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## **Abstract**

The securitisation of European values is a part of the story that creates the favourable conditions for Russia's assertiveness and aggression on the international stage. This dissertation will seek to find out how the Russian regime convinces citizens that European moral standards threaten their homeland. By conducting the critical analysis of the Russian official discourse, this research will examine how Russia securitises European values. The analysis will demonstrate that Russia succeeds in completing this task by emphasising its difference from and superiority over Western Europe. Moreover, the references to the attempts of the West to contain the country contribute to the success of this process. The stress on Russia's distinctiveness and supremacy over Europe helps the ruling elite to convince the public that the spread of European moral standards undermines the basis for the stability Russia needs to survive. Similarly, the suggestion that the Western partners use European values for challenging Russia's sovereignty facilitates persuading citizens that they threaten the country.

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## **Abbreviations**

**EU** – the European Union

**US** – the United States

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## **1. Introduction**

The contribution of Russia to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine became a serious challenge for the relations between Russia and the European Union (EU). The conflict disrupted the stability in the region and consolidated Russia's role as an aggressor on the international stage (Biersack and O'Lear, 2014:348-253, Laruelle, 2015:95). Moreover, it showed the importance of the 'competition of narratives' in the world politics (Bechev, 2015:341-345).

The references to the intensely growing number of internal and external threats to the state helped Russia's authorities to justify the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Similarly, the ruling elite keeps using securitisation for convincing citizens to accept the costs of such actions (Ambrosio, 2016:468-475, Cadier and Light, 2016:206-216, Darczewska, 2015:5-17, Mendras, 2016:81-94, Morozov, 2015:4-139, Shakhrai, 2015:31-46). Consequently, the chosen discourse enables the Russian leadership to mobilise public support for the regime and its ambitious agenda despite the deteriorated relationship with Europe and a negative impact of Western sanctions. This means that the narrative offered by the authorities shapes the boundaries of their policies (Ambrosio, 2016:467-475, Cadier and Light, 2016:206-216, Darczewska, 2015:5-17, Hutchings and Szostek, 2015:184-194, Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2016:145, Schiffers, 2015:17, Shakhrai, 2015:31-46). For this reason, analysing the Russian official discourse is essential in order to get a better understanding of what to expect from the country and how to restrain its assertiveness. The awareness of the factors that make the Russian elite's story successful at home is necessary for gaining a better idea of how to effectively challenge the legitimacy of its ambitious ventures.

The emphasis on the threatening nature of European values is a part of the narrative that Russia's leadership employs to legitimise its grip on power. A considerable number of studies looking at the Russian discourse on European moral standards have been conducted so far. They suggest that the image of Europe driven by values that are alien and subversive to Russian identity dominates the narrative provided by Russia's authorities. Europe's liberalism, democracy, tolerance, materialism, unlimited sexual and religious freedom is contrasted with Russians' conservatism, traditionalism and Orthodox Christianity to convince the local people that the European threat is real (Bechev, 2015:340-349, Laruelle, 2016:275-294, Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2014a:1-6, Makarychev and Medvedev, 2015:45-54, Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2016:138-150, Morozov, 2015:1-163, Stepanova, 2015:120-135, Shakhrai, 2015:30-50, Tsygankov, 2016:1-13). Nonetheless, none of these studies applies the theoretical framework of securitisation to the analysis despite the numerous emphases that the Russian authorities portray European values as threatening to their state. In this case, not enough attention is paid to the process of threat construction that would allow explaining the effectiveness of this narrative.

Moreover, they cover the period only from the start of V. Putin's third presidency until approximately August 2014, when Russia started the counter-sanctions against the West by banning the import of Western food. Accordingly, the potential impact that such developments as the Ukraine ceasefire agreement, deteriorating economic situation in Russia or its role in the fight against terrorism could have on the Russian official discourse is excluded from the analysis (Cadier and Light, 2016:206-216). However, many public figures and scholars still continue to



refer to the above narrative to describe Russia's rhetoric towards Europe (Bechev, 2015:341-346, Cadier and Light, 2016:204-216, Robertshaw, 2015:335-340, Schiffers, 2015:6-17, Shakhrai, 2015:31-46). Consequently, they risk misunderstanding Russia's message.

This dissertation will offer an updated account of the Russian discourse on European values by looking at the period from August 2014 to the end of June 2016. The thesis will seek to contribute to the existing literature on the subject by applying the theoretical framework of securitisation to the analysis. In doing so, this dissertation seeks to find out how Russia securitises European values. The thesis will attempt to achieve two objectives in order to successfully complete this task. Firstly, it will seek to identify the concepts used by the Russian leadership to describe Europe and its code of conduct. Secondly, the dissertation will attempt to discuss how these concepts help the authorities to convince citizens that European values threaten their homeland. This thesis will demonstrate that Russia securitises European values by emphasising its difference from and superiority over Western Europe. Moreover, the references to the attempts of the West to contain the country contribute to the success of this process. The stress on Russia's distinctiveness and supremacy over Europe helps the ruling elite to convince the public that the spread of European moral standards undermines the basis for the stability Russia needs to survive. Similarly, the suggestion that the Western partners use European values for challenging Russia's sovereignty facilitates persuading citizens that they threaten the country.

The following chapter of the thesis will introduce the theoretical framework used for the research. In this case, the main features of securitisation theory and Russia's security agenda will be discussed. This will help to demonstrate the rationale behind referring to the Copenhagen School's approach to security for discussing Russian politics. The section will also provide the literature review to show the extent to which securitisation has already been applied to Russia's case. The third chapter will explain how this study has been conducted. In this respect, the decision to use critical discourse analysis for answering the research question will be justified along the account of the data selection and analysis processes. The fourth chapter of the dissertation will demonstrate how Russia securitises European values. The section will present the concepts the Russian ruling elite employs to portray Europe's moral standards as a threat to the state. Moreover, it will discuss how these notions contribute to the effectiveness of their narrative. The final chapter will provide the overview of this study and offer areas for further research.

## **2. The Copenhagen School and Security in Russia**

### **2.1. A Theoretical Framework of Securitisation**

The complicated and changing nature of international relations determined the diversity of theories supposed to explain them. This variety makes the meaning of concepts used to discuss developments taking place on the international stage rather contentious. The evolution of the notion of security presents a case in point. Traditionalists that dominated the field during the Cold War associate security with ‘the four Ss – states, strategy, science and status quo’ (Williams, 2013:3). They define security in terms of state survival, absence of threats to it and focus on military relations between states (Buzan et al., 1998:1-204; Huysmans, 1998:482-486, Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010:4). Accordingly, this classic approach to security well reflected the peculiarities and tensions of the bipolar world order where two major powers engaged in the arms race. However, the mainstream theories ignored the non-military challenges faced by states and societies, whose prominence rapidly grew at the end of the Cold War. The Copenhagen School of security studies emerged as B. Buzan, O. Waever and J. De Wilde’s attempt to address this problem and widen the traditionalists’ definition of security (Buzan and Waever, 1997:242, Buzan et al., 1998:1-5, Huysmans, 1998:482, Stritzel, 2014:15, Waever, 1995:46-49).

The Copenhagen School borrows from the mainstream theory the belief in the privileged position of the state in the realm of security (Buzan et al., 1998:37; Emmers, 2016:168-169, Sjøsted, 2013:145, Waever, 1995:46-50). Nonetheless, its proponents emphasise that the concept of security should not be limited to the survival of a single player. The Copenhagen School suggests that the notion of security can also concern ‘individuals and their collectivities’ (Huysmans, 1998:485, Waever,

1995:47-48). The theory proposes that the type of threatened objects and menaces they confront varies across different security sectors. Scholars belonging to the Copenhagen School argue that the state plays a key role in military sector, national sovereignty or ideology serve as the main focus of political security, threats to national economy emerge in economic sector, collective identity deserves most attention when the survival of society is in question, and the protection of environment and species become the major concern in environmental sector (Buzan et al., 1998:6-12, Emmers, 2016:169, Waever, 1995:65-70). Consequently, this multi-sector approach to security helped the Copenhagen School to present itself as an alternative to the mainstream theories. The other attribute demonstrating the difference of the former from the latter is an attitude to the source of security threats. Traditionalists view security ‘through the lens of objectivism’ and refer to the absence or presence of real threats to define it (Balzacq and Guzzini, 2015:97-101, Buzan et al., 1998:205, McDonald, 2013:71). Alternatively, the Copenhagen School is interested in the process through which security issues are recognised as threats. In this case, the presentation of an issue in a particular way rather than its real features determines belonging to the security agenda. Accordingly, the Copenhagen School suggests that threats are socially constructed instead of being a reflection of objective reality (Balzacq and Guzzini, 2015:97-101, Balzacq, 2010:5-7; Buzan et al., 1998:1-205, Emmers, 2016:172). This means that the theory includes not only some elements of the mainstream approach to security but also connect them with attributes of constructivism. The Copenhagen School provides the analytical framework of securitisation to illuminate the process of threat construction.

Securitisation occurs when the actor employs the rhetoric of existential threat to justify the use of ‘extraordinary measures’ and breaking the established rules of politics to address it (Balzacq, 2005:171-190, Buzan et al., 1998:21-24, Waever, 1995:50-55). The proponents of the Copenhagen School describe the process of securitisation as a ‘speech act’ (Buzan et al., 1998:26, Waever, 1995:54-55). Securitisation does not require the threat to be real so that the securitising actor could use it for legitimising the failure to respect the accepted procedures. The securitising move by portraying the issue as an existential threat is enough for being able to claim the right to deal with it under the above conditions. However, this does not guarantee the success of securitisation. The belief that utterance of the treat to a referent object is an action that alters reality makes security ‘a self-referential practice’ (Balzacq, 2005:171, Buzan et al., 1998:24-26, Weaver, 1995:55). Nevertheless, the securitising actor’s need to negotiate the outcome of securitisation with the audience proves the inter-subjective nature of this process (Balzacq, 2010:5-16, Balzacq and Guzzini, 2015:97-100, Buzan et al., 1998:25-31, Emmers, 2016:171-172). The issue is securitised only when the audience accepts the message conveyed by the securitising actor and the violation of the established rules of political process. The audience’s consent to the securitising move depends on the presence of ‘felicity conditions’ (Buzan et al., 1998:32-33, McDonald, 2013:73-74). Firstly, they include the demand that the speech act would contain a reference to the existential threat, urge a need to handle it and propose how to complete this task. Moreover, the securitising actor must be authoritative enough to gain the audience’s trust. The features of the constructed threat are also significant. If the issue in question is perceived to be threatening, the securitising actor has more chances to convince the audience to support adding it to the security agenda (Buzan et al., 1998:32-33). Therefore, securitisation rests on three

pillars: the discursively constructed existential threat, urging to use extraordinary measures to tackle it and the audience's acceptance that the threat justifies violating the normal rules of political process.

The Copenhagen School significantly contributes to the evolution of the security concept and offers a novel way for its analysis. However, the theory and its proposed model of securitisation also attract a lot of criticism. For the reason that this thesis looks at the application of securitisation instead of seeking to evaluate the Copenhagen School's approach to security, this paragraph provides only a brief overview of some flaws attributed to the theory. The discussion follows A. Lupovici's (2014:394-395) example and divides the arguments employed to criticise the Copenhagen School into three categories – theoretical, methodological and normative. First of all, theoretical criticism includes the claims that the proponents of the Copenhagen School overemphasise the role of language in securitisation (Balzacq, 2005:179-185, Bigo, 2000:8, Lupovici, 2014:394, McDonald, 2008:568-575, Stritzel, 2007:366-372, Williams, 2003:515-520). The Copenhagen School focuses on how the articulation of threats leads to securitisation but seems to forget that discursive, political and social contexts of the speech act influence the audience's readiness to accept it. This implies that the audience assesses the constructed threat not only with reference to the information provided by the speech act but also with consideration to its previous knowledge, other issues on the security agenda and position of the speaker. Secondly, scholars applying securitisation to non-democratic regimes stress the shortcoming of its methodological framework (Lupovici, 2014:395, Vuori, 2008:69-72). They note that the definition of successful securitisation offered by the theory is too narrow and complicates identifying when securitisation succeeds in non-

democratic countries. This implies that the high centralisation of power in authoritarian states makes it difficult to evaluate the extent to which the audience consents to the securitising move. The strict control of the public sphere and fraudulent, rare elections or their absence deprives people of chances to express their opinion. The Copenhagen School fails to explain what constitutes the audience's acceptance of the securitising move in such cases. Finally, the normative assumptions of the theory are also not immune to criticism (Lupovici, 2014:395, Hansen, 2000:285-290, McDonald, 2008:564-575). In this respect, many scholars primarily stress the inequality inherent in the Copenhagen School's approach to security. Securitisation focuses on the securitising moves of the political elites who can appeal to large audiences and are entitled to speak on their behalf. Consequently, those actors who lack such institutionalised authority to shape the security agenda remain marginalised. The above listed shortcomings of the Copenhagen School might encourage reconsidering its status of a viable alternative to the mainstream theory. Nevertheless, they do not form the sufficient basis for rejecting the suitability of the securitisation framework for this study.

This dissertation looks at the manner in which the Russian ruling elite convinces citizens that European values threaten the survival of their state. The primary focus here is to identify the concepts used to describe European values by performing the securitising move. For this reason, there is a danger of concentrating too much on the discourse without properly understanding the meaning assigned to it (Balzacq, 2005:179-185, Bigo, 2000:8, Lupovici, 2014:394, McDonald, 2008:568-575, Stritzel, 2007:366-372, Williams, 2003:515-520). The thesis is also interested in understanding the reasons why the audience finds this narrative convincing. This

requires taking into account the conditions under which Russia's elite constructs the threat of European values. Accordingly, this research accepts T. Balzacq's (2005:171-190, 2010:1-30) invitation to consider the impact of the existing discursive, social and political contexts on the speech act performance. In this way, it expects to avoid the criticism for overemphasising the role of language in altering the reality. Moreover, the thesis suggests that the peculiarities of the Russian regime facilitate identifying the success of securitisation despite its narrow definition. The difficulties in recognising the successful securitisation in authoritarian states derive from the absence of democratic procedures that would ensure the elite's accountability to citizens and allow people to express their views (Vuori, 2008:65-76). Russia is famous for its 'authoritarian elections' and authorities' increasing control over the public sphere (Mendras, 2016:81-94, White and Feklyunina, 2011:579-599). Even though instances of fraud are the constant feature of the Russian electoral process, scholars note that they do not change its overall outcome (White and Feklyunina, 2011:579-599). Besides, the ruling elite strives for citizens' support and seeks to maintain the formal features of democratic governance by holding regular elections. This implies that the audience of the Russian elite's securitising moves is not completely silent, and its views can be used to assess whether securitisation succeeds in the country. Finally, this study does not consider the focus of securitisation on the political elites' message to be problematic because it also looks at Russia's official discourse. Consequently, securitisation offers the analytical tools adequate for examining the use of the official discourse for shaping the security agenda in Russia.

This thesis applies the Copenhagen School's model of securitisation to the Russian case by seeking to find out how Russia securitises European values. The



fact that Russia's National Security Strategy presents Russian traditional values as the most vulnerable target of external influence confirms that the state's moral standards are considered to be threatened (President of Russia, 2015). The dissertation views Europe's moral standards as the embodiment of threatening external influence because the strategy refers to the efforts of the US and its allies or the West to spread its values and ideology to Russia. Europe belongs to the Western coalition and acts as the major partner of the US in dealing with Russia (Hutchings and Szostek, 2015:184-18). In this case, the state is the referent object that faces the existential threat because the ruling elite portrays the spread of alien values as threatening the local moral standards that form the basis for the state stability (President of Russia, 2015). They suggest that without internal unity the country will not be stable enough to address the high number of threats it faces. This means that the paper focuses on the political security sector that concerns the organisational stability of social order and primarily looks at threats to the state sovereignty (Buzan et al., 1998:141-146). However, the Copenhagen School suggests that the government can sometimes refer to state security when the real object under threat is the government itself. The ruling elite has the right to qualify threats to the regime as directed at the state because its sovereignty can be claimed to be challenged when foreign forces try to influence the state's political form (Buzan et al., 1998:141-146). The Russian elite portrays the spread of European values as an attempt by foreign forces to undermine the state's sovereignty. Nonetheless, this narrative is meant to hide their fear of the citizens' mobilisation against the authoritarian rule (Cadier and Light, 2016:205-216). For this reason, the behaviour of Russia's elite well illustrates how references to the state sovereignty and security are abused for the regime protection. The Russian public is the audience that accepts their attempt to securitise European values. The dissertation views this

securitising move as successful because the level of Russians' support for the president, considered to be the main author of the state's agenda, remains very high during the period under investigation (Levada Center, 2016). The conviction of the majority of citizens that many threats surround Russia as well as their negative attitude to the EU, which acts as the bastion of European values, create the same impression (Bechev, 2015:341-346, Casier, 2013:1377-1381, Levada Center, 2015a, Levada Center, 2015b). Therefore, this research proposes that securitisation of European values in Russia occurs when the ruling elite portrays them as the existential threat to the state to legitimise the regime as well as its assertive and revanchist foreign policy (Grigas, 2016:1, Nitoiu, 2016:2-8).

The application of securitisation theory attracted a lot of attention in the academic literature. However, the majority of scholars have used this theoretical framework for explaining developments taking place in democratic states (Buzan et al., 1998:1-205, Emmers, 2016:174, Huysmans, 1998:479-500, Vuori, 2008:65-90, Williams, 2003:511-530). The attempts to apply securitisation to non-democratic regimes have been less frequent. Nonetheless, they cover a broad spectrum of cases from different continents. For example, A. J. Vuori (2008:65-90) used securitisation for exploring the Chinese political system. C. Wilkinson (2007:5-20) also looked at Asia and analysed the applicability of the Copenhagen School's ideas to Kyrgyzstan. Alternatively, J. Fisher and D. M. Anderson (2015:131-150) examined the relevance of securitisation for regimes located in Africa. P. Bilgin (2011:399-410) and S. K. Savvides (2000:55-70) looked at the extent to which this theory applies to authoritarian regimes located in Europe by examining the Turkish case. Therefore, by using securitisation for discussing Russian politics, this dissertation will contribute to

the academic literature on the application of securitisation to nondemocratic regimes. The following section of the thesis will present the way in which security is understood in Russia. The overview of the Russian security agenda will help to demonstrate why this country is a rich case for analysis.

## **2.2 Reversed Anarchy in Russia**

Russia constantly stresses and requires recognition for its capability to compete with the West on an equal footing. Nonetheless, the Russian perception and approach to security remain one of many issues demonstrating that the state lags behind the competitors. The presence of reversed anarchy in Russia makes it similar to Asian and Third World countries (Alekseev, 2003a:12-17, Alekseev, 2003b:39-40, Blank, 2008:509-514, Blank, 2010:181-188). In the case of reversed anarchy, states have to deal with chaos at home but engage in orderly relations with each other. The domestic disorder derives from the local elite's need to take care of the state-building simultaneously with its protection from external threats. However, the process is time-consuming because they lack necessary resources. For this reason, the situation at home where the ruling elite faces many challenges while trying to consolidate the state is less stable than the state's position on the international stage. This encourages them to use the influence gained abroad for consolidating the country. These states interact with the groups of countries whose institutions can provide an alternate and more developed model of organisation in comparison to the one at home. For this reason, the spread of their partners' influence is threatening because it can strengthen challenges faced by the domestic regime. Consequently, the internal security that the local elite links with the regime survival is the primary concern of states under the condition of reversed anarchy (Alekseev, 2003a:12-17, Alekseev, 2003b:39-40,

Blank, 2008:509-514, Blank, 2010:181-188). The concise discussion of the features attributed to the Russian security agenda will demonstrate why the concept of reversed anarchy describes the situation in Russia so well.

Many scholars suggest that security has played a special role in Russian domestic and foreign policies under the presidency of V. Putin (Blank, 2008:492-520, Blank, 2010:173-188, de Spiegeleire, 2015:7-54, Darczewska, 2015:5-36, Gaddy and O'Hanion, 2015:205-210, Galeotti, 2010:1-6, Jonsson and Seely, 2014:2-20, Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2014a:409-422, Nitoiu, 2016:1-10, Robertshaw, 2015:335-337, Simão, 2016:494-510, Weiss and Pomerantsev, 2014:4-20). Even though they look at Russia's approach to state security from different angles, they agree on the features that distinguish it from other countries. Firstly, they all highlight the blurred boundaries between the internal threats to the regime survival and external threats to the country. The Russian ruling elite equates the strengthening of V. Putin's government with the state consolidation. The spread of Western norms and model of governance encourages the Russian opposition to challenge the authoritarian leadership. Accordingly, this serves as the source of internal threats to the regime. Nonetheless, the elite portrays the spread of Western influence as a menace to the state sovereignty to legitimise the measures taken to address it. This situation is closely related to the second feature of Russia's security politics known as 'the besieged fortress syndrome' (Blank, 2010:173-188, Gaddy and O'Hanion, 2015:205-210, Darczewska, 2015:5-36). The Russian elite uses the narrative of Russia surrounded by enemies to distract the citizens' attention from pressing economic and social problems. This also helps them to convince citizens that primarily a stable and strong state is necessary for withstanding a siege. Consequently, the elite can prioritise

domestic political security, understood as avoiding the delegitimisation of their rule and the radicalisation of their society, over the external, economic and social threats to the country. Moreover, the obsession with restoring a great power status also has implications for the Russian security agenda (Blank, 2008:492-520, de Spiegeleire, 2015:7-54, Nitoiu, 2016:1-10). The ruling elite pursues an assertive foreign policy to protect Russia's interests in the neighbourhood shared with the EU and engages in a confrontation with the United States (US). These efforts to show that the country 'is rising from the knees' are meant to distract the Russian citizens' attention from domestic problems and mobilise their support for the regime (Chaisty and Whitefield, 2015:170, Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2014a:2). Finally, scholars looking at Russian approach to security in relation to the conflict in Ukraine emphasise the resurgence of ideological elements and significance Russia attributes to the battles of values in its agenda (Darczewska, 2015:5-36, de Spiegeleire, 2015:7-54, Galeotti, 2010:1-6, Simão, 2016:494-510, Weiss and Pomerantsev, 2014:4-20). The Russian leadership stresses the threat their state faces from Western values and implications it could have for Russia's internal security. Therefore, the fragility of Russia and its system of governance, use of assertive foreign policy for the state consolidation and focus on internal security prove the presence of reversed anarchy in the country. After having described the Russian approach to security, the next step is to discuss in more detail the role of securitisation in Russia.

The previous section of this chapter demonstrated that securitisation concerns the construction of threats under conditions of emergency. The Russian case well illustrates this process. Securitisation has always been an inseparable element of V. Putin's rule, but it has intensified even more since the eruption of the crisis in

Ukraine (Blank, 2010:174-175, Mendras, 2016:81-88, Morozov, 2015:139). The US and the EU replied to Russia's aggression in Ukraine by imposing sanctions against the country. The combination of sanctions and efforts to isolate Russia created a favourable environment for the authorities to convince citizens that their homeland is under attack (Mendras, 2016:81-94, Robertshaw, 2015:335-337). The deterioration of the Russian economy provoked by the sanctions also helped to justify the urgent need to address threats to the state sovereignty from abroad. Accordingly, the ruling elite portrays Russia as a victim of aggression from the West, which seeks to destabilise the country (Darczewska, 2015:12-20, Haukkala, 2015:26-35, Kunchins, 2016, Shakhrai, 2015:31-46). Official state documents that compose the Russian security agenda also promote this narrative. For instance, the most recent military doctrine issued in 2014 presents the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation eastwards and destabilisation of the situation in individual states as the primary external military risks (President of Russia, 2014). Russia's National Security Strategy released in 2015 also warns of these threats and emphasises the danger deriving from the US and its allies' efforts to contain Russia (President of Russia, 2015). In this way, the Russian leadership legitimises the decision to pursue an assertive foreign policy despite the costs it brings to the country. Nevertheless, the same conditions and manufacturing of external threats contribute to the securitisation of many domestic issues (Blank, 2010:174-178, Makarychev, 2014:409-422, Simão, 2016:494-507). This process is compatible with the theoretical framework of the Copenhagen School because the ruling elite refers to the state survival to justify the securitisation of domestic issues. The Copenhagen School suggests that the leadership can successfully appeal to internal threats if it identifies the regime with the state and put into questions the survival of the political unit (Buzan et al., 1998:146). The long list of topics added to

the Russian security agenda cover such issues as language, culture, identity, mentality, religion, domestic protests, oppositional forces and worldviews (Makarychev, 2014:422, President of Russia, 2014, President of Russia, 2015). This creates an impression that it would be an easier task to identify issues that are not securitised in Russia rather than to list issues that the ruling elite associates with security concerns. The Russian authorities employ the intense securitisation in the domestic sphere to legitimise the increasing centralisation of their power (Morozov, 2015:139-140, Simão, 2016:494-496, Snetkov, 2015:152-156, Rodkiewicz and Rogoza, 2015:16-17). In this case, they use claims that the state sovereignty and stability are the main targets of Western attack to convince people that such reaction is necessary to prevent the West from destabilising their state. As a result, the combination of internal and external threats helps them to mobilise Russians' support for the regime that promises protection and stability in the country (Bechev, 2015:341-346, Mazepus et al., 2016:354-357, Mendras, 2016:88, Schiffers, 2015:6-17, Simão, 2016:494-507, Snetkov, 2015:152-156).

The main purpose of this section was to discuss the Russian approach to security and demonstrate that the theoretical framework of securitisation applies to this case. This section suggested that the concept of reversed anarchy well describes Russia's security politics. The discussion of features attributed to the Russian security agenda helped to justify this proposition. Moreover, this pointed to the importance of securitisation in Russian politics. The concise overview of the role that securitisation plays in the country showed the rationale behind using the Copenhagen School's theory for discussing the recent developments in Russian politics. The following section will demonstrate the extent to which securitisation has already been applied to

this case and explain why it is worth looking at the securitisation of European values in Russia.

## **2.3 Literature Review**

The previous section of this chapter suggested that the process of securitisation in Russia especially intensified after the eruption of the crisis in Ukraine. Given the high price Russia has to pay for the involvement in the conflict, this fact is not surprising. The deterioration of Russia's economy, international isolation and further worsening living conditions in the country marks the end of the social contract V. Putin had with citizens (Cadier and Light, 2016:206-210, Chaisty and Whitefield, 2015:170, Mendras, 2016:81-94, White and McAllister, 2008:624). For this reason, such intense construction of threats to the state counterbalances this loss and serves as the basis for Russians' support for the leadership. Accordingly, a high number of scholars refer to the theoretical model of securitisation when discussing the developments in Russian politics since the start of the conflict in Ukraine. For example, I. Zevelev (2014) speaks of the securitisation of identity in Russia after the annexation of Crimea. G. De Maio (2016:2-21) also brings up issues related to identity politics while describing the tendency of Russia's authorities to securitise Russian minorities residing abroad. Alternatively, A. Snetkov (2015:152-156) refers to securitisation to describe developments taking place in Russia's domestic sphere. The other group of authors employs the analytical framework of securitisation to analyse Russia's interactions with other states. E. Gaufman (2015:141-173) uses securitisation theory to analyse how the Russian media managed to frame the Ukrainian crisis as a struggle against 'fascism'. V. Morozov (2015:137-163) discusses the securitisation of the West in the country and argues that the process



reached the level ‘unprecedented in the history of post-Soviet Russia’. On the other hand, R. Dannreuther (2015:466-483) and R. Connolly (2016:750-773) look at the way in which Russia securitises energy relations and political economy. Consequently, the scope of subjects that academics discuss by applying the theoretical model offered by the Copenhagen School to the Russian context varies significantly. The Russian approach to European values presents another interesting case for the analysis.

Many scholars have discussed the Russian official discourse on European values in light of the Ukrainian crisis (Bechev, 2015:340-349, Laruelle, 2016:275-294, Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2014a:1-6, Makarychev and Medvedev, 2015:45-54, Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2016:138-150, Morozov, 2015:1-163, Stepanova, 2015:120-135, Shakhrai, 2015:30-50, Tsygankov, 2016:1-13). Nonetheless, none of these studies refers explicitly to the theoretical framework of securitisation to account for Russia’s rhetoric towards Europe. Moreover, scholars tend to discuss the role Russia attributes to European values while analysing the changes in the official discourse more generally instead of focusing particularly on the topic of values. In this case, Russia’s rhetoric towards Europe or the EU is sometimes associated with a particular moment of the Ukrainian crisis. In addition, this is often a part of the broader discussion of the shifts in the Russian discourse on Europe brought by V. Putin’s return to the office and the eruption of crisis in Ukraine. Moreover, some scholars include European values in the broader category of Western values which makes it unclear to what extent and whether Russia’s rhetoric towards the US and Europe differs. In addition, the majority of studies focus on the period from May 2012, when V. Putin returned to the presidency, until August 2014, when Russia

introduced the counter-sanctions against the West. The next paragraph of this section will look closer at the studies of Russia's discourse on European values conducted so far.

The first group of scholars examining the Russian rhetoric towards European values discusses the changes in Russia's official discourse since the start of V. Putin's third presidency (Laruelle, 2016:275-294, Makarychev and Medvedev, 2015:45-54, Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2016:138-150, Morozov, 2015:1-163, Stepanova, 2015:121-135, Tsygankov, 2016:1-13). They all note that the Russian authorities contrast Russia's traditional values such as moralism, collectivism, Orthodox Christianity with Europeans' individualism, secularism, materialism, liberalism to show and highlight their country's distinctiveness from Europe. However, these authors refer to different theoretical frameworks for the analysis. For instance, V. Morozov (2015:1-163) uses paleoconservatism for discussing Russia's discourse on values in relation to Europe and demonstrating the subaltern position of the country. Similarly, M. Laruelle (2016:275-294) analyses the raise of conservatism in the Russian official narrative and the state's status as the representative of authentic Europe. A. Makarychev and S. Medvedev (2015:45-54) as well as A. Makarychev and A. Yatsyk (2016:138-150) also stress the role of conservatism in Russia's rhetoric towards Europe and employ biopolitical conservatism to examine it. Alternatively, the main focus of A. Tsygankov's (2016:1-13) analysis is the nationalist discourse of a distinct civilisation that he discusses with the help of the insights from culturally essentialist and liberal constructivist theories. The other group of scholars looks at the Russian rhetoric towards the European code of conduct as a part of the official discourse on the Ukrainian crisis (Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2014a:1-5, Shakhrai,

2015:30-50). They also emphasise that European moral standards are juxtaposed with Russian conservative values to differentiate Russia from Europe. Moreover, they claim that Russia's regime use this comparison to suggest that European values threaten the state. In this case, authors explain that Europe is presented as an external other whose standards of behaviour could cause Russia's moral degradation. Finally, D. Bechev (2015:340-349) examines the competing narratives of the EU and Russia in their shared neighbourhood during V. Putin's third term in office. The author demonstrates that the Kremlin employs 'the othering' of the EU by contrasting its liberalism and tolerance with Russia's traditionalism to secure public support for the regime. Therefore, the concise overview of the academic literature on the Russian rhetoric towards European values reveals that scholars argue that Russia's regime uses 'the othering' of Europe to portray its moral standards as threatening Russia (Bechev, 2015:340-349). However, none of the studies conducted so far refers to securitisation theory for discussing how this threat of European values is constructed.

This dissertation will contribute to the studies applying securitisation to the Russian case because it offers a new subject for the analysis. Furthermore, the thesis will complement the existing literature on Russia's rhetoric towards Europe. The previous studies mention that Russia's leadership describes Europe as a threat to use it as a reference point for constructing the nation's identity, generate support for the regime and legitimise Russia's policies abroad. However, none of them applied the theoretical framework of securitisation for analysing how such a threat is constructed. Furthermore, scholars often discuss how Russia portrays European values while examining Russia's rhetoric towards Europe or the EU more generally, as a part of Russian foreign policy analysis or included in the category of the West. This

dissertation will focus exclusively on the way in which Russia presents European values. Finally, studies conducted so far mainly cover the period from the eruption of the Ukrainian crisis until August 2014, when Russians introduced the counter-sanctions against the Western partners. This project will seek to find out how Russia securitised European values since then until the end of June 2016. The following chapter of the dissertation will discuss the methodology used to achieve this goal.

### **3. Methodology**

This research seeks to examine how Russia securitises European values. The project consists of two tasks: the first one is to identify the concepts that are used to describe European values, and the second one is to consider why they are so effective. The first part of this thesis presented the theoretical framework of securitisation and demonstrated its suitability for explaining policies pursued by Russia. Moreover, it revealed the extent to which the theory has already been applied to the Russian case and showed the rationale behind examining the securitisation of European moral standards in the country. The following chapter will present the research methods used to find out how Russia convinces its citizens that Europe's code of conduct threatens their homeland. Firstly, the section will justify the application of critical discourse analysis to this project. Then, the attention will be paid to the data selection process. Finally, the chapter will look at how the data analysis was conducted.

#### **3.1. Critical Discourse Analysis**

This project concentrates on the way in which the Russian officials employ language for creating the preferred version of the reality. The interest in 'how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted' is considered to be one of the key features of qualitative research (Bryman, 2016:380-407, Mason, 2002:3-4). Accordingly, the focus on how the social phenomenon is constructed makes the use of qualitative research methods compulsory in this case. The application of securitisation theory to this study prompts the need to employ discourse analysis for answering the research question. The Copenhagen School suggests that the reality is socially constructed, and speech acts serve as the key

instruments for completing the process. For this reason, they view discourse analysis as the ‘obvious method’ for studies employing its theoretical framework (Buzan et al., 1998:24-176). Discourse analysis is ‘primarily concerned with how people use discursive resources in order to achieve interpersonal objectives in social interaction’ (Willig, 2001:91). This well complies with the aim to find out how Russia’s leadership uses the official discourse on European moral standards to legitimise its power and provocative foreign policy.

Discourse analysis includes the careful examination of language to understand how its properties contribute to the creation of a particular version of events accepted as the reality (Willig, 2014:341-345). For the reason that the method is based on social constructivism, language is considered as ‘constituting or producing the social world’ instead of simply reflecting it (Bryman, 2016:532, Willig, 2014:341-345). The exclusive focus on discourse well corresponds to the first task of this project, which is to identify concepts used to describe European values. However, such approach is not sufficient for discussing why those concepts help the Russian authorities to successfully securitise them. This requires taking into account the circumstances under which Russia’s leadership portrays European moral standards as a threat to their state. The dissertation relies on critical discourse analysis to answer the research question. Critical discourse analysis emphasises the role of language in producing the abuse and unequal relations of power (Bryman, 2016:540, Jorgensen et al., 2002:63-64, van Dijk, 2013a:353, van Dijk, 2013b:329-336). In this case, language ‘both *constitutes* the social world and is *constituted* by other social practices’ (Fairclough, 1992:64-73, Fairclough, 1989:23, Jorgensen et al., 2002:61-62, van Dijk, 2013a:353). This means that the method not only focuses on features of the used

discourse but also considers the context in which it is provided. Consequently, critical discourse analysis is suitable for finding out how Russia securitises European values.

Critical discourse analysis is not a unitary theoretical framework, and there are rather many types of it (Jorgensen et al., 2002:60-70, van Dijk, 2013a:353). This study follows the approach of N. Fairclough because it is considered to offer a more developed theory and method for the analysis of discourse than others (Jorgensen et al., 2002:60). N. Fairclough suggests that the social context influencing the used language includes not only discursive but also non-discursive elements (Fairclough, 1992:64-73). The scholar also encourages combining the detailed textual analysis, scrutiny of social practices and interpretative tradition. The chapter looks closer at N. Fairclough's model for the qualitative research in the section on the data analysis. The process of the data selection needs to be discussed before explaining how the information was examined.

### **3.2. Data Selection**

The proponents of the Copenhagen School argue that securitisation is the top-down or elite-driven process of threat construction (Buzan et al., 1998:24-176, Weaver, 1995:50-70). For this reason, the thesis focuses on the Russian official documents and ruling elite's discourse on Europe's standards of behaviour to examine how the country manages to securitise them. The information was gathered according to the criteria named by D. G. N. Rae (2007) and used by S. K. Schiffers (2015:6): authorship, relevance to the focus of the project, evident significance, and genre.

Firstly, the official documents setting the guidelines for Russia's foreign and security policies were used for the analysis. This includes the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (2013), the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation (2014) and the Russian Federation National Security Strategy (2015). They provide significant information on the rules used to draw the boundaries between normal politics and emergency in the state. Secondly, V. Putin's and S. Lavrov's speeches, press statements, articles and interviews published on official websites were included in the data set. The information was gathered from the presidential and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation websites. The president directs foreign and security policies in Russia (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2013, President of Russia, 2015). Moreover, the power centralisation in his hands makes V. Putin the most important source of the political message in the country (Teper, 2016:378-390). The discourse of Russia's minister of foreign affairs is also relevant in this case because the research question relates to Russian foreign policy and S. Lavrov helps the president to transmit his message. The media discourse is excluded from the analysis because it is heavily controlled by the government in Russia (Teper, 2016:378-390). Under these circumstances, it is assumed that the media narrative would mainly comply with and would not differ much from the version of Russia's leadership.

The data selection process was conducted by reviewing all the information published on the official websites during the period of interest instead of using keywords for finding the material on the potentially relevant topics. By doing so, it enabled the project to be more rigorous and consistent. The Russian leadership's rhetoric on European values is often intertwined with the comments on Russia's



development, relations with the West or Asian countries. As a result, choosing some keywords at the expense of others could result in the loss of useful information. The material published on the websites from August 2014 to June 2016 was reviewed with the purpose to find the descriptions of Europe, the EU, Russia's relation with them or the West. This timeframe was chosen because the other studies that look at the Russian official discourse on European values and have been conducted so far cover mainly the period until August 2014. Consequently, this research will seek to find out how the Russian leadership has portrayed European moral standards since then. The following section will explain how the selected data was analysed to achieve this goal.

### **3.3. Data Analysis**

The dissertation has followed N. Fairclough's three-dimensional model for data analysis. This framework is based on three pillars: the text, discursive practice and social practice (Bryman, 2016:540, Fairclough, 1992:73-75, Jorgensen et al., 2002:69-77). The data examination should include focusing on the linguistic features of the text, process relating to the production of its meaning and the wider social practices that affect and are influenced by the produced discourse (Fairclough, 1992:73-75). In the case of this research, most attention was paid to the meaning conveyed by the Russian elite's rhetoric on European values and the relationship between their discourse and the social context in which they offer it to the public. This thesis also carefully examined the Russian authorities' vocabulary to identify the concepts used to describe Europe. However, less attention has been paid to other linguistic properties of the text. Even though this might seem problematic at first sight, scholars acknowledge that N. Fairclough's model presents an ideal type that not

always have to be strictly followed (Fairclough, 1992:73-75, Jorgensen et al., 2002:70-77).

Discourse analysis like many other qualitative research methods attracts a lot of criticism for providing biased interpretation of the data (Bryman, 2016:525-543, Gibbs, 2002:14). The use of NVivo software for analysing the data should help this study to avoid such drawbacks. The ability to add codes to the gathered information and see how frequently they recur makes the analysis more consistent and transparent. Besides, the software helps to faster manage the selected material and deal with its output (Gibbs, 2002:1-16, Spencer et al., 2014:287-290). In this way, NVivo facilitates the research process and makes it more rigorous (Gibbs, 2002:1-16). This project has employed the software to examine 98 speeches, press statements, interviews and articles by V. Putin and S. Lavrov. The sources used for the research were reviewed in English to identify the paragraphs relevant to the study. Then, then the Russian version of the information was used for critical discourse analysis. The coding framework for dividing these sources into certain categories has been created after reviewing the literature on Russia's rhetoric towards Europe. The initial version of this framework included fifteen nodes that haven been grouped into those describing Europe, the EU or European values and those that describe Russia. The account of Russia is relevant in this case because the literature review demonstrated that its officials refer to the image of the country to describe Europe. Nevertheless, the coding framework was expanded after examining the selected data. The new nodes were added to the two already existing groups and the third category of labels called 'Russia and the modern world' was created to manage the information on how Russia portrays the context in which it interacts with other entities. The full

list of labels used for coding the data is available in Appendix A and the pattern of their distribution in the data can be found in Appendix B. For this reason, the data has been reviewed a couple of times to make sure that the new labels are properly applied to the material and coding process is consistent. Then, N. Fairclough's three-dimensional model was used for analysing the coding output to answer the research question. The next part of the dissertation will discuss its findings.

### **3.4. Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to present the research methods used to examine how the Russian ruling elite securitises European values. Firstly, the section explained why critical discourse analysis is a suitable method for answering the research question. Critical discourse analysis not only focuses on the features of language but also takes into account the social context in which it is used. This well complies with the aim of this project to identify concepts Russians employ to describe European values and discuss why those concepts contribute to their securitisation. Then, the attention was paid to the data selection process. The section justified the decision to focus on the discourse of V. Putin and S. Lavrov by referring to the fact that securitisation is an elite-driven process. Finally, the chapter looked at the way in which the data analysis was conducted. In this case, the rationale behind using N. Fairclough's three-dimensional model and NVivo software for examining the data was explained. The following chapter of the dissertation will discuss the research findings the discussed methodology helped to get.

#### **4. The Besieged Russian Fortress and European Values**

While the previous chapter explained how this research was conducted, the following part of the dissertation will focus on its results. The analysis of the Russian leadership's discourse on European values will demonstrate that the former securitises the latter by emphasising Russia's difference from and superiority over Western Europe. The references to the attempts of the West to contain the country are also essential for completing this task. V. Putin and S. Lavrov associate European values with the policy of double standards, the politicisation of international relations, American influence, distortion of history, moral relativism and deviation from the core principles of European civilisation. For the reason that the Russian officials describe Europe's moral standards by contrasting them with those attributed to Russia, the way in which they portray their homeland also matters in this case. V. Putin and S. Lavrov refer to the protection of international legal norms, pragmatism, promotion of sovereignty, objectivity and traditionalism to describe what Russia values most and what standards shape its behaviour. The theoretical part of this thesis highlighted the inter-subjective nature of securitisation, which means that the audience has to accept the elite's attempts to portray an issue as a threat so that the process would succeed. For this reason, it is important to consider how the concepts used to construct a threat help these actors to convince the audience to consent to their narrative. The purpose of the following sections is firstly to explain how the Russian officials portray European values while conducting the securitising move and then to discuss the factors making it successful.

#### **4.1. Decadent Europe vs. Morally Superior Russia**

This section will deal with the first task on the way towards answering the research question and will discuss the concepts the Russian authorities use to describe Europe and its code of conduct. The data revealed a couple of trends that slightly complicate finding out how Russia securitises European values. The Russian leadership's emphasis on the need to deal with the threat of terrorism and solve the conflict in Syria gradually changed their focus on the Ukrainian crisis. The events in Ukraine provoked the Russian regime's concerns about the threat of European values to the state and multiple statements meant to elaborate on this problem. The lower level of attention paid to the conflict in Ukraine decreases the amount of data that could help to answer the research question. Besides, the Russian officials' discourse on European values became more moderate than it was in the first half of V. Putin's third presidency when the president even blamed Europe for rejecting the Christian values and equating 'the belief in God with belief in Satan' (Putin, 2013, Schiffers, 2015:14-17, Tsygankov, 2016:1-10). Nonetheless, these trends add the originality to the project instead of predetermining its failure. The 'othering' of Europe and use of 'catch all rhetoric' for this purpose remained the key features of the narrative (Laruelle, 2016:276, Morozov, 2015:41-128). The utilisation of vague and sometimes ambiguous concepts to describe the contrast between Russian and European moral standards provides citizens with the freedom of interpretation. This allows them to understand the message in line with their preferences. For this reason, the Russian authorities' discourse becomes more appealing to the public. The division of the following discussion will reflect the tendency of Russia's leadership to juxtapose European values with Russian ones. The concepts V. Putin and S. Lavrov employ to

describe the moral standards of Europe will be grouped with the notions that the officials use to distinguish them from the Russian case.

First of all, the references to the application of double standards dominate the Russian official discourse on European values. The failure of Europe to respect the universal principles of international law and the tendency to apply them selectively are stressed in 21 of 98 coded sources. The suggestion that European countries comply with and interpret them ‘arbitrarily and politically’ implies that they abuse the universal norms for the promotion of self-interest and reduce them to the instruments for geopolitical competition (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2013). The violation of sovereignty, the right to self-determination, pluralism, principles of territorial integrity and peaceful settlement of disputes are listed as the examples of deviant practices attributed to Europe (Lavrov, 2014b, Lavrov, 2014d, Putin, 2014a, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2013). V. Putin and S. Lavrov mention the intervention in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya and position on the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine to prove Europeans’ ‘hypocrisy and duplicity’ (Lavrov, 2014b, Lavrov, 2016a, Putin, 2014a). The use of vivid metaphors such as ‘whatever Jupiter is allowed, the Ox is not’ to emphasise that Europe fails to meet the standards required from others creates an impression that the criticism and demands expressed by Russia are reasonable instead of simply reflecting disagreements between the two parties (Putin, 2014a). The image of hypocrite Europe is contrasted with Russia’s norms-based behaviour. The priority Russia gives to the adherence to, and protection of international legal norms is stressed in 19 of 98 coded sources. Russia is characterised as the country that acts ‘in strict compliance with’ its international obligations and ‘counters the attempts of certain countries or groups of

countries to revise the universally recognised norms of international law' (Lavrov, 2014a, Putin, 2016a, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2013). The image of Russia as the protector of universal norms suggests that - contrary to other Europeans - it values the fight for justice more than the promotion of self-interest that often requires ignoring the taken responsibilities. Consequently, the Russian leadership uses the contrast between the application of double standards in Europe and protection of international legal norms in Russia to present European values as problematic.

The application of double standards is closely linked with politicisation that Russia's officials also attribute to European standards of behaviour in 9 of 98 coded sources. They suggest that Europe's policy is 'full of ideological bias' and driven by personal 'likes and dislikes' encourage Europe to respond differently to situations of the similar kind (Lavrov, 2014b, Lavrov, 2014e, Putin, 2015a). The references to European sanctions against Russia and especially 'Freudian slips' of some politicians, suggesting 'that the Ukraine conflict is not the only reason for imposing these sanctions', help V. Putin and S. Lavrov to support their argument (Lavrov, 2016c, Putin, 2014a). This implies that Russia is the victim of Europe's efforts to win the geopolitical competition instead of being the one that initiates it in the first place. Russia's authorities present the politicisation of Europeans' relations with partners as a part of the broader campaign aimed at imposing their will on others (Lavrov, 2015a, Lavrov, 2015b). The emphasis on Russia's wish to engage in partnership with Europe, which the officials contrast with the European 'logic of confrontation', contributes to such impression (Lavrov, 2015b, President of Russia, 2015, Putin, 2014a, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2013).

On the other hand, Russia is praised for pursuing ‘open, rational, and pragmatic foreign policy’ that rules out ‘costly confrontations’ (Lavrov, 2016d, President of Russia, 2015, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2013). Russia’s rationality and pragmatism are highlighted in 15 of 98 coded sources. The Russian authorities stress that Russia’s foreign policy is guided by national interest and represents the reaction to the threats emerging against the state (Lavrov, 2015b, Putin, 2015b, The Ministry of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, 2013). In this way, they seem to suggest that Russia should not be held responsible for actions that others provoke the country to take. This also points to the priority given to state wealth instead of power politics. The numerous claims that Russia does not ‘impose anything on anybody’ and simply seeks to protect its national interests by maintaining ‘unconditional respect for international law’ support this interpretation (Lavrov, 2015b, Putin, 2015a, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2013). Accordingly, the ruling elite relies on the juxtaposition of Europe’s politicised decisions and Russia’s rationality as well as pragmatism to show the distinction of the latter from the former.

The Russian leadership relates Europe’s tendency to politicise international relations to its dependence on the influence of the US. V. Putin and S. Lavrov portray Europe as the ‘American puppet’ compelled to launch anti-Russia sanctions by the US in 13 of 98 coded sources (Bechev, 2015:345, Lavrov, 2016e, Putin, 2014a, Putin, 2014b). The references to the Americans’ wish to ‘influence Russia’s relations with its neighbours’ and interfere in the country’s affairs support their narrative (Putin, 2014b, Putin, 2016c). This helps Russia’s officials to equate the spread of European values to the country with the expansion of American influence.



The emphasis on Europe's weakness contributes to the impression that it can be easily subjected to American guidance. The Russian authorities suggest that Europe suffers from inefficiently functioning bureaucracy, instability, economic problems, statelessness and internal divisions (Lavrov, 2015d, Lavrov, 2016f, Putin, 2016b). The stress on Europeans' troubles also helps Russians to challenge Europe's power of attractiveness based on the model of development promising prosperity (Bechev, 2015:341-346). V. Putin and S. Lavrov differentiate Europe's dependence on the US from Russia's ability to act independently (Lavrov, 2015b, Putin, 2015a). They highlight Russia's status of great power in 18 of 98 coded sources. The country is praised for the ability to retain its sovereignty and participate 'in resolving the most important international problems' (President of Russia, 2015). The emphasis on Russia's self-sufficiency, economic, military and spiritual potential adds credibility to its image of great power (Lavrov, 2015b, Lavrov, 2015c, Putin, 2015a). This implies that Russia occupies a superior position on the international stage than its European partner whose agenda and actions depend on the blessing from abroad. As a result, Russia's officials employ the distinction between the lack of independence in Europe and Russian sovereignty to criticise the European code of conduct.

The Russian officials blame the Americans' influence not only for Europe's tendency to politicise international relations but also for providing a subjective account of their development. V. Putin and S. Lavrov criticise its 'attempts to rewrite history' in 9 of 98 coded sources (Lavrov, 2015e, Putin, 2014c). The Russian leadership claims that the false picture of reality is used for gaining 'geopolitical advantages' and distracting the international community's attention from the efforts to suppress those who provide an alternative view (Lavrov, 2014a, Lavrov,

2015e, Putin, 2014a). The references to Europe's 'attempts to revise the outcomes of World War II', the removal of the monuments to its heroes and the support for 'Nazi ideas' in some countries are made to illustrate the situation (Lavrov, 2015f, Putin, 2014c). This implies that Europe manufactures the reality in line with its preferences and abuse the narrative for improving its position in the international arena. Accordingly, European values seem to be based on lies and wishful thinking. On the other hand, the Russian officials describe their country as the defender of the international community from being fooled. Russia's role as the protector of truth that seeks to counter the attempts to 'rewrite history' despite the pressure it faces is stressed in 9 of 98 coded sources (Lavrov, 2015g, Lavrov, 2015h, Putin, 2014b). In this respect, the sanctions imposed on Russia are mentioned to prove that the Western partners seek to silence the country. This implies that the state is right and is punished for challenging the dominant version of the story that is false. The references to the wish to promote as objective as a possible image of Russia instead of relying on 'artificial positivity' are also used to illustrate the contrast between the code of conduct in Europe and Russia (Lavrov, 2014c). The emphasis on Russian fairness creates the impression that Russia offers superior moral standards compared to those promoted by Europe. Consequently, the Russian leadership highlights Europe's subjectivity in relation to Russia's efforts to defend the truth to demonstrate their difference.

Finally, the application of double standards, politicisation of international relations, dependence on the American influence and subjectivity the Russian officials attribute to Europe are presented as the indicators of its broader tendency to deviate from true European values (Bechev, 2015:341-346, Morozov,

2015:119-139). V. Putin and S. Lavrov criticise Europeans for abandoning their ‘core interests, values and principles’ in 14 of 98 coded sources (Lavrov, 2014b, Putin, 2014a). They refer to Europe’s consumerism, ‘aggressive secularism’, failure to respect national identities, traditional family values, lost ‘spiritual strength’, ‘all-permissiveness and complaisant attitude’ to demonstrate that it suffers from moral relativism and offers a rather new neo-liberal version of European values (Lavrov, 2014g, Lavrov, 2015b, Lavrov, 2015i, Lavrov, 2016g, Putin, 2014a, Putin, 2015c). The emphasis on the fact that Europeans renounce the moral standards they used to promote creates the confusion about Europe’s identity. The portrayal of the European code of conduct in such negative light implies urging to reconsider Europe’s attractiveness. The Russian authorities contrast the deviant behaviour of Europe with the promotion of traditional values in Russia to illustrate their concerns. V. Putin and S. Lavrov highlight Russia’s ‘healthy conservatism’ in 12 of 98 coded sources (Lavrov, 2015g, Putin, 2014a, Putin, 2016d). They praise the country for promoting patriotism, normal and healthy lifestyle, respecting family and faith traditions deriving from Orthodox Christianity, national identities, multi-ethnicity, human rights, multilateralism and national unity (Lavrov, 2015b, Lavrov, 2015g, Lavrov, 2016h, Putin, 2014a, Putin, 2014b, Putin, 2016d, President of Russia, 2015). Even though the Russian officials emphasise that Russia shares civilisation roots with Europe, they refer to the country’s traditionalism to demonstrate its difference from the rest of Europeans and prove the refusal to follow the new version of their values (Lavrov, 2014g, Lavrov, 2015a, Lavrov, 2016i, Putin, 2014a, Putin, 2016e, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2013). The use of such adjectives as ‘normal’ or ‘healthy’ to describe Russian moral standards creates an impression that they are superior to those offered by European partners. This also implies that Russia

managed to avoid the deviance from initial European code of conduct that is now common to the rest of Europe. Thus, the Russian authorities use the contrast between Europe's moral relativism and Russia's respect for conservative values to criticise the European standards of behaviour.

The overview of the research findings demonstrated that V. Putin and S. Lavrov associate European values with the policy of double standards, the politicisation of international relations, American influence, distortion of history, moral relativism and deviation from the core principles of European civilisation. Alternatively, Russia is praised for the protection of international legal norms, pragmatism, promotion of sovereignty, objectivity and traditionalism. Therefore, the discussions helped to identify the way in which the Russian leadership describes Europe and consider the meaning of the concepts used for this purpose. However, it remains unclear how they help the authorities to convince citizens that European values threaten their homeland. The second part of this chapter will focus on this question.

## **4.2. Securitisation of European Values**

The first part of this dissertation suggested that V. Putin's regime portrays Russia as the besieged fortress that requires the domestic stability and strength to survive. The preservation of Russian traditional values is presented as a source of the needed stability and an instrument that helps Russia to tackle the faced threats (Blank, 2010:173-188, Gaddy and O'Hanion, 2015:205-210, Darczewska, 2015:5-36, President of Russia, 2015). For this reason, the attempts to undermine

Russian moral standards can be equated with menaces to the state. Without the preservation of its values, the country would lack the internal unity necessary for the stability and survival. This is especially important because of the reversed anarchy in Russia, which means that it has to deal not only with the numerous external but also the internal challenges exacerbated by the state-building process (Alekseev, 2003a:12-17, Alekseev, 2003b:39-40, Blank, 2008:509-514, Blank, 2010:181-188). In this respect, Russia's role of great power is relevant as well because the authorities present this status as the guarantee of sovereignty under the difficult conditions of the state consolidation. This section will discuss how the concepts used by the Russian ruling elite to describe European values facilitate their securitisation given these circumstances. The analysis will demonstrate that Russia securitises European values by emphasising its difference from and superiority over Western Europe. Moreover, the references to the attempts of the West to contain the country contribute to the success of this process. The stress on Russia's distinctiveness and supremacy over Europe helps the ruling elite to convince the public that the spread of European moral standards undermines the basis for the stability Russia needs to survive. Similarly, the suggestion that the Western partners use European values for challenging Russia's sovereignty facilitates persuading citizens that they threaten the country.

Firstly, the contrast between the application of double standards in Europe and protection of international legal norms in Russia helps the regime to securitise Europe's code of conduct. The Russian officials complete the task by suggesting that the spread of Europeans' hypocrisy could erode Russia's status of an actor guided by norms (Haukkala, 2015:36). The comparison of Russia and Europe also supports the Russian leadership's suggestion that the Western partners abuse the

spread of European values for geopolitical goals. The attractiveness of ‘normative power Europe’ complicates the Russian authorities’ attempts to present it as threatening (Headley, 2015:297-305, Manners, 2002:235-250). The EU that embodies Europe is not only supposed to be driven by universal legal norms instead of cost-benefit calculation but also shape the standards of behaviour in world politics. Accordingly, it is a difficult task to convince the audience that values, which should be universally accepted, can endanger the state. Russia’s long lasting ‘sense of national inadequacy’ and efforts to get the recognition of its standards of behaviour from the West also makes the process more complicated (Kanet and Piet, 2014:2, Tsygankov, 2014:348-353, Tsygankov, 2016:2). Consequently, the Russian authorities have to start the construction of threat posed by European values from discrediting them. V. Putin and S. Lavrov’s emphasis on the application of double standards in Europe to suggest that ‘hypocrisy and duplicity’ changed the respect for international law present a case in point (Lavrov, 2014b, Lavrov, 2016a, Putin, 2014a). In this way, they show that Europe fails to promote values worth admiration and comply with the code of conduct it imposes on others. This helps the ruling elite to explain why the country should no longer follow Europe’s example and why they should prevent the spread of local practices to Russia. The fact that the Russian officials’ attempts to challenge Europe’s role of normative power precede the period covered in this research also facilitates the securitisation of European values (Buzan et al., 1998:32-33, Headley, 2015:297-305). The discourse of V. Putin and S. Lavrov well fits in with the already existing narrative. Nonetheless, portraying European values in a negative light is not enough to convince citizens that they threaten the state. For this reason, contrasting them with the Russian moral standards is necessary for showing that the country has a lot to loose if it follows Europe’s guidance.

The presentation of Russia as the guardian of international legal order and the portrayal of its partners in Europe as ‘the destroyers of this order’ help the Russian leadership achieve this goal (Lavrov, 2016b). The stress on the adherence to the universal code of conduct is meant to prove that Russia can finally enjoy membership in ‘the community of civilised states’ (Haukkala, 2015:36). Besides, contrasting this achievement with the deviant practices of European partners even implies Russia’s superiority in relation to them. The acceptance of European hypocrisy would force the country to refuse such status and again be treated as lagging behind others. Given that Russia’s authorities associate the promotion of Russian values with the maintenance of the internal unity necessary for the state stability and survival, the juxtaposition between Europe’s deviance, and Russia’s supremacy encourages citizens to believe that alien influence is threatening (President of Russia, 2015). Furthermore, the references to European partners’ tendency to accuse Russia of violating international law help to convince people that Europeans abuse values for geopolitical goals. V. Putin and S. Lavrov’s remarks about Europe’s efforts to lecture others despite its failure to respect the international legal order strengthen the impression that Europe relies on values to prevent Russian from protecting its national interests (Putin, 2016b). Therefore, distinguishing between European and Russian values, highlighting the superiority of the latter over the former and appealing to the efforts of the West to prevent Russia from raising help its authorities to securitise European values.

Secondly, the Russian authorities benefit from the juxtaposition of politicisation in Europe and Russia’s pragmatism as well as rationality. This enables

them to equate the expansion of European moral standards with the efforts to subordinate the country to Europeans' influence. Russia's growing assertiveness on the international stage has attracted a lot of criticism from the international community. The Western partners condemn Russia's aggression in Ukraine, support for the Syrian regime and blame the country for politicising economic relations with them (David and Romanova, 2015:1-10, Hutchings and Szostek, 2015:185-188, Shevtsova, 2015:171-180, Trenin, 2016). Under these circumstances, convincing citizens that Russia is the one facing threats instead of being an aggressor is a tricky task. However, the suggestion that Europe uses the politicisation of international relations for containing Russia helps V. Putin and S. Lavrov to discredit the criticism of Russian foreign policy (Lavrov, 2015a, Lavrov, 2015b). The subordination of Russia to Europe's will would deprive the country of sovereignty it tries to retain despite many internal and external challenges. The equation of the spread of European values to the state with the expansion of Europe's influence creates favourable conditions for arguing that the condemnation of Russia's behaviour is a part of the 'informational war' the West conducts against the country (Darczewska, 2015:7-17, Hutchings and Szostek, 2015:184). The appeal to the threats faced by the state to distract people's attention from dubious policies proves the strength of the besieged fortress syndrome in Russia. The emphasis on Europe's reliance on 'the logic of confrontation' while dealing with Russia despite its genuine interest in their cooperation contributes to the victimisation of the country (Lavrov, 2015b, Putin, 2014a). In this way, references to Europeans' efforts to contain Russia help to abuse their negative reaction to mobilise citizens' support for the narrative offered by the Russian leadership. The state-controlled media facilitates the securitisation of European values by ensuring the dominance of the ruling elite's version of the story



(Giles, 2016:33-44, Teper, 2016:378-396). The already existing discourse on the competition between Russia and the West encourage citizens to believe that the spread of European code of conduct is another way to subordinate the country to alien influence (Casier, 2013:1377-1381, Morozov, 2015:139-142). Thus, associating the expansion of European values with Russia's containment help V. Putin and S. Lavrov to convince Russians that Europe is threatening their state.

Thirdly, the comparison of Europe's lack of independence and Russian sovereignty facilitates the securitisation of the European code of conduct by associating it with the spread of American influence to the country that would undermine its autonomy. The theoretical part of this dissertation suggested that under the conditions of reversed anarchy the status of great power contributes to the state's consolidation. (Alekseev, 2003a:12-17, Alekseev, 2003b:39-40). For the reason that sovereignty is essential for achieving and maintaining this status, its protection is treated as the national interest of the country. The association of the spread of European moral standards to Russia with the expansion of American influence creates an impression that the state's sovereignty is under attack. The fact that this interpretation fits in well with the already existing narrative of the US efforts to dominate world politics and deprive Russia of its independence facilitates the securitisation of European values (Blank, 2010:173-188, Lantier, 2016, Trenin, 2016). In this respect, the Americans are described to be so keen on curbing Russia's independence because of its role as a counterbalance to the US unipolarity. The imposition and renewal of the Western sanctions against Russia also help the Russian leadership to prove that the country is under attack. However, the criticism of Europe's dependence on the US might lack effectiveness without showing that Russia

has much more to offer and is capable of challenging the American dominance. The emphasis on Russia's independence and 'major role in ensuring a balanced development of international relations' serves this purpose well (Lavrov, 2015b, Putin, 2015a). This helps the Russian authorities to establish the supremacy of Russia's standards of behaviour over those offered by Europe. Besides, the claims pointing to the obsession with the great power status encourage citizens to believe that promoting its influence through the spread of European values is part of the US efforts to prevent Russia's rise 'from the knees' (Blank, 2008:492-520, de Spiegeleire, 2015:7-54, Nitoiu, 2016:1-10). The juxtaposition of Europe's dependence on a partnership with the US and Russia's sovereignty creates the favourable conditions for Russians to link the spread of European values with the Western efforts to contain the country and threaten its supremacy. Consequently, this contributes to the securitisation of European moral standards.

Furthermore, distinguishing Europe's subjectivity from Russia's fairness helps the Russian officials to persuade citizens that European values threaten the state because they cover the Western attempts to deprive Russia of the great power role it tries to play. The tremendous economic crisis, a significant decrease in the country's population and military capabilities followed the collapse of the Soviet Union (Gaddy and O'Hanion, 2015:205-206, Nitoiu, 2016:1-5, Zevelev, 2014). The state decline provoked the identity crisis and fostered the sense of humiliation among Russians that was exacerbated by the country's dependence on the assistance from the West. As a result, it is not surprising that V. Putin's urge to regain Russia's status of great power became one of the key pillars of his popularity (Gaddy and O'Hanion, 2015:205-206, Simão, 2016:495-496, Zevelev, 2014). The contribution to the victory

over and liberation of Europe from Nazism during the World War II constitute a considerable part of Russia's great power narrative (Ambrosio, 2016:467-490, Hutchings and Szostek, 2015:184-194). This creates the favourable conditions for the Russian leadership to portray Europe's attempts to reconsider the country's role as the liberator of the old continent as questioning Russia's rightful place on the international stage. Western criticism of Russia's actions in Ukraine and Syria help the officials to associate these efforts to 'rewrite history' with the general wish to contain Russia (Lavrov, 2016f, Trenin, 2016). For this reason, citizens accept the expansion of values based on the downgrade of Russia as threatening the state. Moreover, the references to the possessed monopoly of truth provide Russia with the aura of superiority in the same manner as the role of the protector of universal legal order. The stress on the ability to offer more ethical code of conduct than the one promoted by Europe helps the Russian authorities to prove that the country deserves to be acknowledged as a 'rule-maker' instead of remaining a 'rule-taker' (Bechev, 2015:395, Laruelle, 2016:296). This allows citizens to forget the sense of humiliation and again be proud of their homeland. Nonetheless, the adherence to European values would deprive the country of this superiority and would subject it to the Western guidance. Therefore, the emphasis on the difference between Europe's subjectivity and Russia's fairness facilitate the securitisation of European values. The task could not be completed without associating it with Europe's efforts to contain the country and Russia's claims to superiority over the Western partners.

Finally, contrasting European moral relativism with Russian traditional values assists Russia's regime in securitising Europe's standards of behaviour by showing that they departed from the original European code of conduct that Russia

promotes and seeks to preserve (Morozov, 2015:42-139, Tsygankov, 2016:1-10). V. Putin's return to the presidency in 2012 marked the transition from the managerial style to the growing ideologisation of the Russian official discourse on Europe. The process reached its peak after the eruption of the crisis in Ukraine (Cadier and Light, 2016:205-210, Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2014a:1-6, Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2016:141-147, Tsygankov, 2016:1-10). This corresponds to the revival of ideological elements in Russia's security policy mentioned in the first part of the thesis. The emphasis on the juxtaposition of Europe's moral relativism and conservative values promoted in Russia proves this change. The transition primarily concerns the ruling elite's efforts to consolidate the society and Russians' national identity to mobilise their support for the regime (Cadier and Light, 2016:205-210, Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2014a:1-6, Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2016:141-147, Tsygankov, 2016:1-10). For a long time the Russian officials sought that Europe would recognise their country's standards of behaviour to end the identity crisis that lingered in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union (Morozov, 2015:42-139, Simão, 2016:494-496, Stepanova, 2015:122-134, Tsygankov, 2014:348-353, Tsygankov, 2016:1-10). Accordingly, the securitisation of European values requires the authorities to explain why they suggest that Russia no longer needs this recognition. The harsh criticism of Europe's decision to abandon their original code of conduct and choose its new but deviant version instead helps to achieve this goal (Morozov, 2015:42-139, Tsygankov, 2016:1-10). The Russian leadership's discourse creates an impression that Europe changed and departed from its true values worthy of Russia's admiration. The numerous references to deviance to describe their new version imply that it is not compatible with the moral principles valued by Russians (Cheskin, 2016:179-180, Laruelle, 2016:275-296). However, saying that the European code of conduct no

longer meets Russia's expectations is not enough to convince citizens that it is also dangerous. The Russian authorities' stress on the contrast between European values and those promoted in Russia facilitates the process. The suggestion that Russia is European, but remains faithful to traditional Europe's values instead of following the new 'anything-goes trend' points to the superiority of the state over the partners choosing the second option (Lavrov, 2016h). The fact that Russia, as well as those promoting different moral standards, are considered to be European suggest that there are two types of Europe. The Russian officials' emphasis on Russian supremacy creates an impression that the state represents the true version of Europe while the other one is false (Bechev, 2015:341-346, Hutchings and Szostek, 2015:184-190, Laruelle, 2016:275-296, Morozov, 2015:41-139). In this case, instead of recognising that their homeland fails to adopt, they claim that the rest of Europe does not manage to retain the identity that Russia protects and considers to be true. Consequently, the official discourse helps Russians to redefine the meaning of Europeaness according to their chosen path of development where conservative values play the central role (Laruelle, 2016:275-296, Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2014b:63-72, Nodia, 2014:139-148). The image of 'the bastion of traditional values' creates the favourable conditions for the ruling elite to argue that Russia acts as a 'state-civilisation' capable of presenting an alternative system of values to the one offered by the decadent partners (Cheskin, 2016:180, Tsygankov, 2016:1-10). The suggestion that the expansion of Europe's liberalism would deprive Russia of these roles helps the Russian authorities with convincing citizens that it threatens their homeland. They portray the preservation of Russian traditional values as key for the consolidation of their society and national identity that should ensure the state's stability. Nevertheless, the spread of deviant practices could erode the moral standards that provide the basis for it. The

claims that Russia needs to be stable to tackle the threats faced at home and coming from abroad encourage Russians to believe in the threatening nature of Europeans' influence. Thus, differentiating Europe's moral relativism from Russian traditional values and highlighting the superiority of the latter over the former contribute to the securitisation of European values.

The above discussion focused on how the concepts used by the Russian leadership to securitise Europe's code of conduct contribute to the success of this process. The analysis demonstrated that Russia securitises European values by emphasising its difference from and superiority over Western Europe. Moreover, the references to the attempts of the West to contain the country facilitate the task. The stress on Russia's distinctiveness and supremacy over Europe helps the ruling elite to convince the public that the spread of European moral standards undermines the basis for the stability Russia needs to survive. Similarly, the suggestion that the Western partners use European values for challenging Russia's sovereignty facilitates persuading citizens that they threaten the country.

### **4.3. Conclusion**

The purpose of this section was to explain how the Russian leadership portrays European values while performing the securitising move and discuss the factors making it successful. Accordingly, the section sought to find out how Russia securitises European values. The analysis of the Russian official discourse on European moral standards demonstrated that the former securitises the latter by emphasising Russia's difference from and superiority over Western Europe. The

references to the attempts of the West to contain the country are also essential for completing this task. The Russian leadership criticises Europe for the policy of double standards, politicisation of international relations, American influence, distortion of history, moral relativism and deviation from the core principles of European civilisation. V. Putin and S. Lavrov contrast the values attributed to Europe with the protection of international legal norms, pragmatism, promotion of sovereignty, objectivity and traditionalism common to Russia. Firstly, attention was paid to the juxtaposition of the application of double standards and protection of international legal norms. In this case, this thesis showed that the emphasis on Europe's failure to comply with the standards they impose on others for the sake of self-interest and its comparison with Russia's norms-driven behaviour help the Russian authorities to portray European values as threatening. Secondly, the difference between Europe's tendency to politicise international relations and Russia's rationality, as well as pragmatism, was examined. The section suggested that the Russian authorities benefit from portraying the Western criticism of Russia as a part of an information war against the country and comparing it with Russia's reactive policy and interest in cooperation. Then, the dissertation looked at the contrast between Europe's dependence on American influence and Russian sovereignty. In this respect, the association of the spread of European moral standards to Russia with the expansion of the American influence and stressing the impact it could have on Russia's role of sovereign great power helped the Russian leadership to convince people that their homeland is under attack. Furthermore, the attention was focused on the juxtaposition of European subjectivity and Russian fairness. The discussion showed that the emphasis on Europe's efforts to manufacture the reality in line with its preferences and abuse the narrative for challenging Russia's rightful place on the international

stage facilitated the securitisation of European values. Finally, the thesis discussed the contrast between moral relativism promoted in Europe and Russians' traditionalism. The section suggested that the comparison of Europe's deviation from their original moral standards and a lack of respect for these conservative values in Russia helped the Russian leadership to portray European values as a threat to their state.



## **5. Conclusion**

This dissertation has sought to find out how Russia securitises European values. On the way towards completing this task, the thesis has attempted to achieve two objectives. Firstly, it has sought to identify the concepts the Russian ruling elite uses to describe Europe and its standards of behaviour. Secondly, the dissertation has attempted to discuss how these notions have helped the regime to convince citizens that European moral standards threaten their state. The critical analysis of the Russian official discourse has demonstrated that Russia securitises European values by emphasising its difference from and superiority over Western Europe. Moreover, the references to the attempts of the West to contain the country contribute to the success of this process. The stress on Russia's distinctiveness and supremacy over Europe helps the ruling elite to convince the public that the spread of European moral standards undermines the basis for the stability Russia needs to survive. Similarly, the suggestion that the Western partners use European values for challenging Russia's sovereignty facilitates persuading citizens that they threaten the country.

The research findings presented and examined in the previous chapter have shown that this thesis has fully met the set goals. The study has found that the Russian authorities associate Europe's code of conduct with the policy of double standards, the politicisation of international relations, American influence, distortion of history, moral relativism and deviation from the core principles of European civilisation. V. Putin and S. Lavrov contrast Europe and its values with the moral standards attributed to Russia in order to describe them. The officials refer to the

protection of international legal norms, pragmatism, promotion of sovereignty, objectivity and traditionalism to highlight what Russia values most and what principles guide its behaviour. Accordingly, the dissertation has successfully identified the concepts the Russian ruling elite uses to describe Europe and its moral standards while conducting the securitising move.

Furthermore, the study has managed to discuss how the way in which V. Putin and S. Lavrov portray European values contributes to their securitisation. Firstly, the dissertation has argued that the stress on the application of double standards in Europe helped them to discredit its role as a normative power whose example everyone should follow. By showing that European code of conduct is not worth admiration contrary to the protection of international legal norms in Russia, the leadership establishes Russia's difference from and superior position to Europe. This allows the Russian regime to present Europeans' criticism of Russia as the efforts to contain the country. The juxtaposition of politicisation of international relations in Europe and Russia's pragmatism and rationality also helps the authorities to achieve this goal. Portraying the spread of European values as the expansion of and Russia's subordination to Europe's influence enables the ruling elite to convince people that they threaten their homeland. In this respect, associating the politicisation with the European logic of confrontation promoted despite the Russian interest in cooperation supports the narrative. Furthermore, Russia's leadership benefits from contrasting Europe's dependence on the American influence with Russian sovereignty. The emphasis on this contrast not only help the authorities to establish Russia's difference from and superiority over Europe but also to present the country as a great power capable of counterbalancing the US. This narrative facilitates the justification of

equating the proliferation of Europe's code of conduct in the country with the Americans' efforts to curb its independence. Then, the thesis has suggested that differentiating Europeans' subjectivity from Russia's fairness facilitates the securitisation of Europe's values by supporting the claims that Europeans use their account of reality for challenging Russia's rightful place on the international stage. In this case, the references to the possessed monopoly of truth provide Russia with the aura of superiority necessary for claiming the right to be one of decision makers in world politics. Finally, the contrast between moral relativism of Europe and Russia's traditionalism helps the Russian ruling elite to convince citizens that the European code of conduct threatens their state. The supremacy it provides Russia with allows the officials to present the country as an alternative system of values to the one offered by Europe. The Russian leadership presents this status as contributing to the state's internal stability that is key for tackling the faced threats, but the expansion of Europeans' deviance would erode it and, for this reason, is threatening. Therefore, the overview of the research findings confirms that referring to Russia's difference from and superiority over Europe as well as the Western efforts to contain the country help the Russian ruling elite to securitise European values.

This dissertation primarily contributes to the academic literature on securitisation theory. The majority of scholars have used this theoretical framework for explaining developments taking place in democratic states. By applying it to the Russian case, the thesis becomes one of less frequent attempts to employ the theory for discussing the peculiarities of non-democratic regimes. Moreover, the dissertation widens the scope of studies using securitisation for examining developments in Russian politics. The focus on the securitisation of European values contributes to the

studies looking at Russia's tendency to securitise such issues as relations with other actors, domestic developments, identity, energy relations, political economy and minorities residing abroad. Furthermore, the thesis complements the literature on the Russian official rhetoric towards European values by applying the theoretical framework of securitisation to the analysis. The studies conducted so far emphasise that the Russian authorities portray them as threatening the country, but have not used the theory to discuss the issue. In addition, they mainly look at the period from May 2012, when V. Putin returned to the presidency, until the introduction of Russia's counter-sanctions against the West in August 2014. By focusing on the way in which Russia securitised Europe's code of conduct since then until the end of June 2016, the dissertation provides an updated account of the subject.

This thesis has not only provided a comprehensive analysis of how the threat of European values is constructed in Russia but also offered the potential areas for further research. Firstly, this study has focused solely on the discourse of the ruling elite responsible for foreign policy making and excluded the media narrative from the data. The assumption that the latter should not differ significantly from the former because of the control that the regime exerts on the media was used to justify this choice. While the general features of the narrative would probably be the same, the media discourse would also elaborate on them. The media is less restricted than the politicians' statements that have to follow a certain protocol. The combination of the media narrative with the authorities' discourse would allow the future research to provide more informative and representative findings. Secondly, this study has ignored the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in conveying the message of the regime on European moral standards. The preoccupation with the spiritual guidance of

the nation and close cooperation with the leadership makes the Russian Orthodox Church a relevant source of information in this case (Laruelle, 2016:291-292, Stepanova, 2015:121-135, Tsygankov, 2016:1-10). The inclusion of the narrative offered by the Russian Orthodox Church into the analysis would have the similar impact on future studies as taking the media message into account. This would allow to better understanding the basis, on which Russia's distinctiveness from the rest of Europe is built in terms of values. Besides, both the media discourse and the Russian Orthodox Church message are elements of the social context that this dissertation invites to consider while conducting the data analysis. Their inclusion in the data set would increase the chances of completing this task. Finally, for reasons of space and time constraints, this thesis has looked at how Russia has securitised European values since August 2014 instead of comparing the new narrative with the one provided until the start of the period under investigation. The in-depth comparative analysis would allow the further research to discuss how the Russian official rhetoric towards Europe has shifted and how the factors contributing to the securitisation of its code of conduct have changed over time. This would help to examine the link between the narrative offered by Russia's leadership and its policy choices.

The role of the Russian official discourse in legitimising the controversial and revanchist policies of the local regime points to the growing importance of the competing narratives in world politics. The securitisation of European values is a part of the story that creates the favourable conditions for Russia's aggression abroad. For this reason, it is significant to look at the construction of this narrative to understand what to expect from the country and how to restrain its assertiveness. The awareness of the factors that make this story successful at home is

necessary for gaining a better idea of how to effectively challenge the legitimacy of Russia's ambitious ventures.

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## Appendix A: Coding Criteria for the Analysis of the Russian Official Discourse on European Values

<b>Description of Europe/the EU/European values</b>	
1 - Status of the American puppet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The officials portray Europe or the EU as dependent on the US, which portrays Russia as a threat.</li> <li>• They present Europe or the EU as willing to please the American master and following its guidance.</li> <li>• Russia's leadership notes that the country could have better relations with Europe or the EU without Americans' influence.</li> <li>• Emphasising the link between Europe and the US.</li> </ul>
2 – Promotion of false history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Russian officials claim that the EU fails to recognise Russia's true role in European history and reasons for the eruption of the Ukrainian crisis.</li> <li>• Russians' complaints about the efforts to reconsider the result of the World War II.</li> <li>• The references to the destroyed monuments.</li> </ul>
3 – Application of double standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Russian leadership highlights the EU's tendency to criticise and condemn its partners for practices that the EU and its allies also fail to avoid.</li> <li>• They stress the unfairness of putting the blame on Russia for violating the norms of international law given the efforts of the country to protect them.</li> </ul>
4 – Deviation from true European values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Russian authorities present Europe and the EU as Russia's 'other' that deviates from and supports the violation of traditional European values Russia so carefully preserves.</li> <li>• The Russian officials criticise Europe and the EU for following the new version of European values, described as neo-liberal values, that Russia does not recognise.</li> </ul>
5 – Moral relativism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The emphasis on the threat of aggressive secularism, too high level of</li> </ul>

	tolerance, individualism, materialism.
6 - The lack of traditional national, cultural and religious identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The association of European values with the lack of traditional national, cultural and religious identity: lacking qualities possessed by Russians.</li> </ul>
7 – Statelessness and divided Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The authorities portray Europe and the EU as suffering from divisions, failure to act decisively and statelessness that exacerbates these divisions.</li> </ul>
8 – Threat of neo-Nazism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The remarks about growing radicalism in Europe, the support of the West for radical government in Ukraine.</li> </ul>
9 – Efforts to deprive Russia of its identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Russian officials note that the US and its allies try to impose their values on other countries and deprive Russia of its identity. For the reason that the EU is the main ally of the US in matters that concern the relations with Russia, such behaviour can also be attributed to Europe. The claims that ‘others’ seek to impose their values on Russians help to convince people those values are threatening.</li> </ul>
10 – European values as threatening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The suggestions that European values divide the society, could strengthen the domestic challenges faced by Russia’s regime.</li> </ul>
11 – Politicised decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Russian authorities’ emphasis that Europe is driven by geopolitical calculations instead of rationality.</li> </ul>
12 – Inefficient entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The references to the complicated Europeans’ bureaucracy that prevents Europe from solving the faced problems and engaging in cooperation on certain issues.</li> </ul>
13 – Europe needs Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The remarks about the fact that Europeans are also interested in the partnership with Russia, but sacrifice beneficial relations for the sake of geopolitical ambitions.</li> </ul>
<b>Description of Russia</b>	
1 - Traditional values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>V. Putin and S. Lavrov refer to Russia’s traditional values to demonstrate the distinctiveness of the country from the rest of Europe.</li> <li>In this way, they suggest that European values promoted in Western Europe, which they consider present as the new form of the continent values, contradict</li> </ul>

	those promoted by Russia.
2 – Promotion of true history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Russian officials claim that only Russia offers an objective account of developments taking place on the international stage.</li> <li>• They suggest that the efforts of the West to rewrite the history are directly related to the wish to contain the country.</li> </ul>
3 – Belonging to European civilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The leadership highlights the common cultural and civilisational routes of Russia and Europe and different paths they choose to follow at the moment.</li> <li>• They describe Russia as European country with immense contribution to Europe's history and culture.</li> </ul>
4 – Protector of European values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Russian authorities present the country as the entity that protects the culture and values once shared with Europe and which now Europe chooses to abandon.</li> <li>• Russia as safeguarding democracy, truth and justice.</li> </ul>
5 – Refusing to follow the new version of European values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russia's leadership suggests that the country's distinctiveness derives from the wish to preserve traditional European values instead of promoting their new version offered by the West.</li> </ul>
6 – Great power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The references to Russia's role of the great power seem to be meant to contrast itself with weak Europe that cannot act without the US guidance.</li> </ul>
7 – Strong and confident Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Russian elites emphasise Russia's self-sufficiency to convince citizens that the state is able to challenge the US unipolarity.</li> </ul>
8 – Unifying force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The remarks about Russia's rational and pragmatic foreign policy that determines its interest in cooperation with the EU and the US despite the deteriorated relations.</li> </ul>
9 – Rational and pragmatic foreign policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The references to Russia's rationality and pragmatism are made in relation to Europe's politicised decisions and refusal to abolish sanctions despite the potential economic benefits.</li> </ul>
10 – Protector of international legal norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Russian authorities emphasise the respect for universal legal norms that others and especially European</li> </ul>

	<p>partners fail to respect. In this way, they can address the criticism from the West for the violation of international law. From Russians perspective, they become the only ones who seeks to protect it.</p>
11 – Russian traditional values under attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The remarks about external influence that can undermine Russia’s moral standards, erode them. This also includes the emphasis on the spread of deviance to the country that is unavoidable in case of complying with Western values.</li> </ul>
<b>Russia and the modern world</b>	
1 – Russia as interested in partnership with Europe, the EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Russian leadership claims that the country is interested in partnership with everyone that agrees to deal with it one equal footing and Europeans are not the exception despite the disagreement and sanctions.</li> </ul>
2 – Internal unity as an answer to threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They suggest that the consolidation and preservation of local identity and values would help to address challenges. They emphasise all values such as patriotism, collectivism that help to convince citizens serving the common wealth instead of be driven by personal needs.</li> </ul>
3 – Terrorism and Syria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They try to distract the people’s attention from the poor relations with the West and economic conditions with the emphasis on Russia’s heroic role in Syria and needed cooperation in fighting terrorism.</li> </ul>
4 – Competition of systems of values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Russian authorities make remarks about the tendency of European partners to use the promotion of values for spreading their influence to the country.</li> </ul>
5 – Centralisation of power to tackle internal and external threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The suggestions that strong state is closely related to the strong government that needs to remain in charge to ensure the stability in the country.</li> </ul>
6 – Threat posed by information activities undermining Russian values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Russian authorities make remarks about the tendency of European partners to use the promotion of values for spreading their influence to the country.</li> </ul>



7 – Fear of destabilisation of individual states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ruling elite emphasises the Western efforts to interfere in the internal affairs of weaker states and destabilise them.</li> </ul>
8 – The expansion of NATO as the main external military threat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Russian leadership portrays NATO as challenging Russia's national interest and failing to comply with its commitments.</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: The Distribution of Codes in the Data

**Table 1. Description of Europe, the EU or European Values**

<b>Nodes</b>	<b>Number of coding references</b>	<b>Aggregate number of coding references</b>	<b>Number of items coded</b>	<b>Aggregate number of items coded</b>
Nodes\Description of Europe, the EU or European values\Application of double standards	30	30	21	21
Nodes\Description of Europe, the EU or European values\Deviation from true European values	14	14	11	11
Nodes\Description of Europe, the EU or European values\Efforts to deprive Russia of its identity	3	3	3	3
Nodes\Description of Europe, the EU or European values\Europe needs Russia	2	2	2	2
Nodes\Description of Europe, the EU or European values\European values as threatening	3	3	1	1
Nodes\Description of Europe, the EU or European values\Inefficient entity	9	9	9	9
Nodes\Description of Europe, the EU or European	4	4	3	3

values\Moral relativism				
Nodes\Description of Europe, the EU or European values\Politicised decisions	11	11	9	9
Nodes\Description of Europe, the EU or European values\Promotion of false history	9	9	9	9
Nodes\Description of Europe, the EU or European values\Statelessness and divided Europe	10	10	10	10
Nodes\Description of Europe, the EU or European values>Status of the American puppet	16	16	13	13
Nodes\Description of Europe, the EU or European values\The lack of traditional national, cultural and religious identity	3	3	2	2
Nodes\Description of Europe, the EU or European values\Threat of neo-Nazism	5	5	4	4

**Table 2. Description of Russia**

<b>Nodes</b>	<b>Number of coding references</b>	<b>Aggregate number of coding references</b>	<b>Number of items coded</b>	<b>Aggregate number of items coded</b>
Nodes\Description of Russia\Belonging	10	10	7	7

to European civilisation				
Nodes\\Description of Russia\\Different from Europe and refusing to follow the new version of European values	6	6	6	6
Nodes\\Description of Russia\\Great power	11	11	10	10
Nodes\\Description of Russia\\Promotion of true history	11	11	9	9
Nodes\\Description of Russia\\Protector of European values	8	8	7	7
Nodes\\Description of Russia\\Protector of international legal norms	24	24	19	19
Nodes\\Description of Russia\\Rational and pragmatic foreign policy	18	18	15	15
Nodes\\Description of Russia\\Russian traditional values under attack	4	4	3	3
Nodes\\Description of Russia\\Strong and confident Russia	9	9	8	8
Nodes\\Description of Russia\\Traditional values	22	22	12	12
Nodes\\Description of Russia\\Unifying force	20	20	20	20

**Table 3. Russia and the Modern World**

<b>Nodes</b>	<b>Number of</b>	<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>Number of</b>	<b>Aggregate</b>
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	<b>coding references</b>	<b>number of coding references</b>	<b>items coded</b>	<b>number of items coded</b>
Nodes\\Russia and the world\\Centralisation of power to tackle external and internal threats	1	1	1	1
Nodes\\Russia and the world\\Competition of system of values	4	4	4	4
Nodes\\Russia and the world\\Expansion of NATO as the main external military threat	17	17	14	14
Nodes\\Russia and the world\\Fear of destabilisation of individual states	6	6	3	3
Nodes\\Russia and the world\\Growing attempts to use information for achieving political goals	14	14	11	11
Nodes\\Russia and the world\\Internal unity as an answer to threats	8	8	5	5
Nodes\\Russia and the world\\Opposition from the West	23	23	19	19
Nodes\\Russia and the world\\Russia as interested in partnership with Europe, the EU	26	26	22	22
Nodes\\Russia and the world\\Terrorism and Syria	15	15	14	14

Nodes\\Russia and the world\\Threat posed by the information activities undermining Russian values	5	5	4	4
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