' ideas that tie tradition to the very soil itself.

Part Two

A struggle for ‘Greater Europe’ – Rassemblement

National narratives of Russia

Due to this extensive ideological background, it seems appropriate to begin this study’s analysis section with the French Rassemblement National ((RN) previously the Front National). Intimately influenced by the France-centric Nouvelle Droite tradition, the party has remained at the forefront of theoretical trends that have shaped the modern radical right.¹ Certainly, the party was explicitly founded in 1972 by the far-right “New Order” movement as a means of obtaining electoral power.² The group also exemplifies long-term radical right attempts to forge a more acceptable image, with the “less controversial” military and political veteran, Jean-Marie Le Pen, chosen as leader for this purpose.³ Despite this, the party’s original role as a nationalist union saw the group struggle with its ideological inheritance, as flirtations with neo-fascism and anti-Semitism persisted throughout its early years.⁴ Jean-Marie has even faced court action for comments made concerning the Holocaust.⁵ Subsequently, the party remained a fringe force until the 1980s, with fortunes only improving as fears regarding immigration and economic stability allowed the movement to become a vehicle for populist dissent.⁶ This period saw the party become a permanent fixture of French politics as a palatable nationalist alternative against what Bornschier describes as “system candidates”.⁷ The party’s popularity only grew throughout the 1990s and ultimately resulted

¹ Jean-Yves Camus, *Le Front National et la Nouvelle Droite* [The National Front and the Nouvelle Droite] in *Les faux-semblants du Front National* [The False Pretences of the National Front] eds. S. Crépon et al. (Paris: Sciences-Po, 2015), pp. 97-98

² Daniel Stockemer, *The Front National in France: Continuity and Change under Jean-Marie Le Pen and Marine Le Pen* (New York: Springer, 2017), pp. 10-11

³ Renaud Thillaye & Claudia Chwalisz, *The Front National: Old Rhetoric, New Practices*, *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*, Vol. 24, Issue 2 (2015), p. 103

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Craig R. Whitney, *French Far-Right Leader Convicted of Slighting Holocaust*, *The New York Times*, 27th December 1997 - <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/12/27/world/french-far-right-leader-convicted-of-slighting-holocaust.html> [accessed 10th March 2020]

Angelique Chrisafis, *Jean-Marie Le Pen fined again for dismissing Holocaust as ‘detail’*, *The Guardian*, 6th April 2016 - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/06/jean-marie-le-pen-fined-again-dismissing-holocaust-detail> [accessed 10th March 2020]

⁶ Daniel Stockemer, *The Front National in France*, pp. 13-16

⁷ Simon Bornschier, *Unis contre la mondialisation? Une analyse de la convergence programmatique des partis populistes de droite européens* [United against globalisation? An analysis of the ideological convergence of populist parties of the European right], *Revue Internationale de Politique Comparée* [International Review of Comparative Politics], Vol. 4, No. 12 (2005), p. 23

in Jean-Marie directly challenging presidential incumbent Jacques Chirac in the second round of elections in 2002.⁸

Nevertheless, it would only be under the leadership of Jean-Marie's daughter, Marine, that the party would become a thoroughly modern force. Assuming leadership in 2011, Marine immediately embarked on a process of "dédiabolisation", in order to further improve the party's image and broaden its appeal.⁹ This saw the removal of many controversial figures from the group, as well as a raft of new policies designed to broaden the group's horizons beyond immigration.¹⁰ The party now possesses an extensive strategy regarding the finer points of state economics, with populist ideals of welfare chauvinism complementing more traditional policies such as counter-terrorism.¹¹ This emphasis on representing 'the French people' is also evident in its new "Rassemblement" personality, which the party hopes will provide a clean break with the past.¹² In relation to this study, these changes have also had profound effects on RN narratives concerning Russia. For example, Le Pen has openly met with Putin in order to campaign for "the restoration of cultural, economic and strategic ties between Russia and France".¹³ The Kremlin, seeking European friends, has warmly welcomed these advances and has even offered funding.¹⁴ A recent US intelligence report estimated that Moscow provided \$13 million to the party in 2014 alone.¹⁵ At the heart of this cooperation, however, lies a strong ideological affinity which this chapter will discuss.¹⁶ This

⁸ Nonna Mayer, *From Jean-Marie Le Pen to Marine Le Pen: Electoral Change on the Far Right*, Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 66 (2013), p. 160

⁹ Renaud Thillaye & Claudia Chwalisz, *The Front National*, p. 103

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Gilles Ivadi, *The Successful Welfare-Chauvinist Party? The Front National in the 2012 elections in France*, ESA's Research Network on Political Sociology (RN32) Mid-term conference, European Sociological Association (ESA) (November 2012), p. 10

Rachel D. Huchins & Daphne Halikiopoulou, *Enemies of liberty? Nationalism, immigration, and the framing of terrorism in the agenda of the Front National*, Nations and Nationalism, Vol. 26 (2020), pp. 78-79

¹² Sedrik Pocuch, *Rassemblement National: Changes and Continuities Under Marine Le Pen*, NATO Association of Canada, 23rd October 2019 - <http://natoassociation.ca/assemblement-national-changes-and-continuities-under-marine-le-pen/> [accessed 11th March 2020]

¹³ Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right: Tango Noir* (Oxford: Routledge, 2018), pp. 87-88
Meeting with Marine Le Pen, President of Russia, 24th March 2017 - <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54102> [accessed 11th March 2020]

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Putin's Asymmetrical Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security, Committee on Foreign Relations - United States Senate, 10th January 2018, p. 50

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Marlene Laruelle, *Dangerous Liaisons: Eurasianism, the European Far Right and Putin's Russia in Eurasianism and the European Far Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* ed. Marlene Laruelle (London: Lexington Books, 2015), p. 22

seems all the more pertinent as the party's continued popularity influences the French 'Overton window', with even Macron adopting much of the group's rhetoric.¹⁷

A new ancien régime? – Gaullism and French identity

In order to understand the party's underlying outlook, it is first useful to discuss the geopolitical 'Self' from which its potential narrative flows.¹⁸ As aforementioned, radical right parties and the RN in particular have been directly influenced by 'New Right' philosophy, whose focus on ontological "organicism" has demonised the 'artificial' influences of 'ideology'.¹⁹ This has naturally affected the party's self-understanding, which rejects what De Benoist describes as the modern "ideology of sameness".²⁰ As such, the RN has forged a narrative 'Self' directly tied to the peculiarities of 'natural' French tradition, with a "glorious history of kings and royalty" deemed incompatible with potential 'counterstories' praising the 1789 Revolution's liberal, universalist legacy.²¹ The party's overall discourse corresponds with this premise, with circular 'nonstories' praising tradition bolstered by a large number of accounts detailing France's historical "politics of grandeur".²² This is exemplified by Le Pen's quotation of General De Gaulle in 2018, who described the country's history as a constant battle to protect

Old France, overwhelmed by history, bruised by wars and revolutions,
coming and going relentlessly from grandeur to decline but straightened
from century to century by the genius of renewal.²³

¹⁷ Liana Fix, *To Macron or not to Macron?*, New Eastern Europe, No. 1-2 (2020), pp. 31-33
Lorenzo Vidino, *Emmanuel Macron's War on Islamism Is Europe's Future*, Foreign Policy, 24th February 2020 - <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/02/24/emmanuel-macrons-war-on-islamism-is-europes-future/> [accessed 17th March 2020]

¹⁸ Molly Patterson & Kristen Renwick Monroe, *Narrative in Political Science*, Annual Review of Political Science, Vol. 1 (1998), p. 316

¹⁹ Jean-Yves Camus, *Le Front National et la Nouvelle Droite*, pp. 97-98

Peter Davies, *The National Front in France: Ideology, Discourse and Power* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 34-35

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Edward A. Kolodziej, *French International Policy under De Gaulle and Pompidou: The Politics of Grandeur* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 618

²³ *Centenaire de la victoire de la 1ère guerre mondiale à Verdun: discours de Marine Le Pen* [Centenary of the victory of the 1st World War in Verdun: speech by Marine Le Pen], Rassemblement National, 10th November 2018 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/videos/centenaire-de-la-victoire-de-la-1ere-guerre-mondiale-a-verdun-discours-de-marine-le-pen/> [accessed 20th March 2020]

"vieille France, accablée d'histoire, meurtrie de guerres et de révolutions, allant et venant sans relâche de la grandeur au déclin, mais redressée de siècle en siècle par le génie du nouveau."

Ultimately, this story's rhetorical deployment represents more than simple opportunism, with the military leader's ideals of "national independence" playing a key role in the party's geopolitical self-understanding.²⁴ Certainly, Thillaye and Chwalisz have argued that the group actively promotes "a Gaullist vision of the world".²⁵ This is reflected in the corpus' themes, with the 'nation-protagonist' viewed as "a power of stability and balance", able to make decisions in global affairs as a wholly sovereign actor.²⁶ Such a position is subsequently said to be the fullest expression of Paris' national circumstances, with this unity of nation and state responsible for great triumphs throughout "a thousand years of history in France".²⁷

Russia, France and "a Europe whole and free"²⁸

Interestingly enough, party publications have often emphasised the presence of "a very old relationship" with Russia within this romantic vision of French history.²⁹ These links take place within a wholly 'organic' understanding of 'Europe', which effectively acts as a 'stage' for the party's Russia narrative. For instance, the party echoes De Gaulle's appeal to a Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals", in which countries cooperate according to national need "from Brest to Vladivostok".³⁰ This natural, continental 'forum' is held as directly

²⁴ Alfred Grosser, *General De Gaulle and the Foreign Policy of the Fifth Republic*, International Affairs, Vol. 39, No. 2 (1963), p. 212

²⁵ Renaud Thillaye & Claudia Chwalisz, *The Front National*, p. 105

²⁶ *144 Engagements Présidentiels* [144 Presidential Commitments], Rassemblement National (2017), p. 19 "Engager la France au service d'un monde multipolaire fondé sur l'égalité en droit des nations, leur concertation permanente et le respect de leur indépendance. Fonder la politique internationale sur le principe de réalisme et rendre à la France son rôle de puissance de stabilité et d'équilibre."

²⁷ *60 ans de la Constitution: sauver les nations pour sauver l'Europe* [60 years of the Constitution: save the nations in order to save Europe], Rassemblement National, 4th October 2018 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/tribunes-libres/60-ans-de-la-constitution-sauver-les-nations-pour-sauver-leurope/> [accessed 21st March 2020]

"De Gaulle et les rédacteurs de notre Constitution ont sacralisé ainsi un principe autant protecteur que fondateur, forgé par mille ans d'histoire de France."

²⁸ *A Europe Whole and Free - Remarks to the Citizens in Mainz. President George Bush. Rheingoldhalle. Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany, May 31, 1989.*, U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany, 31st May 1989 - <https://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/ga6-890531.htm> [accessed 15th July 2020]

²⁹ *Embargo sur les navires Mistral, le RBM dit non!* [Embargo on the Mistral ships, the RBM says no!], Rassemblement National, 17th September 2015 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/embargo-sur-les-navires-mistral-le-rbm-dit-non/> [accessed 28th March 2020]

Andrew Marr BBC Interview - Marine Le Pen, BBC News, 13th November 2016 - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/000000.pdf> [accessed 28th March 2020]

³⁰ Nicolas Lebourg, *The French Far Right in Russia's Orbit*, Carnegie Council (2018), pp. 28-29
Pierre Joannon, *The Cathedral and the Dacha: De Gaulle's and Gorbachev's Visions of a Broader Europe*, Irish Studies in International Affairs, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1991), p. 51

responsible for a Franco-Russian “relationship based on friendship”, with both countries viewed as cooperating as sovereign nations against mutual threats throughout the centuries.³¹ The RN subsequently subjects this relationship to temporal “periodization” during decisive moments in the national story.³² This is especially true of the two world wars, with Le Pen’s 2018 speech on the anniversary of the 1916 Battle of Verdun praising Russia as a “faithful, unalterable ally of France who paid with the price of blood and 70 years of internal oppression for the freedom of Europe”.³³ This acknowledgement of Soviet-era “oppression” also suggests that this overarching metanarrative transcends ideology. For example, the party leader last year lamented the absence of “Russia, which paid a heavy price”, during commemorations of the Normandy Landings.³⁴ Moscow itself, therefore, is also understood in line with ‘objective’ geopolitical realities similar to Eurasianism, with the Russian nation remaining a reliable ally within a historical “Europe of Nations”.³⁵ Of course, despite the seeming ‘certainty’ of grand geopolitics, this study’s focus on subjective narrative suggests that this “traditional Franco-Russian friendship” is likely a means of justifying more recent, material considerations.³⁶ In order for this flattering understanding of the Russian ‘Other’ to therefore exist, it is necessary for a “liminal crisis” to have appeared in RN discourse.³⁷

1er mai 2016: discours de Marine Le Pen [May 1, 2016: speech by Marine Le Pen], Rassemblement National, 3rd May 2016 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/discours/1er-mai-2016-discours-de-marine-le-pen/> [accessed 21st March 2020]

“Il s’agit donc de redonner en priorité à notre politique étrangère sa dimension universelle et globale, mais aussi d’inaugurer une vraie politique régionale et continentale en Europe, de Brest à Vladivostok, et de rebâtir une politique digne de ce nom avec le Proche, le Moyen-Orient et l’Afrique qui corresponde à des solidarités historiques anciennes et non seulement à des mécanismes technocratiques ou uniquement « économiques ».”

³¹ Andrew Marr BBC Interview - Marine Le Pen

³² Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics: A Conceptual Matrix*, Progress in Human Geography, Vol. 37, No. 5 (2012), p. 676

³³ *D-Day: Le Pen juge "regrettable" que la Russie ne soit pas associée aux commémorations* [D-Day: Le Pen deems it "regrettable" that Russia is not associated with commemorations], L’Express, 6th June 2019 - https://www.lexpress.fr/actualites/1/politique/d-day-le-pen-juge-regrettable-que-la-russie-ne-soit-pas-associee-aux-commemorations_2082527.html [accessed 21st March 2020]

Centenaire de la victoire de la 1ère guerre mondiale à Verdun

“Honneur aux héros russes et à ce grand pays, la Sainte et chère Russie fidèle alliée indéfectible de la France qui paya avec le prix du sang, 70 ans d’oppression intérieure cet engagement pour la liberté de l’Europe.”

³⁴ *D-Day: Le Pen juge "regrettable" que la Russie ne soit pas associée aux commémorations*

“Paris - Marine Le Pen a jugé jeudi "regrettable" que la Russie "ne soit pas associée" aux commémorations du 75e anniversaire du Débarquement en Normandie alors que le pays a "payé un lourd tribut".”

³⁵ Jean-Yves Camus, *A Long-Lasting Friendship: Alexander Dugin and the French Radical Right in Eurasianism and the European Far Right*, p. 82

³⁶ *Embargo sur les navires Mistral, le RBM dit non!*

“J’ai présenté et soutenu une motion de rejet préalable, afin de dénoncer un embargo inopportun et hostile à la traditionnelle amitié franco-russe.”

³⁷ Jean-Yves Camus & Nicolas Lebourg, *Far-Right Politics in Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), p. 22

This 'crisis' ultimately appears in the form of a "hawkish Euro-Atlanticist logic", which dominates the corpus' "problem statements".³⁹ Represented by the EU and NATO, these organisations' "Manichaeism" has imposed rigid, liberal understandings of 'good' and 'evil' within a thoroughly "postmodern" geopolitical framework.⁴⁰ This ideological 'distortion', therefore, is held responsible by the party for the suppression of the 'natural circumstances' historically enjoyed by Paris and Moscow. Indeed, in a 2016 interview Le Pen detailed the recent appearance of a "Brussels Wall", which has caused great issues for both the French protagonist and its Russian 'ally'.⁴¹ For example, the Gaullist 'Self' and its "non-aligned tradition" have been severely repressed by these circumstances, with a culture of Western "servility" now present in Paris.⁴² This sees French authorities accept normative rhetoric that simply justifies the "imperialism" of traditional rivals.⁴³ These 'antagonists' bear a striking similarity to those of the Kremlin, with America leading France to great "human and

³⁸ *Moscou: Marine Le Pen reçue par Alexei Pouchkov, chef de la commission des Affaires étrangères à la Douma* [Moscow: Marine Le Pen received by Alexei Pushkov, head of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the State Duma], Rassemblement National, 19th June 2013 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/annonces/moscou-marine-le-pen-recue-par-alexei-pouchkov-chef-de-la-commission-des-affaires-etrangees-a-la-douma/> [accessed 25th March 2020]

"Marine Le Pen a déclaré qu'elle aimerait "qu'on rééquilibre un peu les relations puisque aujourd'hui j'ai quand même le sentiment que l'Union européenne mène une sorte de Guerre froide à la Russie.""

³⁹ *Vote accession Monténégro à l'OTAN: renforcement d'une logique euro-atlantiste belliciste* [Montenegro's NATO accession vote: strengthening a hawkish Euro-Atlanticist logic], Rassemblement National, 2nd December 2016 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/vote-accession-montenegro-a-lotan-renforcement-dune-logique-euro-atlantiste-belliciste/> [accessed 21st March 2020]

⁴⁰ Ian Klinke, *Postmodern Geopolitics?: The European Union Eyes Russia*, Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 64, No. 5 (2012), pp. 929-930

Communiqué de Marine Le Pen sur la tragédie du vol Malaysia Airlines en Ukraine [Press release from Marine Le Pen on the tragedy of the Malaysia Airlines flight in Ukraine], Rassemblement National, 18th July 2014 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/communiqué-de-marine-le-pen-sur-la-tragedie-du-vol-malaysia-airlines-en-ukraine/> [accessed 21st March 2020]

"Face aux drames, qui suscitent l'émotion jusqu'à brouiller la raison, le Front National n'a de cesse d'appeler au discernement, comme il refuse le manichéisme et la manipulation des opinions publiques."

⁴¹ Andrew Marr *BBC Interview - Marine Le Pen*

⁴² *Morlaix: derrière l'embargo russe, des années de crise* [Morlaix: years of crisis behind the Russian embargo], Rassemblement National, 20th September 2014 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/morlaix-derriere-lembargo-russe-des-annees-de-crise/> [accessed 22nd March 2020]

Vote accession Monténégro à l'OTAN: renforcement d'une logique euro-atlantiste belliciste

"Le déploiement de soldats de l'OTAN, la multiplication de ses bases et le renforcement de son système anti-missile balistique entraîne l'Europe dans une logique de choc entre blocs allant à l'encontre de la tradition non-alignée de la diplomatie française."

Embargo sur les navires Mistral, le RBM dit non!

"J'ai voté contre la ratification d'un accord coûteux qui décrédibilise notre respect de la parole donnée, qui hypothéquera nos ventes futures de matériel de haute technologie et qui coûtera près de deux milliards d'euros au budget de la France; le tout pour marquer notre servilité vis-à-vis de l'OTAN."

⁴³ Ian Klinke, *Postmodern Geopolitics?*, p. 935

financial costs” during its ‘ideological’ mission in Afghanistan.⁴⁴ Simultaneously, Berlin’s presence at the heart of EU institutions has only encouraged a Franco-German “imbalance which history has taught us is malignant and even dangerous”.⁴⁵ These narrative ‘villains’ are collectively referred to in party communiqués with phrases such as “American Euro-globalism”, which appears to function as the RN’s greatest geopolitical ‘Other’.⁴⁶

Furthermore, Russia has also been affected by this liberal ‘counterstory’ that valorises the present over the past, with the country “cut off” from Europe behind this diplomatic “Wall”.⁴⁷ This continental division has subsequently exacerbated many shared issues, which interestingly possess a notably French bent. For instance, a small but notable number of stories have emphasised Moscow’s role in counter-terrorism, with a 2018 press release arguing that “We must stop seeing Russia as an adversary and renew dialogue with an indispensable ally in the war against terrorism and the common enemy of the Islamic State”.⁴⁸ This therefore endows the emerging geopolitical narrative with an especially existential nature, with the party viewing the nation’s very livelihood as in danger. However, this stark rhetoric is perhaps exemplified by discussions of Russian sanctions and their effect

⁴⁴ *Communiqué de Marine Le Pen sur la tragédie du vol Malaysia Airlines en Ukraine* [Conférence de Presse Internationale de Marine Le Pen en présence d’Aymeric Chauprade, géopoliticien] [International Press Conference of Marine Le Pen with Aymeric Chauprade, geopolitician], Rassemblement National, 22nd January 2014 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/conferences-de-presse/conference-de-presse-internationale-de-marine-le-pen-en-presence-daymeric-chauprade-geopoliticien/> [accessed 25th March 2020] “*La politique étrangère française actuelle est hélas fondée sur ce mensonge et c’est ce mensonge qui nous a conduit à accompagner les Américains dans la quasi-totalité de leurs guerres depuis l’écroulement de l’URSS, avec les coûts humain et financier que nous connaissons, en Afghanistan notamment.*”

⁴⁵ *1er mai 2019 à Metz: discours de Marine Le Pen* [1st May 2019 in Metz: speech by Marine Le Pen], Rassemblement National, 3rd May 2019 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/videos/1er-mai-2019-a-metz-discours-de-marine-le-pen/> [accessed 21st March 2020] “*Et dans ce mouvement de domination collective sur les peuples, les européistes sans repère n’ont cessé d’avaliser un déséquilibre entre la France et l’Allemagne, déséquilibre dont l’histoire nous a appris la malignité et même la dangerosité.*”

⁴⁶ *Conférence de Presse Internationale de Marine Le Pen en présence d’Aymeric Chauprade, géopoliticien* “*Nous refusons les impérialismes d’où qu’ils viennent, euro-mondialisme américain ou islamisme, comme nous refusons hier le communisme soviétique.*”

⁴⁷ Ian Klinke, *Postmodern Geopolitics?*, p. 929

Semaine de l’Ukraine au Parlement européen: un peu de culture pour beaucoup d’imposture [Ukraine Week in the European Parliament: a little ceremony hides great deception], Rassemblement National, 2nd March 2016 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/semaine-de-lukraine-au-parlement-europeen-un-peu-de-culture-pour-beaucoup-dimposture/> [accessed 3rd April 2020]

“*Après le marasme de l’année passée ayant conduit Bruxelles à se couper de la Russie, partenaire commercial et diplomatique stratégique – notamment dans le conflit syrien – on aurait pensé que l’UE s’assagirait et éviterait de nouvelles provocations à l’égard du géant russe.*”

⁴⁸ *Réélection de Vladimir Poutine* [Re-election of Vladimir Putin], Rassemblement National, 19th March 2018 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/reélection-de-vladimir-poutine/> [accessed 28th March 2020] “*Il faut cesser de voir la Russie comme un adversaire et renouer le dialogue avec un allié indispensable dans la guerre contre le terrorisme et l’ennemi commun de l’Etat islamique.*”

on France's powerful rural sector.⁴⁹ Said to be “sacrificing our agriculture and the national interest on the altar of Atlanticist interests”, these government-supported restrictions are ultimately viewed as holding the country's many farmers “hostage”.⁵⁰ This conflation of ‘the farmer’ with sovereignty, thereby presents a highly romantic image of Russia's importance in relation to the Gaullist ‘Self’. Though whilst radical right ideology is prone to such sentimentality, these stories’ focus on specifically French issues suggest that this rhetoric may, once again, legitimise more practical concerns. Of course, whilst scepticism of Western ‘postmodernity’ remains the preserve of a French opposition party, it forms an integral part of a powerful Russian state's foreign policy.⁵¹ This has seemingly led to a certain ‘messianism’ being attributed to the Kremlin within the corpus, with Cyrille Bret arguing that the RN views itself as the “national branch” of a shared geopolitical struggle centred on Moscow.⁵²

Russia as a modern-era “beacon of hope”⁵³

The movement's understanding of this contemporary ‘fight’ begins with various stories focused on Russia's style of governance. Embodying a thoroughly traditional, ‘national’ form of rule, the Putin administration is viewed as the victim of Western disinformation, which has labelled Moscow as “a kind of dictatorship”.⁵⁴ In contrast to this, Le Pen has praised the Kremlin's resistance to foreign pressure, stating during a 2013 visit to the State Duma that

⁴⁹ Rosemary Fennell, *The Common Agricultural Policy: Continuity and Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 14

⁵⁰ *Adoption de la résolution sur la levée des sanctions européennes contre la Russie : l'Exécutif socialiste contraint de renouer avec l'intérêt national* [Adoption of the resolution regarding the lifting of European sanctions against Russia: the Socialist Executive forced to return to the national interest], *Rassemblement National*, 28th April 2016 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/adoption-de-la-resolution-sur-la-levée-des-sanctions-europeennes-contre-la-russie-lexecutif-socialiste-contraint-de-renouer-avec-linteret-national/> [accessed 3rd April 2020]

“En soutenant les sanctions, le gouvernement socialiste sacrifie notre agriculture et l'intérêt national sur l'autel des intérêts atlantistes.”

“Nos agriculteurs se trouvent pris en otage par l'assujettissement de la France à la politique extérieure des Etats-Unis”

⁵¹ *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 1st December 2016, Section 2, Articles 4-5 - https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptlCk6BZ29/content/id/2542248 [accessed 27th March 2020]

⁵² Cyrille Bret, *France-Russia, a love-hate history*, *New Eastern Europe*, No. 1-2 (2020), pp. 28-30

⁵³ Anton Shekhovtsov, *Marine Le Pen Is No Patriot of France*, Anton Shekhovtsov's Blog, 21st April 2017 - <http://anton-shekhovtsov.blogspot.com/2017/04/marine-le-pen-is-no-patriot-of-france.html> [accessed 28th March 2020]

⁵⁴ *Réélection de Vladimir Poutine*

Moscou: Marine Le Pen reçue par Alexei Pouchkov, chef de la commission des Affaires étrangères à la Douma
“Elle a catégoriquement rejeté la désinformation véhiculée en France, comme quoi la Russie serait une sorte de dictature, un pays totalement fermé. Une diabolisation qui s'est accentuée avec l'arrivée au pouvoir à Moscou, derrière Vladimir V. Poutine, de dirigeants nouveaux, postcommunistes, et qui ont su relever leur pays tant politiquement, que diplomatiquement, économiquement, socialement et moralement.”

the Russian President and his inner circle had “raised their country politically, diplomatically, economically, socially and morally”.⁵⁵ This theme of revival is directly connected to Russia’s Putinist “model” of governance, with the party leader describing it as “one of reasoned protectionism, looking after the interests of his own country, defending his identity”.⁵⁶ Subsequently, the leader has helped “restore pride and contentment to a great nation that had been humiliated and persecuted for 70 years”, thereby placing ‘the nation’ at the state’s heart.⁵⁷ In relation to the RN’s own desires to “restore the State and give back to those who serve it”, this break from Western norms appears as an attractive ‘metanarrative’ for a nation rising “up off its knees”.⁵⁸ This description of Putin’s rule bears a striking resemblance to Roger Griffin’s understanding of “ethnocratic liberalism”, which is widely supported in radical right circles.⁵⁹ Advocating for the restriction of political participation to those belonging to ‘the nation’, the ideal views democracy as a mere tool for the protection and production of a strong ‘national will’.⁶⁰ This theoretical sleight of hand therefore allows the RN to praise the “democratic anchoring of Russia”, with Putin’s 2018 re-election viewed as a triumph of the “will of the Russian people”.⁶¹ It appears, then, that the party effectively views Moscow and its revival of modern-era values as an inspiring example of a nation returning to its “due course”, with Le Pen eager to “defend this model in my own country”.⁶²

Of course, party understandings of Russia’s internal ‘victory’ is of great consequence to its subsequent role on the global stage. Whilst France’s Gaullist ‘Self’ remains restrained by Western “legal imperialism”, the Kremlin has transformed its national ‘strength’ into an

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Andrew Marr BBC Interview - Marine Le Pen

⁵⁷ *Le Pen: I admire 'cool head' Putin's resistance to West's new Cold War*, Euronews, 1st December 2014 - <https://www.euronews.com/2014/12/01/le-pen-i-admire-cool-head-putin-s-resistance-to-west-s-new-cold-war> [accessed 26th March 2020]

⁵⁸ *Discours de Marine Le Pen dans l'Orne* [Speech by Marine Le Pen in Orne], Rassemblement National, 7th January 2018 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/discours/discours-de-marine-le-pen-dans-lorne/> [accessed 26th March 2020]

“*C'est restaurer l'Etat et redonner à ceux qui le servent les moyens de leurs missions*”

Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right*, p. 89

⁵⁹ Roger Griffin, *Interregnum or endgame? The radical right in the 'post-fascist' era*, *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2000), p. 173

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ *Réélection de Vladimir Poutine*

“*Ce large succès électoral confirme la stabilité et l'ancrage démocratique de la Russie, il témoigne de la volonté du peuple russe de poursuivre sur la voie des réformes engagées par le président Poutine qui a permis notamment depuis plusieurs années le retour de cette puissance incontournable sur la scène internationale.*”

⁶² Hakkı Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* (2020), p. 6

Andrew Marr BBC Interview - Marine Le Pen

equally assertive status abroad.⁶³ For example, the same RN publication that celebrated Putin's 2018 success makes a direct causal link between his "reforms" and "the return of this essential power [Russia] on the global stage".⁶⁴ This transformation mirrors the party's own temporal ambitions for Paris, with Le Pen last year stating that "Protecting our country is also leading it on the paths of greatness and power".⁶⁵ Though whilst both nations aspire to grandeur in line with a radical right "return" to a mythical past, the latter's description as "essential" hints at its particularly special status within the geopolitical narrative.⁶⁶ Certainly, this rhetoric alludes to Moscow's almost 'eternal' power akin to the narratives of Dugin, with Russia viewed as the vanguard of a classical sovereignty so treasured by the RN.⁶⁷ This is clear regarding various stories that detail the country's foreign engagements, with Le Pen stating that "Russian determination has helped much in the deliverance of Syria and, consequently, Iraq, two countries that are victims of Western irresponsibility".⁶⁸ This defence of traditional principles is also apparent in the Ukraine conflict. Supposedly "vassalized" by Western interests, Kiev is viewed as the spearhead of attempts to maintain the Kremlin's isolation according to Brzezinski's "The Grand Chessboard".⁶⁹ As such, seemingly 'aggressive' Russian actions are understood as protecting long-established state-centric norms, with Crimea's "return" defending the principle of "self-determination".⁷⁰ These

⁶³ *1er mai 2019 à Metz: discours de Marine Le Pen*

"Ils ont ignoré l'idée même de puissance et ont abdicé devant l'impérialisme juridique des Etats-Unis qui, avec l'extraterritorialité de son droit, s'empare de nos fleurons industriels comme Alstom ou vassalise nos Etats et nos entreprises pour les soumettre aux injonctions de la politique américaine"

⁶⁴ *Réélection de Vladimir Poutine*

"Ce large succès électoral confirme la stabilité et l'ancrage démocratique de la Russie, il témoigne de la volonté du peuple russe de poursuivre sur la voie des réformes engagées par le président Poutine qui a permis notamment depuis plusieurs années le retour de cette puissance incontournable sur la scène internationale."

⁶⁵ *Discours de Marine Le Pen dans l'Orne*

"Protéger notre pays c'est aussi le conduire sur les chemins de la grandeur et de la puissance."

⁶⁶ Matt Golder, *Far Right Parties in Europe*, Annual Review of Political Science, Vol. 19 (2016), p. 481

⁶⁷ Paul F. Robinson, *Russia's Emergence as an International Conservative Power*, Russia in Global Affairs, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2020), pp. 28-31

Julia Himmrich, *The Foreign Policy of the Radical Right: Targeting the EU's Multilateralism*, Dahrendorf Forum, Working Paper No. 14 (2019), pp. 6-7

⁶⁸ *Discours de Marine Le Pen dans l'Orne*

"La détermination russe a beaucoup aidé à la délivrance de la Syrie et, par voie de conséquence, de l'Irak, ces deux pays martyres de l'irresponsabilité des pays occidentaux."

⁶⁹ *L'Ukraine de l'Ouest désormais «ouvertement» vassalisée par Washington* [Western Ukraine now "openly" vassalized by Washington], Rassemblement National, 5th December 2014 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/lukraine-de-louest-desormais-ouvertement-vassalisee-par-washington/> [accessed 27th March 2020]

⁷⁰ *Le Parlement européen attaque la Russie!* [The European Parliament attacks Russia!], Rassemblement National, 13th December 2018 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/le-parlement-europeen-attaque-la-russie/> [accessed 3rd April 2020]

"Sur le fond, elle est d'ailleurs injustifiée car la Crimée est historiquement un territoire russe, donné arbitrairement par Khrouchtchev à l'Ukraine du temps de l'URSS, et dont la population a librement décidé par

activities solidify Moscow's role as a unique pole of "state conservatism" within the narrative, with its 'natural' power allowing it to engage in a struggle at a level that currently evades the movement.⁷¹

Simultaneously, Russia's "spatiotemporal" defence of traditional sovereignty is often linked in the corpus to its promotion of equally conservative social values.⁷² Of course, whilst the RN now promotes a more inclusive image, the party's Gaullist 'Self' still encourages a strong attachment to tradition. This is exemplified by the party's emotional response to the 2019 Notre Dame fire, which is described as "a symbol of our Christian civilization around the world since the 12th century".⁷³ Though whilst the party attempts to defend France from "ultra-liberalism", it is once again the Kremlin, a continental 'redoubt' free from the EU and NATO, that appears as an essential partner in this traditionalist 'struggle'.⁷⁴ Indeed, when asked about Putin in a 2014 interview, Le Pen stated that "He is aware that we defend common values. These are the ideals of 'European civilization'. These values are those of the 'Christian heritage' of European civilization..."⁷⁵ This synthesis of esotericism with geopolitical conflict throughout the party's stories is perhaps the best example of Eurasianism's influence on party narrative. Certainly, whilst the RN rejects Dugin's more extreme ideas, his 'story' of a Russian traditionalism struggling against Western universalism appears to summarise much of the party's outlook.⁷⁶ Consequently, the group views Russia's

référendum son retour au sein de sa mère patrie. Le droit des peuples à disposer d'eux-mêmes est un principe fondamental dont le respect devrait l'emporter sur toute autre considération."

⁷¹ Paul F. Robinson, *Russia's Emergence as an International Conservative Power*, pp. 28-31

⁷² Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics*, p. 680

⁷³ *Incendie de Notre-Dame de Paris : la France en état de choc* [Fire at Notre Dame in Paris: France is in a state of shock], Rassemblement National, 16th April 2019 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/incendie-de-notre-dame-de-paris-la-france-en-etat-de-choc/> [accessed 3rd April 2020]

"Notre-Dame est à la fois un symbole de notre civilisation chrétienne à travers le monde depuis le XII^e siècle, mais aussi un joyau de l'architecture gothique avec ses arcs-boutants si caractéristiques qui ont permis de percer de vitraux ses murs et d'y faire pénétrer la lumière."

⁷⁴ *Le développement chinois ne doit pas nous laisser indifférents* [We should not be indifferent to Chinese development], Rassemblement National, 25th October 2017 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/le-developpement-chinois-ne-doit-pas-nous-laisser-indifferents/> [accessed 4th April 2020]

"La politique chinoise compile un certain nombre d'atouts qui doivent nous faire réagir tant ils sont aux antipodes de l'ultralibéralisme et du mondialisme béat qu'impose l'Union européenne à la France."

⁷⁵ *Marine Le Pen fait l'éloge de Vladimir Poutine «le patriote»* [Marine Le Pen praises Vladimir Putin "the patriot"], Le Figaro, 18th May 2014 - <https://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/le-scan/citations/2014/05/18/25002-20140518ARTFIG00118-marine-le-pen-fait-l-elog-de-vladimir-poutine-le-patriote.php> [accessed 4th April 2020]

"Monsieur Poutine est un patriote. Il est attaché à la souveraineté de son peuple. Il a conscience que nous défendons des valeurs communes. Ce sont les valeurs de la civilisation européenne. Ces valeurs sont celles de l'«héritage chrétien» de la civilisation européenne, «car nous ne contestons pas l'héritage chrétien de la civilisation européenne»."

⁷⁶ Alexander Dugin, *Osnovy Geopolitiki: Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rossii* [The Foundations of Geopolitics: The Geopolitical Future of Russia] (Moscow: Arctogaia, 1997), pp. 11-14

foreign politico-military actions as integrally tied to the protection of time-honoured European traditions. For instance, a delegation of party members to the Kremlin last year personally thanked Putin “for what the Russian army is doing in the interests of the Eastern Christians”.⁷⁷ It appears, then, that the RN views its shared struggle with Russia as one that is simultaneously spiritual and material, with Moscow endowed with a natural conservative ‘mission’. These party ideals closely resemble the ‘geopolitical stories’ proposed by Russian philosopher Alexander Panarin, who saw the country as destined to help preserve “cultural-civilizational diversity”.⁷⁸

Russia’s role as a defender of global autonomy is also made clear during the party’s brief discussions regarding the geopolitical future. For instance, the Kremlin’s rigid anti-Westernism is viewed as playing a critical role in hastening the emergence of a “multi-polar world”.⁷⁹ This often results in party literature tying Russia closely to other “rising powers” such as China, who are seen as the pillars of a new system in which “every country has the right to defend its own interests”.⁸⁰ Such developments would prove to be of great consequence for the party and Russia’s ‘organic’ European forum, with Le Pen directly linking the country’s continued defiance of the EU and NATO to the eventual fall of the “Brussels Wall”.⁸¹ Simultaneously, the rejection of these organisations’ ‘postmodern’ values would see the area’s diplomacy return to its inherent ontology as an ill-defined “Europe of Nations”, which had previously brought about a Franco-Russian ‘Golden Age’.⁸² Of course, these developments would allow the nation-protagonist to overcome “present inadequacies” and express its Gaullist ‘Self’, with France reclaiming its geopolitical ‘grandeur’ as a sovereign great power.⁸³ Whilst the party places Russia at the heart of these developments,

⁷⁷ *Meeting with members of the public from the French Republic*, President of Russia, 18th March 2019 - <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60094> [accessed 3rd April 2020]

Le Pen Meets With Putin Amid Fears of Russian Interference in French Vote, Fortune, 24th March 2017 - <https://fortune.com/2017/03/24/putin-french-election-marine-le-pen-russia/> [accessed 3rd April 2020]

⁷⁸ Paul F. Robinson, *Russia’s Emergence as an International Conservative Power*, p. 22

⁷⁹ *Andrew Marr BBC Interview - Marine Le Pen*

Conférence de Presse Internationale de Marine Le Pen en présence d’Aymeric Chauprade, géopoliticien
Vote accession Monténégro à l’OTAN: renforcement d’une logique euro-atlantiste belliciste

⁸⁰ *Andrew Marr BBC Interview - Marine Le Pen*

Conférence de Presse Internationale de Marine Le Pen en présence d’Aymeric Chauprade, géopoliticien
L’Ukraine de l’Ouest désormais «ouvertement» vassalisée par Washington

Marianne Riddervold & Guri Rosen, *Unified in response to rising powers? China, Russia and EU-US relations*, Journal of European Integration, Vol. 40, Issue 5 (2018), p. 555

⁸¹ *Andrew Marr BBC Interview - Marine Le Pen*

⁸² *1er mai 2019 à Metz: discours de Marine Le Pen*

Andrew Marr BBC Interview - Marine Le Pen

⁸³ *Ibid.*

however, it is important to note that the RN does not envisage a future relationship with Moscow beyond that of two friendly sovereign states. This important ‘counterstory’ provides nuance to the overall metanarrative and reflects the peculiar phenomenon of ‘cooperative nationalism’ found in radical right thought, with Russia’s actions ultimately responsible for helping France rediscover a policy of “balance”.⁸⁴

Conclusion

In conclusion, it appears that rather than simply being described as a fellow anti-Western sceptic, the Kremlin and its role in the world has been the subject of great attention within RN literature. This vivid understanding of Moscow is the product of the party’s French ‘Self’, whose fixation on restoring ‘unchanging’ ideals of Gaullist grandeur naturally lends itself to narrative. These ideas are transformed into a story as the party describes France and its fortunes, with Russia remaining a close ally throughout these experiences. Certainly, the party places the state at the forefront of Paris’ historical diplomacy, as both countries are said to cooperate as sovereign partners within their “Common European Home”.⁸⁵ A narrative “crisis”, however, later emerges to divide the partners. This takes the form of NATO and the EU, whose imposition of a diffuse universalism artificially divides the ‘objective’ continental forum enjoyed by both states. Of course, given France’s current pro-Westernism, it may be questioned as to what extent ideology and circumstance have led to such complementary understandings of Russia. Indeed, the country’s ‘independence’ sees it endowed with a unique spatiotemporal mission to restore past norms, as the RN is unable to offer a similar level of resistance. This ‘struggle’ subsequently takes on both earthly and mystical properties, with Russia fighting for a ‘natural’ Europe in which France can restore its traditional peculiarities. Whilst this narrative relies on national quirks, its transformation of a rhetorical ‘Golden Age’ into the national ‘Self’ raises questions as to its similarities with other parties. Further chapters, therefore, may reveal a “schematic narrative template” regarding Russia, in which these national ‘champions’ are ultimately bound by the confines of radical right thought.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ *Adoption de la résolution sur la levée des sanctions européennes contre la Russie: l’Exécutif socialiste contraint de renouer avec l’intérêt national*

“L’adoption de cette résolution est l’occasion de renouer avec la politique de l’équilibre qui a fait de la France un Etat renommé et respecté sur la scène internationale.”

⁸⁵ Pierre Joannon, *The Cathedral and the Dacha*, p. 51

⁸⁶ James V. Wertsch, *Voice of Collective Remembering* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 60-62

A new era of ‘reinsurance’? – The Alternative for Germany looks toward Moscow

Another party which exemplifies this radical right fascination with Russia and its geopolitical role is the ‘Alternative for Germany’ (AfD). Created in 2013 by dissatisfied members of the German elite, the group is unique amongst the parties present in this study due to its relatively moderate roots.¹ Certainly, the movement was founded in opposition to Berlin’s bailouts during the European economic downturn, with its anti-Euro message endowing the group with the image of a “professor’s party”.² This led to the group narrowly failing to enter the Bundestag in the year of its founding.³ Nevertheless, party desires for a stronger national voice would draw in various demographics, with infighting quickly becoming the norm.⁴ For example, Bernd Lucke, the party’s original leader, was deposed by a growing “national-conservative” faction in the midst of the 2015 migrant crisis, which was described by one leading member as “a gift to the party”.⁵ This saw new head Frauke Petry orient the party more towards identity issues, with a ban relaxed on cooperation with anti-migration protest movement Pegida.⁶ Such actions ultimately brought the party much-sought after political representation in many “Länder” elections.⁷ Ironically, however, this rightward turn would soon outpace Petry, whose desire to market the party as a potential coalition partner to Merkel’s CDU would provoke scepticism among members.⁸

¹ Kai Arzheimer & Carl C. Berning, *How the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and their voters veered to the radical right, 2013–2017*, *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 60 (2019), p. 1

² Philipp Adorf, *A New Blue-Collar Force: The Alternative for Germany and the Working Class*, *German Politics and Society*, Vol. 36, Issue 4 (2018), p. 36

³ Ibid.

⁴ Kai Arzheimer, “Don’t Mention the War!”: *How Populist Right-Wing Radicalism Became (Almost) Normal in Germany*, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 57 (2019), pp. 92-94

Germany’s AfD considers party split amid controversy over radical wing, Deutsche Welle, 2nd April 2020 - <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-afd-considers-party-split-amid-controversy-over-radical-wing/a-52999297> [accessed 5th April 2020]

⁵ Kai Arzheimer & Carl C. Berning, *How the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and their voters veered to the radical right*, p. 1

⁶ Karsten Grabow, *PEGIDA and the Alternative für Deutschland: two sides of the same coin?*, *European View*, Vol. 15 (2016), pp. 173-174

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Kai Arzheimer & Carl C. Berning, *How the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and their voters veered to the radical right*, p. 3

This subsequently brought about the party's consolidation as a traditional radical right party in 2017 under the now former leadership of Alexander Gauland and Alice Weidel.⁹ Rather than disrupt the party's federal election campaign the same year, this shift to an even more abrasive populism would quickly find widespread support, especially in the relatively impoverished former East.¹⁰ This resulted in the party not only becoming the official opposition but also the most successful nationalist party in post-war history.¹¹ The group's rise has naturally provoked existential questions regarding modern Germany's relationship with its troubled past or 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung', with the party eager to re-assess contemporary orthodoxies.¹² This has naturally impacted party thoughts on a resurgent Russia. For example, February 2017 saw Petry meet with State Duma Chairman Vyacheslav Volodin in order to discuss potential cooperation.¹³ Actions such as this have also led to allegations that Kremlin funding may have assisted the party's impressive electoral performance the same year.¹⁴ Despite this, it is perhaps the AfD's strong connection with Russian-Germans that presents its most enduring link with the country. Numbering just under eight million citizens, some community members have actively sought to act as a "unifying link" between the two nations and their politics.¹⁵ These actions have intimately influenced overall party narratives regarding Moscow's geopolitical status, with the group's thoughts on the Kremlin 'Other' challenging consensus at the very heart of the European Union.

"Don't Mention the War!" – In search of a new German assertiveness¹⁶

⁹ Michael A. Hansen & Jonathan Olsen, *Flesh of the Same Flesh: A Study of Voters for the Alternative for Germany (AfD) in the 2017 Federal Election*, German Politics, Vol. 28 (2019), p. 3

¹⁰ Constanze Stelzenmüller, *The AfD wolf is at the door in east Germany*, Brookings Institute, 9th September 2019 - <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/09/09/the-afd-wolf-is-at-the-door-in-east-germany/> [accessed 7th April 2020]

¹¹ Carl C. Berning, *Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) – Germany's New Radical Right-wing Populist Party*, IFO DICE Report, Vol. 15 (2017), p. 19

¹² Julian Göppfardth, *Germany's New Ultranationalist Intelligentsia*, Foreign Policy, 24th September 2019 - <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/09/24/germanys-new-neo-nazi-intelligentsia/> [accessed 7th April 2020]

¹³ *Vjacheslav Volodin vstretilsja s delegaciej političeskoj partii «Alternativa dlja Germanii» (FRG) vo glave s liderom partii Frauke Petri* [Vyacheslav Volodin met with a delegation of the Alternative for Germany political party (FRG) led by party leader Frauke Petry], State Duma, 20th February 2017 - <http://duma.gov.ru/news/13216/> [accessed 7th April 2020]

¹⁴ *Putin's Asymmetrical Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security*, Committee on Foreign Relations - United States Senate, 10th January 2018, p. 128

¹⁵ *Rossijskie nemcy vidjat sebja obedinjajushhim zvenom mezhdru Germaniej i Rossiej* [Russian-Germans see themselves as a unifying link between Germany and Russia], Russlanddeutsche für die AfD [Russian-Germans for the AfD], 18th June 2018 - <https://bit.ly/3bZFkBM> [accessed 7th April 2020]

¹⁶ Kai Arzheimer, "Don't Mention the War!"

Of course, this seeming break with established Russia policy is the product of a long series of subjective considerations regarding Germany's geopolitical 'Self'. Overall, the AfD's renegotiation of the nation-protagonist's identity is perhaps the best example of a radical right party attempting to balance ideological logic with material issues of 'image'. This is due to the political tradition's desire to "return to a mythical and idealized version of the past where states were ethnically homogeneous".¹⁷ In relation to Germany, therefore, it could be assumed that this 'Golden Age' period was that spent under Nazi rule, which 'realised' the country's nationalist 'Sonderweg'.¹⁸ Despite figures such as Björn Höcke, the head of the group's radical "Flügel" faction, party heads continue to distance themselves from any potentially damaging association with neo-Nazism.¹⁹ This was made clear by Gauland in 2018, who stated that "Hitler and the Nazis are just bird shit in more than 1000 years of successful German history".²⁰ As such, it is clear that party stories discussing Germany's "glorious history" are deliberately detached from the fascist era's 'ideological aberrations', with this allowing the party to emphasise less controversial, yet similarly 'grand' parts of the national story.²¹ This is exemplified by the party subjectively "carving up time" to emphasise Bismarck era grandeur.²² Indeed, the AfD's former leader stated during a 2018 interview that many party members view "Bismarck Germany as a reference model".²³ Naturally, this outlook lends itself to geopolitics and party image, with the chancellor's "balance of power"

¹⁷ Matt Golder, *Far Right Parties in Europe*, Annual Review of Political Science, Vol. 19 (2016), p. 481

¹⁸ Jürgen Kocka, *History before Hitler: The Debate about the German Sonderweg*, Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1988), pp. 1-3

¹⁹ Kai Arzheimer, "Don't Mention the War", p. 93

Germany's AfD considers party split amid controversy over radical wing

²⁰ *AfD's Gauland plays down Nazi era as a 'bird shit' in German history*, Deutsche Welle, 2nd June 2018 - <https://www.dw.com/en/afds-gauland-plays-down-nazi-era-as-a-bird-shit-in-german-history/a-44055213> [accessed 8th April 2020]

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics: A Conceptual Matrix*, Progress in Human Geography, Vol. 37, No. 5 (2012), p. 676

Alexander Gauland: Ablehnung von 'Nord Stream 2': Grobes politisches Foul der Franzosen [Alexander Gauland: The refusal of 'Nord Stream 2' is a coarse political foul by the French], Alternative for Germany, 8th February 2019 - <https://www.afd.de/ablehnung-von-nord-stream-2-grobes-politisches-foul-der-franzosen/> [accessed 9th April 2020]

Gustav Gressel, *Bismarck and Germany's pro-Russia lobby*, European Council on Foreign Relations, 7th April 2015 - https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_note_from_berlin_bismarck_and_germanys_pro-russia_lobby311646 [accessed 9th April 2020]

Dr. Alexander Gauland im Gespräch mit Roger Köppel von der Weltwoche [Dr. Alexander Gauland in conversation with Roger Köppel from Weltwoche], Alternative for Germany, 30th July 2018 - <https://www.afd.de/alexander-gauland-im-interview-mit-der-weltwoche/> [accessed 8th April 2020]

²³ *Dr. Alexander Gauland im Gespräch mit Roger Köppel von der Weltwoche*
 "Manche in unserer Partei nehmen das Bismarck-Deutschland als Referenzmodell."

diplomacy seemingly justifying the pursuit of a ‘natural’ leadership position in Europe, by means that are acceptable in modern Germany.²⁴ For example, Gauland has stated that

In foreign policy Bismarck is quite inspiring. Do not offend, cleverly hold everyone together - that was his foreign policy after 1870. One must not follow it slavishly, but pursue an enlightened national interest, not "Germany, Germany over everything": that is worthy of imitation.²⁵

As a result, it appears that the AfD not only views this leading ‘arbiter’ role as the natural expression of Germany’s ‘Self’, but also the country’s traditional means of securing geopolitical grandeur.

Russia and Bismarckian “Realpolitik”²⁶

This self-conception leads to an understanding of the nation’s historical relations with Russia as intertwined with an ongoing struggle to maintain “peace between the powers”.²⁷ This is made clear by stories which emphasise Germany’s central position in a Europe “characterised by different national and regional traditions”, with the country subsequently required to maintain relations with various geopolitical neighbours.²⁸ For example, AfD spokesman Jörg Meuthen stated in 2018 that

Due to its geographic location and historical experience, Germany is well advised not to bind itself unilaterally. We should understand ourselves as partners of both the West and the East for many good reasons.²⁹

²⁴ Erich Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1964), pp. 58-66
René Albrecht-Carrié, *A diplomatic history of Europe since the Congress of Vienna* (New York: Harpercollins, 1958), pp. 163-165

²⁵ Dr. Alexander Gauland im Gespräch mit Roger Köppel von der Weltwoche
“In der Außenpolitik ist Bismarck durchaus inspirierend. Keinen vor den Kopf stoßen, klug alle zusammenhalten – das war seine Außenpolitik nach 1870. Man darf dem nicht sklavisch folgen, aber ein aufgeklärtes nationales Interesse, kein «Deutschland, Deutschland über alles»: Das ist nachahmenswert.”

²⁶ Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany: 1840-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 117-118

²⁷ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875 – 1914* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), p. 312

²⁸ *Manifesto for Germany: The Political Programme of the Alternative for Germany*, Alternative for Germany, 1st May 2016, p. 15

²⁹ Jörg Meuthen: *Dialog und Kooperation mit Russland statt Konfrontation und sinnlose Sanktionen* [Jörg Meuthen: Dialogue and cooperation with Russia instead of confrontation and senseless sanctions], Alternative for Germany, 20th July 2018 - <https://www.afd.de/joerg-meuthen-dialog-und-kooperation-mit-russland-statt-konfrontation-und-sinnlose-sanktionen/> [accessed 10th April 2020]

Within the corpus, these ‘historical experiences’ possess a particular focus on France and indeed Russia, with the latter regularly overturning a Paris-Moscow alliance so damaging to Germany. This is made clear by Gauland’s beliefs that

Prussia was saved in 1763 by a reversal of the alliance of Russia, and a second time in 1807 by the Treaty of Tilsit with Napoleon. The Wars of Liberation (1815) would not have been possible without Russia and unification by Bismarck is also the fruit of a reversal of alliance with Russia, letting Austria support Prussia.³⁰

This convenient reading of history therefore allows the party to conceptualise Moscow as a natural ally, mirroring German geopolitician Karl Haushofer’s belief that Berlin-Moscow forms an organic continental axis.³¹ These ‘traditional’ bonds are further strengthened by discussions of Bismarck’s 1887 bilateral “reinsurance policy”, which ensured non-interference should one side go to war, as well as the belief that “Germany and Russia have had to endure totalitarianism” during the 20th century.³² This repeated appeal to ‘objective’ geopolitics over ideological ‘perversions’ thereby allows the AfD to obscure potentially uncomfortable discussions of the world wars. It appears, therefore, that this geopolitical ‘narrative device’ has once again thrust history into the service of the present, with the radical right party’s fascination with Russia intertwined with a theoretical distaste for contemporary politics.

“Deutschland tut allein schon aufgrund seiner geographischen Lage und seiner historischen Erfahrung gut daran, sich nicht einseitig zu binden. Wir sollten uns aus vielen guten Gründen als Partner sowohl des Westens als auch des Ostens verstehen.”

³⁰ Alexander Gauland: “We refuse to continue the federalisation of Europe”, Visegrad Post, 7th July 2017 - <https://visegradpost.com/en/2017/07/07/alexander-gauland-we-refuse-to-continue-the-federalisation-of-europe/> [accessed 14th April 2020]

³¹ Karl Haushofer, *Geopolitik der Pan-Ideen* [The Geopolitics of Pan-Ideas] (Berlin: Zentral, 1931)

³² Gustav Gressel, *Bismarck and Germany’s pro-Russia lobby*
Secret Reinsurance Treaty with Russia (June 18, 1887), German History in Documents and Images, 18th June 1887 - http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1862 [accessed 12th April 2020]

Alexander Gauland: *Ablehnung von ‘Nord Stream 2’: Grobes politisches Foul der Franzosen*
“Das Nord Stream 2-Projekt ist eine gute Gelegenheit, die deutsche Außenpolitik breiter aufzustellen und im Sinne der Rückversicherungspolitik Bismarcks die Verbindung zu Russland zu vertiefen.”

Zum Gedenktag der Russlanddeutschen [For the memorial day of the Russian Germans], AfD Kompakt, 25th August 2018 - <https://afdKompakt.de/2018/08/25/zum-gedenktag-der-russlanddeutschen/> [accessed 11th April 2020]

“Deutschland wie Russland haben Totalitarismus durchleiden müssen.”

Certainly, the party offers a detailed account of the “crisis-driven present” now facing Germany, as well as its subsequent impact on its ‘traditional’ Russian ally.³⁴ Much like the Rassemblement National, these issues are said to originate in organisations such as the European Union. In the AfD’s case, however, criticism of Brussels appears to be nuanced in line with Germany’s unique history and leadership in the body. For instance, whilst the organisation’s past existence as an “economic union based on shared interests, and consisting of sovereign, but loosely connected nation states”, is deemed compatible with a ‘natural’ Europe, the EU’s recent “centralist aspirations” have ultimately provoked narrative ‘conflict’.³⁵ These “post-sovereign” desires are viewed as inseparable from the imposition of liberal universalism, with Gauland stating that the EU has now become a “replacement fatherland”.³⁶ This has resulted in demands that “the great European idea must not be buried by the megalomania of Brussels Eurocrats”, who have subsequently ‘distorted’ Europe and with it Germany’s ability to truly act as continental ‘arbiter’.³⁷ Furthermore, ‘ideological’ figures such as Angela Merkel have allegedly forced Germany into a “one-sided strategic dependency” on Western ‘antagonists’ such as France and America.³⁸ This aversion to

³³ *Europatag – oder wie blinde Ideologie Europa spaltet* [Europe Day - or how blind ideology divides Europe], Alternative for Germany, 9th May 2018 - <https://afdkompakt.de/2018/05/09/europatag-oder-wie-blinde-ideologie-europa-spaltet/> [accessed 15th April 2020]

“Die AfD steht nämlich für ein vernünftiges Europa, nicht für ein Europa falscher Ideologie.”

³⁴ Hakkı Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power (2020), p. 14

³⁵ *Manifesto for Germany*

Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik – Keine EU-Armee – Souveränität der Vaterländer erhalten [Foreign and Security Policy – No EU Army – Preserve the sovereignty of the fatherland], Alternative for Germany - <https://www.afd.de/aussen-sicherheitspolitik-aussenhandel-entwicklungshilfe/> [accessed 13th April 2020]

“Wir stehen für ein Europa der Vaterländer und lehnen zentralistische Bestrebungen der EU entschieden ab.”

³⁶ Ian Klink, *Postmodern Geopolitics?: The European Union Eyes Russia*, Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 64, No. 5 (2012), p. 934

Alexander Gauland im Sommerinterview mit Roger Köppel (Weltwoche) [Alexander Gauland’s summer interview with Roger Köppel (Weltwoche)], AfD Kompakt, 15th August 2018 -

<https://afdkompakt.de/2018/08/15/alexander-gauland-im-sommerinterview-mit-roger-koepfel-weltwoche/> [accessed 13th April 2020]

“In Deutschland prallen heute, hoch interessant, zwei Identitäten aufeinander: Nach dem Krieg war Europa für die Deutschen der Vaterlandsersatz, die sichere politische Rückfallposition, im Zweifel für Europa.”

³⁷ *Keine EU-Erweiterung am Westbalkan* [No EU enlargement in the Western Balkans], AfD Kompakt, 27th April 2018 - <https://afdkompakt.de/2018/04/27/keine-eu-erweiterung-am-westbalkan/> [accessed 13th April 2020]

“Die großartige europäische Idee darf nicht durch den Größenwahn Brüsseler Eurokraten zu Grabe getragen werden.”

³⁸ *Jörg Meuthen: Russland-Sanktionen sind wirtschaftliches Eigentor für Deutschland* [Jörg Meuthen: Russia sanctions are an economic own goal for Germany], Alternative for Germany, 14th December 2017 -

<https://www.afd.de/joerg-meuthen-russland-sanktionen-sind-wirtschaftliches-eigentor-fuer-deutschland/> [accessed 13th April 2020]

Alexander Gauland: Ablehnung von ‘Nord Stream 2’: Grobes politisches Foul der Franzosen

Washington is made particularly clear during discussions of NATO General Breedlove, whose claims that “Russia and Syria would use the refugees as a 'weapon' against the West to destabilize Europe” are dismissed as a cover for America’s own culpability in a crisis deeply damaging for Germany.³⁹ Such developments only exemplify this “critical juncture” now facing a supposedly traditional Russo-German partnership, with the Kremlin now experiencing geopolitical alienation.⁴⁰

Indeed, the Russian ‘Other’ has been directly affected by this ‘postmodern’ challenge to “the old rules of Russian-Prussian politics, namely good relations with Russia as a condition for good coexistence in Europe”.⁴¹ Many party stories directly blame this exclusion on Berlin, whose traditional power derived from ‘balance’ has been misused now that “blind ideology divides Europe”.⁴² Certainly, one 2016 article regarding NATO-Bundeswehr provocation draws an interesting comparison between modern ‘ideological’ compulsions and those of the Nazi era, stating, “Tanks in the Baltics? That went wrong once before!”⁴³ Such beliefs therefore exemplify the shared fortunes of the German ‘Self’ and its Russian partner within party stories, with Gauland reiterating that “good relations with Russia are the condition of a strong and secure Germany”.⁴⁴ In keeping with this logic, the country’s support of “nonsensical Russia sanctions” has also proven to be deeply damaging to bilateral ties.⁴⁵ These “common problems” appear to have disproportionately affected Germany, with

“Deutschland ist als Nato-Mitglied aus guten Gründen ein enger Verbündeter der USA, aber wir dürfen nicht den Fehler machen, uns in eine einseitige strategische Abhängigkeit zu begeben.”

³⁹ Pazderski: *NATO-Russland-Rat wiederbeleben* [Pazderski: Reviving the NATO-Russia Council], Alternative for Germany - <https://www.afd.de/pazderski-nato-russland-rat-wiederbeleben/> [accessed 13th April 2020]

“Zu der Aussage des US-amerikanischen NATO-Oberbefehlshabers Europa, General Breedlove, vor dem Ausschuss für Streitkräfte des Repräsentantenhauses, dass die USA bereit seien „gegen Russland in Europa zu kämpfen und es zu besiegen“, und zu seiner Mutmaßung, dass Russland und Syrien die Flüchtlinge als ‚Waffe‘ gegen den Westen einsetzen würden, um Europa zu destabilisieren, erklärt das Bundesvorstandsmitglied Georg Pazderski.”

⁴⁰ Hakkı Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, p. 6

⁴¹ Alexander Gauland: *“We refuse to continue the federalisation of Europe”*

⁴² *Europatag – oder wie blinde Ideologie Europa spaltet*

⁴³ *Keine Panzer ins Baltikum!* [No tanks in the Baltics!], AfD Kompakt, 28th October 2016 -

<https://afdkompakt.de/2016/10/28/keine-panzer-ins-baltikum-das-ging-schon-einmal-schief/> [accessed 14th April 2020]

“Panzer ins Baltikum? Das ging schon einmal schief!”

⁴⁴ Alexander Gauland: *“We refuse to continue the federalisation of Europe”*

⁴⁵ *Mittelständische Wirtschaft bestätigt AfD-Wirtschaftskompetenz!* [Medium-sized business confirms AfD economic competence!], AfD Kompakt, 11th December 2017 -

<https://afdkompakt.de/2017/12/11/mittelstaendische-wirtschaft-bestaetigt-afd-wirtschaftskompetenz/> [accessed 18th April 2020]

“Wir haben die Aufhebung der unsinnigen Russland-Sanktionen beantragt und uns für Bürokratieabbau eingesetzt.”

sanctions greatly impacting the nation-protagonist's famed industrial sector.⁴⁶ This issue is made clear by a 2017 party press release, which stated that

If we Germans are not careful, our foreign policy, but especially our economic policy, will suffer lasting damage and many jobs will be lost or moved abroad. Mrs Merkel must finally refrain from her ideology-blinded policy towards Russia. Russia is not an enemy but an opportunity and should become a true partner of Germany.⁴⁷

Simultaneously, the Kremlin is said to now be “working together with new business partners”, thereby exemplifying the existential threat posed by ‘liberal Europe’ not only to traditional links, but Germany’s naturally ‘grand’ ‘Self’.⁴⁸ Of course, questions arise regarding why such a complementary image of the Russian ‘Other’ exists in the first place, with shared ideology and similar material circumstances leading the AfD to conclusions closely resembling those of its French counterpart.

Russia – Europe’s other ‘policeman’?

This resemblance is made particularly clear within the AfD’s brief discussions of Putin’s regime. Congratulating the Russian president on his 2018 re-election, the group also views the strong-man leader’s style of rule as a realisation of the radical right’s ‘ethnocratic’

⁴⁶ Jörg Meuthen: *Russland-Sanktionen sind wirtschaftliches Eigentor für Deutschland Weidel / Gauland: In Biarritz wurde die Chance zur Überwindung der Blockadepolitik gegen Russland verpasst* [Weidel / Gauland: In Biarritz, the opportunity to overcome the blockade policy against Russia was missed], Alternative for Germany, 26th August 2019 - <https://www.afd.de/weidel-gauland-in-biarritz-wurde-die-chance-zur-ueberwindung-der-blockadepolitik-gegen-russland-verpasst/> [accessed 18th April 2020]

“Strittige Fragen und gemeinsame Probleme können nur durch Dialog auf Augenhöhe gelöst werden.”

⁴⁷ Gauland: *Drohungen und Sanktionen gegen Russland schaden nur uns selber* [Gauland: Threats and sanctions against Russia only hurt us], Alternative for Germany, 6th January 2017 - <https://www.afd.de/gauland-drohungen-und-sanktionen-gegen-russland-schaden-nur-uns-selber/> [accessed 14th April 2020]

“Wenn wir Deutschen nicht aufpassen, wird unsere Außen-, aber vor allem unsere Wirtschaftspolitik nachhaltigen Schaden nehmen und mit ihr viele Arbeitsplätze verloren gehen oder ins Ausland abwandern. Frau Merkel muss von ihrer ideologieverblendeten Politik gegenüber Russland endlich Abstand nehmen. Russland ist kein Feind, sondern Chance und sollte ein echter Partner Deutschlands werden.”

⁴⁸ *Forderung nach ‘forciertem Außenhandel’ ist scheinheilige Propaganda der SPD* [Demand for ‘forced foreign trade’ is hypocritical propaganda by the SPD], AfD Kompakt, 5th January 2018 - <https://afdKompakt.de/2018/01/05/forderung-nach-forciertem-aussenhandel-ist-scheinheilige-propaganda-der-spd/> [accessed 18th April 2020]

“Russland arbeitet mit neuen Geschäftspartnern zusammen, unsere Exportwirtschaft verliert massiv und sächsische Arbeitsplätze gehen verloren.”

desires.⁴⁹ This is in spite of the alleged “lies” of European ministers, whose actions are viewed as breaching “non-interference” against a sovereign state which has naturally decided to place ‘the nation’ at the heart of decision-making.⁵⁰ Such ‘modern-era’ populism is contrasted with the Kremlin’s previously weak internal position, with Gauland stating that “Under predecessor Yeltsin pensioners in the countryside no longer received more pensions. Now it [the system] works again”.⁵¹ Overall, this story of Moscow’s transformation into a state pursuing “Russian interest politics” is viewed as a successful “revolt against the modern world”, with these decisions playing a key part in understandings of Moscow’s role on the international stage.⁵²

Certainly, Putin’s restoration of an ‘organic’ sovereignty is directly linked with the country’s embrace of a natural geopolitical position. Falling in line with a radical right fascination for the ‘objectivity’ of classical geopolitics, this position is said to be that of a natural power.⁵³ This is exemplified by the former party leader’s declaration that “Russia can be explained from its history, and Putin fits in well with the tradition of Russian power politics”.⁵⁴ As a result, the inherently powerful state is subsequently said to possess legitimate interests in its

⁴⁹ *Meuthen / Gauland: Wir gratulieren Wladimir Putin zur Wiederwahl* [Meuthen / Gauland: Congratulations to Vladimir Putin for re-election], Alternative for Germany, 18th March 2018 - <https://www.afd.de/joerg-meuthen-wir-gratulieren-wladimir-putin-zur-wiederwahl/> [accessed 19th April 2020]

Dr. Alexander Gauland im Gespräch mit Roger Köppel von der Weltwoche

⁵⁰ *Stephan Protschka: Russlands Wahlen mit Vorverurteilungen nicht beeinflussen* [Stephan Protschka: Do not influence Russia's elections with prejudices], Alternative for Germany, 13th March 2018 - <https://www.afd.de/stephan-protschka-russlands-wahlen-mit-vorverurteilungen-nicht-beeinflussen/> [accessed 30th April 2020]

“Im Hinblick auf die bevorstehenden Wahlen in Russland muss diese Souveränität und Nichteinmischung ebenso gewahrt werden. Dass sich sogar Minister europäischer Länder zu Lügen hinreißen lassen, besonders kurz vor der Wahl, wirft ein fades Licht auf das Demokratieverständnis einiger Politiker der EU-Länder.”

⁵¹ *Dr. Alexander Gauland im Gespräch mit Roger Köppel von der Weltwoche*

“Unter Vorgänger Jelzin bekamen die Rentner auf dem Land keine Renten mehr. Jetzt funktioniert das wieder.”

⁵² *Ibid.*

“Er macht russische Interessenpolitik, und er hat enorm viel geleistet.”

Julius Evola, *Revolt against the modern world: Politics, Religion and Social Order in the Kali Yuga* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1995)

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik – Keine EU-Armee – Souveränität der Vaterländer erhalten

Alexander Gauland: Gemeinsam Druck auf Nordkorea ausüben – Eskalation verhindern [Alexander Gauland: Together put pressure on North Korea - prevent escalation], Alternative for Germany, 11th August 2017 - <https://www.afd.de/alexander-gauland-gemeinsam-druck-auf-nordkorea-ausueben-eskalation-verhindern/> [accessed 19th April 2020]

Gauland: Seehofer zeigt gesunden Realismus [Gauland: Seehofer shows healthy realism], Alternative for Germany, 4th February 2016 - <https://www.afd.de/gauland-seehofer-zeigt-gesunden-realismus/> [accessed 19th April 2020]

⁵⁴ *Dr. Alexander Gauland im Gespräch mit Roger Köppel von der Weltwoche*

“Russland ist aus seiner Geschichte erklärbar, und da reiht sich Putin sinnvoll ein in die Tradition russischer Großmachtspolitik.”

‘sphere of influence’ akin to Haushofer’s “pan-regions” theory, with Gauland also stating that “Russia has always been an empire, and the old Tsarist tradition still plays a big role”.⁵⁵ Party stories surrounding Russian involvement in events such as the Ukraine conflict, therefore, show a great amount of sympathy towards Kremlin actions. For example, whilst criticising the 2018 appointment of Heiko Maas as German foreign minister, AfD Bundestag member Armin-Paul Hempel stated that

The new minister denounces Russia's annexation of Crimea and its ongoing aggression against Ukraine as unacceptable, forgetting that it was the West that had challenged the Russian bear by extensive NATO enlargement to the east.⁵⁶

This rhetoric is supported by Gauland’s appeals to historical ‘fact’, stating that “The Crimea never belonged to Ukraine, Catherine the Great, the Potemkin villages, you know that”.⁵⁷ It could be argued, then, that the party also appears to believe in Russia’s unique “conservative power”, with this influence viewed as an organic reality similar to Eurasianism.⁵⁸ Such beliefs thereby place the party firmly within the German ‘Putinverstehher’ [Putin-understander] tradition. Supported by influential figures such as former chancellor Gerhard Schröder, the tendency has called for an ‘understanding’ of Moscow’s actions beyond ideology.⁵⁹ This empathy is seemingly built on these aforementioned ‘natural’ circumstances, with Russia subsequently understood as a “rational and predictable” actor.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Karl Haushofer, *Geopolitik der Pan-Ideen*

Dr. Alexander Gauland im Gespräch mit Roger Köppel von der Weltwoche

“Russland ist eben immer ein Reich geblieben, und die alte zaristische Tradition spielt noch eine große Rolle.”

⁵⁶ *Bei Amtseinführung verlegt SPD-Außenminister Mitte Europas ins Saarland* [At the inauguration, SPD Foreign Minister relocated to Saarland in the middle of Europe], AfD Kompakt, 15th March 2018 - <https://afdKompakt.de/2018/03/15/bei-amtseinfuehrung-verlegt-spd-aussenminister-mitte-europas-ins-saarland/> [accessed 20th April 2020]

“Der neue Minister prangert Russlands Annexion der Krim und seine andauernde Aggression gegen die Ukraine als nicht hinnehmbar an und vergisst dabei, dass es der Westen war, der durch eine extensive NATO-Osterweiterung den russischen Bären herausgefordert hatte”

⁵⁷ *Dr. Alexander Gauland im Gespräch mit Roger Köppel von der Weltwoche*

“Die Krim hat nie zur Ukraine gehört, Katharina die Große, die Potemkinschen Dörfer, Sie kennen das.”

⁵⁸ Paul F. Robinson, *Russia's Emergence as an International Conservative Power*, *Russia in Global Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2020), p. 10

⁵⁹ Andrii Portnov, *Germany and the disinformation politics of the Ukraine crisis*, *OpenDemocracy*, 24th November 2014 - <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/germany-and-disinformation-politics-of-ukraine-crisis/> [accessed 20th April 2020]

⁶⁰ *How very understanding: Germany's ambivalence towards Russia reflects its conflicted identity*, *The Economist*, 8th May 2014 - <https://www.economist.com/europe/2014/05/08/how-very-understanding> [accessed 20th April 2020]

Such ‘understanding’ plays a pivotal role in stories detailing the great power’s actual continental role. Whilst Russia is viewed as a uniquely influential anti-Western voice, the AfD’s material interests have resulted in an apparent reluctance to understand this position through a militant lens. These circumstances are namely those that led the party to imagine the national ‘Self’ as an arbiter, with Germany’s political moderation seemingly encouraging the Kremlin’s characterisation as a narrative “partner”, rather than the frontline of confrontation against a shared Western ‘antagonist’.⁶¹ This partnership supposedly results from geographic ‘destiny’, as the Kremlin is cast as an essential fixture in a diverse continent. As one press release stated, “Only with the involvement of Russia is it possible to have a stable peace order in Europe”.⁶² Solutions to continental conflict, therefore, are viewed as resulting directly from a geopolitical “balance” historically favourable to the German ‘Self’.⁶³ This sentiment was made particularly clear by the party’s support of Ukraine’s “Normandy Format”, which, in spite of a customary swipe at Berlin’s enthusiasm, was praised as a product of Macron’s call for a “Europe from Lisbon to Vladivostok”.⁶⁴ On a wider scale,

Pazderski: Dialog statt Militärmanöver [Pazderski: Dialogue instead of military manoeuvres], Alternative for Germany, 10th January 2017 - <https://www.afd.de/pazderski-dialog-statt-militaermanoever/> [accessed 21st April 2020]

“Putins Politik war schon immer rational und berechenbar.”

⁶¹ *Zur Landtagswahl hat Sachsens CDU das Thema “Russland-Sanktionen” entdeckt* [For the state election, Saxony’s CDU has discovered the topic of “Russia sanctions”], AfD Kompakt, 18th July 2019 - <https://afdKompakt.de/2019/07/18/zur-landtagswahl-hat-sachsens-cdu-das-thema-russland-sanktionen-entdeckt/> [accessed 21st April 2020]

“Russland ist Partner und kein Feind.”

Georg Pazderski: Gute Beziehungen zu Russland im deutschen Interesse [Georg Pazderski: Good relations with Russia in the German interest], Alternative for Germany, 21st September 2017 - <https://www.afd.de/georg-pazderski-gute-beziehungen-zu-russland-im-deutschen-interesse/> [accessed 21st April 2020]

“Russland ist sowohl wirtschafts- wie auch sicherheitspolitisch als Partner von nicht zu unterschätzender Bedeutung.”

Pazderski: Dialog mit Russland statt Abschreckung [Pazderski: Dialogue with Russia instead of deterrence], Alternative for Germany, 29th September 2016 - <https://www.afd.de/pazderski-dialog-mit-russland-statt-abschreckung/> [accessed 21st April 2020]

“Wir brauchen Russland als Partner in der Wirtschaft und in der Sicherheit.”

⁶² Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik – Keine EU-Armee – Souveränität der Vaterländer erhalten

“Nur unter Einbeziehung Russlands ist eine stabile Friedensordnung in Europa denkbar.”

⁶³ *“Weltpolizei” kann nur die UNO spielen* [Only the UN can play “world police”], AfD Kompakt, 17th April 2018 - <https://afdKompakt.de/2018/04/17/weltpolizei-kann-nur-die-uno-spielen/> [accessed 21st April 2020]

“Das Spiel mit dem Feuer ist sofort zu beenden und der friedliche Ausgleich zu suchen.”

Weidel: Russland gehört genauso an den Verhandlungstisch wie der Nordatlantikpakt [Weidel: Russia is just as much at the negotiating table as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization], Alternative for Germany, 22nd April 2016 - <https://www.afd.de/weidel-russland-gehört-genauso-an-den-verhandlungstisch-wie-der-nordatlantikpakt/> [accessed 21st April 2020]

“Ausgewogenheit ist das Zauberwort der Stunde.”

⁶⁴ *Zum Gipfeltreffen Macron-Putin gibt’s aus Berlin nur “Schweigen im Walde”* [For the summit Macron-Putin, there is only “silence in the forest” from Berlin], AfD Kompakt, 20th August 2019 - <https://afdKompakt.de/2019/08/20/zum-gipfeltreffen-macron-putin-gibts-aus-berlin-nur-schweigen-im-walde/> [accessed 23rd April 2020]

Russia's supposed role as an essential and powerful "partner" is also evident in stories concerned with Moscow's inclusion in pan-continental organisations, with the potential strengthening of bodies such as the OSCE and NATO-Russia Council reducing its 'unnatural' isolation from 'Europe'.⁶⁵ Interestingly, this 'belonging' is devoid of any supporting stories concerned with conservative values, with only a 2018 speech by a regional party representative mentioning a shared "Western Christian culture".⁶⁶ This absence reflects the party's material pressures, as subjective ideology is once again influenced by German political norms.

This desire for 'partnership' has further influenced AfD conceptions of its narrative future with Russia. These prospective links are supposedly the result of an emerging multipolar reality aided by Russian assertiveness, with this "problem statement" once again hinting at Moscow's role as a vanguard of political diversity. Despite this seeming novelty, however, the party views international relations as returning to the state "as it existed from 1815 to 1939".⁶⁷ Of course, it is no coincidence that this shift corresponds with the much-lauded Bismarck era, with the restoration of a multipolar system reviving a continental balance so essential to Berlin's natural strategy. This convenient conclusion is made clear by group beliefs that Germany would merely renegotiate, rather than dismantle, the ideology driving NATO and the EU. For example, Gauland has voiced support for the latter's reform into an "alliance of nation-states, which is the living model in Europe".⁶⁸ This shift towards an 'organic' focus on sovereignty would simultaneously allow Germany to meet Putin "at eye level", thereby allowing engagement with its 'inescapable' Eastern partner.⁶⁹ Such cooperation would likely take the form of 'realist' projects such as Nord Stream II, viewed as

"Dabei sprach Macron, in Anlehnung an ein Wort von Charles de Gaulles, von einem ‚Europa von Lissabon bis Wladiwostok‘ und forderte eine ‚neue europäische Sicherheitsarchitektur‘, in die Russland einbezogen werden müsse."

⁶⁵ Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik – Keine EU-Armee – Souveränität der Vaterländer erhalten

Pazderski: NATO-Russland-Rat wiederbeleben

⁶⁶ *Zum Gedenktag der Russlanddeutschen*

"Russland und seine Kultur gehören zum abendländisch-christlichen Kulturkreis, es gehört zu Europa."

⁶⁷ *Dr. Alexander Gauland im Gespräch mit Roger Köppel von der Weltwoche*

"Aber durch die Beseitigung der Teilung der Welt in zwei festgefügte Machtblöcke entsteht nun, ohne dass man das gleichsetzen könnte, eine neue multipolare Machtordnung, wie sie von 1815 bis 1939 bestand."

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

"Das Bündnis der Nationalstaaten ist in Europa das gelebte Modell..."

⁶⁹ *Gauland: Nicht provozieren, sondern kooperieren* [Gauland: Do not provoke, but cooperate], Alternative for Germany, 20th June 2016 - <https://www.afd.de/gauland-nicht-provozieren-sondern-kooperieren/> [accessed 22nd April 2020]

"Deshalb sollte man gerade jetzt auf Dialog und Kooperation mit Russland auf Augenhöhe setzen."

Weidel / Gauland: In Biarritz wurde die Chance zur Überwindung der Blockadepolitik gegen Russland verpasst
"Strittige Fragen und gemeinsame Probleme können nur durch Dialog auf Augenhöhe gelöst werden."

“a great opportunity to broaden German foreign policy and to deepen ties with Russia in the spirit of Bismarck's reinsurance policy”.⁷⁰ As such, restoring the “old rules” of Prussia-Russia, is ultimately viewed as reviving a uniquely powerful and essential continental axis, with desires to forge “a free trade area” between the EU and Eurasian Economic Union, mimicking the two 19th century powers’ ‘privileged understandings’.⁷¹

Conclusion

It seems, therefore, that the AfD’s Russia narrative does give credence to a potential radical right ‘narrative template’ regarding Russian geopolitics. Naturally hoping to restore Germany to a ‘Golden Age’, the party overall follow a similar pattern to the Rassemblement National in constructing its ‘story’ of Moscow. This is made clear through the constant pressure exerted by an antagonistic Western postmodernism on the national ‘Self’, with both parties balancing reactionary desires with a need to maintain material power. Germany, perhaps, provides a more blatant example of these forces at work, with the country’s Nazi history encouraging the party to adopt a moderate, arbiter ‘Self’ based on Bismarck era grandeur. This subjective national ideal is of course described by the AfD as a wholly objective reality, with this organicism subsequently encouraging an interest in a classical geopolitical tradition fascinated by Russia. For example, the party metanarrative views Moscow as an inherent ally within a historic, natural Europe. This thereby produced a ‘special bilateral relationship’, which persisted until the recent ‘imposition’ of a ‘chaotic’ liberal universalism. As a result, a flattering image of Russia’s ongoing material challenge to these norms is born from such uncertainty, with the state viewed as an exemplary ‘modern-era’ power pursuing sovereign interests. Despite this, moderation has also resulted in the Kremlin’s conceptualisation as a constructive partner, whose participation in Europe can ultimately help restore Germany to its natural role as a geopolitical balancer. It appears, then, that a framework is indeed emerging

⁷⁰ Alexander Gauland: *Ablehnung von ‘Nord Stream 2’: Grobes politisches Foul der Franzosen*
“Das Nord Stream 2-Projekt ist eine gute Gelegenheit, die deutsche Außenpolitik breiter aufzustellen und im Sinne der Rückversicherungspolitik Bismarcks die Verbindung zu Russland zu vertiefen.”

⁷¹ Alexander Gauland: *“We refuse to continue the federalisation of Europe”*
Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik – Keine EU-Armee – Souveränität der Vaterländer erhalten
Wirtschaftskooperation statt politischer Konfrontation! [Economic cooperation instead of political confrontation!], AfD Kompakt, 28th November 2017 - <https://afdKompakt.de/2017/11/28/wirtschaftskooperation-statt-politischer-konfrontation/> [accessed 22nd April 2020]

“Was wir brauchen ist eine Freihandelszone zwischen der Europäischen Union und der Eurasischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft, eine Aufhebung der Visumpflicht und eine Zusammenarbeit gerade in den Zukunftstechnologien wie Nano, Biomedizin oder Künstliche Intelligenz.”

regarding radical right narratives of Russia, with the tradition's core illiberal tenets seemingly encouraging a fascination with the Putinist project. Despite this, questions must be asked regarding whether or not such an interest is inevitable? This may become clearer as the study moves eastward, where recent history may encourage material circumstances inconducive to pro-Russia sentiment.

Stories of militant contrasts – Jobbik’s understandings of Russia

Certainly, Hungary’s Jobbik provides a vivid example of a radical right movement attempting to reconcile communist-era legacies with its Russia policy. Created in 2003 by right-wing students, the party’s extreme ideology appears typical of the former Soviet bloc’s nationalist groups.¹ For example, Minkenberg has noted that the region’s relatively recent transition to Western liberalism has made the post-communist radical right “more reverse-oriented than its Western counterpart”.² Jobbik’s ideological predecessor, the Hungarian Justice and Life Party, exemplifies this rhetoric, with the group advocating in the 1990s for a transition based on Christianity and anti-Trianon irredentism.³ This traditionalism has proven essential to Jobbik’s modern identity under Gábor Vona, who promoted the party as a populist, national alternative to the supposed failures of Europeanisation.⁴ As a result, the group experienced rapid electoral success, as Hungary experienced a perfect storm of factors in the late 2000s. These factors include the infamous 2006 Öszöd speech by Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, whose admittance of lying to the public set in motion an “illiberal revolution” dominated by a radicalised Viktor Orbán.⁵ For Jobbik, which first entered parliament in 2010 as a direct result of these changes, this situation left the party in a rather unique position. Ultimately acting as ideological “scout” for Orbán’s centre right Fidesz, the movement has been directly challenged by an establishment eager to appropriate nationalist rhetoric.⁶ Due to this, the

¹ Norbert Pap & Viktor Glied, *Hungary’s Turn to the East: Jobbik and Islam*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 70, No. 7 (2018), p. 1041

² Jeffrey Stevenson Murer, *The Rise of Jobbik, Populism, and the Symbolic Politics of Illiberalism in Contemporary Hungary*, *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*, Issue No. 2 (2015), p. 86

Michael Minkenberg, *The Renewal of the Radical Right: Between Modernity and Anti-modernity*, *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (2000), pp. 188-189

³ Brigid Fowler, *Nation, State, Europe and National Revival in Hungarian Party Politics: The Case of the Millennial Commemorations*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (2004), pp. 60-61

⁴ Lázár Nóra, *Euro-scepticism in Hungary and in Poland: A comparative analysis of Jobbik and the Law and Justice parties*, *Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, Issue 2, No. 33 (2015), pp. 215-217

⁵ Bartek Pytlas, *Radical Right Parties in Central and Eastern Europe: Mainstream Party Competition and Electoral Fortune* (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), p. 37

Ivan Krastev, *Eastern Europe’s Illiberal Revolution: The Long Road to Democratic Decline*, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2018 - <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/hungary/2018-04-16/eastern-europes-illiberal-revolution> [accessed 12th July 2020]

⁶ Péter Krekó & Gregor Mayer, *Transforming Hungary – together? An analysis of the Fidesz-Jobbik relationship in Transforming the Transformation?: The East European Radical Right in the Political Process* ed. Michael Minkenberg (Oxford: Routledge, 2015), p. 183

party has since moved to differentiate itself as a means of electoral survival. As party communications director Pal Losonczy stated, “They were draining air away from us...”⁷

Whilst the party has continued to court transitional “losers”, Jobbik has distanced itself from previous expressions of anti-Semitism and anti-Roma sentiment.⁸ This process only intensified after Jobbik became Hungary’s official opposition in 2018, with new leaders Tamás Sneider and Péter Jakab simultaneously attempting to forge an even more pronounced break with the party’s past and distinguish themselves from Fidesz.⁹ Such reform would ultimately influence Jobbik’s Russia policy, which represents this study’s most fluid understanding of Moscow. Traditionally, the party has maintained some of the radical right’s strongest connections with the country, with the Kremlin believed to have played a pivotal role in funding during Jobbik’s early years.¹⁰ These connections were spearheaded by former MEP Béla Kovács, who was charged with spying for Russian intelligence in 2017.¹¹ Vona also possessed strong Russian links, with the former leader maintaining notable ties with Alexander Dugin.¹² Despite this, the party’s aforementioned reforms have seemingly resulted in a contemporary rejection of the Kremlin. This ‘volte-face’, therefore, may help reveal the fundamental forces influencing radical right Russia narratives, with the party family continually balancing ideology alongside more material concerns.

⁷ Emily Schultheis, *How Hungary’s Far-Right Extremists Became Warm and Fuzzy*, Foreign Policy, 6th April 2018 - <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/04/06/how-hungarys-far-right-extremists-became-warm-and-fuzzy/> [accessed 28th April 2020]

⁸ András Kovács, *The Post-Communist Extreme Right in Right-Wing Populism in Europe: Politics and Discourse* eds. Ruth Wodak, Majid Krosravnik & Brigitte Mral (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), p. 228

⁹ *Jobbik remembers the Hungarian victims of the Holocaust*, Jobbik, 16th April 2020 - https://www.jobbik.com/jobbik_remembers_the_hungarian_victims_of_the_holocaust [accessed 28th April 2020]

Marton Dunai, *Hardliners in Hungary’s Jobbik demand return to far-right roots*, Reuters, 22nd May 2018 - <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hungary-jobbik/hardliners-in-hungarys-jobbik-demand-return-to-far-right-roots-idUSKCN1IN1MW> [accessed 28th April 2020]

Shaun Walker, *Does electing a leader with Jewish roots prove Jobbik has changed?*, The Guardian, 12th February 2020 - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/12/electing-leader-jewish-roots-jobbik-changed-hungary-shift> [accessed 28th April 2020]

¹⁰ Attila Juhász, Lóránt Győri, Péter Krekó & András Dezső, *“I am Eurasian”: The Kremlin connections of the Hungarian far-right*, Political Capital Institute, March 2015, pp. 23-24

¹¹ Mitchell A. Orenstein & Péter Krekó, *A Russian Spy in Brussels? The Case of “KGBéla” - and What It Means for Europe*, Foreign Affairs, 29th May 2014 - <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/hungary/2014-05-29/russian-spy-brussels> [accessed 28th April 2020]

¹² *Gábor Vona had a lecture at Lomonosov University in Russia*, Jobbik, 24th May 2013 - https://www.jobbik.com/g%C3%A1bor_vona_had_lecture_lomonosov_university_russia [accessed 28th April 2020]

Attila Juhász, Lóránt Győri, Péter Krekó & András Dezső, *“I am Eurasian”*, p. 26

This diversity of thought is also reflected in the various themes present within discourse regarding the natural Hungarian ‘Self’. For instance, Jobbik’s self-understanding firstly emphasises the Magyar nation’s natural unity, with the Trianon “diktat” failing to discourage the party’s defence of an “organic structure based on the traditions of a millennium”.¹⁴ Simultaneously, this appeal to ‘tradition’ also leads Jobbik to embrace a story concerned with Hungary’s dual East-West ‘inheritance’, with any supposed incompatibilities related to this position viewed as a “false contradiction”.¹⁵ Certainly, foreign policy spokesman Márton Gyöngyösi noted in 2015 this dichotomy’s historical presence, stating, “we’ve been struggling with this false dilemma since our first king, St. Stephen”.¹⁶ Subsequently, the group appears to remedy this millennium of uncertainty through a skilful appeal to radical right thought, with Jobbik “carving up time” in order to transform this ‘hybrid’ identity into an ‘organic’ Hungarian path.¹⁷ This ‘special path’ was further discussed by Gyöngyösi in 2018, who stated that

identity should not be such an exclusive issue for a nation that should be equally proud of having migrated into Europe from the Asian steppe as well as having joined the European civilization by embracing Christianity.¹⁸

This series of individual stories hints at the nation-protagonist’s wider ‘Eurasian’ identity, with traditional European nationalist concerns united with the esoteric tradition of Hungarian

¹³ *Turks support Székely Freedom Fight*, Jobbik, 4th November 2013 -

https://www.jobbik.com/turks_support_sz%C3%A9kely_freedom_fight [accessed 29th April 2020]

¹⁴ *Frequently Refuted Lies*, Jobbik, 19th January 2015 - https://www.jobbik.com/frequently_refuted_lies_all [accessed 29th April 2020]

Europe’s Future: At the crossroads of Eastern relations and Western fall, Jobbik, 31st July 2015 -

https://www.jobbik.com/europes_future_at_the_crossroads_of_eastern_relations_and_western_fall [accessed 1st May 2020]

¹⁵ *Talking at the Krynica Economic Forum, Gyöngyösi reveals Jobbik’s vote on Sargentini Report*, Jobbik, 10th September 2018 -

https://www.jobbik.com/talking_at_the_krynica_economic_forum_gyongyosi_reveals_jobbiks_vote_on_sargentini_report [accessed 29th April 2020]

¹⁶ *Nobody trusts Orbán in the East*, Jobbik, 1st April 2015 -

https://www.jobbik.com/nobody_trusts_orban_in_the_east [accessed 28th April 2020]

¹⁷ Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics: A Conceptual Matrix*, *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 37, No. 5 (2012), p. 676

¹⁸ *Talking at the Krynica Economic Forum, Gyöngyösi reveals Jobbik’s vote on Sargentini Report*

Turanism.¹⁹ Stressing Hungary's (highly contested) Turkic connections, the belief conceptualises Hungary's 'Self' as a geopolitical intermediary between East and West.²⁰ This is exemplified by one document's peculiar praise of Islam, with the religion sharing traditional values with Christianity.²¹ These unique ideals were summed up by Vona during a 2013 visit to Istanbul, who declared that "This is our common mission and the universal task of Turanism: to build a bridge between East and West, Muslim and Christian and struggle together for a better world".²²

Russia and Jobbik's "sacred geometry"

This intermediary role, therefore, is of great consequence to the party's Russia relations. Indeed, the Kremlin 'Other' is carefully incorporated into Jobbik's wider geopolitical outlook through the repeated use of a "Germany-Russia-Turkey triangle" narrative device.²³ Representing the "three great empires" that have most influenced the Central European nation's history, the concept's repetition hints at Hungary's need to balance Moscow with other powers in order to fully express its geopolitical 'Self'.²⁴ As Gyöngyösi stated in 2016,

For a thousand years, Hungary has been struggling in the pressing, embracing ring of great powers and the whirling currents of geopolitical interests so that the country could maintain its political, economic and

¹⁹ *Gábor Vona: The future of Eurasia will be based on traditions*, Jobbik, 1st November 2013 - https://www.jobbik.com/gabor_vona_the_future_of_eurasia_will_be_based_on_traditions [accessed 28th April 2020]

Emel Akçalı & Umut Korkut, *Geographical Metanarratives in East-Central Europe: Neo-Turanism in Hungary*, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol. 53, No. 5 (2012), pp. 600-601

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *The background of real conflict in the world*, Jobbik, 15th November 2013 - https://www.jobbik.com/the_background_of_real_conflict_in_the_world [accessed 28th April 2020]
Norbert Pap & Viktor Glied, *Hungary's Turn to the East*, pp. 1043-1045

²² *Gábor Vona: The future of Eurasia will be based on traditions*

²³ *Nobody trusts Orbán in the East*

Why does Orbán keep voting for anti-Russia sanctions?, Jobbik, 1st February 2017 - https://www.jobbik.com/why_does_viktor_orban_keep_voting_for_anti_russia_sanctions [accessed 29th April 2020]

Jobbik is the strongest right-wing party in Europe, Jobbik, 30th March 2015 - https://www.jobbik.com/jobbik_is_the_strongest_right_wing_party_in_europe [accessed 29th April 2020]

²⁴ *Nobody trusts Orbán in the East*

military sovereignty. No wonder that the retention of national sovereignty is the most precious, the most valuable treasure for the Hungarian soul.²⁵

Due to this, the corpus characterises Russia as an unignorable and powerful neighbour historically bound to Magyar realities through geography, with this encirclement of powers bringing opportunity as well as risk. This abstract story is subject to particular “periodization” in the form of 17th century Transylvanian prince Gábor Bethlen’s diplomacy, whose balancing of the Habsburgs, Ottomans and Muscovy saw Jobbik name their 2007 manifesto in his honour.²⁶ A 2015 press release even directly referred to this period as a “Golden Age”, with this interlocutor role subsequently allowing Hungary to engage Russia as an equal.²⁷ Recent historical legacies, however, force the party to discuss less fortunate interactions with Moscow, with this ‘triangle’ distorted as a result of “40 years of communism”.²⁸ Despite this, it is interesting to note that such negative ‘counterstories’ are obscured from discourse, as communist “messianism” is ultimately blamed for “a complete lack of understanding [sic] the idea that different societies could develop along different courses”.²⁹ The West is not afforded such retrospective leniency, with the party’s declaration that “The Trianon Pact... was devised by the same powers that are the spearheads of liberal democracy today”, revealing as to the radical right party’s subjective understanding of the “degenerate present”.³⁰

Resisting “neo-colonialism” – Jobbik and a ‘postmodern’ Europe³¹

²⁵ *NATO has become an offensive alliance but there is no alternative now*, Jobbik, 17th March 2016 - https://www.jobbik.com/nato_has_become_an_offensive_alliance_but_there_is_no_real_alternative_now [accessed 30th April 2020]

²⁶ *Nobody trusts Orbán in the East*

Bethlen Gábor Program, Jobbik, 2nd April 2007 -

https://www.jobbik.hu/rovatok/bethlen_gabor_program/bethlen_gabor_program [accessed 29th April 2020]

B. F. Porshnev, *Muscovy and Sweden in the Thirty Years' War 1630-1635* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 18-20

Ágnes R. Várkonyi, *Gábor Bethlen and His European Presence*, *Hungarian Historical Review*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (2013), p. 695

Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics*, p. 686

²⁷ *Nobody trusts Orbán in the East*

²⁸ *Index: Gyöngyösi: Crimea means a chance for Hungarians as well*, Jobbik, 17th March 2014 -

https://www.jobbik.com/index_gy%C3%B6ngy%C3%B6si_crimea_means_chance_hungarians_well [accessed 1st May 2020]

²⁹ *Europe's Future: At the crossroads of Eastern relations and western fall*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Hakkı Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* (2020), p. 7

³¹ *The Voice of Russia – Exclusive Interview with Gábor Vona*, Jobbik, 4th September 2013 -

https://www.jobbik.com/voice_russia_-_exclusive_interview_g%C3%A1bor_vona [accessed 1st May 2020]

Consequently, it appears clear as to why the corpus' most repeated "problem statement" refers to the "Western, Euro-Atlantic world order".³² Described as "the biggest problem of the past 25 years" by a 2015 press release, this antagonist is viewed as having deprived Hungary of a 'true' post-communist transition to a position of "sovereignty and neutrality".³³ Indeed, the aforementioned article that discussed communism also attributes the same imposing, universalist tendencies to today's "liberalism", as the country simply "went straight from one dependence into another" within its geopolitical 'triangle'.³⁴ Subsequently, the nation-protagonist has again become vulnerable to 'ideological' organisations such as the German-led EU, whose geopolitical desire to build a "federal superstate" is linked by Vona to a diffuse postmodernity of "modern individualism, valuelessness, deviance and liberalism".³⁵ This narrative "chaos" is repeatedly connected to American geopolitical interests, with Gyöngyösi stating during a Sputnik interview that "The US uses its biggest puppet, the EU, for economic and commercial goals and NATO for the military".³⁶ This existential story is directly linked to a recurrent 'conspiracy theory' surrounding Budapest's true loyalties. For example, having discussed Hungary's NATO integration, the party spokesman stated that

All political parties involved in the replacement of the Communist political system, from the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) through the Socialist Party (MSZP) and the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) to Fidesz, consist of carefully selected puppets, who were chosen for this function back in the 1980s.³⁷

³² Ibid.

³³ *NATO has become an offensive alliance but there is no alternative now*

³⁴ *Nobody trusts Orbán in the East*

Europe's Future: At the crossroads of Eastern relations and western fall

³⁵ *The Voice of Russia – Exclusive Interview with Gábor Vona*

Ian Klinke, *Postmodern Geopolitics?: The European Union Eyes Russia*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 64, No. 5 (2012), p. 934

³⁶ *West to blame for refugee crisis, anti-Russian warmongering – Hungarian MP*, Jobbik, 15th October 2015 - https://www.jobbik.com/west_to_blame_for_refugee_crisis_anti_russian_warmongering_hungarian_mp [accessed 1st May 2020]

Hakkı Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, p. 11

³⁷ *NATO has become an offensive alliance but there is no alternative now*

As a result, Jobbik views Budapest as simply a “mouthpiece” of outside interests, with the state’s current divorce from its organic historical ‘Self’ directly responsible for its diplomatic servility.³⁸

Of course, this “liminal crisis” is also understood to have affected Hungary’s ‘natural’ Russian neighbour. Also denied a ‘true’ transition, the country has been described as “the ultimate target of NATO and the US”.³⁹ Such language hints at Jobbik’s wider belief in a shared narrative fate, with Gyöngyösi declaring during a visit to Donbass that

When the Western colonization, or to use the politically correct terminology: the Euro-Atlantic integration of Central Eastern Europe was completed, the front moved to the east, closer to Russia.⁴⁰

This is confirmed by various stories detailing this mutual antagonist’s threat to Moscow. For example, one article states, “Ever since the end of the cold war, all they’d [Russia] been asking for is to have a security zone (from the aspect of Russian security), which is free of CIA and NATO activity”.⁴¹ This provocation is subsequently elevated to the ‘higher’ concerns of Anglo-American geopolitics, as the same article stated that “There is an entire library available about the US’s geopolitical goals from Brzezinski to Fukuyama...”.⁴² As such, the Kremlin now also finds itself at a “critical juncture”, with geopolitical isolation disturbing a once fruitful relationship with Budapest.⁴³ These bilateral troubles are again dominated by discussions of anti-Kremlin sanctions, which are understood as a “ritual self-sacrifice at the altar of American interests”.⁴⁴ Naturally, these actions run “contrary to

³⁸ *The EU-provoked Russian boycott causes severe economic damage*, Jobbik, 11th August 2014 - https://www.jobbik.com/eu-provoked_russian_boycott_causes_severe_economic_damage [accessed 4th May 2020]

³⁹ *West to blame for refugee crisis, anti-Russian warmongering – Hungarian MP*

⁴⁰ *Ukraine will never be the same again - a report from Donieck*, Jobbik, 25th January 2015 - https://www.jobbik.com/ukraine_will_never_be_same_again_-_report_donieck [accessed 4th May 2020]

⁴¹ *Nobody trusts Orbán in the East*

⁴² *Ibid.*

World War III in the Making?, Jobbik, 29th August 2014 - https://www.jobbik.com/world_war_iii_making [accessed 4th May 2020]

⁴³ Hakkı Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, p. 6

⁴⁴ *Jobbik: Anti-Russia sanctions cause serious damage*, Jobbik, 22nd June 2015 - https://www.jobbik.com/jobbik_anti_russia_sanctions_cause_serious_damage [accessed 4th May 2020]
The provocation against Russia is not in the interests of Hungary and Europe, Jobbik, 30th August 2014 - https://www.jobbik.com/provocation_against_russia_not_interests_hungary_and_europe [accessed 4th May 2020]

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Hungary's national interests", thereby strengthening the idea of a common bilateral destiny.⁴⁵ Despite this, the aforementioned language used to describe Moscow hints at a 'messianism' common in radical right thought, with this ideal impacting Jobbik's further discussions.

Russia as a "spearhead" of "resistance"⁴⁶

Certainly, the party's overall understanding of Russia's geopolitical role, at least under Vona, conforms to a Eurasianist metanarrative.⁴⁷ This is made clear by the recurrent theme of Russia's growing assertiveness, with Gyöngyösi noting that "Hungary can only expect to rise if there is a balance between the larger powers, so "now we should welcome Russia gaining ground against the West"". ⁴⁸ Chronologically, this 'struggle' is explicitly linked to Moscow's increasingly 'traditional' domestic politics.⁴⁹ For instance, one press release stated that

You can't even compare the current period with Boris Yeltsin's era which was constantly praised by the West for its transition to democracy.

Obviously because they could enforce their interests much better under a weak leader than now under Putin.⁵⁰

Naturally, this 'redemption story' is understood to have aligned with the national will, as the spokesman qualifies that, "It's not my job to decide if Putin is a good or a bad leader for his nation, this is the Russian people's job".⁵¹ Therefore, the country is once again viewed as having uniquely reconciled the state with its historical 'Self', which has subsequently allowed the Kremlin to 'reclaim' its "great power" position.⁵² The corpus frequently ties these events to Russia's 'traditional' power.⁵³ As one 2017 article stated, "Russian geostrategic thinking

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ *The Voice of Russia – Exclusive Interview with Gábor Vona*

⁴⁷ *Gábor Vona: The future of Eurasia will be based on traditions*

⁴⁸ *Index: Gyöngyösi: Crimea means a chance for Hungarians as well*

⁴⁹ *Nobody trusts Orbán in the East*

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² *Gábor Vona talks about Trump and Putin to New York Times*, Jobbik, 7th February 2017 -

https://www.jobbik.com/gabor_vona_talks_about_trump_and_putin_to_new_york_times [accessed 4th May 2020]

Foreign Policy – Old Values, New Objectives, Jobbik, 12th December 2016 - <https://www.jobbik.com/policies> [accessed 4th May 2020]

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⁵³ *Europe's Future: At the crossroads of Eastern relations and western fall*

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has essentially remained unchanged since tzar [sic] Peter the Great”.⁵⁴ This logic is said to focus on the state’s natural “sphere of influence”, with this spatial reality gifting the state a uniquely powerful voice.⁵⁵

Subsequently, this ability to enforce traditional norms is of great interest to the radical right party. This can be seen throughout discussions of the Ukraine conflict, with the group viewing Russia’s actions as a struggle for the ‘national interest’ against “postmodern geopolitics”.⁵⁶ Of course, these values are understood through a Hungarian lens, as Jobbik views Moscow as “having successfully protected its minorities” in line with its anti-Trianon beliefs.⁵⁷ On a more esoteric level, however, it is important to note that the movement rhetorically ties these actions to concerns of ‘objective’ geography. For example, further discussions of Ukraine also led Jobbik to declare that “Europe is not complete without Russia while Russia as a European power cannot turn away from Europe”.⁵⁸ Moscow’s position as an unavoidable continental fixture thereby leads to direct acknowledgement of its wider Eurasianist ‘mission’, with the country described as “the only one [in Europe] that has the necessary economic, military and political authority. Therefore it is Russia’s historical duty to set Europe back on the track of traditions”.⁵⁹ Subsequently, this fight for the “diversity of civilizations” against Western universalism is viewed as conducive to Hungary’s Bethlen-era ‘Self’.⁶⁰ Vona made this sentiment particularly clear during his aforementioned Istanbul speech, placing Russia on the frontline of a traditionalist struggle that will restore Hungary’s historical ‘triangle’ and with it, its organic intermediary position, “The two great powers of Eurasia, Russia and Turkey, and my own homeland, Hungary... These nations are destined to present the Eurasian alternative”.⁶¹

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⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ *Nobody trusts Orbán in the East*

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Index: Gyöngyösi: Crimea means a chance for Hungarians as well

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Ian Klinke, *Postmodern Geopolitics?*, pp. 929-930

⁵⁷ *Index: Gyöngyösi: Crimea means a chance for Hungarians as well*

⁵⁸ *Europe’s Future: At the crossroads of Eastern relations and western fall*

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Paul F. Robinson, *Russia’s Emergence as an International Conservative Power*, *Russia in Global Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2020), pp. 22-23

Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 1st December 2016, Section 2, Articles 4-5 - https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICk6BZ29/content/id/2542248 [accessed 8th May 2020]

Gábor Vona: The future of Eurasia will be based on traditions

⁶¹ Ibid.

A turn towards the Atlantic? – Jobbik’s new anti-Russia discourse

Geopolitical messianism, aside, it is also important to discuss Jobbik’s aforementioned rejection of these beliefs. This development is directly connected to the group’s electoral competition with Fidesz, with the party’s myriad of anti-establishment ‘stories’ conforming to a common “chain of problems” shared with this study’s other parties.⁶² This scepticism of a government-enforced status quo is naturally supported by academic literature, with Givens arguing that “Although they do not have the goal of tearing down the current political system, they are anti-establishment. They consider themselves “outsiders” in the party system, and therefore not tainted by government or mainstream parties’ scandals”.⁶³ What makes Jobbik’s position particularly interesting, however, is the illiberal nature of its government, which now competes with the group to represent ‘the nation’. Naturally, this has affected the party’s pro-Russia metanarrative, with Budapest’s embrace of a similar outlook now transforming stories of ‘Eurasianist liberation’ into an electoral liability. This thinking is exemplified by the change in tone of this investigation’s corpus from 2018, with anti-Russia arguments that were initially considered ‘counterstories’ now so numerous as to supersede the party’s previous line of thought altogether. As a result, Jobbik appears to have overturned its overarching Moscow narrative, as the state now inhabits the position of ‘postmodern geopolitical villain’. This is made clear by Jobbik’s sudden acknowledgement of Russia’s Soviet era, which now plays a key part in a new “periodization” of Hungarian history.⁶⁴ Described as a “looming Soviet threat” akin to that faced by Western Europe during the Schuman Declaration, Moscow is now increasingly ‘Othered’ through a narrative now more aligned with Euro-Atlanticism.⁶⁵ This antagonist is also viewed as a key supporter of Budapest’s “mafia network”, with the radical right party’s ideological norms still channelled through the traditional binaries of geopolitics.⁶⁶

⁶² Emery Roe, *Narrative Policy Analysis: Theory and Practice* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), p. 92

⁶³ Terry Givens, *Voting Radical Right in Western Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 20

⁶⁴ Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics*, pp. 675-676

⁶⁵ *Schuman’s objectives still apply – Thoughts on 9th May*, Jobbik, 9th May 2020 - https://www.jobbik.com/schumans_objectives_still_apply_thoughts_on_9th_may [accessed 12th June 2020]
Simon Dalby, *Geopolitical Discourse: The Soviet Union as Other*, *Alternatives*, Vol. 13, Issue 4 (1988), pp. 415-417

⁶⁶ *Orbán is willing to give up EU membership just to serve his mafia network*, Jobbik, 1st March 2019 - https://www.jobbik.com/orban_is_willing_to_give_up_eu_membership_just_to_serve_his_mafia_network [accessed 8th May 2020]

Naturally, this ‘volte-face’ has originated in a need to reassess the narrative ‘Self’ in relation to changing realities. This is exemplified by Jobbik’s adherence to a 2019 manifesto issued by the Hungarian opposition, which was agreed under the reform-minded leadership of Tamás Sneider.⁶⁷ For example, the statement’s fourth section reads,

Hungary historically belongs to the community of European nations. We stand united to resist any agenda which, contrary to our national interests, would lead Hungary out of the European Union and make it a part of Russia’s sphere of influence. We will defend our homeland!⁶⁸

This explicitly more European ‘Self’ is further supported by a number of stories which appropriate popular narratives surrounding the 1956 Revolution. Describing themselves as a “resistance movement” against Fidesz’s “Bolshevik government”, Jobbik now appears to characterise Russia as an unchanged, intrusive force still eager to manipulate Hungary.⁶⁹ This new “liminal crisis” is made particularly clear during discussions of Austria’s 2019 Ibiza affair. Involving former Vice Chancellor and Freedom Party chairman Heinz-Christian Strache’s willingness to secretly engage with Russian business interests, the scandal was viewed by the party as merely showcasing an “ongoing practice in Hungary”.⁷⁰ Jobbik MP Tibor Bana even described the country as now subject to “Russian colonization”, with Hungary’s triangular “balance” now distorted from the East.⁷¹ Indeed, Gyöngyösi even tied this issue to a wider story concerned with threats such as “Muslim fundamentalism”, thereby highlighting the danger that this resurgent Russian power poses to the party’s new ‘Self’.⁷² Jobbik’s increasing “pro-NATO” sentiment and desires to “strengthen Europe” (despite reservations regarding federalism), therefore, provides a key insight into the mechanisms of

⁶⁷ *March Manifesto*, Jobbik, 15th March 2019 - https://www.jobbik.com/march_manifesto [accessed 8th May 2020]

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ “*This is sticky-fingered Bolshevism*”, Jobbik, 26th October 2018 - https://www.jobbik.com/this_is_sticky_fingered_bolshevism [accessed 8th May 2020]

⁷⁰ “*What Strache got burned with is an ongoing practice in Hungary*”, Jobbik, 20th May 2019 - https://www.jobbik.com/what_strache_got_burned_with_is_an_ongoing_practice_in_hungary [accessed 8th May 2020]

⁷¹ *Orbán is willing to give up EU membership just to serve his mafia network*

⁷² *Gyöngyösi: If you can’t do symbolic politics what can you?*, Jobbik, 31st October 2019 - https://www.jobbik.com/gyongyosi_if_you_cant_even_do_symbolic_politics_what_can_you [accessed 8th May 2020]

Gyöngyösi: We need to let the English go and strengthen Europe, Jobbik, 31st October 2019 - https://www.jobbik.com/gyongyosi_we_need_to_let_the_english_go_and_strengthen_europe [accessed 8th May 2020]

radical right political manoeuvring and its effect on geopolitical narrative.⁷³ Possessing a fundamental distaste for establishment thinking, the party's renegotiation of the 'Self' has made Russia a casualty of a greater material need to rail against an inherently loathed present.

Conclusion

It seems, then, that rather than simply provide another example of Russia's illiberal credentials, Jobbik's narratives allow for a much more theoretical understanding of these beliefs and their production. This takes the form of two distinct geopolitical 'metanarratives', which, despite their divergent outcomes, are ultimately the product of the same 'Self' and 'Other' relationship peculiar to Europe's radical right. The first of these outlooks is that forged under Vona's radical leadership. Stressing the importance of an intermediary position for Hungary's natural circumstances, the overarching story sees Budapest continually attempt to assert its sovereignty by balancing a triangular relationship with outside powers. Naturally, Russia is viewed as one of these influences, with Jobbik manipulating time in order to stress the mutually beneficial relationship forged under Bethlen's diplomacy.⁷⁴ Despite the rather precise nature of this 'Golden Age', such stories seem to be emphasised due to ongoing problems with Western universalism. This results in the deliberate side-lining of inevitable 'counterstories' related to Moscow's communist era, with 'objective' Eurasianist ideals helping to bridge this theoretical gap. Despite this previous belief that Russia's natural power may help restore order in Europe and with it the true Magyar 'Self', government policy and historical legacies have seemingly made the concealment of these 'counterstories' intolerable. In keeping with this study's subjective presuppositions, this reimagination of the 'Self' and its relationships only highlights the political tradition's tendency to reimagine 'the nation' in relation to electoral needs. This logic is all the more important as the study concludes its discussions with Golden Dawn, whose extremism appears to have been encouraged by the Greek government's recent reliance on Brussels.

⁷³ Ibid.

Márton Gyöngyösi: Gyurcsány is a bigger obstacle to the joint opposition list than gay marriage, Jobbik, 19th March 2020 -

https://www.jobbik.com/marton_gyongyosi_gyurcsany_is_a_bigger_obstacle_to_the_joint_opposition_list_than_gay_marriage [accessed 18th June 2020]

⁷⁴ Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics*, p. 676

Returning to ‘Orthodox geopolitics’? - Golden Dawn’s visions of the Kremlin

Certainly, Greece’s Golden Dawn is perhaps the most controversial party discussed in this investigation. The vision of life-long leader Nikolaos Michaloliakos, the group ultimately emerged as a result of the radical nationalist’s imprisonment on weapons charges in the late 1970s.¹ This time saw Michaloliakos forge close ties with members of Greece’s former military junta, whose shared extremism would leave an indelible mark on party ideology.² Indeed, Golden Dawn’s official creation in 1993, following a decade of existence as a magazine, would be marked by an open adherence to neo-Nazism.³ This abrasive approach quickly evolved into often violent street activities, thereby securing the group a fearsome reputation within Greece’s radical fringe.⁴ Despite this, the 2000s would see the party shift to a “popular nationalism” in line with radical right norms.⁵ This strategy was implemented on the eve of Europe’s financial downturn, with the recession’s catastrophic effects on Hellenic society allowing the party to enter parliament in 2012.⁶ Greece’s frontline position during the 2015 migrant crisis would only exacerbate this uncertainty so beneficial to the group, which claimed third place in elections the same year.⁷ This success appeared emblematic of a movement that had come to terms with its extremist past, with a membership including professors, lawyers and even a former NATO commander helping Golden Dawn to promote itself as the ‘responsible’ face of a ‘betrayed’ nation.⁸

¹ Sofia Tipaldou, *The Dawning of Europe and Eurasia? The Greek Golden Dawn and its Transnational Links in Eurasianism and the European Far Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* ed. Marlene Laruelle (London: Lexington Books, 2015), p. 196

² Ibid.

³ Antonis A. Ellinas, *The Rise of Golden Dawn: The New Face of the Far Right in Greece*, South European Society and Politics, Vol. 18, No. 4 (2013), pp. 547-548

⁴ Antonis A. Ellinas, *Neo-Nazism in an Established Democracy: The Persistence of Golden Dawn in Greece*, South European Society and Politics, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2015), pp. 2-3

⁵ Antonis A. Ellinas, *The Rise of Golden Dawn*, p. 548

⁶ Georgios Karyotis & Wolfgang Rüdiger, *Protest Participation, Electoral Choices and Public Attitudes towards Austerity in Greece* in *The Politics of Extreme Austerity: Greece in the Eurozone Crisis* eds. Georgios Karyotis & Roman Geradimos (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2015), pp. 136-137

⁷ Emmanouil Tsatsanis & Eftichia Teperoglou, *Realignment under Stress: The July 2015 Referendum and the September Parliamentary Election in Greece*, South European Society and Politics, Vol. 21, No. 4 (2016), p. 440

⁸ Helena Smith, *Golden Dawn ditches boots for suits in European election makeover*, The Guardian, 23rd May 2014 - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/23/golden-dawn-greece-european-election> [accessed 11th May 2020]

This moderate mask, however, would slip following the 2013 murder of left-wing musician Pavlos Fyssas by party members. Whilst there were no immediate repercussions, revelations detailing the group's involvement during an ongoing trial would severely impact party popularity. This has resulted in the group now only maintaining representation in the European Parliament, with the "biggest trial of fascist criminality since Nuremberg" threatening Golden Dawn with a return to the political wilderness.⁹ Nevertheless, the group's long lasting position at the forefront of radical right trends is difficult to ignore. This is particularly true regarding its Russian connections, as the party was one of the first to spearhead relations during the 1990s. This is exemplified by Michaloliakos' 1996 visit to Moscow, where he met various nationalist figures such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy.¹⁰ Such meetings helped to set the foundations for the party's strong Russian network today, as Michaloliakos maintains regular correspondence with Dugin.¹¹ Simultaneously, the Kremlin has also allegedly provided Golden Dawn with extensive funding.¹² This has possibly resulted in the party carrying out unprecedented actions in support of Moscow. For example, evidence suggests that Golden Dawn may have played a role in Russian diplomats' alleged attempts to disrupt Athens' 'naming dispute' talks with Skopje in 2018.¹³ These decisive negotiations have subsequently led to Northern Macedonia's NATO accession, thereby potentially placing the party at the centre of European geopolitics.

Hellenic grandeur - A 'mosaic' of identities

This predisposition to geopolitics is also evident with regard to the movement's understanding of the organic Greek 'Self'. Perhaps this study's most vocal disciple of

⁹ Dimitris Christopoulos, *The Golden Dawn trial: a major event for democracy in Greece and beyond*, Open Democracy, 26th January 2018 - <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/he-golden-dawn-trial-major-event-for-democracy-in-greece-and-beyond/> [accessed 11th May 2020]

¹⁰ Sofia Tipaldou, *The Dawning of Europe and Eurasia?*, p. 202

¹¹ "Natural allies" - *The Kremlin connections of the Greek far-right*, Political Capital Institute, 1st March 2016 - https://www.politicalcapital.hu/hirek.php?article_read=1&article_id=27 [accessed 11th May 2020]

¹² Antonis Klapsis, *An Unholy Alliance: The European Far-Right and Putin's Russia*, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (2015), pp. 27-28

¹³ Patrick Strickland, *As the right wing rises in Greece, so does violence against journalists*, Columbia Journalism Review, 10th July 2019 - <https://www.cjr.org/analysis/greece-macedonia-violence-prespa-election.php> [accessed 13th May 2020]

Greece to expel Russian diplomats over alleged Macedonia interference, The Guardian, 11th July 2018 - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/11/greece-to-expel-russian-diplomats-over-alleged-macedonia-interference> [accessed 13th May 2020]

Communists while supporting USA! Article of N.G. Michaloliakos, Golden Dawn, 23rd July 2018 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/communists-while-supporting-usa-article-of-n.g.-michaloliakos> [accessed 14th May 2020]

classical geopolitics due to its extremism, Golden Dawn repeatedly characterises the nation-protagonist as a ‘thalassocracy’. Stating in 2017 that “our country is a par excellence a maritime country with an extended coastline”, the party leader’s stories appear to appropriate land-sea dichotomies promoted within the tradition.¹⁴ This theoretical interest is further evident in Michaloliakos’ support for Haushofer’s belief that “the existence of a state is determined by three indispensable traits: a) the territory b) the people c) the sovereignty”.¹⁵ In line with national traditions, this logic directly leads the party to view a sovereign ‘Self’ as only possible through the unification of the Eastern Mediterranean’s Hellenic communities. These groups are defined by a shared adherence to Orthodoxy, which is deemed so important by Golden Dawn that one article proclaimed that “the state was founded on this religion”.¹⁶ Spatial desires to unite an “entire Hellenism” are made evident throughout the corpus, with memorials to Anatolia’s Greek communities mirroring contemporary concerns regarding the Cyprus dispute.¹⁷ This geographic and ethnic unity is said to have brought about various historical ‘Golden Ages’. For instance, Michaloliakos declared in 2017 that “The Byzantine Empire was also a superpower for almost [sic] thousand years”, with the party also supporting the irredentist ‘Megali Idea’ [“Great Idea”] to restore this grandeur during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.¹⁸ Such ideals were ultimately embraced once again under the inter-war dictator Ioannis Metaxas, whose rule is viewed as the last time “the will of the Greek People” was truly represented within the state.¹⁹ This narrative hero’s actions,

¹⁴ *Greece and Geopolitics: A “strategic” perception of submission – Article of N. G. Michaloliakos*, Golden Dawn, 10th January 2017 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/greece-and-geopolitics-a-strategic-perception-of-submission-article-of-n-g> [accessed 14th May 2020]

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *No to the separation of the state and our Faith-Article of N. G. Michaloliakos*, Golden Dawn, 27th November 2018 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/no-to-the-separation-of-the-state-and-our-faith-article-of-n-g-michalolia> [accessed 18th May 2020]

¹⁷ *The MPs of Golden Dawn honored the Assumption in Sumela Monastery*, Golden Dawn, 17th August 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/the-mps-of-golden-dawn-honored-the-assumption-in-sumela-monastery> [accessed 18th May 2020]

Turkey buys oil platform for the Cyprus’ EEZ!, Golden Dawn, 27th October 2014 -

<http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/turkey-buys-oil-platform-for-the-cyprus-eez> [accessed 16th May 2020]

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

The return of the Ottomans – Article by N. G. Michaloliakos, Golden Dawn, 15th November 2014 -

<http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/the-return-of-the-ottomans-article-by-n-g-michaloliakos> [accessed 16th May 2020]

Slogans and memorabilia of the Special Forces – Article by Ilias Kasidiaris, Golden Dawn, 2nd April 2015 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/slogans-and-memorabilia-of-the-special-forces-article-by-ilias-kasidiaris> [accessed 16th May 2020]

The return of the ottomans and the fake political establishment - Article of N.G. Michaloliakos, Golden Dawn, 13th March 2017 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/the-return-of-the-ottomans-and-the-fake-political-establishment-article-of> [accessed 16th May 2020]

¹⁹ *4th of August Regime: 80th Anniversary*, Golden Dawn, 5th August 2016 -

<http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/4th-of-august-regime-80th-anniversary> [accessed 16th May 2020]

therefore, are understood to have returned the ‘Self’ to its traditional path of geopolitical power, with Michaloliakos stating bluntly that “Greece will be either great and dominant or no Greece at all”.²⁰

Dreams of Byzantium - Russia and the ‘Greek Plan’

Such an interesting mix of ‘objective’ geopolitics and national tradition is of great consequence to Golden Dawn’s historical understanding of Russia. This is exemplified by the party’s rhetorical “periodization” of relations “since Catherine the Great”, whose neo-Byzantine ambitions present the framework for a past dominated by ‘unchanging’ characteristics.²¹ For example, many party stories stress that relations have occurred in line with a “common cultural background” of Orthodoxy.²² This consequently casts Russia as a “natural ally”, whose support was essential to the birth of the modern-era Greek nation-state.²³ Direct quotation of figures from the country’s 19th century independence struggle makes this especially clear, with Michaloliakos referring to the “invocations of Papaflessas and Ypsilanti that the Russian Tsar supported the Revolution”.²⁴ Chronologically, this support is viewed as the product of inevitable geopolitical struggle, with Trikoupis stating that

Ever since the beginning of the fight, England was afraid [sic] the armed intervention of the Russian court in the Greco-Turkish war... They were afraid of the tendency of Russia to fight against Turks in favor of the

Ioannis Metaxas and Greece in 2018-Article of N.G. Michaloliakos, Golden Dawn, 29th October 2018 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/ioannis-metaxas-and-greece-in-2018-article-of-n.g.-michaloliakos> [accessed 16th May 2020]

²⁰ *Greece and Geopolitics – Article of N. G. Michaloliakos*, Golden Dawn, 4th January 2017 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/greece-and-geopolitics-article-of-n.-g.-michaloliakos> [accessed 16th May 2020]

²¹ *N. G. Michaloliakos’ interview on the Russian Network “Russia Athens” about the deep roots of the relationship between Greece and Russia – VIDEO*, Golden Dawn, 24th February 2017 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/n.-g.-michaloliakos-interview-on-the-russian-network-russia-athens-about-th> [accessed 16th May 2020]

Bella Brover-Lubovsky, *The “Greek Project” of Catherine the Great and Giuseppe Sarti*, *Journal of Musicological Research*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (2013), pp. 36-37

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Listening to the whisper of History*, Golden Dawn, 2nd April 2019 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/listening-to-the-whisper-of-history> [accessed 18th May 2020]

tortured coreligionists. They were afraid of the interruption of the conferences about the Greco-Turkish issue.²⁵

Certainly, this criticism of London originates in the ‘common misconception’ that “Greece ought to always be an ally with the great naval force that dominates in Mediterranean”.²⁶ In comparison, Russia is understood as a complementary “central empire”, whose “conflict with Turkey for over 300 years” is driven by land-sea concerns.²⁷ Of course, such ‘objective’ fact is beneficial for the thalassocrat nation-protagonist, whose desire to be the “dominant power in the Strait of Bosphorus” is seen as “good not only for Greece but also for Russia”.²⁸ Interestingly, this series of “problem statements” related to this struggle for an ‘organic’ land-sea alliance obscures any ‘counterstories’ regarding Moscow’s Soviet past, as Michaloliakos stated that “now things are different”.²⁹ As such, this ‘objective’ history is once again the product of subjective renegotiation today, with Greece’s current circumstances seemingly encouraging beliefs in a “Russia that has never harmed our Homeland”.³⁰

Golden Dawn, Russia and a postmodern Greek tragedy

Golden Dawn’s nostalgia for a modern era ‘defined’ by Russian cooperation seems to be the result of an inherent distaste for the political present. Aside from various circular ‘nonstories’ condemning today’s liberalism, such unease is made clear by the corpus’ preponderance of Euro-Atlantic ‘villains’, whose “imperialistic” tendencies have restricted Greece’s natural ‘Self’ within a normative ‘Europe’.³¹ These antagonists bear a striking resemblance to those of the narrative past, thereby characterising Athens as the victim of an ongoing ‘conspiracy’. This is exemplified by the continuing presence of a hostile thalassocracy. For example, a

²⁵ *1821 and the Greeks of 2017*- Article of N. G. Michaloliakos, Golden Dawn, 27th March 2017 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/1821-and-the-greeks-of-2017-article-of-n.-g.-michaloliakos> [accessed 18th May 2020]

²⁶ *Greece and Geopolitics: A “strategic” perception of submission* – Article of N. G. Michaloliakos

²⁷ *Ibid.*

N. G. Michaloliakos’ interview on the Russian Network “Russia Athens” about the deep roots of the relationship between Greece and Russia – VIDEO

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *N.G. Michaloliakos: Attila 1974-Never forget! NO to the submission of SYRIZA and ND to USA*, Golden Dawn, 20th July 2018 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/n.g.-michaloliakos-attila-1974-never-forget-no-to-the-submission-of-syriza> [accessed 18th May 2020]

³¹ *N. G. Michaloliakos at “Parapolitika”: A Nationalistic wind changes Europe*, Golden Dawn, 8th December 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/n.-g.-michaloliakos-at-parapolitika-a-nationalistic-wind-changes-europe> [accessed 20th May 2020]

2014 publication noted the existence of a “dominant force, which once in the time of the national revolution of 1821 was England and today lieu in it is USA”.³² This Anglo-American connection reveals the policies currently believed to restrict the ‘Self’, with Europe’s “current geopolitical “game”” following the theories of Mackinder and Spykman.³³ Due to this, the German-led European Union is said to act in “servitude” to these strategies by enforcing Western universal norms.³⁴ As the party stated in response to Brexit, the EU operates as

An oligarchy, who devastates the peoples through an austerity policy, who has shattered our national independence, who promotes the illegal immigration, imposes quotas even to the agricultural production and does not allow the establishment of lasting ties with the fellow-believer Russia.³⁵

At a more local level, this ‘postmodern uncertainty’ is blamed on Athens’ “para-state”, which has weakened the country by ‘ignoring’ essential fixtures such as Orthodoxy.³⁶ Simultaneously, this disregard for tradition has only encouraged the “neo-Ottoman” ambitions of “sultan” Erdogan”, with Turkish interests once again ‘accepted’ by Western diplomacy.³⁷ This is most clear regarding the ongoing “conquest” of Cyprus’ EEZ by Turkish interests.³⁸ Both literally and metaphorically, therefore, it appears that a ‘counterstory’ promoting a “small and honest Greece” has now been forced on the nation-protagonist, with

³² *The return of the Ottomans – Article by N. G. Michaloliakos*
With high attendance the “Four overviews on geopolitics” by the Institution A.I.G.I.S.-Photography, Golden Dawn, 21st December 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/with-high-attendance-the-four-overviews-on-geopolitics-by-the-institution-a> [accessed 20th May 2020]

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Golden Dawn salutes the courageous decision of British citizens*, Golden Dawn, 24th June 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/golden-dawn-salutes-the-courageous-decision-of-british-citizens> [accessed 21st May 2020]

³⁶ *No compromises for Macedonia! Greek Nationalists sent a fighting message to the traitors throughout the world*, Golden Dawn, 28th June 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/no-compromises-for-macedonia-greek-nationalists-sent-a-fighting-message-to> [accessed 21st May 2020]
No to the separation of the state and our Faith-Article of N. G. Michaloliakos

³⁷ *The turkish threat has arrived in our gates-Article of N. G. Michaloliakos*, Golden Dawn, 9th December 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/the-turkish-threat-has-arrived-in-our-gates-article-of-n.-g.-michaloliakos> [accessed 21st May 2020]

“Our allies”, the memoranda, and the lack of national policy - Article by N. G. Michaloliakos, Golden Dawn, 14th November 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/our-allies-the-memoranda-and-the-lack-of-national-policy-article-by-n.-g.-m> [accessed 21st May 2020]

³⁸ *Turkey buys oil platform for the Cyprus’ EEZ!*

Golden Dawn determined to ‘correct’ this status-quo “radically opposed to the laws of geopolitics”.³⁹

As aforementioned, these dire circumstances currently facing the Greek ‘Self’ are of direct consequence to its ‘organic’ relationship with Moscow. Now seemingly contending with diplomatic isolation, the Kremlin is also understood to be a victim of the Euro-Atlantic ‘Other’ and its “black-white” geopolitical dichotomies.⁴⁰ This is made vividly clear throughout stories connected to the Ukraine conflict. Understood as a Western geopolitical plot to “punish Russia”, the war is viewed as a direct threat to norms of “global peace”.⁴¹ Indeed, the narrative villain is seen as especially willing to “give weapons to government forces to keep on fighting”, with such actions ultimately disturbing ‘objective’ continental circumstances conducive to the Greek ‘Self’ and Russia’s alliance.⁴² Of course, it ought to be remembered that the relationship’s current state is ultimately viewed through a subjective Hellenic lens. This is exemplified by the party’s focus on the effects of ongoing anti-Russian sanctions on Greek society. Said to be “devastating not only our domestic economy, but also our fine diplomatic relations”, the economic embargo is characterised as an artificial division directly harming the nation-protagonist.⁴³ This is evident from Golden Dawn’s romantic appeal to subsequently “support the Greek farmer”, with Russia essential to the nation’s everyday prosperity.⁴⁴ This theme of national well-being is taken to extremes within the corpus through discussions of Islamist terrorism “which threatens the whole of Europe”.⁴⁵ Both states are viewed as victims of this problem, with the party stating after the 2017 St. Petersburg attacks that “all the civilized nations should unite and fight in common for the elimination of Islamic terrorism”.⁴⁶ This metaphysical ‘chaos’ now plaguing the Greek ‘Self’

³⁹ *Greece and Geopolitics – Article of N. G. Michaloliakos*

⁴⁰ *Turkey buys oil platform for the Cyprus’ EEZ!*

⁴¹ *General Epitidios: “The European Union destroyed Ukraine in order to punish Russia”*, Golden Dawn, 17th February 2015 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/general-epitidios-the-european-union-destroyed-ukraine-in-order-to-punish-r> [accessed 22nd May 2020]

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Greek-Russian Alliance: Visitation of N. G. Michaloliakos at the Russian stand during the 81st TIF-Photography*, Golden Dawn, 17th September 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/greek-russian-alliance-visitation-of-n.-g.-michaloliakos-at-the-russian-sta> [accessed 22nd May 2020]

⁴⁴ *Interview of N. G. Michaloliakos at TIF: Greek Nationalists resist to Memoranda and to the illegal immigration-VIDEO*, Golden Dawn, 17th September 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/interview-of-n.-g.-michaloliakos-at-deth-greek-nationalists-resist-to-memor> [accessed 24th May 2020]

⁴⁵ *Golden Dawn in the Russian Embassy to honor the memory of the Ambassador Andrey Karlof - Photos – VIDEO*, Golden Dawn, 23rd December 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/golden-dawn-in-the-russian-embassy-to-honor-the-memory-of-the-ambassador-an> [accessed 24th May 2020]

⁴⁶ *Condolences from N. G. Michaloliakos to the Russian Nation*, Golden Dawn, 4th April 2017 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/condolences-from-n.-g.-michaloliakos-to-the-russian-nation> [accessed 24th May 2020]

is subsequently correlated with Russia's geopolitical absence, thereby hinting at Moscow's essential position within this subjective narrative.

An alliance built on fertile soil?

Overall, it appears that Golden Dawn also envisions Moscow as a 'spatiotemporal' force capable of restoring an ambiguous "old order" so desired by Europe's radical right.⁴⁷ Continuing its rise as a key global player, Russia appears to have encouraged the party to subjectively renegotiate its narrative in line with these advantageous developments. This is justified through stories that describe the state as acting uniquely in accordance with its true 'Self'. For instance, whilst the party offers little discussion of the Kremlin's own domestic revolution under Putin, the movement views the country as having embraced its natural "great power" role.⁴⁸ This is best seen through Michaloliakos' 2014 messianic declaration that in relation to the West it is "the only superpower that can obstruct its hegemony".⁴⁹ As a result of this dichotomy, it appears that the country is essentially understood to be a harbinger of various realist values that are simultaneously integral to the illiberal Greek 'Self'. This is made clear during Golden Dawn's aforementioned discussions of Ukraine, with former party MEP Georgios Epitidios' statement that "Ukraine is a vital space for Russia's defence", essentially characterising Russian actions as a defence of 'organic' state interests.⁵⁰ Simultaneously, Moscow's embrace of its 'national circumstances' is also seen as responsible for its defence of Syrian sovereignty, as "close bonds with Russia" guarantee protection from Western 'aggression'.⁵¹ In contrast, Greece is viewed as currently lacking "such bonds", with the Kremlin's inherent power seemingly capable of transforming a postmodern political present.⁵²

⁴⁷ Aristotle Kallis, *A Thin Red Line?: Far Right and Mainstream in Relational Perspective in The European Far Right: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* ed. Giorgos Charalambous (Nicosia: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2015), p. 10

⁴⁸ N. G. Michaloliakos' interview on the Russian Network "Russia Athens" about the deep roots of the relationship between Greece and Russia – VIDEO

⁴⁹ Turkey buys oil platform for the Cyprus' EEZ!

⁵⁰ General Epitidios: "The European Union destroyed Ukraine in order to punish Russia"

⁵¹ Greece-Syria The international suzerains are the common enemies, Golden Dawn, 17th May 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/greece-syria-the-international-suzerains-are-the-common-enemies> [accessed 24th May 2020]

⁵² Ibid.

For the party, this transformative power appears especially true due to the Kremlin's inescapable ties with a traditional 'Europe'. This connection is the result of Golden Dawn's aforementioned engagement with Anglo-American geopolitics, with the group's direct use of the tradition's terminology revealing the origins of Moscow's 'objective' conservatism. This is ultimately linked to various stories that allude to Russia's position as a "land power" or 'tellurocracy'.⁵³ Such a description bears an intentional resemblance to the neo-Eurasianist ideals of Dugin, with the political lives of these polities characterised by "fixed space, leading to stable social norms and traditions that manifest themselves in authoritarian, hierarchical system with an opposition to trade".⁵⁴ At the same time, however, this inherent traditionalism is seen as especially unique by the party. For example, a 2016 Golden Dawn meeting appeared to hint at Moscow's position as "the crucial geopolitical region of Heartland, a fact that makes this region attractive to the imperialists and in parallel makes this region a land of atrocities".⁵⁵ Of course, these "imperialists" are later identified as a mutual Euro-Atlantic antagonist, thereby characterising the Kremlin as naturally mired in conflict with Western liberalism.⁵⁶ It appears, therefore, that Russia is understood by the party to essentially operate as a redoubt of tradition, with its natural presence in Europe making it especially relevant for a traditional Hellenic 'Self'.

This link is made even more clear by the party's constant allusions to the thoroughly 'Christian' nature of Russia and its foreign policy outlook. Described in multiple stories as a "fellow believer", the country appears to thoroughly embody the ideals of "Greco-Roman civilization and Christianity, the foundations of our Europe!"⁵⁷ These beliefs appear to have fundamentally influenced Moscow's geopolitical decisions, particularly in relation to Syria and its Christian minorities. Indeed, discussions following the election of Donald Trump

⁵³ Sofia Tipaldou, *The Dawning of Europe and Eurasia?*, p. 203

Greece and Geopolitics: A "strategic" perception of submission – Article of N. G. Michaloliakos
With high attendance the "Four overviews on geopolitics" by the Institution A.I.G.I.S.-Photography
 N. G. Michaloliakos' interview on the Russian Network "Russia Athens" about the deep roots of the relationship between Greece and Russia – VIDEO

⁵⁴ Kirill Kalinin, *Neo-Eurasianism and the Russian elite: the irrelevance of Aleksandr Dugin's geopolitics*, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 35, No. 5-6 (2019), p. 462

⁵⁵ *With high attendance the "Four overviews on geopolitics" by the Institution A.I.G.I.S.-Photography*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ "The City has fallen": *The Greek nationalists honored the Memory of the last defenders of Constantinople*, Golden Dawn, 31st May 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/the-city-has-fallen-the-greek-nationalists-honored-the-memory-of-the-last-d> [accessed 26th May 2020]

Eleni Zaroulia: Our Ancestors sacrificed for Macedonia, we will not give her to anyone!, Golden Dawn, 4th April 2019 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/eleni-zaroulia-our-ancestors-sacrificed-for-macedonia-we-will-not-give-her> [accessed 26th May 2020]

Golden Dawn salutes the courageous decision of British citizens

characterised the upstart American president as directly following in Putin's ideological footsteps, with an associated article stating that "Trump and Putin unshakably believe in the freedom of religions and the need for respect of the national and religious minorities".⁵⁸ Such an understanding once again characterises the Kremlin as a Eurasianist defender of the "Cultural and civilizational diversity of the world", thereby inherently promoting the validity of Golden Dawn's conservative 'Self'.⁵⁹ For Greece, however, this relationship is viewed as particularly important due to Russia's continued embrace of a more specific 'Orthodox' tradition. Often paired to Athens through phrases such as "the two Orthodox people", the country's description is strikingly similar to Huntington's theory that Russia is the "core state" of a uniquely Orthodox civilization.⁶⁰ This therefore allows Moscow to offer a specifically enticing alternative narrative to the continent's current liberalism. As Michaloliakos stated, "Notably for us, Greeks, a Europe with Russia would be crucial, because we could have by our side hundred millions of Orthodox".⁶¹

These understandings subsequently impact the party's envisioned narrative future. Overall, this brief cluster of stories is united by assumptions surrounding an emerging international system, dominated by "multipolar" realities.⁶² Naturally, Russia's aforementioned actions are seen as playing a key role in this system's growth, with the country often grouped together with 'alternative' powers, such as China.⁶³ As a result, Golden Dawn believes that the rhetorical and material freedom afforded by such changes would allow Greece to perform a

⁵⁸ *The importance of the Trump-Putin contact for Turkey, Syria and Middle Asia*, Golden Dawn, 25th January 2017 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/the-importance-of-the-trump-putin-contact-for-turkey-syria-and-middle-asia> [accessed 26th May 2020]

⁵⁹ *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 1st December 2016, Section 2, Articles 4-5 - https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptlCk6BZ29/content/id/2542248 [accessed 26th May 2020]

⁶⁰ *Golden Dawn welcomes the Leader of Russia Mr. Vladimir Putin to Greece*, Golden Dawn, 27th May 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/golden-dawn-welcomes-the-leader-of-russia-mr.-vladimir-putin-to-greece> [accessed 26th May 2020]

Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations: The Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), pp. 45-46

⁶¹ *Our Europe-Article of N. G. Michaloliakos*, Golden Dawn, 16th December 2016 -

<http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/our-europe-article-of-n.-g.-michaloliakos> [accessed 26th May 2020]

⁶² *With high attendance the "Four overviews on geopolitics" by the Institution A.I.G.I.S.-Photography*

⁶³ *Golden Dawn's Program for a Free and Powerful Nation*, Golden Dawn, 19th January 2015 -

<http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/golden-dawns-program-for-a-free-and-powerful-nation> [accessed 26th May 2020]

The Golden Dawn condemns the missile attacks in Syria, Golden Dawn, 16th April 2018 -

<http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/the-golden-dawn-condemns-the-missile-attacks-in-syria> [accessed 26th May 2020]

“geostrategic shift” back to its “natural ally”.⁶⁴ This would subsequently encourage conditions conducive to the natural ‘Self’, as a thalassocrat Athens could offer Russia an “outlet to the sea” in return for protection against a mutual Turkish antagonist.⁶⁵ Certainly, much of the party’s future hopes focus on Russia’s military, with one article excitedly discussing

joint aeronautical exercises in the south Aegean sea for Greek and Russian armed forces, and transnational contacts for permanent installation of the Russian fleet in the Aegean bases of Syros or Poros.⁶⁶

These developments ultimately strengthen beliefs that

A Greek-Russian alliance will offer enormous geostrategic advantages for both of our countries. It will provide the opportunity for Greece to declare the Greek EEZ, to exploit our rich energy resources to the benefit of the Greek people in order to make Greece a force to be reckoned in the Eastern Mediterranean.⁶⁷

This sovereign cooperation contrasts with ‘spurious’ ‘counterstories’ claiming that the party would “sell their Homeland for “mother Russia””, with Russian relations fundamentally viewed as ‘organic’.⁶⁸ As such, it seems that Moscow’s ongoing rise is directly connected to Golden Dawn’s long-held desire “For a Great Greece in a Free Europe”, the headline of its first publication in 1983.⁶⁹

Conclusion

⁶⁴ *Greece – Russia – Syriza and Golden Dawn*, Golden Dawn, 5th February 2015 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/greece-russia-syriza-and-golden-dawn> [accessed 26th May 2020]
Speeches of Golden Dawn European Parliament members at the International Patriotic Forum in Russia, Golden Dawn, 2nd April 2015 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/speeches-of-golden-dawn-european-parliament-members-at-the-international-pa> [accessed 26th May 2020]

⁶⁵ *With high attendance the “Four overviews on geopolitics” by the Institution A.I.G.I.S.-Photography Greece and Geopolitics: A “strategic” perception of submission – Article of N. G. Michaloliakos*

⁶⁶ *Greece – Russia – Syriza and Golden Dawn*

⁶⁷ *Golden Dawn welcomes the Leader of Russia Mr. Vladimir Putin to Greece*

⁶⁸ *Communists while supporting USA! Article of N.G. Michaloliakos*

⁶⁹ *Our Europe-Article of N. G. Michaloliakos*

In conclusion, therefore, it appears that the group's overarching story has simultaneously strengthened the potential existence of a positive narrative template, whilst also providing more information as to this shared outlook's theoretical underpinnings. Seemingly this study's most militant party, Golden Dawn appears eager to openly engage with classical geopolitics' more esoteric vocabulary. Of course, this is complemented by a common radical right interest in defending 'national tradition', with Russia allowing the party to weave both pursuits together. Certainly, party stories offer an elaborate discussion of Russian links, casting both Orthodox nations as historically engaged in a natural alliance of land and sea power. For a traditionally grand and thalassocrat Greek 'Self', however, such links are left strained by the spatiotemporal confusion enforced by a now almost predictable Euro-Atlantic 'Other'. Subsequently, the state is forced to endure a 'post-sovereign' political present under an alien Western universalism, thereby making it vulnerable to an 'eternal' Turkish enemy. This results in perhaps the most messianic understanding of Russia within this investigation, with the state embodying a mystical "Orthodox collectivist East", directly linked to neo-Eurasianist theory.⁷⁰ Of course, it ought to be remembered that such extremist tendencies were ultimately responsible for the party's aforementioned downfall. Questions may be asked, therefore, as to the relevance of such ideas today. Nevertheless, whilst the party may have fallen foul of radical right needs to maintain a moderate image, Golden Dawn's narrative is revealing of ongoing nationalist thought in Greece and Europe. This is exemplified by Kyriakos Velopoulos' new 'Greek Solution' party, which is rumoured to possess close Kremlin ties. Stating that "we go logically towards Christian Russia...", the fledgling group appears to be directly influenced by Golden Dawn's pioneering history within radical thought.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Alexander Dugin, *Osnovy Geopolitiki: Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rossii* [The Foundations of Geopolitics: The Geopolitical Future of Russia] (Moscow: Arctogaia, 1997), p. 389

⁷¹ John Psaropoulos, *Kyriakos Velopoulos: From TV salesman to European Parliament*, Al Jazeera, 1st June 2019 - <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/05/kyriakos-velopoulos-tv-salesman-european-parliament-190530192827942.html>

Comparison and Reflection

Having examined the four parties' individual Russia narratives, it is now useful to reflect on what such analysis may reveal regarding the European radical right's overall understanding of Moscow. Of course, whilst the groups have shown great diversity in line with this study's expectations, it is also clear that their patterns of behaviour are ultimately bound by Wertsch's "schematic narrative template".¹ Stressing universal desires to restore a lost national grandeur akin to the Nouvelle Droite philosophical tradition, the four movements' fundamental narratives appear to traverse the "specific" national circumstances so lauded by their literatures.² This abstract 'template' thereby places a common radical right 'nation-protagonist' in an inherently "crisis-driven present", with the subjective understandings of this chaotic, postmodern existence influencing the contours of a modern-era 'Golden Age' and a potential future 'return' to this reality.³ On an international scale, this 'struggle' occurs within an Anglo-American geopolitical dichotomy, with Russia's position as a narrative 'hero' or 'villain' decided according to the subjective, contemporary needs of the party. Certainly, Jobbik's decisive turn against Moscow has showcased the crucial fact that the European radical right does not always look favourably upon a resurgent Russia. Whether positive or negative, however, it is important to note that these outlooks are invariably presented as 'objective fact', leaving little room for nuance.⁴ This rather ironic situation in which supposedly 'unchangeable' realities are manipulated for subjective gain is reflected in the actions of geopolitics' very founders. For example, Ó Tuathail has noted the bias present in Mackinder's own method during his ventures in Kenya, stating that "Mackinder's science was neutral yet absolutely superior, objective yet thoroughly personalized".⁵ As a result, whilst further research will be needed in order to strengthen its validity, it does appear that a 'mechanism' exists by which a radical right 'Self' understands the resurgent Russian 'Other'. This framework has been exposed by the fundamental fixtures of radical right narrative, with

¹ James V. Wertsch, *Voice of Collective Remembering* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 60-62

² Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far-Right: Tango Noir* (Oxford: Routledge, 2018), p. xxiii

³ Hakkı Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* (2020), p. 14

⁴ Roger Griffin, *Afterword in Radical Right in Central and Eastern Europe Since 1989* ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), p. 300

⁵ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 63

overarching realities regarding Moscow ultimately viewed through the lens of national peculiarities.

Between myth and reality – Constructing radical right ‘truth’

In practical terms, this ‘mechanism’ begins with the acknowledgement that European radical right parties desire to achieve two interconnected aims. These goals are both related to the tradition’s inheritance from its neo-fascist predecessors, with the groups showcasing both continuity and novelty in relation to established theory.⁶ For example, radical right outlooks still desire to “save the nations” by enforcing ‘objective’ nationalist values within state structures, with differences only appearing once the details of this goal are placed under scrutiny.⁷ Indeed, whilst the extra parliamentary far-right have maintained revolutionary tendencies, the radical right’s reactionary nature has seen parties focus on ‘restoring’ a historical “Golden Age”.⁸ Such a comparative lack of militancy hints at a crucial factor that has influenced the subjectivity of the radical right ‘Self’. This is namely the tradition’s frustration with fringe politics and its subsequent desire to restore this grandeur by operating as a “democratic” force.⁹ Such willingness to amass power in line with Western liberal practices, which remain the reality for the majority of Europe’s population, thereby places the ‘objective Self’ de facto under the stresses and strains of societal influence. This desire for electoral approval is made clear by the radical right’s embrace of a thoroughly nationalist form of ‘populism’, with the four groups eager to champion ““the pure people” versus “the corrupt elite””.¹⁰ Due to this, the exact nature of this nationalist ‘Self’ appears to be fundamentally influenced by material concerns of power, with this study documenting two key practices that have affected this self-understanding.

⁶ Matt Golder, *Far Right Parties in Europe*, Annual Review of Political Science, Vol. 19 (2016), p. 481

⁷ Ibid.

60 ans de la Constitution: sauver les nations pour sauver l’Europe [60 years of the Constitution: save the nations in order to save Europe], Rassemblement National, 4th October 2018 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/tribunes-libres/60-ans-de-la-constitution-sauver-les-nations-pour-sauver-leurope/> [accessed 12th June 2020]

⁸ Jean-Yves Camus & Nicolas Lebourg, *Far-Right Politics in Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), p. 22

Nobody trusts Orbán in the East, Jobbik, 1st April 2015 -

https://www.jobbik.com/nobody_trusts_orban_in_the_east [accessed 12th June 2020]

⁹ Cas Mudde, *The War of Words: Defining the Extreme Right Party Family*, West European Politics, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1996), pp. 230-231

¹⁰ Conrad Ziller & Thomas Schübel, “The Pure People” versus “the Corrupt Elite”? Political Corruption, Political Trust and the Success of Radical Right Parties in Europe, *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, Vol. 25 (2015), p. 368

Refining ‘the struggle’ for the national audience

Firstly, perhaps the most obvious influence on these radical right identities is the direct rejection of ‘status-quo’ ideals. Often taking the form of government policy, these beliefs are almost invariably viewed as responsible for a ‘uncertain’ present wholly incompatible with the nation-protagonist’s ‘natural’ circumstances.¹¹ As aforementioned, a distaste for the contemporary appears to be inherent to this political tradition, with the certainties of a historical ‘Golden Age’ contrasting with today’s “paranoid mindset”.¹² This is exemplified by the parties’ various stories that condemn the status-quo supported in their capitals, with the groups using phrases such as “para-state” and “megalomania” to describe authorities and their ‘treacherous’ behaviour.¹³ Such ‘betrayal’ often takes the form of an adherence to the ‘postmodernity’ of Western liberal values, with this universalism threatening national distinctiveness according to modern-era norms.¹⁴ In spite of this, Jobbik’s newfound scepticism of Russia once again challenges this one-dimensional understanding, with Moscow’s supposed activities in Hungary now viewed by the party as a “colonization”.¹⁵ As such, it could be argued that rather than instinctively opposing outside ideology of a certain origin, the radical right in practice dislikes the very concept of foreign influence, which naturally implies a ‘post-sovereign’ distortion of the nation-state. This is made clear by similar stories detailing government “servitude” regardless of the supposed ‘master’, as these actions naturally contrast with the independent ‘Self’.¹⁶ This subsequently encourages an inverse correlation in relation to the party’s identity creation, with government actions narrowing the resources available to radical right parties in their search to construct a ‘Self’ that is simultaneously nationalist and popular.

¹¹ Terry Givens, *Voting Radical Right in Western Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 20

¹² Hakkı Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power (2020), p. 12

¹³ *Keine EU-Erweiterung am Westbalkan* [No EU enlargement in the Western Balkans], AfD Kompakt, 27th April 2018 - <https://afdKompakt.de/2018/04/27/keine-eu-erweiterung-am-westbalkan/> [accessed 12th June 2020] *No compromises for Macedonia! Greek Nationalists sent a fighting message to the traitors throughout the world*, Golden Dawn, 28th June 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/no-compromises-for-macedonia-greek-nationalists-sent-a-fighting-message-to> [accessed 12th June 2020]

¹⁴ Jean-Yves Camus & Nicolas Lebourg, *Far-Right Politics in Europe*, pp. 123-124

¹⁵ *Orbán is willing to give up EU membership just to serve his mafia network*, Jobbik, 1st March 2019 - https://www.jobbik.com/orban_is_willing_to_give_up_eu_membership_just_to_serve_his_mafia_network [accessed 12th June 2020]

¹⁶ *With high attendance the “Four overviews on geopolitics” by the Institution A.I.G.I.S.-Photography*, Golden Dawn, 21st December 2016 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/with-high-attendance-the-four-overviews-on-geopolitics-by-the-institution-a> [accessed 13th June 2020]

Furthermore, this rather blunt instrument of identity formation is complemented by a constant refinement of the nationalist ideals available to the parties. This process has been made clear by policies such as the Rassemblement National's "dédiabolisation", which has enforced a strict "periodization" of historical grandeur in line with national circumstances and popular sentiment.¹⁷ The Alternative for Germany's continued dismissal of neo-Nazism perhaps exemplifies this tendency of geopolitical actors to act as "timetravellers", emphasising and obscuring 'national time' to their liking.¹⁸ Subsequently, any attachment to National Socialist ideals that are deeply unpopular in German society and even banned by official decree is avoided by the party, as this would likely impact its electoral popularity and official legality.¹⁹ Of course, this would subsequently affect the group's ability to promote any form of grand national 'Self' within state institutions. This would thereby disrupt its two core aims as set out within the political tradition's theoretical background. As such, radical right parties gravitate towards a national "emplotment" focused on historical ideals free from controversy, with the RN's admiration of De Gaulle mirroring Golden Dawn's defence of Orthodoxy.²⁰ In line with this study's theory, it is perhaps best to view and measure this phenomenon through the use of the 'Overton Window' concept. This theory describes the range of political thought deemed acceptable by a society at a given time.²¹ These thoughts can be mapped onto six levels of severity ranging from "Unthinkable" to "Policy", with societies constantly renegotiating the limits of this 'window'.²² Certainly, Europe's radical right have played a

¹⁷ Renaud Thillaye & Claudia Chwalisz, *The Front National: Old Rhetoric, New Practices*, The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs, Vol. 24, Issue 2 (2015), p. 103

Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics: A Conceptual Matrix*, Progress in Human Geography, Vol. 37, No. 5 (2012), p. 687

¹⁸ *AfD's Gauland plays down Nazi era as a 'bird shit' in German history*, Deutsche Welle, 2nd June 2018 - <https://www.dw.com/en/afds-gauland-plays-down-nazi-era-as-a-bird-shit-in-german-history/a-44055213> [accessed 14th June 2020]

Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics*, p. 686

¹⁹ *Criminal Code of the Federal Republic of Germany*, Section 86, 86a, German Law Archive - <https://germanlawarchive.iuscomp.org/?p=752#86> [accessed 14th June 2020]

²⁰ *Centenaire de la victoire de la 1^{ère} guerre mondiale à Verdun: discours de Marine Le Pen* [Centenary of the victory of the 1st World War in Verdun: speech by Marine Le Pen], Rassemblement National, 10th November 2018 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/videos/centenaire-de-la-victoire-de-la-1ere-guerre-mondiale-a-verdun-discours-de-marine-le-pen/> [accessed 14th June 2020]

No to the separation of the state and our Faith-Article of N. G. Michaloliakos, Golden Dawn, 27th November 2018 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/no-to-the-separation-of-the-state-and-our-faith-article-of-n.-g.-michalolia> [accessed 14th June 2020]

Carl Dahlman & Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Broken Bosnia: The Localized Geopolitics of Displacement and Return in Two Bosnian Places*, Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. 95, No. 3 (2005), p. 660

²¹ *The Overton Window*, Mackinac Center for Public Policy - <https://www.mackinac.org/OvertonWindow> [accessed 31st May 2020]

²² Craig Dellandria, *Ontario needs an NDP of the Right*, Policy Options / Options Politiques, 15th May 2017 - <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/may-2017/ontario-needs-an-ndp-of-the-right/> [accessed 14th June 2020]

crucial role with regards to the limits of acceptable thought, with many adherents openly embracing Overton's concept.²³ It could be argued, then, that by reflexively influencing the parameters of acceptable thought, radical right parties have been able to fine tune their own stories surrounding the nation's changing fortunes. In relation to Russia, this approach may be responsible for whether or not a party rhetorically decouples the country from its Soviet legacies, as the wrong decision could potentially damage the group's ability to act as a 'national champion'.

"The mythic past" – The emotional pull of narrative²⁴

These processes ultimately decide what resources are available to radical right movements as they construct the national 'Self', which possesses an inherently 'temporal' nature. All four of these thoroughly conservative parties have shown a great interest in developing narrative as part of their identity. Of course, this is exemplified by the corpus' myriad of 'stories', which help reveal the nature of these nations' pasts, presents and potential futures when viewed in a wider context. These eras are explicitly endowed with specific emotional value by the radical right, thereby placing the contemporary 'concerns' of the electorate within an 'objective' temporality.²⁵ This is perhaps best seen with regards to the fact that the radical right parties' national 'Self's' wholly align with aforementioned 'Golden Ages', with this time believed to embody the country's "eternal values".²⁶ Such a romantic understanding thereby hints at the thoroughly objective nature with which these ideals are promoted to the electorate through mediums such as party websites. This tendency has been discussed by various researchers, with Megal Cinar noting how "organicism" can simplify narratives into their core concepts.²⁷ Such terminology closely resembles that of the radical right philosophy discussed throughout this study, as parties bluntly distinguish between geopolitical 'heroes'

²³ Ibid.

Christian Bjørnskov, *Populism: Three approaches to an international problem*, Economic Affairs, No. 39 (2019), p. 275

Kai Arzheimer, "Don't Mention the War!": How Populist Right-Wing Radicalism Became (Almost) Normal in Germany, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 57 (2019), p. 97

²⁴ Ishay Landa, *The Magic of the Extreme: On Fascism, Modernity, and Capitalism*, *The Journal of Holocaust Research*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (2019), p. 61

²⁵ Hakkı Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, p. 2

²⁶ Roger Griffin, *Afterword*, p. 300

²⁷ Meral Cinar, *Collective Memory and National Membership: Identity and Citizenship Models in Turkey and Austria* (London: Palgrave, 2015), pp. 5-7

and ‘villains’.²⁸ This simplicity ensures the party’s continued dominance over the narrative and its subsequent position as national ‘vanguard’. As Hakkı Taş has argued, the certainty of these narratives “ensures individuals cease to be the autonomous agents of their lives, but float through time as part of the greater nation”.²⁹ Overall, these developments ultimately result in the articulation of an objective and detailed national ‘Self’, whose monolithic narrative is used as a powerful political weapon. This finally allows the radical right to mobilise the electorate, with these groups promoting themselves as the messianic inheritors of an unchanging tradition that will cast aside the troubles of the present day.³⁰

A matter of time and space – Grounding narrative in an ‘organic’ Europe

This narrative ‘objectivity’ appears to be the key link between radical right ideology and its fascination with classical geopolitics. At first glance, such a connection may seem obvious due to the tradition’s interest in militaristic rhetoric.³¹ Indeed, geopolitics naturally helps to endow the national ‘Self’ with a physical, territorial reality, with a historical ‘struggle’ to protect this presence appealing to the parties’ existential rhetoric.³² On a more theoretical level, however, it is perhaps the various ‘certainties’ offered by such realism which is ultimately so appealing to the groups. This can be seen in the way in which classical geopolitics explicitly ties ‘national interests’ to the very soil that countries inhabit, thereby implying that nations possess an unchanging character.³³ Of course, such ideals naturally complement radical right thought, which actively claims to represent objective values. As a result, geopolitics plays a crucial role in ‘elevating’ the national ‘Self’ to the international stage, with parties tying their ‘stories’ to the classical tradition throughout their literatures. For example, whilst Golden Dawn’s extremism sees the party engage with the tradition’s esoteric terminology, the other three groups are still eager to make direct reference to thinkers such as Brzezinski and Dugin.³⁴ The universal acceptance of these theoretical precepts

²⁸ Lynn Davies, *Gender, Education, Extremism and Security*, Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, Vol. 38, No. 5 (2008), pp. 620-621

²⁹ Hakkı Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, p. 5

³⁰ Roger Griffin, *Afterword*, p. 300

³¹ Ian Klinke, *Geopolitics and the Political Right: Lessons from Germany*, International Affairs, Vol. 94, No. 3 (2018), pp. 498-501

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics*, p. 42

³⁴ *With high attendance the “Four overviews on geopolitics” by the Institution A.I.G.I.S.-Photography L’Ukraine de l’Ouest désormais «ouvertement» vassalisée par Washington [Western Ukraine now “openly” vassalized by Washington]*, Rassemblement National, 5th December 2014 -

subsequently hints at a shared understanding of what ‘forces’ drive European politics, with this directly impacting narratives surrounding the Russian ‘Other’.

It ought to be noted that this study’s parties appear to focus specifically on the aforementioned norms of Anglo-American geopolitics. This is in spite of the rhetorical diversity of the corpus, with this study’s critical perspective suggesting that even nationalist parties are prone to engage with hegemonic discourse. The inherent ‘power’ of this outlook is made clear by its focus on British and American strategy in Europe, which may be understood critically as representing ‘the world’ to those who embrace the tradition.³⁵ This is evident with regards to Mackinder and his ‘Heartland’ thesis when viewed as a subjective assessment of British continental strategy. Described by Zhengyu Wu as a plan to “oppose any European power unifying or achieving hegemony on the continent”, the strategy ultimately aimed to maintain London’s naval supremacy by denying a ‘land state’ possession of resources capable of opposing such dominance.³⁶ This dichotomous worldview subsequently results in the creation of a Russian Heartland ‘Other’, which embodied a distinct ‘land power’ most likely to accrue said resources through expansion.³⁷ For this study’s radical right narratives, this inherent conflict appears to be understood as a fact of European diplomacy. Certainly, the conflict’s ‘organic’ nature also appears to function as a realist understanding of ‘order’, with objective geography ensuring a “balance of power” so often tied by the groups to their independent ‘Self’.³⁸ This ‘balance’ is subsequently linked to the four movements’ repeated characterisation of Europe as a diverse “community of civilisation”, with Ian Klinke noting extreme right desires to enforce a continental “Monroe Doctrine”, in which all nations can fully express themselves.³⁹ As a result, it appears that

<https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/lukraine-de-louest-desormais-ouvertement-vassalisee-par-washington/> [accessed 16th June 2020]

Gábor Vona had a lecture at Lomonosov University in Russia, Jobbik, 24th May 2013 -

https://www.jobbik.com/g%C3%A1bor_vona_had_lecture_lomonosov_university_russia [accessed 16th June 2020]

³⁵ Zhengyu Wu, *Classical geopolitics, realism and the balance of power theory*, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 6 (2018), p. 794

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 795

³⁷ Halford Mackinder, *The Geographical Pivot of History*, *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (1904), p. 435

Halford Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction* (London: Holt, 1919), p. 150

³⁸ Zhengyu Wu, *Classical geopolitics*, p. 794

³⁹ Marta Lorimer, *Europe as ideological resource: the case of the Rassemblement National*, *Journal of European Public Policy*, Forthcoming (2020), p. 7

Ian Klinke, *Geopolitics and the political right: Lessons from Germany*, *International Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 3 (2018), p. 499

Europe's radical right uses this Anglo-Russian dichotomy in order to understand from where an 'ideological' threat may appear in relation to Europe and subsequently their own country. Naturally, the use of this theory to navigate ongoing tensions is motivated by material interests, with parties 'picking sides' according to their self-understandings. With regards to Moscow, this results in two potential outlooks, with the acceptance or rejection of Russia's inherent power viewed as important to restoring a historical "balance" deemed essential to a lost and wholly objective 'Golden Age'.⁴⁰

Russia as narrative hero and villain

Given the tendency of this study's parties to view Russia as 'heroic', it is perhaps appropriate to first discuss the positive outlook that has emerged from the corpus. Overall, these beliefs effectively view Russia as an 'Eurasian Saviour', as such views rely on the core tenets of neo-Eurasianism. Of course, many of the parties have not just engaged with Dugin's ideas but have actively maintained long-term professional contact.⁴¹ This tendency has occurred in the face of a 'postmodern' Euro-Atlantic 'villain', whose liberal universalism has supposedly challenged the geopolitical independence and modern-era values of both the radical right 'Self' and Russia. Due to this, it may seem clear why Dugin's Russo-centric interpretation of Anglo-American geopolitics may be so appealing to these groups. As aforementioned, neo-Eurasianism transforms the supposed "backwardness" of Moscow's static 'land power' into a virtue, characterising the country as a uniquely anti-Western redoubt of traditionalism.⁴²

⁴⁰ *144 Engagements Présidentiels* [144 Presidential Commitments], Rassemblement National (2017), p. 19
Weidel: Russland gehört genauso an den Verhandlungstisch wie der Nordatlantikpakt [Weidel: Russia is just as much at the negotiating table as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization], Alternative for Germany, 22nd April 2016 - <https://www.afd.de/weidel-russland-gehoert-genauso-an-den-verhandlungstisch-wie-der-nordatlantikpakt/> [accessed 15th June 2020]

Index: Gyöngyösi: Crimea means a chance for Hungarians as well, Jobbik, 17th March 2014 - https://www.jobbik.com/index_gy%C3%B6ngy%C3%B6si_crimea_means_chance_hungarians_well [accessed 15th June 2020]

⁴¹ "Natural allies" - *The Kremlin connections of the Greek far-right*, Political Capital Institute, 1st March 2016 - https://www.politicalcapital.hu/hirek.php?article_read=1&article_id=27 [accessed 16th June 2020]

Jean-Yves Camus, *A Long-Lasting Friendship: Alexander Dugin and the French Radical Right in Eurasianism and the European Far-Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* ed. Marlene Laruelle (London: Lexington Books, 2015), p. 82

Gábor Vona had a lecture at Lomonosov University in Russia

⁴² Charles Clover, *The Unlikely Origins of Russia's Manifest Destiny*, Foreign Policy, 27th July 2016 - <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/27/geopolitics-russia-mackinder-eurasia-heartland-dugin-ukraine-eurasianism-manifest-destiny-putin/> [accessed 13th June 2020]

Alexander Dugin, *Osnovy Geopolitiki: Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rossii* [*The Foundations of Geopolitics: The Geopolitical Future of Russia*] (Moscow: Arctogaia, 1997), pp. 15-19

This position is justified through Moscow’s retrospective incorporation into a party’s overall narrative. For example, Russia’s historical interactions with the ‘Self’ are viewed as emblematic of a historical sovereignty based on natural circumstance. This is clear in the way bilateral interactions are explicitly facilitated through an ‘organic’ continental framework that stress the national voice. Such constructs include the RN’s “Europe from Brest to Vladivostok” and Jobbik’s “Germany-Russia-Turkey triangle”.⁴³ This theme continues with Russia’s contemporary conceptualisation as a uniquely “international conservative power” struggling for modern-era certainties regarding state and society.⁴⁴ This is made particularly clear in relation to the actions of Vladimir Putin, who appears to have ‘squared the circle’ by uniting traditional values with the state.⁴⁵ Such an achievement naturally contrasts with a continent dominated by “ultra-liberalism”, with the Kremlin’s foreign policy actions subsequently viewed as a ‘spatiotemporal’ defence of “national interests”.⁴⁶ Ultimately, this messianic position is seen as playing a decisive role in restoring a diverse, “multipolar” world, conducive to the ‘Self’.⁴⁷ It could be argued, then, that such conceptions view the country as the harbinger of what Dugin describes as “plural anthropology”, with the state endowed with a “universal mission” to defend “national diversity”.⁴⁸

In spite of such praise, it is also important to discuss the negative outlook that has emerged in this investigation. Of course, given the fact that only one party has expressed such ideas, it is

⁴³ *1er mai 2016: discours de Marine Le Pen* [May 1, 2016: speech by Marine Le Pen], Rassemblement National, 3rd May 2016 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/discours/1er-mai-2016-discours-de-marine-le-pen/> [accessed 16th June 2020]

Why does Orbán keep voting for anti-Russia sanctions?, Jobbik, 1st February 2017 - https://www.jobbik.com/why_does_viktor_orban_keep_voting_for_anti_russia_sanctions [accessed 16th June 2020]

⁴⁴ Paul F. Robinson, *Russia’s Emergence as an International Conservative Power*, *Russia in Global Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2020), p. 10

⁴⁵ *Meuthen / Gauland: Wir gratulieren Wladimir Putin zur Wiederwahl* [Meuthen / Gauland: Congratulations to Vladimir Putin for re-election], *Alternative for Germany*, 18th March 2018 - <https://www.afd.de/joerg-meuthen-wir-gratulieren-wladimir-putin-zur-wiederwahl/> [accessed 16th June 2020]

Andrew Marr BBC Interview - Marine Le Pen, BBC News, 13th November 2016 - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/000000.pdf> [accessed 17th June 2020]

Nobody trusts Orbán in the East

⁴⁶ *Le développement chinois ne doit pas nous laisser indifférents* [We should not be indifferent to Chinese development], Rassemblement National, 25th October 2017 - <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/le-developpement-chinois-ne-doit-pas-nous-laisser-indifferents/> [accessed 17th June 2020]

Why does Orbán keep voting for anti-Russia sanctions?

⁴⁷ *With high attendance the “Four overviews on geopolitics” by the Institution A.I.G.I.S.-Photography Dr. Alexander Gauland im Gespräch mit Roger Köppel von der Weltwoche* [Dr. Alexander Gauland in conversation with Roger Köppel from Weltwoche], *Alternative for Germany*, 30th July 2018 - <https://www.afd.de/alexander-gauland-im-interview-mit-der-weltwoche/> [accessed 17th June 2020]

⁴⁸ M. Millerman, *Alexander Dugin on Eurasianism, the Geopolitics of Land and Sea and a Russian Theory of Multipolarity*, *Theory Talks*, No. 66, December 2014, p. 11
Paul F. Robinson, *Russia’s Emergence as an International Conservative Power*, pp. 13-14

naturally difficult to explicitly ground this interpretation within the “schematic narrative template”. However, given the radical right’s tendency to promote ‘objective’ dualities of ‘good’ and ‘evil’, it is possible that wider evidence for this outlook may appear with further research. Having examined Jobbik’s increasing scepticism of Russia, it seems that this outlook ultimately describes Moscow as a ‘Neo-Soviet Meddler’. Whilst the party accepts Russia’s inherent geopolitical power, it by no means views it as benevolent. This is made clear by Jobbik’s characterisation of Russia’s resurgence as akin to Soviet repression, with the group now refusing to ‘bend time’ in order to argue that “now things are different”.⁴⁹ Often compared to a “looming Soviet threat”, Russia is subsequently ‘Othered’ due to its ‘normative’ challenge to the national ‘Self’.⁵⁰ This tendency to compare the country to its communist past suggests that its actions are dismissed as ‘postmodern’ and ‘ideological’, much like the Euro-Atlantic ‘villain’. As such, radical right calls to “strengthen Europe” ultimately resemble Russophile desires for ‘multipolarity’, with Moscow now viewed as responsible for having distorted a ‘Golden Age’ aligned with Europe’s ‘natural’ geopolitics.⁵¹ This renegotiation of shared presuppositions suggests that this outlook may follow a theoretical outline promoted by Atlanticist thinkers such as Zbigniew Brzezinski. Much as Dugin’s interpretation of Anglo-American geopolitics provides a framework for pro-Russian sentiment, the intellectual’s policy of ‘containing’ Eurasia may simultaneously function as a guide for a radical right ‘Self’ uneasy with Russia’s resurgence.⁵²

Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, it appears that whilst comparison of the four party narratives yields a great number of similarities and differences, it also reveals how these groups operate on a

⁴⁹ N. G. Michaloliakos’ interview on the Russian Network “Russia Athens” about the deep roots of the relationship between Greece and Russia – VIDEO, Golden Dawn, 24th February 2017 - <http://www.xryshaygh.com/en/view/n.-g.-michaloliakos-interview-on-the-russian-network-russia-athens-about-th> [accessed 17th June 2020]

⁵⁰ Schuman’s objectives still apply – Thoughts on 9th May, Jobbik, 9th May 2020 - https://www.jobbik.com/schumans_objectives_still_apply_thoughts_on_9th_may [accessed 18th June 2020]
Simon Dalby, *Geopolitical Discourse: Soviet Union as ‘Other’*, Alternatives, Vol. 13 (1988), pp. 415-416

⁵¹ Gyöngyösi: If you can’t do symbolic politics what can you?, Jobbik, 31st October 2019 - https://www.jobbik.com/gyongyosi_if_you_cant_even_do_symbolic_politics_what_can_you [accessed 18th June 2020]

Gyöngyösi: We need to let the English go and strengthen Europe, Jobbik, 31st October 2019 - https://www.jobbik.com/gyongyosi_we_need_to_let_the_english_go_and_strengthen_europe [accessed 18th June 2020]

⁵² Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Perseus Books, 1997), pp. 50-51

theoretical level. This is seemingly due to the organisations' "specific" interpretations of a shared ideological 'template', with the political tradition's essential beliefs acting as a mechanism by which the Russian 'Other' is understood as a geopolitical actor. This framework is exposed through the material decisions made by the parties when constructing a glorious national 'Self', which is always nationalist and 'popular', regardless of the distinct 'colouring' left by national tradition. This self-understanding is ultimately presented as the narrative's historical 'Golden Age', with this 'organicism' acting as the crucial link for the identity to classical geopolitics. This interest in geopolitical theory is expressed through the rigid dichotomy of the Anglo-American tradition, with its appeal to the soil inseparable from the nation's 'objective' reality. This thereby transforms Moscow into a narrative 'hero' or 'villain' depending on subjective circumstance. For instance, the four parties have generally shown a tendency to characterise the Kremlin as a messianic 'saviour'. This discovery validates the connections made by Marlene Laruelle between the radical right and neo-Eurasianism, with Russia understood as a redoubt of values cherished by the political tradition.⁵³ Certainly, Moscow is essentially viewed as the harbinger of an 'alter-universalism', capable of restoring modern-era values conducive to the 'Self'. At the same time, however, it is clear that some parties may negatively view the country's inherent power, with tentative research suggesting that this may result from a reluctance to decouple Russia from a "Soviet threat" akin to the thoughts of Brzezinski.⁵⁴ This theoretical engagement thereby challenges the "useful idiots" discourse so often attributed to the radical right, with desires for national salvation encouraging parties to pick sides in an existential debate fostered by the 'great thinkers' of geopolitics.⁵⁵

⁵³ Marlene Laruelle, *Dangerous Liaisons: Eurasianism, the European Far Right and Putin's Russia in Eurasianism and the European Far-Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* ed. Marlene Laruelle (London: Lexington Books, 2015), pp. 1-2

⁵⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, p. 59

⁵⁵ Alina Polyakova, *Why Europe Is Right to Fear Putin's Useful Idiots*, Foreign Policy, 23rd February 2016 - <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/23/why-europe-is-right-to-fear-putins-useful-idiots/> [accessed 5th August 2019]

Dr. Andrew Foxall, *Putin's Useful Idiots: Britain's Left, Right and Russia*, The Henry Jackson Society - Russia Studies Centre, Policy Paper No. 10 (2016)

Conclusion

Following the previous chapter's findings, it appears that this study has come to a number of new and sometimes surprising conclusions. Shifting focus onto the European side of the radical right-Russia relationship, the investigation has produced knowledge that is both innovative and potentially valuable for further research. This is the culmination of a methodology which has attempted to engage directly with various parties' publications on Moscow, which have remained unexplored to a considerable degree. As expected, these texts are characterised by monolithic understandings of 'the nation' and its global position, with radical right ideology possessing an especially militant adherence to 'objectivity'. Subsequently, the adoption of a critical, interpretivist approach has proven effective in providing satisfying answers to the study's two research questions. Certainly, the method's 'deconstruction' of party data has not only helped identify detailed geopolitical narratives but also expose the fundamental forces controlling the extent to which these "eternal values" coincide and contrast. This subjective renegotiation within radical right Russia policy, therefore, has ultimately resulted in the country being understood through a specifically radical lens of shared ideology and national tradition.

This is first evident with regard to the study's application of critical geopolitics. Aiming to democratise the practice of 'labelling' territory away from statecraft's "wise men", the tradition has proven effective in giving voice to the foreign policies of 'non-traditional' actors, such as the European radical right.¹ Furthermore, this critical understanding has succeeded in challenging the bias of these parties' geopolitical outlooks, characterising it as the result of a subjective 'Self' based on material circumstance.² At the same time, however, it is worth reflecting on the particular suitability of this approach in relation to understanding the increasingly popular radical right. Overall, the nationalist tradition's presuppositions, perhaps somewhat ironically, lend themselves to the hegemonic norms of geopolitics to a remarkable degree, with party samples expressing an especial admiration for these "wise men" and their realism. As aforementioned, this results in the Russian 'Other' being viewed through the prism of a "geopolitical gaze" forged by over a century of Anglo-American

¹ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Thinking Critically about Geopolitics* in *The Geopolitics Reader* eds. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby & Paul Routledge (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 3

² Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Introduction* in *The Geopolitics Reader*, p. 22

continental strategy.³ Intimately tied to politics' 'natural laws' as laid out by Mackinder in 1904, the school of thought casts Europe as existing organically between Anglo-American naval power and an inherently influential Russian "Heartland".⁴ Interestingly, this land-sea dichotomy is eagerly accepted by this study's radical right groups, who appear to draw objective certainty from this natural 'conflict'. Indeed, it could be contended that the four parties appear to embrace this metaphysical existence within a spatial reality akin to Spykman's intermediary "Rimland", with this 'organic' position providing a "balance" essential to the articulation of a grand national 'Self'.⁵

Simultaneously, the power of national peculiarities in deciding how the four parties use this information is striking.⁶ This investigation has made a strong case for the use of narrative analysis in exposing such decisive information, with the radical right 'Self' existing as much in an imagined past and future as the political present.⁷ Such temporality is made clear by the four groups' profound ambitions to emulate Julius Evola's "revolt against the modern world", with 'eternal' heroes and villains renegotiated in line with the uncertainties of a "liminal crisis" now threatening the country.⁸ This shared framework's alignment with James Wertsch's theory of "schematic narrative templates" is particularly noteworthy, as the movements use abstract ideological touchstones in order to subjectively construct their own "specific narratives" surrounding the struggle to restore a national 'Golden Age'.⁹ Geopolitical concerns, therefore, are intimately linked to this process of narrative construction. This is exemplified by the fact that the four parties' idealised histories are connected to an 'organic' continental balance, with the groups deciding whether or not Russia is 'ideologically' disrupting this order according to their own subjective national circumstances.

³ David Atkinson, *Geopolitical Imaginations in Modern Italy in Geopolitical Traditions: Critical Histories of a Century of Geopolitical Thought* eds. David Atkinson & Klaus Dodds (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 106

⁴ Zhengyu Wu, *Classical geopolitics, realism and the balance of power theory*, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 6 (2018), p. 795

⁵ Colin S. Gray, *Nicholas John Spykman, the Balance of Power, and International Order*, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 6 (2015), pp. 873-874

⁶ James V. Wertsch, *Voice of Collective Remembering* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 60-62

⁷ Hakkı Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* (2020), p. 6

Jean-Yves Camus & Nicolas Lebourg, *Far-Right Politics in Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), p. 22

⁸ Julius Evola, *Revolt against the modern world: Politics, Religion and Social Order in the Kali Yuga* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1995)

⁹ James V. Wertsch, *Voice of Collective Remembering*, pp. 60-62

Of course, the study's sample has shown a somewhat predictable tendency to forge positive narratives, which are influenced by neo-Eurasianism. Casting the Moscow-friendly policies of national 'heroes' such as De Gaulle and Bismarck as embodying a glorious past, these coinciding outlooks appear to be motivated by troubles that have arisen due to the imposition of 'ideological' Euro-Atlantic norms. As a result, Western, or specifically American, power is believed to have overstepped its bounds in a 'diverse' Europe, with the Russian "Heartland" viewed as the only power capable of restoring a continental harmony conducive to modern-era national interests. Jobbik's surprising rebuke of these more conventional conclusions, however, offers a narrative that is especially novel. This storyline now sees Russia characterised as the postmodern imperialist 'villain', which exerts undue control over the country in an 'ideological' manner akin to the Soviet era. It could be argued that this contrasting stance originates within Hungary's sensitive legacies regarding "Bolshevism", which still retain emotional power today.¹⁰ Due to this, it seems that the radical right's aversion to a normative, post-sovereign 'status-quo' translates into a 'grass is always greener' approach on the European geopolitical stage, with the subjective, opportunistic narratives that drive these beliefs characterising the four groups as much as "emotional vampires" as defenders of the national will.¹¹

Whilst this incorporation of 'chronopolitics' has proven effective in bringing to life the radical right's geopolitical visions, it is worth reflecting on how the findings' deficiencies may be improved by further research. In keeping with the theme of time, it is clear that interviews with party spokesmen would help add rigour to the data following the unprecedented difficulties of research in the current period. With reference to this study's findings, however, there is a pressing need to corroborate the Hungarian radical right's newfound animosity towards the Russian-Eurasian "Heartland". Such an issue seems to be the result of the investigation's criteria regarding party choice. This was mainly focused on investigating parties that are emblematic of the "perfect storm" of factors that gripped the

¹⁰ Paul Lendvai, *One day that shook the communist world: the 1956 Hungarian uprising and its legacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 241

"*This is sticky-fingered Bolshevism*", Jobbik, 26th October 2018 - https://www.jobbik.com/this_is_sticky_fingered_bolshevism [accessed 8th May 2020]

¹¹ Hakkı Taş, *The chronopolitics of national populism*, p. 5

continent across various geopolitical divides over the past decade.¹² It is perhaps rather appropriate, then, that the outcome of a study based on narrative has concluded that there is now a growing need to appreciate the radical right beyond its historical rise. Of course, the very idea of connections between the radical right and Russia appeared as a topic of interest precisely due to the fallout of the 2008 financial crisis. This is exemplified by Laruelle's aforementioned belief that the seeming 'failures' of Western norms may lead to the radical right's embrace of neo-Eurasianism.¹³ Overall, this theory has been proven correct by this investigation. However, it is now necessary to appreciate the political tradition as an established part of Europe's wider political eco-system, with national norms and traditions creating a variety of tailored geopolitical outlooks.

In relation to the language used to negatively describe Russia's geopolitical resurgence, it could be suggested that further research may find it useful to focus on countries which have experienced communist rule in their recent histories. This is due to the impressive amount of discussion related to Russia's Soviet legacies within the four parties' literature and subsequent narratives. It is striking that such issues are even mentioned by this investigation's more pro-Russia parties, who have felt the need to explicitly obscure the era's history in their 'stories'. Given the political tradition's militant adherence to dichotomous politics, it appears that subjective decisions to actively subject these legacies to "periodization" may serve as a crucial juncture for parties who potentially embrace this relatively unexplored Atlanticism.¹⁴ Countries that may prove profitable to explore therefore include Estonia and Poland. In light of this study's discussion of the importance of popular national tradition, it seems that any radical right formation in these countries would find it very difficult to achieve their aims by adopting a pro-Russia strategy.¹⁵ This contrasts with the countries found in this investigation, with Jobbik's unanticipated volte-face seemingly

¹² Dan Dungaciu, *Perfect Storm in Europe: Towards a new way of understanding the European Crisis and its consequences* in *The Perfect Storm of the European Crisis* eds. Dan Dungaciu & Ruxandra Iordache (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), pp. 3-5

¹³ Marlene Laruelle, *Introduction* in *Eurasianism and the European Far-Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* ed. Marlene Laruelle (London: Lexington Books, 2015), pp. xi-xiii

¹⁴ Ian Klinke, *Chronopolitics: A Conceptual Matrix*, *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 37, No. 5 (2012), p. 676

¹⁵ Samuel Stolton, *Le Pen's pro-Kremlin stance creates friction with Estonian populist hosts*, Euractiv, 14th May 2019 - <https://www.euractiv.com/section/eu-elections-2019/news/le-pens-pro-kremlin-stance-creates-friction-with-estonian-populist-hosts/> [accessed 18th June 2020]

Joanna Kwiecień, *Poland through Eurasian Eyes: Russian Propaganda Messages in the Media*, Warsaw Institute, 18th July 2017 - <https://warsawinstitute.org/poland-eurasian-eyes-russian-propaganda-messages-media/> [accessed 18th June 2020]

resulting from a rare ability to ‘choose’ due to Hungary’s relatively liberal historical experiences of “Goulash communism”.¹⁶ An investigation focusing on the two aforementioned states may therefore strengthen the findings of this research in a number of ways. For example, it may allow for an understanding as to how radical right parties manipulate geopolitical narratives to fit new-found governmental positions.¹⁷ This may prove enlightening with regards to the ways in which these parties rhetorically define the much-loathed political present. Simultaneously, research building on this study may be able to explain the growing tendency of radical right groups in these countries to define themselves as representing “True Europe”.¹⁸ Indeed, this rhetorical practice may serve as a means of obscuring potentially difficult questions surrounding an Atlanticist stance in much the same way that the Eurasianist radical right manipulate narrative in order to avoid prolonged discussions of the Soviet era.

Due to this, it may be said that whilst this investigation has aimed to participate in debate directly related to the European radical right, it may also offer a small contribution to ongoing discussions surrounding the very concept of ‘Europe’. Of course, due to this study’s international perspective, it is hard to ignore the extraordinary rise of international conservative alignments, which now aim to ‘restore’ the continent to its ‘traditional’ state.¹⁹ This rather ironic development has placed the political tradition at the forefront of cooperation across bodies such as the European Union, with the European Parliament’s ‘Identity and Democracy’ (ID) bloc now challenging norms at the institution’s heart.²⁰ In relation to the importance of narrative, it could be argued that the success of this group may ultimately depend on how willing parties are to sacrifice their own “specific” geopolitical stories in relation to a greater ‘schematic narrative template’. Of course, it would prove

¹⁶ Roger Gough, *A Good Comrade: János Kádár, communism and Hungary* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), p. 150

¹⁷ Aleks Szczerbiak, *Why is Poland’s Law and Justice party still so popular?*, LSE Blogs, 1st October 2019 - <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2019/10/01/why-is-polands-law-and-justice-party-still-so-popular/> [accessed 18th June 2020]

Evan Gershkovich, *Estonia joins the far-right club*, Politico, 30th April 2019 - <https://www.politico.eu/article/estonia-tallinn-joins-the-far-right-club-martin-helme-mart-helme-kersti-kaljulaid-populism/> [accessed 18th June 2020]

¹⁸ Stefano Braghiroli & Vassilis Petsinis, *Between party-systems and identity-politics: the populist and radical right in Estonia and Latvia*, *European Politics and Society*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (2019), p. 436

Janine Holc, *Poland’s European Vision: Religion, Secularism, and Poland’s Role in the Emergence of the Lisbon Treaty*, *The Polish Review*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (2017), p. 104

¹⁹ Florian Bieber, *How Europe’s Nationalists became Internationalists*, *Foreign Policy*, 30th November 2019 - <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/11/30/how-europes-nationalists-became-internationalists/> [accessed 18th June 2020]

²⁰ *Ibid.*

impossible to accommodate all of this study's grand 'Selves' at the same time, with Russia's involvement in a new yet traditional Europe potentially causing friction. Certainly, the Kremlin remains a frontline issue for the bloc, which was made evident during Le Pen's 2019 visit to sceptical ID colleagues in Estonia.²¹ As such, it will be important to follow these developments and adapt research accordingly, with the French politician recently declaring in Milan that in spite of its 'existential' difficulties, the political present now represents "a moment, in which united in heart and spirit, we will give the whole of Europe the signal of resistance, hope and reconquest...".²²

²¹ Samuel Stolton, *Le Pen's pro-Kremlin stance creates friction with Estonian populist hosts*

²² *Grande réunion publique à Milan avec Matteo Salvini: discours de Marine Le Pen* [Large public meeting in Milan with Matteo Salvini: speech by Marine Le Pen], Marine Le Pen – YouTube, 18th May 2019 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEVqSxqlkxU> [accessed 18th June 2020]

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