

Images of Russia in the selected American weekly news magazines during the years 2004-2014

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Abstract

The purpose of the article is to analyze the manner in which the selected American weekly news magazines –TIME, Newsweek and The Nation –presented Russia in the years 2004-2014. 342 articles were examined using content analysis and discourse analysis. The articles were coded into seven distinct categories and then the numeric data was analyzed in terms of the distribution of content in every magazine in question. Discourse analysis was applied to facilitate close reading of the texts and recognition of trends, generalizations and delineation of concepts. The article attempts to answer the question about the kind of a social construct about Russia that is offered to the American audience by the weekly news magazines. The hypothesis that is being posed and tested in this analysis is that during the selected time period the American reporting not only involved the centuries-long American media narratives where “good Russia” coincided with periods of Russian weakness and narratives about a “bad Russia” with periods of Russian assertiveness but also that the reporting seems to be trapped in the Cold War discourse. The analysis demonstrated that Cold War remains a salient concept and reference point for all three magazines in their reporting about Russia. The reporting in TIME and Newsweek confirms the hypothesis about being trapped in Cold War logic while the discourse about Russia in The Nation distances itself from the mainstream views and offers alternative perspectives.

Keywords: media democracy, media philosophy, press opinion, public opinion, discourse analysis

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to analyze the manner in which the selected American weekly news magazines –*TIME*, *Newsweek* and *The Nation* –presented Russia in the years 2004-2014. The chosen time period is broken up into 3 parts in order to better show how the trends were changing in time: 2004-2008 during the second term of Putin’s presidency, 2009-2012 covering Medvedev’s presidency, and 2013-2014 during the period of Vladimir Putin’s third presidential term. The years 2004 and 2014 were breakthroughs and beginnings of new chapters for Russia. 2004 marks the year of the Russian involvement in the Ukrainian elections, followed by the Orange Revolution. After the revolution, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, Russia faced a unified front of both the United States and Europe. In the same year, Russia experienced a terrorist attack in Beslan which marked the beginning of tighter control by the Kremlin and an increased role of security forces in internal affairs – in other words, Putin redesigned the way he would govern. 2014 brought breakthroughs as well: first, Russia annexed a part of a foreign territory, the Ukrainian Crimea, which entirely changed the post-Cold War geopolitical order, and then-after shooting down of the Malaysian airliner MH17 over the Ukrainian territory and the alleged Russian involvement in the tragic event- perception of Russia in the West drastically changed. Afterwards Russia, in the words of Vladimir Trenin, embraced the non-West¹. Thus both 2004 and 2014 witnessed what the group of contributors to the Parisian journal *Hermès* calls *evenements*– events that bring upheaval of the order of things, after which it needs to be re-examined what has opened or closed, what has become possible or impossible. Faced with an *evenement*, subjects are summoned to reconfigure the course of their existence.² The author examines how the selected American weekly magazines reflected those shifts and reconfigurations throughout the given time period. 342 articles that wrote about or at least mentioned Russia were used for the analysis. There were two research methods used: content analysis and discourse analysis. The analyzed material was coded into seven distinct categories: Russia’s foreign policy; Russia’s domestic policy; Russia’s international economic relations; Russia’s domestic economy; Russian society; culture; and history. Next, the numeric data was analyzed in terms of the distribution of content in every magazine in question. Discourse analysis was then applied to facilitate close reading of the texts and recognition of trends, generalizations and delineation of concepts. Taking theoretical

¹ Dmitri Trenin, “From Cooperation to Competition: Russia and the West,” *Horizons*, January 21, 2015, accessed March 3, 2019, <https://carnegie.ru/2015/01/21/from-cooperation-to-competition-russia-and-west-pub-59436>

² Jocelyne Arquembourg, *De l'événement international à l'événement mondial: Emergence et manifestations d'une sensibilité mondiale*, *Hermès*, 2006, accessed March 3, 2019, <http://documents.irevues.inist.fr/handle/2042/24050>

inspiration from the post-modernist sensibility represented by Michael Foucault and Jacques Derrida, among others, the article attempts to answer the question about the kind of a social construct about Russia that is offered to the American audience by the weekly news magazines used in the analysis. In particular, the goal is to establish how the selected weekly magazines define legitimate perspectives about Russia for its readers in the course of the eleven years, to recognize regularities that transcend single texts, and to pinpoint the differences in creating the image of Russia between the three weekly magazines in question. Weekly news magazines provide a fitting material for such analyses due to the fact that it is the “newsweeklies” that “tell people how to think about the news”³ The three weekly magazines that have been chosen for this analysis: *TIME*, *Newsweek* and *The Nation* do exactly that however each of them in a different manner, based on its own chosen orientation. *Newsweek* with its circulation about 1,5 million strives to be the “thought leader”. It has been relying heavily on the writing of brand-name journalists like Fareed Zakaria or Christopher Hitchens. *Time* has the world's largest circulation for a weekly news magazine. In mid-2012, its circulation was over three million. Both *TIME* and *The Newsweek* are considered to be mainstream magazines in the United States. *The Nation*, a politically progressive weekly magazine with circulation of slightly above 100,000, is the oldest continuously published weekly magazine in the United States (established in 1865) and the most widely read weekly journal of progressive political and cultural news, opinion, and analysis. In contrast to *TIME* and *Newsweek*, *The Nation* is not one of the mainstream magazines but rather a niche news magazine, and it was selected because it offers a commentary and alternative approach to the mainstream discourse with narratives reminiscent of Bakhtinian dialogue with the mainstream views. The hypothesis that is being posed and tested in this analysis is that during the selected time period the American reporting not only involved the centuries-long American media narratives where “good Russia” typically coincide with periods of Russian weakness and narratives about a “bad Russia” coincide with periods of Russian assertiveness but also the reporting seems to be trapped in the Cold War discourse with an American projection of a bipolar world where two world powers compete for the spheres of influence. As a result we get a “back to the future” writing trapped in the old security architecture that doesn’t seem to have adjusted to the post-Cold War tectonic changes and thus reaches for the Cold War rhetoric that during the Cold War was referred to as “Manichean, double-standard thinking on both sides that

³ Richard Pérez-Peña, “The popular Newsweek becomes a lonely category,” *New York Times*, January 16, 2009. Accessed February 28, 2019. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/17/business/media/17weeklies.html>

relentlessly vilified each other, denied it had any legitimate national interests outside its own borders and blamed it for every conflict.”⁴

RUSSIA ON THE PAGES OF TIME, NEWSWEEK AND THE NATION- QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

In the course of the years 2004-2014 there were published 342 articles in all three magazines combined regarding Russia, making it its main topic or at least indirectly describing some of its aspects. The majority of those articles were published in *Newsweek* (191), followed by the *Nation* (82) and *TIME* (69). One of the causes of the large number of the articles in *Newsweek* was the fact that there were a lot of one to three paragraph notes that were placed in the section “Periscope”. None of the magazines wrote about Russia regularly. While the number of articles devoted each year to Russia varied considerably, it is possible to indicate the moments when Russia was attracting more attention. In 2007 *TIME* published a lot of articles devoted to Russia when Putin was recognized as a Person of the Year. In 2008 there were numerous analyses following the Russian-Georgian conflict in August. Finally, in 2014 one can clearly see a spike in the number of articles as the year brought the Russian annexation of Crimea and the alleged involvement of Russia in the shooting down of the Malaysian airliner over the Ukrainian territory.

TABLE 1: Number of articles regarding Russia in *TIME*, *Newsweek* and *The Nation* in the years 2004-2014.

	TIME	Newsweek	The Nation
2004	7 (10%)	7 (4%)	6 (8%)
2005	2 (3%)	9 (5%)	8 (10%)
2006	3 (4%)	12 (6%)	10 (12%)
2007	19 (28%)	17 (9%)	3(4%)
2008	8 (12%)	18 (9%)	11(13%)

⁴ Stephen F. Cohen, “Media’s New Cold War,” *The Nation*, Jan. 31, 2005, accessed June 3, 2005, <https://www.thenation.com/article/medias-new-cold-war/>

2009	6 (7%)	21 (11%)	7 (9%)
2010	3 (4%)	26 (13%)	2 (2%)
2011	4 (6%)	3 (2%)	2 (2%)
2012	4 (6%)	15 (8%)	8 (10%)
2013	2 (3%)	19 (10%)	11 (13%)
2014	11 (17%)	44(23%)	14 (17%)
TOTAL	69 (100%)	191 (100%)	82 (100%)

Source: Own Analysis

The analyzed magazines were most likely to write about Russia in terms of international politics– between 39% and 55%. The next popular category was domestic politics- between 23% and 28%. The fact that politics was attracting the most attention of the reporters is not surprising as they were trying to familiarize their audience with a situation concerning a foreign country that appears distant and exotic (in Segalen’s terms⁵) to many readers. The topics prevalent in that category involved Russia’s position in the world (also as a potential threat that needs to be managed), its identity and ideology, Putin’s governing philosophy, and domestic affairs-the state of the Russian democracy, security and civil liberties. The next most important category for *TIME* and *Newsweek* was economy and for *The Nation* culture and history. That seems to be natural due to the general interest of *TIME* and *Newsweek* magazine in politics and economy. In the case of Russia their articles focused on cyclical changes of the Russian economy that reflected fluctuations of the oil prices, the lack of economic differentiation and the measures that were implemented to address the crises. *The Nation* focused more on the broad analyses of the historical and cultural background that led to the current situation in Russia and hence it published more articles in those categories. It is interesting to note a high number of articles concerning social situation in Russia published in *Newsweek*. It seems to reflect the overall inclination of the magazine to describe events through a prism of a human-interest frame. ⁶

⁵ Victor Segalen, *Essai sur l'exotisme*, Paris:Fata Morgana 1978, p. 41

⁶ Holli A. Semetko, and Patti M. Vankenburg “Framing European politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News,” *Journal of Communication*, 1 June 2000, accessed February 28, 2019, <http://https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02843.x>

TABLE 2: Topics covered by *TIME*, *Newsweek* and *The Nation* in the articles concerning Russia in the years 2004-2014.

	TIME	Newsweek	The Nation
International Politics	38 (55%)	75 (38%)	40 (48%)
Domestic Politics	19 (28%)	47 (25%)	19 (23%)
International Economy	3 (4%)	28 (14%)	2 (2%)
Domestic Economy	5 (7%)	9 (5%)	0 (0%)
Culture	1 (2%)	7 (4%)	9 (10%)
History	2 (3%)	9 (5%)	12 (15%)
Society and Religion	1 (1%)	16 (8%)	2 (2%)

Source: Own Analysis

III. Russia on the pages of *TIME*, *Newsweek* and *The Nation*. Qualitative Analysis

III.1. Russia's International Politics in *TIME*, *Newsweek* and *The Nation*

III. 1. A. 2004-2008- end of harmony and growing tensions

The most discussed development of that time period is the Russian involvement in the Ukrainian 2004 elections and its consequences for the Russian-American relations. Both *Newsweek* and *TIME* agree that the events in Ukraine thwarted the harmony between the U.S. and Russia because in Ukraine the "free hand"⁷ or "impunity"⁸ that President George Bush was giving Putin in his dealings when the so-called "Russian near abroad" came into sharp discordance with Bush's attempts to promote democracy abroad. After the Orange Revolution Putin, for the first time since Iraq, finds himself facing a united front of the U.S. and Europe against Russia (*evenement*). *The Nation* attributes that situation to the recent U.S. policies, especially "tendencies to unilateralism."⁹ They point out that the United States needs to reconcile itself with its peripheral geopolitical position, which is a beginning of a "healthy multipolar world". One by-product of that new situation is a re-run of the "Great

⁷ Paul Quinn-Judge and Yuri Zarakhovich, "The Orange Revolution" *TIME*, Dec. 17, 2004, accessed March 1, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,832225,00.html>

⁸ Michael Hirsh and Frank Brown, "Back to the U.S.S.R.?" *Newsweek*, Sept. 27, 2004, accessed September 28, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-122324744.html>

⁹ Sherle. R. Schwennger, "A world neglected" *The Nation*, Oct. 18, 2004, accessed March 1, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/world-neglected/>

Game” where “powerful players once again position themselves to control the heart of Euroasian mass with transnational oil companies trying to pursue their own interests in a Wild East Style”.¹⁰*The Nation* points out that the Bush administration uses “war on terror rhetoric” in order to pursue its “energy imperialism” in Central Asia, an area that Russia considers as its strategic backyard which is why it resents the American presence there. Putin is not trying to annoy the United States but “when the chips are down, he no longer goes with Washington”. In 2005 all three magazines address the issue of whether Russia is a menace and, if so, how to approach it. For *TIME* the Russian menace is exemplified by an “army of spooks” from Russia that are widely present in the U.S and who spy on the American military technology, hardware, and the long-term foreign policy goals.¹¹ For *Newsweek* that menace is encapsulated in the “Russian Model,” -“a specific deviation of the political and economic practices as an effect of major oil revenues” that has been spilling into Central Asia.¹² They also notice Cold War-style rhetoric on the part of “Fortress Russia” that produces accusations “that once dominated the Soviet era of geopolitics: the discourse of covert actions on Russia’s borders, competing spheres of influence and zero-sum games.” Putin is attributed with “ingenuous nostalgia for the Evil Empire”.¹³ Thus “Bush’s challenge is to persuade Putin to remember not just the end of World War II but the end of the Cold War.” *Newsweek* suggests that Putin needs to be not only gently “coaxed out of his shell” as his cooperation is needed on a number of issues” but also to be reminded that the Cold War is over.¹⁴ In one article *Newsweek* reminds its readers that “the Cold War is won” and that “American-sponsored globalism is dominant”.¹⁵ *The Nation* takes another perspective and claims that the mainstream press invokes a new Cold War with Russia through its biased, russophobic reporting.¹⁶ The origin of that communication style goes back to the “triumphalist winner-take-all policy of extracting unilateral concessions first from Yeltsin and then from Putin”. Those “exceedingly unwise” US policies make Russia feel

¹⁰ Lutz Kleveman, “Oil and the New Great Game”, *The Nation*, January 29, 2004, accessed March 1, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/authors/lutz-kleveman/>

¹¹ Timothy J. Burger and Brian Bennett “The Russians Are Coming”, *TIME* Jan. 30, 2005, accessed March 1, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1022559,00.html>

¹² Fareed Zakaria, “How to escape the Oil Trap,” *Newsweek*, Aug. 29, 2005, accessed Aug. 6, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-135384271.html>

¹³ George F. Will, “Aspects of Europe’s Mind”, *Newsweek*, May 9, 2005, accessed Aug. 7, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-132088081.html>

¹⁴ Frank Brown, “Nothing to Celebrate”, *Newsweek*, February 28, 2005, accessed Aug. 6, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-129098041.html>

¹⁵ Fareed Zakaria, “The Limits of Democracy”, *Newsweek*, January 6 29, 2007, accessed Aug. 8, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-158157677.html>

¹⁶ Stephen F. Cohen, “The Media’s New Cold War”, *The Nation*, January 31, 2005, accessed May 5, 2018, Accessed March 2, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/medias-new-cold-war/>

isolated and “contained” which leads to a new cold war. In 2006 the leading theme is the raising strength and confidence of the oil-rich Russia on one hand and the seemingly reassuring, “emollient” responses of Washington. The readers are told that the best approach to “solve the complex challenges a buoyant but flawed Russia poses” is to convince the Russians to follow international norms while helping them build appropriate domestic institutions. *The Nation* disagrees and claims that despite the “decorative and outwardly reassuring attitude, the real policy has been different” and American approach is described as “more aggressive and uncompromising than was Washington’s approach to Soviet Communist Russia”. The result is rebuilding by the Americans of a “re-verse iron curtain and remilitarization of American-Russian relations”. Underpinning components of the US policy are the “familiar cold war double standards condemning Moscow for doing what Moscow does.” In 2007 the most widely discussed aspect is the Russian foreign policy as a function of the American “indifference”. In *TIME* magazine Zbigniew Brzezinski considers the “apparent American indifference” not as an evidence of a moral failure of the American policymakers but rather as a consequence of “America’s disastrous war in Iraq on U.S. foreign policy”.¹⁷ Brzezinski argues that such developments as false claims of Iraqi WMD, Guantanamo, and continuing chaos in Iraq destroyed U.S. credibility in the world, and, as a result, America granted “impunity” to Russia, counting on Russia’s support on issues like North Korea and Iran. As a consequence the two dominant frames of mind in the Kremlin elite are “schadenfreude” at the US discomfort and a dangerous presumption that Russia has a free hand to act as it pleases in international affairs. Brzezinski thinks that the wars that both Russia and the United States engaged in destroyed the opportunities still available a decade and half ago, namely of two former cold war adversaries working together in partnership based on common values and strengthening global security. That vision didn’t materialize and Russia chose a path that James Graff called “adventurism” well symbolized in planting a titanium flag right on the North Pole- the action Arien Cohen of Heritage Foundation called “an attempted land grab”.¹⁸ At the end of 2007 *TIME* devotes a lot of attention to Russia as Putin is recognized as the Person of the Year for his “clear-eyed recognition of the world as it is and of the most powerful individuals and forces shaping that world—for better or for worse”. On the same occasion *TIME* tackles the question of the American “misconceptions about Russia”, and it claims that there are no misconceptions but rather “a purposeful attempt by some to create an image of Russia based on what one could use to influence our internal and foreign politics”. In 2008 *TIME* reporter Eben Harrel reminds his readers that “cold war tensions persist” and that “with thousands of Russian

¹⁷ Zbigniew Brzezinski, “How to Avoid a new Cold War”, *TIME*, June 7, 2007, accessed March 2, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1630544,00.html>

¹⁸ James Graff, “Right for the Top of the World”, *TIME*, October 7, 2007, accessed, March 2, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1663848,00.html>

and American warheads still ready to launch at a moment's notice, accidental annihilation remains a plausible threat".¹⁹ Those tensions became even more evident after Russia mobilizes the international public opinion with its 2008 invasion of Georgia. Analysts argued whether or not that moment should be regarded as a tipping point in the Russian foreign politics. And so Brzezinski in his front cover analysis "Staring Down the Russians" writes that "Russia is now on watch" by the international community that will closely observe whether Russia continues to make coercion the method of achieving "its imperial aims" or whether it is willing to cooperate with the international community and respect its values²⁰. Newsweek writes about the Georgia attack as a "major strategic blunder" and not as a turning point in international affairs. Fareed Zakaria compares the attack to the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 when "Kremlin elite drunk on high oil prices foolishly overreached and triggered a countervailing reaction in the region and across the world."²¹

III.1. B. 2009-2012- RESET: IT'S MOMENTUM AND BREAKDOWN

In 2009 the trend was to analyze the position of Russia after the invasion of Georgia. *TIME* magazine reports void and emptiness that is evident in the Russo-American relations after falling out over the invasion. It also points out that the two interpretations of the invasion couldn't have been more different. Americans saw that "Russian forces invaded the territory of an American ally and Russia felt resentment that the West didn't notice that their military action was in response to "intolerable provocation by the Georgian government".²² *The Nation* agreed with the Russian interpretation and wrote about the discrepancy between the image of Russian behavior in the United States and its reality which [the image- KL] was dramatized by the war over South Osetia in August. The event is referred to as a "clear and obvious Georgian attack" that was "misreported as an act of Russian aggression by the US media and establishment".²³ With interpretations being so diverse, there was a consensus that after August 2008 relations with Russia seemed to be, in the words of Strobe Talbott, the former Deputy Secretary of State, "in a strange 'back to the future stage' -a situation where

¹⁹ Eben Harell, "Still Training for the End of the World," *TIME*, June 27, 2008, accessed March 2, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1826276,00.html>

²⁰ Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Staring Down the Russians," *TIME*, Aug. 14, 2008, accessed March 3, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1832846,00.html>

²¹ Fareed Zakaria, "This Isn't the Return of History," *Newsweek*, September 8, 2008, accessed December 11, 2017, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-184345420.html>

²² Dmitri K. Simes, "Moscow in the Middle," Nov. 9, 2009, *TIME*, accessed Dec. 11, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1826276,00.html>

²³ Anatol Lieven, "How Obama Can Reform US Policy Towards Russia," January 12, 2009, Accessed March 2, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/how-obama-can-reform-russia-policy/>

“the only thing we can do business on is arms-control-treaties²⁴”. *The Nation* observes that the current “cold peace” between the U.S. and Russia after the Georgian conflict might be even more dangerous than the past Cold War because the front line now is on Russia’s own border, Moscow has limited control of its vast stockpiles of materials of mass destruction, and, finally, because there is no effective American domestic opposition to hawkish policies in Washington. ²⁵At the same time *TIME* reporters point out that the United States is not the sole desired partner for Russians who maintain ties with Shanghai Cooperation Organization and are active members of BRIC. ²⁶The underlying thought is that if there is a need for validation that is not satisfied by the West Russia may turn in other directions. Meanwhile *Newsweek* refers to Russia’s leaders as “downright bullish” after their confidence has been bolstered by the price of oil. ²⁷ Russia appears to be the “The Europeans’ real fear”²⁸ especially that in their view the United States is “soft” with Russia. Russia, in its turn, seems to be “more interested in controlling its neighborhood than clasping Washington’s hand”²⁹ and has been noticed to be working hard towards raising its profile in Central Asia at the expense of the United States”. *Newsweek* sums up that Moscow sends a message that says “The Bear is back”³⁰ and the concerns about “getting its claws back” are even more justified as president Medvedev decides to reform its military “as a credible deterrent to further NATO expansion- as well as powerful incentive to accept Russian leadership”. ³¹The Bear has been reasserting its might towards its neighbors and responding with “surprising alacrity” when the oil prices no longer support Russian geopolitical ambitions.³²

²⁴ Bobby Ghosh, “US and Russia: The Talk Starts Here,” *TIME*, Jul. 13, 2009, accessed March 5, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1908438,00.html>

²⁵ Alexander Cockburn, “Toward a New Cold War,” *The Nation*, Sept. 15, 2008, accessed March 13, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/toward-new-new-cold-war/>

²⁶ Bobby Ghosh, “U.S. and Russia. The Talk Starts Here”, *TIME*, July 13, 2009, Accessed March 2, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1908438,00.html>

²⁷ Owen Matthews, “Russia’s Dry Well,” *Newsweek*, July 13, 2009, Accessed May 20, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-197314033.html>

²⁸ Fareed Zakaria, “A Return to Reality”, Sept. 28, 2009, Accessed May 20, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-208337773.html>

²⁹ Owen Matthews, “Russia Keeps Its Fist Clenched”, *Newsweek*, July 13, 2009, accessed May, 20, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-202557425.html>

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ Owen Matthews and Anna Nemtsova, “Russia Gets Its Claws Back”, *Newsweek*, November 30, 2009, Accessed May 20, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-212711291.html>

³² Rana Foroohar, “The Decline of the Petro-Tsar”, *Newsweek*, February 23, 2009, accessed May 20, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-193897043.html>

In 2010 Russia seems to be more relaxed and forthcoming in its intentions towards the rest of the world. That new behavior *Newsweek* attributes to the fact that from Putin's perspective "for the first time in a decade, the world is finally going his way, and he can afford to relax a bit". In fact within Obama's "reset" the United States backed off of plans to plant anti-missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic in Ukraine after the victory of a pro-Moscow president NATO membership was out of question. Finally, there was no one to stop Russia from "effectively annexing Georgia's northern territories in 2008".³³ At the Russia-NATO summit that year Medvedev was "busy making friends".³⁴ *Newsweek* reminded readers that Washington's reset with Moscow had one clear casualty: Georgia. The West didn't want to compromise relations with Russia by overly supporting Georgia³⁵ as Russia was "trying to assert itself in Ukraine, Georgia and Central Asia".³⁶ In 2011 the highlight of the "reset" seems to be over and the leading question is whether the Americans should or should not care about Russia and about Russians. *TIME* magazine reminds its readers about the Cold War as "the last war that Americans won" and that the hope was that "that the Russians had won it too". Meanwhile *Newsweek* in its article "The Incredible Shrinking Superpower"³⁷ informs its readers that "with its rampant voter fraud and declining population, the country is careening towards irrelevance" and that it is nothing more than "another messed-up kleptocracy". The article depicts a country that reelected the governing party in fraudulent elections where the total percentage of votes as presented on the states' television exceeded 128%.³⁸ *The Nation*, on the other hand, points out that "without an expansive, cooperative relationship with Russia, there can be no real US national security".³⁹ And yet "the relations have been so bad since Obama has taken office that they are referred to by many as a new cold war". Because of that, president Obama proposed a "reset, (..) of course what used to be called détente".⁴⁰ That reset remains "limited and unstable" mainly due to the fact that the

³³ Owen Matthews and Anna Nemtsova, "Finding a Friendly Face in Russia", *Newsweek*, July 5, 2010, accessed June 2, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-229647587.html>

³⁴ Owen Matthews, "Russia's Timid Reforms", *Newsweek*, December 6, 2010, Accessed June 2, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-243045129.html>

³⁵ Owen Matthews, "Georgia Not on our Mind", *Newsweek*, June 21, 2010, accessed June 2, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-228899089.html>

³⁶ Joel Kotkin, "The New World Order," *Newsweek*, October 4, 2010, accessed June 2, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-238088672.html>

³⁷ Niall Ferguson, "The Incredible Shrinking Superpower," *Newsweek*, December 19, 2011, accessed June 2, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-274717960.html>

³⁸ *ibid*

³⁹ Stephen F. Cohen, "Obama's Russia's Reset," *The Nation*, June 1, 2011, accessed March 2, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/obamas-russia-reset-another-lost-opportunity/>

⁴⁰ *ibid*

new cold warriors are “fierce and unrelenting”. They draw on traditional Russophobia and demonize Russia by attributing sinister motives to all its moves. President Obama, while standing behind Medvedev, continues to denigrate Putin as a leader with “one foot in old ways” or even one that “doesn’t have a soul”. Overall “U.S. cold war-era themes became more pronounced and “triumphalist orthodoxy” monopolize the political system and the mainstream media⁴¹. In 2012 *TIME* writes that in the new “post-American world” Russia is a part of a new group of nations including China, India, Brazil and Russia (BRIC) that are now starting to reshape the globe but, because of the internal and external problems, the new world order is “characterized more by the absence of the great powers than by their presence”. *Newsweek* signals a breakdown of the “reset” in Russo-American relations using the metaphor of a “thaw [that-KL] appeared in momentum until Putin retook his presidency”- an event that was followed by “massive Arab Spring-like protests in the capital⁴²”. *The Nation* comments on the situation by reflecting on the “myopia” of those who had thought that the destruction of the Soviet State would constitute a “breakthrough” to democracy and freedom.

III.1. C.2013-2014- NARCISSISTIC RAGE AND SPLENDID ISOLATION

In 2013 *TIME* and *Newsweek* draws a gloomy picture of Russia that is “as much at odds as at any time since the Cold War. *TIME* magazine notes “Putin’s newly confrontational approach” The magazine cites Russian military strategists who underline that the United States is clearly “the threat to Russia”⁴³ and they cite the Russian military doctrine where the West and the USA are Russia’s main geopolitical opponents. The articles of that time clearly distance themselves from Russia and build a mental barrier between the two countries for their audience. They justify their actions by showing that Russia has also been constructing the United States into an unfriendly Other: “Uncle Sam has been turned into a bogeyman for all occasions, blamed for everything from slowing economic growth (...) to the dumbing down of Russian youth”. ⁴⁴Russian politicians talk about “strategic shift” and prepare themselves for a period of isolation from the West. *Newsweek* sums it up: “Having brought Russia back onto the world stage, Putin is perfectly happy to stand in the spotlight alone”. *TIME* distances its readers from Russia by depicting it as a dangerous place where regime

⁴¹ ibid

⁴² Anna Nemtsova, “Michael McFaul,” *Newsweek*, June 25, 2012, accessed June 3, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-293666007.html>

⁴³ Simon Shuster, “The World According to Vladimir Putin,” *TIME*, Sept. 16, 2013, Accessed March 2, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2151148,00.html>

⁴⁴ ibid

opponents get poisoned⁴⁵, handicapped children whose only hope is international adoption get contained in orphanages due to “patriotism”, and the newest export product is xenophobia. *The Nation* deplors such reporting about Russia, especially “the media’s relentless demonization of Putin, often factual or illogical that has replaced serious, multidimensional analysis”.

2014 brings “the iciest relations between the Kremlin and Washington since the dark days of the Iron Curtain”⁴⁶ especially after the annexation of Crimea and shooting down of the Malaysian jetliner MH17 over Eastern Ukraine. *TIME* reports that “leaders in Europe and the U.S. found themselves stymied once again by Putin’s brazenness”⁴⁷ and admits that the West doesn’t have a lot of leverage to stop Putin who is “determined to uphold the dreary habits of czars of Soviet leaders while projecting Russian exceptionalism and power”.⁴⁸ *Newsweek* draws its readers’ attention to the fact that for Vladimir Putin “the contemporary world is not a chessboard but a mat for judo grabs” as opposed to the game of chess that has rules that need to be followed⁴⁹. All three magazines agree that Crimea has changed the world. The geopolitical peace thinking has been disturbed and nothing is certain anymore. *Newsweek* depicts the annexation of Crimea not only as a violation of non-proliferation agreements but as an act that undermined the basic stability of the postwar world. *TIME* writes: “Putin doesn’t want to play within the system anymore. He wants to challenge it now”.⁵⁰

The Nation also sees Crimea as *evenement* but in a different aspect: “Future historians will note that in April 2014, nearly a quarter-century after the end of the Soviet Union, the White House declared a new Cold War on Russia-and that, in a grave failure of representative democracy, there was scarcely a public word of debate, much less opposition, from the American political or media establishment”. The White House adopted “an updated version of the Cold War strategy of containment” which the magazine calls a “shameful complicity

⁴⁵ Peter Pomerantsev, “The Ballroom Dancer and the KGB,” *Newsweek*, January 4, 2013, accessed June 3, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-314797257.html>

⁴⁶ Lynnley Browning “Ambassador Teft Would Upset Russia,” *Newsweek*, May 23, 2014, accessed June 5, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-371931689.htm>

⁴⁷ Simon Shuster, “In Russia Crime Without Punishment,” *TIME*, Jul 24, 2014, accessed March 2, 2019, <http://time.com/magazine/us/3028040/august-4th-2014-vol-184-no-5-u-s/>

⁴⁸ *ibid*

⁴⁹ Lynnley Browning, “What the Martial Arts Taught Putin,” *Newsweek*, accessed June 5, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-371931709.html>

⁵⁰ Simon Shuster, “Vladimir Putin the imperialist,” *TIME*, Dec. 10, 2014, accessed March 2, 2019, <http://time.com/time-person-of-the-year-runner-up-vladimir-putin/>

of the American media elite at this faithful turning point⁵¹. *The Nation* reflects on the origins and dynamics of the recent mainstream discourse about Russia: "Has Washington's twenty-year winner take all approach to post-Soviet Russia shaped this degraded news coverage, or is official policy shaped by that coverage⁵²?" *Newsweek* highlights the aspect of Russia's carefully crafted image that was shattered by the recent developments: "Putin affects a tough, independent demeanor. But everything he has done in his 14 years in power has been about building up Russia and Russia's image in the eyes of the world. From the lavish G8 summit in St. Petersburg in 2006, to the \$50 billion Sochi Olympics, to the 2018 World Cup, Putin has lavished billions on raising Russia's profile. ⁵³(...) MH17--or, rather, the Kremlin's handing of its aftermath--has ruined years of careful soft-power building at a stroke. For someone as status-obsessed as Putin, that must hurt⁵⁴".

III.2. DOMESTIC POLITICS 2004-2014

III.2. a.2004-2008 – "managed democracy"

In the Russian domestic politics year 2004 brought an important *evenement*—the terrorist attack in Beslan. In the aftermath Putin "revived some of the cardinal structures of the failed Soviet Union", such as limiting the movement of the Russian citizens within the country. *Newsweek* points out that that at this point Putin yet again has to decide how to rule and the first signs aren't positive: "He has turned back the clock as much as he could". ⁵⁵ It is now the Kremlin and not the voters that will be choosing governors. The article underlines both Putin's "power play" and the fact that there was barely any protest heard in Russia in response to those moves. While reporting the increasingly consolidated power, *TIME* refers to Russia as "all but name a one-party system in which suspicion of the West and the private sector is rising⁵⁶". The changes in Russia, while linked to immediate risks, provide a good pretext to consolidate power. In 2005 *Newsweek* describes Russia as "neither developed nor democratic" with Putin not having "any plans to make it the former or allow it to be the

⁵¹ Katrina Vanden Heuvel and Stephen F. Cohen, "Cold War Against Russia-Without Debate", *The Nation*, May 19, 2014, accessed March 5, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/cold-war-against-russia-without-debate/>

⁵² Stephen F. Cohen, "Distorting Russia", *The Nation*, March 3, 2014, accessed March 5, 2014, <https://www.thenation.com/article/distorting-russia/>

⁵³ Owen Matthews, "Putin's Ukraine Mistakes Have Made Him a Pariah", *Newsweek*, July 22, 2014, accessed March 2, 2019, <https://www.newsweek.com/2014/08/01/putins-ukraine-mistakes-have-made-him-pariah-260303.html>

⁵⁴ *ibid*

⁵⁵ Michael Hirsh and Frank Brown "Back to the USSR," September 27, 2004, accessed Feb. 3, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-122324744.html>

⁵⁶ Paul Quinn-Judge, "Vladimir Putin: Not a Man to Be Trifled With," *TIME*, April 26, 2004, accessed September 9, 2017, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,993960,00.html>

latter⁵⁷". Putin's inner circle narrows and remains split into the factions of "siloviki" ("the powerful ones) and the "liberals". The siloviki consist mainly of military and KGB veterans and liberals of those who believe in Western style market reforms yet also favor tight political control. *Newsweek* notices that the most-needed debate about democracy gets diluted by minor topics, such as the future of Lenin's mausoleum in Moscow: "the state is rebuilding its repressive machinery and we are discussing Lenin's body".⁵⁸ *Newsweek* points out that "Russia remains an autocratic country whether its rulers call themselves tsars, communists or Vladimir Putin".⁵⁹ The article describes Russia as a country where "politics and profits are so intertwined that top Kremlin officials control some of the country's biggest companies⁶⁰". Additionally it underlines the impunity of the Russian security apparatus. Not only are political murders that are on the rise in Russia but the security forces appear to have launched a psychological campaign that threatens the people with a message "you are next." The atmosphere of fear doesn't endanger the popularity of Putin who is seen as the one who "restored order, revived growth and reasserted national pride"⁶¹ but has heightened anxieties about Putin's government's backsliding into communist-era intrigue and repression".⁶² That is why many wealthy Russians choose to emigrate to countries where they can be "distanced from dangers and unpredictability of the Russian state machine".⁶³ Stability of that state and the entire Russian regime rests "heavily, if not entirely, on the personal popularity and authority of one man- Vladimir Putin".⁶⁴ *The Nation* observes that "while Putin's ratings are an extraordinary 70 to 75 percent positive, political leaders' institutions and would-be leaders below him have almost no public support". *The Nation* talks about a "praetorian political system devoted to and corrupted by their [post-Soviet elite-KL]wealth, at best a 'managed' democracy."⁶⁵

⁵⁷ George F. Will, "Aspects of Europe's Mind," *Newsweek*, May 9, 2005, accessed June 6, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-132088081.html>

⁵⁸ George F. Will, "Nothing to Celebrate," *Newsweek*, May 9, 2005, accessed June 8, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-129098041.html>

⁵⁹ Michael Hirsh and Owen Matthews "Russian Roulette," *Newsweek*, accessed March 12, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-155505727.html>

⁶⁰ *ibid*

⁶¹ Fareed Zakaria "What the World Really Wants," *Newsweek*, May 29, 2006, accessed March 12, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-146231071.html>

⁶² *ibid*

⁶³ J.F.O. Mcallister "Moscow on the Thames," *TIME*, Dec. 03, 2006, accessed March 6, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1565518,00.html>

⁶⁴ Stephen Cohen, "The New American Cold War," *The Nation*, July 10, 2006, accessed March 2, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/new-american-cold-war-2/>

⁶⁵ *ibid*

In 2007 the key word for describing Russia's internal politics is "authoritarian." *Newsweek* writes about "creeping authoritarianism" in countries such as Venezuela and Russia. "Authoritarian" is also the word used by Boris Berezovsky who calls for the "violent overthrow" of the regime. *Newsweek* cites him saying that "authoritarian regimes only collapse by force"⁶⁶. On a similar note *TIME* magazine names Russia one of the "oil producing autocracies" along with Iran and Venezuela. The elevated price of oil gives those countries "more money to crush or buy off internal dissent"⁶⁷. Brzezinski explains the anti-democratic trends that are gaining strength in Russia as having their origins in the Chechen war that "reversed the ambiguous trend toward democracy in Russia"⁶⁸ by "intensifying authoritarian tendencies, heightening political repressions and fueling chauvinism inside Russia."⁶⁹

In 2008 the focus is on Medvedev- Putin's handpicked successor who *Newsweek* describes as a "loyal nobody".⁷⁰ Most observers expect from Medvedev's time in office to be Putin's unofficial third term. Russians "don't seem to mind", which is evident in Putin's approval ratings that reach 76%.⁷¹ *The Nation* continues the "authoritarian" themes and finds their origins in Yeltsin's times with Putin merely pushing "the devolution to its logical conclusion of "electoral monarchy" and "bureaucratic capitalism".⁷²

III.2.b. 2009-2012- between "thaw" and "old ways"

In 2009 the magazines observe an interplay of new, liberalizing forces – a "thaw" – with the tendencies to go back to Soviet practices in an uneasy situation when the "old" president still appears to direct the show. On one hand President Medvedev does things that were unthinkable during Putin's presidency such as listening to Duma committees and making decisions based on them.⁷³ Contrary to Putin, he claims that NGO's are essential for the health of the state. Even the state-controlled television undergoes marked liberalization to the extent that the political satire gets revived. Thus there are clear signs of "political spring"

⁶⁶ Owen Matthews and Mark Hosenball, "Pressure on Putin," *Newsweek*, April 23, 2007, accessed March 26, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-162129822.html>

⁶⁷ Peter Bainart, "Is Freedom Failing", *TIME*, May 21, 2007, accessed March 5, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1619543,00.html>

⁶⁸ Zbigniew Brzezinski "How to Avoid a New Cold War," *TIME* Jun. 07, 2007, accessed March 3, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1630544,00.html>

⁶⁹ *ibid*

⁷⁰ Owen Matthews "Russia's Mighty Mouse" *Newsweek*, February 25, 2008, accessed April 4, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-175042726.html>

⁷¹ *ibid*

⁷² Robert V. Daniels, "From Gorbachev to Putin," *The Nation*, Oct. 20, 2008, accessed March 2, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/gorbachev-putin/>

⁷³ Owen Matthews and Anna Nemtsova "Medvedev's Moscow Spring," *Newsweek*, May 4, 2009, accessed May 20, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-198558051.html>

although most analysts talk about “change of style” and not about a real qualitative change. And yet nobody doubts that Putin is still in charge and intends to go “back to the throne.”⁷⁴ Those plans are endangered by the imminent economic crisis that may considerably lower the approval for Putin and Medvedev: “With the high oil prices ensuring good economic conditions, Putin’s authoritarian and anti-democratic moves were if not supported than at least tolerated. Now, with the imminent crisis, serious unrest seems inevitable despite the autocratic moves⁷⁵”. In anticipation of trouble, the Kremlin strengthens measures that would allow its forces to deal with street unrest and inserts into the Russian justice system several norms of the 1920s such as the Stalin-era troika courts.⁷⁶ At the same time it becomes evident that there are areas that “even President Medvedev can’t change” such as the Russian law-enforcement system that “lives by its own rules”.⁷⁷ At the same time Medvedev follows “an old Soviet playbook” to forge a collective national identity for “today’s ethnically diverse and economically depressed Russia”. Part of that playbook is to forget communist crimes. In the words of Orlando Figes cited by *Newsweek*: “Modern Russia may not be totalitarian, but the Kremlin is very deliberately staking out an official view of history and-like its communist predecessor, sacrificing truth in the name of unity”. Year 2010 thwarts a lot of hopes of the anticipated liberalization. Medvedev tries to address the popular discontent regarding police incompetence by calling for a thorough reform of the “notoriously corrupt” Interior Ministry but with little actual progress. *Newsweek* gives clear recommendations: “This time Medvedev should take advantage of popular outrage to make sweeping changes instead of ordering up more repressions. If he does, he could end the bloodshed in the Caucasus, and help Russia to boot”.⁷⁸ *Newsweek* presents a picture of a president who “talks up liberal ideas”, warns the country’s bureaucrats to “stop terrorizing business”, eases the Soviet style registration system, introduces Solzhenitzyn’s Archipelago Gulag as a required reading in schools, allows opposition rallies and yet a “new generation of exiles is fleeing Russia”. They are “leaving the country after being robbed and threatened with false arrest and by crooked law-enforcement officials”. The root of such apparent contradictions seems to be the situation in which Medvedev attempts to act “in a system still dominated by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin⁷⁹”. Another theme that is being addressed at

⁷⁴ “Vladimir Putin” *Newsweek*, January 5, 2009, Accessed May 20, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-191286556.html>

⁷⁵ *ibid*

⁷⁶ Owen Matthews and Anna Nemtsova “Fear Comes to the Russian Heartland,” *Newsweek*, February 23, 2009, accessed May 20, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-193897040.html>

⁷⁷ *ibid*

⁷⁸ Owen Matthews “Cleaning Up Dirty Police in Russia” *Newsweek*, April 12, 2010, accessed June 2, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-223222481.html>

⁷⁹ *ibid*

that time is the Russian civil society. *Newsweek* writes that “like the rest of society, the middle class has accepted the paternalism of Putin’s government and remained apolitical and apathetic”.⁸⁰ *The Nation* observes “a growing wave of civic activism” in the realm of ecological movement but stays realistic in that “while ecological protests have the potential to be the catalyst for social changes and they played a role in a collapse of the Soviet Union, the enduring strength and popularity of Putin/Medvedev government makes that transition unlikely in the foreseeable future⁸¹”. In 2011 *TIME* focuses on the quality of democracy in Russia and observes that “Russians have been more than happy to accept a la carte freedom rather than the full buffet⁸²”. The simplest answer to questions about why Russians are not more free is that after everything they've been through, it just hasn't been a priority as, after the chaos of the 90s people in Russia have consistently expressed their preference of order even at the expense of personal freedom. After the Russian wages increased nearly twofold during the first two Putin terms, “democratization quickly fell to the back of people's minds⁸³.” Another theme that captures the American media attention at that time is the second trial of the oligarch and entrepreneur Mikhail Khodorkovsky who “used his assets to support opposition to then President Putin”. *Newsweek* reports that the guilty verdict against Khodorkovsky came “as a big blow to those Russians who had hoped their country was changing for the better and that Medvedev’s “grand promises” about battling “legal nihilism,” by which he meant eliminating misuse of law by the powerful, was nothing more than empty words⁸⁴ . *The Nation* distances itself from the discussion about Khodorkovsky, claiming that glorifying oligarchs disqualifies the democracy even more in the eyes of the Russian people. The magazine turns its attention to the forces that are at play in a “struggle over the nation future⁸⁵”. The forces that are competing against each other are the “democrats” associated with Medvedev and “ultranationalists” and neo Stalinists” who insist that modernization without Westernization is possible. The discussion seems to go back to the centuries-long debate between Slavophiles and Westernizers. The struggle would be resolved in Moscow but Washington would play a role in it as “the liberal forces have had

⁸⁰ Rana Foroohar and Mac Margolis, “The Other Middle Class,” *Newsweek*, March 15, 2010, accessed June 2, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-220567716.html>

⁸¹ Vadim Nikitin, “The New Social Activism in Russia,” *The Nation*, Nov. 8, 2019, accessed March 5, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/new-civic-activism-russia/>

⁸² Nathan Thornburgh and Simon Shuster, “Russia’s New Guard,” *TIME*, Dec. 12, 2011, accessed March 5, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2101044,00.html>

⁸³ *ibid*

⁸⁴ Owen Matthews, “Legal Nihilism Continues in Russia,” *Newsweek*, January 17, 2011, accessed June 6, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-245820626.html>

⁸⁵ Stephen F. Cohen, “Obama’s Russia Reset,” June 20, 2011, accessed March 2, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/obamas-russia-reset-another-lost-opportunity/>

a political chance only when relations with the West were improving".⁸⁶ In 2012 the situation in Russia takes a sharp turn as Putin, after being "as close as Obi-Wan and Luke" to Medvedev, abruptly announces his return to the presidency.⁸⁷ The transition is accompanied by major protests on the streets of Moscow of those who believed in Medvedev's message about greater transparency and the country's economic independence. "Instead they got a retreaded, botoxed Putin who accused opponents of being traitors and American stooges- and whose big campaign promise was to boost military spending". Newsweek writes about the street protesters who look "tired and dispirited and lost" because the prospect of another 6 or maybe 12 years with Putin "has put chill on the protest movement and, it seems, the country as a whole".⁸⁸ *TIME* writes about "the anti-Putin movement, which some of its organizers have perhaps too brazenly called a revolution" with Navalny as its leader who, through his online campaigns against corruption, became an internet folk hero and has brought the anger out of the web and onto the streets although it is doubtful that it could be channeled into revolution.

III.2.c. 2013-2014- ruthless Leviathan

In 2013 the key image is the "powerful and ruthless regime" which cannot be escaped even by emigrating as exemplified by the poisoning of a former Russian spy in London. There are other impressions that make up a Leviathan-like image of the Russian state just to cite "Russia's draconian rule of law", "homophobia" or "confinement of the (...) orphans in orphanages by taking refuge in patriotism"⁸⁹. *TIME* writes about the measures that distract people, keep Putin's rating high and redirect frustration via measures such as rearming police, pay hikes for the groups that traditionally support Putin and funneling anger towards the United States that by the majority of Russians is regarded as "an aggressor that aims to control all the countries in the world".⁹⁰ *The Nation* distances itself from that gloomy picture of Russia and claims that the American mainstream media report selectively and "avoid topics where it is not able to grasp the level of complexity" such as the recent students' protests in Moscow that were "not avowedly pro-Western" and their participants didn't

⁸⁷ Owen Matthews "Sochi Russia," *Newsweek*, March 8, 2012, Accessed June 3, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-283493188.html>

⁸⁸ Masha Gessen "Erasing Kasparov," *Newsweek*, May 14, 2012, Accessed June 3, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-289095179.html>

⁸⁹ Peter Pomerantsev, "The Ballroom Dancing and the KGB", *Newsweek*, January 4, 2013, accessed March 5, 2019,

http://contentviewer.adobe.com/s/Newsweek/c5cab60bd7a45d4a6b493fc0ba1ffcf/com.newsweek.20130104/16_fe_spy_01.html; Nico Hines, "Exporting Homophobia," *Newsweek*, August 30, 2013, accessed March 5, 2019, <https://www.newsweek.com/2013/08/30/russia-exporting-homophobia-237900.html>

⁹⁰ Simon Shuster "The World According to Putin," *TIME*, Sept. 16, 2013, accessed May 19, 2018, <http://content.time.com/time/covers/europe/0,16641,20130916,00.html>

have personal ties to US press and Washington officials. In the first half of 2014 the American press focuses on the preparations for the Sochi Olympics, which is looked upon as the acme of Putin's power and popularity at home.⁹¹ That popularity actually peaks after the annexation of Crimea with official letters supporting Putin's actions: "a practice of forcing people to declare themselves with the regime of against it borrowed from Stalinist days" ⁹²as *Newsweek* comments. By the end of 2014 readers receive an image of a new after-Crimea reality with Putin following tactics of "leveraging popularity gained by foreign adventurism to crack down on opposition at home." ⁹³ With the approval rating above 80% Putin limits even more TV, internet platforms, including those of his main political opponents Garry Kasparov and Alexei Navalny. While those steps present an image of extreme confidence to the public it is "not clear how durable Putin's popularity really is—or what could happen if the Russian economy continues to slide and dissent criticism of his foreign policy begins to circulate". *TIME* leaves its readers with the impression of Putin's inevitability and with the lack of alternatives. "In any case who would challenge Putin? By suppressing opponents (...) Putin has left few plausible challengers. Renewed street protests are a possibility (...). But Putin quashed the protests of 2012 handily. As for the ballot box, Putin's current six-year term doesn't expire until 2018-and he is free to seek another one" ⁹⁴

III.3. INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

III.3.a. 2004-2008- risky business location and island of exception

The time period starts positively and strongly for the Russian international economic relations. *TIME* reporters note several strategic corporate alliances aiming to extract and market the Russian oil more efficiently. That picture is nevertheless overshadowed by the concerns about Putin's increasing interference in the economy. Additionally the Yukos affair—"the largest and the most successful Russian oil company, which is being haunted out of business by the Kremlin⁹⁵"- puts a question mark over the security of Russia as a business location. The situation of the Russian state and Yukos are compared to the dynamics between "a mouse being tortured to death by a cat-or-a tiger. And so the "Cat" keeps chasing the companies that try to operate in Russia- but the oil companies keep pilling in

⁹¹ Bill Powell "After Sochi," *Newsweek*, February 14, 2014, accessed June 5, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-358609717.html>

⁹² Owen Matthews "Ukraine's Broken Nuclear Promises," *Newsweek*, March 28, 2014, accessed June 5, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-362262527.html>

⁹³ Michael Crowley and Simon Shuster "Vladimir Putin's War", May 19, 2014, accessed March 3, 2018, <http://time.com/magazine/us/92064/may-19th-2014-vol-183-no-19-u-s/>

⁹⁴ *ibid*

⁹⁵ Yuri Zakharovich, "Putin's Surprise Power Play," *TIME*, Sept. 12, 2007, accessed March 6, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1661193,00.html>

because the opportunities seem to outweigh the risks. *Newsweek* depicts Russia as a risky business location that doesn't always play by the rules. And so Russia is a place for the "unflinching" investors who are not afraid of a "Russian Roulette" type business environment.⁹⁶ From the global economic perspective, Russia is classified as a "rogue offspring"- one of those countries that "can flout all the rules, resist modernization and spout anticapitalist rhetoric". It is one of those "islands of exception just like Iran, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela".⁹⁷ Thus European energy officials are rethinking their reliance on natural gas and Russia as their supplier of choice.

III.3.b. 2009-2012- "weak link" as the oil prices go down

Newsweek writes about "major rebalancing" as BRIC shoppers become "a major force in global consumption" However BRIC consumption is projected to slow down and Russia is mentioned as the primary reason for that- "the weak link".⁹⁸ In the same 2009 "the trio of Putin, Chavez and Ahmadinejad are referred to as the "dark side of an otherwise golden era of growth in global economy". The trio is said to be losing its strength as the world economy is sliding into recession. High oil prices have been reshaping the geopolitics in the previous years but at that point we are seeing reversal of that. The decline is "dizzying" as the "petrostates" are getting slammed harder than most by the global credit crunch". Russia 's stock falls even further than any other in the world since" foreigners fled Russia faster than from any other emerging market"⁹⁹.

Because of that there emerges a reversal in attitude of Russians now "sending welcome signals to foreign investors". In 2010 Russia actively looks for other partners in its "campaign to balance U.S. power and prestige around the globe". There are willing partners in Latin America-the area that becomes "the hottest market for Russian arms" and in China—with the joint project of a new \$13 billion oil pipeline.¹⁰⁰ Chinese-Russians economic relations are said to be uneven with China exploiting the Russian know-how, transforming it into high-tech deals and then "trading with the world and making the big bucks". 2012 brings the admission of Russia into the World Trade Organization after "tortuous negotiations." *The*

⁹⁶Allan Sloan "Russian Roulette for Unflinching Investors," *Newsweek*, May 8, 2006, accessed March 12, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-145333781.html>

⁹⁷ Robert Samuelson "Will America Pass the Baton," *Newsweek*, March 6, 2006, accessed March 12, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-142589717.html>

⁹⁸ Jim O'Neill "The New Shopping Superpowers," *Newsweek*, April 20, 2009, accessed May 20, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-197663501.html>

⁹⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰⁰ Owen Matthews "Russia Turns East and Sells Out," *Newsweek*, October 11, 2010, accessed June 2, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-238577648.html>

Nation observes that the mutual economic and commercial interdependency is the greatest defense against a potential cyberattack from Russia.¹⁰¹

III.3.c. 2013-2014- new economic warfare

At that point there are failed hopes regarding the economic development of BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China). It was expected that those “emerging nations with enormous populations, territories, and natural resources would become the great global powers of the 21st century”. But those hopes don’t seem to materialize. *Newsweek* cites Paulo Sotero, the director of the Brazil Institute of the Woodrow Wilson Center, who said that “these countries no longer believe their own hype”.¹⁰² Additionally, the oil price hit does far more damage to Putin than Western sanctions aimed at punishing him for Russia's role in Ukraine, and so “Washington had every reason to celebrate the market shift”.¹⁰³ At the same time Washington prepares its new “war room” for the new kind of economic warfare where “energy is a potent weapon for the West in the new Cold War against Vladimir Putin” just as it was in the past. The control room in this new kind of war is a unit inside the U.S. Treasury Department: the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence (TFI) with 730 staff members which “is using sophisticated financial weaponry to hit carefully chosen targets linked to hostile governments¹⁰⁴”.

III.4.Domestic Economy 2004-2014

III.4.a. getting rich under the nationalist regime

At the beginning of 2004 the attention of the American magazines concentrates on the Russian oil giant, Gazprom that “is still run as a branch of the Kremlin”¹⁰⁵ Gazprom is micromanaged by Putin who “not only runs Gazprom in critical situations but makes day-to-day decisions as well”. Gazprom, thus far defended by a “ring fence” of protectionist barriers and the “increasingly nationalist regime of President Putin” is now in need for about \$200 billion foreign investment money. However it is a challenge to attract investors to a country that not only defaulted on its own ruble bonds in 1998 but has been known for

¹⁰¹ Misha Glenny “Cyber Arms Race Has Begun,” *The Nation*, Oct. 12, 2018, accessed March 2, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/cyber-arms-race-has-begun/>

¹⁰² Christopher Dickey “BRICKing bad,” *Newsweek*, September 20, 2013, accessed June 3, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-343639070.html>

¹⁰³ Leah McGrath Goodman “A different kind of oil crisis,” *Newsweek*, November 28, 2014, accessed March 3, 2019, <https://www.newsweek.com/2014/11/28/different-kind-oil-crisis-285331.html>

¹⁰⁴ “The Art of Financial Warfare: How the West Is Pushing Putin's Buttons,” *Newsweek*, May 2, 2014, accessed June 5, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-372432328.html>

¹⁰⁵ Owen Matthews “Being on the Gusher,” *Newsweek*, Jan. 30, 2006, accessed March 12, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-141188860.html>

confiscating assets of companies whose management annoyed the Kremlin, like it was in the famous Yukos case. At the same time *Newsweek* reports about successes of the Russian economy during Putin's presidency and notices the emergence of a new class of successful businessmen that aren't afraid "to flaunt what they've got."¹⁰⁶

III.4.b.2009-2012- fragile and overlevered

"With both the price of oil and the Moscow Stock Exchange having roughly doubled in value over the past 6 months, Russia's leaders are downright bullish."¹⁰⁷ *Newsweek* is far from being impressed with the Russian economic performance: "Don't be fooled!" "Russia's still reeling from the commodities crash and things are poised to get worse before they get better". The key terms that are used to describe the domestic economy of that time are "overleveraged" and "fragile". One of the major reported problems are so-called "monotowns": towns dominated by a single industry. They are especially vulnerable during global downturns. When a plant is the main employer the whole town is stricken with fear when that one enterprise has problems. The Kremlin hasn't used the periods of prosperity to help diversify monotowns and even suppressed their own initiatives as some of them strove to create stabilization funds. That is especially disconcerting when one realizes that "Putin's world position when it comes to oil production isn't so strong at all"¹⁰⁸. It turns out that it is not so strong in terms of investing in sciences and technology either: *The Nation* notices that the Soviets were much more generous and forward thinking in supporting scientific research. After Gagarin reached orbit, the expenditures on science have fallen from 6 to 1.5 percent and as a result Russia experienced "technological stagnation" and brain drain of its most talented people¹⁰⁹. In that context Russia's "forward looking president", Medvedev is portrayed positively as the one who wants to liberate Russia from the "humiliating reliance on oil and gas exports" and plans to create projects such as innovation cities like Stolkovo by Moscow that *Newsweek* calls a Russian "Silicon Valley" or a "Stanford of Moscow" where academic brains would mingle with entrepreneurs to launch startup companies. Medvedev fights a "lonely battle" as he faces "an enormous obstacle" in the realization of those plans and namely "the rapacious state" The article expresses doubts whether Medvedev could

¹⁰⁶ Joseph Contreras "Capitalist Tools," *Newsweek*, October 29, 2007, accessed June 9, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-170204613.html>

¹⁰⁷ Owen Matthews "Russia's Dry Well," *Newsweek*, August 17, 2009, accessed May 20, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-197314033.html>

¹⁰⁸ Owen Matthews and Anna Nemtsova, "Finding a Friendly Face in Russia," *Newsweek*, July 5, 2010, accessed June 2, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-229647587.html>

¹⁰⁹ Stephen F. Cohen, "Soviet Union Afterlife," *The Nation*, January 9, 2012, accessed March 6, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/soviet-unions-afterlife/>

fully insulate Skolkovo and his other innovation projects from Russia's endemic corruption or whether they would be just "new profit centers for crooked officials".¹¹⁰

III.4.c.2013-2014- "Silicon Valley" Turns "One big Detroit" when Tech Bubble Pops

In 2013 *Newsweek* describes Russia as "one big Detroit" as it concentrates on the situation of monotowns in remote areas of the Russian Siberia where "despair is a daily experience and every new setback is met with apathy". *Newsweek* suggests that fear is "the real legacy of Putin's Russia" especially in industry-towns where local political leaders "invariably combine with the major employer leaving little option for its residents except sullen, obedient compliance. Unemployed, deprived of freedoms of expression they are "afraid of their own shadow". Instead of encouraging innovation and innovation, the government "stands by as dissent is punished an optimism snuffed out" 2014 brings a bleak picture of the economy that was already stagnating—growth was just 0.8 percent in the first half of the year—and is "now almost certainly contracting". It gets even worse when the bubble of the technical innovation pops as Putin and his actions in Ukraine kill it completely: "This is Vladimir Putin's hidden crime: Just as Russia's startup culture had a hope of getting legs, Putin's actions in Ukraine have helped knock it back down". The smartest coders seem to be facing the alternative of either fleeing the country or joining the kleptocracy. "It is really sad", comments *Newsweek*, that the brightest found themselves in the environment where they are forced to make "me-too-stuff at best—and criminal stuff at worst"¹¹¹.

III.5.SOCIETY AND RELIGION 2004-2008

III.5.a. 2004-2008- fear, fatalism and apathy

The picture of everyday life of the Russian people is painted in predominantly dark colors and is marked by fatalism and lack of alternatives. *TIME* reports that with Putin's rating around 80 percent the mood of his voters is "more fatalistic than triumphant"¹¹². "Another reported quality is fear of the Russian people interviewed: "Of course I am scared. (...) But what we can do? We're ordinary people. We don't control our lives. It's up to them at the top."¹¹³The gloomy picture is intensified by the information about poignant social and health problems such as "one of the world's fastest-growing HIV/AIDS infection rates, negative population growth, pollution"- that are "largely ignored"¹¹⁴ in Russia. When the financial

¹¹⁰ Owen Matthews, "Russia Home of the Next Silicon Valley," *Newsweek*, May 17, 2010, accessed June 2, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-225858527.html>

¹¹¹ Kevin Maney, "Putin Pops Russia's Tech Bubble," *Newsweek*, September 5, 2014, accessed June 5, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-380381808.html>

¹¹² Paul Quinn-Judge and Yuri Zakharovich, "Terror on the Subway," *TIME*, February 16, 2004, accessed September 9, 2017, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,993365,00.html>

¹¹³ *ibid*

¹¹⁴ Paul Quinn-Judge, "Vladimir Putin: Not a Man to Be Trifled With," *TIME*, April 26, 2004, accessed September 9, 2017, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,993960,00.html>

situation improves around 2006 and “you can see people have more money¹¹⁵” the Russian people remain cautious: “You can never be optimistic about anything in our country because if you are optimistic, it will end badly.¹¹⁶” Thus there are many affluent Russians who emigrate, often to United Kingdom in search of normality, claiming that Russia is not the place where it is possible to “live in a peace, keep the money”.¹¹⁷ Millions of Russians are “being left behind” without a sufficient safety net, mainly the pensioners who struggle to support themselves, especially in small villages located far away from the capital. “In the Russian countryside plagued by demographic collapse that followed the fall of the Soviet Union¹¹⁸ Russian farmers live in villages that are “few and far between, separated by miles of forest and fallow fields¹¹⁹”. Farmers are depicted as docile, subordinate and lacking initiative, “content to live off their minuscule pensions (...) rather than risk going into agriculture on their own¹²⁰.” The countryside at the end of 2007 is presented as economically stagnant, rejuvenated only by Eastern Orthodox churches and monasteries that attract increasingly more young people. There is “joy and relief at the return of Russia’s religion” and manifestations of faith have become more common.¹²¹ There are also new societal trends in the cities: Although many Russians still consider those who display the signs of wealth as “extortionist” there is a new consensus that not all the rich are criminals after all. The new rich, educated and sophisticated native Russians are increasingly more valued and, in sharp contrast to the previous years, the fact of being an expat or speaking English is not an automatic pass to the societal elite circles.¹²²

III.5.b.2009-2012- demographic crisis and deep divisions

¹¹⁵ Peter Gumbel, “Getting Rich in the Heart of Russia”, *TIME*, May 15 2006, accessed September 13, 2017, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,1191848,00.html>

¹¹⁶ *ibid*

¹¹⁷ J.F.O. McAllister, “Moscow on the Thames,” *TIME*, December 3, 2006, accessed March 6, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1565518,00.html>

¹¹⁸ Nathan Thornburgh, “In search of Russia’s Big Idea”, *TIME* December 31, 2017, accessed Sept. 14, 2017,

http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/personoftheyear/article/0,28804,1690753_1690757_1695382,00.html

¹¹⁹ *ibid*

¹²⁰ *ibid*

¹²¹ *ibid*

¹²² Peter Savodnik “And Moscow Makes Me Sing and Shout” *TIME* December 31, 2007, accessed March 3, 2019, <https://pl.scribd.com/document/216635165/Time-Person-of-the-Year-2007-31-Dec-2007-VLADIMIR-PUTIN>

Newsweek draws a picture of a country with poor demographic projections, which is one of the reasons why “once mighty Russian bear is in fact a distinctly mangy old bruin”.¹²³ That bear” also struggles with “a tuberculosis infection rate that is just half that of Bangladesh, but 27 times that of the United States.”¹²⁴ The magazine cites Vladimir Putin who in that context talks about “the serious threat of turning into decaying nation”.¹²⁵

The Nation observes deep fissures between the secular and more conservative elements of Russia and within the Russian Orthodox Church.¹²⁶ They point out “a growing movement to defend secularism”. The new anti-gay law is referred to by *The Nation* as “discriminatory and inhumane”, and the magazine analyzes the reasons behind the “ascendance of hyperconservative traditional values”. The magazine underlines that Russia is “a deeply divided, complex country”. While LGBT people groups have had increasing acceptance in cosmopolitan areas since homosexuality was decriminalized in 1993, “there is still entrenched homophobia and support for anti-gay policies. While reform within Russia is already an uphill battle, it would become even more challenging if a pro-gay rights campaign is waged from outside Russia and homosexuality is framed as a “Western import”. The “corrupting influences” of the West and most specifically of the United States are supposed to be counterbalanced by a powerful wing of Russia’s political class, in alliance with a rising Orthodox Church. That traditional shift aims to not only to recriminalize homosexuality but also to aggressively promote the “traditional family” through state subsidies and other benefits.¹²⁷

III.5.c. 2013-2014- fear and lack of alternatives

The end of the period in question ends with a gloomy picture of a society being stricken by fear and lacking alternatives under the watch of the state apparatus. “Clench your teeth and learn to grin and bear it, otherwise you might end up like one of the Moscow opposition activists, behind bars, facing years in prison,” says one interviewed unemployed woman¹²⁸.

¹²³Niall Ferguson, “The Year that the World Really Changed,” *Newsweek*, November 16, 2009, accessed May 20, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-203768276.html>

¹²⁴ibid

¹²⁵“400 million people can’t be wrong,” *Newsweek*, Nov. 15, 2010, accessed June 8, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-241789687.html>

<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-241789687.html>

¹²⁶ Katrina Vanden Heuvel, “Pussy Riot vs. Night Wolves,” *The Nation*, May 21, 2012, accessed March 3, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/noted-204/>

¹²⁷Adam Federman, “Seeding Russia’s Culture War,” *The Nation*, Jan. 27, 2014, accessed March 3, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/issue/january-27-2014/>

¹²⁸ Anna Nemtsova, “Russia One Big Detroit,” *Newsweek*, December 6, 2013, accessed June 3, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-351919290.html>

Fear seems to be a real legacy of Putin's Russia, particularly in Russia's 342 single-industry towns, or "monotowns," where local political leaders invariably combine with the major employer leaving little option for its residents except sullen, obedient compliance¹²⁹

III.6.CULTURE 2004-2014

III.6.a.between sophistication and lack of influence

The magazines concentrate on influential literary figures such as Leo Tolstoy ("War and Peace" referred to as a "yardstick of quality"), Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Anna Akhmatova. The qualities of the Russian culture that are repeatedly underlined are sophistication and complexity. Poetry of Akhmatova is conveyed to the readers with a metaphor: "The box has a triple bottom¹³⁰." Stravinsky's music challenges the "lazy notions of tradition, history, time itself¹³¹" The qualities that are admired in literary works are the level of complexity and enduring influence on world culture.¹³² The same level of refinement is attributed to the Russian music. Overall the Russian culture is presented as sophisticated and worth one's interest. ¹³³At the same time reporters write about Russia losing its cultural influence over the neighboring countries. The author looks at the elites in Ukraine, Georgia, the Baltic states—and to lesser extent Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgystan and concludes that "the cultural center of gravity is no longer Moscow. He sums up with a strong statement: "Russia has lost the soft-power war". ¹³⁴Meanwhile many Russians see themselves as victims of a culture war that they feel had been staged against them by the West and by the anti-Moscow leaders of the post-Soviet states. They feel that regardless of their good will and honest efforts the neighboring states have an anti-Russian agenda. *Newsweek* points out that the Kremlin has tried to address the problem, for example by funding Russkiy Mir- "a grant-dispensing organization that gives away \$22 million a year to champion Russian language". ¹³⁵Meanwhile *The Nation* pursues a trend that is evident in several articles and namely for the reviews of literary works it chooses the ones that explore the humanist and

¹²⁹ ibid

¹³⁰Elif Batuman, "The Passion of Anna," *The Nation*, July 10, 2006, accessed March 6, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/passion-anna/>

¹³¹ David Schiff, "Shuffling Stravinsky," *The Nation*, March 17, 2008, accessed March 6, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/stravinsky-shuffle/>

¹³² Radhika Jones, "Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn," *TIME*, Aug. 07, 2008, accessed June 29, 2018, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1830419,00.html>

¹³³ Andrew Nagorski, "Portrait of a Tyrant," *Newsweek*, November 12, 2007, accessed March 26, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-170830819.html>

¹³⁴ Owen Matthews, "The East Looks West," *Newsweek*, June 9, 2008, accessed April 4, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-179698645.html>

¹³⁵Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Journal of the Purge Years," *The Nation*, August 28, 2006, accessed March 6, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/journals-purge-years/>

democratic potential of the Soviet system and allow for imagining of alternatives in development and understanding of the Soviet ideology. For example in "Journals" by Jochan Hellbeck the Communist ideology is viewed "as a ferment working in individuals and producing a great deal of variation as it interacts with the subjective life of a particular person". The book was written as a part of "a broader trend among young scholars, influenced by Michael Foucault and more directly by Stephen Kotkin, to study Stalinism of the Soviet 1930s as a civilization in the process of invention. Those scholars aim to bring ideology back to the centre stage by applying discourse analysis, or a close examination of texts, particularly those written in first person such as diaries." Hellbeck's analysis of his diaries is "first-rate" and his enthusiasm for the subjects of that analysis "infectious". His selection of diaries is tailored to fit his hypothesis about Soviet citizens's urge to self-transform and master the Soviet worldview.

III.6.B. 2009-2012 -BETWEEN THE SOCIALIST AND MODERN ART

Both *Newsweek* and *The Nation* continue selecting the literary and art topics that seem to correspond to each magazine's overall attitude towards Russia. *The Nation* describes the post-art-movement of Conceptualists who parodied Socialist realism but were not in open, earnest confrontation with the Soviet regime: "They played the fool, winking at their audience and daring the king to behead them"¹³⁶. It seems to be yet another attempt by *The Nation* to show how artists were trying to understand and internalize the Soviet ideology without being in direct opposition to it. *Newsweek*, on the other hand, looks at a "turbulent history" of modern art in Russia. Today the modern art is still "representative of a more liberal, Western worldview in the country".¹³⁷ Those new liberals who participate in democratic protests can be also seen in the new, rejuvenated Gorky Park in Moscow. The park where modern art venues are well established is a symbol of a potential change.¹³⁸

III.6.c. 2013-2014- performances and literary patronage

Newsweek looks at protesters in Russia who use the genre of performance. One of the described performers in the middle of Moscow "hangs his head and stared between his legs as if giving birth to pain". His protest- "Fixation"-performed in front of Lenin's tomb "protested Russia's decline into what he calls a police metaphor for the apathy, political indifference, and fatalism of contemporary Russian society."¹³⁹*The Nation* addresses the topic of literary patronage in Soviet Union and in modern Russia. In the Soviet Union writers were

¹³⁶ Elaine Blaire, "The Wait: On Vladimir Sorokin," *The Nation*, April 13, 2009, accessed March 6, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/wait-vladimir-sorokin/>

¹³⁷ Peter Pomerantsev, "This is the New Russia," *Newsweek*, June 18, 2012, accessed June 5, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-292822362.html>

¹³⁸ *ibid*

¹³⁹ *ibid*

an important group regardless whether their art was official or unofficial or unofficial. Official literature was written by unionized writers, approved by government and published by state presses. Unofficial writers could not be published and could not be awarded literary prizes but they could be punished with a lengthy prison sentence for their works. In either case they were highly respected in the Soviet society where people had a "boundless, almost superstitious respect for poetry".¹⁴⁰ Repressed Soviet writers had the chance to become political heroes even when their writings were not explicitly political: Every "unofficial" story or poem became an act of bravery, of protest". Some Soviet era literature is so densely encoded as to be nearly incomprehensible to an outsider".¹⁴¹ ("A dense weave of hidden subtexts" is also admired while discussing Shostakovich's music¹⁴²). *The Nation* seems to be remembering fondly those internal tensions and mental acrobatics that reveal hidden talents just as described by Milosz in "The Captive Mind"¹⁴³. The reality of modern Russia seems to have lost the capacity of cultivating a dream. In today's Russia it is the oligarchs that took over the part of art patronage, mainly because after the chaotic privatization they felt the need to "rebrand themselves" in the eyes of the people. As a result some of them were called "philanthropists", often providing social benefits that were no longer the government's responsibility. Putin's government clearly supported those practices to the extent that government-approved philanthropy came to constitute an official tax.¹⁴⁴ *The Nation* repeatedly reflects upon the thwarted Soviet experience via the eyes of numerous artists and movements. One of them is Victor Serge (his biography by Susan Weismann) who argued that revolutionary socialism and democracy are not incompatible.¹⁴⁵

III.7. HISTORY 2004-2014

III.7.a. 2004-2008- different views on the recent history and ideology

Newsweek writes about how the Russians view their recent history. That view is very different from how the West views the nineties. Unlike in the West, the Russian people do not have any respect for Yeltsin who they associate with "instability, lawlessness and banditry". Conversely they perceive Putin "as having restored growth and reasserted

¹⁴⁰ Sophie Pinkham, "Oligarchs and Graphomaniacs," *The Nation*, April 29, 2013, accessed March 3, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/oligarchs-and-graphomaniacs/>

¹⁴¹ *ibid*

¹⁴² Marina Harris, "Running Like Shadows," *The Nation*, Aug. 12, 2013, accessed March 6, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/running-shadows/>

¹⁴³ Czeslaw Milosz, "The Captive Mind," Knopf, 1953, accessed March 6, 2019, <https://pl.scribd.com/document/353888952/The-Captive-Mind-Czeslaw-Milosz-pdf>

¹⁴⁴ *ibid*

¹⁴⁵ Sophie Pinkham, "The Museum of the Revolution," *The Nation*, Dec. 9, 2013, accessed March 3, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/museum-revolution/>

national pride".¹⁴⁶ *Newsweek*, while expressing some admiration for Yeltsin, points out that "he pointed Russia in the wrong direction".¹⁴⁷ In another article *Newsweek* analyzes how history in Russia is used in the current attempts to build a state-sponsored ideology. For example the Battle of Moscow is now "largely" forgotten due to "Stalin's blunders, incompetence and brutality" that made it possible for German troops to approach the outskirts of Moscow. Mentioning it in today's Russia would undermine the Soviet story of the "Great Patriotic War" and the image of Stalin as military genius--the images that are fostered in the era of President Putin¹⁴⁸.

III.7.b.2009-2012- perestroika, the end of Soviet Union and the end of Cold War

Both *Newsweek* and *The Nation* offer different views on the significance of the events that happened 20 years earlier. *Newsweek* looks back at the Year 1989 through the eyes of the revisionist historian, Stephen Kotkin who argues that the long term significance of the Soviet collapse of two decades ago is limited as it was only a conclusion of a process that started two decades earlier and thus 1989 only revealed what that country really was when stripped of the regional superpower status¹⁴⁹. *The Nation* advances a different view and namely that the end of the Soviet Union was a return to the country's neo-Bolshevik tradition of imposed change and that "none of the factors contributing to the end of the Soviet Union were inexorable or deterministic". *The Nation* underlines the significance of the year 1985- the year that Perestroika started- and it calls it "the most important event of the last twentieth century"- an attempted reformation of both inside the Soviet Union and its cold war relations with the West.¹⁵⁰ According to *The Nation* the next defining moment was in the early 90s when the factor that "detrimentally affected the vision of (...) a new post cold war order" was the conviction on the part of the Americans that they won the Cold War and thus they didn't need to change. It was "the other" that had to change.¹⁵¹ Everything went wrong when perestroika was undermined and "the idea of gradual change was transformed into a sudden leap".¹⁵² Americans, in Gorbachev's words "became dizzy with imaged success". *The Nation* deplores that the opportunities that Gorbachev created for the international

¹⁴⁶ Fareed Zakaria, "What the World Really Wants," *Newsweek*, May 29, 2006, accessed March 12, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-146231071.html>

¹⁴⁷ Michael Hirsh, "Bush's History Problem," *Newsweek*, September 3, 2007, accessed March 26, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-168111524.html>

¹⁴⁸ Andrew Nagorski, "Stalin's Tipping Point," *Newsweek*, September 10, 2007, accessed May 26, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-168356557.html>

¹⁴⁹ Niall Ferguson, "The Year that World Really Changed," *Newsweek*, November 16, 2009, accessed May 20, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-203768276.html>

¹⁵⁰ Stephen F. Cohen, "Gorbachev's lost legacy," February 24, 2005, accessed March 3, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/gorbachevs-lost-legacy/>

¹⁵¹ Katrina Vandel Heudel and Stephen F. Cohen, "Gorbachev on 1989" Nov. 16, 2009, accessed March 3, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/gorbachev-1989/>

¹⁵² *ibid*

relations of those times have been missed or even lost forever “primarily because of the United States—who—instead of ending the cold war and arms race, undertook winner-take-all policy of extracting unilateral concessions first from Yeltsin and then from Putin”.¹⁵³ *The Nation* sums up that the loss of historical opportunities of that period “may be the worst, and most unnecessary, political tragedy of our time”. *The Nation* advances a hypothesis that the “recent chill” in the US-Russian relations doesn’t have much to do with Putin’s behavior at home or abroad and that the reason is that “the cold war ended in Moscow but not in Washington” and “the triumphalist narrative was the primary reason the cold war was so quickly revived”. With the “triumphalist narrative” American scholars “reverted quickly to the previous Sovietological axioms that the system was unreformable and doomed”. While the Soviet breakup led the American specialists back to the cold war era concepts of historical inevitability, it convinced many of their Russian counterparts that there are always different potential scenarios in history and that the Soviet reformation had been one of the lost alternatives—“a chance to democratize and marketize Russia by methods more gradualist, consensual and less traumatic, and thus more fruitful and less costly, than those adopted after.”¹⁵⁴

III.7.c. 2013-2014- reaching out to history to make sense of the present

History was looked at in order to rationalize the events of 2014 and re-conceptualize after the *evenement*- annexation of Crimea by Russia, took place. *The Nation* summarizes the debate that occurred in the American media by claiming that “the right wing reaction in Ukraine mirrors the hysteria in 1945”.¹⁵⁵ The magazine points out that while the circumstances are different, one aspect remains “sadly consistent between Crimea in 1945 and Crimea today: diplomatic boundaries are determined by military facts on the ground, not the other way around—but conservatives prefer to ignore this, demanding impossible results and mining global crisis for political gain¹⁵⁶”. *The Nation* explicitly declares itself as a supporter of détente and identifies itself with the “opponents of the US policies that contributed to woefully to the

¹⁵³ Stephen F. Cohen, “Gorbachev’s lost legacy,” February 24, 2005, accessed March 3, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/gorbachevs-lost-legacy/>

¹⁵⁴ Stephen F. Cohen, “America’s New Cold War With Russia”, *The Nation*, Feb. 4, 2013, accessed March 3, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/americas-new-cold-war-russia/>

¹⁵⁵ Eric Alterman, “The Cold War Dies Hard,” *The Nation*, March 24, 2014, accessed March 6, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/right-loses-it-over-russia-again/>

¹⁵⁶ *ibid*

current crisis". ¹⁵⁷*Newsweek* on the other hand writes in the same context about "Crimea and Punishment"¹⁵⁸ and "Ten Ways the West Can Punish Putin"¹⁵⁹.

¹⁵⁷ Stephen Cohen, "Patriotic Heresy vs. New Cold War," *The Nation*, Sept. 15, 2014, accessed March 3, 2014, <https://www.thenation.com/article/patriotic-heresy-vs-new-cold-war/>

¹⁵⁸ Owen Matthews, "Crimea and Punishment," *Newsweek*, March 14, 2014, accessed June 5, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-372949452.html>

¹⁵⁹ Max Strasser, "Ten ways the West Can Punish Putin," *Newsweek*, March 14, 2014, accessed June 5, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-372949453.html>

I. CONCLUSION

The three magazines in question discussed many different aspects of the situation Russia and offered images that at certain points coincided and at others contradicted each other. The most popular and thus the most numerous category was international politics: Russia seen through the prism of international relations (39% in *Newsweek*, 49% in *The Nation* and 55% in *TIME*). The image of Russia and the world presented by *TIME* and *Newsweek* differed fundamentally from the image presented by *The Nation*. The two mainstream magazines showed a world where the United States won and Russia lost the Cold War. Thus Russia's role was to internalize those facts and to act according to the rules of the post-Cold War order where the United States was to be the leading voice. Russia's importance was directly contingent on its utility and namely on the amount of the support it could offer to the United States in resolving problems in the areas where it had a lot of influence. The most critical of Russia's international behavior was *Newsweek*. Its articles contained the biggest number of value-laden terms and labels such as "international bully", "Nigeria with snow", "Upper Volta with missiles". *TIME* was more moderate and displayed more respect towards Russia's position in the world. Awarding the Person of the Year status to Putin in 2007 was just one proof of that. *The Nation* saw Russia as an important partner for the United States in crafting a new multipolar world together. Russia was not a loser of a Cold War. Rather it was one of the parties that decided about the dissolution of the Soviet Union. *The Nation* consistently advanced the view that it was because of the American conviction about winning the Cold War and the triumphalist American discourse afterwards that the American-Russian relations deteriorated and the opportunities for partnership were lost. That "triumphalist discourse" that *The Nation* identifies is a part of the Cold War discourse that is clearly present in the material under analysis. Even though the *Newsweek* and *TIME* often attribute the cold war thinking and rhetoric to Russia, it is their narrative that follows Cold War logic. The dominant trend of the two mainstream magazines is to portray Russia as a threat to freedom and democracy, the "Russian model" as a germ infecting body politics and, after 2014, as a "barbarian" intent upon destroying the post cold war order. That narrative resembles the way the Americans perceived the Soviet threat during Cold War. In that narrative Vladimir Putin is an authoritarian leader bent on reclaiming the former imperial glory of the Soviet Union first in Ukraine, then in the Baltic states, and then everywhere else. In doing so he is backed by a new wave of nationalism, conservatism and anti-Americanism that has taken hold in Russia. In that climate, any Russian intervention is filled with all kinds of menacing interpretations. Those interpretations change throughout time with the "good Russia" coinciding with its moments of weakness and "bad Russia" with its moments of assertiveness. In *The Boston Globe*, Stephen Kinzer, a visiting fellow at the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University makes the point that Washington policymakers

are caught up in a Cold War time warp, in which bipolar confrontation with Russia is “strangely comforting” in a world shaken by ISIS, radical Islamist extremism, and a massive influx of Middle East refugees to Europe: “Having Russia as enemy is strangely comforting to Americans. It reassures us that the world has not really changed.(...) That means we do not have to change our policies. Our back-to-the future hostility toward Russia allows us to pull out our dusty Cold War playbook. We have resurrected not just that era’s anti-Moscow policies but also hostile rhetoric that accompanied them¹⁶⁰”. The cold war logic is also present in other aspects of the social reality that makes up the image of Russia for the American readers. Russia’s Domestic Politics (23% in *The Nation*, 25% in *Newsweek* and 28% in *TIME*) is portrayed as a managed or illiberal democracy- autocratic and menacing, undemocratic and with the Leviatan-type omnipresent Kremlin and docile population. In words of Fareed Zakaria, who frequently contributed to *Newsweek* and also authored a book that analyzed similar systems, “countries around the world are being governed by regimes like Russia’s that mix elections and authoritarianism- illiberal democracies.”¹⁶¹ Interestingly the image of Russia’s domestic policy presented by all three magazines is painted in similar colors, however, there are different opinions about the origins of the situation. *The Nation* blames the poor quality of the Russian democracy on the lost opportunities and wrong moves on part of Yeltsin and the West (the United States in particular) while *Newsweek* and *TIME* base their reasoning on the allegedly inevitable cycles of breakdown manifested throughout the Russian history and on the political culture ingrained in the Russian national character.

From the perspective of international economic relations (2% *The Nation*, 3% in *TIME* and 14% in *Newsweek*) Russia is portrayed as similarly vulnerable as during the Cold War with its global economic position dependent on the cycles of oil prices. Because of those cycles that do not always correspond with the global strong financial phases and thus are to a degree immune to universal laws of international economics, Russia is referred to as one of the “islands of exception just like Iran, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela”.¹⁶² Thus possible ideas to deal with such Russia oscillate from attempts to integrate it tighter into global economic system to engaging in an economic form of a warfare” in the new Cold War against Vladimir Putin.”

¹⁶⁰ Stephen Kinzer, “Russia is Not the Enemy,” *The Boston Globe*, accessed March 6, 2019, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2015/09/19/russia-not-enemy/O0nCDUXrXAYLliutmqUtlN/story.html>

¹⁶¹ Farid Zakaria: *Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York London 2007, p. 1202, Kindle

¹⁶² Robert Samuelson “Will America Pass the Baton,” *Newsweek*, March 6, 2006, Accessed March 12, 2018, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-142589717.html>

The articles devoted to domestic economy were not numerous (7% in *TIME*, 5% in *Newsweek* and none in *The Nation*) but presented an image of a Third World economy with some luxurious islands of exceptions located in big cities. The vast countryside was portrayed as locked in apathy, fear, lack of initiative and lack of alternatives (as exemplified by the often addressed monotowns). *The Nation* kept silent on those matters but both *Newsweek* and *TIME* presented a condescending vision of a kleptocracy whose only hope would be to follow the universal rules of economy and which on the conceptual map of global economies is closer to Venezuela than to the developed West. As far as portraying social life in Russia is concerned, the uncontested leader was *Newsweek* (8%), having published much more on that subject than *TIME* (1%) or *The Nation* (2%). It is important to note that *Newsweek* presented many of its articles about Russia using human interest frame which personalizes the events being described.¹⁶³ Overall the Russian society is portrayed by *Newsweek* and *TIME* as apathetic and fatalistic, with reformers, including Medvedev, facing the powerful state and the barrier of "old ways." Only *The Nation* saw the Russians as comparatively more active and free-willed. New societal trends, as viewed by the lenses of all three magazines, were visible solely in large cities. Russia is moreover portrayed as plagued by demographic crisis and deeply divided. Those divisions often reflect the centuries-old discordance between Slavophiles and Westernizers.

Culture attracted a lot of attention in *The Nation* (11%) that approached it as a part of its consistent image of Russia that manifested the magazine's nostalgia for the Soviet sensibility and the opportunities that were lost with the end of the Soviet Union. Thus its reporters kept crafting alternative approaches to the Soviet system, most notably the ones that internalized the Soviet ideology without being in a direct opposition to it. *Newsweek* and *TIME*, without devoting much time to the Russian culture, nevertheless admired it for its complexity and sophistication. While recognizing its strong position in the world cultural traditions they pointed out its weakening influence and as losing its soft power.

The last category analyzed category-history- was the most frequently addressed by *The Nation* (15%) followed by *Newsweek* (5%) and *TIME* (3%). Recent Russian history was undoubtedly the most visited period of the Russian past and the historical moment that provoked the most controversy was the end of the cold war – its causes, process, outcome and consequences. *Newsweek* was the most adamant in its view that Russia needs to reconcile itself with the fact of losing the Cold War and recognize the American dominance. *TIME* was subtler in writing about it but essentially shared the same view. *The Nation*, on the other hand, condemned such "muddled thinking" as the exact reason why the Russian-American

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relations reached the point of “hot peace” and, unlike *TIME and Newsweek*, considered both countries as winners who together decided to end the Cold War.

The analysis clearly demonstrated that the Cold War remains a salient concept and reference point for all three magazines in their reporting about Russia. Russia continues to be an important part of the American identity serving as one of its influential “Others” especially that, based on the image created by the mainstream American weekly magazines, the Antichrist more often than not still resides in Moscow. The first step in escaping the “Cold War warp” seems to be the ability to look between the lines of the press narratives that –just like the Soviet literary works – often have a “triple bottom”.

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