Human Nature, After All

Affective Realism in Russian Foreign Policy

Harald Edinger
St Benet's Hall
University of Oxford

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DPhil in International Relations in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford

Trinity Term 2021

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Abstract

Russia continues to challenge the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, perhaps even Western interpretations of a rules-based international order. Its actions have repeatedly blindsided foreign policy analysis. That is partly due to shortcomings of predominant theoretical paradigms in International Relations. To supplement prevailing perspectives, this thesis proposes the use of affect as a conceptual lens.

Affective realism combines classical realist scholarship on human nature with research in the life sciences. The resulting analytical framework outlines a process of appraisal, which generates specific affective responses and action tendencies. A didactic and probabilistic approach, affective realism is not intended to disprove competing narratives. In fact, affective science may corroborate the assumptions on which some rationalist or constructivist models are predicated.

The plausibility of the theoretical propositions and methodological approach thus developed is probed via four cases: Russia's response to NATO intervention in the Balkans in 1999; a study of Russian attitudes towards Europe and the US between 2000 and 2008; the Russian-Georgian war of 2008; and the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Anger over the non-recognition of Russian great-power status has steadily curtailed elites' willingness to compromise. Around 2007, the quality and intensity of their affective disposition towards the West shifted from resentment to contempt, favouring yet more assertive policies. The thesis also finds that concerns regarding analysts' inability to distinguish between genuine and instrumental displays of affect might be overstated. What leaders experience and express publicly is often congruent or converges over time. However, affectively valenced concerns are located at different levels. References to security threats, for example, could be indicative of more deeply felt ontological anxieties or officials' visceral fear over regime stability and their personal safety. Understanding affective dynamics, and the action tendencies they promote, can improve explanations of foreign policy in the Russian case and potentially others.

To Maria and Oskar Edinger

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The completed thesis is dedicated to my parents. There is no one to whom I owe more gratitude. My only qualm is with appropriateness. If I am so fortunate as to have a future in academia and keep up some degree of mental acuity, this will not be my best work. I should note, so as not to perturb my supervisors, examiners, or other readers, that I am perfectly content with the chapters that follow. In the context of my broader intellectual development, however, it shall primarily lay the groundwork for a lifelong effort to learn, develop my ideas, and make a contribution. Hence, the dedication pertains to what this dissertation represents and the opportunities it opens up. I would not have gotten here if not for my parents' unwavering support; and I will always emulate their example of decency and purpose.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile
CFE	Conventional Forces in Europe
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty
EU	European Union
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
FSB	Russian Federal Security Service
G7/G8	Group of Seven/Group of Eight
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
KGB	Committee for State Security of the Soviet Union
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KVM	Kosovo Verification Mission
MID	Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	NATO-Russia Council
OAF	Operation Allied Force
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PJC	Permanent Joint Council
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RIAC	Russian International Affairs Council
RISI	Russian Institute for Strategic Studies
SCO	Shanghai Co-operation Association
SORT	Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TRIP	Teaching, Research, and International Policy Project
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

1. INTRODUCTION

Russian foreign policy of recent decades has contested the conventional understanding of the post-Cold War security architecture. From vigorous opposition to NATO action against Yugoslavia in 1999, to its own intervention in Ukraine in 2014, Russia has challenged Western interpretations of the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity that have served as the bedrock foundation of the international system. More than six years after the annexation of Crimea and against the backdrop of new controversy over Russia's treatment of domestic opposition and media, Europe and the US continue their struggle to find an adequate, let alone concerted, response. On the other side of this relationship is Russia's evolving perspective on 'the West.' Europe is Russia's 'significant other,'[1] which has traditionally tied Russians' self-image to how they believe they are seen by their Western neighbours. However, mutual interest among both scholars and policymakers has not prevented consequential misunderstandings and setbacks in relations between the two sides.

This project is motivated both by continuing policy challenges posed by Russia, as well as an ambition to advance the use of International Relations (IR) theory in foreign policy analysis (FPA). The question is, are students of foreign policy making good enough use of the explanatory tools available, or could we make more accurate predictions of future state behaviour? When it comes to explaining patterns of continuity and change in Russian-Western relations over time, prevailing

[1] Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 250-61; Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, Fourth ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 14-22.

schools of thought in IR have a mixed track record.[2] Structural realism and liberalism[3] rely on the rational actor assumption, whereas constructivist scholarship, emphasising the intersubjective nature of the social world, generally does not produce distinct theories of actorhood. Both rationalist and constructivist theories rely on a traditional, 'cognitivist' outlook,[4] which makes them suboptimal models of decision-making.

In part for these reasons, integrating actors and structures, levels of analysis, or process and outcome remains a problem in FPA. To address these shortcomings, IR and FPA need to re-engage with the common denominator of all social scientific theory: the human being. The key to state behaviour, Hans Morgenthau suggested, lies in the motives of their leaders. The task of the political scientist is establishing the contents of these motives. However, how are we to deduce the motivation of policy-makers, if we are sometimes unsure about the reasons for our own actions? That is why, instead of subjective motivation, classical realists took an interest in generalisable processes, or 'repetitive patterns' of the mind. Among them, affect and emotion describe universal human phenomena that have now been researched extensively in psychology and neuroscience. The theoretical framework developed in

[2] A large majority of IR scholars in the US failed, for example, to predict Russian military intervention in Ukraine when polled just days before its annexation of Crimea in early 2014. Tuomas Forsberg and Christer Pursiainen, 'The Psychological Dimension of Russian Foreign Policy: Putin and the Annexation of Crimea,' *Global Society* 31, no. 2 (2017). For detailed poll results, see: Daniel Maliniak, Susan Peterson, Ryan Powers, and Michael J. Tierney, 'Snap Poll: The View from the Ivory Tower,' *Foreign Policy*, 7 March 2014, http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/03/07/snap-poll-the-view-from-the-ivory-tower/; Daniel Maliniak et al., 'TRIP Snap Poll I: Nine Questions on Current Global Issues for International Relations Scholars,' *Teaching, Research, and International Policy Project (TRIP)*, 7 March 2014, https://www.wm.edu/offices/global-research/trip/snap-polls/publications/trip-snap-poll-one-report-final.pdf.

[3] The author is aware of the ambiguity of the term 'liberalism' in common parlance but also in the political science literature. For a summary of what liberalism denotes in the context of IR theory and FPA, see Michael W. Doyle, 'Liberalism and Foreign Policy,' in: Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Timothy Dunne, *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, Second ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[4] A view that is predicated on computational theories of mind, focusing on factors that can be known and understood. See Hilary Putnam, *Mathematics, Matter, and Method*, Second ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

this thesis combines that research with insights of classical realists in IR. I argue that the works of Thucydides, Machiavelli, and especially twentieth century theorists like Morgenthau express an intuitive understanding of the interplay between affect and cognition and offer conceptual pointers on how to incorporate complex affective dynamics in prevailing theoretical frameworks.

Affect denotes a broad range of human experiences. I propose the use of particular affective phenomena with a distinct cognitive profile, often referred to as the primary emotions, as conceptual lenses on foreign policy. Three cases of heightened affective salience for Russian elites and one extended episode in Russian-Western relations serve as illustrative examples of the theoretical framework: Russian reactions to NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999, the deterioration of Russian-Western relations during Vladimir Putin's first two terms as president, the Russian-Georgian war of 2008, and Russian involvement in the 2013/14 political crisis in Ukraine. Emphasising the experience of fear of regime change and anger over perceived status denial, these cases show how affective dynamics may instil resentment among elites or influence leaders to pursue a more assertive course. By establishing reference points with competing theoretical paradigms, the objective is to address gaps they might leave open, rather than disproving them. The analytical payoff is expected to be particularly pronounced in the case of Russia but should be beneficial for other cases and the broader purpose of theorising individual actorhood in IR.

The introductory chapter proceeds as follows. First, I provide an overview of the current state of research on Russian foreign policy through the lens of different IR theories. I examine why the realist tradition has played a special role in FPA and the suitability of realism to inform a new generation of scholarship on 'first image'

theories of state behaviour. Homing in on one particular aspect of psychology-based explanations, I then consider how IR scholarship has treated and attempted to integrate affect and emotion. Lastly, I outline the framework of affective realism that will guide the subsequent qualitative analysis and introduce the methods and sources used.

1.1. International Relations theories and Russian foreign policy

Foreign policy as a field of academic inquiry emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War, when European emigres like Hans Morgenthau introduced their political thinking to US public policy discourse. Some of the most notable contributions to the sub-field followed in the 1960s and 70s as part of the 'behaviourist revolution' across the social sciences. Looking at the extensive body of theoretical and empirical scholarship produced over the years, we can distinguish, at a general level, between approaches that seek to explain the process of foreign policy decision-making, and those that seek to explain specific policies, or outcomes.[5] The former ask how decisions are made, the latter why a specific decision was made. Both approaches may be further divided into those privileging actors – heads of state, foreign ministers, or groups such as parliaments, foreign ministries, or partisan committees, to name but a few – and those working with structures – most importantly the international system of states but also other types of structures: ideational, normative, cultural, economic, domestic, bureaucratic, global, or regional. The prevailing 'theories of foreign policy,' which correspond to the major schools of

[5] For a distinction, see Charles F. Hermann, 'Foreign Policy Behaviour: That Which Is to Be Explained,' in: Maurice A. East, Stephen A. Salmore, and Charles F. Hermann, *Why Nations Act: Theoretical Perspectives for Comparative Foreign Policy Studies* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1978), 118.

thought in IR, overlap largely with the structural subset:[6] structural realism, liberalism, social constructivism, and post-structuralism.

Structural realism explains foreign policy with reference to an anarchic international system, where only power maximisation or alliances can ensure a state's survival.[7] Although, strictly speaking, structural realism – specifically its original version developed by Kenneth Waltz – does not claim to be able to explain any one state's foreign policy but only broader patterns in international politics. Chapter 1 addresses this incongruity between the works of Waltz and those that came after him in more detail. Where FPA is, nonetheless, guided by this school of thought, it traces changes in Russia's place and relative power in the state system and draws strategic implications from it. There is a direct link between changes in the distribution of power and policy outcomes, with little to no regard for domestic politics or the individual motivation of decision-makers. Stephen Sestanovich lays out a balanced realist argument about the general trajectory of Russian-Western relations since the Cold War: the major decisions taken by Western leaders with respect to the European order had been without alternatives, even if they meant alienating Russia. Equally, Russia had no choice but to respond in kind.[8]

John Mearsheimer provides the sharpest structural realist take on recent Russian foreign policy, concluding that the West provoked the annexation of Crimea

[6] A *theory* is understood as a set of predictive claims dependent on *assumptions* (e.g. egoism and the will to power) and *scope conditions*. Anarchy – the lack of a form of central organisation or control in the international system – may be considered the principal scope condition in structural realist theory, for example. It follows that rather than a 'theory,' the whole of realism would be more accurately described as a *school of thought* or a *paradigm* in IR. See William C. Wohlforth, 'Realism and Foreign Policy,' in: Smith, Hadfield, and Dunne, *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*.

[7] Structural realists that followed Waltz distinguished between *offensive* and *defensive* motives to maximise power. The implications are roughly the same, as both sub-schools are rooted in the security dilemma. On offensive realism: John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001). On defensive realism: Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

[8] Stephen Sestanovich, 'Could It Have Been Otherwise?,' *The American Interest* 10, no. 5 (2015), https://www.the-american-interest.com/2015/04/14/could-it-have-been-otherwise/.

by falling for 'liberal delusions' and ignoring the imperatives of power politics.[9] When it was published, Mearsheimer's argument was in marked contrast to the bulk of Western media coverage as well as most of the scholarship on the conflict in Ukraine. The impact of his thesis is illustrative of some wider deficiencies of FPA on Russia: without fully understanding Russian motives, or *why* it was, a lot of scholarship has seemed preoccupied with *what* it was – discussing the brazenness and illegality of the move and suitable repercussions. In doing so, analysis is occasionally conflated with policy prescriptions.

Realist FPA habitually uses the vernacular of geopolitics. Especially since the Russian annexation of Crimea, the 'return of geopolitics' has been a widely encountered theme in both the academic and popular literature – often mischaracterising geopolitics as a synonym for blunt power politics. As Stefano Guzzini points out, however, there is some overlap between structural realist theory and geopolitical concepts: the diplomatic branch of realism has its roots in foreign policy practice and European diplomatic culture. The strategic one is more closely related to military planning, has a propensity for worst-case thinking and tends to think of politics as a prolongation of war by other means, reversing Clausewitz's famous dictum. This latter branch, he suggests, is closely connected to geopolitics.[10] 'Geoeconomics,' as Mikael Wigell and Antto Vihma note, should be distinguished from geopolitics because of qualitative differences in how policies impact the target

[9] John Mearsheimer, 'Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin,' *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (2014).

[10] Stefano Guzzini, 'Which Geopolitics?,' in: Stefano Guzzini, *The Return of Geopolitics in Europe? Social Mechanisms and Foreign Policy Identity Crises* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). For an example of 'strategic' realist FPA on Russia, see Colby Howard and Ruslan Pukhov, *Brothers Armed: Military Aspects of the Crisis in Ukraine* (Minneapolis, MN: East View Press, 2014).

state on both the national and international level.[11] Contrary to what one might expect, geopolitics frequently relies on an engrained affective dimension in that it builds on historical narratives about the 'self' – the culture, values, or ideals of one's own side.[12] This is a core tenet of the argument presented in Chapters 6 and 7 on Russian interventions in Georgia and Ukraine, respectively.

Liberal FPA attempts to open the black box of domestic politics and to account for variance in international anarchy by incorporating state preferences. At different levels of detail, liberal FPA seeks to explain how the interplay of Russian political elites, domestic institutions, and socio-economic forces shape its foreign relations. This kind of analysis on the link between regime type and foreign policy in Russia can be found, for example, in the work of Karen Dawisha, Allen Lynch, or Alexander Motyl.[13] Liberal analysis often encompasses a normative dimension, such as the promotion of democracy, human rights, or personal liberties. Michael McFaul presents an inside account of US-Russian relations since 1989 as someone who is both a recognised scholar of comparative government and a strong promoter of liberal-democratic values.[14] There is considerable overlap between analysis informed by different strands of liberal IR theory and the 'Innenpolitik' tradition in FPA, which views foreign policy as a direct outgrowth of domestic politics.[15] Neoliberal

[11] Mikael Wigell and Antto Vihma, 'Geopolitics Versus Geoeconomics: The Case of Russia's Geostrategy and Its Effects on the EU,' *International Affairs* 92, no. 3 (2016).

[12] On this, see the concept of 'affective geopolitics' as described by Gerard Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[13] Karen Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2014); Allen C. Lynch, 'The Influence of Regime Type on Russian Foreign Policy Towards the West 1992–2015,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 49, no. 1 (2016); Alexander J. Motyl, 'Fascistoid Russia: Whither Putin's Brittle Realm?,' *World Affairs* 174, no. 6 (2012).

[14] Michael McFaul, *From Cold War to Hot Peace: The inside Story of Russia and America* (London: Allen Lane, 2018).

[15] Fareed Zakaria, 'Realism and Domestic Politics: A Review Essay,' in: Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller, *The Perils of Anarchy: Contemporary Realism and International Security* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

institutionalism provides another contribution to FPA, which emphasises the influence of both economic interconnectedness – a premise retained from traditional liberal IR theory – and international institutions on the behaviour of states.[16]

Constructivism offers a meta-theoretical approach to the study of social or political phenomena, which complicates a definition of 'constructivist IR theory' and the corresponding variant of FPA. Generally, constructivism views interests as socially constructed, in part by actors' experience within the international system. Notable representatives of the school have suggested it may be thought of as an antithesis to rationalism in IR.[17] Seeking a minimal definition, Emanuel Adler holds that 'all strands of constructivism converge on an ontology that depicts the social world as intersubjectively and collectively meaningful structures and processes,'[18] allowing for the fact that constructivist scholarship can be both structuralist[19] or post-structuralist.[20]

Constructivist FPA is concerned with two concepts in particular: the first is norms and how they influence actors' understanding of the world. Roy Allison, for example, contrasts Russian and Western justifications for military intervention between 1990 and 2011 alongside the evolution of international norms and

[16] Kalevi J. Holsti, *Taming the Sovereigns: Institutional Change in International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Arthur A. Stein, 'Neoliberal Institutionalism,' in: Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[17] James Fearon and Alexander Wendt, 'Rationalism v. Constructivism: A Skeptical View,' in: Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, *Handbook of International Relations* (London: Sage, 2002).

[18] Emanuel Adler, 'Constructivism and International Relations,' in: ibid., 100. Italics are original.

[19] Wendt tried to adapt the work of 'structuration theorists' in sociology to come up with a new approach to structural theorising in IR. Alexander E. Wendt, 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory,' *International Organization* 41, no. 3 (1987).

[20] Adler refers to this branch of constructivism in IR as 'radical constructivism.' While its proponents do not deny the existence of material reality per se, they believe that it cannot be truly represented. Emanuel Adler, 'Constructivism in International Relations: Sources, Contributions, and Debates,' in: Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, *Handbook of International Relations*, Second ed. (London: Sage, 2013), 117.

customary international law.[21] The second concept centres on identity – how the nature of the state and its interests are socially constructed and may be used by leaders to justify a particular foreign policy orientation.[22] This approach is well represented in foreign policy textbooks by Anne Clunan or Andrei Tsygankov,[23] or articles on Russian identity with respect to Europe,[24] the West,[25] NATO,[26] or Ukraine.[27]

The boundary between social constructivist and post-structuralist scholarship is porous. Post-structuralist analysis might suggest that a state's foreign policy is best explained in terms of its search for recognition, or its striving to uphold a particular vision of itself. Ted Hopf, for example, provides a comparison of the relationship between identity and foreign policy in the Soviet Union and modern Russia, which shows how a state's understanding of itself can affect how its decision-makers understand other states.[28] These examples are no different from identity-centred constructivist accounts. More generally, the aim of post-structuralist contributions is to highlight the importance of the exercise of critique to establish the possibility of producing a wide variety of different explanations of political phenomena.

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[21] Roy Allison, *Russia, the West, and Military Intervention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). See also 'The Russian Case for Military Intervention in Georgia: International Law, Norms and Political Calculation,' *European Security* 18, no. 2 (2009).

[22] On the theoretical underpinnings, see Felix Berenskoetter, 'Identity in International Relations,' in: Robert A. Denemark and Renée Marlin-Bennett, *The International Studies Encyclopedia* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

[23] Anne L. Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*.

[24] Iver B. Neumann, 'Russia's Europe, 1991–2016: Inferiority to Superiority,' *International Affairs* 92, no. 6 (2016).

[25] Robert English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

[26] Andrei P. Tsygankov, 'The Sources of Russia's Fear of NATO,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 51, no. 2 (2018).

[27] Mikhail A. Molchanov, *Political Culture and National Identity in Russian-Ukrainian Relations* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2002).

[28] Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities & Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

Scholarship on Russian status aspirations ought to be addressed separately. Theories of what status is, how it is attained, retained, accommodated, or denied, draw on a variety of traditions inside and outside of IR. Most commonly, scholarship on status is associated with the constructivist school because of its preoccupation with concepts such as identity and norms. That is particularly true for variants of constructivism that seek close integration with political psychology.[29] Status may be an ideational concept but it also equips its holder (i.e., a leader who has attained a certain renown for themselves or the state they represent) with political capital, elevating their standing in domestic politics. In the international arena, status grants access to clubs and counts as 'reputation for power.'[30] Status is closely related to prestige,[31] and both concepts have material relevance. As Robert Gilpin suggests, 'if your strength is recognized, you can generally achieve your aims without having to use it.'[32] Or, as Michelle Murray puts it, status 'allows the hegemon to realise its interests without having to use force.'[33]

There has been growing interest in Russia's concerns over its status, specifically Russian responses to perceived disrespect or denial of its great-power status. To some extent, scholarly attention has been precipitated by official Russian doctrine, which, since the mid-1990s, propagated 'great-power status' as a main

[29] Jacques E. C. Hymans, 'The Arrival of Psychological Constructivism,' *International Theory* 2, no. 3 (2010); Vaughn P. Shannon and Paul Kowert, *Psychology and Constructivism in International Relations: An Ideational Alliance* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2012).

[30] Yuen Foong Khong, 'Power as Prestige in World Politics,' *International Affairs* 95, no. 1 (2019).

[31] Generally, holding a certain status refers to the relative position occupied by a state in the hierarchy of states. Prestige is more diffuse concept. It may be amassed over time, with no upper 'boundary' to how much prestige a state may hold. Status can be lost; prestige tends to be more durable. The two terms are often used interchangeably.

[32] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 31.

[33] Michelle Murray, *The Struggle for Recognition in International Relations: Status, Revisionism, and Rising Powers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 5.

theme characterising the country's foreign policy orientation.[34] Using aspirational constructivism, Anne Clunan makes an argument about the domestic importance of status and why Russian elites settled on a national identity focused on its historical status as a great power.[35] Most of the scholarship employing the concept of status, however, is based on social identity theory.[36] Deborah Larson and Alexei Shevchenko suggest that post-Soviet Russia has been striving for a distinct, positive social identity. It does so primarily by following strategies of social competition and social creativity.[37] In response, scholars like Stephen Ward cautioned that social identity theory tells us little about how to confront status aspirations. To the contrary, widespread mishandling of the theory may encourage leaders to wrongly believe they can change the distribution of status – inducing, rather than attenuating, geopolitical conflict.[38] More recently, scholars like Jonathan Renshon have attempted to integrate material sources of status aspirations (such as economic output and military capabilities) with perceptual and intersubjective factors, i.e., those elements out of which status is constituted that are dependent on the recognition of others.[39] One way that states actively seek status is through fighting. Taking a rationalist approach,

[34] Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, 103.

Although there have been times when official references to Russia's status as a great power were scaled back for a variety of reasons, some of which are discussed in Chapter 5. See Mark Urnov, '"Greatpowerness" as the Key Element of Russian Self-Consciousness under Erosion,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014).

[35] Anne L. Clunan, 'Historical Aspirations and the Domestic Politics of Russia's Pursuit of International Status,' ibid.

[36] For an introduction to social identity theory, see Henri Tajfel and John Turner, 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict,' in: William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel, *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1979).

[37] Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, 'Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy,' *International Security* 34, no. 4 (2010); *Quest for Status: Chinese and Russian Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019). For another application of social identity theory (and related social-psychological concepts) to Russian foreign policy, see Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests*.

[38] Steven Michael Ward, 'Lost in Translation: Social Identity Theory and the Study of Status in World Politics,' *International Studies Quarterly* 61, no. 4 (2017).

[39] Jonathan Renshon, *Fighting for Status: Hierarchy and Conflict in World Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018). For a recent review of the literature on status in international politics, see Elias Götz, 'Status Matters in World Politics,' *International Studies Review* 23, no. 1 (2021).

Renshon explains how conflictual behaviour can be aimed at enhancing status, which suggests another way of looking, for example, at Russia's annexation of Crimea as far from irrational (as some rational accounts have argued it was).

Another literature worth mentioning, part of which ties in with the concept of status, places Russian foreign policy in the broader struggle of constructing – if only in ideational terms – a Eurasian empire. 'Eurasianist' thought varies in terms of its extremism. On the pure ideological side of the spectrum, thinkers like Aleksandr Dugin and conservative politicians like Vladimir Zhirinovski understand Russia to be an expanding land-based power, locked in a perpetual struggle with sea-based 'Atlanticist' powers – the UK and, more recently, the US and its Western European allies. To balance Atlanticism, they seek to build a geopolitical alliance encompassing countries like Germany, Turkey, Iran, India, China, or Japan.[40] It would be wrong to assert that Eurasianism is solely based on geopolitics, however. Intellectually, the Eurasianist project has a significant cultural dimension, envisaging Russia as an amalgamation of, or bridge between, Asian and European cultures. Instrumentally, more moderate Eurasianists may be drawn to the conservative and nationalist elements inherent in empire-building,[41] or to the potential utility of Eurasianism and the project of (re-)constructing a larger sphere of Russian influence to reinstate its rightful status in the world.[42] Gerard Toal summarises the geopolitical substructure and contemporary appeal of authors like Aleksandr Dugin as follows:

> A mega-geographic signifier that could be bent to the purposes at hand, Eurasianism was, above all else, a vehicle for the construction of imperial

[40] For example, Aleksandr Dugin, *Konservativnaya Revolyutsiya* (Moscow: Arktogeya, 1994); and *Osnovy Geopolitiki* (Moscow: Arktogeya, 1997).

[41] For example, Gennady Zyuganov, *Rossiya i Sovremennyi Mir* (Moscow: Informpechat', 1996); *Geografiya Pobedy* (Moscow, 1997).

[42] Andrej Krickovic and Igor Pellicciari, 'From "Greater Europe" to "Greater Eurasia": Status Concerns and the Evolution of Russia's Approach to Alignment and Regional Integration,' *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 12, no. 1 (2021).

> Russian nationalist visions of post-Soviet space. Defined in opposition to Westernizing visions of Russia, Eurasianism was founded around the conceit that Russia was geographically exceptional by virtue of its situatedness between Europe and Asia. Russia's destiny was to be an imperial power bridging continents.[43]

Scholars have also successfully combined theoretical approaches. Contrasting different modes of understanding the deterioration of Russian-Western relations from their high point in the early 1990s, Neil MacFarlane, for example, concludes that 'multiple, reinforcing factors related to the internal characteristics of Russian political culture and the political system' were the cause.[44] In the style of an Innenpolitik approach, and drawing on constructivist theory, Roy Allison considers different explanations for Russian conduct in the Ukraine crisis, among which is a persuasive presentation of the role of domestic political consolidation in the escalation of the conflict.[45] Sten Rynning traces the erosion of the European security order to multiple, interlinked forces: political contestation regarding the meaning of 'restoration' post-1989, military instability and new forms of warfare, and Western moral equivocation. His policy recommendation has a distinctively structural character: 'Western policy should aim to strengthen the concert and clarify the balance.'[46]

As evidenced by the works above, theoretical FPA has made insightful contributions to the study of Russian foreign policy. The same can be said of behaviourist scholarship and personality-focused approaches, based on general

[43] Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*, 76-77.
[44] S. Neil MacFarlane, 'Kto Vinovat? Why Is There a Crisis in Russia's Relations with the West?,' *Contemporary Politics* 22, no. 3 (2016): 342.
[45] Roy Allison, 'Russian 'Deniable' Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules,' *International Affairs* 90, no. 6 (2014).
[46] Sten Rynning, 'The False Promise of Continental Concert: Russia, the West and the Necessary Balance of Power,' *International Affairs* 91, no. 3 (2015).

human psychological traits[47] or biographical information.[48] Is there a need, then, to develop an additional perspective on Russian behaviour? Graham Allison's account of the Cuban Missile Crisis – a foundational text in the sub-field of FPA – demonstrates that there is much to learn from applying and contrasting different explanatory models. By developing three 'conceptual lenses' to explain the events of October 1962, Allison carves out an analytical middle ground between diplomatic history and classical realist theory on the one side, and behaviourist science on the other. Our views of events, he states, are influenced by the 'basic assumptions we make, categories we use, our angle of vision,' and by 'comparing and contrasting the three frameworks (…), we see what each magnifies, highlights, and reveals as well as what each blurs or neglects.'[49] This thesis is based on the presupposition that classical realist conceptions of human nature, and the insights into affective dynamics they hold, may provide a valuable supplementary 'conceptual lens' on Russian foreign policy.

1.2. Realism and why state X made a certain move

Realism and its different sub-schools continue to exert immense influence on policy-makers, particularly in Russia. This may be a double-edged sword, as many realist theorists have 'legitimised their perspective partly by their role as advisors to foreign policy-makers.'[50] Nonetheless, there are good reasons why realism and its

[47] Forsberg and Pursiainen contrast different approaches – among them a perspective focussed on affect and emotion but also one that emphasises the influence of Vladimir Putin's personal history on contemporary foreign policy. Forsberg and Pursiainen, 'The Psychological Dimension of Russian Foreign Policy: Putin and the Annexation of Crimea,' 233-38.

[48] Fiona Hill and Clifford G. Gaddy, *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*, Brookings Focus Books (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2013).

[49] Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1971), v.

[50] Anders Wivel, 'Explaining Why State X made a Certain Move Last Tuesday: The Promise and Limitations of Realist Foreign Policy Analysis,' *Journal of International Relations and Development* 8, no. 4 (2005): 355.

precepts, 'a dispassionate analysis of capabilities (…), a penchant for discounting the universalistic rhetoric on both sides, and a focus on narrow group interest and the potential for conflict,'[51] have exerted an enduring appeal on scholars and policy analysts. Because of its dual commitment to general theory and in-depth case study, realist theory provides promising templates for improving first-level approaches to FPA.

Broadly speaking, realism, its various sub-schools and theoretical derivatives converge on three core assumptions: egoism, dominance (or striving for power), and organisation in groups. Egoism predicts that humans are driven primarily by self-interest. This does not preclude altruism or cooperation but suggests that putting our own perceived interest before that of others is the default mode of social behaviour, politics included. Power, and with it the ability to dominate others, is often referred to as the currency of politics. All issues in international politics may be traced back to an unequal distribution of power. Lastly, humans organise in groups. The cohesion provided by groups increases their chances for survival and is a source of status. While realism does not claim that states are the only actors in the international system, they have been the most important form of group organisation in modern history and will continue to play the primary role in international politics.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the work of Kenneth Waltz caused a revolution in realist thought. Classical realists had considered human nature – the psychological needs, passions, and philosophical disposition of the individual – the vantage point of political theory. Waltz referred to this perspective as the 'first level'

[51] William C. Wohlforth, 'Realism and Foreign Policy,' in: Smith, Hadfield, and Dunne, *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, 44.

of analysis, or 'first image' theory.[52] Instead of human nature, he sought to anchor his version of realism in the anarchical structure of the international system of states – the 'third image.' Waltz supported this shift with a sweeping critique of first image explanations, which caused many scholars to view classical texts as outdated and lacking the necessary foundation in contemporary social science.

Not just realists but across all schools of thought in IR, theorists and analysts turned their backs on human nature and chose to focus on the second and third level instead: the internal political dynamics of the state and the interaction of states in the international system, respectively. According to TRIP survey data, the proportion of scholarship focused on the first image has steadily declined from roughly one quarter of all IR journal articles in 1980 to just 6.55 per cent in 2014.[53] Over the same time period, the share of articles associated with the second and third level (65.24 and 50.14 per cent, respectively) remained fairly stable.[54] Scholarship dedicated to FPA has mirrored this trend and abandoned the individual for the state and international system. In 1980, more than half of journal articles dealing with foreign policy were centred on the individual – i.e., invoking both general human traits and personal idiosyncrasies of specific political actors. By 2014, that figure had dropped to a mere one fifth of all FPA articles.[55]

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[52] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1959).

[53] Daniel Maliniak, Susan Peterson, Ryan Powers, and Michael J. Tierney, *TRIP Journal Article Survey* (Williamsburg, VA: Institute for the Theory and Practice of International Relations, 2017), https://trip.wm.edu/. The shares given refer to the proportion of IR journal articles in 2014 dealing with the respective level of analysis (there obviously being some overlap between levels, and 8.83% of articles employing none of the three levels).

[54] Evidently, there is some overlap between level two (65% of articles) and level three (60%) publications, i.e. some are assigned to more than one level. 8.83% of articles in 2014 could not be assigned to any level of analysis.

[55] Share of articles with a 'substantive focus on foreign policy' assigned to level one. The overall share of journal articles with a 'substantive focus' on foreign policy also decreased markedly from 37.78% in 1980 to just 8.55% in 2014.

Disregard for explanations based on human nature now seems ill-advised. One of the reasons why there is much to (re-)discover in the writings of classical realists, particularly its mid-twentieth-century representatives, lies in their background and experience. Morgenthau and his contemporaries aspired to translate 'the maxims of nineteenth century European diplomatic practice into more general laws of an American social science.'[56] At the least, this long intellectual tradition and firm grounding in diplomacy and policy-making offers a broad and promising research agenda – thoughts on the links between human emotion, decision-making, and political organisation that are worthy of further exploration. As Andrew Ross observes, all the while, under our noses lay 'political realism – whose long-standing concern for evil, fear, and tragedy indicates a potentially bountiful source for thinking about human emotion and its role in international politics.'[57] A synthesis of classical texts with a view to the role of affect in policy-making, and focussing on the work of Hans J. Morgenthau, will be attempted in Chapter 2.

Morgenthau found the search for explanations of foreign policy in the 'motives of statesmen' to be 'both futile and deceptive.' We often do not know our own motives, so what makes us think we could make accurate claims about the intentions of others? Motives, he suggested, are 'the most illusive of psychological data,' and can lead the analyst astray.[58] They are deceptive because there is no 'correlation between the quality of motives and the quality of foreign policy.'[59] Analogously, due to myriad intervening variables, Iver Neumann describes the difficulty for the social

[56] Stefano Guzzini, *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy: The Continuing Story of a Death Foretold* (London: Routledge, 1998), 1.

[57] Andrew A. G. Ross, 'Realism, Emotion, and Dynamic Allegiances in Global Politics,' *International Theory* 5, no. 2 (2013): 275.

[58] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Sixth ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1985), 5.

[59] Ibid.

scientist to draw connections 'between the social impetus of motivation,' the 'formation of motivation itself,' and finally, the 'presumed individual motivation and the observable social intention that results from it.'[60]

Affect and emotion present an alternative to 'motives,' and a bridge between impetus and action. At least in theory, emotion may be 'readily observable in social interaction.'[61] As an object of study in the social sciences, emotion is not without problems, though. It falls somewhere between the physiological and the cognitive, between experiential inputs and behavioural outputs, between the process and the result of policy-making. It is precisely because of the indeterminate nature of human affect and emotion, however, that these phenomena hold promise for theoretical integration. Incorporating affect in prevailing analytical frameworks may provide a useful conceptual link between theory and FPA. The intuition and experience of classical realists can aid in this task of trying to understand how affect impacts state behaviour. 'A nation,' Morgenthau observed, 'is obviously not an empirical thing.' We could only abstract from individuals who 'make up the nation and who have certain characteristics in common.' The primary task of foreign policy analysts, therefore, was to put themselves in the 'position of a statesman.'[62] Translated into the vernacular of modern political science, this means basing 'inferences about a country's foreign policy on its elite's perceptions of its goals,' in combination with contextual factors in the domestic and foreign realm.[63]

[60] Iver B. Neumann, 'International Relations as a Social Science,' *Millennium* 43, no. 1 (2014): 343.

[61] Ibid., 344.

[62] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5.

[63] Richard Hermann, quoted in: Richard Ned Lebow and Thomas Risse-Kappen, *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995), 17.

1.3. Affect and emotion in International Relations

Affect and emotion have become an increasingly popular topic in International Relations. Before expanding on the reasons for the 'affective turn,' some differentiation should be made between the two terms. *Affect* is an umbrella term, encompassing emotions, dispositions, or moods. Moods, for example, are more diffuse affective states that generally last longer and are perceived to be less intense.[64] All refer to ways in which embodied mental processes and the felt dimensions of human experience influence thought and behaviour.[65] When affect enters our consciousness we may recognize it as a feeling but it might also remain at a level below conscious awareness, in the form of bias.[66] Feelings, which we may be consciously aware of, can be understood as a subjective representation of affect – private to the individual experiencing them. In the pertinent literature, the term *emotion* is typically reserved for an affective experience that has a distinct cognitive profile and a socially recognisable expression such as the so-called 'primary emotions:' anger, fear, happiness, and sadness. Their physical manifestations are universal across cultures and societies, although there continues to be debate about differences as the expression of emotions is partly socially learned. Outside of affective neuroscience and adjacent fields, the two terms are commonly used interchangeably. This thesis will primarily use the term affect. Only when referring to a specific affective response – usually one of the primary emotions – will the term emotion be used.

[64] Elaine Fox, *Emotion Science: Cognitive and Neuroscientific Approaches to Understanding Human Emotions* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[65] See the definition of 'affective dynamics' in Todd H. Hall and Andrew A. G. Ross, 'Affective Politics after 9/11,' *International Organization* 69, no. 4 (2015): 848.

[66] Antonio R. Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind: Constructing the Conscious Brain* (London: William Heinemann, 2010).

Three central questions continue to occupy affective science, and cannot be ignored by IR, either. The first question concerns how affective phenomena should be conceptualised, which determines how we study them. The pertinent literature speaks to the intricacy of the phenomenon: the term emotion encompasses interrelated causal effects consisting of situational cues, physiological changes, emotion labels, and expressive gestures.[67] Experiencing emotions, according to Janice Bially Mattern, corresponds to a contingent 'way-of-being human,' which emerges from 'interactions between agencies and structures of both material and social sorts.'[68] Rose McDermott views emotions as 'a large set of differentiated, biologically-based complex(es) that are constituted, at the very least, by *mutually transformative interactions* among biological systems (e.g., cognition, physiology, psychology) and physical and sociocultural ones.'[69]

As in other branches of the social sciences, the 'nature versus nurture' debate has entrenched scholars' positions on what affect is and how it ought to be studied. Unnecessarily so, because the answer has always been both – nature *and* nurture. Biology and social institutions are intertwined, as Neta Crawford observes. The expression of a single gene depends both on other genes and the epigenetic environment. One interpretation of this is that human biology is malleable – our environments and the experiences we have can rewrite the physiology of our brains.[70] The intensity of the debate has drawn some of the attention away from

[67] Peggy A. Thoits, 'Emotional Deviance: Research Agendas,' in: Theodore D. Kemper, *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990).

[68] Janice Bially Mattern, 'A Practice Theory of Emotion for International Relations,' in Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot, *International Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 63.

[69] Rose McDermott, *Political Psychology in International Relations* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 692. Italics are original.

[70] Neta C. Crawford, 'Human Nature and World Politics: Rethinking "Man",' *International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2009): 276.

efforts at bringing affect into our discipline. Despite scientific advances, 'we are only barely beginning to understand the capabilities and complexity of human reasoning,' Valerie Hudson argues. It is quite possible that we are still 'missing necessary elements of theory, methodology, and perhaps even technology' to take on the challenge of theoretical integration in FPA.[71] Most IR scholars, therefore, seem to have met the challenge of incorporating affect in theory and analysis 'by dodging it,' as Bially Mattern observes.[72]

Some attempts, however, have been quite fruitful: Brent Sasley draws on intergroup emotions theory to illustrate how emotional reactions generate shared perceptions and behaviour, or states' foreign policies.[73] Todd Hall and Andrew Ross systematize several paths for theorising collective experience in affective terms: bottom-up from the level of individuals through shared concerns and dispositions, horizontally across individuals through contagion, and top-down as a result of social harmonising processes.[74] Bially Mattern's practice theory of emotions suggests they may best be captured through mediated discourse analysis.[75] And scholars like Richard Ned Lebow and Jacques Hymans have heralded the arrival of a new paradigm, 'psychological constructivism,' that combines ancient philosophy and modern research to shed light on the role played by groups of 'emotional people' in international politics.[76]

Another important question concerns whether affective phenomena can be reliably distinguished from one another. Interdisciplinary research suggests that there

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[71] Valerie M. Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 204.

[72] Bially Mattern, 'A Practice Theory of Emotion for International Relations,' 63.

[73] Brent Sasley, 'Theorizing States' Emotions,' *International Studies Review* 13, no. 3 (2011).

[74] Hall and Ross, 'Affective Politics after 9/11.'

[75] Bially Mattern, 'A Practice Theory of Emotion for International Relations.'

[76] Hymans, 'The Arrival of Psychological Constructivism.'; Richard Ned Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

are a number of distinct affective responses that are 'hardwired' in human neuropsychology, having been selected for their adaptive advantageousness. These 'basic' or 'primary' emotions occur universally across cultures and are even shared by all mammals.[77] This approach, often referred to as 'faculty psychology,' follows classical typological thinking. Mental states are organized as a limited number of categories, or 'natural kinds.'[78] One important representation of this approach is 'appraisal theory,' first formulated by Richard Lazarus.[79] Appraisal refers to the process of constructing emotional meaning within the relationship of the individual and their environment. Each emotion is defined by a unique relational meaning, summarizing personal harms and benefits residing in the specific 'person-environment relationship.' If someone feels that an event might harm or benefit them – relative to what they had been expecting – innate 'action tendencies' and 'coping mechanisms' are set off.

'Natural kinds' approaches have been criticised because they would not allow for enough cultural variation. Anna Wierzbicka, for example, argues that appraisal theory underestimates the problem of language. Lazarus had not properly defined central emotional phenomena such as 'anger.' Even if his interpretation did fit the use of the word anger in English, 'there would still be no reason to regard the emotion identified by this word as one that has universal significance – over and above those identified by emotion terms in other languages.'[80]

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[77] Jonathan H. Turner, *On the Origins of Human Emotions: A Sociological Inquiry into the Evolution of Human Affect* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 68-69.

[78] See also: Nico H. Frijda, *The Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[79] Richard S. Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[80] Anna Wierzbicka, 'The Relevance of Language to the Study of Emotions,' *Psychological Inquiry* 6, no. 3 (1995): 248.

Factoring in these criticisms, research on affect in IR may have proceeded too cautiously. Andrew Ross rightly asserts that emotions are composite phenomena that consist of 'various [individual] emotion types.' Ultimately, their true 'psychological dimensions' may only be accessible in 'clinical settings.' [81] Instead of researching stable and uniform emotion categories, we need to account for the way emotions circulate socially and the 'tendency for such exchanges to involve shifting mixtures of affect.'[82] Brent Sasley makes a similar point when he writes that a broader theoretical framework that would allow for more analytical rigor and wider application has not been developed, and that there was a general lack of understanding 'how states act emotionally' in IR.[83]

Strictly speaking, these authors are likely correct in assuming that we never just feel one distinct emotion, for example *just* fear *or* anger, but that our experience is always a more complex affective response, which is contingent upon and changing with the social environment. However, the observation that 'the social world of global politics is too messy for an off-the-shelf application of categories from psychology'[84] should not be taken as a reason to abandon the effort altogether. If we followed that logic, the social world as a whole could be considered too messy to be accessible through analysis. For the time being, 'off-the-shelf' categories are all that is available. Taking inspiration from mid-twentieth-century realists, I suggest that acknowledging the complexity of emotion should not bar us from calling things by their name – socially recognizable affective responses with distinct labels such as 'fear' and 'anger'. Purely for heuristic reasons, and to be able to draw on existing

[81] Andrew A. G. Ross, *Mixed Emotions: Beyond Fear and Hatred in International Conflict* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 3.
[82] Ibid., 17.
[83] Sasley, 'Theorizing States' Emotions,' 453.
[84] Ross, *Mixed Emotions: Beyond Fear and Hatred in International Conflict*, 3.

research, our framework needs to retain some distinction between archetypal emotions. To be able to say anything about affective dynamics, we cannot avoid accepting some degree of reductionism – albeit a rigorous version of it that clearly states all the theoretical propositions made.

Finally, there is the question of intentionality. Any researcher in the social sciences working on affect and emotion will inevitably have to answer how they intend to identify affective responses and distinguish between their deliberate, instrumental display and their spontaneous, unintentional expression. Only the latter category, it is assumed, would be useful in making inferences as to actors' 'true' motivations and yield insights into their decision-making process. Unfortunately, as long as political leaders are reluctant to undergo brain imaging as they go about their day, there will be no sure-fire way of telling affective phenomena apart.

IR has awarded particular attention to this distinction, while other branches of the social sciences have become wary of attempts to embed affective phenomena in causal processes. More specifically, we may identify three core areas of existing affective research in IR: scholarship focused either on the biological, psychological, and social conditions that generate affect; the action tendencies promoted by particular kinds of affective responses; and the instrumental use of affect for strategic reasons. Hall conceptualises this latter category as *emotional diplomacy* – 'coordinated state-level behaviour that explicitly and officially projects the image of a particular emotional response toward other states.'[85]

Emotions, in that view, are intentional, result from a collaborative process, and are displayed by state officials in a strategic effort to shape the other side's

[85] Todd H. Hall, *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

perception. States pursue the same goals as in rationalist theories, but the standard rules of state-level interactions are supplemented with 'social meanings, expectations, and patterns of behaviour associated with emotional responses.'[86] Hall's theory productively links three literatures – rationalist, constructivist, and psychological. Like most of the work on emotion in IR,[87] however, at its core lies a rational choice logic. The framework of affective realism presented in this thesis, in contrast, emphasises affective experience on the part of the political agent and the action tendencies that might result from particular affective responses. This is not meant as a refutation of the instrumental use of affect and emotion. In fact, as Hall and others note, emotions may be either 'emotional labour'[88] or subjective experience, and in many cases, both. Even if their display is neither intentional nor a collective effort, emotions still perform an essential communicative function, aimed at influencing others' perception and behaviour. To the extent that this thesis contests the subordination of affective displays to strategic action, it does so merely to shift the focus on the experiential aspects of affect.

The emotions of fear and anger, in particular, have certain features that make them difficult to represent within rational choice paradigms.[89] The notion that displays of anger might be useful or indeed 'rational' should not seem revolutionary to the political scientist. Anger lends credibility to statements of political operatives,

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[86] Ibid., 16.

[87] Particularly impactful contributions to studying the emotional underpinnings of rational choice (and related concepts such as signalling, perception, or motivation) have been provided, for example, by: Jonathan Mercer, 'Rationality and Psychology in International Politics,' *International Organization* 59, no. 1 (2005); Rose McDermott, 'The Feeling of Rationality: The Meaning of Neuroscientific Advances for Political Science,' *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 4 (2004).

[88] Following Arlie R. Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983).

[89] Although prospect theory has allowed for a large step forward in modelling decision-making by considering, in particular, the impact of fear (of losses). See Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, 'Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk,' *Econometrica* 47, no. 2 (1979); Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, 'Prospect Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis,' in *The International Studies Encyclopedia*, ed. Robert A. Denemark (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing, 2010).

for example, 'in conveying that a normatively significant boundary' or 'red line' has been crossed.[90] This makes anger a particularly pertinent phenomenon for the policy analyst: the experience of anger typically goes along with an urge to express it.[91] However, by working 'to construct particular issues as sensitive and volatile,' displays of anger lie 'outside the realm of standard cost-benefit calculations,' as Hall admits.[92] In politics, anger also generally encompasses an attribution of blame, which is tinged with self-serving biases and negative sentiments towards the 'other,' all of which, it can be argued, might interfere with rational choice logic. Self-deception is another consequence, as individuals tend to 'rationalize their own anger' and make it seem as if it was 'for the good.'[93] These are just some examples of experiential by-products of anger, which illustrate why it might be hard to situate emotion along a causal path. They also attest to the difficulty in determining whether their expression is strategic or spontaneous, and whether leaders present falsehoods deliberately or unintentionally.

The emotion of fear is more tenuous in the sense that its display is neither detectable, nor would it fulfil any obvious function in signalling one's intention. Yet it is undeniable that fear not only plays a crucial role in decision-making but that components of fearful displays cannot be completely removed from, or concealed in, social or strategic interaction. As Jervis indicates, when political actors attempt to shape others' 'image' of their state – in an effort to influence the other side's beliefs about how the state will likely act – these attempts tend to fail if they involve

[90] Hall, *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage*, 4.

[91] Gerben A. van Kleef et al., 'Anger in Social Conflict: Cross-Situational Comparisons and Suggestions for the Future,' *Group Decision and Negotiation* 17 (2008): 16-17.

[92] Hall, *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage*, 4.

[93] James Averill, 'Studies on Anger and Aggression: Implications for Theories of Emotion,' *American Psychologist* 38 (1983): 1150-51.

consciously hiding or suppressing one's own affective experience.[94] Similarly, psychologists such as Paul Ekman have proven that people display 'microexpressions' – emotion-specific contractions of facial muscles that last for just a split second and cannot be concealed.[95]

Aside from split-second expressions on someone's face, lower-intensity experiences that last for a longer time, such as 'conditioned fear,' may be even more relevant to political science. Conditioned fear does not subside when the ostensible threat has disappeared and may even become permanent, or at least longer-lasting than other kinds of emotional learning.[96] Individuals become more conscious of potential future threats. In addition to being worse at calculating the costs, risks, and benefits of their choices, 'the fearful' frequently fail to see how their behaviour, even if intended as defensive, might be seen as threatening – 'enhancing what is already a cognitive bias.'[97] Humans also have a tendency to categorize all the individual causes that may have evoked a fearful reaction together and treat it as one and the same thing, 'even when they are otherwise perceptually, functionally, and theoretically diverse.'[98] Loewenstein et al. surmise that our traditional 'consequentialist' models are inadequate to describe behaviour in the face of risk well, because of the

[94] See, for example Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1989), 32-34.

[95] Paul Ekman, *Emotions Revealed: Understanding Faces and Feelings* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003), 15.

[96] Gregory J. Quirk, René Garcia, and Francisco González-Lima, 'Prefrontal Mechanisms in Extinction of Conditioned Fear,' *Biological Psychiatry* 60, no. 4 (2006); Mauricio R. Delgado et al., 'Neural Circuitry Underlying the Regulation of Conditioned Fear and Its Relation to Extinction,' *Neuron* 59, no. 5 (2008).

[97] Crawford, 'Human Nature and World Politics: Rethinking "Man",' 278.

[98] Paula Niedenthal, Jamin Halberstadt, and Åse Innes-Ker, 'Emotional Response Categorization,' *Psychological Review* 106, no. 2 (1999): 338.

differences 'between the calculus of objective risk and the determinants of fear,' and the 'extent that fear does play an important part in risk-related behaviours.'[99]

To the extent that prevailing IR theories have considered the workings of affect, they have done so primarily as an extension of such traditional models. An orthodox reading of leaders' motivation and behaviour in realism emphasises egoism, a lust for power, and the benefits derived from group membership. Most of the literature treats these as inherently rationalist concepts, associated with unitary actorhood and fixed and complete preferences. This goes along with a cognitivist outlook, which focuses on factors that can be known and understood and is based on a traditional understanding of computational theories of mind.[100] This, however, is not the only possible interpretation of realist theory. The pursuit of power, when viewed through the prism of fear, is not an end in itself but a means to an end, which is survival. Thinking of assertive foreign policy action, thus, need not be 'part of a proactive strategy motivated by a lust for power and domination,' as Freyberg-Inan notes. It is just as plausible to view them 'as part of a reactive strategy, as responses to a more basic motive, which is the emotion of fear.'[101]

Traditional IR theories either ignore non-rational aspects of lived experience – anything from subtle intuitions, feelings, moods, or subconscious biases, to strongly felt convictions and passions – or integrate them as auxiliary variables. Evidently, though, these play a foundational role in risk assessment and decision-making. Genes and adaptation offer another explanation why the rational actor might fall short: instances of 'evolutionary mismatch,' in which evolved human behaviours lead to

[99] George Loewenstein, Scott Rick, and Jonathan D. Cohen, 'Neuroeconomics,' *Annual Review of Psychology* 59 (2008): 280.

[100] For a summary, see Hilary Putnam, *Mind, Language, and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 429-40.

[101] Annette Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), 3.

poor decisions in modern settings, can explain why states go to war, even though 'rational choice' should compel them to avoid escalation at all costs. Decision-makers, due to their behavioural disposition, may choose power-maximizing behaviour to dominate their adversary, irrespective of whether it is a good strategy under the circumstances.[102]

On the other side of the spectrum of IR theories, opposite of rationalist approaches, social constructivism cannot quite accommodate affect, either. Empirical evidence shows that emotions often override the staple categories of constructivist theory, such as the constraints placed on individual behaviour by sociocultural norms, identities and values.[103] It stands to reason that questions raised by traditional theories, emphasizing either material capabilities or social constructs, may put unnecessary constraints on FPA and complicate the task of integrating affect in our analytical frameworks. The issue is not 'security *or* status,' as the two concepts are – as a function of the emotionally valenced concerns underlying them – closely connected. The same goes for the purported need to confine analysis to only one level.

The classical realist answer to the agency-structure problem appears unsatisfactory at first but could present a productive approach to FPA: psychological motives shared by the individual and the state matter more than the demarcation lines between them. Similarly, with respect to the other major point of contention – distinguishing between an instrumentalist interpretation of performed emotion and emotion as an input factor in decision-making – classical realists did not see as large a discrepancy. Andrei Tsygankov rightly observes, viewing realist motives through a

[102] Dominic Johnson and Bradley Thayer, 'The Evolution of Offensive Realism,' *Politics and the Life Sciences* 35, no. 1 (2016): 18.

[103] Jonathan H. Turner, 'The Sociology of Emotions: Basic Theoretical Arguments,' *Emotion Review* 1, no. 4 (2009): 341.

constructivist lens, whether intuition or intentional display, 'both versions agree that emotions should be read in the context of international competition for power, status, and prestige.'[104]

1.4. Affective realism as a framework for analysing foreign policy

Affect shapes lived experience and has a huge impact on decision-making. When experiences and cognitive beliefs concerning risks diverge, 'emotional reactions often drive behaviour.'[105] Such findings should not be construed to suggest that decisions are always 'made on a whim.' Rather, the challenge to rationalist approaches is found in the fact that the traditional dichotomy between rational choice and 'emotionality,' whereby the term is used to denote 'irrationality,' is no longer tenable. We now know that affective responses are a central component in the decision-making process. Information must be affectively valenced to enable rational thought and decision-making.[106]

A conventional understanding of decision-making suggests that affect and emotion need to be 'overcome' to pursue one's rational interests. Emotions, as Collins asserts, are the 'common denominator of rational choice.'[107] In the same vein, good strategy requires an understanding of how emotion can shape actors' thoughts and behaviour but must not itself be based on experiential impulses.[108] However, there is another interpretation. Just as there cannot be rational thought

[104] Andrei P. Tsygankov, 'The Frustrating Partnership: Honor, Status, and Emotions in Russia's Discourses of the West,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014): 347.

[105] George Loewenstein et al., 'Risk as Feelings,' *Psychological Bulletin* 127, no. 2 (2001): 267. See also Jonathan Mercer, 'Emotional Beliefs,' *International Organization* 64, no. 1 (2010).

[106] Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York, NY: G.P. Putnam, 1994).

[107] Randall Collins, 'Emotional Energy as the Common Denominator of Rational Action,' *Rationality and Society* 5, no. 2 (1993): 9.

[108] See, for example: Robert H. Frank, *Passions within Reason: The Strategic Role of the Emotions* (New York, NY: Norton, 1988); Jonathan Mercer, 'Emotion and Strategy in the Korean War,' *International Organization* 67, no. 2 (2013).

without affect, the converse relationship is equally true: only when individuals have become cognisant of objects and events in their environment and history can they experience affect about these objects and events.[109] In fact, the generation of an affective response requires a focal point, or 'concern,' as it is known in appraisal theory.[110] The subjective importance of concerns is more variable than preferences or interests. According to Hall and Ross, concerns are 'loci of affective investment,' such as one's family or nation, the hierarchy of which changes and that may evoke a variety of different emotions depending on the situation.[111] Concerns may thus manifest themselves in a more concrete form. Specific policy goals, for example, are often indicative of underlying concerns, such as physical safety or social standing.

The theoretical framework developed and applied in this thesis is termed *affective realism*. It is informed by broader lessons derived from classical realist theory (Chapter 2) in conjunction with pertinent research in psychology, affective neuroscience, evolutionary biology, and linguistics (Chapter 3). Affective realism, the way it is used here, encompasses a number of ways for conceptualising affect, especially the primary emotions of anger and fear, in foreign policy. It describes how affective experience may impact policy-makers both at crucial decision-points and across extended timespans. The framework consists of three dimensions termed *appraisal*, *action tendencies*, and *attitude*, representing the main mechanisms through which the lived experience of leaders and elites is shaped by affect. In other words, the three dimensions are ways in which we can conceptualise different aspects of affect that bear on policy-makers. These ways of thinking about affect function differently, at different times, but may be interconnected – either mutually

[109] Turner, 'The Sociology of Emotions: Basic Theoretical Arguments,' 342.

[110] See the explanation in this section and Richard S. Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[111] Hall and Ross, 'Affective Politics after 9/11,' 854.

reinforcing or mitigating each other. Affective realism can be considered successful if it manages to produce a set of plausible (counter-)claims in FPA against which other conceptual lenses can be set.

The term affective realism, an amalgamation of the neuropsychological phenomenon of *affect* and classical *realist* theory, seemed an obvious choice for this framework and methodological approach. It ought to be pointed out that affective realism also designates an established concept in neuroscience, developed by Lisa Feldman Barrett.[112] Part of Feldman Barrett's broader theoretical framework on the workings of the brain, affective realism refers to a tendency of a person's feelings to influence their actual perceptual experience. There are some similarities between the two frameworks, which will be discussed in Chapter 3. Most importantly, both emphasise the predictive capacity of the brain – as opposed to the traditional understanding of the brain as a reactive organ. As evolved hominids, we have learned from previous experience when it might be advantageous to feel a certain way – anxious, terrified, angry, or enraged; or when it might be better to involve cognition to 'cope' with our feelings and produce a different affective response more suitable for the situation. Some of our experiences, Lazarus suggests, 'are essentially anticipatory, whereas others are reactions to the outcomes of an adaptationally relevant encounter.'[113] By and large, however, the way in which the term affective realism is used in this thesis should be distinguished from Feldman Barrett's theory, as an integrated, stand-alone framework for analysing foreign policy.

The first dimension of affective realism, appraisal, encompasses the central mechanism around which the framework is organised. Based primarily on appraisal

[112] Lisa Feldman Barrett, *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain* (London: Pan Books, 2018).
[113] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 52.

theories of emotion,[114] the basic premise is that emotions are adaptive responses indicative of the appraisal of environmental conditions for the individual's well-being. Well-being depends on whether individuals consider objects or events as being conducive to or obstructing their concerns. Concerns might revolve around personal or national status, values, or more materially, the physical safety of leaders and their families. Leaders and policy-makers will ask themselves whether any actions taken by their counterparts abroad might interfere with the attainability of their goals relative to their most important concerns. This sequencing of the affective process, in this and across the other dimensions, is primarily a didactive device and not meant to reflect exactly what goes through decision-makers' minds at any given time.

While appraisal colours *how* individuals think, action tendencies shape not only *what* they think but also what they wish to happen next. Action tendencies form the conceptual link between cognitive-affective appraisal and a motivational, or physiological response. Generally, action tendencies consist of standard response patterns that evolved through natural selection. These are often characterized as an automatic, non-deliberate, or even primitive urge toward action. Because such urges – most notoriously, to fight, flee, or attack – are often incompatible with social norms, action tendencies are balanced by coping mechanisms. These draw on the assessment of different 'coping options' – 'what is possible, likely to be effective in the specific context, and compatible with social and personal standards of conduct,'[115] all in an effort to (re-)introduce the desired affective state.

[114] Ibid.; Jonathan H. Turner, *Human Emotions: A Sociological Theory* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007).

[115] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 114.

Finally, attitude, is built over time. Individuals have a predisposed state of mind regarding their concerns – they prefer particular states of the world. If a valued concern is impacted and the perceived cause persists, the experience may be transformed into a more permanent disposition, or attitude,[116] which determines the quality of subsequent interactions and policies. The attitude dimension also encompasses another function of affect: affirmation. It denotes ways in which affect seeks to rationalise itself. Affirmation helps to make sense of a particular state of the world and primes the individual for taking subsequent action. It is the affirmative function of emotion that allows us to 'tie our hands' in order to solve problems that self-interested decision-makers cannot solve.[117] Affirmation may also alter the character of the emotional experience in ways that make it more socially acceptable. Lastly, affirmative tendencies can provide advance justification of responsive actions. One of the most important consequences of the emotion of anger, for example, is a tendency to 'rationalise' it and make it seem that being angry is for one's own good.[118]

There are multiple connections and feedback mechanisms between the three dimensions. Across all three, I hold that some emotions have universal characteristics: primary emotions, such as fear or anger, were selected for due to their adaptive advantageousness, and elicit specific action tendencies. These are not always acted upon (one might even argue they are rarely acted upon). Some manifestations of affect might, however, leave more visible traces in discourse and behaviour: anger, for example, encompasses an attribution of blame and is associated

[116] Richard M. Perloff, *The Dynamics of Persuasion: Communication and Attitudes in the Twenty-First Century*, Seventh ed. (London: Routledge, 2020).
[117] Frank, *Passions within Reason: The Strategic Role of the Emotions*.
[118] Averill, 'Studies on Anger and Aggression: Implications for Theories of Emotion.'

with tendencies to underestimate risk and an urge to attack the source or causer of the negative feeling.

1.5. Research design

Using process tracing and discourse analysis with a focus on affective expression, I identify displays of affect and emotion in interactions between Russia, the US, and Europe. Evidently, feelings are difficult to measure. Some evidence is provided by meticulous analysis of the factual account – apparent changes in officials' assessments, risk-taking behaviour, or patterns of justification. However, as with other psychological approaches to IR, empirical evidence is often inconclusive. In contrasting and complementing differing perspectives on foreign policy, necessary evidence is thought to be just as useful. It may be more conducive to think of the application of affective realism as a series of 'hoop tests,'[119] which showcase its plausibility while not discounting or disproving other theories.

Eckstein refers to this type of case study as a 'plausibility probe.' Plausibility probes are intended to gauge whether a case can be explained by the theory, thereby establishing whether a 'theoretical construct is worth considering at all.'[120] Accordingly, the argument advanced in subsequent chapters is not that rationalist or constructivist models have failed to explain the gradual downturn in Russian-Western relations or individual policy decisions taken by the Russian leadership. In fact, in many instances, the science on emotion corroborates the assumptions made by other theories.[121] Instead, the objective is to demonstrate the usefulness of

[119] See Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, Strategies for Social Inquiry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 17.

[120] Harry Eckstein, *Regarding Politics: Essays on Political Theory, Stability, and Change* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 148-49.

[121] For example, see the discussion in Chapter 4 on seemingly irrational behavioural patterns, which may be displayed to send 'costly signals.'

emotion as a supplementary lens on foreign policy, connecting capabilities, ideas, state power,[122] and the individual.

In line with this methodological approach, the choice of a multipart single-country case reduces the problem of comparability.[123] Affect is crucially dependent on history, political culture, and language. Having to account for variance in these categories across states in addition to changing situational contexts would further complicate the task of evaluating general claims about the role of affect. A single country case does not absolve the analyst from not only carefully describing the changing global and regional environment but also elaborating on the idiosyncrasies of individual actors, their interpersonal relationships, and differences in governance and the exertion of state power over time. Most important among the personal-structural changes, the centralisation of foreign policy-making under Vladimir Putin has left the 'transmission belt' between individual motivation and state behaviour operating with much less domestic interference than under Yeltsin's disintegrating leadership.

There are a number of reasons why Russian politics, generally, constitutes a suitable object of analysis for an approach focused on affect. These will be examined in more detail in Chapter 3. For one thing, it has been suggested that Russian language and political culture are particularly emotionally expressive. The 'vertical of power' simplifies the task of representing executive structures and outlining the micro-foundations of the elite's shared identity. Conversely, the poor track record of prevailing IR theory and theory-driven FPA on Russian-Western relations calls for

[122] Here I am referring to the concept of state power in the neoclassical realist literature. See Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

[123] See George and Bennett on the 'congruence method.' Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

the application of a 'first-image' view. The theory suggests that fear for regime survival, which goes hand in hand with elites' more visceral fears concerning their personal safety and well-being, and internalised anger over perceived status denial are persistent drivers of Russian foreign policy in relation to Europe and the US.

A longer observation period does put some constraints on the level of detail: space does not allow for an exhaustive treatment of the military history of the Yugoslav Wars, the diplomatic struggle over European missile defence, or a detailed chronology of the Colour Revolutions. The key application for emotion in foreign policy is not to speculate which foreign policy decisions were made 'in the heat of the moment,' as some suggest the annexation of Crimea was,[124] but to study the role of affective attitudes over a longer time horizon. By examining the nature of the Russian-Western relationship between 1999 and 2014, discursive patterns can be collated with significant events or changes in domestic politics and tracked more methodically. Beginning the investigation in the late 1990s enables us to isolate, at least for one major case, the effects of affect from the personality of Vladimir Putin: responding to the NATO intervention in Kosovo fell to an institutionally, physically, and mentally impaired Boris Yeltsin. Decision-making power was not as centralised in the Kremlin as it would be under Putin, domestic political structures were still in transformation, and relations with the West were still – at least on the surface – more amicable than at any point after the 2003 US invasion of Iraq.

Primary source material consists of official foreign policy doctrine, press releases, transcripts of speeches and interviews and, to the extent available, officials' self-reports. It has been accessed through governmental websites or online databases

[124] Danila Galperovich, 'Eksperty: Reshenie Putina Anneksirovat Krym bylo Impulsivnym,' *Golos Ameriki*, 10 March 2015, http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/content/dg-putin-crimea-experts/2674973.html.

– primarily Integrum World Wide, which provides the largest digital archive on Russian-language print media. Where no public URL or alternative source is provided for Russian newspaper articles or television interviews, the content was accessed through Integrum.

Transliterations from the Cyrillic into the Latin alphabet follow the Library of Congress system. Unless otherwise noted, all transliterations from Russian sources were done by the author. In cases where an alternative spelling is very common and familiar from use in English-language media, the simplified version is used (e.g. Yeltsin instead of Yel'tsin, Dmitry instead of Dmitriy, Alexei instead of Aleksey). When citing from non-Russian language secondary literature, the style of transliteration used in that source was maintained. When quoting from speeches, interviews, or press releases of government officials, the official English translation was used wherever provided. Most speeches of Vladimir Putin, for example, are available in English through official channels.

The lack of access to internal memoranda or other 'non-official' sources clearly presents a challenge to an empirical investigation of relatively recent events. This is on top of the obvious limitation that even if recorded, one could never be sure of leaders' thoughts and feelings. This, however, should not preclude attempts at micro-level explanations of Russian behaviour. Akin to research into identity or preferences, a lot may be gained from applying the lessons of different branches of the social and life sciences to observable state behaviour.

Status denial, this thesis argues, is one of the main reasons for the downward trend in Russian-Western relations. Resentment, a low-intensity variant of anger due to Western denial of its great-power status, had started to build well before Vladimir Putin took office. In the mid-1990s, it became consensus among the elite that

'greatness' was to be the overarching vision for Russia's standing in the world, and the only possible response to the humiliation that was the collapse of the Soviet Union.[125] Yevgeny Primakov turned the vision into doctrine by formulating an 'active foreign policy:' Russia's economic and material weakness was to be countered by a boost in national self-esteem and frequent reference to its great-power status.

Beyond vicarious identification with one's own state, the role of emotion in foreign policy involves the reduction of the 'other side' to a simpler affective category, often irrespective of who its individual agents are. Lopez, McDermott, and Bang-Peterson refer to this as the 'unitary actor heuristic.' For reasons of 'cognitive simplicity,' human brains have evolved to represent 'groups as if they were a special category of individual, relatively unstable and with a relatively short shadow of the future.'[126] Affectively charged attitudes are persistent and colour expectations of future relations with the other side. In some cases, that anthropomorphic view overpowers actual leadership changes, however consequential. Despite diplomatic initiatives and confidence-building measures surrounding the US-Russian 'reset,' for example, Vladimir Putin played down hopes for an improvement in relations: 'the US is a very big ship and cannot change its course dramatically in a few months.' Besides, Obama would only be around for 'eight years maximum.'[127]

Affective realism is also predicated on the view that the relationship between science and IR theory need not be one-directional. Biology and psychology can point

[125] Dmitri Trenin, 'Russia's Post-Imperial Condition,' *Carnegie Moscow Center*, 18 October 2011, https://carnegie.ru/2011/10/18/russia-s-post-imperial-condition-pub-45753.

[126] Anthony C. Lopez, Rose McDermott, and Michael Bang Petersen, 'States in Mind: Evolution, Coalitional Psychology, and International Politics,' *International Security* 36, no. 2 (2011): 67.

[127] Ellen Barry, 'Putin Sounds Warning on Arms Talks,' *The New York Times*, 29 December 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/30/world/europe/30russia.html.

us to those aspects of human nature – behavioural dispositions, affective responses, reflexes, perceptions, or intuitions, to name but a few widely-studied phenomena – that may be most consequential in determining the course of international politics. IR scholars for some time now have recognised this need to re-engage with the biological and psychological particulars of being human and their implications for the social world.[128] One strand of research that bears particular relevance to the project at hand builds on evolutionary theory. Taking its insights on biology and psychology to politics affirms classical realism's choice of core features of human nature: self-interest, social stratification, and 'groupish' behaviour are the most prominent among social animals.[129] Even a structural theory such as offensive realism may be founded on assumptions about human nature, as Bradley Thayer and Dominic Johnson suggest. The reason lies in anarchy, not as a structural cause of state behaviour, but through the way in which it shaped humans over time. Anarchy is a good approximation for the conditions in the prehistoric environment in which human brains and behaviour evolved.[130]

To sum up, foreign policy involves a whole host of different actors, embedded in a range of different structures. 'Their interaction is a dynamic process, leading to the constant evolution of both actors and structures.'[131] Due to the complexity of this interaction and a whole host of associated methodological and epistemological challenges, scholars have become wary of attempts to combine actor and structure-based explanations. We 'lack a self-evident way to conceptualise these entities and

[128] For an introduction to this research agenda, see Chris Brown and Ken Booth, 'Structural Realism, Classical Realism and Human Nature,' *International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2009); Crawford, 'Human Nature and World Politics: Rethinking "Man".'

[129] Johnson and Thayer, 'The Evolution of Offensive Realism,' 11.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Christopher Hill, *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 28.

their relationship,' as Wendt puts it.[132] Theoretical integration, Hudson agrees, 'remains a promise unfulfilled for the time being.'[133] If there is a division between IR and FPA, it may have pushed IR further towards structural-systemic theories, while FPA has retained its preoccupation with behaviourist approaches. What has been called for, and what this project aims to contribute to, is a 'rapprochement of the sub-fields to inspire integrative frameworks that take account of both psychological and structural factors to be able to actually explain and predict the behaviour of international actors.'[134]

1.6. Thesis outline

Chapter 2 looks to classical realism for lessons on the role of affect in politics. It discusses how different sub-schools within the realist paradigm approach FPA, the assumptions they make regarding human nature, and the propositions they have formed on the individual, the state, and the international system. Exploring the works of classical authors like Thucydides and Machiavelli up to twentieth-century realists like Hans Morgenthau, the chapter is structured around five central issues: the levels of analysis problem, the definition of power and status, the question how to theorise affect across political actors and entities, the classification and choice of emotion(s), and classical realists' approach to applying the scientific method to the political world. These five issues have constituted the bulk of criticism of classical realist theory, and they continue to pose challenges to contemporary theorising and analysis. Classical realist scholarship converges on some broader insights that have informed the development of the affective framework in the subsequent chapter and guided the

[132] Wendt, 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory,' 338.
[133] Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory*, 184.
[134] Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature*, 173.

task of tracing affect in decision-making processes in the empirical cases. Among these insights: realists are adamant about the need to clearly separate analysis from policy advice. Far from 'cold-hearted' power politics, their policy prescriptions often build on ethical considerations. Even though politics may be governed by 'objective laws,' these might not be accessible in their entirety through analysis. The levels of analysis are more interlaced than in structural theory. As Morgenthau put it, a nation is but an 'abstraction from a number of individuals.'[135] In classical realists' view, the state is a synthetic product of the psychological needs and expressions of its subjects.

Building on this set of general IR-theoretical principles derived from classical realism, Chapter 3 turns to mid-range theorising on affect and emotion, drawing on the pertinent psychological, sociological and psycho-linguistic literature. Together, these theoretical explorations lay the foundation for the development of the conceptual framework of affective realism and how it is to be applied to the empirical cases. Chiefly, it relies on Richard Lazarus' cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotions, as well as Jonathan Turner's work, which is underpinned by evolutionary theory. The basic premise is that emotions are adaptive responses indicative of the appraisal of environmental conditions for the individual's well-being. The framework consists of three dimensions – cognitive appraisal, action tendencies, and affective attitude – to categorise components of affective responses and guide the task of identifying representations of emotional meaning in the source material.

Chapters 4 to 7 make up the empirical module of the thesis.[136] Chapter 4 analyses Russian policy towards Europe and the US during the late 1990s, focusing

[135] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 117.

[136] For detailed considerations regarding the choice and partition of 'within-cases,' see the concluding section of Chapter 3.

on the response to NATO intervention over the Kosovo crisis in 1999. The behaviour and rhetoric of Russian officials around the turn of the millennium is laden with emotive displays of anger over the perceived denial of its great-power status and fear for the territorial integrity and political stability of the country. Chapter 5 follows with a longitudinal study of the evolution of Russian foreign policy during Vladimir Putin's first two terms as President, which was marked by a change in the affective attitude of Russian elites from 'resentment' to 'contempt.'

The empirical analysis continues with two chapters focusing on the months surrounding the Russian-Georgian war (2008) and the annexation of Crimea (2014). Both episodes mark a watershed in Russian-Western relations but could also be viewed as delayed consequences of prior developments, for example: alleged Western involvement in the Colour Revolutions (2003-2005), US plans for a new missile defence system in Europe (announced in 2007), the UNSC resolution on Libya (2011), criticisms of the 2011 Russian Parliamentary elections, and both open and covert American support for the Euromaidan movement (2013). Some of these incidents had indisputable ramifications for Russian security or bear a direct relation to the post-Soviet geographic space, while others do not. What they all share is their impact on affectively valenced concerns. Cumulatively, they contributed to the formation – or affirmation, depending on one's initial views – of a negative affective disposition of Russian elites towards Europe and the US.

2. ROOTS IN HUMAN NATURE: REALIST LESSONS ON PSYCHOLOGY

This chapter is organised around a set of issues that arise when analysts attempt to apply theory to complex, real-world scenarios in the field of FPA. One of the biggest challenges lies in the abundance of different actors and structures and in the difficulty of finding an explanatory paradigm that accommodates both. We know that 'their interaction is a dynamic process, leading to the constant evolution of both actors and structures'[137] but still lack 'a self-evident way to conceptualize these entities and their relationship.'[138] Notable representatives of FPA have thus conceded that theoretical integration between actors and structures 'remains a promise unfulfilled for the time being.'[139] Even within approaches ostensibly focused on single actors and their interactions, deep divisions between rationalist, behaviourist and interpretivist explanations exist.

Numerous cues, I argue, can be found in the writings of classical realists, who were centrally concerned with the social implications of individual motivation. Especially mid-twentieth century classical realists, such as Hans Morgenthau, explicitly addressed what connects 'human nature' to political theory and analysis. While all realists believe that, ultimately, the distribution of power between states determines their scope of action, these scholars – in contrast to later structural realists – envisaged no 'smoothly functioning mechanical transmission belt' between system

[137] Christopher Hill, *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 28.

[138] Alexander E. Wendt, 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory,' *International Organization* 41, no. 3 (1987): 338.

[139] Valerie M. Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 184.

structure and actor behaviour.[140] They maintained that the international distribution of power can drive countries' behaviour 'only by influencing the decisions of flesh and blood officials.'[141]

Before proceeding, two premises around which this theoretical survey is constructed ought to be substantiated. First, why a focus on *individual human agency* holds promise for FPA and social science more broadly. Second, why *realist thought* – and within that paradigm, classical scholarship in particular – offers the best 'way in' to derive lessons for FPA.

2.1. The changing view of human nature in realist theory

This attempt at strengthening the theoretical foundations for FPA takes as its vantage point the smallest social unit – the individual. To use the shorthand introduced by Kenneth Waltz,[142] we are dealing with 'first image' theory. With his main work, *Theory of International Politics*,[143] Waltz initiated a paradigm shift in the focus of IR theorists and analysts – away from the first to the second and especially third images. Structural realists like Waltz maintain that many of the large phenomena studied – most importantly the onset of war – can be explained satisfactorily through structure alone. As Wolfers points out, if a house is on fire, one does not need to know much about the varying 'dispositions' of its inhabitants to expect that they all 'would feel compelled to run for the exits.' Waltz himself suggested that neorealism is of limited use to foreign policy analysis. Structural

[140] Aaron L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895-1905* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 13.

[141] Gideon Rose, 'Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,' *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 158; Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976).

[142] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1959).

[143] *Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

balance of power models cannot tell us how foreign policy decisions are made; in other words, 'international politics is not foreign policy.'[144] This was the reason why structural models sometimes fail to explain why particular wars occur, even though it would be in the rational interest of the states involved to avoid them. In light of these early debates, it may seem surprising that most realist contributions to FPA follow a neorealist template and focus on the third image.

Structural realism constitutes a momentous contribution to IR. However, as Waltz himself maintained, the utility of his neorealism to students of foreign policy is limited. A theory of international politics might be good at explaining 'the constraints that confine all states,' but cannot account for 'why state X made a certain move last Tuesday'.[145] Despite this caveat, many that followed in this tradition applied neorealism to foreign policy cases nonetheless.[146] In doing so, some scholars might have contributed to the wrong impression that realists do not care about domestic or psychological factors, because structural theory alone can explain foreign policy.[147] Stephen Walt offers a more accurate reading of Waltz: 'despite his emphasis on the autonomous role of system-level forces,' he argues, 'Waltz' "neorealist" theory still relied on unit-level factors to account for the security problem.' One needed a 'separate theory of "foreign policy,"' which incorporates unit-level factors, 'to fully explain why states in anarchy are insecure.'[148] Waltz essentially makes the case for an *Innenpolitik* approach to FPA, paying close

[144] See 'International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy,' *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (1996).
[145] *Theory of International Politics*, 121-22.
[146] Most notably, see Waltz' exchange with Elman on this subject: Colin Elman, 'Horses for Courses: Why Not Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy?,' *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (1996).
[147] Robert W. Tucker, 'The Radical Critique Assessed,' in *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy*, ed. Robert W. Tucker, Studies in International Affairs (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971).
[148] Stephen M. Walt, 'Realism and Security,' in *The International Studies Encyclopedia*, ed. Robert A. Denemark (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 3.

attention to how systemic imperatives transmit through the domestic level in the making of foreign policy.[149]

Despite Waltz' systemic orientation, much of realist theorising, whether structural or classical, may really be based on assumptions about human nature. Some have already made this or similar arguments in a well-founded manner: 'realist international-political theorizing is necessarily human nature-based international-political theorizing.'[150] Its preoccupation with states as the main actor had merely disguised these foundations.[151] It is also noteworthy that the centrepiece of Morgenthau's classical theory, his definition of power in terms of innate human nature, which was underpinned by a distrust of scientific rationalism, was left almost unscathed by the 'behaviourist challenge' of the 1960s and 70s. As Carlsnaes argues, critics of realism never challenged its underlying assumptions, but only its methodology.[152]

Even structural realists have built their theories on implicit assumptions about behavioural motives. As Annette Freyberg-Inan argues, 'assumptions about the motives of political actors, which represent beliefs about individual psychology, form the ontological foundation of all realist theories, even those which, like the structural systemic realism of Waltz, attempt to avoid all concern with how

[149] Waltz' approach to foreign policy analysis is exemplified in Kenneth N. Waltz, *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics: The American and British Experience* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Co., 1967).

[150] Robert Schuett, 'Classical Realism, Freud and Human Nature in International Relations,' *History of the Human Sciences* 23, no. 2 (2010): 21.

[151] Annette Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), 3; Dominic Johnson and Bradley Thayer, 'The Evolution of Offensive Realism,' *Politics and the Life Sciences* 35, no. 1 (2016).

[152] Walter Carlsnaes, 'Foreign Policy,' in *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons (London: SAGE, 2013), 302.

individual actors come to make their policy choices.'[153] The structural realists' preoccupation with nation-states had obscured the role of these beliefs on human nature. Therefore, 'the relationships between the central motivating forces of fear, self-interest, and the desire for power have not been systematically specified by realist theory. Neither has the degree of influence that the operation of these motives, as compared to that of constraints imposed by the environment, is expected to have on foreign policy decisions.'[154]

Since the early 1990s, there has been growing disenchantment with rationalist epistemology, especially with structural realist theory. Its representatives struggled to make sense of the peaceful resolution of the Cold War; they could not account for the influence of different regime types; and in general, the demand for further structural sub-theories seemed exhausted. Everything useful about structural realism had already been said, as Randall Schweller suggests – 'there is no way to improve or amend Waltz's theory without violating its structural-systemic nature and, in doing so, confounding the theory's highly deductive and internally consistent logic.'[155] To account for more variance in state behaviour, theorists sought to incorporate the impact of factors like institutions, state-society relations, culture and identity formation, or perception in structural realism.[156] To some, however, the introduction of unit-level factors or state motivations robs the theory of its 'determinate and predictive character that seemed to give the pure power hypothesis its particular

[153] Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature*, 3.

[154] Ibid., 4.

[155] Randall L. Schweller, 'The Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism,' in *Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field*, ed. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press, 2003), 313.

[156] On the intellectual development of structural realism and the ways in which it has progressively incorporated lower-level factors, see Patrick James, *International Relations and Scientific Progress: Structural Realism Reconsidered*, International Relations & Scientific Progress (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2002).

value.'[157] It might seem that contemporary realism leaves us with two equally unattractive options – either the 'indeterminate and highly abstract assumptions of structural realism' or the 'context-specific *ad hoc* analyses of neoclassical and postclassical realism.'[158]

Neoclassical realists[159] claim that we can have our cake and eat it too. The sub-school purports to be a 'realist theory for the foreign policy analyst,'[160] reflecting 'a sustained effort on the part of a new generation of scholars to gain the analytical benefits of realist theory without falling prey to its potentially misleading over-generalization.'[161] Neoclassical realism does not rely solely on material power and brings in intervening variables like domestic politics and even social constructivist categories such as ideology, prestige, and social norms. Its most important contribution to the realist canon lies in its dismissal of the – often implicitly made – assumption that states can reach, through rational calculation, an accurate assessment of the distribution of power in the international system and act on it.

By specifying the interconnectedness of domestic and international politics and emphasizing the need to study actor's motives in the context of time and place,

[157] Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), 86.

[158] Anders Wivel, 'Explaining Why State X Made a Certain Move Last Tuesday: The Promise and Limitations of Realist Foreign Policy Analysis,' *Journal of International Relations and Development* 8, no. 4 (2005): 356.

[159] For an overview of neoclassical realism: Rose, 'Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy.'; Randall Schweller, 'The Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism,' in *Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field*, ed. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003); Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, and Steven E. Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016); Gustav Meibauer et al., 'Forum: Rethinking Neoclassical Realism at Theory's End,' *International Studies Review* (2020)..

[160] William C. Wohlforth, 'Realism and Foreign Policy,' in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, ed. Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Timothy Dunne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 46.

[161] Ibid., 36.

neoclassical realism has made a vital contribution to theory-driven FPA.[162] In terms of its fundamental logic, however, the neoclassical approach remains structural. Critics have charged it, therefore, for giving up 'generality and predictive power' in exchange for a 'gain in descriptive accuracy and policy relevance.'[163] Its proponents counter that choosing between parsimony and contextual depth is not a trade-off, but a matter of stages. Most neoclassical realists suggest that foreign policy is determined, above all, by a country's place in the international system – its material power position relative to other states. Having established that position, the analyst would then incorporate variables at the domestic and individual levels in order to be able to explain how similarly powerful countries can have different foreign policies. Case studies, therefore, follow a two-step approach: first, applying structural realist assumptions, and second, testing whether the these hold up with the help of unit-level variables.

Responding to charges of 'ad-hocism,'[164] key representatives of neoclassical realism fine-tuned the theoretical framework, its assumptions, and methodology.[165] They detail and delimit the range of unit-level intervening variables employed by analysts. Among the four classes of intervening variables, 'leader images' is probably closest to expressing the ambition of classical theorists in modern social scientific terms, introducing a range of constraints on information-processing.[166] Maintaining primarily a systemic vantage point, however, neoclassical analyses also

[162] For a comprehensive survey of neoclassical theorising, situating its contributions within realist thought more broadly: Annette Freyberg-Inan, Ewan Harrison, and Patrick James, *Rethinking Realism in International Relations: Between Tradition and Innovation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

[163] Stephen M. Walt, 'The Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition,' in *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner (New York, NY: Norton, 2002), 211.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*.

[166] The four classes of intervening variables are (1) leader images, (2) strategic culture, (3) domestic institutions, and (4) state-society relations. Ibid., ch. 3.

adopt a 'cognitivist' outlook, which focuses on factors that can be known and understood and is based on traditional computational theories of mind.[167] Other aspects of lived experience – anything from intuitions, moods, or subconscious biases, to strongly felt convictions – are not considered in a systematic way. These phenomena indisputably play a huge role in risk assessment and decision-making, though. While the integration of advanced psychological models such as prospect theory[168] allows for a more accurate representation of individual experience, the treatment of affect in neoclassical realism remains auxiliary to the base assumption of rational choice. Deviations or cognitive distortions are only drawn upon to explain variance in a system of 'bounded rationality.'

In contrast, classical theorists chose a different route to incorporate variables across levels of analysis. As Sten Rynning and Stefano Guzzini suggest, their theories allow 'for more common sense and hence variety' when theorising state behaviour.[169] The psychological micro-foundations of classical realism, particularly pertaining to the impact of emotions on decision-makers, are an underexploited resource for theorists and foreign policy analysts. Rather than using these foundations to patch up holes in structural theory, they may be thought of as ontological basis for realist theory, engaging with which is a useful undertaking by itself.

Different things can be meant by the term 'classical realism', which is why its scope in the context of this review ought to be briefly outlined. Trying to categorize

[167] Hilary Putnam, *Mathematics, Matter, and Method*, Second ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[168] Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, *Balancing Risks: Great Power Intervention in the Periphery*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

[169] Sten Rynning and Stefano Guzzini, 'Realism and Foreign Policy Analysis,' *Copenhagen Peace Research Institute* 41 (2001), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237465426_Realism_and_Foreign_Policy_Analysis.

classical realist thought, Doyle distinguishes between 'fundamentalism,' which goes back to Machiavelli and gives primacy to the *ambition* of individuals; Hobbes' 'structuralism,' which introduced the systemic anarchy of the 'state of nature,' i.e. the external conditions faced by the individual; and lastly, 'constitutionalism,' which emphasizes Rousseau's work on state-society relations.[170] The roots of all three strands can be found in Thucydides' 'complex' realism.' It is important to note, however, that Thucydides was an historian and his primary ambition was to produce an accurate account of particular events, not to develop theory. By following rigorous standards, he sought for his narrations to be evidence-based and impartial. In that way, his analyses of historical developments followed the principle of causation that is characteristic of modern political science. It also becomes clear from his writing that Thucydides views human nature – emotions such as fear and anger, as well as an unwavering self-interest – as the central driver of relations between states. The assumptions he made and the positions of central characters he gives voice to thus correspond to what later became 'political realist' theory.

Apart from the classics themselves, there is much to build on. Recent years have seen renewed interest in classical realism, especially the work of Hans Morgenthau. The product of this 'classical turn' is a plethora of (re)interpretations of foundational texts. Richard Ned Lebow, for example, offers a reading of Thucydides, Clausewitz, and Morgenthau that connects domestic and international politics. His *Tragic Vision* seems to exaggerate realists' concern with ethical conduct and shared interests, however, and essentially reformulates the paradigm in social constructivist

[170] Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company, 1998).

terms.[171] Other authors have also accentuated early realists' focus on moral action.[172] Jütersonke points to the engagement of classical realists with ethical questions and explores some of the reasons why their writings have gained popularity over structural theory.[173] Solomon draws connections between love and power in Morgenthau's writings,[174] others emphasize the influence Max Weber,[175] Friedrich Nietzsche,[176] or Sigmund Freud[177] had on him. Scheuerman highlights the radical agenda of twentieth century classical realists for international reform,[178] and Steele reflects on the 'reflexive turn' in contemporary reinventions of realism itself.[179]

'There is no simple, straightforward classical realism,' Rose writes. 'Rather, the term covers a host of authors who differ greatly from one another in assumptions, objectives, and methodologies (…).'[180] Indeed, the increasing array of interpretations of, and variations on classical realist theory speak to the futility of attempting to break the paradigm down to a set of key propositions or principles. What seems more promising is to explore common ontological and epistemological foundations of these texts, given that all – in one way or another – hark back to the concept of

[171] Richard Ned Lebow, 'Thucydides the Constructivist,' *American Political Science Review* 95, no. 3 (2001); *The Tragic Vision of Politics: Ethics, Interests, and Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[172] William Bain, 'Deconfusing Morgenthau: Moral Inquiry and Classical Realism Reconsidered,' *Review of International Studies* 26, no. 3 (2000); Michael C. Williams, 'Why Ideas Matter in International Relations: Hans Morgenthau, Classical Realism, and the Moral Construction of Power Politics,' *International Organization* 58, no. 4 (2004).

[173] Oliver Jütersonke, 'Morgenthau and the Return to Ethics in a Realist Theory of Power Politics,' *Cooperation and Conflict* 41, no. 4 (2006).

[174] Ty Solomon, 'Human Nature and the Limits of the Self: Hans Morgenthau on Love and Power,' *International Studies Review* 14, no. 2 (2012).

[175] Stephen Turner and George Mazur, 'Morgenthau as a Weberian Methodologist,' *European Journal of International Relations* 15, no. 3 (2009).

[176] Ulrik Enemark Petersen, 'Breathing Nietzsche's Air: New Reflections on Morgenthau's Concepts of Power and Human Nature,' *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 24, no. 1 (1999).

[177] Robert Schuett, *Political Realism, Freud, and Human Nature in International Relations: The Resurrection of the Realist Man*, Palgrave Macmillan Series on the History of International Thought (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[178] William E. Scheuerman, 'The (Classical) Realist Vision of Global Reform,' *International Theory* 2, no. 2 (2010).

[179] Brent J. Steele, 'Eavesdropping on Honored Ghosts: From Classical to Reflexive Realism,' *Journal of International Relations and Development* 10, no. 3 (2007).

[180] Rose, 'Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,' 153.

human nature. This exploration will be structured around five fundamental issues: the levels of analysis problem, the definition of power and status, the 'scaling up' of affectivity, the classification and choice of emotion(s), and the accessibility of the political world to scientific method. These five continue to pose challenges to theory building and analysis in IR. As will become evident, there is some overlap between them. The question of scaling up emotion, for example, pertains directly to the levels of analysis. The matter of applying scientific methods in IR touches on all five, not least on the classification of emotion.

Even more relevant to the topic at hand, the five issue areas have been the peg on which many criticisms directed at classical theory have been hung. It should be worthwhile to review, therefore, how classical authors have dealt with them or might address them, and whether there are lessons for the discipline at large or for the enterprise of FPA. The primary author reviewed here is Hans Morgenthau, as he takes the clearest and most comprehensive position on the core issues considered. Also, in many ways, Morgenthau's magnum opus, *Politics Among Nations* may be considered the culmination of classical realist theory – synthesizing, clarifying, and contextualizing many of the principles put forward by his predecessors. Aspects of the work of Thucydides, Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, Carl von Clausewitz, E. H. Carr, and Reinhold Niebuhr will also be referenced.

2.2. The levels of analysis

Classical realists were centrally concerned with the functioning of the mind, what constitutes 'human nature,' and how it might translate into laws of political life. Philosophically, we may trace the concept of human nature back to Greek thought and Plato's tripartite theory of the soul, or *psyche*, consisting of a logical, spirited,

and appetitive part. It was adopted by his student, Aristotle, who organised the three parts hierarchically: at the most primordial level lies the self-interest motive, or appetite, which promotes behaviour that fulfils bodily desires, maximises wealth, and is targeted at the comforts and joys of life. The self-esteem or status motive has a more competitive, socially constructed dimension, and has the individual strive for the maximisation of honour and recognition by other members of society, while minimising the feeling of shame or failure. Reason is the calculating part of the soul, curtailing the other two motives and enabling decision-making and choice. While the self-interest drive ensures short-time pleasure and the fulfilment of vital needs, and status targets a healthy congruence between one's self-esteem and standing in society, reason is to make sure the two are kept in balance, ultimately ensuring a meaningful, rewarding life. Appetite and spirit were akin to the horses of a chariot, Aristotle suggested, and 'pulled' human motivation. To rein in the two forces and steer the cart, however, one also needed a charioteer – reason.

Thucydides, in breaking with the mythological tradition that characterised the writing of his time, shared this preoccupation with human motivation. Because his description of the conflict between Athens and Sparta in the *History of the Peloponnesian War* was also intended to improve objectivity and accuracy, he is regarded the first 'scientific historian.'[181] His *History* does not offer a general theory of IR. Nonetheless, he is often regarded as the 'founding father' of the discipline, because his historical account contains two important elements of realist thought: first, systematic suggestions of the causes of war, and second, a portrayal of human nature and the resulting nature of interstate relations as expressed in the speeches of

[181] Charles Norris Cochrane, *Thucydides and the Science of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929).

the Athenians.[182] His meticulous rendition of historical speeches, in which the main actors expound the reasons for their decisions, is key to reconstruct the causes of the war and the turns it took, and thus carries vital lessons for political psychology.

Human nature as the main cause of conflict is an understanding Thucydides shares with twentieth century classical realists, such as Hans Morgenthau, E. H. Carr, or Reinhold Niebuhr. They would also agree on the main resultant of human nature in the political sphere: the struggle for power. Humans, according to Hobbes, who arguably put it in a more brute way than other classical realists, have perpetual 'desire for power after power,' which is why the world was inclined to move towards a state of war of 'all against all.'[183] This understanding of the 'natural' state of the world is more of a threatening image, however, than an inevitable outcome of the struggle for power. There are some elements of classical realist thought that often escape more orthodox readings. As Lebow points out, classical realists emphasise the limitations of power and the ways in which it becomes self-defeating, particularly with respect to hegemonic states and leaders' hubris, which often leads to 'tragic' outcomes.[184] Furthermore, they share a sensitivity to ethical dilemmas and questions of what is 'just.' Reflecting a tragic view of life and politics, they 'recognise that communal bonds are fragile and easily undermined by the unrestrained pursuit of unilateral advantage by individuals, factions, and states.'[185]

Considering the central role of psychology, where should classical realism be situated in terms of the levels of analysis framework? Kenneth Waltz, who introduced the three level-distinction to IR, faulted his classical precursors for their

[182] Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature*, 21.

[183] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 66.

[184] Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics: Ethics, Interests, and Orders*, ch. 2.

[185] Ibid., 60.

superfluous preoccupation with unit-level causes of war.[186] To Waltz, environmental conditions at the most aggregated level alone – the distribution of power in the system – are sufficient indicators of outcomes. Paying attention to individuals or their interactions would merely serve to introduce ambiguity, because of the 'error involved in taking the social man as the natural man.'[187] To Waltz, classical realist theory lacked scientific standards. A brief re-appraisal of his critique suggests that for purposes of explaining foreign policy, as opposed to international politics, classical realism does provide an appropriate template. First, Waltz regards human nature as an arbitrary and speculative concept that cannot be empirically verified.[188] On the whole, classical realists' insightful but often imprecise and circumstantial analyses cannot escape that criticism. However, recent empirical findings from psychology and the life sciences may fill some of these gaps and put the behavioural assumptions underlying classical thought on a more scientific foundation. To that end, interdisciplinary scholarship has already made significant strides. The chapter at hand seeks to make another contribution towards that objective.

Waltz asserts that Morgenthau's conception of human nature is essentially a constant and therefore not suited to explain variation in political outcomes.[189] However, classical realists did not suggest that human nature pre-determined decisions. Their writings point to the contingent nature of behaviour on the social and historical context – including the domestic and international political spheres. Modern evolutionary psychology mirrors this notion by moving away from a crude, monolithic concept of human nature towards a more complex understanding of interactions between the individual and the environment. Only some aspects of

[186] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, ch. 2.
[187] *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, 166.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, 28-29.

human nature are constant but at a more 'disaggregated level.'[190] Drawing distinctions between the malleable and the pre-programmed patterns of behaviour is what makes hypothesizing about human nature a worthwhile, indeed a necessary, task not just for evolutionary psychologists but also IR scholars.

Finally, Waltz suggests that classical realism is reductionist – attempting to explain outcomes through the behaviour of individual units while ignoring the constraints imposed on state behaviour by the international system itself.[191] This criticism seems to ignore that all theory is, by definition, reductionist. What matters is the kind of reductionism. Richard Dawkins distinguishes between 'simple' and 'hierarchical' reductionism. The former was merely hypothetical, as no one would actually attempt to explain complicated phenomena '*directly* in terms of the *smallest* parts.' Hierarchical reductionism, on the other hand, rightfully recognizes 'that a complex issue, such as the causes of human behaviour', must be broken down into smaller component parts and 'may be usefully explained at a number of levels of analysis.'[192] Classical realists' views on reductionism cannot be easily summarized. Section four elaborates further on this issue.

After *Theory of International Politics*, classical texts were commonly conceived of as outdated and lacking scientific foundations. Such neglect is a fallacy, because the concepts they focused on have been and will continue to be an inextricable part of international politics. As Morgenthau argues,

> Human nature, in which the laws of politics have their roots, has not changed since the classical philosophies of China, India, and Greece

[190] Chris Brown, 'Human Nature, Science and International Political Theory,' *Journal of International Relations and Development* 16, no. 4 (2013): 446; Robin I. M. Dunbar and Louise Barrett, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[191] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 65, 74.

[192] Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (Harlow: Longman Scientific & Technical, 1986), 13. Italics are original.

> endeavoured to discover these laws. Hence, novelty is not necessarily a virtue in political theory, nor is old age a defect.[193]

In search for the classical realist approach to the levels of analysis, Max Weber's *methodological individualism* may be the best approximation. Weber suggested that collective action, such as that of a state, should be studied as the result of the actions of individual persons. Only individuals, he argued, 'can be treated as agents in a course of subjectively understandable action.'[194] Social phenomena could only make sense if we thought of them as if they were the result of the behaviour of a purposeful individual – an 'ideal type.' Ideal types, much like Morgenthau's 'objective laws that govern all politics,' are not observable in reality, but provide benchmarks against which empirical phenomena can be measured.[195]

As a consequence of their focus on what we would now term the 'psychological micro-foundations' of social action, classical realists, in contrast to their structural successors, draw no distinction between levels of analysis two and three – the domestic and the systemic. *All* politics, claimed Morgenthau, is a struggle for power and prestige, 'inseparable from social life itself.'[196] Contrary to the 'primacy of foreign policy' guiding practitioners of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, classical realists recognized that the realms of domestic and international politics cannot be separated. Machiavelli, in *The Prince*, emphasized that state leaders should be just as concerned about the domestic sphere as they are about external threats.

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[193] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Sixth ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1985), 4.

[194] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), 13.

[195] Kenneth Allan, *Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2005), 149.

[196] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 31.

> For a prince should have two fears: one internal, concerning his subjects; the other external, concerning foreign powers. From the latter, he can defend himself by his effective arms and his effective allies, and he will always have effective allies if he has effective arms.[197]

In Morgenthau's work, the domestic and international domain are connected through the struggle for power and prestige. Looking at these two concepts through Weber's methodological individualism, we encounter the forces that may link the individual to the state and the international system. Identification with the state, according to Morgenthau, lies at the core of nationalism, communism, fascism, and other national or transnational phenomena. If the individual's lust for power and prestige cannot be satisfied within the domestic community, the logical next step is to struggle for power and prestige on behalf of the nation.

> These psychological trends, operating within the individual members of a nation, find support in the rules of conduct and in the institutions of society itself. Society restrains aspirations for individual power within the national community and puts the mark of opprobrium upon certain power drives pointing toward individual aggrandizement. But it encourages and glorifies the tendencies of the great mass of the population, frustrated in its individual power drives, to identify itself with the nation's struggle for power on the international scene. Power pursued by the individual for his own sake is considered an evil to be tolerated only within certain bounds and in certain manifestations. Power disguised by ideologies and pursued in the name and for the sake of the nation becomes a good for which all citizens must strive.[198]

Structural realists consider the struggle for power between nation-states under anarchy the natural condition of the political world. To classical realists, anarchy is instead a reflection – or even a product – of the individual's struggle for power and prestige, acted out in a more malleable social space which is the international arena. Herein lies the essence of classical realists' warnings of idealism. What made 'moralizers' so dangerous is that they did not face the same constraints

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[197] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Peter E. Bondanella, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 63.

[198] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 119.

internationally that they did in domestic politics. In the international sphere, 'where institutional ties are weak,' it was easier 'to mould contingency and the claims of legitimacy to their own purposes.'[199]

The classical realist response to the level of analysis problem may be formulated as follows: the choice of any one level is not essential and the tripartite distinction is more of an unnecessary straight-jacket. While that might seem like an effort at avoiding the problem, it appears methodologically defensible from a Weberian perspective. As Jeffrey Alexander suggests, 'macro'-level social phenomena have to be explained through reference to their 'micro' foundations, which provide the action-theoretic mechanism.[200] This view is not in contradiction to the general realist precept privileging the state as the main entity in international politics. In explaining the actions of the state, however, the 'action frame of reference'[201] associated with individual actors holds primacy.

2.3. Concepts of power and status

Classical realist scholarship has also been faulted for failing to offer a precise and consistent definition of power and status. According to sociologist Theodore Kemper, the two are the most fundamental relational dimensions between humans, and intricately connected to affect and emotion: an anticipated or actual gain in either dimension would bring about positive emotions; a loss would trigger negative ones.[202]

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[199] David Runciman, 'Political Theory and Real Politics in the Age of the Internet,' *Journal of Political Philosophy* 25, no. 1 (2017): 8.

[200] Jeffrey C. Alexander, *The Micro-Macro Link* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987).

[201] Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1937), 43-51.

[202] Theodore D. Kemper, *A Social Interactional Theory of Emotions* (New York, NY: Wiley, 1978).

The concept of *power* is central to all sub-schools within the realist tradition. The struggle for it, according to Morgenthau, 'is universal in time and space and as an undeniable fact of experience.'[203] Or, as Neumann and Sending argue, 'power struggles are seen as emanating either from the animus dominandi of human nature or from fear, or from a mix of the two.'[204] The distinction between what power is obtained for – defensive or offensive purposes – is not central to classical realists. In some accounts, it is sought for defensive purposes, in others, its maximization is an objective in itself. All realist schools, however, regard power – and the implications its pursuit has on states' security – as central.

Defining power remains one of the major challenges to IR theory. Political power, Morgenthau notes, is 'one of the most difficult and controversial problems of political science.'[205] Gilpin, similarly, describes the concept of power as 'one of the most troublesome in the field of international relations.'[206] Structural realism generally takes an 'absolute' approach to power – adding up material resources like wealth, population, territory, and, of course, military capabilities.[207] This approach is known as 'power as resources.'[208] While military capabilities are paramount to classical realists, some passages of *Politics among Nations* emphasize also the psychological effects of power:

> It gives the former control over certain actions of the latter through the impact which the former exerts on the latter's minds. That impact derives

[203] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 38.
[204] Iver B. Neumann and Ole Jacob Sending, *Governing the Global Polity: Practice, Mentality, Rationality* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 685.
[205] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 31.
[206] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 13.
[207] Except for those structural realists like Gilpin, who focus on the social-psychological ramifications of power asymmetries in the form of perception, threat, signaling, etc.
[208] David A. Baldwin, *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993), 274.

> from three sources: the expectation of benefits, the fear of disadvantages, the respect or love for men or institutions.[209]

These lines correspond more closely to a 'relational power' concept,[210] in which the behaviour of one causes a change in the behaviour of the other. Relational, like absolute power, is multidimensional. It may increase in one dimension or domain, while decreasing in another. Morgenthau cautioned against coarse theories of power. The 'predominant theoretical and practical concern with the material aspect of power in the form of force, actual or threatened,' he argued, causes us to neglect the subtle and intangible relationships that also underlie power.[211]

As Baldwin argues, discussing the capabilities of states, but failing to 'designate or imply a framework of assumptions about who is trying (or might try) to get whom to do what are comparable to discussions of what constitutes a good hand in cards without specifying which game is to be played.[212] In any analysis of a power relation, it becomes necessary, therefore, to specify the *scope* and *domain* of actors' power. Scope refers to the particular aspect of another actor's behaviour that is to be affected, such as the economic or military realm, while domain refers to an actor's area of influence, i.e. which actors or parts of the world may be influenced.

Power may just as well be exerted 'through orders, threats, the authority or charisma of a man or of an office, or a combination of any of these.'[213] Crucially, it depends on how it is perceived by the other side. This is reflected in what Morgenthau termed the 'policy of prestige,' aiming to induce perceptual change on

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[209] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 32.

[210] Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, *Power and Society: A Framework for Political Inquiry* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1952); Robert A. Dahl, 'The Concept of Power,' *Behavioral Science* 2, no. 3 (1957).

[211] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 33, 86.

[212] David A. Baldwin, 'Power and International Relations,' in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons, *Handbook of International Relations*, Second ed. (London: SAGE, 2012), 277.

[213] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 33.

part of the other side. Diplomatic ceremonies and military parades are more than simply shows of strength but meant to evoke an affective response. This suggests that to Morgenthau, power is merely one yardstick of political realities, albeit the most important one, and closely connected to other 'currencies' of politics. The assumption that leaders 'think and act in terms of interest defined as power,' Morgenthau writes,

> allows us to retrace and anticipate, as it were, the steps a statesman – past, present, or future – has taken or will take on the political scene. We look over his shoulder when he writes his dispatches; we listen in on his conversation with other statesmen; we read and anticipate his very thoughts. Thinking in terms of interest defined as power, we think as he does, and as disinterested observers we understand his thoughts and actions perhaps better than he, the actor on the political scene, does himself.[214]

At this point, it seems opportune to address the evident gender dimension of this research. As J. Ann Tickner argues, in *Politics among Nations*, Morgenthau (as representative of the classical realist tradition), 'has constructed a world almost entirely without women.'[215] His conceptualisation of the 'political man' contributed to the 'social construction of hegemonic masculinity' in International Relations. 'In Western political theory from the Greeks to Machiavelli,' Tickner suggests, 'this socially constructed type of masculinity has been projected onto the international behaviour of states. The violence with which it is associated has been legitimated through the glorification of war.'[216] As Tickner herself acknowledges, there is no reason to assume he did so deliberately but based on historical observation. By the

[214] Ibid., 5.

[215] J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1992), ch. 2.

[216] Ibid. For further analysis of the gender dimension of classical realism and the ways in which representations of political actors (as well as their requirements and virtues), see V. Spike Peterson, *Gendered States: Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations Theory* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992); Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *Fortune Is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Wendy Brown, *Manhood and Politics: A Feminist Reading in Political Theory* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1988).

mid-twentieth century, examples of women occupying positions of power were still few and far between.

Jumping forward to the early twenty-first century and the empirical cases at hand. The main state actors involved – Russia, the United States, and, to a lesser extent, European countries – still have not had female leaders (or were not led by women during the primary observation period of the case study section).[217] While I do not take that fact as absolution of the need to engage with questions of gender, it does put constraints on the availability of data on which to base such an investigation. It can also be argued that a theoretical framework seeking to demonstrate the hypothetical use of something as elusive as affect can ill afford to introduce more complexity by opening up yet another dimension of human nature. In short, gender aspects of classical realist theorising and Russian-Western relations (as well as political psychology and affective science, for that matter) present fascinating opportunities for further scholarly exploration. Due to word limitations and the characteristics of the main actors being studied, this thesis cannot make much of a contribution to that endeavour.

Status and the related concepts of respect and prestige might have an equally long tradition in the study of politics as power does. The desire to be recognised was a key part of what the Greek philosophers conceptualised as the 'spirit,' or *thumos*. According to Ned Lebow, thumos 'is best conceived of as an innate human drive, with self-esteem as a goal, and honour and standing as the means by which it is achieved.'[218] What status, prestige, and honour have in common is that all are relative. They are attained by influencing others' perceptions of one's own

[217] With the notable exception of Germany's Angela Merkel.

[218] Richard Ned Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 64.

achievements and qualities, thereby inducing the other party to pay deference. More recently, status has become the focus area of a dedicated literature in IR and has been frequently invoked to explain the assertiveness of hegemonic challengers like China and Russia. Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth propose that it reflects 'collective beliefs about a given state's ranking on valued attributes (wealth, coercive capabilities, culture, demographic position, socio-political organization, and diplomatic clout).'[219]

There are subtle differences between the terms, as well as between their classical and contemporary understandings. Prestige, for example, is defined as the public recognition of achievements or the attainment of qualities.[220] In contrast to status, prestige is not indicative of differences as to the relative position of states in the social hierarchy. When a great power declines, its status may be demoted but it will, at first, retain its prestige. Status is also to be distinguished from honour. Max Weber defined honour as the adherence to a code of conduct that is associated with a particular status group.[221] Unlike with status, there is no 'honour hierarchy' – a state can only strive to uphold its honour but cannot attain more of it through victory in war or other achievements.[222] Honour, in other words, sets particular levels of expectations for states of a similar status.

In classical realism, status, standing, prestige, self-esteem, or the desire to be recognised, all relate to the micro-psychological foundations of motivation and behaviour. In that sense, status, if defined broadly as a need for social approbation or to satisfy one's self-esteem, affects both individuals and, at a higher level of aggregation, also states. In Greek society, self-esteem and one's social standing, as

[219] T. V. Paul, Deborah Welch Larson, and William C. Wohlforth, *Status in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 8.

[220] Daniel Markey, 'Prestige and the Origins of War: Returning to Realism's Roots,' *Security Studies* 8, no. 4 (1999): 157-58.

[221] Max Weber et al., 'Economy and Society,' *American Sociological Review* 34, no. 4 (1969).

[222] Paul, Larson, and Wohlforth, *Status in World Politics*, 16.

one of the former's core determinants, played an important role, especially in politics. For Thucydides, as historian Frank Adcock observes, 'to be admired is a legitimate ambition, but as the spring of courage, the spur of action, in the public interest.'[223] Crucially, self-esteem in Greek thought is to be distinguished from another motive, self-interest. While the latter 'is a purely self-referential motive, which will divide a society in times of crisis,' honour or the quest for social recognition 'has the community as its focus and, if properly cultivated, can support cohesion and enhance cultural evolution, as it did in Athens before the war.'[224]

In the seventeenth century, an opposite view on these two 'motives' seems to have taken hold. Hobbes, for example, appears to equate the desire to be recognised with egotism and vanity, which could increase the likelihood for the outbreak of conflict. Profit and fear lead men to fight for gain and security and instils in them a sensible caution. Pride and the desire for honour, or 'social passions,' as Hobbes refers to them, leads to the use of violence for various and often insignificant reasons.[225] Even though Hobbes' theory is built mainly on the emotion of fear and physical security, wars could also occur, because 'anger can become irrationally inflamed by even trivial slights to our glory.'[226]

Self-interest denotes a drive to purse perceived opportunities. These opportunities may encompass any material or immaterial resource that is believed to better one's life, for example financial gain, personal rights and liberties, access to sexual partners, education, and so on. This motive has gained special importance in

[223] F. E. Adcock, *Thucydides and His History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 52.

[224] Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature*, 30.

[225] Ibid., 51, 108. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 13.

[226] Arash Abizadeh, 'Hobbes on the Causes of War: A Disagreement Theory,' *American Political Science Review* 105, no. 2 (2011): 298.

liberal theories of IR and liberal philosophy more broadly, due to its emphasis on preferences and the gain associated with the identification of common interests and cooperation. Following the logic of Abraham Maslow's well-known 'hierarchy of needs,' as soon as the motive of fear has been taken care of, i.e. a condition of basic security has been established, actors can turn to the pursuit of other needs and opportunities. Conversely, Lebow argues that, based on his reading of Greek philosophy, fear comes to the fore when reason loses control over the spirit (status) and appetite (self-interest).[227]

The twentieth century realists repeatedly invoke 'the passions' throughout their work. Morgenthau emphasises the importance of the pursuit of prestige to bolster the state's power base ('prestige in support of a policy of the status quo or of imperialism'). However, he also points out that leaders should be wary of pursuing a policy of prestige for its own sake (or 'the personal glory of the ruler') while being 'neglectful of the national interests at stake and of the power available to support them.'[228] Morgenthau's interest in prestige clearly revolves around psychology (and psychopathologies) on the part of both leaders and publics. This is evidenced by his last published paper, in which he investigates 'The Roots of Narcissism.'[229] Perhaps better known are his writings on nationalism as an expression of individuals' search for vicarious fulfilment of their emotional needs through the state.

Morgenthau's writings on prestige are particularly pertinent to this thesis due the centrality of affective processes. On the one hand, he suggests that emotions are to blame for some of the contingency and indeterminacy of political life that prudent statesmanship must manage. His policy of prestige, Ross argues, 'is subject to special

[227] Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations*, 113.
[228] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 94.
[229] Hans Morgenthau and Person Ethel, 'The Roots of Narcissism,' *The Partisan Review* 3 (1978).

volatility partly because it involved unpredictable emotions, such as trust, love, humiliation, and awe.'[230] On the other hand, Morgenthau, as well as Niebuhr, realised that emotions laid the groundwork for decision-making. Faced with changing circumstances and novel challenges, social actors would have to rely on emotions to help them generate a suitable response.[231]

Finally, this subsection discusses the connections between the two concepts of power and status (or prestige). Lebow suggests that while Morgenthau recognised the importance of prestige, because of his 'commitment to constructing a parsimonious theory,' he reversed the relationship between power and prestige, thus viewing power as an end in itself.[232] However, many passages in Morgenthau point to a relational understanding of power and the reciprocal effects that exist between power and status. More power means more prestige, but more prestige also means more (perceived) power. Beyond prestige, Morgenthau also discusses connections between power, love, and loneliness.[233] The fact the he considers the pursuit of power to be on the same continuum as these affective phenomena is further indication that the true ontological basis for his theorising, and a relational approach to power, lies in human psychology.

While considering prestige a key factor in interstate relations, classical realists generally 'treated [power] as a reflection of a state's military capabilities, especially as demonstrated in war, precluding any investigation into nonmaterial determinants of status.'[234] Contemporary realists have carved out the complex relationship

[230] Andrew A. G. Ross, 'Realism, Emotion, and Dynamic Allegiances in Global Politics,' *International Theory* 5, no. 2 (2013): 283.

[231] Ibid.; Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 34, 89, 94.

[232] Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations*, 22.

[233] Hans Morgenthau, 'Public Affairs: Love and Power,' *Commentary* 33, no. 3 (1962); Solomon, 'Human Nature and the Limits of the Self: Hans Morgenthau on Love and Power.'

[234] Paul, Larson, and Wohlforth, *Status in World Politics*, 4.

between power and prestige more methodically. Robert Gilpin added the element of perception to the classical conception by proposing that 'prestige is the reputation for power, and military power in particular.'[235] Similarly, as Steve Wood points out, prestige 'is distinct but not isolated from power: material, social or imagined.' Vice versa, prestige, that is, the 'recognition of importance,' constitutes an important basis of being and acting as a great power.[236] In a recent piece, Yuen Foong Khong suggests that international competition between great powers – the US and China, mainly – is indeed better viewed in terms of a struggle over the hierarchy of prestige, rather than material power.[237]

Even hard-boiled realist scholar-practitioners recognize the importance of non-material aspects of power. 'An exact balance [of power] is impossible,' Henry Kissinger admits, 'because while powers appear to outsiders as factors in a security arrangement, they appear domestically as expressions of a historical existence. No power will submit to a settlement, however well balanced and however "secure," which seems totally to deny its vision of itself.'[238] While anarchy might not entirely be 'what states make of it,'[239] even structural realists would concede that there is some variance in anarchy. The main difference between the two concepts appear to lie in the fact that status has a broader base and assumes voluntary conferral. 'If power implies getting someone to do what he/she would not otherwise do, status

[235] Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, 31.

[236] Steve Wood, 'Prestige in World Politics: History, Theory, Expression,' *International Politics* 50, no. 3 (2013), 388.

[237] Yuen Foong Khong, 'Power as Prestige in World Politics,' *International Affairs* 95, no. 1 (2019).

[238] Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812-1822* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 147.

[239] Alexander E. Wendt, 'Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,' *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992).

encourages willing deference. Status and power usually co-vary, but there are interesting cases where they diverge.'[240]

It has been argued that picture of classical realists embracing unrestrained power politics or accepting the inevitability of great power war is not supported by their writings. Some classical realists, Michael Williams argues, are 'deeply concerned that a recognition of the centrality of power in politics does not result in the reduction of politics to pure power, and particularly to the capacity to wield violence.' Instead, they sought 'a politics of limits that recognizes the destructive and productive dimensions of politics, and that maximizes its positive possibilities while minimizing its destructive potential.'[241] The central task of the realist analyst, thus, is to explain the link between power, prestige, and policy. The realist advisor, on the other hand, while recognizing the struggle over power and prestige as the 'natural condition' of politics, must identify when power becomes dangerous or self-defeating, and put checks on it accordingly.

2.4. Bringing in affect

The following section evaluates the suitability of classical realist scholarship in terms of providing a template for integrating affective phenomena in political theory and analysis – specifically with respect to 'aggregating,' 'scaling up,' or 'collectivizing' emotion from the individual to social groups to the level of the state. Having studied the work of Morgenthau and Niebuhr, Andrew Ross answers this question with a qualified yes. Classical realism, he concludes, offers 'no specific theory of the psychological, social, or neuro-corporeal mechanisms by which

[240] Paul, Larson, and Wohlforth, *Status in World Politics*, 14.
[241] Michael C. Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 7.

emotional expressions propagate through social interaction.' However, he concludes that their 'organic approach' does serve 'as a useful and timely reminder that segregating psychological and social processes limits our ability to understand the complexity of emotional dimensions of political life.'[242]

The roots of classical realists' 'organic approach,' again, can be found in Greek thought. Contrary to common presumption, Greek political theorists did not have an essentialist view of human nature. In other words, behaviour was not predetermined by character. Rather, one's actions – even the affective responses involved in behavioural outcomes – are influenced by the environment. Beyond having a restraining influence on human passions, the Greeks thought that emotions were mediated, if not aroused, by our interpretations of the words and deeds of others.[243] This contrasts with a traditional understanding of emotions as a natural and instantaneous response to external stimuli. Aristotle thought that emotions are malleable to the changing attributions we make about others' motives, and thus the result of a process of reasoning.[244] Thucydides and the Greek playwrights also recognised that 'emotions can be made self-validating when action based on them provokes the expected behaviour.'[245] Nature and nurture, for early political theorists, was not a binary.

The Aristotelean concept of reason as a complementary human 'drive,' meant to constrain and educate self-interest and prestige,[246] is surprisingly close to our contemporary understanding of the interplay between affect and reason. In this view,

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[242] Ross, 'Realism, Emotion, and Dynamic Allegiances in Global Politics,' 276.

[243] David Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), xii–xiii, 28, 37.

[244] Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations*, 129-30.

[245] Ibid.

[246] Lebow uses the term 'appetite' for the self-interest motive and 'spirit' for the drive for prestige. Ibid.

reason acts as a restraining mechanism, because the attainment of goals depends, to some extent, on compliance with the norms of society. In the history of psychology, the introduction of the dualism separating the 'passions' of the body from the 'reason' of the mind represents a departure from the tripartite psyche of the Greeks. Their hierarchical conception between body and mind – between the irrational, impulsive, and biological and the rational, intelligent, and spiritual – however, was retained.[247] More recently, neuropsychology has concluded that this stark dichotomy between cognition and emotion does not capture the actual mental processes involved in decision-making. One cannot make rational decisions or form preferences without relying on established affective responses. Or put differently, one cannot think without feeling.

How did classical realists propose affect permeated the different entities of the political world – the individual, the state, and the international system? According to Morgenthau, the struggle for prestige is one of the main mechanisms relying on these connections between entities. The underlying psychological concepts, such as the desire to be recognised, self-esteem, or demanding deference or respect can also be applied to states, where they manifest themselves in the form of shared identities and the reproduction of emotional and cognitive practices by group members, as Brent Sasley suggests.[248] Individuals' similarities with respect to identity, habits, interests, practices and preferences, in turn result in a unified and collectively shared cognitive and emotional foreign policy disposition.[249] The link between groups of individuals and state behaviour is particularly strong in authoritarian and semi-authoritarian

[247] Johnmarshall Reeve, *Understanding Motivation and Emotion*, Fifth ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009), 25.

[248] Brent Sasley, 'Theorizing States' Emotions,' *International Studies Review* 13, no. 3 (2011).

[249] Pierre Bourdieu and Samar Farage, 'Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field,' *Sociological Theory* 12, no. 1 (1994): 9.

systems. When decision-making is in the hands of a small, relatively homogenous group, identifying and building a shared identity becomes comparatively easier.

Morgenthau's treatment of nationalism illustrates this understanding of a synthesis between the individual and the state. He recognised that human beings seek vicarious fulfilment of their goals through social groups to which they feel connected. Consequently, Morgenthau believed that nationalism implied the transfer of individuals' aspirations and desires onto the state.[250] Those who are unable to 'find full satisfaction of their desire for power within the national boundaries,' he believed, '(…) project those unsatisfied aspirations onto the international scene.'[251] While society restrains the individual's aspirations for power domestically and tolerates it only 'within certain bounds and in certain manifestations,' power disguised by ideologies and pursued in the name and for the sake of the nation becomes a good for which all citizens must strive.'[252]

One needed to understand the psychology of identity to be able to explain social movements like Soviet communism or the rise of national socialism in Germany. Whether it was Soviet workers and peasants or Germans of the interwar period, both were demoralized by historical circumstance and found a way to pursue their aspirations either by identifying with the 'the fatherland of socialism'[253] or submitting to the 'stream of nationalistic fanaticism.'[254] To Morgenthau in particular, psychology, societal issues, and international politics were intricately connected through affective states of individuals.

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[250] First expressed in Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (London: Latimer House, 1947), 169.
[251] *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 118-19.
[252] Ibid.
[253] Ibid., 125.
[254] Ibid., 124.

With respect to integrating emotions, Thucydides' human drives and Morgenthau's 'passions' and 'impulses,' by mirroring the fluidity between distinct emotions, as well as the interconnectedness of affect and cognition, may point us in the right direction. As Solomon points out, Morgenthau treats the emotions of loneliness, love, and frustration not just as interlinked, but also connected to the pursuit of power.[255] This does not offer us much in terms of claims on the behavioural implications of distinct emotions, let alone a theory of complex affective dynamics in politics. However, as Ross suggests, 'the seemingly antiquated vocabulary' used by Morgenthau and Niebuhr, may 'provide a conceptual platform from which to explore where and how their interconnectedness matters in the study of global politics.'[256]

2.5. The choice of emotion

This section addresses the question why classical realists focused predominantly on negative affective phenomena such as fear or anger. It is for this reason that realists have been criticized for being preoccupied with the 'evil' aspects of human nature. Realism implies 'the quasi-ontological primacy of brute power over law', argues Jürgen Habermas, for example.[257] Charles Beitz holds that for realists, 'moral judgements have no place in discussions of international affairs or foreign policy.'[258] And Annette Freyberg-Inan, in her study of the psychological foundations

[255] Solomon, 'Human Nature and the Limits of the Self: Hans Morgenthau on Love and Power,' 221.

[256] Ross, 'Realism, Emotion, and Dynamic Allegiances in Global Politics,' 280.

[257] Jürgen Habermas and Ciaran Cronin (trans.), *The Divided West* (Cambridge: Polity, 2006), 161.

[258] Charles R. Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 15.

of the paradigm, finds that realists had ignored motives such as 'the desire for affiliation or community as well as the operation of altruism.'[259]

Such charges can be responded to in two ways. First, there are significant parts of classical realist theory, as well as analytical work, focused on positive emotion and human proclivities for altruistic behaviour, cooperation, and ethical conduct.[260] As Glaser argues, realism can be an 'optimistic philosophy' if viewed in the context of contingent realism. 'Cooperative policies,' he suggests, 'are a form of self-help and are the best form of defence in the form of arms control or unilateral defence policies instead of arms races.'[261] That view is predicated on the understanding that altruistic behaviour is not an aberration according to evolutionary theory and, depending on the context, may actually be promoted by evolutionary pressures.[262]

Indeed, criticisms that equate realism to fatalism are not sustainable with a view to realists' record of activism. Realist scholars have hardly been impartial bystanders and regularly take clear positions on issues in contemporary foreign policy. Morgenthau, for example, was an ardent critic of the war in Vietnam. More recently, many self-identified American structural realists denounced the qualified morality used to legitimise the 2003 invasion of Iraq,[263] which was motivated in part by a liberal-interventionist foreign policy agenda and, arguably, religious convictions of top officials within the Bush and Blair administrations. In staking out these

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[259] Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature*, 11.

[260] For example, Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics: Ethics, Interests, and Orders*; Solomon, 'Human Nature and the Limits of the Self: Hans Morgenthau on Love and Power.'

[261] Charles Glaser, 'Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-Help,' *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1994): 50.

[262] See Samuel Bowles, 'Group Competition, Reproductive Leveling, and the Evolution of Human Altruism,' *Science* 314, no. 5805 (2006); Donald T. Campbell, 'On the Genetics of Altruism and the Counter-Hedonic Components in Human Culture,' *Journal of Social Issues* 28, no. 3 (1972); Johnson and Thayer, 'The Evolution of Offensive Realism,' 16; Thayer, 'Bringing in Darwin: Evolutionary Theory, Realism, and International Politics,' 143-44.

[263] 'An Open Letter to the American People,' Group of Experts on Sensible Foreign Policy, 14 October 2004, https://www.sensibleforeignpolicy.net/.

positions, what was important to classical realists was to separate theorising from analysis from policy advice. For theory and analysis, their priority was to develop general laws based on human nature, which could then be applied to the historical and social context. For policy, they wanted to provide general guidance for leaders and decision-makers to navigate the dangerous and unpredictable political environment.

The other way to respond to the charge of a 'negativity bias' in classical realism is that there are good reasons for such a bias.[264] As most observers of international politics will admit, developments tend to be a lot more interesting and decisions more significant when negative outcomes are looming. Focusing on negative phenomena has proven essential to human evolutionary success. Chapter 3 will cover these psychosocial factors in more detail. Generally, there is more to learn from negative events, in part because the consequences might threaten our survival. Prospect theory, which emphasizes that potential losses weigh much heavier on decision-makers' minds than potential gains, incorporates this finding.[265] Accordingly, classical realists concluded that negative experiences and the affective responses they promote are stronger motivators than positive ones. In the eyes of mid-century classical realists, the negativity bias also fulfilled an important function as a corrective to the focus on cooperation and mutual gains in utopianist theory and associated policy prescriptions.

[264] On the primacy of negative information in political science and the underlying psychology, see Dominic D. P. Johnson and Dominic Tierney, 'Bad World: The Negativity Bias in International Politics,' *International Security* 43, no. 3 (2018).

[265] Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, 'Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk,' *Econometrica* 47, no. 2 (1979); Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, 'Prospect Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis,' in *The International Studies Encyclopedia*, ed. Robert A. Denemark (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing, 2010).

The emphasis on negative emotion had an additional, didactic purpose: instilling a sense of moral responsibility in leaders. Thucydides thought that brute power politics will always be a fact of life: 'in terms of practicality, the dominant exact what they can and the weak concede what they must.'[266] Athenian hegemony is legitimised in this way. As its envoys argue, 'we have done nothing surprising or contrary to human nature in accepting an empire when it was offered to us and refusing to give it up, under the domination of the three most powerful motives – prestige, fear, and self-interest.'[267] However, human nature according to Thucydides does not predetermine all facets of behaviour. While self-interest and short-sightedness will always threaten to throw the political order into disarray, leaders can break the circle. At times, his protagonist, Pericles, appears conflicted about the way in which the Athenian empire was acquired.[268] As Steven Forde argues, this illustrates that Thucydides meant to educate 'practical political men' and have them lead by example.[269]

Another explanation for early realists' focus on negative emotion is their interest in tragedies. An understanding of politics as a steadily recurring tragedy – of a world that is defined to a significant part by animal instincts, violence, and coincidence – and the aspiration to offer guidance on how to act prudently, successfully, but also humanely in such an environment is what unites classical realists of antiquity with those of modernity. There is a difference, however, between a tragic conception of political life and pessimism or nihilism. Hopelessness is precisely what classical realists sought to overcome. They also seem to share (the

[266] Thucydides 5.89, in *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. Martin Hammond (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 302.
[267] Ibid., 38.
[268] Ibid., xlvi.
[269] Steven Forde, *The Ambition to Rule: Alcibiades and the Politics of Imperialism in Thucydides* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 9.

exception, one could argue, being Hobbes) a rather nuanced understanding of human nature. Man is not simply inherently evil, but largely driven by affective impulses and hunger for power, which often leads to evil behaviour.

Instead of painting a purely deterministic picture of human nature, though, these authors have been susceptible to the variability of the effects of human nature on behaviour. Human nature sets certain parameters, within which a messy and contingent political process unfolds. If they chose to learn from history, however, leaders could make better, more prudent decisions. The *History of the Peloponnesian War* rests on the assumption, as John Finley observes, that even if you cannot change the 'natural tendencies of society,' by knowing them, you could 'at least guide them.'[270] A key objective of the *History* is thus to highlight Pericles' virtues of morality, moderation, and reason.[271] Moral virtues, as opposed to general human traits, are viewed as not natural. They could only be learned and exhibited when it was not to the detriment of the state. Nothing in Thucydides points to the existence of a natural moral law, or that it would apply to the political sphere.

In late fifteenth century Europe, however, the prevalent view was that politics should be righteous and warfare should be guided by common ethical standards. Machiavelli regarded this way of thinking as unrealistic and argued for a separation of politics from ethics: 'it seemed more suitable for me to search after the effectual truth of the matter rather than its imagined one.'[272] The primary purpose, or literary frame of *The Prince*, however, was to provide a 'manual' on leadership and foreign

[270] John H. Finley, *Thucydides*, Ann Arbor Paperbacks (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1963), 308.

[271] Antonios Rengakos, *Form Und Wandel Des Machtdenkens Der Athener Bei Thukydides*, Hermes, Einzelschriften, Heft 48 (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1984).

[272] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 53.

policy.[273] Though he justified certain immoral actions if they had to be taken for the good of the state, his writings are nonetheless influenced by Christian morality. Despite his rejection of the subordination of political goals to moral principles, Machiavelli made the normative qualification that some actions are, quite simply, evil.

The work of Hans Morgenthau also exemplifies the classical realist didactic. He aims to offer both a warning of the inexorability of power struggles and useful tools for diplomats and foreign policy professionals. Prudence – not one's individual convictions, ideology, or morals – should guide foreign policy. However, he does not deny that statesmen, in real life, would be influenced by ethical considerations: 'A man who was nothing but "political man,"' Morgenthau writes, 'would be a beast, for he would be completely lacking in moral restraints.' 'Real man' is always a composite of 'economic,' 'political,' and 'moral man,' and so on.[274]

The debate on the 'nature' of affect and emotion – i.e. whether emotion is something universal and hard-wired or variable and culturally learned; and whether we can distinguish between distinct emotions – will be introduced in Chapter 3. Precursors to this debate can be found classical realist theory. Writers made reference both to archetypical primary emotions like fear and anger as well as more ambiguous phenomena such as 'drives' or 'passions.' It has been argued that in terms of any singular, distinct emotion, fear has played a foundational role in IR theory. Lebow suggests that while liberalism and Marxism are rooted in the motive of self-interest, realism is based on fear.[275] The theories within the realist paradigm 'contend that in

[273] Mary Dietz, 'Trapping the Prince: Machiavelli and the Politics of Deception,' *The American Political Science Review* 80, no. 3 (1986).
[274] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 16.
[275] Lebow refers to the self-interest motive as 'appetite.'

anarchical environments, actors must make security their first concern, and only then can they indulge their desires for material well-being.'[276]

Thucydides points to the growth of Athenian power, and the fear this caused in Sparta, as the main cause of war. The Athenians' speech at the Spartan assembly, in turn, point to fear and security concerns as the main reasons for their imperialist ambitions. However, fear is not only negative. Fearful responses prime us to react properly to a perceived threat, thus fulfilling a vital evolutionary function. This is reflected in the speech of Archidamus II, the king of Sparta, to an assembly of leaders of the Peloponnesian alliance:

> (…) and often the smaller force, focused by fear, has worsted superior numbers caught complacently unprepared. In enemy country there is constant need for both confidence and fear – a brave spirit for battle, but also practical precautions inspired by fear. This way lies the greatest courage in attack and the greatest security under attack.[277]

Hobbes, who translated the *History*, contributed to its elevation to the foundational text in the realist paradigm. The motivational assumptions Hobbes gathered from Thucydides through deductive reasoning crucially influenced his own view of human nature and the political theory based on it.[278] Both he and Machiavelli before him view human nature as fearful and, as a consequence, self-interested and power-hungry. For them, the emotion of fear is not only a fact of political life, but also an important tool for leaders to maintain political order and secure their hold on power. This becomes particularly evident in Machiavelli's advice to the prince that 'it is better to be feared than loved.'[279]

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[276] Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations*, 35.
[277] 'Speech to Peloponnesian leaders,' in *The Peloponnesian War*, 79.
[278] Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature*, 184, fn. 28.
[279] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ch. 17.

Twentieth century classical realists pointed to an additional, lower-intensity manifestation of fear, in the form of a subliminal anxiety. Both Morgenthau and Niebuhr attribute part of the human struggle for power to the existence of an underlying fear. Faced by their own mortality and a fundamental insecurity in the world, individuals would turn to pursuing power for power's sake. Humans could only overcome their anxiety through 'a will-to-power which overreaches the limits of human creatureliness,' Niebuhr wrote.[280] Similarly, Morgenthau's *animus dominandi* is the consequence of an attempt 'at pushing the individual beyond his natural limits towards a transcendent goal.'[281] The 'boundless character of human ambitions,' is, therefore, 'the consequence of man's effort to hide his weakness, deny his dependence and insignificance and thus to quiet his fears.'[282] Human history, being 'subject to contingency and necessity' in this view, could be seen as man's 'sinful efforts to escape and to deny his dependence and his involvement in finiteness.'[283]

The other archetypical emotion which is at the focus of this thesis is *anger*. Anger is the common response to a denial of status, i.e. not recognizing another's rightful place in the social hierarchy. As Plato pointed out, *thumos* would respond with anger to any affronts to one's desire to be recognised, it would 'seethe and grow fierce,' and 'will not let go until either it achieves its purpose, or death ends all.'[284] Similarly, Thucydides warned of the role of anger in triggering conflict when he

[280] Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man. A Christian Interpretation. Vol. I, Human Nature*, Library of Theological Ethics (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1964), 178.

[281] Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*.

[282] Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man. A Christian Interpretation. Vol. I, Human Nature*, 99.

[283] *The Nature and Destiny of Man. A Christian Interpretation. Vol. II, Human Destiny*, 51.

[284] Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Alain Badiou (Cambridge: Polity, 2012).

recounted the speech of Archidamus II to Peloponnesian leaders: 'war is unpredictable. Most attacks are sudden, springing out of anger.'[285]

Because of the centrality of 'angry' responses as a consequence of status denial, it could be argued that much of the literature on status concerns is built around psychological claims concerning social identity, perceptions of 'unfair' treatment, and anger. In this context, anger, defiance, or outrage should be understood as more than just an automated, primitive response but as the affective component of an attempt to restore status. Foreign policy analysis staked on status concerns generally does not make the connections between the concept of status and affective experience explicit. Engaging more thoroughly with the psychology of status seeking (and denial) as well as the experiential by-products of anger should enable us to hypothesise under what conditions certain concerns, such as security, military might, territory, status, or values matter, and when one concern matters more than another. This is a central task with which sections of Chapter 3 (on social identity theory, anger, and status) and the empirical part of this thesis are concerned.

2.6. The scientification of politics

A major point of criticism often levelled at classical realism concerns the accessibility of politics to scientific method, and authors' often contradictory claims on the issue. Morgenthau famously considers politics and society to be 'governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature.'[286] On the other hand, he is very sceptical of claims to objectivity in social science and attempts to reduce IR to a branch of the behavioural sciences.[287] He accuses 'scientific utopianists' of failing to

[285] *The Peloponnesian War*, 79.
[286] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 4.
[287] Ibid., ch. 2.

understand the complex causes of war by wrongly assuming that peaceful coexistence was the natural state of the world and conflicts among nations mere 'maladjustments.' It should be added that classical realists generally do not suggest – with the exception of Hobbes – that the other extreme of politics tending towards a natural condition of war 'all against all' is any truer, or inevitable.

With respect to the attainability of objective truth, the classical realists' approach is again reflected in Weberian social philosophy. While the *means* of social action may be readily identifiable, their *ends* are interpreted through the subjective understanding of the social scientist. The ability of the social sciences to derive universal laws was, therefore, severely limited. That is no reason not to try, however. Even though objective truth was essentially unattainable, Weber thought its pursuit was still worthwhile.[288] Summarizing this notion, and embodying the classical realist critique of idealism, he writes:

> We know of no scientifically ascertainable ideals. To be sure, that makes our efforts more arduous than in the past, since we are expected to create our ideals from within our breast in the very age of subjectivist culture; but we must not and cannot promise a fool's paradise and an easy road to it, neither in thought nor in action. It is the stigma of our human dignity that the peace of our souls cannot be as great as the peace of one who dreams of such a paradise.[289]

Contrary to repeated charges, methodological individualism does not hold any ideological content. Weber cautions that it was 'a tremendous misunderstanding to think that an "individualistic" method should involve what is in any conceivable sense an individualistic system of values.'[290] Accordingly, Morgenthau writes that 'universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states in their abstract

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[288] David Goddard, 'Max Weber and the Objectivity of Social Science,' *History and Theory* 12, no. 1 (1973).

[289] Max Weber, in Guenther Roth and Wolfgang Schluchter, *Max Weber's Vision of History: Ethics and Methods* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979), preface.

[290] Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, 18.

universal formulation.' They had to be filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and place and states should pursue prudent policies and seek compromise based on the satisfaction of their mutual interests.[291]

Combining these two ambitions – one positivistic, the other normative (as referred to previously as the 'classical realist didactic') – leaves us with a version of realism that seeks 'a way of thinking normatively about politics that is suitably sensitive to the conditions and features of the political sphere, with the hope that doing so will provide us with theories befitting the actual practice of politics.'[292] Clearly, these two ambitions of realist scholarship are often at odds with one another, as Freyberg-Inan outlines in her discussion of the tension between descriptive and prescriptive realism.[293]

To properly address the issue of the 'scientification' of politics, a brief survey of classical realist writers' ambitions is helpful. By and large, their theoretical and analytical work was intended to address flaws in the dominant historical or political discourses of the time. Bell suggests, therefore, that a good way to demarcate classical realist thought is by highlighting what it rejects, rather than what it endorses.[294] Realism might also be thought of as an 'intellectual moment of resistance,' rather than a unified movement.[295] Thucydides sought to strengthen the explanatory component of political accounts, based on historiographic work. In contrast to Herodotus, who recounted events in terms of mythology or religion, he

[291] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 12.
[292] Matt Sleat, 'The Politics and Morality of the Responsibility to Protect: Beyond the Realist/Liberal Impasse,' *International Politics* 53, no. 1 (2016): 5.
[293] Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature*, chs. 4 and 5.
[294] Duncan Bell, 'Political Realism and International Relations,' *Philosophy Compass* 12, no. 2 (2017): 3.
[295] Mark Philp, 'Realism without Illusions,' *Political Theory* 40, no. 5 (2012): 631.

offered a more positivistic 'scientific history.'[296] Realism's main ideational 'adversary,' however, emerged during the Renaissance period: moralism. Apart from the charge that moralists failed to grasp the nature of politics 'as it really is,' their worldview, in the eyes of classical realists, posed concrete dangers to the stability of the international order.

Considering the pervasive influence of Christianity at the time, Machiavelli's rejection of faith-based rules of morality was ground-breaking. Religious doctrine and ethics tell us nothing about the workings of politics, he suggested, which is why they ought to be subordinated to the interests of the state – security and stability being the main ones. Sometimes conventional morality must be violated, because 'a man who always wishes to profess goodness will inevitably come to ruin amongst so many who are not good.'[297] Hobbes famously shared this tragic view of human nature. Like Machiavelli, he sought to liberate the emerging scientific engagement with politics from the constraints placed on it by idealist political philosophy, raising self-preservation, or *raison d'état*, above ethical concerns.

The emergence of twentieth century realism came as a response to idealist thought, which had dominated IR scholarship during the interwar years. E. H. Carr held that 'morality can only be relative, not universal,' and thus moral principles would always be determined by the strongest states, which use the cloak of morality to further their interests.[298] Reinhold Niebuhr accused 'utopianists' of basing their worldview on a flawed understanding of moral law. Kantian philosophy, in which their thinking is rooted, would unnecessarily create a gulf between the 'sensible' and

[296] Reference to a lecture by historian David L. Silverman, in Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature*, 19.

[297] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 53.

[298] Edward H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1939), 19.

the 'intelligible' self, nature and reason. 'The sensible self is essentially evil from the perspective of the intelligible self,' while the intelligible self, reason, is an autonomous source of morality.[299] Responding to idealists or moralists, these authors drew on their own interwar experience in Europe, the work of earlier realists, as well as the works of Max Weber,[300] Friedrich Nietzsche,[301] or Sigmund Freud.[302]

By doubting the accessibility of the social world to science, Morgenthau and others departed from Aristotle's empiricism. 'The soul,' the latter suggested, 'possesses the truth by way of affirmation or denial.'[303] The assumption that 'the world is thoroughly accessible to science and reason and that it contains in itself all the elements necessary for the harmonious co-operation of all mankind' seemed like a dangerous fallacy to Morgenthau.[304] Even the 'pure reason of the natural scientist' cannot be divorced 'from the irrational forces determining human behaviour' – it will only be a 'reason whose cognitive relation to its object is not influenced by its irrational determination.'[305]

Reason does not occur naturally in the world, as utopianists or 'liberal internationalists' wrongly believed. 'Clamouring for reason to extend its dominion over all human affairs and expecting it to reach this goal by its own inner force is the most futile, yet most conspicuous, social practice of the age,' Morgenthau argued.[306] Instead of being attainable by 'scientific man', reason needed to be learned and

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[299] Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man. A Christian Interpretation. Vol. I, Human Nature*, 119.

[300] Turner and Mazur, 'Morgenthau as a Weberian Methodologist.'

[301] Petersen, 'Breathing Nietzsche's Air: New Reflections on Morgenthau's Concepts of Power and Human Nature.'

[302] Schuett, *Political Realism, Freud, and Human Nature in International Relations: The Resurrection of the Realist Man*.

[303] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross and Lesley Brown, New ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 104.

[304] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 43.

[305] *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, 133-34.

[306] Ibid., 134.

cultivated as part of an arduous process. To do that, one needed to study the imperfect realities of political life. 'Where reason reigns,' Morgenthau wrote, 'it does so owing to irrational forces pressing for this extension of its reign.'[307]

Despite the somewhat opaque terminology, Morgenthau's writings about the 'irrational forces' of the mind express a refined understanding of the interplay between emotion and cognition. Strong evidence in psychology and neuroscience suggests that there can be no *reasoned*, or *rational* decision-making, without relying on affective mechanisms.[308] In other words, the dichotomy between emotion and cognition is no longer tenable. To make rational decisions, it was assumed, one had to overcome emotional impulses. Consequently, rational choice theorists considered it a fault of the strategic actor if 'emotional reactions' drove their behaviour.[309] However, emotion is a crucial part of the decision-making process. Information must be emotionally valenced to enable rational thought and decision-making.[310] The converse relationship is equally true: only when individuals have become cognisant of objects and events in their environment and history can they experience emotions about these objects and events.[311]

Classical realists thought that when we engage in reasoning, our perception has already been coloured by emotions, narrowing our subjective scope of action and promoting certain action tendencies over others. As Morgenthau put it:

> Emotions are already determined when we start using our reasoning powers in the social sphere; and only within the framework of this determination are we able to use those powers at all.' Even when we seem

[307] Ibid.

[308] Rose McDermott, 'The Feeling of Rationality: The Meaning of Neuroscientific Advances for Political Science,' *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 4 (2004); Jonathan Mercer, 'Rationality and Psychology in International Politics,' *International Organization* 59, no. 1 (2005).

[309] George Loewenstein et al., 'Risk as Feelings,' *Psychological Bulletin* 127, no. 2 (2001): 267.

[310] Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam, 1994).

[311] Jonathan H. Turner, 'The Sociology of Emotions: Basic Theoretical Arguments,' *Emotion Review* 1, no. 4 (2009): 342.

> to have an inner experience of reason deciding a conflict between interests and emotions which struggle for dominance within ourselves, we experience in truth the victory of the stronger interests and emotions (…).[312]

Similarly, in *Politics among Nations*, he states:

> The contingent elements of personality, prejudice, and subjective preference, and of all the weaknesses of intellect and will which flesh is heir to, are bound to deflect foreign policies from their rational course.[313]

Morgenthau pointed out that self-deception poses a great danger, not just to the decision-maker but also to the political scientist. 'Liberal' theories, and rationalist philosophy more broadly, had not only fallen prey to this self-deception, but cast it into an ideology and disguised it as scientific theory.

> For even though man is dominated by interests and driven by emotional impulses, as well as motivated by reason, he likes to see himself primarily in the light of this latter, eminently human quality. Hence, he gives his irrational qualities the earmarks of reason.[314]

Contrary to the standard interpretation that 'passions' are negations of 'reason,' there is evidence that classical realists recognized the interdependence between the two concepts. In Morgenthau's work, for example, Andrew Ross finds that the two cannot be easily separated and 'rational deliberation can never be insulated from the sentiments and inclinations that sustain it.'[315] Morgenthau thought that the psychological and social transformations of modernity had caused passions to be concealed and replaced emotional forces with 'scientific truth,' laying the foundation to the fiction that reason might operate independently of passion.[316]

In conclusion, classical realists doubted that 'rational' intentions could be isolated from actors' whims or 'passions,' let alone that outside observers would be

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[312] Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, 135.
[313] *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 7.
[314] *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, 135.
[315] Ross, 'Realism, Emotion, and Dynamic Allegiances in Global Politics,' 281; Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, 160-61.
[316] Ross, 'Realism, Emotion, and Dynamic Allegiances in Global Politics,' 281.

able to distinguish between them or even draw a connection between motivation and the results of an action. At the core of twentieth century realists' take on the accessibility of the social world through science lies their critique of 'utopianism:' an objective, 'modern science of peace',[317] they thought, was unattainable. Utopian liberalism was an ideology rather than a viable approach to political science. As Ross argues, both Morgenthau and Niebuhr thought that an emotional impetus was underlying the 'universalist ambition of liberal ethics,' which gave it 'a kind of secularized religious appeal.'[318] While they doubted its attainability, twentieth century realists did not, however, renounce the pursuit of objective knowledge in the social realm through scientific method altogether.

[317] *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 43.
[318] Ross, 'Realism, Emotion, and Dynamic Allegiances in Global Politics,' 288-89.

3. BAD FEELINGS: TRACING AFFECT IN FOREIGN POLICY

This chapter complements the IR-theoretical view developed in the preceding one with a cross-disciplinary assessment of research on affect and emotion. Drawing on different concepts from psychology, neuroscience, and linguistics, I develop a framework for conceptualising and tracing affective expressions in foreign policy discourse, which is termed *affective realism*. The framework consists of three parts or dimensions, representing different ways in which affect impacts the experience of political agents, changes their attitude towards foreign counterparts, and promotes some action tendencies over others.

3.1. Affect and emotion across disciplines

The understanding of what it means for an individual to experience affect and under what circumstances he or she might act on it differs between but also within academic disciplines. There is no such thing as a consensual definition of affect or emotion. The distinction between the two is somewhat more straightforward. Emotions denotes a narrower phenomenon – a type of affective response with a 'recognisable' neurological and physiological profile that is, in theory, detectable. Contemporary psychology recognises emotion as a psycho-physiological construct, focusing on its role in connecting the mental and the physical realms. Lisa Feldman Barrett and James Russell, for example, suggest that emotions should be viewed as 'syndromes' or 'components' of social action, including motivation, feeling, behaviour, and physiological effects.[319] Sociologist Peggy Thoits suggests that emotions are made up of interrelated causal effects consisting of situational cues,

[319] Lisa Feldman Barrett and James A. Russell, eds., *The Psychological Construction of Emotion*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: Guildford, 2015), Introduction.

physiological changes, emotion labels, and expressive gestures.[320] Unless referring to distinct emotions (and important differences between them that have ramifications for political action), this thesis mainly uses the term affect, affective dynamics, affective response, or affective process.

Depending on the discipline and the research objective – whether affect is used heuristically or didactically, or what aspects of affectivity itself are studied – definitions vary. Social scientific research in the 1950s and 1960s attempted to make clear-cut differentiations, deconstructing the process leading up to affective responses. Scholars tried to distinguish between experience and response, feeling and behaviour, inputs and outputs. Judson Brown and Isabel Farber, in a first attempt to theorise emotions in such a way, conceived of them as an intervening variable, opening the door to a social-scientific application of emotion.[321] Elizabeth Duffy tried to replace the concept with another intervening variable between observable inputs and outputs – activation, a form of energy mobilisation.[322] Such theoretical efforts have now been repudiated in favour of a more complex understanding of affectivity.

Paul Ekman led the charge that some types of emotion such as 'anger' and 'fear' have universal foundations that have remained largely unchanged over time and are the same in all humans. Other psychologists and linguists argue that the environment takes precedence and how emotions are expressed differs from culture

[320] Peggy A. Thoits, 'Emotional Deviance: Research Agendas,' in *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions*, ed. Theodore D. Kemper (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990).

[321] Judson Brown and Isabel E. Farber, 'Emotions Conceptualized as Intervening Variables,' *Psychological Bulletin* 48 (1951).

[322] Elizabeth Duffy, *Activation and Behavior* (New York, NY: Wiley, 1962).

to culture.[323] There seems to be scientific consensus around a select number of *primary emotions* – fear, anger, sadness, and happiness.[324] The universal occurrence of these feeling states in different cultures supports the assumption that they are to some extent 'hard-wired' in human neuroanatomy. Experiments have documented numerous instances where emotions override sociocultural constraints. According to Jonathan Turner, this indicates that they have a basis in the autonomic nervous system, the neurotransmitter and neuroactive peptide systems, the endocrine and musculoskeletal systems.[325] Understandably, the terms by which more intricate *secondary emotions* are identified have a higher degree of cultural specificity. One need only look at terms like 'anxiety,' 'apprehension,' 'resentment,' or 'revulsion' and the difficulty of translating them into other languages. Nonetheless, Turner suggests that 'these linguistic labels for variations in primary emotions' may also be considered 'surface manifestation of a basic neurological capacity. They are a kind of emotional superstructure to an underlying biological substructure.'[326]

In the social sciences, theories of affect and emotion have tended to fall on one or the other side of a divide between a physiological-universal view and the notion of a 'blank slate' advanced by social constructivism. On the side of biological universals, sociologist Jonathan Turner offers a scheme of variations – first- and

[323] For a compilation of challenges to 'natural kinds' approaches, see Lisa Feldman Barrett, 'Emotions Are Real,' *Emotion (Washington, DC)* 12, no. 3 (2012); James Russell, 'Culture and the Categorization of Emotions,' *Psychological Bulletin* 110, no. 3 (1991); Anna Wierzbicka, *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Universals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[324] The four primary emotions according to Turner are: satisfaction-happiness, aversion-fear, assertion-anger, and disappointment-sadness. Jonathan H. Turner, *On the Origins of Human Emotions: A Sociological Inquiry into the Evolution of Human Affect* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 68-70. *Human Emotions: A Sociological Theory* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 8-9.

[325] 'The Sociology of Emotions: Basic Theoretical Arguments,' *Emotion Review* 1, no. 4 (2009): 341.

[326] *Human Emotions: A Sociological Theory*, 3.

second-order elaborations of emotions – with a basis in neurology.[327] On the side of social construction, Steven Gordon argues that culture and language are, in fact, the very basis for the expression of affect and emotion. Individuals would 'learn' emotions from society, by adopting linguistic labels for certain behaviours, autonomic nervous system responses, or types of relationships.[328] The choice between these two vantage points determines not only how one thinks about affect and emotion but also the path one takes to study these phenomena. While advocates of a universal view commonly start with human neuroanatomy, constructivists pay more attention to questions raised in the relevant literature in sociology, anthropology, linguistics, and related fields.

Interestingly, this fissure runs through academic disciplines themselves. Looking at linguistics, for example, some contributions approach affect from a general angle, i.e. first, they try to identify universal properties of emotions in texts and lexemes and potentially add on cultural and linguistic specifics in the next step.[329] Other studies begin with the specificities of different languages and culture areas, emphasising, for example, what is distinctly 'Russian' about specific affective expressions.[330] These contributions would stress that any 'picture' of human affect is unique to the language it is represented in. Generating a 'scientific' view of emotions is neither promising nor desirable.

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[327] Ibid.

[328] Steven L Gordon, 'Social Psychology: Sociological Perspectives,' in *Social Psychology: Sociological Perspectives*, ed. Morris Rosenberg and Ralph H. Turner (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

[329] Valentina Apresjan, 'Emotions: Linguistic Representation and Cultural Conceptualization,' (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1995); Irina B. Levontina and Anna A. Zalizniak, 'Human Emotions Viewed through the Russian Language,' in *Emotions In Crosslinguistic perspective*, ed. Jean Harkins and Anna Wierzbicka (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2001).

[330] Anna Wierzbicka, 'Talking About Emotions: Semantics, Culture, and Cognition,' *Cognition & Emotion* 6, no. 3-4 (1992); Jean Harkins and Anna Wierzbicka, 'Introduction,' in *Emotions In Crosslinguistic perspective*, ed. Jean Harkins and Anna Wierzbicka (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2001).

With a view to the applicability of affect to IR, the field would do well to avoid becoming another venue for the age-old nature versus nurture debate. According to Jaak Panksepp, 'the semantic controversies that routinely arise in the discussion of emotion, have long hindered the progress of research in this area.'[331] As is often the case with socio-psychological phenomena, the 'truth' lies somewhere in the middle, and the question of either-or is more about emphasis than it is about objective reality. Recognising 'the interrelationship between them as historically pertinent to both the biological composition of human beings and the production of human social reality,' Jennifer Sterling-Folker argues, can get us closer to grasp how social reality is produced and enable the social sciences to catch up with other scientific disciplines, which have developed a better understanding of the influence of biology.[332]

I suggest that we can derive a benefit from approaching emotions from both the universal and culture-specific vantage point, in ontological as well as linguistic terms. As Wierzbicka suggests, there 'is no real conflict between the view that human feelings can be "embodied" and have a biological dimension and the view that they are "socially constructed" and have a cultural dimension.' Thinking and talking about emotions and feelings would differ greatly from culture to culture, but there could also be no doubt that 'commonalities and indeed universals' exist with respect to emotions.[333] Theories can help with sorting out the culture-specific from the universal but cannot absolve us from considering contextual details of the case and affective phenomenon in question.

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[331] Jaak Panksepp, 'Toward a General Psychobiological Theory of Emotions,' *Behavioral Brain Science* 5, no. 3 (1982): 449.

[332] Jennifer Sterling□Folker, 'Realism and the Constructivist Challenge: Rejecting, Reconstructing, or Rereading,' *International Studies Review* 4, no. 1 (2002): 96-97.

[333] Wierzbicka, *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Unviersals*, 306-07.

Another big question in the history of affective science concerns the role of cognition or the relationship between affect and 'rational' thought. As has already been indicated, the notion of a clear separation between the two phenomena is now considered largely obsolete. An affective response cannot be formed without cognitive appraisal.[334] Conversely, adopting a theoretical concept of affect and emotion that is rooted in neuroscience does not rely on the assumption that cognition necessarily precedes affect. Information must be emotionally valenced to enable rational thought: when the prefrontal cortex (the part of the brain associated with deliberation and decision-making), is disconnected from the amygdala (the subcortical area activated by emotions like fear and anger), individuals cannot make decisions.[335] This finding has important implications for our theoretical understanding of affect in the social sciences in that it weakens a purely social constructivist argument suggesting that emotions are primarily the result of cognitive processes and the social environment. The process is more complex involves reciprocal effects: physiological activation can precede cognitive appraisal, which may give rise to range of new affective responses, strengthen or override existing ones: 'once emotions are aroused and are attended to cognitively,' Turner describes, 'the flow of emotions may change as individuals become aware of others' reactions to their actions, as they bring to bear relevant social structural conditions, or as they invoke relevant cultural vocabularies and normative codes.'[336]

[334] See Rose McDermott, 'The Feeling of Rationality: The Meaning of Neuroscientific Advances for Political Science,' *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 4 (2004); Jonathan Mercer, 'Rationality and Psychology in International Politics,' *International Organization* 59, no. 1 (2005).

[335] Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York, NY: G.P. Putnam, 1994).

[336] Turner, 'The Sociology of Emotions: Basic Theoretical Arguments,' 342.

3.2. A theoretical foundation for affective realism

To a large extent, the theoretical understanding of emotion – and, by extension, affect – presented in this chapter rests on Jonathan Turner's sociological theory of emotions[337] and Richard S. Lazarus' pioneering work,[338] specifically his thoughts on causality in the emotional process and the relationship between primary and secondary emotions. Both sources represent what have been summarised as 'appraisal theories' of emotion.[339] *Appraisal* refers to the process of constructing emotional meaning within the relationship of the individual and their environment, including other individuals. The basic premise is that emotions are adaptive responses indicative of the appraisal of environmental conditions for the individual's well-being. Well-being depends on whether individuals consider objects or events as being conducive to, or obstructing, their *concerns.* A concern denotes an 'enduring disposition to prefer particular states of the world'[340] and may include the individual's needs, attachments, values, current goals, and beliefs.[341]

Appraisal also determines the quality and intensity of resulting feelings, action tendencies, physiological responses, and ultimately, behaviour. Lazarus' work was ground-breaking, because it specified the role of cognition in provoking an affective response, or did so in a more precise way than alternative models. Appraisal theory specifies the criteria or variables that allow for the generation of differentiated emotions: goal relevance and goal congruence, certainty, and coping potential.

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[337] *On the Origins of Human Emotions: A Sociological Inquiry into the Evolution of Human Affect*; *Human Emotions: A Sociological Theory*.

[338] Richard S. Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[339] For criteria that differentiate them from other theories, see Agnes Moors et al., 'Appraisal Theories of Emotion: State of the Art and Future Development,' *Emotion Review* 5, no. 2 (2013).

[340] Nico H. Frijda, 'The Laws of Emotion,' *The American Psychologist* 43, no. 5 (1988): 351. See also: *The Laws of Emotion* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2007).

[341] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 39.

Finally, appraisal introduces agency to the theoretical framework. It makes a huge difference, whether an event was caused by oneself, someone else, or interpersonal circumstances.[342] Appraisal is not equal to the resulting affective response, or emotion. Rather, appraisal refers to what an event means to the person experiencing it – how it *feels*. Together with coping processes, appraisal should be viewed as 'joint products of personality and environmental variables, which unite in the person-environment relationship.'[343]

Each emotion is defined by a unique relational meaning, summarizing personal harms and benefits residing in the person-environment relationship. If someone feels that an event might harm or benefit them – relative to what they were expecting – innate 'action tendencies' and 'coping processes' are set off.[344] Lazarus' theory distinguishes between antecedent factors (environmental or personality-related), mediating process (appraisal, action tendencies, and coping), and outcomes (immediate responses or long-term well-being). However, rather than a crude input-output partition, the theory emphasises interdependence of variables – no single variable or part of the process is sufficient to explain the outcome by itself. *Coping*, in particular, has a large impact on the person-environment relationship through feedback mechanisms.

Turner's theory recognises Lazarus' concept of cognitive appraisal as a precursor for the formation of emotions. His theory further builds on the work of psychologist Robert Plutchik,[345] sociologist Theodore Kemper[346] on primary and

[342] Moors et al., 'Appraisal Theories of Emotion: State of the Art and Future Development,' 120.

[343] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 39-40.

[344] Ibid.

[345] Robert Plutchik and Henry Kellerman, *Theories of Emotion* (New York, NY: Academic Press, 1980).

secondary emotions, and William Wentworth's[347] evolutionary perspective, which turns more attention to selection pressures and the neurology of emotions. With respect to identifying affect in discourse, the framework of affective realism also draws on the concept of 'cognitive scenarios' developed by Anna Wierzbicka. Starting from the premise that emotions involve script-like mental processes,[348] she suggests that they are best understood via prototypical thoughts. The idea of the cognitive scenario is embedded in a linguistic approach termed 'natural semantic metalanguage' (NSM). NSM essentially aims to verbally deconstruct the emotion process and to find 'semantic explications,'[349] or formal representations of meaning, i.e. the meaning of a particular word or expression from the perspective of the issuer.[350]

Jack Barbalet provides a summary that describes, in a broad sense, the way emotions are thought of in this thesis:

> Emotions are generally thought of as feelings and sensations. Emotion includes these, certainly. But, unlike mere feeling and sensation, an emotion has direction and therefore an object. Although their emotions do not automatically set a person on a course of action, they do leave a clear stamp on an actor's disposition and intentions. Emotions situate actors in their relations with others. Actors are moved in their interactions with others by their emotions, and their emotions lead them to evaluate and change the course of their conduct in the relationships and situations they

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[346] Particularly Kemper's work on primary (fear, anger, depression, and happiness/satisfaction) and secondary emotions: Theodore D. Kemper, 'How Many Emotions Are There? Wedding the Social and the Autonomic Components,' *American Journal of Sociology* 93, no. 2 (1987).

[347] Wentworth argues that humans are hard-wired for certain primary emotions such as anger, disgust, fear, hatred, and sadness which (continue to) promote evolutionary fitness. Wentworth, William M., and Darrell Yardly, 'A Bioevolutionary Perspective on the Sociology of Human Emotions,' in *Social Perspectives on Emotion* ed. David D. Franks, William M. Wentworth, and John Ryan (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1994).

[348] See Beverly Fehr and James Russell, 'Concept of Emotion Viewed from a Prototype Perspective,' *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 113, no. 3 (1984).

[349] For a more detailed outline of the 'explication' method, see Wierzbicka, *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Unviersals*, 60-63; Cliff Goddard and Anna Wierzbicka, *Words and Meanings: Lexical Semantics across Domains, Languages, and Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), ch. 5.

[350] Cliff Goddard and Zhengdao Ye, *'Happiness' and 'Pain' across Languages and Cultures* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2016), 9.

> face. It is through their emotions that actors are engaged by others, and through their emotions that they alter their relations with them.[351]

The above concepts have informed the development of the framework of affective realism. They have helped me in envisioning the process by which affect is generated and how individual components of this process might be identified in the actions, statements, and changing behavioural patterns of political operatives. However, it is important to understand these tools cannot provide conclusive or even sufficient evidence for their subjective experience at any given time. In order to draw any inferences regarding actors' affective state and their motivations, some further assumptions and qualifications need to be introduced to the framework. In addition, a determination needed to be made as to what specific phenomena to look for.

3.3. A choice of distinct emotions: fear and anger

One of the arguments introduced in Chapter 2 is that classical realists did well to focus on the negative emotions. Those to whom their work was addressed needed to understand why the political world was such treacherous terrain in order to be able to navigate it prudently and, indeed, ethically. This section explores the neuroscientific basis of the primary emotions and why it makes sense for FPA to focus on experiences like fear and anger.

Attempts to contrast and categorise emotions are as old as language: philosophical conceptions from antiquity were followed by work in psychology, psychiatry, the social sciences, and more recently, the life sciences. What is striking about the primary emotions of fear, anger, happiness, and sadness is that three out of the four are *negative* emotions, which implies they work against social cohesiveness

[351] J. M. Barbalet, *Emotion, Social Theory, and Social Structure: A Macrosociological Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 133.

and solidarity. What that means is that in and of themselves, these experiences do not bind a group of individuals together.[352] To increase group cohesion and enable societies to work, natural selection had to find a way to overcome the dissociative power of fear, anger, and sadness. Turner proposes that natural selection managed this by combining negative and positive emotions, resulting in what he calls 'elaborations' of primary emotions, such as gratitude, pride, triumph, hope, or solace. As these more complex phenomena 'proved to be a successful adaptation, natural selection continued to enhance this capacity.'[353]

Where primary emotions 'could not fully mitigate against the power of negative emotions to disrupt the social order,' Turner suggests that natural selection further rewired hominid neuroanatomy to produce 'second-order elaborations:' shame, guilt, and alienation.[354] These are a mix of all three negative primary emotions. Shame makes one feel unworthy, because of not having behaved competently or having failed to meet social norms. It is a combination of disappointment and sadness at oneself, followed by anger at the self and fear about the consequences of improper behaviour. Guilt, too, combines disappointment and sadness, but with fear of the consequences or anger at oneself for violating moral norms. Lastly, alienation emerges out of disappointment/sadness and 'anger at a situation or social structure, and fear about the consequences of not meeting expectations in this structure.' While it does not promote sociality or solidarity per

[352] See Turner on 'The Neurology of Strong Ties and Solidarity,' Turner, *Human Emotions: A Sociological Theory*, 32-36. See also Rozin and Royzman, who found that eight out of nine 'major taxonomies of emotion' privilege negative emotions; and Johnson and Tierney, who suggest that five out of six basic emotions are negative. Paul Rozin and Edward B. Royzman, 'Negativity Bias, Negativity Dominance, and Contagion,' *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 5, no. 4 (2001); Dominic D. P. Johnson and Dominic Tierney, 'Bad World: The Negativity Bias in International Politics,' *International Security* 43, no. 3 (2018).

[353] Turner, *Human Emotions: A Sociological Theory*, 8-9.

[354] Ibid., 9.

se, Turner argues, it may reduce the disruptive power of anger.[355] All three of these second-order emotions contribute to social stability: they either mitigate negative emotions, promote self-control and self-sanctioning, and operate as a motivational force to repair broken bonds or violations of moral codes.[356]

The first researcher to develop a model that 'combined' emotions was Robert Plutchik. His three-dimensional circumplex model builds on evolutionary theory and groups emotions on an 'emotion wheel' akin to the primary colours. By putting emotions in such a functional framework, Plutchik sought to define them 'in terms of what their adaptive function might be, and thus understand better their biological basis and the apparent connections between them.'[357] In a similar vein, Richard Lazarus groups individual emotions into families based on a shared 'core relational theme,' which in turn is constituted by similarities in their primary and secondary 'appraisal pattern.' Emotion families are also characterised by common action tendencies and certain linguistic traits. According to these criteria, he distinguishes between emotion families resulting from a primary appraisal of goal relevance and *incongruence*, those with goal congruence, borderline emotions, and nonemotions.[358] Anger and fear (more precisely, fright/anxiety) are part of the first family of goal-incongruent emotions, as are shame, sadness, disgust, and envy or jealousy.

Homing in on *fear*, the primary emotion is a natural response to threats to one's survival. While is a vital evolutionary trait but can produce political action that may appear highly 'irrational' in a modern context. Fear can manifest itself as a high-

[355] Ibid., 10-11.
[356] Ibid., 11.
[357] Robert Plutchik, 'The Nature of Emotions,' *American Scientist* 89, no. 4 (2001): 344.
[358] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 81-82.

intensity affective experience[359] such as panic or terror. Experiencing such intense reactions signals that situational factors have, rather suddenly, impacted a *concern* of ours – an 'enduring disposition to prefer particular states of the world'[360] – in the case of fear, typically our physical safety or that of loved ones. Alternatively, it can come in a lower-intensity form and often operate on levels below conscious awareness. Low-intensity affective responses guide us by instilling our perceptions, attitudes, and thoughts with subjective valences,[361] which makes them crucial for decision-making.

Irrespective of whether fear is generated endogenously through self-reinforcing mechanisms or purposely harnessed by leaders to shape public opinion, fearful experience prompts individuals to be more perceptive of potential future threats. Such 'charged emotional relationships' may permeate the international system and long outlast their initial cause, as Crawford observes.[362] Through narratives of enmity or aggression, fearful environments may become self-sustaining, even though the initial threat has disappeared. Far beyond politically expedient narratives, 'fear and enmity are written on the bodies of individuals in elevated cortisol and other stress hormones, in hyper-arousal, and the tendency to both look for and recall threats and past harm.' Institutionally, it can become embodied in 'perceptions, routines, expectations, military doctrines, and forces.'[363] Much like ideology and worldview shape an individual's perceptions and the range of policy options they consider, fear can act as a filter through which institutional actors perceive other institutions or

[359] I am relying on a distinction of affective experience based on subjectively felt intensity, from low to high. See Turner, 'The Sociology of Emotions: Basic Theoretical Arguments,' 342.

[360] Frijda, 'The Laws of Emotion,' 351.

[361] Andrew Ortony, Gerald L. Clore, and Allan Collins, *The Cognitive Structure of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[362] Neta C. Crawford, 'Institutionalizing Passion in World Politics: Fear and Empathy,' *International Theory* 6, no. 3 (2014): 548.

[363] Ibid.

states. Information that runs counter to the established view of the other side and the threat emanating from it is more likely to be filtered out. Another reason is that experiences that are accompanied by fear produce strong emotional memories. Once conditioned, a fearful response may be triggered by a similar event than the one remembered by the individual, even though there might not be an actual threat. Such conditioned fear reactions are difficult to extinguish and can 'recur spontaneously or can be reinstated by stressful experiences.'[364]

When fear (or anger) are involved in international politics, it is likely that one or both of the most valuable concerns in that arena, which were discussed in Chapter 2, are involved: *power* and *status*. In this context, the work of Theodore Kemper on the categorisation of emotions and their social dimension is particularly pertinent. Kemper developed a theory outlining how power and status (or prestige) are connected to affect. The two establish fundamental relational dimensions between actors, and emotions result from real, expected, imagined, or recollected outcomes of social interactions, primarily in these two dimensions. Positive emotions, he suggests, are the consequence of a gain in power or prestige, while negative emotions like anger, fear, or shame are the result of a loss in power or prestige.[365] Together with Randall Collins, Kemper extended his theory to include expectation states. A vital insight for FPA, expectation states allow for a change in affective states without there being any actual, material change in relative power between actors. The mere expectation of holding, gaining, or losing power effectuates positive or negative emotions. Correspondingly, when the individual loses or expects to lose power, indicating that 'the other actor is more dangerous and that the loser's resources for

[364] Joseph E. LeDoux, 'Emotion: Clues from the Brain,' in *Foundations in Social Neuroscience*, ed. John T. Cacioppo (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).

[365] Theodore D. Kemper, *A Social Interactional Theory of Emotions* (New York, NY: Wiley, 1978).

engaging in conflict are less than he thought,' this will ordinarily result in 'some degree of fear or anxiety.'[366]

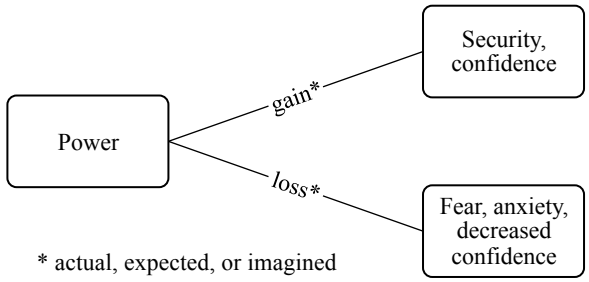

Figure 1: Changes in relative power and affective responses

With respect to gains or losses in status (prestige), the affective pattern follows a similar logic. However, as status is a relational concept, the attribution of the event that caused, or may cause, a change in status now plays a key role. If individuals blame themselves for a loss in prestige, they experience sadness, shame, or embarrassment – the affective intensity of the experience will vary depending on the dimension of the status loss. If, on the other hand, someone else is blamed for the loss, anger or dislike will result. In contrast to a loss in power, when status is lost, there is not 'only the deprivation of whatever currency the status was normally paid in, that is, the injury; there is also the insult to reckon with.'[367] Status loss, when it is attributed, energises, which makes one 'a more alert and dangerous combatant' and might cause the individual to revert to the other relational dimension, power. The purpose of such a 'power initiative' in response to a slight or offense is not only to retrieve the lost status, but also to seek deference, 'to punish the other to warn him not to act in a similar way again.'[368]

[366] Theodore D. Kemper and Randall Collins, 'Dimensions of Microinteraction,' *American Journal of Sociology* 96, no. 1 (1990): 56.

[367] Ibid., 57.

[368] Ibid. See also Bert R. Brown, 'The Effects of Need to Maintain Face on Interpersonal Bargaining,' *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 4, no. 1 (1968).

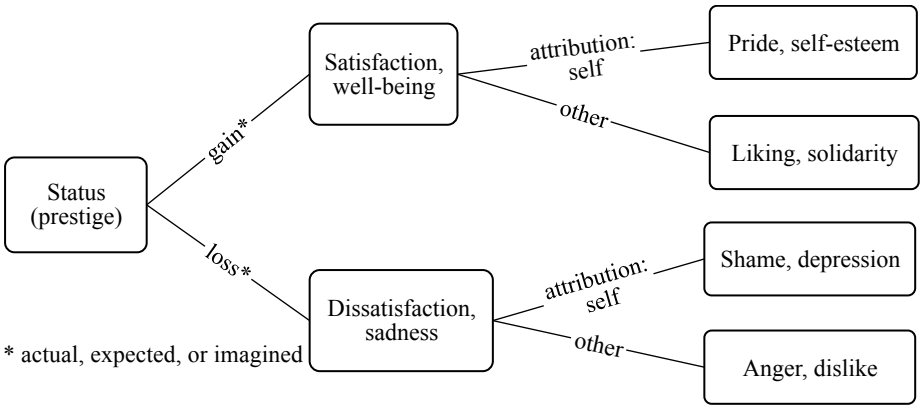

Figure 2: Status changes and affective responses

Work on affect and emotion in political science and IR generally focuses on their individual occurrence, e.g. the impact of anger on leaders or polities. The work of Kemper and Collins is useful because it allows us to model not just the connections between individual emotions but also how these types of affective response are related to the key 'resources' in politics, namely power and status. Appraisal theory, too, alerts us to their interconnectedness, as distinct emotions often originate from the same concern.

3.4. Affective realism

Affective realism is a way to think about the workings of affect and emotion, consisting of three dimensions: (1) appraisal, (2) action tendencies, and (3) attitude, each encompassing different components or steps in the process of generating an affective response. Some of these components we might be able to identify through particular semantic indicators. Put differently, what is being categorised across the three dimensions are verbal representations that are indicative of the *meaning* of components of the process to the person experiencing affect. Verbal representations of fear and anger, some of which will be listed further on, were identified deductively by drawing on the psychological, psycholinguistic, and neuroscientific

literature on these two specific emotions, affect more broadly, and their manifestations in language and behaviour.[369] In other words, the different 'stages' and 'components' described by the three dimensions are mere fragments of what officials might have experienced or felt when faced with a certain event or situation – based on their reaction or statements at the time.[370]

Affective displays point to the individual significance of concerns – anything from objects, events, relationships, to social status – as appraised by the speaker (or writer, depending on the form of media), and more broadly, their general attitude towards the foreign counterpart. The distinction between the three dimensions is mainly semantic, reflecting differences in the possible meaning of affective expressions, rather than representative of any material – cognitive, neurological, causal, or temporal – breakdown of the component parts of the affective process. The model does not say that the interaction between any particular action tendency and coping process will reliably result in a certain behaviour pattern. To the extent that a causal sequence is implied in the model, it mainly relates to that which exists between appraisal and action tendencies/coping. However, there are feedback mechanisms and a large degree of recursivity between components of the process, which suggests the framework is better thought of as an integrated whole: affective responses are generated through the interaction of any or all of these components.

[369] Apart from reviewing the original research in the respective disciplines, I have also gained insight into possible ways of systematising affective expressions from various publications coming out of the research project 'Claiming respect: Tracing the socio-emotional dimension of Russia's relations with the West,' conducted at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy Hamburg. I thank the lead researcher, Regina Heller, for discussing with me the methodology of comparative, qualitative content analysis (QCA), which she and her colleagues applied to identify semantic patterns of anger in post-Soviet Russian official speech.

[370] And in some cases, e.g. when drawing on autobiographical material, ex-post accounts.

3.4.1. Appraisal

'From the vantage point of evolution, cognition developed in order to predict the future,' Plutchik writes.[371] He is referring to the considerable adaptational advantage that comes with the ability to form expectations about the future. Previous experience has taught us when it is appropriate or even helpful to feel anxious, terrified, angry, or enraged – or when it might be better to learn to 'cope' with these feelings in favour of engaging in more deliberate decision-making. Some of our emotional experiences, Lazarus argues, 'are essentially anticipatory, whereas others are reactions to the outcomes of an adaptationally relevant encounter.'[372]

Amid the use of terms such as 'cognitive' and 'deliberate,' it is important to remember that the object of theorising are still affective responses and how they are generated – not the process of making rational decisions. Cognitive appraisal is not the same as a rational decision – it 'implies nothing about rationality, deliberateness, or consciousness.' Just as there are different ways of 'knowing' (a prerequisite for cognition), there are two strands of the appraisal process – 'one that operates automatically without awareness or volitional control, and another that is conscious, deliberate, and volitional.' Both may be at work to constitute the 'core relational theme' of each individual emotion, which is necessary for the emotion to 'mean' something to us.[373]

For now, it is important to recognise the interconnectedness of cognition and affect. Appraisal theory suggests that without some form of cognitive knowledge, there can be no affective response. Individuals cannot determine the significance of specific concerns without prior knowledge. However, as Lazarus argues, knowledge,

[371] Plutchik and Kellerman, *Theories of Emotion*, 74.
[372] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 52.
[373] Ibid., 169.

i.e. the apprehension of facts alone, is not enough. Appraisal also requires an 'evaluation of how these facts affect one's well-being.' Some sense of 'self-interest' and an appraisal of the significance of the 'person-environment relationship' is 'both necessary and sufficient' to produce affect and emotion.[374] In foreign policy, both domestic politics and the actions of one's counterparts internationally play crucial roles in constituting the person-environment relationship. As has been argued in the preceding chapter, classical realist theory alerts us to this interconnectedness of the two realms.

Concerning the appraisal dimension, the primary analytical task is as follows: to determine what decision-maker's main concerns are and how certain objects or events – mainly actions taken by international counterparts – might impact these concerns. To be more precise, how makers of foreign policy, from their perspective, *appraise* the effect of objects or events on goal attainability with respect to their main concerns. In the foreign policy context, this boils down to one central question: 'what have they done to me and why?' Questions such as these guide our efforts to detect semantic indicators of cognitive appraisal in foreign policy discourse. The product of the appraisal process is what Lazarus terms the 'core relational theme.' But how do we get from verbal expressions to components of the appraisal process to relational meaning? Meticulous description of the process is key. The ambiguity of emotions, Lazarus suggests, 'is only true if we limit ourselves to single words that represent the response "feel" or some other part of an emotional whole – for example the action tendency.' The solution is to write out in more detail an 'emotional configuration or scenario.' If we describe the essential relational content of

[374] Ibid., 177.

individual emotions well, there should be little ambiguity regarding the emotional process.[375]

Linguist Anna Wierzbicka sees great promise in NSM applications to emotions: taking a cross-cultural perspective, she argues that every language contains its own picture of the world, which is informed by its respective 'ethnopsychology.' By uncritically relying on emotion terms in one language, we might fall prey to the 'naïve picture of the world' contained in that language.[376] However, she also discusses aspects of emotions that might be universal across cultures.[377] 'Neither the diversity nor the universal aspects of "emotions" (…) can be studied without an appropriate metalanguage,' she argues, and suggest NSM as an apt tool for this kind of cross-cultural analysis.[378] By specifying the component parts of emotions semantically, she suggests, we could even go beyond incessant debates of whether they are 'biologically based' or 'culturally constituted,' 'private and internal' or 'public and social,' and concentrate on more concise questions: 'what people think, feel, want, know, say, and do; what happens in their bodies; how the thoughts, feelings, wants, and bodily events are linked (temporarily and/or causally); and also, how those links are perceived, and spoken about, by the "actors" and experiencers themselves, and what role the feelings (linked with culturally shaped thoughts and biologically based bodily events) play in the stream of life.'[379]

Explications reveal that many English emotion words follow a semantic template consisting of four parts: (a) attribution of some prototypical thought content

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[375] Ibid., 68.

[376] Wierzbicka, *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Unviersals*, 34. See also Jurij D. Apresjan, *Lexical Semantics: User's Guide to Contemporary Russian Vocabulary* (Ann Arbor, MI: Karoma, 1992).

[377] Wierzbicka, *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Unviersals*, ch. 7.

[378] 'The Relevance of Language to the Study of Emotions,' *Psychological Inquiry* 6, no. 3 (1995): 34.

[379] *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Unviersals*, 24.

to the experiencer, (b) spelling out this content (the 'prototypical cognitive scenario'), (c) triggering a feeling (either good or bad), and (d) understanding the feeling to be typical of the kind of feeling evoked by such thoughts.[380] The thoughts themselves reflect universal human concepts, which, tied together, constitute the grammar of the cross-cultural metalanguage. Both the concepts and the rules of combination (the grammar) are the result of Wierzbicka's 'empirical cross-linguistic investigations,' which are based on work with 'typologically diverse and genetically unrelated languages.'[381]

For the two main emotions considered in this thesis, this template, or explication, would be as follows:[382]

X felt fear

(a) X felt something because X thought something

(b) sometimes a person thinks:
I don't know what will happen
some bad things can happen
I don't want these things to happen
I want to do something because of this if I can
I don't know if I can do anything

(c) when this person thinks this, this person feels something bad

(d) X felt something like this
because X thought something like this[383]

Fear in the psychological literature is divided into two separate categories: fright and anxiety. The former is caused by a concrete threat, while anxiety is the product of an ambiguous, potential danger. Henceforth, when I use fear as an umbrella term, it refers primarily to fright, which assumes both a concrete threat and

[380] See Goddard and Wierzbicka, *Words and Meanings: Lexical Semantics across Domains, Languages, and Cultures*.

[381] Wierzbicka, *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Unviersals*, 35.

[382] Wierzbicka's 'semantic template' is used here to demonstrate how prototypical emotions may be explicated. It differs from the template that will be used to explicate appraisal of anger and fear in the foreign policy context (see tables below), which follows Lazarus' outline of cognitive appraisal.

[383] Wierzbicka, *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Unviersals*, 75.

the existence of a relationship between two actors. However, to match the concerns identified in the first stage, which include not only physical, but also ontological security,[384] the definition of fear must be somewhat broader to encompass emotional components that are, in a stricter sense, ascribed to anxiety. As will become apparent in the empirical account, the boundaries between the two are porous and one can easily transform into the other.

Wierzbicka discusses another, related concept from the 'fright/anxiety' family of emotions: alarm. Alarm may be even more pertinent to the context of international politics. As the explication makes clear, alarm provokes a more explicit urge to react. Much like an alarm clock, she argues, 'emotional alarm' contains the essential elements of 'suddenness,' 'mobilisation to action,' 'awareness of an impending danger,' and the 'need to act "now."'[385]

X was alarmed

(a) X felt something because X thought something

(b) sometimes a person thinks:
something has happened now
because of this I know: something bad can happen in a short time
I don't want it to happen
because of this I have to do something
I don't know what I will do

(c) when this person thinks this, this person feels something bad

(d) X felt something like this
because X thought something like this[386]

Anger, not least because of the consequential reactions it can provoke, is one of the most intensively studied emotions. Definitions vary quite widely, though, depending on the contextual scenario that is implied. Anger, as derived in the

[384] See Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State* (London: Routledge, 2008).
[385] Wierzbicka, *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Unviersals*, 81.
[386] Ibid. Adapted to correspond to the four parts of the semantic template outlined above.

preceding chapter from status motive – and its origins in the Greek *thumos* – corresponds to Lazarus' 'core relational theme' for this emotion: 'a demeaning offense against me and mine.'[387] When conceived of in the context of the same author's 'appraisal theory,' anger is more usefully thought of as a response to 'goals blocked.'[388] Wierzbicka's explication, $angry_{(2)}$, is based on the scenario that 'something bad happened' and the experiencer is not sure whether he or she can do anything about it – implying less control than for $angry_{(1)}$, where 'something bad' is attributed to a causer:

X was angry at Y

(a) X felt something because X thought something

(b) sometimes a person thinks:
something bad happened
because someone did (didn't do) something
I don't want things like this to happen
I want to do something because of this if I can

(c) when this person thinks this, this person feels something bad

(d) X felt something like this
because X thought something like this.[389]

Breaking down emotions into seemingly self-evident semantic components may appear like a superfluous exercise. But it is precisely the simplicity of the explication that gives us analytical leverage. NSM approaches produce reductive paraphrases, i.e. they 'attempt to say in other, simpler words what a speaker is saying when he or she utters the expression being explicated.'[390] While individual words expressing emotions might mean something different depending on the language or cultural context, the words 'feel,' 'want,' 'good,' or 'bad' generally do not differ

[387] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*.
[388] Ibid.
[389] Wierzbicka, *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Unviersals*, 89.
[390] Goddard and Ye, *'Happiness' and 'Pain' across Languages and Cultures*, 11.

much in their meaning. Simplification also addresses the opacity of emotions as an object of study themselves. Same as between disciplines, there is little agreement across cultural settings as to how they arise in body and mind and what their effects may be. Focusing not on what they are, but on their component parts, presents a possible solution to this problem.

Having broken down the process into its component parts, what is left to do is identifying the core relational theme of an affective response. The primary emotions fear and anger provide illustrations: to experience fear means to feel threatened. Threat, in turn, is the result of a cognitive appraisal process. It relies on both personality-related and environmental factors. Only the combination of these factors can produce relational meaning. Lazarus breaks it down into more detail: 'if we are threatened,' he argues, 'we also want something that is endangered in a particular environmental setting and we believe we lack the power to attain it.'[391]

The process works quite similarly for anger: we get angry when we are insulted or slighted. But the experience of anger will not be able to form unless personal and environmental factors – in the foreign policy context, the 'environment' is to a large part constituted by the nature of previous relations with the other side – are conjoined: we are insulted and angry only if someone slights us and we want this person's respect and regard; another person might be unable to effectuate an insult.'[392] We may thus look at the event that set off the emotional process as core relational themes – in this case, threat and insult. This does not mean we can reduce explanations to boilerplate emotional concepts that will apply in every case. Description of the appraisal process, the personal attributes and environmental

[391] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 90.
[392] Ibid.

factors involved remains indispensable. Threat, insult, and the associated emotions fear and anger 'lose their meaning when applied to an environment without regard to the persons who transact with it. Similarly, the relational meaning is lost when these concepts are applied to persons who have no regard for the environmental conditions that bring these relational meanings about in persons for whom they are relevant.'[393]

The table below presents an attempt at illustrating the process components of the two main emotions, fear and anger, in a prototypical foreign policy context. It shows the components of the first dimension, appraisal, and associated questions a hypothetical foreign policy official would ponder. Correspondingly, these questions also guide the qualitative analyst. Same as in Lazarus' theory, primary and secondary appraisal are viewed here as a sequential process for didactic reasons. This does not rule out the possibility that, in reality, sub-processes may occur simultaneously, in a different order, or repeatedly. Affect, cognition, motivation, and behaviour are much more complex than can be accurately represented by any model.

First dimension – appraisal			
	Component	**Semantic indicators/questions guiding qualitative analysis**	
		Fear	*Anger*
	Fundamental concerns[394]	Physical safety and integrity Life goals Well-being of inner circle Values, meanings	Values, meanings Ego-ideals and self-esteem Personal/national status
Primary appraisal	Goal relevance	Does the event bear on my personal well-being and goals or my extended (e.g. elite or national) interests in any way?	Does the event impact my personal or the national status or my/our value system in any way?

[393] Ibid.
[394] These are not limited to anger and fear but may be the cause of any affective response.

	Goal incongruence	How is my/our safety, our goals, and our way of life threatened; to what extent does this differ from my expectations?	How is my/our status or values impacted; does the outcome fall short of my expectations?
	Ego-involvement	How much more threatened do I feel compared to my expectations?	How does this make me feel vs. how should I feel in terms of my status expectations?
Secondary appraisal	Causer portrayal	Who is behind the threat; how do they intend to harm me/us?	Who angered or offended me and how does this make me feel about that person, group, entity, or country?
	Blame/credit	Why do they want to harm me/us; how does this match fit in with my preconceptions of the other side?	Why are they attempting to diminish my/our status or values; why have they done it in the past?

Table 1: First dimension of affective realism (appraisal)

Primary appraisal refers to the process by which an individual determines whether an event touches any of their fundamental concerns and is relevant for the attainment of their goals (with respect to said concerns). According to Lazarus, the process consists of three steps: goal relevance, goal (in)congruence,[395] and the type of ego-involvement. Rather than offering an abstract definition, the process steps are examined using the example of the two primary emotions fear and anger. To reiterate the caveat issued above regarding the explication of emotions, this is not the same as arguing that the process always follows the same neuropsychological pathway. The sequencing is mainly, as Lazarus suggests, a 'didactic device,' allowing us to 'follow the theoretical logic of a progressive narrowing of appraisals to a specific emotion.'[396] This suggests that there is no standard process for individual emotions. It is more useful to think of the generation of a specific affective response as a

[395] Negative emotions such as fear and anger only arise out of goal incongruence.
[396] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 223.

decision tree, rather than a pre-set sequence. The same event may bring about different emotions.

Anger is aroused when one gets offended by somebody else (anger directed at oneself is commonly recognized at shame or guilt). The 'other' in this interaction is believed to have acted arbitrarily at best and malevolently at worst, even though they could have chosen to act differently. That is often the case in international politics, where another's actions are rarely congruent with (or exceeding) one's own goals. When status is concerned, for example, deference and respect shown by the other side would have to exceed one's own self-conception. Following an appraisal of goal (in)congruence, the *ego* becomes further involved. Ego-involvement refers to aspects of 'ego-identity' or personal commitments, which include moral values, ego-ideals, meanings and ideas, the well-being of other persons, or life goals.[397]

By far the most important when it comes to the generation of anger is self- and social esteem. Preserving or enhancing one's self-esteem against assault is a basic motive for several negative emotions including anger. In contrast to these other responses, however, prototypical anger results not from a mere frustration but must be caused by a 'personal slight or a demeaning offense.'[398] Frustration is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for anger. The secondary appraisal stage includes the identification of the causer of an action or event and the assignment of blame or credit. The way other actors are identified and characterised – e.g., as untrustworthy, belligerent, erratic, or revisionist – holds vital information about the relationship between the two sides and determines the range of affective responses that may be generated. Attributing blame combines this knowledge of who is responsible for the

[397] Ibid., 150.
[398] Ibid., 223.

detrimental effects of an encounter with the belief that they could have acted differently.

The appraisal process for a prototypical 'fear' response is initially congruent with anger, the difference being that other concerns may be affected. While there is no universally valid connection, when the potential damage is to our self-esteem or value system, anger is a common response pattern; when our physical safety and well-being are at stake, fear is the default. There are, of course, numerous exceptions and deviations. As with anger, an event or encounter impacts a fundamental concern (goal relevance). In international politics, this is rarely good news. If anything, what has occurred could be detrimental (goal-incongruent) to our physical safety. Lazarus suggests that the third stage, ego-involvement, is not relevant when it comes to fear [fright]. This seems plausible: if we fear for our lives, we probably care little about our roles, relationships, and functions in society.[399] There is an important caveat, however: ego-involvement may become important in the 'appraisal of the significance of how one reacts to the fright encounter.' And if the concern touched upon is something other than bodily integrity, such as 'personal meaning structures,' ego-identity also becomes involved, and anxiety might be a possible emotional response.[400]

With respect to secondary appraisal, Lazarus suggests that none of its components is essential for both fright and anxiety. Blame, he suggests, is irrelevant – presumably because attribution does not matter in the case of overpowering fright and because anxiety cannot be attributed; coping potential as well as future expectancy are uncertain. Combining Lazarus' model of the appraisal process with Collins and

[399] Ego-identity as a 'person-in-the-world' as defined in Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, Revised ed. (London: Vintage, 1995).

[400] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 236-37.

Kemper's theory of power and prestige, we can now construct a more complex representation of the generation of fear and anger responses. As indicated, fear and anger may originate in the same concerns: physical safety, life goals, values and way of life, self-esteem, etc. Any of these may be associated with the overarching political 'currencies' of power and/or prestige.

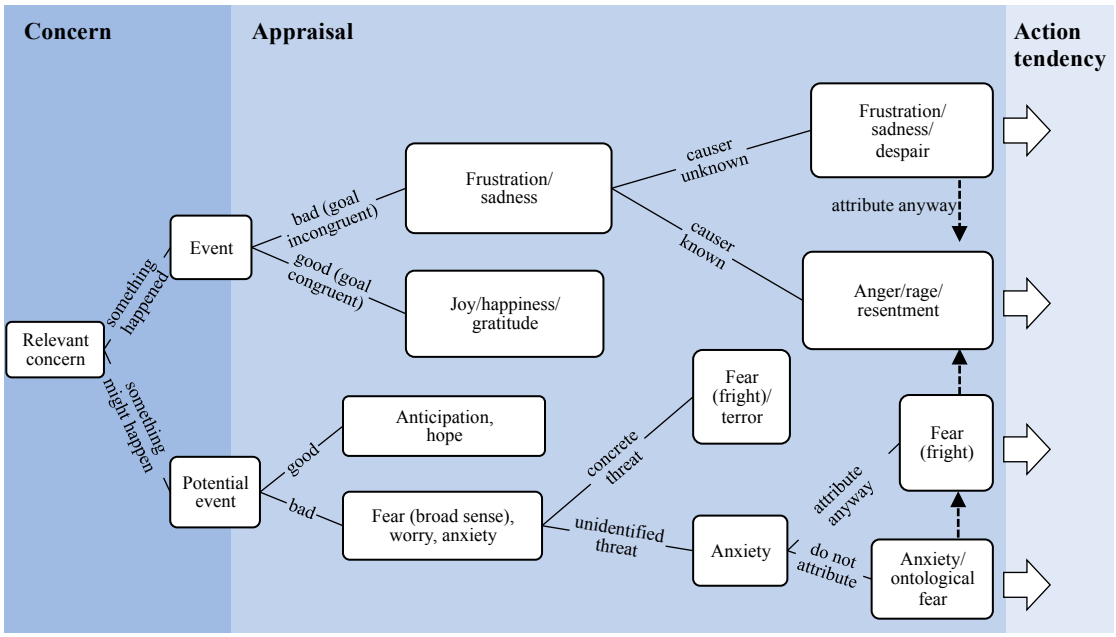

Figure 3: Appraisal process paths generating distinct affective responses

Lazarus' assertion that 'blame is certainly irrelevant, and if we blame someone, the expectable emotions are anger, guilt, shame, or jealousy,'[401] possibly neglects the fluidity of fright and anxiety, which Lazarus himself points out. The uncertainty inherent in anxiety, producing as it does an opaque, existential threat, may be worse than the more concrete sensation of fright. A common reaction is thus to externalise and objectify this existential threat, 'by reference to sources of external and concrete danger.'[402] Being afraid of something or someone oddly seems preferable to being

[401] Ibid.
[402] Ibid., 237.

anxious in general[403] or doing nothing in the face of uncertainty, as Gal and Lazarus show.[404] This volatility is represented in the chart above by the connections that exist between emotions in the latter stage of the appraisal process, where, depending on changing circumstances or attribution, one affective response may be transformed into another.

3.4.2. Action tendencies

The difference between the first and second dimension of the framework may be boiled down to the following questions: If the decision-maker, during appraisal, asks themselves, 'how do I feel about what happened,' the action tendencies phase will have them ask 'what do I feel should happen now?' These deliberations are epitomised by two impulses that can be consistent or in conflict with one another: innately given action tendencies and more deliberate coping processes, or 'coping potential.'[405] We may think of these two processes as mediating factors between appraisal and outcomes. During appraisal, the individual establishes whether objects, events, or encounters are potentially relevant to their personal well-being (primary appraisal) and makes an initial assessment of the consequences for the self (secondary appraisal). Action tendencies, or action readiness, according to Frijda,[406] provide the link between the cognitive-emotional appraisal stage and physiological response patterns, while coping processes 'alter the person-environment relationship

[403] Freud suggested that all experiences of concrete danger may result from an intrapsychic condition, which he referred to as 'neurotic anxiety.' See Bram M. Fridhandler, 'Outline of Psychoanalytic Theory of Emotion.' (University of Massachusetts, 1986), 41-42.

[404] Reuven Gal and Richard S. Lazarus, 'The Role of Activity in Anticipating and Confronting Stressful Stuations,' *Journal of Human Stress* 1, no. 4 (1975).

[405] In Lazarus' theory, the coping process (as well as action tendencies, although this is less clear) is part of secondary appraisal. Because of the emphasis on (re)action (versus appraisal), however, these components are treated separately here, as part of the second dimension.

[406] Nico H Frijda, Peter Kuipers, and Elisabeth Schure, 'Relations among Emotion, Appraisal, and Emotional Action Readiness,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 57, no. 2 (1989).

either in reality or in its appraised meaning, both of which, in turn, change the prior emotional state.'[407]

Action tendencies consist of standard response patterns that were evolutionarily selected for. Psychologists characterise them as automatic, non-deliberate, and primitive[408] – a 'compelling urge toward action.'[409] If we accept these definitions, action tendencies can be used to identify and distinguish between individual emotions. For example, if someone takes flight or avoids an encounter, it is a likely response to fear or terror.[410] In the case of anger, there is an urge to seek retribution and attack. Humans in a modern context, however, rarely attack the objects of their anger. Hence, there must be an intervening variable between appraisal, action tendencies, and outcome – coping. When a human or nonhuman animal feels endangered, the coping process can 'augment or inhibit the impulse to attack,' Lazarus suggests, 'the former occurring when the process is compatible with the action tendency and the latter occurring when it is in conflict with the action tendency,' for example when it is inhibited by societal or personal taboos.[411]

By and large, coping denotes processes that are more complex and deliberate than innate action tendencies. Unlike action tendencies, coping draws on appraisals of different 'coping options' – 'what is possible, likely to be effective in the specific context, and compatible with social and personal standards of conduct.'[412] In that sense, we may view coping as a transmission stage between evolutionarily pre-programmed urges and more sophisticated, strategic, yet still affective, responses.

[407] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 87.
[408] Ibid., 114.
[409] Nico H. Frijda, *The Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
[410] Attack may also be a plausible response to fear – however, it is not suggested to be the most likely action tendency.
[411] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 114.
[412] Ibid.

The distinction between the two – the automatic and the deliberate – is far from clear-cut, which makes it worthy of further exploration. Tracing it back to Freud's 'primary' and 'secondary process,' offers a possible explanation: primary process denotes a primitive, fragmented and dream-like way of forming a mental image of a state or object one desires to attain. Conjuring up these desirable images and acting on them has one clear purpose: to maximise pleasure. The secondary process is influenced by the emerging ego and superego and is thus more 'realistic,' it factors in experience and one's own personality. According to Freud's theory, the secondary process is tasked with dissipating tension caused by the primary process-pursuit of pleasure and enable the individual to exist in the world.[413]

Another analogy can be drawn to the popular concept of two 'systems' of thought introduced by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky.[414] System one denotes fast, automatic, emotional, stereotypic or unconscious thought. System two is slower, more effortful, logical, calculating, or conscious, bearing resemblance to secondary appraisal and the action tendencies and coping processes introduced in dimension two. Yet we should be careful with equating 'automatic' action tendencies with primitive urges. 'Automatic processing,' Lazarus argues, 'can involve complex, abstract, and symbolic significances that through experience can be condensed into an instant meaning.'[415]

Although the term might suggest as much, coping is not synonymous with simply 'accepting' or 'coming to terms with' a situation and learning to deal with the

[413] Michael Robbins, 'Another Look at Dreaming: Disentangling Freud's Primary and Secondary Process Theories,' *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 52, no. 2 (2004).

[414] Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).

Kahneman's thesis is, of course, about decision-making and not emotion. There are a lot of differences between the two, most importantly that decision-making processes ultimately lead to measurable outcomes.

[415] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 155.

consequences. Rather, it determines whether and how the individual can manage the demands arising from changed circumstances or 'actualize personal commitments.'[416] This means that the emotion process involves a phase during which the person evaluates prospects for taking action – or, to be more exact, prospects for thinking about doing something – to change or re-set the person-environment relationship according to one's desires.[417] If someone caused us a slight, this stage of the process has us ask the question, 'which of the actions I could take in response has the potential to improve my well-being and restore the status quo ex ante?' The scenario for fear is similar. Assuming we know what we are afraid of, sticking to an example from the evolutionary context, 'should I think about fleeing, or re-appraise the situation?'

Second dimension – action tendencies (and coping mechanisms)		
Component	**Questions guiding qualitative analysis**	
	Fear	*Anger*
Action tendency	*Flight/avoidance or attack* What would I typically feel like doing when I am anxious/afraid?	*Attack, revenge, punishment* Do offenses of this kind make me feel like seeking retribution?
Coping	Do I retreat or go on the offensive? How does either option affect my well-being?	Is retribution worth it; is it at all likely to succeed? Are there alternative ways of expressing disapproval?

Table 2: Second dimension of affective realism (action tendencies)

As has been mentioned, fear and anger are responses to many of the same fundamental concerns. They are, as Lazarus puts it, 'opposite but interdependent sides of the same adaptational coin.' Coping options and their presumed success feed

[416] Susan Folkman and Richard Lazarus, 'If It Changes It Must Be a Process: Study of Emotion and Coping During Three Stages of a College Examination,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 48, no. 1 (1985).

[417] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 150.

back into the appraisal process.[418] Which of the two responses appears more intensely in the individual's experience depends on the secondary appraisal process. Anger over a perceived offense generally evokes a tendency to attack. Whether an opponent is actually attacked depends on the individual's coping potential, whereby the individual determines whether an attack may lead to a more favourable outcome. This is assumed to be true for humans but is most easily observed in the animal kingdom. Within seconds, animals decide whether to attack an adversary or flee. Much like in human decision-making, this choice is not necessarily final. The interdependence between the two emotions is why human aggression and thoughts of mounting an attack are often accompanied by fear. We become afraid of placing ourselves in danger, 'either from the object of the attack or on the basis of moral or idealized self- concepts,' i.e. by violating our own image and expectations of ourselves.[419]

3.4.3. Attitude

The 'traditional' assumption regarding affect in politics is that the only time experienced leaders like Vladimir Putin will display affect is when it serves their political ends. However, even the most skilful and calculating politicians are subject to physiological truths. Emotions, more of than not, are difficult to hide. Individuals are often not aware of the emotions they express in their behaviour or even their own affective experience. Joseph LeDoux shows that the physiological activation involved begins before individuals become fully cognisant of the events that induced the affective process. The reason is neurological: all sensory inputs are routed through the thalamus to the 'emotions centres' in the subcortex before reaching the

[418] Ibid., 225.
[419] Ibid., 225; ch. 3.

neocortex, the part of the brain associated with sensory perception and conscious thought.[420] Trying to capture this distinction, Lazarus talks of emotional responses as being either 'volitional and instrumental in that they are performed to create a social effect' or 'expressive, which implies an involuntary process.' The distinction between *instrumental* or *expressive* – between the deliberate use of emotions to attain certain goals, and uncontrolled emotional displays – is always interpretive 'and thus involves a kind of theory,' which necessitates that the observer be very clear about whether they deem an emotional response to be motivated or expressive.[421]

In some cases, not even the individual experiencing affect can determine whether what they feel is genuine or put on. Making that same distinction is infinitely harder for the analyst of behaviour and involves a degree of supposition. However, to re-emphasise the purpose of the framework of affective realism is not to draw up selective categories of affective expression. Apart from difficulties telling instrumental from expressive displays of affect, there can be no clear distinction between the parts of the affective process described by the three dimensions of appraisal, action tendencies, and attitude. The three categories mainly offer a way to organise the accumulated knowledge on the workings of affect and produce a set of propositions as to the deeper meaning of expressing certain concerns, worries, charges, justifications, and so on. One distinction between dimensions one, two, and three that will be reflected in the following paragraphs is the larger consideration of the linguistic literature. While the appraisal and action tendencies sections were rooted in the universal components of the affective process, this section pays more heed to the subtleties of affective expressions in Russian language and culture.

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[420] Joseph E. LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998).

[421] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 43.

In many ways, the pop-cultural image of the callous Russian official could not be further from the truth. 'Russian leaders,' Tsygankov suggests, 'tend to express their hopes and frustrations loudly and openly.'[422] The affective expressiveness shows in the language itself. In her study of Russian, Wierzbicka concludes that *emotionality* is one of the 'fundamental semantic themes' of that language. As evidence, she offers 'the tremendous stress on emotions and on their free expression, the high emotional temperature of Russian discourse, the wealth of linguistic devices for signalling emotions and shades of emotions.'[423] Wierzbicka lists two additional themes that are characteristic of the Russian language, in particular: *moral passion* – emphasising the struggle between good and evil within oneself and in the world, and a tendency to form 'extreme and absolute' moral judgments;[424] and *anti-rationalism* – the feeling that there are limits to logical thinking and human knowledge and that life is inherently unpredictable. Similarities with the classical realist 'worldview' outlined in the previous chapter are remarkable and may be pointed out at this point.

Clyde Kluckhorn's observations regarding Russians' desire for authority and social standing, although dated, suggest that the motives of power and prestige drive not just Russian leaders but permeate society at large: 'Russians (…) stand out for their passion for affiliation, for belongingness, and for their warmth and expressiveness in human relations. (…) The people are warmly human, tremendously dependent upon secure social affiliations, labile, non-rational, strong but

[422] Andrei P. Tsygankov, 'The Frustrating Partnership: Honor, Status, and Emotions in Russia's Discourses of the West,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014): 347.

[423] Anna Wierzbicka, *Semantics, Culture, and Cognition: Universal Human Concepts in Culture-Specific Configurations* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 395.

[424] Ibid., 395-96.

undisciplined, needing to submit to authority.'[425] Such desires for belongingness and authority can be traced back to a fourth theme listed by Wierzbicka: *non-agentivity*. It marks the feeling that human beings are not in control of their lives and a tendency to fatalism. This one implies potential friction between Russian and Western foreign policy agendas. As Georgy Fedotov, studying the 'Russian national character,' noted in 1952, 'the fatalism of the East,' when contrasted with the 'activism of the West,' is one of the keys to the 'Russian soul.'[426] Russian scepticism of rationalism, too, conflicts with the 'Western tyranny of reason,' as Yuri Samarin called it.[427] Again, there are striking parallels to Morgenthau's critique of the 'scientification' of international politics.

Parts of this section might create the impression that there is something *exceptional* about the affective disposition of the Russian people, which has implications on their political behaviour. That is not the argument that I or the cited specialist literature are trying to make. Rather, references to a particular Russian 'habitus' or Russians' expressiveness are, if anything, suggestive of socio-historical peculiarities of Russian diplomatic culture and peculiarities of the Russian language in a linguistic sense. The assumption is that these socio-cultural circumstances might facilitate the applicability of affective realism, or at least not hinder it. They are not indicative of any inherent psychological properties of Russian elites.

The table below shows four categories denoting different forms of affective and attitudinal expression: emotion concept, emphasis and connotation, interjection

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[425] In Raymond Augustine Bauer, Alex Inkeles, and Clyde Kluckhohn, *How the Soviet System Works: Cultural, Psychological, and Social Themes*, Russian Research Center Studies 24 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), 611.

[426] Georgy G. P. Fedotov and Mikhail Georgievich Meerson-Aksenov, *Rossija i Svoboda: Sbornik Statei* (New York, NY: Chalidze Publications, 1981), 74.

[427] Andrej Walicki and Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka, *A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 100.

and exclamation, and comparison. Differences lie in the rhetorical devices employed but also in the kinds of affective meaning – conceptual, cognitive, connotative, denotative, and so on – that are evoked. Categories have been drawn up deductively, based on the pertinent literature in linguistics and semantics. Each includes definitions and examples of emotion-signifying words, phrases, or rhetorical practises.

Third dimension – attitude			
		Examples of rhetorical devices and semantic indicators	
Category	**Definition**	***Fear***	***Anger***
Emotion concept	Explicit reference to recognised emotion terms	anxiety/fear (*trevoga*), worry (*ozabochennost'*), etc. 'And I am scared. If one imagines the details (…), then the danger of a third world war is clearly emerging before our eyes.'[428]	anger/resentment (*obida*), indignation (*vozmushcheniye*), disappointment (*razocharovaniye*), etc. 'Their actions today cause other feelings: indignation, anger, hatred (…)'[429]
Emphasis/ connotation	Emphasising one's emotional state through intensifying words, dramatization, exaggeration, or repetition; use of terms or phrases with secondary meaning	*Emphasis (encirclement):* '(…) the installation of military bases around Russia, the unbridled expansion of NATO and other similar "presents" for Russia – we therefore have every reason to believe that they are simply testing our strength.'[430] *Appeal:* '(…) to save hundreds and hundreds of people who will die in a few hours. I ask, join the whole of Russia' [in pursuing peaceful negotiations with Milosevic][431]	*Intensifications:* 'more than incomprehensible' (*boleye chem neponyatno*), 'an unprecedented step' (*bespretsedentnyy shag*), 'astronomical digits' (*astronomicheskiye tsifry*), 'colossal shock' (*kolossal'noye potryaseniye*), 'unnecessarily' (*neopravdanno*) *Rhetorical question/self-fulfilling prophecy:* 'Should we oppose the aggressive actions of an organization or not, or should we remain silent – stay silent and say it is fine to crack down? You

[428] Yuri Luzhkov, 'Vstayet' Opasnost' Tret'yey Mirovoy Voyny, *Moskovskiye Novosti*, 20 April 1999. Integrum.

[429] Nikolai Bezborodo, 'Speech Before the Duma,' 27 March 1999. Integrum.

[430] Dmitry Medvedev, 'Annual Address of the President to the Citizens of Russia,' Press Service of the President, 5 November 2008, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1968.

[431] Boris Yeltsin, 'Television Speech on the Threat of a NATO Strike on Yugoslavia,' 24 March 1999. Integrum.

			will do what you want (anyway).'[432]
Comparison	Expressing feelings by way of comparing and contrasting	*Metaphor:* '(…) we also need to build our home and make it strong and well protected. (…) The wolf knows who to eat, as the saying goes. It knows who to eat and is not about to listen to anyone, it seems.'[433] *Analogy:* '60 years ago it was already done. How did it end? Hitler took the whole of Czechoslovakia! How will Serbia and Yugoslavia end? All will be taken!'[434]	*Stereotype/analogy:* 'The Americans are great masters at overthrowing foreign governments. They have always been doing this. Except, earlier they at least did it secretly. Now they do it openly and impudently.'[435]
Interjection/ exclamation	Indicating one's affective or cognitive mental state	(Emotional response highly context-dependent) *Interjections*: 'alas' (*uvy*), 'unfortunately' (*k sozhaleniyu*), 'well …' (*nu*) *Exclamations*: 'Well, this is thuggery!' (*nu eto zhe banditizm!*), 'so many hares were killed with one shot, you would tire from counting them!' (*ved' stol'ko zaytsev ubito odnim vystrelom, chto perechislyat'*), 'you know, these are real crocodiles' tears!' (*nu vy znayete, eto deystvitel'no krokodilovy slezy!*), 'not really!' (*neser'yezno!*)	

Table 3: Third dimension of affective realism (attitude)

3.4.3.1. Emotion concepts

Emotion concepts make explicit reference to individual emotions that are widely recognised across cultures and languages. According to Zoltán Kövecses, emotion concepts are 'prototypical cognitive models.' These models represent 'our folk understandings of emotion' and could even be considered opposed to scientific theories of emotion.[436] To Kövecses, looking at 'what particular emotions are widely thought to be' is a more promising avenue of research than studying 'what they

[432] Yevgeniy Primakov, 'NTV television interview on the NATO bombings of Yugoslavia,' 25 March 1999. Integrum.

[433] Vladimir Putin, 'Annual Address of the Prime Minister to the Federal Assembly,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 10 May 2006, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/23577.

[434] Vladimir Zhirinovsky, 'Speech Before the Duma,' 14 October 1998. Integrum.

[435] Nikolai Ryzhkov, 'Interview with Sovetskaya Rossiya,' 19 August 1999. Integrum.

[436] Zoltán Kövecses, 'The Cultural Model of Anger Inherent in American English,' in *Cultural Models in Language and Thought*, ed. Dorothy C. Holland and Naomi Quinn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 2.

really are,' as our common conceptions of emotions very likely influence scientific theorising of emotions.[437] Emotion concepts 'describe' feeling states, rather than expressing them through other rhetorical means. Even though this descriptions occurs using different vocabularies and against different cultural settings, Wierzbicka argues that all languages share 'some words for describing (rather than merely voicing) feelings based on certain thoughts,' for example, anger, shame, or surprise in English.[438] Their meaning might differ across languages, but they all combine the following two components: 'someone feels something; because this person thinks something.'[439] Placing these descriptions side by side, it seems 'folk' and 'scientific' conceptions may not be that far apart, after all.

Emotion concepts ought to be distinguished from direct expressions of emotion. As Fritz Hermanns argues, emotion concepts [emotionsbezeichnende Wörter, i.e. 'words designating emotions'] are neither 'emotive' nor 'expressive.' If anything, they are secondary – distanced and descriptive – expressions of the denoted feelings or emotional states.[440] Emotion concepts relay information comparable to what Geoffrey Leech terms 'conceptual,' 'cognitive,' or 'denotative meaning.'[441] To say, 'I am angry' or 'I am afraid' is more descriptive and typically delivered in a very different way than it would be if the person was actually expressing anger or fear, e.g. through blushing, shouting, increased muscle tension, or accelerated breathing. It should also be mentioned that 'explicitly denoting emotions' in this context is not limited to the usage of the words 'anger' or 'fear.'

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[437] Ibid.

[438] Wierzbicka, *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Unviersals*, 284.

[439] Ibid.

[440] Fritz Hermanns, 'Kognition, Emotion, Intention. Dimensionen Lexikalischer Semantik,' in *Die Ordnung Der Wörter: Kognitive Und Lexikalische Strukturen*, ed. Gisela Harras (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1995), 144-45.

[441] Geoffrey N. Leech, *Semantics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974).

3.4.3.2. Emphasis and connotation

The following categories encompass terms and phrases that might 'signify' an affective state. Among them, putting *emphasis* on what a speaker is experiencing is the most direct way of expressing affective meaning. The *connotation* of a statement, in contrast, is much harder to detect. Emphasis is directly correlated with the intensity of the manifestation of the emotion: evidently, there are differences in the way resentment and rage, or anxiety and terror are expressed. Fear, for example, can manifest itself as a high-intensity affective experience such as panic or terror.[442] Experiencing such intense reactions signals that situational factors have, rather suddenly, impacted a concern – in the case of fear, typically our physical safety or that of loved ones. Alternatively, it can come in a lower-intensity form and operate on levels below conscious awareness. Low-intensity fear may become conditioned and last longer than other kinds of learning. Thusly embedded fear can give rise to hypervigilance, or the fear evoked by possible loss. Fear of terrorism, for example, is experienced by the public long after an attack has occurred, even though the actual threat of being harmed by a terrorist attack is still marginal and or, due to heightened security measures, even lower than before.

Connotation represents the secondary meaning of a word or phrase – what it refers to, rather than its conceptual content. Much like emphasis, connotations can simplify, exaggerate, or dramatize what is said. Connotative meaning is another one of the seven types of meaning offered by Leech. When talking about connotations, he argues, we are in fact talking about the '"real world experience" one associates with an expression when one uses or sees it.'[443] This difference between conceptual

[442] Here I am relying on a distinction of affective experience based on subjectively felt intensity – high and low – introduced in Turner, *Human Emotions: A Sociological Theory*.

[443] Leech, *Semantics*, 13.

content and connotation corresponds to what Leech argues divides 'language' and 'the real world,'[444] which gives us a sense of just how difficult they are to make out.

Connotative meaning varies between cultures, languages, time periods, and between individuals, even if they have the same cultural background. Depending on the context, terms that are objectively neutral can have a positive or negative connotation. Any mention of 'NATO,' 'democracy promotion,' or 'liberalism' might have a negative connotation to a Russian audience. The assertion that connotations differ between languages seems self-evident. However, semantic research suggests that all languages share a basic conceptual framework, as it is a universal property of the human mind.[445] One way to detect connotative meaning, I have found as part of the qualitative analysis, is to search for lexemes that could have easily been replaced by a more neutral formulation at no loss to the message's conceptual meaning.

3.4.3.3. Comparison

Historical analogies, metaphors, or stereotypes play an important role in political language, usually when it comes to attributing the other side with certain characteristics or offering advance justification of one's own course of action. Rhetorical means such as these play on the affective power of comparing and contrasting. Same as emphasis and connotations, comparisons encompass semantic indicators establishing the connotative rather than the conceptual meaning of a statement.

Describing cognitively based feelings in terms of a comparison, i.e. via 'like,' appears to be a universal mode across humans, Wierzbicka writes. 'The main human strategy for talking about feelings,' she continues, 'is analogous to the main human

[444] Ibid., ch. 1.
[445] Ibid., 13.

strategy for talking about colours'[446] – which brings us back to Plutchik's circumplex, 'colour wheel' of emotions. When employing Wierzbicka's NSM approach of explication, we find this to be true for all emotions, including fear and anger: 'I do not want to feel like someone who experiences these feelings.' Comparisons bring out this emotive element even more clearly, whereby the reference – what something is being compared to – can be concrete or very abstract. Prominent examples would be Vladimir Putin's likening of US foreign policy to that of the Third Reich[447] – an oft-evoked historical analogy precisely because of its emotional charge[448] – or, more abstract, his reference to the 'wolf,' which 'knows who to eat.'[449]

The more 'fine-grained' the lexemes used in these semantic comparisons, the more language-specific they typically are. Only a few, very simple concepts, Wierzbicka suggests, belong to the shared lexical core of all languages – the rest are too complex not to be language-specific. On the 'simple' end of the spectrum, binaries are basic comparisons of 'good' and 'bad' things or states. Metaphors, on the other hand, are often tied to a language. They are more than mere stylistic devices, allowing for the expression of the aspects of feeling states that are hard to describe or even hard to comprehend. As Lakoff and Johnson put it, 'the essence' – and the comparative core – 'of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.'[450] Finally, stereotypes are also comparisons. They reduce, distort, or falsify characteristics of other actors to render a 'mental

[446] Wierzbicka, *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Unviersals*, 305.

[447] In: Andrew E. Kramer, 'Putin Is Said to Compare U.S. Policies to Third Reich,' *New York Times*, 10 May 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/10/world/europe/10russia.html.

[448] See the chapter on comparisons with the National Socialist regime in Monika Schwarz-Friesel, *Sprache Und Emotion*, Second ed. (Tübingen: A. Francke, 2013).

[449] Vladimir Putin, 'Annual Address of the Prime Minister to the Federal Assembly,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 10 May 2006, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/23577.

[450] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 5.

representation' of the other side that is more in line with one's own view or objectives.

3.4.3.4. Interjection and exclamation

Interjections typically consist of just one word or a very short phrase and are indicative of the speaker's mental state. Wierzbicka here distinguishes between three classes of interjections: emotive ones (indicating that 'I feel something'), volitive ones ('I want something'), and cognitive ones ('I know something'). In terms of their meaning, interjections may be situated somewhere between emphasis and connotation – they express feeling without directly referring to it. *Exclamations* are longer and consist of several linguistic signs with their own specifiable meaning.[451] Examples of interjections in English would be 'wow,' 'gee,' or 'gosh.' Expressions such as 'good lord!', 'it is unbelievable!', or 'what the hell!' are examples of exclamations.

As with the other categories, some things about interjections and exclamations are universal, whereas others are language-specific. The Russian interjection 'aha,' for example may express something quite different than its English equivalent. 'Aha' in English expresses 'surprise, triumph, derision, or amused discovery.' In Russian, 'aha' may express 'recalling, confirming, satisfaction, irony.'[452] Every language has interjections that are 'general purpose' – they indicate no individual emotion, or one

[451] Anna Wierzbicka, *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: The Semantics of Human Interaction*, Second ed. (Mouton de Gruyter: Berlin, 2003), 290.

[452] Wierzbicka (ibid., 326.) adds that 'aha' by itself does not signal satisfaction or irony but that such attitudes can easily 'attach themselves' to it in a suitable context. Two explications of 'aha' in Russian are offered (p. 329) – one expressing agreement or confirmation, the other, which is closer to the English equivalent, satisfaction.

that is simply not specifiable.[453] However, their ambiguity does not render interjections useless. As with other affective expressions, context is key.

3.5. Methodology and sources

The framework of affective realism guides the central analytical task in the following chapters: to detect expressions of affect, primarily different manifestations of fear and anger, in Russian foreign policy discourse. Affective realism describes experiential conditions that can supplement comparative explanations of a policy choice or course of action. It is not, in and of itself, sufficient to describe the outcome. Hence, it may contribute to explanations why some interactions involving high stakes provoked assertive policy action, and others did not. It therefore falls under the same taxonomy of explanations outlined by Tuomas Forsberg and Christer Pursiainen in their psychological analysis of the annexation of Crimea. They make the case not for 'mono-causal explanation' but attempts 'to construct theoretically sustained psychological explanations, to assess them against the background of available evidence and to discuss their limitations.'[454]

In methodological terms, the empirical chapters have been compiled using the tools of process tracing and affect-centred discourse analysis. Rigorous application of these methods rests on three elements: first, careful description; second, getting the sequence of dependent, independent, and intervening variables right, and third, prior knowledge. Description of key steps, or moments, is the foundation of process tracing. 'Static' description, as David Collier notes, is a crucial building block in

[453] Ibid., 317.

[454] Tuomas Forsberg and Christer Pursiainen, 'The Psychological Dimension of Russian Foreign Policy: Putin and the Annexation of Crimea,' *Global Society* 31, no. 2 (2017): 222.

analysing the process being studied.[455] The second element, uncovering the causal chain or sequence of events, relies on good description. In order to explain how events have unfolded over time, the analyst needs to be able to adequately describe a single event or situation at an individual point in time. Thus, the descriptive component of process tracing, Collier argues, 'begins not with observing change or sequence, but rather with taking good snapshots at a series of specific moments. To characterize a process, we must be able to characterize key steps in the process, which in turn permits good analysis of change and sequence.'[456]

The third element is the importance, and type of, prior knowledge that is used to evaluate pieces of evidence that provide the basis for descriptive and causal inference. While the previous two points emphasized the importance of not anticipating certain results, the analysis cannot be divorced from theory. As Waltz argues, 'we need a theory, or some theories, in order to know what kind of data and connections to look for.' 'Knowledge,' he summarizes the dilemma, 'must precede theory, and yet knowledge can proceed only from theory.'[457] Collier distinguishes between four interrelated types of prior knowledge: *conceptual frameworks* that are necessary to identify and link the topics seen as meriting analytic attention. *Recurring empirical regularities*, i.e. established patterns in the relationships among two or more phenomena. Building on these recurring regularities is what Collier refers to as *Theory-I* – theory that is built 'by collecting carefully verified, interconnected hypotheses.'[458] Finally, *Theory-II* refers to explanatory models that go beyond simply observing that interconnected empirical regularities occur, but also

[455] David Collier, 'Understanding Process Tracing,' *Political Science and Politics* 44, no. 4 (2011): 823.
[456] Ibid., 824.
[457] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 8.
[458] Ibid., 2.

explain why they occur. As with hypotheses and variables involved, analysts of foreign policy should specify what kind of prior knowledge informs their research designs, so that theory and empirics can be properly distinguished.

To some degree, this work is motivated by a dissatisfaction with existing research on affect and emotion in IR, most of which has relied on constructivist theory and employed discourse analysis. This has had certain methodological and ontological implications, putting the focus, for example, on the emotional mechanisms underlying the construction of norms and identities. Regina Heller criticises this 'classical' approach via discourse analysis on the grounds of being 'methodologically arbitrary and unsystematic.' The interpretation of language, she charges, is insufficient to understand how 'emotions precede, form, and sustain identity.'[459] Opposite of research that treats affect and emotion as social constructs are those scholars that view them as inner states of individual bodies. Because emotions are the product of neurological and psychological processes, these researchers also believe that we should be able to study their effects on perceptions and behaviour. It seems expedient to take the middle ground and to view affect and emotion as neither exclusively inner states that may be observable through physiological indicators nor purely social constructs that leave traces in the public sphere. They are subjectively experienced, but because many emotions that occur in political life are of a collective nature, they may be, as Wolf argues, 'intrinsically

[459] Regina Heller, 'More Rigor to Emotions! A Comparative, Qualitative Content Analysis of Anger in Russian Foreign Policy,' in *Researching Emotions in International Relations*, ed. Maéva Clément and Eric Sangar (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 75-76. See also the chapter by Erik Ringmar in the same volume, which employs psychoanalytical methods.

public' and therefore can be 'readily identified using the established tools of discourse analysis.'[460]

Classical realists, as Chapter 2 argues, saw the levels of analysis as more interlaced than their structural successors, treating the state as the 'synthetic product of individual psychological needs and expressions.'[461] Emphasising vicarious identification with the state, Morgenthau suggested that we cannot make empirical observations of the foreign policy of a state, but only of 'certain individuals who belong to the same nation' who make foreign policy.[462] While states themselves are not emotional, they are made up of individuals who share similar affective experiences.

Studying the sources of the 'Russian habitus' discernible in NATO-Russian diplomatic interaction, Vincent Pouliot suggests that a 'dispositional mechanism' creates the illusion of corporate agency, of 'states as people.' Collectives influence the individual through dispositional deposits that 'mark participant bodies with intersubjective traces.' Together, these dispositions, as 'subjectivised intersubjectivity,' make societal traits present in every one of its members. They constitute the 'Russian habitus' that became discernible in Pouliot's interviews with international organization and foreign ministry officials and defence officers.[463] Or, as Pierre Bourdieu and Samar Farage argue, individuals' similarities with respect to

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[460] Reinhard Wolf, 'Political Emotions as Public Processes: Analysing Transnational Ressentiments in Discourses,' in *Researching Emotions*, 232. See also Crawford, 'Institutionalizing Passion in World Politics: Fear and Empathy.'; Emma Hutchison and Roland Bleiker, 'Theorizing Emotions in World Politics,' 6, no. 3 (2014); Jonathan Mercer, 'Feeling Like a State: Social Emotion and Identity,' *International Theory* 6, no. 3 (2014).

[461] Andrew A. G. Ross, 'Realism, Emotion, and Dynamic Allegiances in Global Politics,' *International Theory* 5, no. 2 (2013): 276.

[462] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Sixth ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1985), 117. For a more recent, related discussion, see: Richard K. Herrmann, 'How Attachments to the Nation Shape Beliefs About the World: A Theory of Motivated Reasoning,' 71, no. 1 (2017).

[463] Vincent Pouliot, *International Security in Practice: The Politics of NATO-Russia Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 86-87.

identity, habits, interests, practices and preferences result in a unified and collectively shared cognitive and emotional foreign policy disposition. They arrive at this conclusion by treating the state as a field in which a 'societal game' over resources is played. Throughout the many iterations of the game, certain dispositions are reinforced in individuals, at the same time endowing the state with a high concentration of symbolic capital so that it 'possesses the means of imposition and inculcation of durable principles of vision and division that conform to its own structure.'[464]

The source material includes official foreign policy doctrine, speeches, press releases, or interview transcripts and, to the extent that they are available, officials' self-reports about their own and their contemporaries' thoughts and motivations. With respect to 'foreign policy elites,' the analysis will be centred around high-ranking officials who were involved in the decision-making process and possessed most of the relevant information at the time. Principally, this includes the President, Prime Minister, Foreign and Defence Ministers, and individual parliamentarians, officials, or business leaders – depending on their position in the executive structure and within the President's 'inner circle.' Most of the material is accessed through the online database 'Integrum,' which offers the largest digital archive of Russian-language media. Other sources include the websites of the press services of the Kremlin, the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Defence.

The lack of access to any internal memoranda, 'non-official,' or other 'first-hand' sources clearly presents a challenge to this empirical investigation of relatively

[464] Pierre Bourdieu and Samar Farage, 'Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field,' *Sociological Theory* 12, no. 1 (1994): 9.

recent foreign policy decisions. It might be argued that due to the scarcity of data, attempts at micro-level explanation of Russian behaviour are futile. Granted, the contextual subtleties of real-world decision-making situations cannot be replicated, and we can never be sure of decision-makers' true intentions. However, in foreign policy cases studies (as in other branches of the social sciences more generally), there is no kind of evidence that would prove, conclusively, that other theories are any more accurate. Despite their 'obvious methodological problems,' Tuomas Forsberg and Christer Pursiainen speak out in favour of psychological approaches, stating that they 'will not only complement but are indeed necessary elements of any in-depth discussion and understanding of Russian foreign policy (…).'[465]

The best an analyst can do is to aim at uncovering the observable manifestations of these motivations, akin to research into identity or preferences. As with these approaches to IR, 'first-level' empirical evidence of Russian foreign policy is often inconclusive. It is better to think of the application of affective realism as a series of 'hoop tests' that make one theory plausible while not excluding others.[466] The biggest analytical payoff will be derived from integrating and contrasting the psychological perspective with other levels of analysis – a material 'third,' a domestic-politics focused 'second image,' and an intersubjective, constructivist view. Affect and emotion, in that sense, might serve as a link between motivation and behaviour, and between comparative perspectives of FPA. Russian politics, specifically, is thought to provide a suitable object of analysis for such a kind of approach for several reasons.

[465] Forsberg and Pursiainen, 'The Psychological Dimension of Russian Foreign Policy: Putin and the Annexation of Crimea,' 224.

[466] Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, Strategies for Social Inquiry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 17.

The properties of Russian language (and culture, to an extent) in this regard have already been mentioned. Linguists have suggested Russian is particularly rich in expressions of affective content. To productively engage with the discourse, I identified different categories of emotional meaning: conceptual, cognitive, connotative, denotative, etc., based on a deductive approach that draws on relevant linguistic and semantic literature. Due to the 'vertical of power' established by Putin, decisions are made by a small circle of individuals and traverse the political apparatus without much interference from institutions or other domestic actors, such as civil society or an opposition to speak of. 'State power,' in neoclassical realist terms, is high in Russia. And what is true for resource mobilisation and the centralised decision-making structure is assumed to be observable for the statements accompanying these decisions and their emotive content. Because of this concentration of power and the relative homogeneity of the foreign policy elite, finding a shared identity becomes easier. In other words, if the Russian president feels strongly about something, we are likely to hear about it, if not witness material (re)action.

Evidently, there is a large degree of variance between cases with respect to the degree of executive control over the foreign policy apparatus. Russia spoke with many more (often contradictory) voices during the late Yeltsin period than under Putin; and since the start of his third presidential term, the latter has continued to tighten the reins considerably. This introduces an important methodological question. Are the inferences produced by this framework based on the leader, e.g. Putin and his psychological idiosyncrasies as well as unique personal and professional background, or the system around him, which, to a large extent, he has constructed

himself? And how does affective realism conceptualise the interaction between the person and that structure?

Reference has already been made to the work of some scholars, who have succeeded in specifying the links between Putin's background, personality, the evolution of Russian domestic politics, and foreign policy.[467] Obviously, these contributions have been taken into account and provide an invaluable resource on which to base an affect-centred approach like the one presented here. Broadly speaking, however, affective realism errs on the side of generalisable behavioural patterns of the mind as opposed to 'Putinology,'[468] which I take to mean a narrative that is staked on biographical information or an exercise in remote psychological diagnosis of the man himself. Like the earlier tradition of Kremlinology, such accounts run the risk of basing their hypotheses 'on the art of second-guessing the inner dynamics of an opaque system (…).'[469] As a consequence, some accounts of Russian foreign policy might have contributed to an 'implicit assumption that Russian policy-makers behave inherently less rationally than their foreign counterparts, being driven not so much by concrete national interests as by highly subjective and even personal impulses.'[470] I have done my utmost to avoid such fallacies in the chapters that follow.

The choice of case studies – rather, the selection of the four 'within-cases' in Russian-Western relations that make up the empirical chapters – also needs to be

[467] To give just one notable example, Fiona Hill and Clifford G. Gaddy, *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*, Brookings Focus Books (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2013).

[468] On the fallacies of this kind of analytical enterprise, see: Leon Aron, 'Putinology,' *The American Interest*, 30 July 2015, https://www.the-american-interest.com/2015/07/30/putinology/; Andrew Monaghan, *New Politics of Russia: Interpreting Change* (Manchester University Press, 2016), 44-52.

[469] Forsberg and Pursiainen, 'The Psychological Dimension of Russian Foreign Policy: Putin and the Annexation of Crimea,' 223.

[470] Dmitri Trenin and Bobo Lo, *The Landscape of Russian Foreign Policy Decision-Making*, (Moscow: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 8.

addressed separately. Evidently, Chapters 6 and 7 deal with some of the most consequential decisions in post-Cold War Russian foreign policy. In going to war with Georgia and interfering in Ukraine, Russia accepted a direct confrontation with the US, European countries, and NATO. From the vantage point of area studies, a thesis that seeks to make a contribution to scholarship of contemporary Russian foreign policy would be hard-pressed not to look at these cases. In terms of research design, there are two possible classifications for two closing chapters. Whether it is theory testing, an empirical illustration, or a plausibility probe, one might critically remark that those two episodes make for rather 'extreme cases,' which are likely to produce biased estimates of causal effects.[471] The other interpretation is that more extreme circumstances correspond to what George and Bennett termed 'heuristic' or 'deviant' cases, which have a higher potential value for theory-building.[472] Or, as Hall put it, 'such conditions thus provide a natural experiment for both established and new theories of state behaviour.'[473]

Particularly when pitted against rationalist explanations, extreme cases might be precisely what is needed to probe the usefulness of affect as a conceptual lens. When the stakes are already high, would not rationalist frameworks suggest that decision-makers tread lightly or at least try to avoid being driven by their emotions? That seems to be the underlying notion in FPA informed by structural realism, liberal theory, or domestic politics, examples of which will be surveyed and contrasted in the empirical section. Moreover, the two 'extreme' cases make up no more than half of the empirical section. Chapters 4-7, as a whole, constitute a longitudinal study of

[471] David Collier and James Mahoney, 'Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research,' *World Politics* 49, no. 1 (1996): 59.

[472] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, Bcsia Studies in International Security (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 75.

[473] Todd H. Hall, *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 11.

Russian relations with Europe and the US and its foreign policy towards Georgia and Ukraine.[474] Evidently, space is limited and the timeframe is relatively long, which means these chapters cannot offer anything close to a comprehensive assessment of Russian-Western relations. However, they contain treatment of several 'within-cases' that could have turned out 'extreme' (but did not). Chapters 6 and 7, too, deal with the question why Russian leaders opted for assertive action but also why they stopped short of further escalation – that is, occupying larger parts of Georgia or overtly supporting separatists in eastern Ukraine.

[474] To clarify, the focus in Chapter 4 is not on Russian policy towards Yugoslavia but its reactions to Western actions there.

4. NEW REALITIES: RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE LATE 1990s

This chapter discusses Russian foreign policy towards Europe and the US in the late 1990s, focussing on the response to NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999. The inner-Russian debate on foreign policy during that time is laden with expressions of anger over the denial of its self-perceived great-power status and fear of challenges to the integrity and system of government of the Federation. Growing resentment towards 'the West,' exacerbated by political infighting and the experience of existential uncertainty developed since the breakup of the Soviet Union, contributed to the emergence of a more unified foreign policy orientation among elites: it emphasised Russian great-power status, autarchy in the realms of culture, society, and security, and scepticism when dealing with the US and increasingly, also European partners.

A central argument developed in this chapter is that the workings of affective realism explain both how 'impulsive' behaviour may be the result of high-intensity affective responses, and how long-lasting attitudes or behavioural dispositions are formed. Regarding the latter, perceptions of repeated offenses caused by denying Russia its rightful status and frustrated hopes of the partnership with West transformed experiences of anger into an enduring disposition, or attitude, of resentment. Beginning the empirical investigation in the pre-Putin era shall provide support for the argument that emotionally valenced concerns such as security and status are the product of a long historical trajectory, not just a recent marker of a newly assertive or 'revisionist' Russia.

4.1. The long shadow of the 'chaos years'

For the first decade of Russian independence, uncertainty extended into all spheres of government – economy, jurisprudence, welfare, defence. By 1995, the GDP had been slashed in half; poverty, mortality, and the crime rate soared; and the demoralising First Chechen War (1994-1996) had shown that the former superpower was unable even to control guerrilla groups in its border regions. Although president Boris Yeltsin restored the semblance of order after the constitutional crisis of 1993, there was reason to worry not only about the stability of his administration, but the very durability of the system of government.

Interestingly, the tussle over the future of the country had little influence at first on the formulation of its foreign policy doctrine. References to Russian 'great power ambitions' (velikoderzhavnost') accompanied discussions about its external image from early on.[475] By the late 1990s, it became consensus opinion among the foreign policy establishment that Russia should preserve or resurrect its status in international affairs.[476] The appeal of being a constituent of a great power is heavily affectively valenced. It is for a reason that many Russians listed the respect previously shown to their country by the international community as a main reason why they regret the collapse of the Soviet Union.[477] No citizen deliberately weighs the benefits of empire against the proportional costs, to him- or herself, of obtaining it. To leaders, the relative benefits likely seem even larger, as bolstering the national status comes with an increase of personal prestige. Perceptions of greatness were bolstered by several material and institutional status-markers: as the legal successor

[475] Mark Urnov, '"Greatpowerness" as the Key Element of Russian Self-Consciousness under Erosion,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014): 309.

[476] Dmitri Trenin, 'Russia's Post-Imperial Condition,' *Carnegie Moscow Center*, 18 October 2011, https://carnegie.ru/2011/10/18/russia-s-post-imperial-condition-pub-45753.

[477] Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities & Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

to the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation retained its seat on the United Nations Security Council; it was still the largest country in the world in terms of landmass, occupying a crucial geopolitical position between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East; and it maintained a nuclear arsenal roughly equal to that of the United States.

The beginnings of Russian reassertion on the world stage are personified by Yevgeny Primakov, who became foreign minister (January 1996 – September 1998) and then prime minister under President Yeltsin. Reversing the Western-oriented course of the first half of the decade, Primakov prioritised challenging the US-led unipolar world order, while re-integrating Russia more closely with its former Soviet neighbours. According to Tsygankov, Primakov believed that 'Russia's new liberal values did not erase the need to maintain the status of a distinct Eurasianist great power and to balance Western influences.'[478] To counter the reality of a deficiency in material power and increase national self-esteem, Primakov promoted the doctrine of an 'active foreign policy.'[479]

In analysing this policy shift, deficiencies of structural realism become evident. Assertive behaviour, both defensive and offensive realists would argue, must be underpinned by an increase in a state's relative power capabilities: 'as the power of a state increases,' Gilpin suggests, 'it seeks to extend its territorial control, its political influence, and/or its domination of the international economy.'[480] Neoclassical realists maintain this general approach: 'Methodologically,' according to Rose, 'it calls for an emphasis on theoretically informed narratives that trace how relative

[478] Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, Fourth ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 19.

[479] Yevgeny M. Primakov, *Gody v Bol'shoy Politike* (Moscow: Kollektsiya Sovershenno Sekretno, 1999), 213-21.

[480] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 106. On the defensive and offensive realist position, respectively, see Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987); John J. Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War,' *International Security* 15, no. 1 (1990).

material power is translated into the behaviour of actual political decision-makers.'[481] In mid-1990s Russia, with the economy in freefall, this material basis was quite evidently lacking. The importance attributed to multilateral institutions, above all the United Nations Security Council, is also not easily represented by structural realist theory. Membership went along not just with increased leverage but signified great-power status. It appears that any explanation of Russia's shift to an 'active foreign policy' cannot but take ideational factors into account. On several occasions, Primakov suggested that reintegrating the former Soviet space would come at an economic cost, but in terms of prestige and securing the popular buy-in to internal reform, it was well worth paying.[482]

A 'statist' view of Russian national interest might describe Primakov's foreign policy stance most accurately.[483] He and others believed Russia could ill-afford to be preoccupied with domestic issues, while its geopolitical position and territorial integrity were threatened.[484] Statists are generally in favour of cooperating with the West when it is in Russia's interest, but insist that the 'principle of absolute power equality'[485] – that Russia's overall capability across all material dimensions be equal to that of the United States – be honoured at all times. 'Russia,' Primakov stated, 'has been and remains a great power, and its policy toward the outside world should

[481] Gideon Rose, 'Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,' *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 168.

[482] As expressed, for example, in an internal memorandum to the president on the issue of Russian-Belarusian integration. See Sherman W. Garnett, 'Russia and the West in the New Borderlands,' in Michael Mandelbaum, *The New Russian Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations, 1998), 75.

[483] Tsygankov argues that three distinct traditions of foreign policy have emerged over Russia's history: Westernist, Statist, and Civilizationist. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, ch. 1.

[484] Ibid., 100.

[485] Ibid., 101.

correspond to that status. (…) Geopolitical values are constants that cannot be abolished by historical developments.'[486]

These views became doctrine, as exemplified by the 1997 National Security Concept. The document envisaged Russia's relationship with 'other great powers' as an 'equal partnership.' Rather than attempting closer integration with the West, the programme suggested balancing 'global European and Asian economic and political actors' as well as strengthening security ties to CIS states. The biggest threats to the country were posed by a new 'geopolitical situation' combined with the weakness of the national economy.[487]

The single most important manifestation of that geopolitical threat was NATO expansion.[488] Russian observers perceived the continued importance attributed to the North Atlantic alliance by Western countries in two ways: they either did not see Russia as an equal partner in maintaining the global balance of power, or – far from being a 'worthy foe' – Europeans and Americans deemed Russia a source of regional instability that had to be contained. The 1994 Brussels Declaration, in which heads of state 'expected' and 'welcomed' an expansion of NATO 'that would reach to democratic states to our East,'[489] laid to rest Russian hopes of becoming a formative force in a new European security architecture. Boris Yeltsin, who had always appeared to be favourably disposed to the West, struck a sombre tone, warning that

[486] 'Primakov Starts With the CIS,' *Moskovskiye Novosti*, 14-21 January 1996, in Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Nogee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*, Fifth ed. (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2014), 121.

[487] 'Russian National Security Blueprint,' *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 26 December 1997, in Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, 102.

[488] For a detailed account of NATO expansion and Russian responses to it, see Joseph L. Black, *Russia Faces NATO Expansion: Bearing Gifts or Bearing Arms?* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

[489] 'Declaration of the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, 11 January 1994, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_24470.htm?mode=pressrelease.

Europe had not yet 'had time to rid itself of the legacy of the Cold War' and that NATO risked plunging both sides into a 'Cold Peace.'[490]

The outcry might have been based less on 'hard' security considerations but the emotional defeat which expansion signified.[491] Primakov admitted: rather than a 'military problem,' it was more of a 'psychological one.'[492] Roberts surmises, 'NATO's growth in post-Cold War Europe served as a symbol of Western accomplishment and Russian defeat.'[493] This corresponds to the psychological literature on social status, which lists shame and contempt as the other two emotions – next to anger – accompanying status loss. While shame attributes the loss of status to oneself, contempt blames the other side, which is generally perceived as socially inferior.[494] In practical terms, however, accommodation emerged as the only viable path. In May 1997, Russian negotiators concluded a cooperation agreement with the alliance. The relationship was institutionalized in the form of the Permanent Joint Council (PJC).

Critics viewed it as a declaration of surrender. Political scientist and presidential advisor Sergey Karaganov warned that NATO's plans meant a 'potential

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[490] 'Speech by President Yeltsin at the December 1994 CSCE Summit,' *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 7 December 1994, in Roland Dannreuther, 'Escaping the Enlargement Trap in Nato-Russian Relations,' *Survival* 41, no. 4 (1999): 146.

[491] According to Tsygankov, the Kremlin did not see NATO as a military threat in the 1990s, but largely as an 'insufficiently reformed' political organization. Andrei P. Tsygankov, 'The Sources of Russia's Fear of NATO,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 51, no. 2 (2018): 102. Even after expanding and building up its capabilities in Poland, Romania, and the Baltics, military analysts concluded that NATO presented no serious challenge to Russian security, nor did its four rotating battalions provide 'an effective deterrent.' Jorge Benitez, 'NATO Summit Special Series: Estonia and Latvia,' *Atlantic Council*, 3 July 2016, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/nato-summit-special-series-estonia-and-latvia.

[492] Yevgeny Primakov, quoted in Leonid M. Mlechin, *Ministry Inostrannykh Del: Romantiki i Tsiniki* (Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf 2001), 620. Similarly, broader security concerns, such as the historically founded 'encirclement thesis,' may also be framed in psychological terms.

[493] Kari Roberts, 'Directions: The United States,' in *Routledge Handbook of Russian Foreign Policy*, ed. Andrei P. Tsygankov (London: Routledge, 2018), 240.

[494] Theodore D. Kemper, *A Social Interactional Theory of Emotions* (New York, NY: Wiley, 1978), 136-38.

new Yalta,' a new split of Europe, on terms unfavourable to Russia.[495] NATO quickly became the prime enemy image evoked by hawkish voices in the security community, the 'civilizationalists,' for whom Yeltsin's and Primakov's 'statist' doctrine was too accommodating. Fear and anger play a predominant role in civilizationalist thought: fear of a world order dominated by the West, in which Russia would be demoted to a vassal state. Anger both at the West for having exploited Russia's weak position, and anger at one's own leadership for having made too many concessions already.

Towards the end of the decade, civilizationalist thought played an increasingly important role in debates on Russia's place in the world. Dating back to the sixteenth century, civilizationalism emphasises the distinctiveness of Russian culture, often by committing to the values of Orthodox Christianity, and calls for the expansion of Russia's territory as the best way of providing for its security. In the nineteenth century, civilizationalism was synonymous with striving for the 'Russian empire' and promoting Pan-Slavic unity. It then converged with Leninism in the early twentieth century, emphasising a direct challenge of the West in the form of world revolution, and lingered in the thinking of Soviet elites long after the revolutionary project was abandoned.[496] Most recently, civilizationalism has merged with Eurasianism, which considers the land-based Russian empire to be in a perpetual struggle with sea-based Atlantic powers. On the more moderate end of the contemporary civilizationalist spectrum, Gennady Zyuganov of the Russian

[495] Sergei Karaganov, 'The Threat of Another Defeat,' *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 3 February 1995, in Alexander Velichkin, 'NATO as Seen Through the Eyes of the Russian Press,' *NATO Review* 43, no. 2 (1995), http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1995/9502-6.htm.

[496] Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, 10.

Communist Party maintains that Russia constitutes a unique civilisation that must be isolated from Western decadence and shielded from US unipolar ambitions.[497]

Psychologically, the preconditions for a demise of Russian-Western relations appear to have been in place by the late 1990s. As chapter 3 argues, goal incongruity can induce shame and self-reproach or anger, depending on whom negative events are attributed to. If the subjectively perceived cause of anger persists, the emotion may be transformed into a permanent disposition – resentment – which determines subsequent interactions and policies.[498] Part of the blame was put on the Kremlin and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID).[499] Vladimir Lukin, ordinarily a liberal voice in the domestic political debate, lamented that Russia had been weak before, 'but it had a strong foreign policy.' Since the end of the Cold War, 'Russia has been weak and has had a weak foreign policy.'[500]

The main culprits, however, were the leaders of Western democracies. In the eyes of Russian elites, the other side had neglected the country's security concerns, denied its rightful status, and proven itself untrustworthy time and again. This latest charge, whether European or US leaders had made – and broken – any promises of non-expansion, continues to be the subject of debate.[501] The question that matters in FPA is how either side interpreted the process of expansion and the interactions that

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[497] Gennady Zyuganov, *Geografiya Pobedy* (Moscow, 1997).

[498] J. M. Barbalet, *Emotion, Social Theory, and Social Structure: A Macrosociological Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 133-39.

[499] See also Mlechin, *Ministry Inostrannykh Del: Romantiki i Tsiniki*.

[500] James Headley, *Russia and the Balkans: Foreign Policy from Yeltsin to Putin* (London: Hurst & Co., 2008), 9.

[501] The most widely accepted account is provided by Derek Averre: Gorbachev had agreed with Western leaders to accept German reunification within NATO 'in return for a tacit acceptance that the Soviet Union had interests in Central and Eastern Europe, that NATO would be reconstructed as part of a far-reaching post-Cold War settlement, and that neither its jurisdiction nor its military presence would be extended eastwards.' None of this was, however, codified in any treaty or agreement. Derek Averre, 'From Pristina to Tskhinvali: The Legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia's Relations with the West,' *International Affairs* 85, no. 3 (2009): 576.

accompanied it. To the Russians, the West seemed increasingly like an 'unreliable partner.'[502]

Once established, distrustful relationships and 'enemy images' are sticky. For reasons of 'cognitive simplicity,' human brains have evolved to represent 'groups as if they were a special category of individual, relatively unstable and with a relatively short shadow of the future.'[503] Even though group composition is unstable – more so in ancestral tribes than in modern nation states – emotionally charged attitudes are persistent and colour expectations of future relations with the other side. Often, that anthropomorphic view overpowers actual changes to the leadership. In that way, distrust cultivated in the 1990s may still bear on the relationship. Despite diplomatic initiatives and confidence-building measures surrounding the US-Russian 'reset,' for example, Putin played down hopes for an improvement in relations: 'the US is a very big ship and cannot change its course dramatically in a few months.' Besides, Obama would only be around for 'eight years maximum.'[504]

4.2. Russian responses to Western intervention in Kosovo

4.2.1. From Dayton to Rambouillet

Why did Russia care about the Balkans? That question is crucial in assessing the country's broader foreign policy stance in the late 1990s. Averre argues that criticism of Operation Allied Force (OAF) overwhelmingly focussed on security issues – the ramifications of a potential destabilisation of Yugoslavia and the

[502] Joshua R. I. Shifrinson, 'Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion,' *International Security* 40, no. 4 (2016): 9.

[503] The 'unitary actor heuristic,' according to Anthony C. Lopez, Rose McDermott, and Michael Bang Petersen, 'States in Mind: Evolution, Coalitional Psychology, and International Politics,' *International Security* 36, no. 2 (2011): 67.

[504] Ellen Barry, 'Putin Sounds Warning on Arms Talks,' *New York Times*, 29 December 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/30/world/europe/30russia.html.

dismantling of the global security order more broadly.[505] However, Serbia was of little strategic value to Russia. The military and economic links between the two countries were weak and there was no defence agreement. In fact, relations between Serbia (and, by extension, Yugoslavia) and Russia throughout the Cold War had been ambiguous at best. Rationalist-material thought has some difficulty explaining how an unyielding and irrational sympathy towards Milošević and the Serbs suddenly emerged, especially when compared to some of Russia's other strategic partnerships.[506] They also fail to connect anti-Western feelings to NATO expansion and the failed market reforms in the 1990s (as opposed to Russian self-criticism).

Russia's 'special relationship' with Serbia was a key theme repeatedly evoked throughout the crisis. Former communists and neo-imperialists admired the tenacity of Milošević to maintain the unity of the republic, while nationalists considered the ancient heartland of Slavic Orthodoxy worth preserving. According to David Mendeloff, historical memory, imprinted on Russian society through decades of mass education, directly impacted the perception of elites during the Kosovo crisis. The 'myth of Slavic brotherhood' placed cognitive limitations on their thought, causing their perception to be distorted and consequently limiting the scope of possible actions they thought were available.[507] Traditional ideational theories, he suggests, ignore or minimise popular historical ideas as independent causes of misperceptions.

Throughout much of the 1990s, Russia remained too hamstrung by material limitations and political instability to be of much aid to its 'Slavic brother.' In

[505] Averre, 'From Pristina to Tskhinvali: The Legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia's Relations with the West,' 581-82.

[506] David Mendeloff, '"Pernicious History" as a Cause of National Misperceptions: Russia and the 1999 Kosovo War,' *Cooperation and Conflict* 43, no. 1 (2008): 33-34.

[507] Ibid.

February 1994, when NATO first threatened to bomb Serb artillery units around the besieged Sarajevo, Russia came to the rescue by moving in its own troops to reinforce Serb positions. Elites celebrated the successful defiance of Western policy, but were wary that 'great power harmony might not tolerate many more such inspired initiatives.'[508] One and a half years later, and having used up his diplomatic capital, Yeltsin had little choice but to condone UN-sanctioned air strikes against the Bosnian Serb Army – NATO's first mission outside the territory of its member states. During the subsequent peace talks at Dayton, Ohio, Russian negotiators had to accept NATO command of peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russian objections to the use of force to keep Serb secessionists in check remained muted.[509] All of this contributed to a pent-up sense of helplessness and resentment among Russian elites, which would be discharged over the Kosovo question a few years later.

By the autumn of 1997, that question became hard to avoid for the major powers. Resistance towards Serb governance had increased since the early 1990s, leading to the establishment of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), an Albanian nationalist paramilitary force, in 1996. What followed was an escalating spiral of violence between the KLA and the Serb police. The members of the 'Contact Group' – the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia – which had initially been formed to deal with Bosnia, agreed to widen the remit of the group to coordinate an international response to the situation in Kosovo. Agreeing on the desired outcome was comparatively easy: an end to armed conflict and 'significant

[508] Allen C. Lynch, 'The Realism of Russia's Foreign Policy,' *Europe-Asia Studies* 53, no. 1 (2001): 14.
[509] Ibid., 15, 28.

autonomy' for Kosovo as a part of the FRY.[510] Getting there was the hard part: Kosovo Albanians rejected anything short of independence, while Milošević refused to withdraw Yugoslav troops.

Since the beginning of the Yugoslav wars, the Russian position had reflected its weak bargaining position and emphasised pragmatic cooperation and the institutionalisation of control mechanisms. Until early 1998, when Russia delayed consideration of an arms embargo against Serbia in the UNSC, the record shows few instances of open disagreement with the Western course of action. Considering that an embargo would also hurt the KLA, that a spill-over of the conflict could destabilise the region,[511] and having succeeded in toning down the draft resolution, the Russian delegation eventually voted for it at the end of March.[512] The embargo had little effect on the intensity of the conflict. By May, Serbian hostilities against the KLA and Albanian civilians had escalated, which was covered widely in the international media and prompted Western leaders to start thinking openly about military action against Serbia.

The issue caused a rift in the Contact Group. US and UK representatives decried Serbian actions while the Russians blamed Kosovar 'terrorists' and highlighted the progress made by the FRY towards meeting the goals defined by the Group. Yeltsin urged Milošević to be more receptive to diplomatic initiatives, if he wanted Russia to continue to be on his side.[513] Their talks produced a joint statement proclaiming that the FRY would reduce its security forces in certain areas and agreed

[510] 'Statement on Kosovo by the Contact Group of Foreign Ministers,' 24 September 1997, in Heike Krieger, *The Kosovo Conflict and International Law: An Analytical Documentation 1974-1999* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 121.

[511] However, Russian officials continued to deny that Kosovo posed a threat to regional or international peace and stability, so as not to establish the prerequisites for intervention.

[512] 'United Nations Security Council Resolution 1160,' 31 March 1998, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/252117?ln=en.

[513] Oleg Levitin, 'Inside Moscow's Kosovo Muddle,' *Survival* 42, no. 1 (2000): 132.

to let foreign diplomats and representatives of international organisations into Kosovo to monitor the situation.[514] The presence of international observers was a step forward, but did not stop advances of the separatists, which, arguably, felt emboldened by sabre-rattling coming out of Washington and Brussels. In July, Serb forces responded with a large-scale offensive of their own. What success they had in pushing back the separatists came at a high cost: civilians were terrorised, villages destroyed, and hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians displaced.

The Serb's conduct on the ground and Milošević's inflexibility made Russian leaders increasingly frustrated. Partly to put pressure on Belgrade, Russia voted for UNSC Resolution 1199, calling on the FRY to withdraw 'security units used for civilian repression' under Chapter VII of the Charter.[515] Yeltsin might have sanctioned the implicit use of threat against Yugoslavia, because Milošević had repeatedly reneged on his commitments.[516] At the same time, Russian drafters of the resolution believed the text did not lend itself to be interpreted as an authorisation to use force. Then-Permanent Representative to the UN Sergei Lavrov emphasised that there was 'no reasonable alternative' to a settlement through 'peaceful and political means,' especially not 'unilateral measures of force.'[517]

Leaders in Washington and Brussels had a different interpretation. On 24 September, the day after Resolution 1199 passed, the North Atlantic Council (NAC), NATO's decision-making body, issued an 'Activation Warning,' raising the level of

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[514] 'Joint Statement by Presidents Yeltsin and Milošević,' 16 June 1998, in Marc Weller, *The Crisis in Kosovo 1989-1999: From the Dissolution of Yugoslavia to Rambouillet and the Outbreak of Hostilities* (Cambridge: Documents and Analysis Publishing Ltd., 1999), 292.

[515] 'United Nations Security Council Resolution 1199,' 23 September 1998, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/260416?ln=en.

[516] Alex J. Bellamy, *Kosovo and International Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 92.

[517] Sergei Lavrov, 'Statement to the UN Security Council concerning Resolution 1199,' 23 September 1998, in: Krieger, *The Kosovo Conflict and International Law: An Analytical Documentation 1974-1999*, 153.

military preparedness in anticipation of an air campaign in Kosovo. In response, Russian diplomats signalled that they would veto any further resolutions explicitly authorising the use of force.[518] This position narrowed the scope for collective action within the Security Council framework.[519] Had they tried, and failed, to secure a UN mandate, a decision to strike anyway would have directly defied the Security Council. Instead, the US took the lead in pushing for 'humanitarian intervention' in Yugoslavia. Some unfortunate statements by Western officials might have contributed to the Russians' self-perception as 'defenders of international law.' Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, for example, was quoted as saying that, 'if force is necessary, then we will not be deterred by the fact that the Russians do not agree with that.'[520]

Russian responses to the Activation Warning were characterised by anger and defiance: Defence Minister Igor Sergeyev warned that Russia would be forced to break off its relations with NATO, START II ratification would be halted, ultimately leading to the start of a 'new Cold War.'[521] When the NAC, on 13 October, issued another warning of air strikes that would commence within 96 hours, Colonel-General Ivashov declared that in case of aggressive measures against Yugoslavia, Russia could pull out of the arms embargo and begin 'a full-scale military cooperation with Belgrade.'[522] Yeltsin and Russian negotiators struck a more measured tone and diplomatic efforts continued in the background, eventually pre-

[518] Bellamy, *Kosovo and International Society*, 93.

[519] The Independent Commission report on Kosovo concluded that Russia's 'rigid commitment to veto any enforcement action was the major factor forcing NATO into an unmandated action.' Independent International Commission on Kosovo, *The Kosovo Report: Conflict, International Response, Lessons Learned* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4, 161.

[520] Madeleine K. Albright, 'Press Conference on Kosovo,' 8 October 8 1998, in: ibid., 353 (annex 7, end note 22).

[521] Iulia Berezovskaia, 'V Predchuvstvii Voyny Posol'stva Pokidayut Belgrad,' *Izvestia*, 7 October 1998. Integrum.

[522] Dmitry Gornostaev, 'Zapad Pred'yavlyayet Ul'timatum Belgradu,' *Segodnya*, 14 October 1998, https://www.uni-potsdam.de/u/slavistik/zarchiv/1098wc/n190h14.htm.

empting military action. Throughout those days in late 1998, the administration repeatedly had to walk back threats issued by Ivashov and other military leaders – prompting the Kremlin to emphasise that President and Prime Minister made foreign policy, not the military.[523]

The Activation Order helped get Milošević to agree to a ceasefire. Yugoslavia would withdraw heavy weapons and parts of its security forces from Kosovo and allow independent observers to enter the province to ensure compliance with UNSCR 1199. The Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) was established, introducing some 2,000 OSCE observers to monitor conditions on the ground and NATO planes providing air reconnaissance. Having avoided Western intervention, Russian reactions transformed from threats to a mixture of defiance and triumphalism. The reason military action against the FRY had been averted, Primakov suggested, was that Russia had threatened 'dramatic shifts' in relations with the alliance. The prospect of 'many changes in [their] policy orientation' had intimidated NATO into abstaining from using force.[524] And Foreign Minister Ivanov confidently ensured the Duma that they would get NATO to cancel their plans for a military operation altogether.[525]

Indignation, regret, threats, defiance. Not only do these expressions illustrate that anger can take many different forms. The fact that they play such a pronounced role in Russian foreign policy discourse of the time supports another central claim found in the psychological and linguistic literature: anger triggers an urge to

[523] Dmitry Yakushkin, Press Secretary to President Yeltsin, quoted in Yuriy Davydov, 'Problema Kosovo v Rossiyskom Vnutripoliticheskom Kontekste,' in: Dmitry Trenin, 'Kosovo: Mezhdunarodnyye Aspekty Krizisa,' *Carnegie Moscow Center*, 13 June 1999, https://carnegie.ru/1999/06/13/ru-pub-35788, 272.

[524] Bobo Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Reality, Illusion and Mythmaking* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 55.

[525] 'Transcript of Plenary Meeting of the State Duma,' Press Service of the State Duma, 14 October 1998. Integrum.

communicate one's experience. Chapter 3 argues that the experience of emotions indicates that a fundamental concern has been touched. At the interpersonal level, emotions have a crucial role as communicative devices – conveying to another person information about one's feelings, intentions, and appraisal of the meaning of a relationship. These general social functions are fulfilled by the expressions of anger encountered in Russian responses to NATO policy in different ways: firstly, to signify the importance of, and commitment to, the concern that has been impacted ('this issue is too important for me to concede on'), to point up the competitive stance ('I will not relent'), and threaten consequences ('I will harm you if you do not back down').[526] In that sense, expressing anger may be quite 'rational.' Behavioural research shows that in ultimatum bargaining settings, 'angry' recipients of a one-time offer were generally made higher offers by the other participants than 'non-angry' ones.[527]

International politics, of course, rarely correspond to a bargaining game with only one iteration. Self-perceptions of power and prestige, arguably, also influenced the outcome in the case at hand. NATO leaders seemed unfazed by Russian expressions of anger. Despite the installation of the KVM and the fact that the Yugoslavian withdrawal appeared to be going to plan, the Activation Order was not revoked. Armed intervention thus remained on the table and became even more probable around December, when both the KLA and Serbian forces broke the ceasefire. Fighting reached a gruesome apex in January 1999 with the killing of 45 Kosovo Albanians by Serbian security forces in the village of Račak in central

[526] Gerben A. van Kleef et al., 'Anger in Social Conflict: Cross-Situational Comparisons and Suggestions for the Future,' *Group Decision and Negotiation* 17 (2008): 16-17.

[527] Eric Dijk et al., 'A Social Functional Approach to Emotions in Bargaining: When Communicating Anger Pays and When It Backfires,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 94, no. 4 (2008).

Kosovo.[528] Russian observers feared that the incident would provide a reason for war, as NATO commanders reminded Milošević of their readiness to use force.

As conditions on the ground deteriorated and the peace process had reached an impasse, the Contact Group decided to make another large-scale attempt at a diplomatic solution, holding peace talks at the Château Rambouillet in France. The Kosovo Albanian and Serb delegations took turns obstructing the talks, opposing specific political and military provisions of the Interim Agreement: the Kosovo Albanians wanted the final accord to include a provision for a binding referendum on independence after three years, while the Serbs took issue with the implementation proposal, fearing that the wording could warrant a NATO-led force getting access to all of Yugoslavia.[529]

Unsurprisingly, the Russians were equally opposed to a leading role for NATO. Their repeated reassurances to vote down any UNSC resolution allowing for the use of force hampered any leverage they might have had over the Milošević regime. Adamantly, Yeltsin declared to Clinton and German Chancellor Schröder, 'we won't let anybody touch Kosovo.'[530] Russian elites cannot but have experienced some dissonance between the recognition sought and the role they actually played in deciding the fate of the Balkans. There was an increasing perception that Russia was transforming into a policy-taker and junior partner of Western countries and institutions. At the same time, they wanted the country to be an indispensable player on the world stage, a great power among great powers. Its 'dynamic and well-balanced foreign policy is an important stabilizing factor in international affairs,' the

[528] Alex Bellamy, 'Reconsidering Rambouillet,' *Contemporary Security Policy* 22, no. 1 (2001): 22.

[529] Contact Group, 'Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo,' 23 February 1999, in *Security and Peace* 17, no. 3.

[530] Dmitri Gornostaev and Valeriy Sokolov, 'Boris Yeltsin Ob'yavilchto My ne Dadim Tronut Kosovo,' *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 19 February 1999. Integrum.

Foreign Minister proclaimed. 'Most countries recognize that the resolution of major modern problems is impossible without Russia's direct participation and without taking its interests into account.'[531]

Blame for the ultimate failure of the Rambouillet talks can be found on both sides. Moscow did its part to give Milošević a false sense of security. And NATO's inflexible position, failing to 'relent on the implementation provisions,' also played a role, as the International Commission report concludes.[532] Last-ditch efforts to persuade Milošević to accept the settlement failed and on 20 March, and OSCE's verification mission withdrew from Kosovo. This provided the determining factor – critics would argue, the pretext – for the installation of peacekeepers by force.[533] On 23 March, OAF began, targeting military installations and dual-use infrastructure across Yugoslavia.

4.2.2. The discursive response

Russian responses to OAF were dominated by anger about the disrespect for their position and standing within the international community. They were also tinged with fear of a dilution of international law – the conventional interpretation of international law under the aegis of the UN, to be more precise – and of Kosovo fanning the flames of secessionism at home. The verbal and written records provide evidence for this, as do some concrete actions on the part of the Russian leadership. Let us examine the discursive angle first.

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[531] Igor Ivanov, 'Transcript of the Foreign Minister's Press Conference,' Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press Centre, 22 January 1999, Integrum.

[532] Independent International Commission, *The Kosovo Report: Conflict, International Response, Lessons Learned* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 157. This, in part, was founded on the Clinton administration's belief that a peacekeeping mission led by the UN was bound to fail just like it had in Bosnia. See Headley, *Russia and the Balkans: Foreign Policy from Yeltsin to Putin*, 359.

[533] John Norris, *Collision Course: NATO, Russia, and Kosovo* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005), Foreword by Strobe Talbott.

There are psychological reasons why officials couched their outrage over OAF primarily in terms of the challenge it posed to international law. Legal arguments, when viewed through the prism of emotion, are fundamentally moral claims.[534] Evolutionary theory suggests that the roots of acting in accordance with social rules, of which international law is part, lies in reciprocal altruism:[535] cooperating dyads may reap larger benefits that single actors, defectors should be punished. When rule violations go unpunished, negative emotions are generated. In the social context, these emotions are typically 'other-condemning,' such as anger, contempt, and disgust.[536] Anger is the strongest of the three, denoting a perceived injustice against the self. When it is evoked, responses are likely to take on a moral dimension. The impact on 'the self' is discernible from the elements of personal injury, and insult, in Russian reactions.

Some reactions made it seem as if the fact that Russia had not been consulted was just as appalling as the bombing itself. In an emotion-laden televised address, Yeltsin expressed both indignation and worry: OAF was a 'blow to the entire international community,' a 'very serious step' that had ignited 'war in Europe and possibly beyond' and it was 'incomprehensible' to him how such a step could have been taken without Security Council approval. To save 'hundreds and hundreds of people,' Yeltsin urged Western leaders to restart negotiations with Milošević and asked the world to 'join all of Russia in its indignation' and to 'help Clinton not to

[534] For an interdisciplinary treatment of the pervasion of emotions through the legal system, see Susan Bandes and Jeremy Blumenthal, 'Emotion and the Law,' *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 8, no. 1 (2012).

[535] Mark Ridley and Richard Dawkins, 'The Natural Selection of Altruism,' in *Altruism and Helping Behavior: Social, Personality, and Developmental Psychology*, ed. J. Philippe Rushton and Richard M. Sorrentino (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1981).

[536] Jonathan Haidt, 'The Moral Emotions,' in *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, ed. Richard J. Davidson, H. Hill Goldsmith, and Klaus R. Scherer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Cendri A. Hutcherson and James J. Gross, 'The Moral Emotions: A Social-Functionalist Account of Anger, Disgust, and Contempt,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 100, no. 4 (2011).

take this tragic step.' 'A tragic step!', he repeated.[537] This was echoed in another statement by Yeltsin, presented to the UNSC by Russian representative Sergei Lavrov the same day: the use of 'naked aggression' made it necessary that Russia 'reconsider its relationship with NATO.' Wanting to leave no doubt that the Yeltsin administration was serious, he added that if the conflict escalated further, 'Russia reserves the right to take adequate measures, including military ones, to ensure its own and the security of all of Europe.'[538]

Foreign Minister Ivanov called it the 'first act of aggression against an independent state in Europe since the end of World War II' and suggested it was part of a larger effort to establish a US-led unipolar world order, and 'NATO-colonisation.'[539] Primakov, too, spoke of a 'blow to the world order' and emphasised the lengths to which he and Yeltsin had gone to try and dissuade President Clinton from 'tragic' and 'dramatic' path he had chosen.[540] Their rhetoric exemplifies the use of stereotypes and simple good/bad juxtapositions to express anger at an outgroup, while emphasising the virtuousness of one's own side. In that way, the speaker attempts to substantiate why outrage is warranted and seeks external verification of, and solidarity with, their feeling state. Perhaps their primary function, comparisons and juxtapositions are meant to provide an advance justification of responsive actions.

Averill suggests that 'the typical instigation to anger is a value judgment. More than anything else, anger is an attribution of blame.' Attributions of blame are often

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[537] Boris Yeltsin, 'Television Address of the President of the Russian Federation on the Threat of a NATO Strike on Yugoslavia,' Press Service of the President, 24 March 1999. Integrum.

[538] Boris Yeltsin, 'Statement by the President of the Russian Federation,' presented to the UN Security Council by Russian Representative Sergey Lavrov, New York, 24 March 1999, in: Krieger, *The Kosovo Conflict and International Law: An Analytical Documentation 1974-1999*, 424-25.

[539] Igor Ivanov, 'Speech to the Duma,' 27 March 1999, in: ibid., 482.

[540] Yevgeny Primakov, 'Nemedlenno Ostanovit' Nuzhno etu Praktiku Bombardirovok,' NTV Television Interview with Svetlana Sorokina, 25 March 1999. Integrum.

tinged with self-serving biases or influenced by other feelings. The most widespread consequence of anger is a tendency for a person to 'rationalize their own anger' and frame their appraised experience and action tendencies in a way that makes it seem their anger 'was for the good.'[541] Affective experience, in this example, blurs the line between cognition and emotion. Because ex-post rationalization often goes along with self-deception, it is hard to distinguish whether leaders present falsehoods deliberately or do so unintentionally, or whether the expression of emotion itself is strategic or involuntary. By contributing to 'construct particular issues as sensitive and volatile,' even instrumental displays of anger may lie 'outside the realm of standard cost-benefit calculations,' as Hall acknowledges.[542] 'Irrational' anger might nonetheless be very useful to convey that a red line has been crossed.

As has been argued, the nature and intensity of emotion depends on the concern that is impacted. The degree of anger, and how exactly it manifests itself, depends on the object or event that provoked the angry response. Different concerns weigh differently on decision-makers' minds. Status, for example, appears to be valued very highly by Russian elites. But even within the status dimensions, there are variations with respect to the intensity of anger, depending on the specific concern that has been touched. Russian interpretations of its relative status, Forsberg argues, depend on the nature of the interaction and the issues at stake. If they are 'military or economic,' 'Russia is more willing to understand,' i.e. accept, its relative status. But if 'international norms and questions of justice' are contested, 'Russia is more likely to interpret Western action as violating its status.' Conversely, 'it is more likely to

[541] James Averill, 'Studies on Anger and Aggression: Implications for Theories of Emotion,' *American Psychologist* 38 (1983): 1150-51.

[542] Todd H. Hall, *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 4.

interpret its own action as enhancing its status when it is defending such values differently from the West.'[543]

Throughout the early days and weeks of OAF, collective outrage in large part drove the combative rhetoric and actions of the administration. According to one commentator, the reaction of elites 'bordered on psychosis.'[544] Whatever anger Yeltsin, Primakov, and Ivanov felt over Western disrespect was thus exacerbated by pressure put on them by other domestic players. For years, nationalists and communists had criticised the administration for being too accommodating towards the West. Now they emphasised Russian's civilizationalist ties to their 'Slavic brothers' in Serbia[545] – arguably, a self-evident issue given the long historic precedents. In terms of policy, however, the national agenda was effectively altered 'from issues of poverty, corruption and economic crisis to national dignity, Western imperialism and external threat to Russia.'[546]

4.2.3. The behavioural response

The assessment of OAF in political discourse was, therefore, virtually unanimous across all factions: the air strikes were morally reprehensible and in violation of international law; the humanitarian reasons awarded by Western leaders a mere pretence for their ambition to consolidate NATO's role as Europe's 'policeman' and establish American hegemony. Among the great powers, only Russia was actively working towards a peaceful resolution of the Kosovo crisis.

[543] Tuomas Forsberg, 'Status Conflicts between Russia and the West: Perceptions and Emotional Biases,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014): 323.

[544] Maksim Yusin, 'Rossiyskuyu Politiku Zakhlestnuli Emotsii,' *Izvestia*, 26 March 1999. Integrum.

[545] Gennady Zyuganov, 'Ostanovit' Agressiyu,' *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 27 March 1999. Integrum.

[546] Vladimir Brovkin, 'Discourse on NATO In Russia During the Kosovo War,' *Demokratizatsiya* 7, no. 4 (1999), http://demokratizatsiya.pub/archives/07-4_brovkin.pdf, 558.

Because Western leaders were disrespectful and suffered from delusions of grandeur, however, its position had not been heard.

In diplomatic practice, however, administration officials were walking a tightrope: vigorous opposition to NATO enjoyed widespread support by all sides of the domestic political spectrum. On the other hand, Yeltsin and his ministers felt that they had to tread carefully in order not to do lasting damage to Russia's relationship with its Western partners, on which it was economically reliant. As Primakov recounted, throughout the crisis, Russian negotiators were reminded not to isolate themselves from the 'international community' over Kosovo.[547] As soon as indignation over the bombings subsided somewhat, Yeltsin sought to mend ties with the West, lending further support to the hypothesis that the administration pursued conflicting aims throughout the crisis. The difficulty of weighing up prestige against profit became evident on the very first day of OAF, as Yeltsin and Primakov deliberated whether to abort the Prime Minister's trip to IMF talks in Washington.

Having learned about the imminent bombings while on his way to Washington, Primakov ordered his plane to be turned around and return to Moscow.[548] The purpose of the trip was to negotiate loan guarantees with the IMF. Cancelling was meant to be a diplomatically unprecedented and provocative gesture, although probably less impulsive than it seemed: Russian officials had already signalled that if bombing started, the talks were off.[549] Critical voices, mainly associated with the Westernist and economic-liberalist camps, called the gesture 'spectacular and

[547] Primakov, *Gody v Bol'shoy Politike*, 352.

[548] Although it can be debated whether Primakov's U-turn constituted a 'disproportionate' reaction. For reasons of domestic perception and personal credibility, it arguably was the only viable option available to him.

[549] Primakov's own testimony suggests that he had informed 'the Americans that in case of a strike, I will interrupt my visit and come back home. They knew it.' The ultimate decision to return was reached after contacting President Yeltsin from the airplane, who 'supported this decision.' Yevgeny Primakov, 'Nemedlenno Ostanovit' Nuzhno etu Praktiku Bombardirovok.'

abstract,' in no way corresponding to the 'difficult socio-political and economic situation,'[550] suggested it had sacrificed critical economic aid, and represented a turn from efforts to 'build a modern society' to 'communist-style demagogy.'[551]

Why did Yeltsin and Primakov commit themselves to provocation before the first bombs had even been dropped? Traditional rationalist or game-theoretical models would consider Primakov's 'U-turn' an example of a 'costly signal.'[552] A signal (in this case, the U-turn) is intended to communicate an actor's preferences and judgments (expressing outrage at NATO intervention, which is generally intended to restore status or dignity).[553] Signals become more credible, the higher the cost incurred by the sender (economic disadvantages due to forfeiting IMF talks). In this sense, sanctions can also be regarded as signals, if they come at some cost to the side imposing them. Regina Heller outlines this in her treatment of the affective logic underlying the Kosovo conflict: emotion can explain why individuals opt for 'costly signals' or breaches of established norms and practices, even if 'from the outside, such action occurs costly, sometimes risky, even useless, if the addressee does not change its attitude.'[554] That argument does not refute signalling theory. On the contrary, incorporating affective information and inferences about leaders' personal

[550] Grigory Yavlinsky, leader of the 'Yabloko' party, quoted in Nikolay Ul'yanov, 'Strana Podderzhala Primakova,' *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 25 March 1999, University of Alberta archives, https://sites.ualberta.ca/~khineiko/NG_97_99/1149879.htm.

[551] Vlast', 'Primakov Razvernul Stranu,' *Kommersant*, 30 March 1999, https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/15317.

[552] On rationalist theories on signalling, see Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970). (Jervis refers to a costly signal as an 'index.') See also James D. Fearon, 'Signaling Versus the Balance of Power and Interests: An Empirical Test of a Crisis Bargaining Model,' *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 38, no. 2 (1994); 'Rationalist Explanations for War,' *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995).

[553] P. Shaver et al., 'Emotion Knowledge: Further Exploration of a Prototype Approach,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 52, no. 6 (1987): 107.

[554] Regina Heller, 'Russia's Quest for Respect in the International Conflict Management in Kosovo,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014): 335. See also Rose McDermott, *Political Psychology in International Relations* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 15.

impressions (of one another) can improve applications of rationalist models to empirical cases.[555]

The same point can be made about the Russian response to Kosovo at large. According to Mendeloff, rationalist models and 'cognitive theories of misperception,' even if they do incorporate historical memory and popular opinion,[556] remain incomplete and unsatisfying. Existing theories could not capture 'the full impact of societal views of history on leaders' perceptions of their strategic interests, and the interests and intentions of others.' Most importantly, they did not treat the content of 'popular historical ideas' that could cause 'national misperceptions' seriously.[557] By taking the content of these ideas into account, Russian leaders' intense reaction to OAF becomes more understandable. In part, it was based on a distorted interpretation of Russia's history in the Balkans, which contributed to unwavering support of the Serbian regime and further strengthened elites' negative emotional disposition towards the West.

Emotions carry information on the meaning of the interpersonal relationship. Anger, like all negative emotions, signals a desire for change – in this case, a return to the status-quo ante. The person expressing anger signifies that they have re-appraised the meaning of the relationship and, relative to it, their concerns or self-interest. It is this re-appraisal that occurs as part of the experience of anger that can promote risky, unconventional, and seemingly self-destructive behaviour. According

[555] On the affective and neuropsychological foundations of signalling theory, see Todd Hall and Keren Yarhi□Milo, 'The Personal Touch: Leaders' Impressions, Costly Signaling, and Assessments of Sincerity in International Affairs,' *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (2012).

[556] For example, Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976); Alexander George, 'The Causal Nexus between Cognitive Beliefs and Decision-Making Behaviour: The 'Operational Code' Belief System,' in *Psychological Models in International Politics*, ed. Lawrence S. Falkowski (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979).

[557] Mendeloff, '"Pernicious History" as a Cause of National Misperceptions: Russia and the 1999 Kosovo War,' 34.

to Welch Larson and Shevchenko, a state's 'disproportionate reaction to perceived humiliations' provides 'indirect evidence of concern for status.' By acting as spoilers and 'engaging in obstructionist behaviour,' states try to demonstrate their importance, restore their status and dignity.[558]

In many instances, obstructive behaviour has the added benefit of establishing what we might call normative distance to the counterpart. Tajfel and Turner argue that individuals strive to belong to social groups with 'positive value connotations,' which enhances their self-esteem. The evaluation of one's own group works through social comparison with a reference group. If the comparison is deemed to be unfavourable, the individual has three ways to react to their perceived 'negative or threatened social identity:' leaving or disassociating themselves from their group, which, evidently, is seldom an option for political leaders; or by engaging in either 'social creativity' or 'competition.'[559] In other words, changing the terms of comparison or promoting comparison along dimensions salient and favourable to one's own group. By tarnishing the other side, boycotting and spoiling interaction, Primakov and Yeltsin may have aimed at creating, by comparison, a more positive identity for their own 'group.'

Besides, there was no good alternative to turning around. Losses weigh heavier on people's minds than potential gains. Primakov's return to Moscow essentially amounted to damage control. Doing 'business as usual' in Washington, on the other hand, would have cemented Russia's role as policy-taker and signalled that its leaders would stand idly by as its declared national interests were violated.

[558] Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, 'Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy,' *International Security* 34, no. 4 (2010): 70.

[559] Henri Tajfel and John Turner, 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict,' in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1979), 40-43.

Answering domestic critics and explicitly addressing the trade-off between Russian pride and potential economic damage, Primakov said 'our political principles are not for sale.'[560] In psychological experiments, Turner and Brown have shown that individuals in certain circumstances will sacrifice personal and group economic gain for the sake of a more positive in-group distinctiveness.[561] This notion is reflected in the overall response to his 'U-turn' in the domestic debate, which was largely positive.[562]

In retrospect, however, the 'rather emotional' cancellation struck many not as a 'policy,'[563] certainly not like a policy worthy of a great power. Aiming to issue a more deliberate and unitary response to OAF, Yeltsin followed up with some concerted actions: Russia's chief envoy to NATO was recalled to Moscow, the country's participation in the Alliance's 'Partnership for Peace' programme was terminated, and plans for a NATO communications mission to Moscow were put on hold. The President further called for a meeting of the UN Security Council and on NATO to immediately cease any military actions against sovereign Yugoslavia.[564]

In mid-April, Yeltsin appointed former Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin as special envoy to the Balkans, tasked with negotiating the terms of Serbian troop withdrawal with NATO partners. His willingness to talk, along with the removal of the hawkish Primakov several weeks later signalled a desire to salvage the relationship with the West. Throughout May, as NATO bombings continued, Chernomyrdin conducted a series of talks with Milošević and Western officials,

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[560] Renate Flottau et. al, 'Alle Serben im Krieg,' *Der Spiegel*, 29 March 1999, http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-10630204.html.

[561] Rupert Brown and John C. Turner, 'The Crisscross Categorization Effect in Intergroup Discrimination,' *Clinical Psychology* 18 (1979).

[562] Nikolay Ul'yanov, 'Strana Podderzhala Primakova.'

[563] Alexey Mitrofanov, Chairman of the Duma Committee on Geopolitics, quoted in Ibid.

[564] Boris Yeltsin, 'Statement by the President of the Russian Federation,' Press Service of the President, 25 March 1999. Integrum.

among them US President Clinton, Vice President Gore, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, Chinese General Secretary Jiang Zemin, and Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari.

The diplomatic tug-of-war, from a Russian perspective, can be viewed primarily as an effort to restore and enhance the country's prestige. Chernomyrdin was prepared to agree to a NATO peacekeeping force, so long as Russian participation was guaranteed – in a separate sector of Kosovo and outside of NATO's command structure. Worried about a cementation of a partition of the country, the Western allies rejected his conditions. Chernomyrdin, however, had little room for manoeuvre as the alternative might have involved a US ground invasion of Kosovo.[565] On 8 June, at the G8 summit in Cologne, the Russian delegation agreed to the allies' terms, paving the way for a Military Technical Agreement with Yugoslavia, which would govern the withdrawal of its forces and the deployment of an international peacekeeping mission.

The agreement received a mixed response at home. On the surface, the President's objectives – and end to the bombing, maintaining the integrity of Yugoslavia, and a UN mandate for the peacekeeping operation – were met. However, Russian negotiators were widely believed to have had little do with the final terms of the agreement. News reports suggested that the delegation had mislead the public, knowing that NATO would have never agreed to a separate Russian mission in Kosovo.[566] Hardliners and high-ranking members of the Russian military felt that Russian interests were not served. Colonel-General Leonid Ivashov was particularly vocal. Upon his return from negotiations with Milošević in Belgrade on 4 June, along

[565] 'A Kosovo Chronology,' *PBS Frontline*, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/etc/cron.html.

[566] Gennady Sysoyev, 'Rossiya Dogovorilas' s 'Semerkoy:' Generalam Prikazano Molchat',' *Kommersant*, 9 June 1999, https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/219797.

with Chernomyrdin and Foreign Minister Ivanov, he openly criticized the plan sponsored by the other seven members of the G8 – a plan which his superiors had helped broker.[567]

The incident is illustrative of the chaotic levels the domestic infighting – between different branches of government, opposition figures, members of the media, and within the administration – had reached at that point. Comparing the divergences in ambition and opinion that were openly displayed by Russian officials then to the well-aligned foreign policy apparatus under Putin illustrates just how powerful a shared vision and emotional disposition towards an 'outgroup' can be. It is also fair to ask which role the president, the members of his government and general staff played at different points. In his later years, Yeltsin was quite evidently plagued by alcoholism and illness, raising the question of mental fitness and whether, towards the end of his presidency, he still had a role to play in foreign policy decision-making. On the other hand, Yeltsin was known for his autocratic leadership style and tendencies towards megalomania.[568] Having personality traits such as these – which many world leaders display, if not from the outset, then obtained throughout their time in office – suggests that Yeltsin would have been reluctant to give up control. That observation, however, has little bearing on the issue of consciousness and aptitude.

[567] Gennady Sysoyev, 'Rossiyskiye Generaly Protiv Mira v Yugoslavii,' *Kommersant*, 5 June 1999, https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/219637.

[568] Robert H. Donaldson, 'Boris Yeltsin's Foreign Policy Legacy,' *Tulsa Journal of Comparative and International Law* 7, no. 2 (2000), https://digitalcommons.law.utulsa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1079&context=tjcil.

4.2.4. Standoff at Slatina airfield

Irrespective of how leaders tried to sell it – in subjective terms, the failure to obtain any meaningful concessions at the G8 dealt another blow to Russian national self-esteem. With political leaders humiliated by the domestic backlash and generals vexed by the strategic setback, the stage was set for confrontation. On 12 June 1999, 'Russia Day,' when the country celebrated the declaration of sovereignty, Russian paratroopers and British-led NATO troops found themselves in an unprecedented stand-off at Slatina airport in Pristina.

Rationalist theory provides for a widely-accepted explanation of the incident. Russia wanted to make sure that it would play a formative role in post-war Kosovo. As one structural realist analysis reads, 'Russia was compelled to assert its entitlement to interests befitting a major power.' Kosovo, as part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, by extension, fell within its sphere of interest.[569] To an extent, the policy was a success. Arguably, Russia's bargaining position with respect to the implementation of the peacekeeping mission had been strengthened. The fact that Yeltsin did not order the incursion of Russian aircraft into the closed Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Romanian airspace is further indicative of a rational risk/return consideration. Provoking a larger confrontation with NATO was not a risk worth taking.

Russian fears of being squeezed out of Kosovo were mirrored by NATO generals. Wesley Clark, then Supreme Allied Commander Europe, suggested that the West should have been tougher: 'we had left too much room for interpretation, which could lead to a partition. Now it seemed to be up to the military to correct the

[569] Roberts, 'Directions: The United States,' 241.

Russian view by changing the facts on the ground, if we could.'[570] While assessments based on material power and strategy may capture the essence of the decision quite well, a psychological examination of the events of June 1999 reveals additional layers of Russian thinking and carries lessons on subsequent Russian conduct.

Technically speaking, Russia's 'airport dash' was in accordance with international law. UNSC Resolution 1244 outlined post-war arrangements and did not specify the role of NATO or Russia in the command structure of the peacekeeping force. The resolution was signed on 10 June, the day the Russian paratroopers entered Kosovo from Bosnia. This led even moderates to hail the move as a great success: 'sending Russian troops into Kosovo was an attempt, in a quite dramatic and audacious form, to show that as long as the UN exists, international agreements must be fulfilled,' one article quotes Vladimir Lukin.[571] The way in which it was framed as a virtuous act to protect the foundations of international law, however, conveys not just hyperbole, but the existence of deeper, emotional motives: 'now the whole world has seen that we can act brilliantly in an apparently hopeless situation. (…) the West has finally begun to realise that it can't treat Russia like some lackey.'[572]

Quite the opposite to its intended aim of restoring pride and great-power status, 'posturing' of the kind that followed the Pristina incident 'sometimes smacked of desperation,' as Bo Lobo argues.[573] As details emerged about what had happened in

[570] Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 387.
[571] Gennady Charodeyev, 'Vladimir Lukin: Prikaz mog Otdat' Tol'ko Odin Chelovek – Prezident,', *Izvestia*, 15 June 1999, in Headley, *Russia and the Balkans: Foreign Policy from Yeltsin to Putin*, 413-14.
[572] Ibid.
[573] Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Reality, Illusion and Mythmaking*, 55.

Pristina, domestic criticism became more vocal, framing the campaign as 'adventurous' and 'mindless.' In an interview with Ivashov, a reporter suggested that to some, the operation had seemed like 'throwing a battalion into Pristina, without thinking about the pitfalls [lit.: the stones hidden underwater].' The General tried to reassure that the 'political and military consequences were calculated thoroughly,' and that backup units had been in 'full readiness,' should it have become necessary. 'But what is the point of readiness, if the skies are closed to us?', the reporter probed, to which Ivashov struggled to provide a convincing answer. 'I repeat: everything was calculated. And international law was on our side.'[574]

As Yeltsin later acknowledged, retribution might have played a bigger than strategic aims. Vital concerns had been impacted by the events leading up to 12 June. Not just Russian prestige was at stake, internalised by the President and high-ranking members of his administration, but also their personal pride as defined by how their political legacy would be viewed. A more concrete concern, their political future and personal well-being was threatened by how domestic competitors judged their handling of the Kosovo crisis. In his memoir, Yeltsin admits that the decision to put troops in harm's way did not come easily, in part due to the lack of a good reason: 'why were we demonstrating military boldness and waving our fists after the fight was over? Still, I decided that Russia must make a crowning gesture, even if it had no military significance.' The main point, he thought, was that 'Russia had not permitted itself to be defeated in the moral sense. It had not let itself be split. It had not been dragged into the war.' Pristina, in the eyes of Russian elites, might have been a military failure, but a 'moral victory.'[575]

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[574] Leonid Ivashov, 'General-Polkovnik Leonid Ivashov: Segodnya Nash Pervyy Samolet Syadet v Kosovo,' *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 26 June 1999. Integrum.

[575] Boris N. Yeltsin, *Midnight Diaries* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2000), 266.

Actions precipitated by anger are largely symbolic.[576] The seizure of Pristina airport, despite ending in a precarious stand-off, can be viewed as such – largely symbolic. The primary objective, restoring Russian pride, had been met by arriving at the airfield before British troops did. The authors of the plan[577] were aware of the risk of an armed clash with NATO but deemed it small compared to the gains in prestige.[578] Leaving the psychology of decision-making out of the picture complicates attempts to produce a comprehensive explanation of Russia's move.

4.3. Becoming the 'true' Europe

Western academic analysis of Russian foreign policy at the turn of the millennium converged around some central themes. First, Russia, in material terms, was no longer a force to be reckoned with. Its industrial base had been eroded, there was no functioning financial sector, and the military was disorganised and relying on antiquated technology.[579] Second, executive decision-making was erratic and non-transparent. Government agencies, individuals within the administration and the military, and oligarchs were frequently pursuing their own agenda on the international stage.[580] It was these actors who had, mainly out of their own interest, upheld Russian ties to the G7 countries and pushed for continuing integration into Western-led liberal institutions.[581] Overall, however, Russia's experiment with democratization and market transition had failed. The danger was for the nationalists

[576] Averill, 'Studies on Anger and Aggression: Implications for Theories of Emotion,' 1147.

[577] Yeltsin's state of mind and involvement in the decision-making process leading up the airport seizure remains a topic of debate.

[578] According to an interview with Ivashov, the President had assessed these risks based on reports from the Foreign and Defence Ministries and a 'thorough analysis' of the situation. Leonid Ivashov, 'Segodnya Nash Pervyy Samolet Syadet v Kosovo.'

[579] For example, Cynthia Roberts and Thomas Sherlock, 'Bringing the Russian State Back In: Explanations of the Derailed Transition to Market Democracy,' *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 4 (1999).

[580] Claudia Schmedt, *Russische Außenpolitik unter Jelzin. Internationale und innerstaatliche Einflussfaktoren außenpolitischen Wandels* (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 1997).

[581] Michael McFaul, 'A Precarious Peace: Domestic Politics in the Making of Russian Foreign Policy,' *International Security* 22, no. 3 (1997).

to gain the upper hand in Russian politics and chart a more unilateral and antagonistic foreign policy course.[582]

These themes are summarised by Michael McFaul, who concludes that Russian foreign policy in the 1990s is best explained by factors at level of domestic politics.[583] It is not hard to see how liberal theory or Innenpolitik approaches, by considering the different actors and interest groups Russian foreign policy had to cater to, add an important facet to our understanding of Russian behaviour. The Yeltsin administration needed to calm domestic discord, while maintaining a positive relationship with Europe and the US to make sure foreign direct investment and development aid kept flowing. Allusions to greatness ensured the buy-in of statists and civilizationalists, while incurring relatively small costs in Russia's dealings with the West. A further advantage of this policy lies in Russian historical experience. A great-power status, elites eventually agreed, could only be achieved by shoring up a strong, centralised state.

Realists countered that Russian foreign policy, in fact, corresponded quite closely to systemic imperatives. The fact that Russia had succeeded in reconciling two potentially conflicting policy objectives – establishing Russian diplomatic and security hegemony in the former Soviet space, while avoiding a rupture with the West – proved this.[584] On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, the shift towards a more assertive foreign policy under Primakov runs counter to development of the country's material strength. Robert Gilpin offers a more nuanced realist take, arguing that a declining power, such as Russia in the 1990s, might take more risks than an

[582] Leon Aron, 'The Foreign Policy Doctrine of the Post-Communist Russia and its Domestic Context,' in Mandelbaum, *The New Russian Foreign Policy*.
[583] Michael McFaul, 'Russia's Many Foreign Policies,' *Demokratizatsiya* 7, no. 3 (1999).
[584] Lynch, 'The Realism of Russia's Foreign Policy.'

established hegemon.[585] To avoid a further loss in their international standing, these states might choose to act more aggressively, or even launch a preventative attack.

Rationalist theory shows further limitations in the Kosovo case when it comes to predicting alliance behaviour. Material factors cannot explain Russian support for Serbia. In fact, historically, Russian support for Orthodox Slavs in the Balkans had repeatedly led to disastrous and costly outcomes. Taking into account Russia's own history of political oppression and violence and its ostensible embrace of democratic values, Mendeloff goes even further, suggesting that the 'more likely – and rational – response to "ethnic cleansing" and mass killings should have been condemnation of Serbia and support for NATO action.'[586] Even if the ideational category of 'anti-Western' feelings is taken into account, we would still not be able to predict which instances of Western intervention might elicit a Russian response. 'In short,' Mendeloff concludes, 'the material interests argument predicts multiple outcomes – both support for and opposition to NATO action – whereas the ideational argument offered here predicts only one – support for Serbia.'[587]

Foreign policy takes place in an ideational context. Defining this context allows the analyst to narrow down the scope of action and draw inferences as to why a certain policy was chosen over another. As for the ideational context in which Russian foreign policy elites operate, it consists of two primary elements: first, the notion that Russia has been, and must continue to be, a great power. And second, that the yardstick for the organisation of Russian politics and society would always be Europe – not necessarily as a role model for its development, but as an entity to

[585] Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*.
[586] Mendeloff, '"Pernicious History" as a Cause of National Misperceptions: Russia and the 1999 Kosovo War,' 32-33.
[587] Ibid., 33.

compare itself to.[588] This was true especially during the first decade after the Cold War, but continues to play a crucial role in Russian self-conception and general foreign policy orientation. Neumann builds on this scholarship and the presupposition that societies and their states seek recognition in the world. 'States,' he suggests, 'somehow have to relate to society's views of the grounds on which a country should seek recognition.'[589]

Neumann's investigation of Russian foreign policy traces elites' thoughts on Europe, how their state and society, or civilisation, relates to Europe, and what it means for Russians that their country should be 'great,' from Soviet times to the contemporary context. The European turn was most pronounced in 1991, when the dominant opinion was that Russia should become a Western-style liberal-democratic, capital country.[590] Former Communists, statists, and civilizationalists countered with Russian historical experience, suggesting that the only way to achieve stability was to have a strong state – which, in the traditional understanding, required a certain degree of authoritarianism. If Russian policy-makers suffered from an 'inferiority complex' in 1991, this was inverted into a 'superiority complex.'[591] The character of the Russian response to OAF would suggest that this 'complex' had taken a firm hold by the turn of the millennium.

Structural realism provides the most parsimonious framework for guiding foreign policy analysis. Correspondingly, it cannot explain much of the variance in

[588] Iver B. Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations*, Second ed. (London: Routledge, 2016); Sergei Prozorov 'In and out of Europe: Identity Politics Is Russian-European Relations.,' in *Identity and Foreign Policy: Baltic-Russian Relations and European Integration*, ed. Eiki Berg and Piret Ehin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008); Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, 'Shortcut to Greatness: The New Thinking and the Revolution in Soviet Foreign Policy,' *International Organization* 57, no. 1 (2003).

[589] Iver B. Neumann, 'Russia's Europe, 1991–2016: Inferiority to Superiority,' *International Affairs* 92, no. 6 (2016): 1382.

[590] Ibid.

[591] Ibid.

outcomes. Liberal theory and domestic politics allow for more detail as to why individual actors, or groups of actors, might have acted the way they did. Constructivist accounts centred on norms, identity or Russian ideas of greatness and its relation to Europe add another important facet by providing the ideational frame for foreign policy action. How the 'other' in a foreign policy relationship is characterised – as a friend, ally, partner, rival, or foe – determines to a significant extent the actions one's own side might take, in material terms. Neither rational choice nor socially constructed actorhood are particularly good at capturing individual experience, however. By focussing on beliefs, norms, and identity, the connection to real-life actors becomes harder to establish.

Denial of social status may evoke different emotional responses. Next to avoidance of the social situation – which points to the intricate connection between the fight or flight response – anger is the most common one. As has been argued, anger triggers an urge to express one's dissatisfaction, defiance, or condemnation at the behaviour of the 'other.' Most behaviours motivated by anger tend to be symbolic. However, manifestations of anger in the form of rage or combinations of anger and fear may provoke more severe reactions. If the subjectively perceived cause of anger persists, the emotion may be transformed into a permanent disposition – resentment – which determines subsequent interactions and policies.[592]

From 'wanting to be Europe' Russia went to claiming to 'be the true Europe' – a civilisation cognisant of its traditional values, protective of its societal stability, and a counterweight to 'Western depravity.' How does the phenomenon of anger help us understand Russian elites' shift from an inferiority to a superiority complex with

[592] J. M. Barbalet, *Emotion, Social Theory, and Social Structure : A Macrosociological Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 133-39.

respect to Europe (or the West more broadly)? The mechanism of 'social comparison,' as described by Tajfel and Turner, points to the psychological underpinnings of that re-assessment.[593] In their theory, social categories are cognitive tools used to order the social environment. By ascribing value connotations to an 'other' (in this case, Europe), social comparison provides a 'system of orientation for *self*-reference.'[594] Striving to enhance their self-esteem and create a more positive social identity, Russian leaders differentiated themselves from Europe with the aim of achieving superiority in some dimensions.

The perception, no doubt founded on a material basis, was that Russia had already lost ground in most of the important dimensions – economic, military, social stability, prestige. Other than leaving one's group, Tajfel and Turner suggest that there are two strategies to counter negative or threatened social identity: (direct) social competition or social creativity. The latter denotes redefining or altering the elements of the comparative situation, even there is no actual change in one's group's social position or resource endowment. In other words, creating new realities. Social creativity may have contributed to several misperceptions about realities in the Balkans and Western motives there. Mendeloff suggests that Russian leaders exaggerated the benefit of defending Serbia, overestimating Serb capabilities, inflating the direct threat to Russia, misreading the motives behind Western intervention as 'predatory,' and blinding themselves to the 'full barbarity of Serb behaviour in Kosovo.'[595]

Coming up with a new 'dimension' of comparison, changing the values assigned to the attributes of the group to make them more favourable, or finding a

[593] Tajfel and Turner, 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict,' 40-43; ibid.
[594] Ibid., 40; ibid., emphasis in the original.
[595] Mendeloff, '"Pernicious History" as a Cause of National Misperceptions: Russia and the 1999 Kosovo War,' 33.

different out-group to compare yourself to, may also be considered socially creative. Changing the values Russia should aspire to from openness, liberal democracy, and diversity to 'righteousness and tradition' can be taken as an example of the first variant. Referring to Russian strategic parity in nuclear terms rather than fretting over its conventional inferiority, albeit not a 'value' per se, may be regarded an example of changing attributes. Or directing Russia's attention to China and reintegrating the former Soviet space, e.g. in Central Asia and Eastern Ukraine, instead of playing catch-up with Europe, as an example of looking to different out-groups.

4.4. The psychological legacy of Operation Allied Force

OAF marks a crucial turning point in Russian-Western relations. To this day, it is used as an example of US hegemonic ambitions, pursued outside the common framework of international law, in the guise of humanitarian intervention. It challenged the post-Cold War role Russia foresaw for the UNSC among international institutions and more importantly, their self-image and perception. Apart from the humiliation, Russians agreed that Kosovo set a dangerous precedent. Among the elite, OAF implanted fears of Western-backed insurgencies in the 'near abroad' and destabilisation in Russia's own peripheral regions, and it helped in formulating a common vision of Russia as a great power. NATO bombed not just Serbia, but also the UN and post-Cold War Europe 'as an idea, as a political and civilizational project.' For many, 'Gorbachev's crystal dream of a "common European home"' lay in pieces.'[596]

Outrage over OAF may have been aggravated by thoughts as to whether Russia could have averted it. When compared to the diplomatic struggle over Bosnia five

[596] A. Grachev, 'UN Hit by NATO Strikes,' cited in: Averre, 'From Pristina to Tskhinvali: The Legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia's Relations with the West,' 575.

years earlier, Russia's bargaining position had improved somewhat. NATO's 1995 bombing campaign had 'laid bare the internal contradictions of the Yeltsin administration's policy toward the conflict in former Yugoslavia:'[597] fiery rhetoric was rarely underpinned by assertive action. The situation in 1999 was different. Yeltsin was still a weak President, albeit for different reasons, but NATO lacked a mandate to interfere in the 'internal affairs' of the Yugoslav Republic. This being a widely-accepted fact among foreign policy elites made it easier to find a unified approach. As Headley suggests, the agenda had become more consensual around a 'realist/centrist core.'[598] By taking the middle ground and appointing more hard-line foreign ministers, Yeltsin succeeded in getting some of the communists, pan-Slavic nationalists, and other anti-Western factions to buy into his Kosovo policy.

The Russian response to Kosovo is thus illustrative of several broader points about FPA and the levels of analysis. Unit-level explanations of foreign policy are typically embedded in the wider structural context of the struggle over power and prestige between states. This essentially mirrors the neoclassical realist research agenda. The environmental context is necessary to explain why Russian elites, who were 'divided on domestic programmatic grounds,' nevertheless found a 'core pragmatic nationalist consensus' around reversing Russia's decline, focussing its foreign policy on the CIS region, and maintaining its status as a nuclear superpower.[599] Even adherents of liberal theory agree that 'these objectives shape Russian foreign policy behaviour and influence Russian foreign policy responses to other international issues in general and predictable ways.'[600]

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[597] Scott Parrish, 'Twisting in the Wind. Russia and the Yugoslav Conflict,' *Transitions* 14 (1995), 28.

[598] Headley, *Russia and the Balkans: Foreign Policy from Yeltsin to Putin*, 347.

[599] Lynch, 'The Realism of Russia's Foreign Policy,' 11.

[600] McFaul, 'Russia's Many Foreign Policies,' 397.

What does emotion add to these explanations? The 'anger hypothesis' does not provide conclusive evidence as to why Russia protested but did not attempt to halt NATO intervention; why Yeltsin decided to send troops to Pristina airport but not press for reinforcements; or why the Russian leadership would acquiesce, time and again, when faced with NATO expansion. Neither do displays of anger confirm that anger was, in fact, experienced. However, necessary evidence (as opposed to sufficient) can also be valuable in support of the plausibility of an argument. It seems intuitively true that affective responses do not generally follow rational means-ends calculations. This is not to say, however, that we should neglect rationalist explanations altogether. Decisions are not always made impulsively or as a direct response to affective triggers. Neither are they always intentional, collaborative displays for strategic purposes.

The Kosovo case illustrates that emotions play just as an important a role in inducing impulsive actions, as they do in determining the 'stickiness' of perceptions and associated behavioural patterns. How to tell them apart remains a central challenge for this kind of research. It stands to reason that enduring emotional attitudes exert a different impact on the individual than brief, high-intensity emotional responses do. Effects can run counter to one another, as might have been the case in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, when Russian feelings of sympathy stood in contrast to the established pattern of resentment towards the US. Or they might play off each other, when events seem to conform with pre-existing images of the 'other,' as was the case during the Colour Revolutions, when perceived interference in the domestic politics of former Soviet states confirmed Russia's 'enemy image' of the US.

On balance, the struggle over Kosovo left a lasting imprint on Russian foreign policy. It proved crucial for elites to develop a shared emotional disposition, founded on Russian status aspirations and manifested in the form of resentment and distrust of NATO and its agenda setters. Russian actions during OAF illustrate how this disposition might promote certain action tendencies. This is reflected not just in the emotionally charged rhetoric – denouncing Western intervention as morally reprehensible and in violation of the UN Charter – but also in deed: most saliently, the U-turn of the Prime Minister's plane en route to Washington and the seizure of Pristina airport.

5. MIXED FEELINGS: RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER PUTIN

> Addressing the people of the United States on behalf of Russia I would like to say that we are with you, we entirely and fully share and experience your pain. We support you.
>
> Vladimir V. Putin, 11 September 2001[601]

> One state and, of course, first and foremost the United States, has overstepped its national borders in every way. This is visible in the economic, political, cultural and educational policies it imposes on other nations. (…) It results in the fact that no one feels safe. I want to emphasise this – no one feels safe!
>
> Vladimir V. Putin, 10 February 2007[602]

What happened between Russia and the West during Vladimir Putin's first two presidential terms? This chapter investigates the reasons for the deterioration of relations from 2000 to 2008, probing the impact of affective phenomena on Russian officials' evolving perception of, and assertiveness towards, Europe and the United States.

The first half of the chapter sketches the general trajectory of Russian-Western relations over those eight years. It discusses how several attempts at East-West cooperation were made and why these largely failed. Nonetheless, the Russian president appeared eager to uphold a pragmatic modus vivendi with Europe, the US, and NATO that would allow his country to remain on a path of economic recovery and modernisation. By 2007, however, numerous setbacks had caused Russian officials to re-evaluate their self-image in relation to the West, which gave rise to a

[601] Vladimir Putin, 'Statement on Terrorist Attacks in the USA,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 11 September 2001, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21328.

[602] Vladimir Putin, 'Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 10 February 2007, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034.

more confrontational foreign policy orientation. My departure point for this investigation is the existing corpus of theoretical perspectives on Russian foreign policy, informed by either structural realism, social constructivism, liberal theory focused on regime types and leaders' preferences, and the cross-sectional literature on status concerns. Affective processes described in Chapter 3, divided in the three dimensions of *attitude, appraisal*, and *affirmation*, are drawn on to complement established narratives and offer plausible (alternative) reasons for Russian conduct.

The second half homes in on the characteristics and manifestations of widespread affective phenomena. I argue that the position of Russian elites towards the West transformed from being characterised by *resentment* to *contempt*. The latter is a more problematic emotion for social interaction and changed not only officials' attitude but also how they appraised situations and self-affirmed, or rationalised, policy choices.

5.1. Russian-Western relations from 2000 to 2007

While external conditions – and with them, the nature of challenges posed to Russia – changed, the general orientation of its foreign policy remained remarkably stable: attaining (or maintaining) great-power status. To Putin and his associates, that was not a lofty goal but a vital necessity. 'Such a country as Russia can survive and develop within the existing borders only if it stays as a great power,' he contended. 'During all of its times of weakness (…) Russia was invariably confronted with the threat of disintegration.'[603] This position proved popular with elites as well as ordinary Russians. Looking at public opinion polls, Joseph Clark concludes that 'the

[603] Vladimir Putin, 'Poslaniye Federal'nomu Sobraniyu Rossiyskoi Federatsiyi,' Press Service of the Kremlin, March 16, 2003, in: Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, Fourth ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016).

desire for great-power status appears to be so strong, widespread, and long-lasting that it is best thought of as a regime ideology. This desire is the basis of the Russian government's public support and legitimacy.'[604]

From his first day in office, Putin made it clear that his politics – foreign and domestic – were to be guided by the 'national interest.' Asked about the goals of his administration, Putin said that 'our main goal is to make people believe in everything we say and do. That ours is a heartfelt position, dictated only and solely by considerations of the national interests.'[605] This subordination of individual ambitions and freedoms under the interest of the state is a characteristic shared by contemporary Russian and most of Soviet foreign policy. Neil MacFarlane refers to it as 'state-centrism:' 'the proper focus in a calculation of interest is not the human community or the society of states, but the state itself.'[606] In a 1994 article, MacFarlane argues that Russian thinking had evolved from an 'embrace of a liberal internationalist perspective on Europe, characteristic of the late Gorbachev era and encapsulated in the phrase "Common European Home," to a much more nuanced and differentiated perspective' – characterised as both 'state-centric' and 'realist,' whereby 'realist' denotes a focus on power and the geopolitical position of the state.[607] This position would be further consolidated and personified after 1996 by the nomination of Yevgeny Primakov as foreign and later prime minister.

The conviction that the absence of great-power status was equal to disintegration was surely strengthened by NATO action against Yugoslavia in 1999.

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[604] Joseph R. Clark, 'Russia's Indirect Grand Strategy,' *Orbis* 63, no. 2 (2019): 231.

[605] Vitaly Mansky, *Putin's Witnesses* (documentary movie), 9 November 2018, 10:00.

[606] S. Neil MacFarlane, 'Russian Conceptions of Europe,' *Post-Soviet Affairs* 10, no. 3 (1994): fn. 2. See also Henry E. Hale, *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Andrei P. Tsygankov, *The Strong State in Russia: Development and Crisis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[607] MacFarlane, 'Russian Conceptions of Europe,' 235.

Derek Averre concludes that the 'humiliation Moscow suffered over the Kosovo crisis was a salutary lesson for Russia's governing elite: it demonstrated the need for cohesion in the country's foreign policy and for a strong and self-reliant state, guided by a firm hand, at a time of growing international and regional instability.'[608]

The firm approach, guided by the primacy of the national interest, did not at first rule out partnering with the West. Although Putin's background in intelligence would suggest that he was primed for distrust of the US and Europe, he sought to find ways to cooperate. Putin's 'duality of purpose' is illustrated by his careful manoeuvring on arms control.[609] With his hand strengthened by electoral wins, Putin successfully lobbied the Duma to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban (CTBT) and long-dormant Strategic Arms Reduction (START II) treaties. The main Russian objective behind START II was to alleviate the financial burden of maintaining a nuclear arsenal equal in size to that of the US, which Russia could ill afford. As a precondition, Putin wanted the US to continue to abide by the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty, which entitled either side to no more than two launch sites for defensive missiles. CTBT was signed by President Clinton but failed to win a majority in the US Congress. ABM and START II would die a more protracted death, which will be discussed further on.

When Putin first met the newly elected US president, George W. Bush, their relationship immediately took a very friendly tone. Having looked his Russian counterpart in the eyes, Bush famously declared that he could 'get a sense of his

[608] Derek Averre, 'From Pristina to Tskhinvali: The Legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia's Relations with the West,' *International Affairs* 85, no. 3 (2009): 585.

[609] Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Nogee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*, Fifth ed. (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2014), 365.

soul.'[610] Putin, on his part, seemed to be flattered, even though their meeting had brought no substantial progress on arms control or missile defence: 'when a president of a great power says that he wants to see Russia as a partner and maybe even as an ally, this is worth so much to us.'[611]

The attacks on the US of 11 September 2001 presented an opportunity to further improve relations and convince political rivals as well as constituents that closer economic ties and cooperation in the fight against Islamic terrorism were not without merits. Putin was reportedly the first foreign leader to express condolences to the American people in a phone call to George W. Bush[612] and followed up with a televised address, during which he proclaimed: 'we are with you, we entirely and fully share and experience your pain. We support you.'[613] It cannot be said whether such an unambiguously supportive message came easily to Putin. Fact is that solidarity with the US was a position opposed by many in the elite circles and especially in the military. In a six-hour meeting between the president and members of the 'power ministries,' Russia's position vis-à-vis the US and on the threat of Islamic fundamentalism were coordinated. On 24 September, Putin announced publicly that the Russian Federation stood ready 'to make its contribution to the war on terrorism.'[614]

A de-facto alliance with the US would not have been possible geo-strategically, or palatable in terms of Russian officials' Cold War experience and the resulting

[610] Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honour: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2011).

[611] Frank Bruni, 'Leaders' Words at First Meeting are Striking for Warm Tone,' *New York Times,* 17 June 2001, in: Robert Legvold, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century and the Shadow of the Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 146-47.

[612] Vladimir Putin, 'Sostoyalsya Telefonnyy Razgovor Prezidentov Rossii i SSHA,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 11 September 2001, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/27394.

[613] Vladimir Putin, 'Statement on Terrorist Attacks in the USA,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 11 September 2001, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21328.

[614] Lilija Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), 206.

affective disposition, had it not been for the existence of a common enemy. Since the final years of the Soviet Union, Russia had been engaged in a fight against Islamic fundamentalism inside and outside the country. Apart from Chechnya, operatives in the Kremlin were concerned about the dynamics in Central Asia. Already in the early 2000s, evidence suggested that fundamentalists from Afghanistan were supporting insurgents in Tajikistan in an effort to erect a 'greater Islamic Caliphate in Central Asia, including parts of Russia itself.'[615] America's war against the radical Taliban regime threatened to destabilise the wider region. Furthermore, the war in Bosnia and Operation Allied Force (OAF) against Serbia had provided cautionary tales of the consequences of Western liberal interventionism, which, Russian analysts feared, could have unintentionally strengthened Islamic extremists.[616]

There might have been some strategic intent in Russian officials' declarations of sympathy after 9/11, that is, expecting future reciprocal benefits from their seemingly 'altruistic' behaviour. It was also suspected that its alignment with the US should draw attention away from Russia's war in Chechnya, which had just been resumed, and the growing number of allegations of war crimes. However, even strategic behaviour is often undergirded by genuine feelings. Emotion research has shown that expressions of sympathy include signs of 'distress' which are akin to experiencing sadness.[617] In terms of appraisal and action tendencies, sympathy involves the recognition of the other's plight and elicits a tendency to help: 'the suffering of the other person is experienced immediately as something to be

[615] A. V. Malashenko, Dmitrii Trenin, and Anatol Lieven, *Russia's Restless Frontier: The Chechnya Factor in Post-Soviet Russia* (Washington, D.C: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004), 166.

[616] Ibid., 167.

[617] Richard S. Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991), 289-70; Candace Clark, *Misery and Company: Sympathy in Everyday Life* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 43.

alleviated.'[618] Hall argues that actions like Russia's immediate avowal of support after 9/11, without any clear signs of it expecting something in return, represent an unacknowledged puzzle for existing IR theories. Irrespective of their strategic intent, displays of sympathy on part of China and Russia are 'inexplicable without reference to a specific set of shared expectations about basic notions of "natural" human behaviour, of which the emotions are an integral part.'[619]

The expression of sympathy is based on the conviction that the 'victim' deserves no blame for its situation.[620] By 'feeling someone else's misery,' displays of sympathy involve role-taking and empathy.[621] Because the latter is antithetical to the emotion of contempt, it stands to reason that Russian expressions of sympathy for the American people would have been toned down, had the events of 9/11 occurred closer to the end of Putin's second presidential term. That is, assuming the thesis of a shift in affective attitude from resentment towards contempt, which this chapter will develop, does hold some truth. Appraisal theories define sympathy as an 'inclination to think and feel like someone else, sharing the feelings or interests of another, as when we are in sympathy with someone or a group, or are sensitive to or affected by another's emotions, especially sorrows.'[622] We may speculate what this inclination to put oneself in another's perspective suggests about one's self-identified position in

[618] Lauren Wispé, *The Psychology of Sympathy*, Perspectives in Social Psychology (New York, NY: Plenum, 1991), 314-21.

[619] Todd Hall, 'Sympathetic States: Explaining the Russian and Chinese Responses September 11,' *Political Science Quarterly* 127, no. 3 (2012): 370.

[620] Candace Clark, 'Sympathy Biography and Sympathy Margin,' *American Journal of Sociology* 93, no. 2 (1987): 296-300; Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 289-90; Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 321; Wispé, *The Psychology of Sympathy*, 71-76.

[621] Clark, *Misery and Company: Sympathy in Everyday Life*, 43-44.

The two emotions should be distinguished. Sympathy tends to be more self-centred (i.e., 'making' an experience about oneself) and borders on the feelings of pity or sorrow. See Michael Lewis and Jeannette M. Haviland-Jones, *Handbook of Emotions*, Second ed. (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2000), 671-91.

[622] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 288.

the social hierarchy. In the presence of a large perceived gap in relative positions, feelings of sympathy might come harder to the lower-ranking party. Conversely, Russian displays of sympathy may be indicative of a latent claim to equal status.

Russian support for the 'war on terror' was substantial not only in word but also in deed. The two states engaged in an extensive exchange of intelligence information, Russia granted US airplanes flyover rights and greenlighted the construction of US military bases in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Relations with NATO, too, improved considerably. A new joint NATO-Russia Council (NRC) was set up, Russia joined the Alliance's anti-terrorism operations, and cooperation in training, exercises, and crisis management was ramped up.[623]

From their highpoint after 9/11, however, relations between the two states entered a process of gradual deterioration. About one year into the partnership with the US, as Donaldson observes, Moscow began to doubt its benefits.[624] Initially, it was only criticism and allegations of human rights violations in Chechnya issued by the US State Department that irked Moscow. Neither were Russian officials particularly pleased by the Bush administration's drawing of an 'axis of evil.' Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov spoke of 'double standards,' while foreign minister Igor Ivanov argued that some US allies were just as 'evil' as the axis powers in Bush's concoction.[625] These were initial examples of the attributions of blame, albeit carefully worded ones, that were reminiscent of the language used before the Russia-US partnership came into being.

Much more damaging to relations were the Bush administration's subsequent decisions. In December 2001, the US withdrew unilaterally from the ABM treaty to

[623] Donaldson and Nogee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*, 370.
[624] Ibid.
[625] Ibid.

pursue its plans for a missile defence system. Putin refrained from launching a vocal protest. 'Probably because any protestations would have fallen on deaf ears anyway, which might have accentuated the limits of Russian influence,' as Roberts analyses.[626] To save face, Russia, on its part, withdrew from the START II treaty on nuclear arms reduction.

A minimal compromise, the two leaders signed the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) when they met in Moscow in May 2002. The treaty contained a passage on the reduction of nuclear warheads but not down to the levels Russia had hoped for. It also did not foresee the destruction of warheads but only their storage and had a withdrawal period of only three months. Despite this and other unambiguous setbacks and what many in Russian policy circles perceived to be slights by the US, Putin held on to the pact. In July 2002, he declared that 'partnership with the United States' was an 'unconditional priority' because the threat of terrorism demanded it.[627] Furthermore it was out of necessity, even if the relationship was not characterised by complete harmony, that he could not allow it 'to slide into confrontation.'[628]

Russian scholars at the time referred to this foreign policy orientation as the 'Putin Doctrine.'[629] It emphasised realism[630] over ideology and suggested that economic progress was only attainable through closer integration with the West. Most strikingly, the Putin Doctrine was purported to lay to rest any efforts to achieve

[626] Kari Roberts, 'Directions: The United States,' in *Routledge Handbook of Russian Foreign Policy*, ed. Andrei P. Tsygankov (London: Routledge, 2018), 243.

[627] Katerina Labetskaya, 'Putin Sets Policy Priorities for Russian Diplomats,' *Vremya Novostei*, 15 July 2002, in: *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 54, no. 28 (2002): 5.

[628] Aleksandr Samokhotkin, 'Hurry Up and Turn on the Light,' *Vremya Novostei,* 29 January 2003, in: *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 55, no. 4 (2003): 2.

[629] 'Expert Panel: Is There a Putin Doctrine in Foreign Policy?', *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 54, no. 31 (2002).

[630] Similar to the above assessment of policy experts, Richard Sakwa refers to Russian foreign policy during Putin's first term as 'new realism.' Richard Sakwa, ''New Cold War' or Twenty Years' Crisis? Russia and International Politics,' *International Affairs* 84, no. 2 (2008).

parity with the United States – an ambition that had guided Soviet foreign policy throughout most of the Cold War.[631] Mark Urnov makes an analogous observation in foreign policy discourse. He traced references to Russian 'greatpowerness' (*velikoderzhavonost'*) – the belief that Russia has been and must continue to be a great power – between 2000 and 2014. Urnov finds that starting in Putin's first term, the term 'great power' progressively disappears from official discourse.[632] In fact, after 2006, the term is largely absent from national security strategies, foreign policy concepts, documents on military doctrine, or presidential addresses to the Federal Assembly, until it starts to re-emerge around the beginning of Putin's third presidential term.

However, Putin's waiver of references to Russia's great-power status was no tacit acknowledgment of the country's subordination to American military and economic power. Neither did non-use of the term imply that the Russian leader, foreign policy establishment, and large parts of the population would not continue to view Russia as a great power and expect external validation for its self-image. In the eyes of Russian elites, the country's clout in global energy markets, its nuclear arsenal, permanent seat on the Security Council, and increasing assertiveness towards its neighbours (which, in large part, relied on the former attributes) would suffice to mark its status as a great power even in the absence of open competition with the US. Besides, since the end of the Cold War, Russian officials now lacked the tool of a combative, 'othering' ideology which had been used ad nauseam to mobilise against the capitalist West.

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[631] 'Expert Panel: Is There a Putin Doctrine in Foreign Policy?', 1.

[632] Mark Urnov, '"Greatpowerness" as the Key Element of Russian Self-Consciousness under Erosion,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014): 308. The review encompassed all official doctrine published between 2000 and 2014, including the Foreign Policy Concepts 2008 and 2013, the Concept of Long-term Socio-Economic Development until 2020, the National Security Strategy up to 2020, and the 2010 Military Doctrine 2010.

Quite contrary to capitulation, the abandonment of the term great power, along with Putin's pragmatic orientation towards the West, illustrates a shift from a strategy of social competition to social creativity, as outlined by Tajfel and Turner.[633] One might seek positive distinctiveness for their in-group by 'redefining or altering the elements of a comparative situation.'[634] Realising that the hitherto prevalent terms of comparison had become, or had always been, unfavourable to Russia, Putin attempted to change them. As Larson and Shevchenko observe, 'the gap between Russia's self-image as a great power and its reception by the West evoked anger and frustration' among Russian elites. Unlike during the Yeltsin years, however, 'Russia did not pursue social competition but sought to achieve prestige in a different area than geopolitical might.'[635]

Another reason for the limited use of the terminology, according to Urnov, one that is 'quite reasonable in PR logic,' could be a desire 'to eliminate the conflict between Russia's claims to the status of a great power, in spite of the obvious deficit in hard and soft capabilities,' and correspondingly, 'the position of Western elite who believe that this weakness deprives Russia of that status.'[636] There is evidence to suggest that Putin was afraid that Russia would turn into a third-world country.[637] Comparing Russian economic performance to that of Portugal, the EU's poorest

[633] Chapter 4 introduces the varying reactions to an undesirable status hierarchy and social change as described by Tajfel and Turner. For Social Identity Theory and its applications in IR, see Henri Tajfel and John Turner, 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict,' in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1979); Anne L. Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); Jonathan Mercer, 'Anarchy and Identity,' *International Organization* 49, no. 2 (1995); Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, 'Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy,' *International Security* 34, no. 4 (2010).

[634] Tajfel and Turner, 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict,' 43.

[635] Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, 'Russia Says No: Power, Status, and Emotions in Foreign Policy,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014): 272.

[636] Urnov, '"Greatpowerness" as the Key Element of Russian Self-Consciousness under Erosion,' 309. See also: Dmitriy Trenin, *Integratsia i Identichnost': Rossia Kak 'Novyi Zapad'* (Moscow: Evropa, 2006), 218-99.

[637] Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, 140.

member, he cautioned against chest-thumping rhetoric: 'let us not call to mind our national interests [only] on those occasions when we have to make some loud statements.'[638] The new leader appeared to put Russia's great power ambitions on the back burner as long as it lacked the necessary material basis.

Tajfel and Turner describe different social creativity strategies, examples for which can be found in Russia's foreign policy during Putin's first and the early years of his second term. The first is the introduction of a 'new dimension' on which to compare the in-group to the out-group. Russia's enormous natural resource wealth seemed to be an obvious choice. Putin, in a meeting with security professionals in late 2005, had articulated a vision for Russia to become a world leader in energy production.[639] His words were picked up by public relations professionals close to the Kremlin who saw in it a 'new strategy for Russian development,' proclaimed by the President, which would make Russia an 'energy superpower.'[640]

Tajfel and Turner also point out that there are built-in problems arising from crafting a new dimension of comparison and 'legitimising the value assigned' to those new 'social products – first in the in-group and then in other groups involved.'[641] The in-group did not pose much of a problem, despite some who might have been sceptical of the merits of advertising Russia's oil and gas centrism. The out-group, though – European governments, who were already heavily dependent on Russian natural resources – responded to the communication with alarm.[642] In line

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[638] Vladimir Putin, 'Rossiya na Rubezhe Tysyacheletiy,' *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 30 December 1999. Integrum.

[639] Vladimir Putin, 'Vstupitelnoe Slovo na Zasedanii Soveta Bezopasnosti po Voprosu o Roli Rossii v Obespechenii Mezhdunarodnoy Energeticheskoy Besopasnosti,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 22 December 2005, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/23356.

[640] Dmitriy Orlov, 'Byt' li Rossii 'Energeticheskoy Sverkhderhzavoy?' *Izvestia*, 17 January 2006. Integrum.

[641] Tajfel and Turner, 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict,' 43.

[642] Editorial, 'Imperialist Gas,' *The Washington Post*, 23 April 2006, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/22/AR2006042201026.html; Anne

with Social Identity Theory, if legitimisation of a new dimension appears threatening to the out-group, 'an increase in intergroup tension can be predicted.'[643] Putin, who still priced good economic relations with the West highly, thus discarded the neologism 'energy superpower.'[644] As Urnov suggests, this went along with the abandonment of the 'traditional nomenclature of a great power' which has been referenced above.[645]

Another variant of social creativity is to change the values attributed to one's own characteristics. Responding to repeated criticisms of apparent shortcomings in Russia's governance structure and democratic process issued by politicians and think tanks in Europe and the US, Putin doubled down. In part, because he could easily afford to do so – economic and military successes during his first few years in office proved him right. More crucially, Putin's authoritarian tendencies and power centrism were not altogether unpopular with political elites who supported the shift away from European-style values of personal liberty and transparency that had been trailed through the late Gorbachev period to the early 1990s. 'Against this westernizing or liberal representation of Europe,' Neumann writes, 'stood what was at first a makeshift group of old communists and right-wing nationalists, who put forward an alternative representation which began to form around the idea that the quintessential Russian priority was to have a strong state.'[646]

Seith, 'Energie-Supermacht Russland: 'Die Europäer könnten am Ende die Geiseln sein,' *Der Spiegel*, 29 June 2006; https://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/energie-supermacht-russland-die-europaeer-koennten-am-ende-die-geiseln-sein-a-423167.html.

[643] Tajfel and Turner, 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict,' 43.

[644] Vladimir Putin, 'Vstrecha V. Putina s Uchastnikami Tretego Zasedanija Mezhdunarodnogo Discussionnogo Kluba "Valdai",' Press Service of the Kremlin, 9 September 2006, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/23789.

[645] Urnov, '"Greatpowerness" as the Key Element of Russian Self-Consciousness under Erosion,' 309.

[646] Iver B. Neumann, 'Russia's Europe, 1991–2016: Inferiority to Superiority,' *International Affairs* 92, no. 6 (2016): 1382.

Lastly, a strategy of social creativity might involve changing the out-group, particularly 'ceasing or avoiding the use of a high-status out-group as a comparative frame of reference.'[647] Elements of this form of social creativity can be found early on in Putin's reign. In contrast to his predecessor, he used his first year in office to travel extensively to European capitals, former Soviet states, as well as more 'exotic' destinations such as Cuba, Iraq and North Korea. This was to mark a more active and original foreign policy agenda, independent of the US. Most importantly, also during his first year, Putin travelled to China and India in an effort to build strategic partnerships and possibly to cast Russia as a 'rising power' by association.

Putin's outreach initiatives sharpened Russia's international profile. The central frame of reference for its self-image as well as the crafting of foreign policy, however, remained unchanged since Tsarist times. Europe and the 'West' remain constitutive for Russia's national identity.[648] In some ways, this is unavoidable given the close geographical proximity of the two entities. The centrality of the 'debate on Europe' to political life in Russia through the ages is striking, nonetheless, as Neumann observes: 'Europe kept producing new ways of arranging polities, and Russia could not afford simply to neglect this fact. It was forced to respond by the very nature of the state system.' When polities 'vie for overlapping social space,' (…) they have to 'keep up or go bust.'[649] Analogies from evolutionary theory[650] or commerce[651] abound: to survive, one must constantly keep moving.

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[647] Tajfel and Turner, 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict,' 43.

[648] Olga Malinova, 'Obsession with Status and Ressentiment: Historical Backgrounds of the Russian Discursive Identity Construction,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014): 292.

In Russian discourse on foreign policy, there is considerable overlap between the concept of 'Europe' and that of 'the West.' MacFarlane, 'Russian Conceptions of Europe,' 237. See also: Boris G. Kapustin, 'Yevropeyskaya i Rossiyskaya Tsivilizatsii: Oroizoydyot lyi ikh Vstrecha,' *Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnyye Otnosheniya* 4, 43.

[649] Neumann, 'Russia's Europe, 1991–2016: Inferiority to Superiority,' 1396.

Over the course of the year 2002, the threat of a war in Iraq loomed increasingly larger. Russia was opposed to armed intervention to remove Saddam Hussein, not least because its oil and gas companies had a substantial investment in the country. Beyond that, Moscow was worried that an invasion of Iraq would set a precedent for US liberal interventionism, with or without Security Council approval.[652] In November of the following year, the Rose Revolution in Georgia provided the first confirmation that such fears might have been warranted. In line with its stated aim of 'spreading democracy,' the US provided the Georgian opposition with both training and financial resources.[653]

The objective to avert war and instead lobby Iraq to re-admit UN inspectors was shared by China and the majority of European countries, most notably France and Germany. Concordant with its earlier position on Yugoslavia, Russia insisted that using force against Iraq without a corresponding UN resolution would be in violation of international law. When, in November 2002, the Security Council passed an unanimous resolution asking Iraq to surrender weapons of mass destruction and allow UN monitors back into the country, its main sponsors Russia, China, and France made sure to emphasise that Iraqi violations of the resolution did not imply 'any automaticity in the use of force.'[654]

Despite its economic exposure in Iraq and universal opposition to liberal interventionism, Russia kept its criticism of Washington's war plans relatively subdued. In part, this was because the unprecedented resistance coming from its

[650] Matt Ridley, *The Red Queen: Sex and the Evolution of Human Nature* (London: Viking, 1993).

[651] Thomas K. McCraw, *Prophet of Innovation: Joseph Schumpeter and Creative Destruction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

[652] Viktor Posuvalyuk, *Bagrovoe nebo Bagdad* (St Petersburg: Aleteiya, 2012), 191.

[653] Lincoln A. Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia, PA: Penn, 2009), 120.

[654] United Nations Security Council, 'Resolution 1441,' 8 November 2002, https://www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/documents/1441.pdf.

European allies France and Germany was much more uncomfortable for Washington. Russia could afford to watch from the side-lines as the US was gambling away its diplomatic capital with its allies and a rift was forming right through the centre of NATO. This fitted neatly into Moscow's designs for a multipolar world order. On the occasion of a visit to Paris in early 2003, Putin spoke of the Russo-Franco-German position on war as 'the first attempt since the time of World War II to find a solution to a serious international crisis outside the framework of blocs.'[655] To an extent, this development might have made the alliance's announcement to assimilate the Baltic republics easier to digest.[656] Notwithstanding the incorporation of three erstwhile Soviet republics, the partnership with the US remained in place.

The war in Iraq came anyways, and initial reactions among Russian elites and the public were disappointment and indignation. Vladimir Putin undoubtedly shared these sentiments but found himself in what must have been a very unpleasant position of having to advocate for maintaining antiterror cooperation with the Americans. 'For political and economic reasons,' he stated dryly, 'Russia does not have an interest in a US defeat.'[657] Avoiding outspoken criticism of US foreign policy in the Middle East, he instead focused on consolidating relationships with newfound partners in Europe, France and Germany. Together with his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao, he established the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), unmistakeably in an effort to counter US influence in Central Asia.

The elections in December 2003 and March 2004 provided Putin with a comfortable majority in parliament and a landslide victory in the presidential

[655] Elmar Guseinov et al., 'Have Russia, 'Old Europe' Formed 'Antiwar Entente'?,' *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 55, no. 6 (2003): 2.

[656] 'Prague Summit Declaration,' NATO e-Library, 21 November 2002, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_19552.htm.

[657] 'President Meets with Regional Journalists,' *Izvestia*, 4 April 2003, in: *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 55, no. 13 (2003): 8.

election, at 71.2 percent of the vote. Following the tragic outcome of a hostage taking by Chechen militants in the city of Beslan in September 2004, Putin placed his priorities on domestic security. One consequence was that he took several measures to consolidate his rule and have free rein in combatting Islamic terrorism.[658] It is likely that he genuinely believed a stronger central government was necessary to ensure stability, which is why Putin reacted increasingly sensitively to charges of democratic backsliding coming from the West. European organisations were particularly vocal in pointing out deficiencies in Russian democracy and human rights violations in its campaign against Chechen separatists.

Disagreement between Moscow and the West over different forms of democracy and their respective desirability was also at the core of another coloured revolution that broke out in Ukraine in November 2004. Demanding a rerun of the presidential election on the basis of widespread fraud, the EU impeded Russia's designs for the future Ukrainian administration. Putin had to look on powerlessly as his favoured candidate Viktor Yanukovich lost to the pro-Western candidate Viktor Yushchenko. A violent revolution in Kyrgyzstan in February 2005 led to the ouster of Russian-supported President Askar Akayev. Because American financial assistance of opposition forces, the free press, and civil societies had hastened the fall of autocrats in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, some commentators in Russia began to see in this trend a plan to dismember the Russian Federation.[659] Sergei Lavrov expressed the official Russian opinion:

> When we talk about spreading democracy and freedom around the world. Russia proceeds from the premise that inculcating these values in a given society from outside is (1) impossible, and (2) dangerous on account of

[658] Georgy Mirsky, 'Iran is not Iraq,' *Vremya MN*, 3 June 2003, in: *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 55, no. 22 (2003), 6.

[659] Donaldson and Nogee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*, 385.

> the consequences such attempts could have. Two circumstances must be taken into account. First, there cannot be any single model of democracy. (…) And second, democracy has to grow and mature from within.[660]

In 2005 and 2006, Putin continued his pivot to Asia to create a bulwark against the further spread of liberal revolutions. In June 2005, Russian, Chinese, and Indian foreign ministers met in Vladivostok to discuss prospects for strategic cooperation. A month later, following a SCO meeting, the organization produced a concluding declaration that demanded a timetable for the withdrawal of American forces from Central Asia. Despite standing its ground on certain issues, Russia's overall position continued to be the pursuit of pragmatic cooperation.

That is, until 2007, when Russian-American relations in particular began to deteriorate markedly. Resuming its plans for a missile defence system, the Bush administration held talks with the Czech Republic and Poland to build a radar station and a missile interceptor base on European soil. Once completed, the system would have severely hampered Russia's nuclear deterrent – an issue that was tied as much to security as it was to Russian prestige. Virtually all factions involved in Russian policy-making were united in opposition to the plans. 'It is this kind of agreement, not the split between Russia and United States over the problem of South Ossetia, that may have a greater impact on the growth in tensions in Russian-American relations,' remarked the chairman of the foreign affairs committee of the Duma.[661] In an initial reaction, Moscow threatened to withdraw from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty signed in 1987. Putin countered Bush's plans with a proposal to

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[660] Natalya Ratiani, 'Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov: 'Our Common Task is to Move Away From the Traditions of Byzantine Diplomacy,'' *Izvestia*, 17 May 2005, in: *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 57, no. 21 (2005), 6.

[661] Thom Shanker and Nicholas Kulish, 'U.S. and Poland in Missile Deal,' *The New York Times*, August 15, 2008, Al, 9.

build a joint system. Behind the scenes, Russian diplomats tried to sow division among European countries over the American plan.[662]

The tone between presidents Bush and Putin remained friendly. However, Washington's inflexibility on missile defence caused increasing grievance in policy circles. In mid-July, after Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had officially rejected Putin's proposal for a joint system, Putin made good on his threat to suspend the treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE). As pragmatic cooperation faded from the agenda, the rhetoric began to get more combative. Russian self-confidence was bolstered by encouraging developments on the oil market, with barrel prices above USD 100, compared to low double digit figures around the turn of the century. References to Russia's rightful great-power status made a return to Moscow's official statements. Defence Minister Ivanov, for example, suggested that Russia had 'completely recovered the status of great power that bears global responsibility for the situation of the planet and the future of human civilization.'[663]

In a speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, foreign minister Sergei Lavrov summarised how Russia's position had changed in light of missile defence: 'It should be understood that for all the non-confrontational nature of Russia's foreign policy, there are some "red lines" for us, namely, when a real threat arises to our national security or to the existing international legal order. Here we have no choice but to respond and to uphold our position to the end.'[664] Less than two weeks later, Russia substantiated its self-assured language with a show of force, announcing the test of the world's most powerful nonnuclear explosive device which

[662] Donaldson and Nogee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*, 392-3.

[663] Sergei Ivanov, 'Triada Natsional'nykh Tsennostei,' *Izvestia*, 14 July 2006, in Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, 186.

[664] Sergei Lavrov, 'What Guides Russia in World Affairs,' *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 10 September 2007, in: *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 59, no. 36 (2007), 3.

it nicknamed 'the father of all bombs.' Its purpose was unambiguous: 'to curtail US and NATO military activity along Russia's perimeter,' as one analyst observed.[665] Some in the Kremlin began to speak of a 'new cold war.'[666]

This was the already tense environment in which talks on the final status of Kosovo were to be conducted. A draft UNSC resolution recommending a clear path to its independence was blocked by Russia. Nonetheless, by the end of the year 2007, the US, UK, and France had made it clear that they would recognise Kosovar independence, even if declared unilaterally. The matter was followed with a keen interest in Tbilisi as well. President Mikheil Saakashvili expressed his concerns about Kosovar secession from Serbia to leaders in Europe and the US. He felt that it would anger Russia to the extent that retaliation against Georgia, in the event of an attack, would be far more likely. Unfortunately, Western leaders assured him that Russia was bluffing.[667]

Echoing his country's stance from eight years prior, foreign minister Lavrov lamented that the UN seemingly was 'no longer of interest to the West,'[668] and offered a possible explanation: 'bombing Yugoslavia and recognising the illegally and unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo' could hardly be squared under the aegis of the UN Charter.[669] As Vladimir Putin's second term as president drew to a close, relations with the West were at a low point. Rather than being the result of individual episodes described above, however, these could be thought of as

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[665] Igor Iavlanskii, 'On Whose Head Did the Parachuting Barrel Fall?' *Izvestia*, 13 September 2007, in Donaldson and Nogee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*, 394.

[666] Ibid.

[667] Ronald D. Asmus, *A Little War That Shook the World: Georgia, Russia and the Future of the West* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 100.

[668] Interview with *Vremya Novostei*, 21 December 2007, in Averre, 'From Pristina to Tskhinvali: The Legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia's Relations with the West,' 588.

[669] Sergei Lavrov, 'Joint Press Conference with Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Volodymyr Ohryzko,' Press Service of the Foreign Ministry, 15 April 2008, https://www.mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/342385.

symptoms or catalysts of the downward trend. As Levitin argues, 'the humiliations and frustrations of the post-Soviet period (…) would have come out into the open with or without the Kosovo war (…) The deterioration [of relations] has to be understood in the context of more general and long-standing trends in Russian foreign policy.'[670]

5.2. Resentment to contempt

The preceding sub-chapter presented an outline of the high and low points of Russian-Western relations during Vladimir Putin's first two terms as president. This section focuses on an evolving affective phenomenon that, I suggest, changed how Russian officials viewed their relationship with Europe and the US over the same time frame. With growing disappointment and distrust, the feeling of *resentment* transformed into *contempt* – both forms of anger but each associated with different action tendencies and epiphenomena.

The social psychological equivalent to this shift is described by Iver Neumann. He studied the 'about-turn from cooperation to conflict' between the two sides in terms of Russian's self-image:[671] considering what it means for Russians that their country should be 'great,' Neumann traces how the country's present self-image in relation to Europe developed. While Russia might have suffered from an 'inferiority complex' towards Europe during the 1990s, that was 'inverted into a superiority complex' under Putin.[672] Moving from Russia's collective identity to the level of individual psychology, I hold, should yield insights into decision-making. By

[670] Oleg Levitin, 'Inside Moscow's Kosovo Muddle,' *Survival* 42, no. 1 (2000): 138.
[671] Neumann, 'Russia's Europe, 1991–2016: Inferiority to Superiority,' 1381.
[672] Ibid., 1383.

explicating the effects of anger, in its varying forms, on the experience of the leader, we can draw inferences on the action tendencies that were likely promoted.

The affective manifestation of an 'inferiority complex' at the level of the individual political operative is *resentment*. Both denote the presence of a social hierarchy that is deemed unfavourable to the self or one's group. Resentment, the way it is used here, is a moral variant of the emotion of anger, as is *spite* and *vengefulness*. The literature describes resentment as an 'emotional apprehension to undeserved advantage.'[673] Those experiencing it feel that they are losing resources while other classes, class segments, or groups are perceived to gain resources they do not deserve.[674]

The term can be traced back to Max Scheler's classic study of *Ressentiment*.[675] Drawing on Nietzsche, who had argued that emotions were dichotomous states of being either powerful or impotent,[676] Scheler theorised ressentiment as the condemnation of what one secretly craves but cannot achieve. In the Nietzschean tradition, resentment is a self-destructive form of anger that, while functioning 'anaesthetically to deaden the pain of injury,' would reinforce passivity in those subject to it.[677] As Barbalet points out, the Nietzschean conception emphasises an important element of the emotion: when left unacknowledged, resentment encompasses an 'explosive force' in social relations.[678] While the Nietzschean, debilitating form of resentment is not the only variant this emotion can take, an

[673] J. M. Barbalet, *Emotion, Social Theory, and Social Structure: A Macrosociological Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 63.

[674] Jonathan H. Turner, *Human Emotions: A Sociological Theory* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 188.

[675] Max Scheler and Lewis A. Coser, *Ressentiment* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1961). See also: Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 15.

[676] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Philosophy of Nietzsche* (New York, NY: Modern Library, 1927), 563.

[677] Barbalet, *Emotion, Social Theory, and Social Structure: A Macrosociological Approach*, 63.

[678] Ibid.

asymmetry in the social hierarchy or the distribution of resources – leaving those lower in the hierarchy unable to turn their resentment into action – is generally considered part of the environmental context giving rise to this particular emotion.

In cultural terms, around the turn of the century, Europe was viewed as 'the main track of civilization'[679] – a model to emulate. 'Today we turn a new page in the history of our bilateral relations and do our part to build a common European home,' Putin proclaimed in a speech before the German Bundestag in 2001.[680] And 'we are a part of the Western European culture. No matter where our people live, in the Far East or in the south, we are Europeans.'[681] As has been discussed, it is important to understand the centrality of Europe to the Russian self-image and the psychological, ideational, and normative aspects of that relationship. The concept of Europe, MacFarlane argues, 'occupies a psychological, as well as an institutional and geographical, space.' However, the concept is monolithic and ignores differences in intellectual and philosophical thought within Europe. 'When we speak of the evolution of Russian conceptions of Europe,' MacFarlane continues, 'we are speaking not merely of the redefinition of geostrategic and economic interest within a particular geographical area, but of changes in perspectives regarding "European" ideas and norms.'[682] Or, as Tsygankov puts it: 'the "self's" assessment of the "other" is subject to variations, depending on the "other's" willingness to accept the "self's" influence.[683]

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[679] Vladimir Putin, 'Rossiya na Rubezhe Tysyacheletii', *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 30 December 1999, http://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-12-30/4_millenium.html.

[680] Vladimir Putin, 'Wortprotokoll der Rede Wladimir Putins im Deutschen Bundestag,' Press Service of the German Bundestag, 25 September 2001, https://www.bundestag.de/parlament/geschichte/gastredner/putin/putin_wort-244966.

[681] Vladimir Putin, *First Person: An Astonishingly Frank Self-Portrait by Russia's President* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2000), 169.

[682] MacFarlane, 'Russian Conceptions of Europe,' 237.

[683] Andrei P. Tsygankov, 'The Sources of Russia's Fear of NATO,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 51, no. 2 (2018): 103.

By the mid-2000s, perspectives regarding Europe had already changed considerably. Talk of a 'common European home' had given way to representations of Europe as something 'other,' 'false,' or 'rotten' (*gniloy*, *gnilyushchiy*).[684] For the sake of completeness, it ought to be mentioned that such representations did not arise out of nothing but had historical precedents. Berdyaev describes Russia as 'a complete section of the world – a colossal East-West.' Russia united East and West, but they were also 'always engaged in strife.'[685] From this esteem for the synthesis of Eastern and Western patterns of human development as well as from characterisations of Russian culture[686] emerged a claim to Russian superiority, as MacFarlane argues.[687] Going even further back, 'ambivalence about Europe' was one of the main reasons for the development of Russian nationalism in the 18th and 19th centuries. 'The Russian self-definition,' MacFarlane summarises, 'was explicitly, if not necessarily consciously, constructed in reaction to a perceived threat of Europeanisation.'[688]

We can break this change in Russian perceptions of Europe and the West down to the level of psychology. Depending on whether the 'self' (Russia) and its influence is recognised or denied by the 'other' (the West), it may generate either *hope* or *resentment* and the perception of threat.[689] This has crucial implications on whether the 'self' will be primed toward benevolence or spite – cooperation or acting as a spoiler. According to Tsygankov, this emotional evolution from fear to hope to

[684] Neumann, 'Russia's Europe, 1991–2016: Inferiority to Superiority,' 1392; Marlene Laruelle, *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right* (Oxford University Press, 2019), 134 (Aleksandr Dugin).
[685] Nikolai Berdiaev, *The Russian Idea* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1947), 2.
[686] Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, 267.
[687] MacFarlane, 'Russian Conceptions of Europe,' 239. See also: Sergei Chugrov, 'Rossiya mezhdu Vostokom I Zapadom,' *Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnyye Otnosheniya* 7, 77.
[688] MacFarlane, 'Russian Conceptions of Europe,' 240. See also: Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, 244-45, 54, 61, 66.
[689] Tsygankov, 'The Sources of Russia's Fear of NATO,' 103.

frustration has been a recurring pattern in Russian-Western relations since the 19th century:

> Hope frequently turned into frustration with what Russia saw as the other side's unwillingness to reciprocate and, ultimately, mistrust and fear that the Western nations indeed aim to undermine Russia's sovereignty and security. Sustained fear and mistrust on occasions turned into anger and anger-shaped policies of abandoning cooperative initiatives and adopting patterns of defensive or assertive behaviour.[690]

What distinguishes resentment from *contempt* is one's self-perceived position in the social hierarchy. Generally speaking, resentment is targeted at those thought to be higher up in the hierarchy; contempt is felt for those perceived to be lower than one's own in-group. Ian Robertson applies this very principle to an assessment of the psychology of Vladimir Putin: 'contempt is the emotion reserved for those we regard as inferiors, and it is likely that Putin regards the West – particularly Western Europe – as inferior in many ways (…).[691] Robertson suggests that 'contempt must be considered as one of the most important elements of [Putin's] psychology. It is not only contempt for what he almost regards as weak – and, possibly in his macho world view, effeminate – Western leaders. More important is his contempt for their institutions (…).'[692]

The definition of contempt might seem inconsistent. On the one hand, the assumption is that those who experience it consider their own social status to be higher than the reference group. On the other hand, contempt presumes a perceived injustice that is attributed to the lower-ranking group. The reason lies in the

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[690] 'The Frustrating Partnership: Honor, Status, and Emotions in Russia's Discourses of the West,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014): 346.

[691] Ian H. Robertson, 'Inside the Mind of Vladimir Putin,' *The Telegraph*, 24 February 2015, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11431850/Inside-the-mind-of-Vladimir-Putin.html.

[692] Ian H. Robertson, 'The Danger That Lurks Inside Vladimir Putin's Brain,' *Psychology Today*, 17 March 2014, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-winner-effect/201403/the-danger-lurks-inside-vladimir-putins-brain.

combined character of the emotion. Plutchik treated contempt as a blend of anger and disgust,[693] while according to Ekman and Friesen, contempt is a combination of anger and denigration but stands alone as a primary, or universal emotion in its own right.[694] To reiterate what appraisal theory understands by 'combined' emotions (in contrast to 'blends' of emotions), Lazarus argues that the core relational themes of either emotion remain unchanged. For example, 'smugness' in Lazarus' conception, 'is a combination of contempt and pride. (…) to feel smug is to feel both contemptuous of those who are below us and proud to be superior. The content is not changed from the original emotions that were blended (…).[695]

With respect to its effects and action tendencies promoted by the emotion, contempt is more problematic than resentment or the superordinate category of anger. First, because the probable action tendencies promoted by contempt are distinctly more aggressive. Second, because contempt negates empathy – the ability to take the other side's view.[696] That ability, however, is a corner stone of successful diplomacy. In the absence of empathy, establishing trust and finding compromise solutions becomes virtually impossible. As Robertson writes in his psychological profile of Vladimir Putin, 'contempt negates the other perspective and the object of contempt is just that – an object. Objects do not have a point of view.'[697] Action tendencies do not accurately predict future behaviour. However, much like 'Societal

[693] Robert Plutchik and Henry Kellerman, *Theories of Emotion* (New York, NY: Academic Press, 1980).

[694] Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen, 'A New Pan-Cultural Facial Expression of Emotion,' *Motivation and Emotion* 10, no. 2 (1986).

[695] Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation*, 229.

[696] Nancy Eisenberg, *Altruistic Emotion, Cognition, and Behavior.* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1986); 'Empathy and Sympathy,' in: Lewis and Haviland-Jones, *Handbook of Emotions*.

[697] Robertson, 'Inside the mind of Vladimir Putin.'

debates do not determine foreign policy moves, (…) the general tenor of policy debates has the effect of making certain moves easier to legitimate than others.'[698]

It might seem as though I am suggesting that resentment, in contrast to contempt, does not facilitate retaliatory action tendencies – which would match the empirical record of Russian behaviour: not until 2008, when resentment had transformed into contempt, did Russia act assertively against perceived injustices.[699] Such a reading would be too simplistic. Barbalet, who studied the emotional effects of differentially distributed levels of power and prestige across subpopulations argues that when an 'other' becomes simply too powerful for one's own side to realise their interests, anger and resentment are often accompanied by fear.[700] In contrast to a scenario where a lack of power is viewed as one's own failing and fear leads to a flight response or social withdrawal, when the other side is blamed for one's powerlessness, fear occurs jointly with resentment and the response is likely to be of the 'fighting' kind. 'Such perceptions,' Turner writes, 'may be mobilized by ideologies or arise spontaneously, but in either case, very intense emotions like vengefulness are aroused, and these are the emotions of violence.'[701] Besides, Russia had a far greater capacity to act in 2008 than at any point since the end of the Cold War, while its main geopolitical antipole was tied down in two wars. In other words, it might not have been *able* as forcefully before then.

We might also hypothesise about the role of contempt in strategies of social creativity as outlined by Social Identity Theory. Contempt holds a particularly

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[698] Neumann, 'Russia's Europe, 1991–2016: Inferiority to Superiority,' 1394.

[699] Apart from the fact that Russia in 2008 had far greater capacity to act than at any point since the end of the fact. In other words, it might not have been *able* to act as forcefully before.

[700] Barbalet, *Emotion, Social Theory, and Social Structure: A Macrosociological Approach*, 133.

[701] Jonathan H. Turner, 'The Sociology of Emotions: Basic Theoretical Arguments,' *Emotion Review* 1, no. 4 (2009): 350.

pronounced potential for 'othering.' When used instrumentally, shoring up contempt can prove particularly effective at creating a distinction between the 'proud self' and the 'disgusting other,' or inferior out-group.[702] As a former advisor to the Kremlin puts it, Putin went from being an 'avowedly pro-Western leader' to declaring 'the supremacy of Russian society and morality over the "decadent" and "genderless" West.' The resulting foreign policy was 'based on the notion that if the West will not accept us as equal partners, then we will simply assume that role [as an equal] for ourselves.'[703]

The fact that expressions of contempt can communicate a number of negative sentiments about the other, while at the same time promoting one's own side as being virtuous illustrates the communicative function of the emotion. Rather than being merely spontaneous, even involuntary displays of one's experience, affect and emotion can be loaded with a wealth of cultural and historical references. Toal integrates this notion in his theory of *affective geopolitics* – a 'thicker' account of Russian behaviour, using tools of critical geopolitics and resting on bio-cultural foundations.[704] According to Toal, an affective geopolitics is at work in the foreign policy practices of both the United States and Russia, one that activates historic myths and heroic self-images while framing adversaries as equivalent to historic

[702] Simon Koschut, 'Speaking from the Heart: Emotion Discourse Analysis in International Relations,' in: *Researching Emotions in International Relations*, ed. Maéva Clément and Eric Sangar (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 284; Matthew Coen Leep, 'The Affective Production of Others: United States Policy Towards the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict,' *Cooperation and Conflict* 45, no. 3 (2010): 335.

[703] Angus Roxburgh, 'Putin Began by Embracing the West. Now, He Wants Revenge,' *The Guardian*, 12 August 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/aug/12/vladimir-putin-west-russian-president-20-years#maincontent.

[704] Gerard Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 45.

For other scholarly contributions linking geopolitics and emotion, see Dominique Moïsi, *The Geopolitics of Emotion: How Cultures of Fear, Humiliation, and Hope Are Reshaping the World* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2009); Adis Maksic, *Ethnic Mobilization, Violence and the Politics of Affect* (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2017).

enemies (Hitler, Nazism, fascism).[705] Further examples are the concept of 'Slavic brotherhood' which was widely promoted in the late 1990s to shore up sympathy for Yugoslavia; or the framing of Russian actions in both Georgia and Ukraine as a 'historic duty' to protect its 'compatriots' who find themselves, through unfortunate circumstance, living outside the borders of modern-day Russia.

Contempt may also be used to alleviate the pressures emanating from social comparisons with out-groups that are deemed unfavourable. As Hall argues, 'contempt and disgust can be employed to signal a certain perception of the target that minimizes the possibility for interaction. Correspondingly, the performance of contempt by state actors may work to constitute certain states as pariahs or rogues.'[706] While casting yourself as a 'rogue' might not be the desired outcome of such strategies, changing the dimensions of comparison or 'taking oneself out of the game' entirely can shift the focus away from an inauspicious competitive situation.

I argue that there was a change at the level of personal psychology of Russian policy-makers from resentment to contempt which parallels the transition from an 'inferiority' to a 'superiority complex' theorised by Neumann. While we cannot establish a direct causal link between this change and foreign policy, emotions put constraints on the scope of action available to policy-makers and make some actions more likely than others – in much the same way that ideas predetermine the choice of policies:

> It seems clear that the repertoire of actions that lie close to hand regarding a partner in cooperation differs from those regarding an outright adversary. It is, as a Russian would say, no coincidence that, in the 1990s, dominant stories of Europe as an ideal that Russia would increase its greatness by following went hand in hand with a foreign policy of

[705] Ibid., 13.

[706] Todd H. Hall, *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 189; K. P. O'Reilly, 'Perceiving Rogue States: The Use of the 'Rogue State' Concept by U.S. Foreign Policy Elites,' *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3, no. 4 (2007).

> cooperation. By the same token, it is hardly surprising that today's dominant stories of Russian superiority to Europe coincide with a policy of confrontation.[707]

In their study of Russian relations with NATO, Forsberg and Herd describe four attempts to build a partnership. In each of these attempts, the 'optimistic tone and rhetoric of cooperation' would eventually clash with the 'actuality as measured in practical and concrete terms,' leading to an overall deterioration of the relationship over time.[708] The first, 'romantic' period was based on shared optimism that the Cold War divisions could be left behind and ended around 1994 when NATO expressed its desire to expand into central and eastern Europe. Having come to view enlargement as inevitable, Russia, in a second phase, pushed for treaties to limit NATO activities in former Soviet states and demanded participation in its decision-making. It ended in a visceral display of disappointment and indignation, when Russian and NATO forces faced each other at Pristina airport (see chapter 4). Under Putin, the attacks of 9/11 provided the main impetus to once again try and improve relations. Numerous factors, some of which have already been discussed, facilitated the breakdown of these efforts. Chief among them, the 2003 war in Iraq, tacit support of the Rose and Orange Revolutions, the enlargement of NATO to the Baltic states, and repeated admonitions of democratic backsliding in Russia. All these constituted veritable disappointments for Moscow. To argue this, it should be noted, is not an attribution of blame to military strategists in Washington or Brussels but merely a value-free assessment of factors contributing to Russian officials' evolving affective attitude.[709]

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[707] Neumann, 'Russia's Europe, 1991–2016: Inferiority to Superiority,' 1383.

[708] Tuomas Forsberg and Graeme Herd, 'Russia and NATO: From Windows of Opportunities to Closed Doors,' *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 23, no. 1 (2015): 42.

[709] There are many reasons for the decision to enlarge NATO, among them genuine convictions that it would foster European security but also economic incentives and simply organisational inertia. A thorough discussion of these is well beyond the scope of this chapter.

In search for an end point to Putin's efforts at improving relations with NATO and the West more broadly, his speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007 is an obvious contender.[710] It remains one of his most scathing displays of disappointment and disdain of NATO expansionism and US unipolarity. America had overstepped its 'national borders in every way' and through 'an almost uncontained hyper use of force.' It did so whenever it pleased and in neglect of international law, and with the consequence of 'new human tragedies' and the creation of 'new centres of tension.' The enlargement of NATO represented 'a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust.' Even more affectively charged, enlargement was a clear breach of past assurances and a violation of explicitly given 'security guarantees.'[711] The West, in other words, was not worth Russia's trust.

As with any expression of emotion, we can only speculate about intentionality. My position on distinguishing between an instrumentalist interpretation of 'performed' emotion and emotion as an input factor in decision-making is outlined in the introduction. Significant episodes like Putin's display of anger and disdain for US foreign policy at the Munich Security Conference, in particular, raise questions about the deliberate intent of such performances. This interpretation would be inconsistent with the communicative function of emotion, though: most emotions promote a desire to be expressed in the person experiencing them. And even when an emotion is expressed for strategic purposes initially, it is often a short distance to its being embodied and felt.

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[710] As is NATO's April 2008 Bucharest Declaration and Russian officials' responses to it.

[711] Vladimir Putin, 'Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 10 February 2007, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034.

Especially when it comes to vital concerns or strongly felt positions, there is often little distinction between private feeling and publicly expressed sentiment. As Vojtech Mastny observes in connection to his studies of formerly classified Soviet archival materials: perhaps the greatest surprise so far to have come out of the Russian archives is that there was no surprise: the thinking of the insiders conformed substantially to what Moscow was publicly saying. Some of the most secret documents could have been published in Pravda without anybody's noticing.[712]

[712] Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), 9. See also Tuomas Forsberg, 'Status Conflicts between Russia and the West: Perceptions and Emotional Biases,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014). Forsberg argues that while 'a gap between private and public thinking may exist, it should not be exaggerated a priori.'

6. BACK WITH A VENGEANCE: WAR WITH GEORGIA

This chapter focuses on Russian-Western interactions up to and including August 2008, when Russian forces attacked Georgia.[713] The first section presents the story through the lens of the predominant paradigms in IR theory, identifying questions they have left unanswered. Subsequently, it demonstrates how the toolkit of affective realism may be used to supplement or fine-tune existing narratives. Three affective phenomena are key to this explanation of the events of August 2008: contempt, fear, and hubris: the contemptuous attitude of Russian officials that had arisen throughout the previous eight years lowered their willingness to cooperate and made assertive policy action more likely. Fear of a challenge to the Russian regime and its civilizational values promoted the decision to attack Georgia with overwhelming force. Finally, leaders in both Moscow and Tbilisi were overconfident with respect to the expected outcome of a military confrontation.

6.1. The August War in IR Theory

Isolated skirmishes and provocations had occurred throughout the year in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In early August 2008, the situation in South Ossetia escalated with repeated exchanges of fire between Georgian peacekeepers and separatists. The war proper began late in the evening on 7 August, when Georgian forces opened mortar and artillery fire on the South Ossetian capital of Tskhinvali, killing several members of Russia's peacekeeping contingent. A direct confrontation between Georgian and Russian forces, which had moved into South Ossetia through the Roki tunnel, ensued. Three days later, the Russians had not only taken

[713] Henceforth, the Russian-Georgian war of 2008 will also be referred to as 'August War' or 'Five-Day War.'

Tskhinvali, but expelled Georgian troops from South Ossetia altogether. Meanwhile, Abkhaz forces had opened a second front in the west by attacking the Georgian-held Kodori Gorge. Eventually, Russian troops from both fronts would advance onto Georgian territory, while the Russian air force attacked Georgian targets far beyond the disputed provinces.

The events of that summer continue to be the subject of heated debate – a debate that has been complicated considerably by propaganda from both sides. An exhaustive dissection of the confrontation is beyond the scope of this chapter, as is offering an appropriate response to the overarching question 'who is to blame?' The objective, instead, is to probe existing explanations of the reasons for the war for shortcomings and supplement them with available evidence from the record of officials' testimony. Because of the focus on the Russian leadership and to a lesser extent, that of Georgia and the US, it can also not award as much attention to other actors – NATO, the EU, the Council of Europe, or individual countries such as France or Germany – as would be due to their role in the conflict and its resolution.

For a general baseline, the 2009 report of the EU's 'Independent International Fact-Finding Mission,' also known as 'Tagliavini report' after the Swiss Ambassador leading the mission, still appears most useful. The report concluded that 'open hostilities' had been started by Georgia on 7 August, breaking the ceasefire which had been announced by Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili. The Russian government, too, bore responsibility for creating conditions that led to escalation.[714] Detailed analyses of the conflict and its wider ramifications for European security

[714] 'Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia,' 30 September 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/30_09_09_iiffmgc_report.pdf.

have also been produced by Roy Allison,[715] Ronald Asmus,[716] as well as Svante Cornell and Frederick Starr.[717] Finally, the relevant sections of the memoirs of then-US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice also proved instructive.[718]

While this chapter does not scrutinise the sequence of events or assign blame to either side,[719] some general observations regarding the timeline should be made. Assessments as to who fired the 'first shot' are complicated by exchanges of fire involving both sides during the preceding weeks and months. To argue that Saakashvili had simply acted recklessly would be an oversimplification, although he does deserve considerable blame for miscalculating both the Russian response and nature of (or lack of) prospective US support. In fact, high-ranking Bush administration officials and State Department experts working on the Caucasus had warned Georgia against the consequences of military action.[720] 'The Russians had baited a trap, and the impetuous Saakashvili walked right into it,' as US secretary of defence Robert Gates summed up the conflict.[721] The Five-Day War was also not simply a Russian invasion. Saakashvili's claims of responding to a Russian military invasion were undermined by statements made by himself and his top military officials shortly after the shelling of Tskhinvali began.[722]

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[715] Roy Allison, 'Russia Resurgent? Moscow's Campaign to 'Coerce Georgia to Peace',' *International Affairs* 84 (2008); 'The Russian Case for Military Intervention in Georgia: International Law, Norms and Political Calculation,' *European Security* 18, no. 2 (2009).

[716] Ronald D. Asmus, *A Little War That Shook the World: Georgia, Russia and the Future of the West* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[717] Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr, *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War in Georgia*, Studies of Central Asia and the Caucasus (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2009).

[718] Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honour: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2011).

[719] This issue is complicated enough to merit separate treatment: Rick Fawn and Robert Nalbandov, 'The Difficulties of Knowing the Start of War in the Information Age: Russia, Georgia and the War over South Ossetia, August 2008,' *European Security* 21, no. 1 (2012).

[720] Niklas Nilsson, *Beacon of Liberty: Role Conceptions, Crises and Stability in Georgia's Foreign Policy, 2004–2012* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2015), 183.

[721] Robert M. Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (London: WH Allen, 2014), 168.

[722] Charles Clover et al., 'Countdown in the Caucasus: Seven Days That Brought Russia and Georgia to War,' *Financial Times*, 27 August 2008, https://www.ft.com/content/af25400a-739d-11dd-

Russian troops did commit multiple violations of international law in the course of the conflict and the expansion of its ostensibly defensive military operation into other parts of Georgia lacks an adequate justification. The Russian military undoubtedly had contingency plans for an invasion of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Also, Russian military exercises conducted just north of the border with South Ossetia had not been entirely ramped down before fighting began.[723] Russian paratroopers still occupied key strategic positions and some battalions had been moved even closer to the border, which Russia later justified as a potential reinforcement of its peacekeeping contingent in South Ossetia.[724] There is no irrefutable evidence to suggest, however, that the war was entirely premeditated by Moscow, as some have argued.[725] Finally, much of the coverage of the war neglects to mention why many Abkhaz and Ossetians felt grievances against the central government in Tbilisi, not just since the Georgian military quashed independence movements in the two provinces in two bloody wars in 1991/92 and 1992/93, respectively.

When speaking of the 'two leaders,' this is generally referring to the president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili on the one, and the then-prime minister of Russia, Vladimir Putin, on the other side. Three months before the August War, he had switched offices with Dmitri Medvedev, who now served as president. It is safe to assume, however, that the broad strokes of Russian foreign policy continued to be

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8a66-0000779fd18c. Still the next day, Saakashvili suggested that 'fighting was initiated by the separatist regime.' 'US Embassy Cable,' 8 August 2008, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08TBILISI1341_a.html. Later, Georgian sources would revise the timing of Russian troop movement back by over a day. Hans Mouritzen and Anders Wivel, *Explaining Foreign Policy: International Diplomacy and the Russo-Georgian War* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2012), 61.

[723] 'Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia.'

[724] 'Rossiyskaya Armiya Podoshla k Granitse Yuzhnoy Osetii,' *Life*, 4 August 2008, https://web.archive.org/web/20080807015351/http://life.ru/news/27624.

[725] Marcel H. van Herpen, *Putin's Wars: The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism*, Second ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

drawn by Putin. Especially regarding the already tense security situation in the Caucasus, the most consequential decisions were made by, or at least cleared with, Putin. When Georgian artillery began shelling Tskhinvali, Medvedev hesitated and sought to coordinate with Putin first. It was later reported that Putin was angry with Medvedev over this 'lack of resolve'[726] – there should not have been any doubt in his deputy's mind as to what he, Putin, would have done. The fact that Putin was still calling the shots is corroborated by Saakashvili's testimony. Every time he wanted to speak to the new Russian president, he would be put through to Putin.[727]

With respect to the determinants, objectives, and conduct of the Russian military campaign, there are two competing narratives. The official Russian explanation, that 'its operation and subsequent security measures in Georgia have been sui generis and essentially retaliatory – an ad hoc, exceptional, though large-scale, response to a Georgian attack on South Ossetia,' as summarised by Allison.[728] The other view, which in large part also applies to Russia's more recent operations in Ukraine, suggests that its ostensible concern for Abkhaz and Ossetian populations merely provided the pretence to re-assert its role as a regional security provider and deter the West. The record shows some testimonies pointing to these underlying goals of Russian foreign policy, for example when a triumphant foreign minister Lavrov announced that 'the myth of the "unipolar world" has finally been dispelled.'[729]

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[726] Steven L. Myers, *The New Tsar: The Rise and Reign of Vladimir Putin* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 349.

[727] Gerard Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 156.

[728] Allison, 'Russia Resurgent? Moscow's Campaign to 'Coerce Georgia to Peace',' 1145.

[729] Sergei Lavrov, 'Remarks at an Enlarged Meeting of the Federation Council International Affairs Committee,' Moscow, 18 September 2008, https://www.mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/324594.

With its emphasis on polarity and the balance of power in an effort to uncover the real motives of rational actors, this view corresponds to structural realist theory. Georgian action against Tskhinvali, according to this logic, provided an opportunity to deter US ambitions in the region and put an immediate stop to plans for further NATO enlargement. The theory provides a fitting template, also because Russian foreign policy itself, at the time, is said to have taken a more 'realist' turn. Averre summarises the Russian position as follows:

> Disabused of illusions about a 'common European home' based on shared values and reciprocal respect for security interests, and about the prospects for reconfiguring institutions to nurture such a community, Russia's response has been to recast its approach to international affairs in realist terms, perceiving sovereign states alternately cooperating and contending for influence in an unpredictable, 'anarchic' system, and consequently to reinforce its ambitions to shape this environment.[730]

Structural realists have blamed Georgia for provoking Russia and by extension, Europe and the US for giving Georgians a false sense of security (similar arguments would be made six years later after the annexation of Crimea). Paul Saunders suggests that Saakashvili acted recklessly and had overestimated what his lobbying efforts in Washington could get him. He convinced himself that Russia would not respond out of fear of provoking the West. What Saakashvili neglected to factor in, though, was that Moscow had much more at stake than Washington did. Prudence allowed only one conclusion: 'throughout history, weak nations with powerful neighbours have energetically sought strong allies. (…) America doesn't need reckless friends.'[731]

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[730] Derek Averre, 'From Pristina to Tskhinvali: The Legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia's Relations with the West,' *International Affairs* 85, no. 3 (2009): 591.

[731] Paul J. Saunders, 'Georgia's Recklessness,' *The Washington Post*, 15 August 2008, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/14/AR2008081403053.html. See also: Emmanuel Karagiannis, 'The 2008 Russian-Georgian War Via the Lens of Offensive Realism,' *European Security* 22, no. 1 (2013).

Few theories can compete with the clarity and succinctness of structural realism. Some of the problems that arise most frequently when applying that paradigm to foreign policy analysis are discussed in Chapter 1. Among them, the innate determinism of balance of power-based assessments; rationalist and cognitivist biases that obfuscate the formation of state preferences; and a disregard of domestic politics, non-state actors, and other interest groups – which is especially problematic in an environment as complex and contested as the post-Soviet space.

At their first meeting during the opening ceremony of the Beijing Summer Olympics, as Russia was ramping up its retaliatory strike on Georgia, George W. Bush expressed concern to Vladimir Putin about a 'disproportional' response. Bush also signalled disappointment over the 'hot-blooded' nature of the Georgian president.[732] In doing so, he implicitly told Putin that the US had not authorised the Georgian attack on Tskhinvali. Nonetheless, Bush informed the Russian prime minister that 'we are going to be with them [the Georgians].'[733] Bush's response goes against what some structural realists would prescribe in this situation. There was little to gain from siding with a small country on the other side of the world, much less one that had just attacked a Russian protectorate despite repeated warnings not do so.[734] As Gerard Toal argues, 'the dilemma Saakashvili created for the Bush administration was in directly pitting affective against strategic geopolitics.'[735] To make sense of this and other actions of either side, and gain predictive power, a more

[732] George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 2010), 435.
[733] Ibid.
[734] Although other structural realists might argue that by nature of its allied status with Georgia or in order to deter further Russian transgressions, the US was compelled to act. Liberally minded adherents of realpolitik, similarly, would raise questions about the credibility of America's commitment to Georgian security.
[735] Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*, 168.

thorough investigation of the affective foundations of leaders' decision-making is necessary.

The literature on status concerns exhibits similar deficiencies when it comes to providing an in-depth explanation of the impact of status-seeking behaviour on individual policy decisions. Why do states vie with each other for prestige? In no small part, because leaders identify with their state and the common pursuit of seeking recognition in the world becomes a personal objective. The reason is a process of socialisation, which also involves neuropsychological adaptations. Examining the arc of Putin's leadership over two decades, clinical psychologist Ian Robertson hypothesises that 'too much power, for too long, has changed his brain to a point where his ego and country are one.'[736] This development is only exacerbated by the fact that increases in national prestige become a valuable currency in domestic power plays. Robertson suggests why the convergence of ego and national interest may be problematic: '(…) it means that we cannot be sure that President Putin will behave entirely predictably according to some logical notion of cost and benefit.'[737]

In discussions of Russian foreign policy, there is another theoretical paradigm that typically produces diametrically opposed policy recommendations. For lack of a better word and recognising the broad range of connotations associated with the term, these accounts are summarised as 'liberal.' Even within the narrow domain of Russian foreign policy analysis, there is not one, consistent liberal explanation, but a number of accounts that generally depart from a similar, normatively charged vantage point. That departure point includes the view that Western-style parliamentary democracy, legal and law enforcement systems, and the role played by

[736] Ian Robertson, 'Inside the mind of Vladimir Putin,' *The Telegraph*, 24 February 2015, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11431850/Inside-the-mind-of-Vladimir-Putin.html.

[737] Ibid.

the fourth estate are preferable to their Russian equivalents. In this paradigm, Russian politics is generally characterised by its autocratic tendencies, lack of transparency, and cronyism. It is this domestic context from which a neo-imperialist foreign policy arises, ardently focused on the re-establishment of its sphere of influence in the former Soviet space and possibly beyond.

Liberal accounts further presuppose that US and European foreign policy, with some exceptions, pursues 'decent' objectives consistent with the promotion of democracy and the protection of individual liberties. Starting from these often Western-centric positions, Russian foreign policy serves as an inverse template, a 'dark double' of US foreign policy.[738] Consequently, liberal explanations of Russian behaviour tend to trail the official US foreign policy line. Statements on the unacceptability of Russian actions 'in the twenty-first century'[739] or the obsolescence of 'spheres of influence'[740] – thereby casting the Russian position as primal and outdated – are illustrative of this position. When the policy prescription precedes analysis, explanations of Russian behaviour inevitably suffer.

The vantage point of the liberal position blinds the analyst to how the impact of the policies of one's 'own' side are being perceived. For example, *why* it is that NATO expansion, recognising Kosovo's independence, or the construction of a missile defence system in Europe are met with such fierce rejection by Russian officials? These are important questions in and of themselves that are often left unaddressed. To pre-empt some of these analytical shortcomings, one way or other, we have to try and adopt the view of the decision-maker without any cultural,

[738] David S. Foglesong, *The American Mission and the 'Evil Empire:' the Crusade for a 'Free Russia' since 1881* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[739] 'President Bush Discusses Situation in Georgia,' White House Press Service, 11 August 2008, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/08/20080811-1.html.

[740] 'Remarks of the Situation in Georgia,' White House Press Service, 15 August 2008, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/08/20080815.html.

ideological, or institutional preconceptions. Like Hans Morgenthau suggested, '(…) as disinterested observers we understand his thoughts and actions perhaps better than he, the actor on the political scene, does himself.'[741]

Ironically, even though one of the purported advantages of liberal or 'Innenpolitik' explanations over structural realism is its consideration of unit-level variables in domestic politics, they often turn a blind eye to other significant factors. Toal considers this an 'essentializing tendency' that systematically downplays, marginalizes, and ignores 'the situational, contextual, and spatial factors that may account for state behaviour.' In the context of Georgia, the individual agency of separatist leaders, military officials, the defence industry, powerful Western politicians inside and outside the current administration, or the Russian parliament, is often downplayed. Explanations of Russian foreign policy then tend to converge on 'primordialist claims' such as a narrow interpretation of the assessment of 'Russian conduct' by George Kennan in the early days Cold War.[742] Toal summarises it as follows: 'Russia's behaviour is a product of a base neurosis, an essential disposition toward territorial expansionism and control of its neighbouring states.'[743] The main problem with this disposition in liberally oriented analyses is that it is rarely stipulated and remains implicit.

6.2. Affective realism and the August War

The following section complements the previous one by homing in on the affective dimension of Russian decision-making around the August War. Prevailing analytical paradigms leave some questions open that the framework of affective

[741] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Sixth ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1985), 5.
[742] Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*, 26.
[743] Ibid.

realism seeks to address. Among them: why was Russia's retaliation so overwhelmingly forceful, or disproportionate, as critics have charged? A related question, why did Russia expand its offensive to parts of Georgia outside the disputed territories? Why, of all possible justifications, did Russian leaders invoke the 'responsibility to protect?' And how did potential consequences of their actions – capital flight, economic sanctions, exclusion from international clubs and fora, or potential Western involvement in the conflict itself – factor into decision-making?

From an affective viewpoint, the decision of Mikheil Saakashvili to strike Tskhinvali is an interesting case in itself, although not the central subject matter of this chapter. Nonetheless, some observations regarding the psychology of the Georgian leader need to be made to develop a comprehensive map of the affective landscape in which decision-makers from both sides found themselves in. One emotion was shared by both leaders: Saakashvili and Putin experienced different forms of *hubris* – shaping their attitude towards the other side, how they appraised and interpreted the sequence of events, and how they self-affirmed their perceptions of the respective decision-making contexts they operated in.

Many assessments of the war point to Saakashvili's personality as a proximate cause, suggesting he was either delusional, reckless, narcissistic, or all of these attributes combined. That Saakashvili had been riding a wave of success is hard to deny. Having been swept into office in 2003 by a popular uprising, he quickly embarked on a massive expansion and modernization of the Georgian armed forces. Between 2003 and 2008, military expenditure rose from just USD 42.6 million to over 1 billion, or from 1.1 percent of GDP to a staggering 9.2 percent.[744] Relying largely on updates of its old Soviet heavy armoury, Georgia also imported a great

[744] Absolute amounts in current (2020) USD, SIPRI database, https://www.sipri.org/.

deal of weapons from countries such as Israel, Turkey, Ukraine, and Poland. By 2008, Georgia's army had become a formidable force for a country of its size.[745] According to Toal, these high levels of military spending, the acquisition of new weapons, and the close cooperation with much more powerful states are themselves 'evidence of hubris' that affected not just Saakashvili but also his government and military leaders.[746]

In material terms, Georgia was still in no position to fend off a large-scale Russian invasion, but the hope was that it could deter one. By initiating a swift operation in South Ossetia, Saakashvili intended to capture Tskhinvali and integrate it with the Georgian enclave just north – creating a fait accompli before Russia had time to react.[747] Arguably, he also felt emboldened by rhetoric coming out of Washington promising Georgian integration into the Western defence orbit and economic structures. If bad came to worst, he hoped, the US, in one way or other, would come to Georgia's defence.[748] Having received a higher education there, Saakashvili maintained friendships with influential American politicians and had good contacts to foreign policy think tanks and media outlets. It can be debated whether Saakashvili's reliance on US support was delusional, testament to an enlarged ego, or a more widespread belief held by elites. In the wake of the Russian counteroffensive, the US embassy in Tbilisi documented, for example, how

[745] For a comprehensive summary of Georgian military expansion, see Mikhail S. Barabanov et al., *The Tanks of August* (Moscow: Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, 2010), ch. 1.

[746] Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*, 160.

[747] 'US Embassy Cable,' 8 August 2008, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08TBILISI1337_a.html.

[748] For an exhaustive account of the evolution of the relationship between Georgia and the US since the end of the Cold War, and its potential consequences on Georgian foreign policy in the lead-up to the Five-Day War, see Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*, ch. 3.

representatives of the Georgian military were deeply and genuinely disappointed that the West would not come to its aid.[749]

In any case, it is likely that Saakashvili, in weighing his options, suffered from 'positive illusions.'[750] Setting ambitious objectives and acting boldly had paid off handsomely in the past – not least when he defected from the ruling party to lead protestors in the Rose Revolution. In facilitating this perception, US foreign policy might have had a role to play. As tensions soared in the summer of 2008, secretary of state Condoleezza Rice travelled to Georgia on a delicate mission: to call for restraint while avowing continued support for Georgian sovereignty and democracy-building. According to Rice's memoir, she was quite clear with Saakashvili about what would happen if he gave in to Russian provocations: '"(…) don't engage Russian military forces. No one will come to your aid, and you will lose," I said sternly. He got the point, looking as if he'd just lost his last friend.'[751] On the other hand, Toal observes that, 'given Saakashvili's disposition to hear what he wanted, not to mention his conflation of Georgia with Israel, Rice's rhetoric sent a less than clear message at a crucial juncture.'[752] Claims by president Medvedev that, after Rice's trip to Georgia, Saakashvili 'simply dropped all communications with us' further attest to his overconfidence.[753] As former diplomat and policy analyst Strobe Talbott would later

[749] 'US Embassy Cable,' 8 August 2008, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08TBILISI1349_a.html.

[750] For the phenomenon and its hypothetical consequences, see Dominic Johnson, *Overconfidence and War: The Havoc and Glory of Positive Illusions* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[751] Rice, *No Higher Honour: A Memoir of My Years in Washington*.

[752] Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*, 157.

[753] Dmitry Medvedev, 'Interview to Russia Today, First Informational Caucasus Television, and Ekho Moskvy Radio,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 5 August 2011, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/12204.

state, America did not green-light Georgian military action, but there might have been 'a problem with an insufficiently red light.'[754]

The 'winner effect' is likely something that affected both adversaries, Saakashvili and Putin, going into the August War. 'Winning,' according to neuroscientific research on animals and humans, changes the chemistry of the brain – increasing focus, cognitive abilities, and importantly, levels of aggression and confidence.[755] Putin had ended Russia's 'chaos years,' quashed Chechen separatism, and overseen an unprecedented economic recovery. Saakashvili, on his part, believed to enjoy popular support; he had built up Georgia's military; and as far as tensions with Russia were concerned, he was convinced that he occupied the moral high ground. That would ensure, if push came to shove, that the entire Western world would come to his defence. There is an alternative interpretation of Saakashvili's actions derived from a self-assessment of his domestic popularity that should also be addressed (the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive). Rather than simply acting on a 'winning streak,' Saakashvili might have been motivated by the social unrest in Tbilisi at the end of the previous year. Escalating the conflict with Russia, in that sense, might have been his attempt to 'divert public opinion to an external threat or mollify it through a quick victory.'[756]

Overconfident regarding the prospective outcome of a direct confrontation, the two state leaders found themselves in the highly affectively charged context of August 2008. In a meeting with the French president, Putin left no doubt as to what Russia's response was going to look like: 'we are going to make them pay. We are

[754] Charles Clover et al., 'Countdown in the Caucasus: Seven Days that Brought Russia and Georgia to War,' *Financial Times*, 26 August 2008, https://www.ft.com/content/af25400a-739d-11dd-8a66-0000779fd18c.

[755] Ian H. Robertson, *The Winner Effect: How Power Affects Your Brain* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012). See also: Moheb Costandi, *Neuroplasticity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016).

[756] As pointed out to me in conversation with my supervisor, Neil MacFarlane.

going to make justice.'[757] The first official statement, published after a meeting of president Medvedev with the National Security Council, seemed legalistic but determined. Echoing the language of Russia's response to OAF, it contained several passages that were designed to cast Russia as the morally righteous actor in this altercation and issuing a warrant for a forceful response – thereby engaging in affective affirmation. Georgia had committed an aggression against Russian peacekeepers and civilians, its actions were a 'gross violation of international law' and 'of the mandates that the international community gave Russia as a partner in the peace process,' Medvedev's statement read.[758] Legal language, in this context, is a powerful tool to express indignation and establish a claim of moral superiority.

Another passage of Medvedev's statement suggested that Georgia had to be 'coerced to peace,'[759] expressing superiority and virtuousness. This is crucial, because it introduced the notion that, in light of Georgian atrocities, Russia's response needed not be reciprocal but had to be overwhelming to restore order and prevent the loss of further civilian lives. It constituted both an ex-ante justification of the response and enabled Russian decision-makers to self-affirm that retaliation was not only necessary but had to be decisive. Medvedev proclaimed, 'it is my duty to protect the lives and dignity of Russian citizens wherever they may be,'[760] which laid the groundwork for the subsequent justification of Russian intervention with the 'responsibility to protect.'

The move seemed like an almost surreal reversal of Russia's position on OAF. Like the NATO campaign against Yugoslavia, Russian intervention was not backed

[757] Helen Cooper, 'In Georgia Clash, a Lesson on US Need for Russia,' *The New York Times*, 10 August 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/10/world/europe/10diplo.html.

[758] Dmitry Medvedev, 'Statement on the Situation in South Ossetia,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 8 August 2008, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/1043.

[759] Allison, 'Russia Resurgent? Moscow's Campaign to 'Coerce Georgia to Peace',' fn. 2.

[760] Medvedev, 'Statement on the Situation in South Ossetia.'

by the UNSC. Quite contrary to Kosovo, however, Russian officials considered claims of the two breakaway provinces to independence to be substantiated by international law.[761] In 1999, Russian advocacy of humanitarian interventionism seemed inconceivable – in large part because Moscow was afraid of opening a 'Pandora's box' of ethnic conflict and of fuelling secessionist tendencies within Russia itself. Trying to avoid the precarious linguistic terrain of 'R2P,' Moscow could have justified its Georgian campaign by citing worries of refugee movements and other security issues caused by a spill-over of instability from across the border.

In spite of a substantial discussion in Russian policy circles and the media about the possible value of Kosovar independence as a precedent for South Ossetia, decision-makers in Moscow likely interpreted the two cases very differently. According to appraisal theory, the intensity of an affective experience is determined, above all, by the subjective importance of the concern that is impacted.[762] While Russian prestige was at stake both in the Balkans and in the Caucasus, the latter was a substantially more important concern to leaders in Moscow. In their mind, the potential consequences of inaction ranged from the cementation of the country's status as a second-tier power and policy-taker to the beginning of the disintegration of the Russian Federation.

Gerard Toal's theory of affective geopolitics offers a useful explanation why the stakes were high and why both sides' interpretations of OAF and events in the Caucasus differed so fundamentally. Geopolitics, in Toal's reading, 'triggers powerful emotions – love, hope, and pride as well as outrage, contempt, and hate –

[761] See, for example, the speech by Russian ambassador Vitaliy Churkin to the UN on 28 August 2008, in Averre, 'From Pristina to Tskhinvali: The Legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia's Relations with the West,' fn. 70.

[762] For an introduction, see the theoretical section of Chapter 2. Also: Richard S. Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991); Jonathan H. Turner, *Human Emotions: A Sociological Theory* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007).

and involves moments of ritualized enactment, such as pageant and parade, music and memory, celebration and dance, that are beyond words.' Both Russia and the US, he argues, 'draw upon structurally similar affective storylines in their geopolitical cultures.' Because they 'produce mutually incomprehensible interpretations of the same events,' geopolitical crises of 'supreme irony' continued to emerge between the two.[763]

The statement by the National Security Council reaffirmed Russia's claim to a special role in the Caucasus. Crucially, it also established a sense of moral responsibility for at-risk populations living in former Soviet republics. The language used to make these claims – pitting Russia as the saviour of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and ethnic Russians living in these territories against Western-backed aggression – irreversibly tied the issue to Russian status and ontological security and made them almost impossible to go back on. One term, in particular, expressed the affective salience of the issue and consolidated the nature of the Russian response, and how it was going to be justified, going forward: genocide.

Toal writes that the stimulus for this framing came in a broadcast of Vladimir Putin touring a field hospital in Vladikavkaz, just north of the Georgian border, on 9 August.[764] The sequence shows Putin talking to South Ossetian women, who offer testimony of various atrocities committed by Georgian forces there. Putin's response to the ghastly reports is, 'they have gone totally mad. It is genocide, really.'[765] Whether the expression was spontaneous or had been coordinated between Russian officials prior to the broadcast cannot be determined. South Ossetian sources had been using the term for months to warn about Georgian intentions and call on Russia

[763] Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*, 13.
[764] Ibid., 182.
[765] 'Russian PM Putin Decries 'Genocide' at Meeting with Refugees in North Ossetia,' BBC Monitoring, 9 August 2008, in ibid.

for help. The next day, during a meeting with Medvedev, Putin repeated his allegations: Georgia's actions had gone far beyond a conventional military operation. 'It seems to me that we are seeing elements of a kind of genocide against the Ossetian people,' he suggested.[766] Soon thereafter, Medvedev, too, would start to speak openly about a Georgian-perpetrated genocide in the Caucasus.

It did not take long for Russian officials to extend their indignation also to Western governments and analysts, whose interpretations of the war, they felt, unduly absolved Saakashvili. Beyond defending them verbally, the US had begun to support Georgia directly by airlifting Georgian soldiers from Iraq to fight against Russia. In a press conference on 11 August, Putin chided:

> What is surprising is not even the cynicism of such actions, because politics, as they say, is a cynical business in general. What is surprising is the level of cynicism. What surprises is the ability to swap good and bad, black and white, the slick ability to pose an aggressor as a victim of the aggression, and to make the victims responsible for its consequences. But, of course, Saddam Hussein had to be hanged for destroying several Shiite villages. And the present Georgian leadership, who have simply wiped out ten Ossetian villages from the face of this planet, whose tanks were running over children and old men, who have burned civilians alive in sheds – these people, certainly, had to be taken under protection. If I am not mistaken, Ronald Reagan once said about a Latin American dictator: 'Somoza is a bastard, but he is our bastard. And we will help him, we will protect him.'[767]

Toal's framework of affective geopolitics points to the fundamental changes that had occurred not only in Russia's relationship to Georgia but also to the West: '(…) Saakashvili's move provoked the anger and disgust of the Russian leadership. This was affective not strategic geopolitics, and the language that accompanied it – "war criminal" and "genocide" – was not the language of diplomacy or transactional

[766] Dmitry Medvedev, 'Beginning of a Working Meeting with Prime Minister Vladimir Putin,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 10 August 2008, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1052.

[767] Vladimir Putin, 'Prime Minister Vladimir Putin Chaired a Government Presidium Meeting,' Press Service of the Prime Minister, 6 May 2008, http://archive.premier.gov.ru/eng/events/news/1648/.

geopolitics. Instead, this was the language of righteous anger.'[768] Incidentally, terms like 'genocide' and 'war criminal' had also been used five years earlier by George W. Bush to describe Saddam Hussein and sound the war drums against Iraq.

The tone had shifted markedly and left no doubt about the sincerity of Russian intentions. Usage of the term genocide and related phrases and metaphors illustrate another purpose of the affirmative dimension of affective expressions, in addition to rationalising the experience to oneself and the members of one's in-group.[769] When someone is exposed to information that threatens their self-integrity (in this case, incomprehension that Western officials could perceive what happened in Georgia as anything but an abuse of power and the use of violence against ethnic minorities on the part of Saakashvili), they will defend themselves in one of several ways. Examples of defensive reactions include denial of the situation, avoidance, or changing one's appraisal of the new information to make it appear less threatening.[770] Allusions to genocide, which reject the Western interpretation of the Georgian invasion, could be an example of denial or re-appraisal of a perceived threat.

Affirmation helps to interpret a particular state of the world in terms that are in accordance with one's self-integrity. It also primes the individual and the target of their communication for subsequent action. Displays of outrage or contempt are supposed to communicate the importance of a particular issue to the person displaying the emotion and to reinforce the intention to act exactly as they claim they

[768] Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*, 167.

[769] Geoffrey L. Cohen and David K. Sherman, 'Self-affirmation Theory,' in Roy Baumeister and Kathleen Vohs (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Social Psychology* (Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage Publications, 2007).

[770] Claude Steele, 'The Psychology of Self-Affirmation: Sustaining the Integrity of the Self,' *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 21 (1988); Geoffrey L. Cohen and David K. Sherman, 'The psychology of self-defense: Self-affirmation theory,' in: Mark P. Zanna, *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (San Diego, CA; London: Elsevier Academic Press, 2006).

will. It is part of the affirmative function of emotion that allows us to 'tie our hands' in order to solve problems that self-interested decision-makers cannot solve.[771] In some circumstances, however, the resulting behaviour can be self-destructive.

When looking for reasons for the August War, and indeed for the larger trend of worsening relations with the West, Russia's *fear of encirclement* is frequently brought up. There is a sound historical argument and plenty of official testimony to back up that argument.[772] It rests on two mutually reinforcing explanations. The first involves socialisation. One aspect of Toal's affective geopolitics as applied to the post-Soviet space concerns how 'individuals and groups tacitly understand and acquire deep-seated dispositions about the territory of the state they live in and those that surround it.' Russia's great size continues to induce a 'sense of vulnerability' and 'has been accompanied by discourses about plots and encirclement schemes by historic enemies, portraying Russia as a besieged fortress.'[773] Russians have a 'long cultural/historical narrative of partial encirclement and insecurity, and a historically deep social construction of external threat emanating from their western fringe.'[774] Far from an abstract intellectual construct that only affects elites and military strategists, socialised fear of 'being surrounded' is a widely held notion that features prominently in Russian literature, folklore, and spiritual life. Even at a time where closer cooperation with the West was sought, the government newspaper warned: 'one way or another, Russia, the entire former USSR, remains encircled by a dense ring of military and intelligence-gathering installations belonging to the North

[771] Robert H. Frank, *Passions within Reason: The Strategic Role of the Emotions* (New York, NY: Norton, 1988), 255-56.

[772] George N. Curzon, *Frontiers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907); Edward C. Thaden and Marianna F. Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Herfried Münkler, *Empires: The Logic of World Domination from Ancient Rome to the United States* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007).

[773] Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*, 46.

[774] S. Neil MacFarlane, 'Kto Vinovat? Why Is There a Crisis in Russia's Relations with the West?,' *Contemporary Politics* 22, no. 3 (2016): 351.

Atlantic alliance.'[775] Nonetheless, explanations evoking fear of encirclement are typically confined to a level of analysis that yields only cursory insights into actual decision-making.

The second explanation rests on the psychology of the leader. Neil MacFarlane advocates deeper engagement with the threat formation of encirclement:

> Putin and his colleagues in the Soviet security apparatus were acculturated into this perception of isolation, hostility, and threat in their formative years. That formation may affect the cognitive framing of their current situation. In other words, despite the possible instrumental value of their rhetoric, they may also believe what they say about the threat from the West.[776]

The threat that Putin and fellow Russian elites perceive, he suggests, may be very personal.

> Since 2004, Putin and his colleagues have taken the democratization of neighbouring countries, notably Ukraine, to be a compelling threat, not so much to Russia, but to the structure of power and profit he and his colleagues have attempted to build in Russia.[777]

It seems possible, therefore, that the nature of the threat that is being communicated, even between elites, is quite different from the threat that is actually perceived. Rather than a military invasion, Russian leaders fear an attack on the system of government they have constructed, undoubtedly with hard work, that works particularly well for them and ensures their livelihood and physical well-being. Russian officials have suggested as much by expressing their aversion to democratisation and regime change – though such references are fewer and less pronounced than warnings of Western incursion using a security vernacular.

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[775] Sergey Ptichkin and Aleksei Chichkin, 'From Where Russia Is Clearly Visible,' *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 22 January 2002; Evgeny Mikhilov, 'The Art of Wiping Things Out,' *Vesti*, 24 January 2002, both in Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, Fourth ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 146.

[776] MacFarlane, 'Kto Vinovat? Why Is There a Crisis in Russia's Relations with the West?,' 351.

[777] Ibid., 351-52. On Russia's system of rent-seeking, see: Karen Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2014).

The affective salience of personal fears is much higher than the potential consequences of policy (in)action for the state. The subjective hierarchy of concerns can explain why likely repercussions of 'disproportionate' action against Georgia played a limited role in Russian officials' decision-making, at least during the first few days of the confrontation. As these consequences – the threat of sanctions, capital flight, the increased intractability of the war the longer it would last, and the humiliation dealt by the refusal of even some CIS states to recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia – became harder to avoid, their impact on policy-making appreciated. By recognising that the Russian leader's decisions in the early stage of the war were heavily affectively charged, we can square the scale and intensity of the initial invasion with the decision, just five days later, to desist from pushing on to Tbilisi and forcing Saakashvili from power.[778]

Irrespective of the IR theoretical paradigm – the concept of fear features particularly prominently in structural realism – explanations may be based on affective dynamics that few narratives even consider. Toal holds that analysts like John Mearsheimer do well in describing Putin as a 'first class strategist.'

> Yet this rationality is built upon a singular affect – fear – that has neither empirical checks nor a responsibility to context and circumstance. Fear acts as an explanatory deus ex machina. But any responsible account of the 2008 and 2014 invasions has to account for why fear should be seen as the fundamental motivation behind these invasions. Why fear of NATO encroachment in 2008 or EU encroachment in 2014 triggered wars but did not result in wars in 2004 – when NATO expansion incorporated the former Soviet Baltic Republics – needs explanation.[779]

Arguments like these should lay to rest any doubts as to whether IR ought to reengage with first image theory, in particular the role of affect. Fear was not the only affective phenomenon at play in August 2008. Any investigation into the causes

[778] Although it has been argued that Russia, at that point, did not have the residual capability to capture Tbilisi.

[779] Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*, 32.

of the Five-Day War must also account for the affective motivation associated with the geographic locale. 'Acting less out of fear than from righteous indignation mixed with feelings of protection, pride, and glory,' Russia, from its own perspective, 'rescued these populations.'[780] Hubris and overconfidence bias also affected leaders on both sides. Finally, the discussion in the previous chapter about a shift from resentment to contempt does not suggest that resentment, or *Ressentiment*, had disappeared from the affective compass of Russian officials. To argue that Ressentiment constitutes an attitudinal influence is not to negate the possibility that its lingering effects had a proximate impact on decision-making.

6.3. Conclusions

A famous slogan of the 'Party' in George Orwell's *1984* reads 'who controls the past controls the future.'[781] While the guns of August 2008 fell silent in a matter of days, a propaganda war over the proper interpretation of the events of that summer continues to rage – epitomised not least by a steady supply of film adaptations meant to cast one's side in the desired light. In political science and IR, strangely, analysis of the conflict and its ramification has become something of a side note. In part, that is because in the immediate aftermath of the war, the attention of global audiences was captivated by the effects of the financial crisis. The following year, attempts at a 'reset' of relations with Russia by the incoming Obama administration (though ultimately a failure) seemed to suggest the 2008 war would not have any lasting consequences. Finally, Russian operations in Ukraine from 2014 onward overshadowed its precedents in the Caucasus.

[780] Ibid., 32-33.
[781] George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1949), 143.

This has left the importance of the Five-Day War largely understated. Six years before Crimea, the invasion of Georgia signified a sea-change in Russian-Western relations. More than that, it marked a fundamental transition in post-Cold War international security. For the first time, a state actively contested US designs for European security, which had been predicated on a central role of NATO and the normative principle that small states, even former members of the Soviet Union, should be able to chart their own course in international politics independent of the interests of great powers – that is, powers other than the US. Finally, it challenged what had seemed like an inviolable proposition in international law, particularly as applied to modern-day Europe – that boundaries could not be changed by force. In Russian foreign policy, the assumption of its 'responsibility to protect' Abkhaz and South Ossetian compatriots is a turning point towards a more assertive, self-confident course. Underscoring its affective salience, Dmitry Medvedev likened the significance Georgian attack for Russia to that of September 11, 2001 for the US.[782]

Personality traits aggravated how the Five-Day War played out: 'tragically, this emergent conflict acquired a deeply personalized form and culminated in a violent paroxysm that revealed aspects of the personalities of the two leaders – recklessness from Saakashvili and punitive reaction from Putin – that made for an ugly little war.'[783] But personality is only part of the story. Mikheil Saakashvili stumbled into a war he could not win in part because Western leaders and policy experts failed to clarify that making Georgia front and centre of a democracy promotion agenda did not equal the extension of American security umbrella to the Caucasus.

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[782] Dmitry Medvedev, 'Transcript of the Meeting with the Participants in the International Club Valdai,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 12 September 2008, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1383.

[783] Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*, 129.

Much has also been written about Vladimir Putin's psychopathology. Clinical psychologist Ian Robertson, for example, warns:

> I do not have the slightest doubt that Putin intends to stay in power at least until 2024 and perhaps beyond. There can be little doubt that his brain has been neurologically and physically changed so much that he firmly and genuinely believes that without him, Russia is doomed. Absolute power for long periods makes you blind to risk, highly egocentric, narcissistic and utterly devoid of self-awareness. They also make you see other people as objects and the emotional-cognitive consequence of all this is … contempt.[784]

Exercises in remote diagnosis, if done properly, can be insightful and thought-provoking. We must be cautious of drawing the faulty conclusion, though, that if it were not for the person of Vladimir Putin, Russian-Western relations could be restored with ease. As MacFarlane argues, socio-economic and political circumstances play as big a role in shaping the character of the person in power as that person's nature. Structural conditions in the wake of the tumultuous 1990s favoured the rise of a 'strong man.' Putin, he writes, 'was as much an effect of crisis as a cause of crisis.' And 'it is more likely than not that, if Putin were shunted aside, the succession would occur within the group that currently dominates Russian politics.'[785]

Fear of encirclement and isolation affectively affirmed Putin's chief concern of a challenge to his rule and, directly related, personal well-being. He and others might also allude to encirclement to self-rationalise other, more diffuse fears. As Galeotti observes, 'to many in and close to the Kremlin, Russia faces a real threat, not borne by tanks and missiles but cultural influences, economic pressure, and political penetration. This is, in their eyes, a civilizational threat aimed at making Russia a

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[784] Ian Robertson, 'Putin's Contempt for the World Must not be Appeased,' 17 March 2014, *The Conversation*, https://theconversation.com/putins-contempt-for-the-world-must-not-be-appeased-24507.

[785] MacFarlane, 'Kto Vinovat? Why Is There a Crisis in Russia's Relations with the West?,' 353.

homogenized, neutered, subaltern state.'[786] At the core of this civilizational threat lies the centrality of individualism and political competition in Western societies which is pitted against collectivist desires for stability and concentrated authority in Russian culture.[787] The encirclement narrative is thus closely connected to one's self-identification as 'superior' through a process of affective change.[788] As Motyl observes, 'the superiority of Russia and Russian civilization are still closely held values, as is the belief that the West is hostile and that the country needs a strong leader, Putin, to assert Russia's greatness and combat Western influence.'[789]

When he qualified Saakashvili's actions as 'hot-blooded,' George W. Bush more or less clearly ensured Putin that the US had nothing to do with the attack on Tskhinvali.[790] Putin might have believed him initially. Subsequently, however, Putin's personal amity with Bush gave way to an embodied attitude of contempt towards the West, casting the Georgian war as part of a larger plan to encroach on Russia's immediate sphere of interest and destabilise his regime. Contempt, fear, and hubris played a powerful role in Putin's self-affirmation process, enabling him to make sense of past events in the context of this larger historical and cultural narrative.

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[786] Mark Galeotti, 'NATO is a Symbol that Russia is Always an Outsider,' *Intellinews*, 11 July 2016, https://www.intellinews.com/stolypin-nato-is-a-symbol-that-russia-is-always-an-outsider-101714/.

[787] Andrei P. Tsygankov, 'The Sources of Russia's Fear of NATO,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 51, no. 2 (2018): 102. See also: Henry E. Hale, *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Andrei P. Tsygankov, *The Strong State in Russia: Development and Crisis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[788] See the corresponding section in the preceding chapter.

[789] Alexander J. Motyl, 'The Sources of Russian Conduct: The New Case for Containment,' *Foreign Affairs*, 16 November 2014, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2014-11-16/sources-russian-conduct.

[790] Bush, *Decision Points*, 435.

7. DISASTER FORETOLD? RUSSIAN INTERVENTION IN UKRAINE

This chapter addresses two kinds of questions. The first is a set of substantive questions related to the empirical case: why did the Russian leadership decide on a takeover of Crimea? Why did they support separatists in Eastern Ukraine but stop short of intervening directly? The other question is of a broader, meta-theoretical nature – whether academics, think tank analysts, or policy-makers should, or could, have predicted Russian actions in Ukraine in 2014, if only they had applied the right theoretical tools or integrated them more effectively? This latter question, too, has attracted attention far beyond the ivory tower as some public intellectuals have fallen back on theoretical vignettes, conflating analytical frameworks with policy prescriptions. Some have argued Moscow's actions in Ukraine are an understandable response to a mounting Western security threat, brought to the fore by the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative, and that the US ought to accept Russian regional hegemony; others have decried a form of Russian neo-imperialism that must be opposed every step of the way in a broader effort to aid the democratisation of the former Soviet world; and another group of scholars has drawn connections between the ideational constructs of identity, status, or civilisation and the assertive turn in Russia's foreign policy but producing conclusions that are partly antithetical.

The organisation of this chapter is similar to the preceding one. It gives an overview of the major developments in Ukrainian politics and related interactions between Russia, the United States, and Europe in as matter-of-factly a way as possible. It then summarises how the main strands of theory-driven FPA have approached the Ukraine crisis and the annexation of Crimea, identifying specific questions these accounts cannot answer satisfactorily or partial explanations that

could be improved by a supplementary conceptual lens. The third section, applying the framework of affective realism, does just that – supplementing prevailing narratives with a perspective focused on affective processes. It is split into the broader developments leading up to the crisis and factors influencing the decision to take over Crimea.

7.1. Background

Russia's response to the political crisis in Ukraine had enormous ramifications not only for Ukrainians, particularly those living in Crimea and the south-east, but arguably posed the greatest challenge to the European security architecture since the end of the Cold War. It has left a lasting imprint on Russian relations with Europe, the US, and NATO. In putting together this chapter, I have turned to the following key resources in particular for a general timeline and nuanced assessment of events in late 2013/early 2014: a detailed analysis authored by Elizabeth Wood, William Pomeranz, E. Wayne Merry, and Maxim Trudolyubov;[791] an edited volume on the crisis by Elias Götz;[792] the works of Richard Sakwa;[793] Derek Averre and Kataryna Wolczuk;[794] and Roy Allison's treatment of the legal claims surrounding Russian intervention.[795] For a summary of Russian perspectives, I turned to a collection of essays edited by Colby Howard and Ruslan Pukhov.[796]

[791] Elizabeth A. Wood et al., *Roots of Russia's War in Ukraine* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2016).

[792] Elias Götz, *Russia, the West, and the Ukraine Crisis* (London: Routledge, 2018).

[793] Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016).

[794] Derek Averre and Kataryna Wolczuk, *The Ukraine Conflict: Security, Identity and Politics in the Wider Europe* (London: Routledge, 2018).

[795] Roy Allison, 'Russian 'Deniable' Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules,' *International Affairs* 90, no. 6 (2014).

[796] Colby Howard and Ruslan Pukhov, *Brothers Armed: Military Aspects of the Crisis in Ukraine* (Minneapolis, MN: East View Press, 2014).

The proximate cause of the crisis was a prolonged tussle over Russian deliveries of natural gas. Since the Orange Revolution, arguments over prices, transit fees, and outstanding debt resulted in several escalations and Russian gas giant Gazprom repeatedly shutting off part of the supply and only restoring deliveries after Ukraine had agreed to severe concessions. The 'colour revolutions' brought a general change in Russia's relationship with other CIS member states. Irrespective of whether a 'friend' or 'foe' was in power, Moscow remained cautiously aware of American and European influence. Where Russia had earlier rewarded defence cooperation with economic benefits, they now used their market power to put pressure on governments in Ukraine, the Caucasus, or Central Asia and extract rents while doing so.

Tensions with Ukraine were alleviated in early 2010 with the election of pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovych to the presidency. On 21 April, presidents Yanukovych and Medvedev signed the Kharkiv Pact,[797] extending Russia's lease on a base in Sevastopol for its Black Sea fleet until 2042 in exchange for a 30 percent discount on gas. This was criticised inside and outside of Ukraine with opposition politicians repeatedly calling for its revocation.[798] Over the next three years, Moscow continued to put pressure on Kiev to either join the Russian-led Customs Union[799] or sell off its entire gas transit infrastructure.[800] Neither of these plans would gain sufficient political support in Ukraine. Nonetheless, throughout 2012 and 2013, Vladimir Putin

[797] The transliteration from Russian is Kharkov.

[798] Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Nogee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*, Fifth ed. (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2014), 179.

[799] A customs union was one of the principal tasks of the Eurasian Economic Community (succeeded in 2014 by the Eurasian Economic Union). At the time, the Eurasian Customs Union was comprised of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Its members agreed to lift tariffs on goods traded within the union and a common external tariff on all exports.

[800] Dmitri Medvedev, quoted in Svetlana Gamova, 'Kiev Puts It All on the Line,' *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 2 September 2011, in Donaldson and Nogee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*, 180.

used gas prices as his biggest bargaining chip to persuade Yanukovych to join the Customs Union over seeking deeper economic integration with Europe and get him to rule out future efforts towards Ukrainian NATO membership.

By the end of 2013, in the midst of a severe recession, it became increasingly clear that energy insecurity was not Kiev's biggest problem. Rather, the country faced a more fundamental decision regarding its future economic orientation and political allegiances. While the Kremlin wanted to see Ukraine integrated in its planned trade union, the EU had offered them to become part of an association agreement, which would pave the way for closer economic and political cooperation.[801] Access to the European market was an attractive prospect but would also commit Yanukovych to an improvement of Ukraine's human rights record and the release of his former rival, Yulia Tymoshenko, from prison. Legislation to that effect was repeatedly rejected by Yanukovych's party, who held the majority in parliament. It became clear that the two paths were mutually exclusive. US officials were most concerned by the Eurasian Union project and characterised it, rather pejoratively, as 're-Sovietisation' or an idea from Tsarist times.[802]

Stuck between a rock and a hard place, Yanukovych chose Moscow. To the surprise of many inside and outside of Ukraine, a government order issued on 21 November 2013 stated that Ukraine would suspend preparations to join the EU association agreement while it intended to renew an 'active dialogue' with Moscow

[801] For an overview, see 'Eastern Partnership,' *European External Action Service*, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/419/Eastern%20Partnership.

[802] Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, in Charles Clover, 'Clinton Vows to Thwart New Soviet Union,' *Financial Times*, 7 December 2012, https://www.ft.com/content/a5b15b14-3fcf-11e2-9f71-00144feabdc0; Senator John McCain, quoted in Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, Fourth ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 244.

in the economic sphere.[803] The announcement was followed by an outcry of the opposition and public protests on a scale not seen since the Orange Revolution, concentrated around Kiev's main square. Within a few days, clashes between protestors and security forces began. After three months and hundreds of casualties, the inner city resembled a battlefield.

On 20 February 2014, violence spiralled out of control. To ease tensions, Yanukovych signed a compromise deal with opposition leaders, brokered by the foreign ministers of Poland, Germany, France, and Russia's representative, Aleksandr Lukin, that set a date for new elections in November. Euromaidan protestors largely rejected the agreement, demanding the immediate removal of the president from office. On 21 February, Yanukovych fled to Russia. A transitional government headed by opposition leader Oleksandr Turchynov, who would serve as acting President until elections could be held in June, was formed. The way the transfer of power was received by Russia and the West differed markedly. While Russian politicians and commentators bemoaned a violent coup d'état, their American and European counterparts hailed the success of the Euromaidan movement as a victory for democracy – glossing over the fact that the new governing coalition also included members of the ultra-nationalists and far-right factions of Ukrainian politics.

Russian elites and media were less upbeat about events in Ukraine. Even before the ouster of Yanukovych, Putin had given a press conference with representatives of the 'Crimean Republic' present, asserting that something needed to be done to protect ethnic Russians living in Ukraine from the 'rampage of Nazi,

[803] Kathy Lally, 'Ukraine, under pressure from Russia, puts brakes on EU deal,' *The Washington Post*, 21 November 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/ukraine-under-pressure-from-russia-puts-brakes-on-eu-deal/2013/11/21/46c50796-52c9-11e3-9ee6-2580086d8254_story.html.

nationalist, and anti-Semitic forces,' who 'resorted to terror, murder and riots,' and now 'set the tone in Ukraine.'[804] On that basis, Russia began to reinforce its troops legally stationed in Crimea. On 27 February, 'little green men' – disguised soldiers without insignia – started appearing in front of government buildings. Even though the Russian parliament officially authorized the deployment of Russian forces in Ukraine on 1 March, officials would not openly admit the masked soldiers were Russian service members until mid-April, when Putin first suggested they had come to the aid of Crimean self-defence forces.[805]

On 16 March, a referendum was held in Crimea, resulting in an overwhelming ninety-seven per cent of its inhabitants supporting re-joining the Russian Federation. The next day, the EU and US announced sanctions against Russia, condemning what they viewed as an illegal redrawing of national borders. Disconcerted by nationalist messages coming from the central government in Kiev, activists from the ethnic Russian populations of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Nikolayev, Kharkiv, and Odessa regions launched protest movements, calling for more autonomy. Official Russia was broadly supportive of these demands, urging Ukrainian authorities to refrain from using force and take steps to ensure the rights of Russian speakers are respected. At the same time, Moscow increased its military presence on Ukraine's eastern border and once more jacked up the price of its gas deliveries.[806]

Attempts to negotiate a settlement between separatists and Ukrainian forces had little success as outbreaks of violence in the east and south of the country reached ever more tragic heights. After a summer of intense fighting, especially in

[804] Vladimir Putin, 'Address by President of the Russian Federation,' Press Service of The Kremlin, 18 March 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603.

[805] Vladimir Putin, 'Annual Direct Line,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 17 April 2014, http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/7034.

[806] Andrei Tsygankov, 'Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy,' *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015).

Donbas, the Ukrainian military was essentially defeated. A cease-fire was reached in the Belarusian capital of Minsk on 3 September but did little to prevent further outbreaks of violence later in the year. A second attempt at a ceasefire was made in February 2015. The so-called Minsk II protocol foresaw the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the conflict zone, prisoner exchanges, and political reform aimed at more political autonomy for the eastern provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk and was to be overseen by local OSCE monitors.[807] While formally at peace, the two sides have been engaged in limited combat ever since. The tense situation in the east is exacerbated by Ukraine's economic weakness and rampant inequality as well as the entrenched positions of the great powers who are party to the conflict.

This chapter does not seek to provide detailed answers to any of the following questions: who is to blame for the escalation of violence over the course of the Euromaidan protests; why did Viktor Yanukovych suddenly flee the country; what role did Western officials and intelligence services play in the revolution and the formation of the new Ukrainian government; or who shot down Malaysian Airlines flight 17 over eastern Ukraine? These questions are certainly important and pertinent to the choices faced by Russian policy-makers but cannot be addressed within the scope of the chapter, as the primary objective of the case is illustrative in the sense of a 'plausibility probe.'[808] It proceeds as follows: first, prevailing theoretical narratives on the causes of Russian intervention in Ukraine, leading up to its annexation of Crimea and supporting separatist forces in the south-east are reviewed. The objective is to highlight their respective strengths and weaknesses and to identify the kinds of

[807] Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, 253.

[808] See Harry Eckstein, *Regarding Politics: Essays on Political Theory, Stability, and Change* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 148-49.

open questions and methodological limitations that can be meaningfully complemented by an application of the framework of affective realism.

7.2. The Ukraine crisis and IR theory

For a number of reasons, the events of late 2013/early 2014 present a particularly pertinent case for prevailing IR theories and FPA. One could argue the outcome – the first annexation of another state's territory in post-war Europe – is so momentous that the discipline *must* find sound explanations for it in order to be considered a legitimate research enterprise. The case featured a range of actors – from the great powers[809] to competing factions in Ukrainian politics to ethnic Russian separatists – offering a toehold for different theoretical paradigms to be applied. Finally, there were also a number of structures and ideational constructs at play, offering a 'way in' for yet another set of theories: from the historical and cultural significance of Ukraine to Russia's proclivity for viewing efforts at economic integration with Europe as a challenge not only to its security buffer but also its status and system of values.[810]

[809] Opinions differ as to whether the European Union meets the criteria of a 'great power' in world politics. In many ways, the process of developing a common foreign and defence policy is still ongoing. However, for geographic reasons alone, its economic significance to Ukraine, and because the EU maintained a relatively unitary policy throughout the crisis, it is being regarded as a great power in this particular case.

Whether the Russia Federation – a country with a GDP roughly the size of Italy, South Korea, or the state of Texas – can (still) be considered a great power is an equally valid question. It is well addressed in: S. Neil MacFarlane, 'The 'R' in Brics: Is Russia an Emerging Power?,' *International Affairs* 82, no. 1 (2006). Because of its overall military capabilities, its stated ambitions to assume a global role and challenge US unipolarity, and its regional preponderance (paired with its vital interests in, and influence over, Ukraine), Russia is seen as a great power with respect to its actions in 2013/2014.

[810] For an overview of different theoretical approaches that have been applied to the Ukraine crisis, see: David Cadier and Margot Light, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Ideas, Domestic Politics and External Relations* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Elias Götz, 'Putin, the State, and War: The Causes of Russia's Near Abroad Assertion Revisited,' *International Studies Review* 19, no. 2 (2017); Tuomas Forsberg and Christer Pursiainen, 'The Psychological Dimension of Russian Foreign Policy: Putin and the Annexation of Crimea,' *Global Society* 31, no. 2 (2017). Allison, 'Russian 'Deniable' Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules.'; Tor Bukkvoll,

Theories should be evaluated on the basis of their explanatory power – that is, whether they can account for an empirical phenomenon in a succinct and consistent manner. Predictive power is a much taller order and when it comes to the Ukraine crisis, predominant paradigms of thought in IR have not fared too well. As has been mentioned in the Introduction, in late February 2014, investigators at the College of William and Mary conducted a poll of 908 IR scholars across the US, asking them to weigh in, among other things, on the current situation in Ukraine.[811] Only 14 per cent of respondents answered the question 'will Russian military forces intervene in response to the political crisis in Ukraine?' in the affirmative, while 57.5 per cent responded with a clear 'no' (the rest chose not to make a prediction). That estimation mirrored that of the US intelligence community at the time.[812] Interestingly, there was very little variation between 'general' IR scholars and those focused on Eastern Europe and Russia. In fact, area specialist put the likelihood of Russian intervention even lower than generalists. There is no breakdown of scholars according to theoretical predilections.

Structural realists base their analyses off of the distribution of material power in the international system.[813] As argued in the previous chapter, Russia's material

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'Why Putin Went to War: Ideology, Interests and Decision-Making in the Russian Use of Force in Crimea and Donbas,' *Contemporary Politics* 22, no. 3 (2016).

[811] Daniel Maliniak et al., 'TRIP Snap Poll I: Nine Questions on Current Global Issues for International Relations Scholars,' *Teaching, Research, and International Policy Project (TRIP)*, 7 March 2014, https://www.wm.edu/offices/global-research/trip/snap-polls/publications/trip-snap-poll-one-report-final.pdf.

[812] Laura Smith-Spark, Phil Black, and Frederik Pleitgen, 'Russia Flexes Military Muscle as Tensions Rise in Ukraine's Crimea Region,' *CNN*, 27 February 2014, https://edition.cnn.com/2014/02/26/world/europe/ukraine-politics/; Eli Lake, 'Putin's Bluff? U.S. Spies Say Russia Won't Invade Ukraine,' *The Daily Beast*, 27 February 2014, https://www.thedailybeast.com/putins-bluff-us-spies-say-russia-wont-invade-ukraine.

[813] See Chapter 2 on the distinction between structural and classical realist concepts of power 'as resources' versus a relational dimension. For a more multi-faceted realist take on the Ukraine crisis that emphasises the importance of economic over military power (which is, however, subject to some of the pitfalls associated with deviating from the parsimonious logic of structural theory also discussed in Chapter 2), see: Michael E. Becker et al., 'Reviving the Russian Empire: The Crimean Intervention through a Neoclassical Realist Lens,' *European Security* 25, no. 1 (2016).

power base had appreciated significantly since 1999 along with hydrocarbon prices. While the country suffered greatly from a slump in resource prices and a recession brought on by the 2009 financial crisis, its military expenditure kept rising steadily. In contrast, Western countries and the US in particular, who also felt the effects of the economic crisis, had to bear the additional cost of prolonged military operations in the Middle East. Along several quantitative metrics of measuring national power, Russia was steadily rising against European states and the US between 1999 and 2016, as Simon Saradzhyan and Nabi Abdullaev find.[814]

Russian foreign policy, according to structural realists, is determined by systemic pressures and incentives, according to which the state must act to ensure its security. Based on this logic, John Mearsheimer argues that Russia had to react to efforts to turn Ukraine into a Western stronghold and eventually expand a hostile military alliance (NATO) up to Russia's doorstep.[815] Beyond justifying rhetoric, Mearsheimer attaches little value to claims of democracy promotion and economic cooperation. Leaders and policy experts in Europe and the US made the mistake of ignoring the facts of 'realpolitik.' This oversight, paired with their own 'liberal delusions,' blinded them to see how their actions would be perceived by Russia and led them to stumble into a crisis of their own making. In a similar way, Bock et al. apply balance of threat theory to the case of Ukraine and find that Western policy-makers failed to see how their actions could be seen as a threat to Russian interests.[816] Finally, Alexander Korolev views Russia's actions in Ukraine as a part

[814] Simon Saradzhyan and Nabi Abdullaev, 'Measuring National Power: Is Putin's Russia in Decline?,' *Europe-Asia Studies*, 73, no. 2 (2021).

[815] John J. Mearsheimer, 'Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin,' *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (2014).

[816] Andreas M. Bock, Ingo Henneberg, and Friedrich Plank, '"If You Compress the Spring, It Will Snap Back Hard": The Ukrainian Crisis and the Balance of Threat Theory,' *International Journal* 70, no. 1 (2015).

of a broader 'hard balancing response' to US hegemony. Like Mearsheimer, Korolev views the Ukrainian crisis as supporting evidence for the continued relevance of structural realism.[817]

Analytical commentary such as Mearsheimer's has garnered enormous attention far beyond the community of academics and 'policy wonks.' This attention, I would argue, is not only well earned but necessary in the spirit of having an open debate about Russian foreign policy and responses to it. An original argument that is logically consistent, carefully developed, and supported by empirical evidence ought not to be discredited – also, and especially, if it goes against the mainstream of policy analysis on the case in question, and irrespective of one's own theoretical, methodological, or political leanings.

The case of Ukraine is also illustrative of some shortcomings of structural realism, however. Some of these shortcomings have to do with the theory's parsimony – zeroing in on only a narrow set of causal variables at the level of the international system. Inevitably, this absolves the analyst from the necessity of engaging with the historical, social, ideational, and personal idiosyncrasies of the case at hand. Additional deficiencies are pointed out in the preceding chapter on the case of the Russian-Georgian war. To restate them briefly, analyses might suffer from rationalist or cognitivist biases, an 'innate' determinism, or 'essentializing' tendencies. The latter two points have, in some form, been at the core of criticisms of structural realist explanations of the Ukrainian crisis. Theorists have been inconsistent – sometimes even contradicting themselves – with respect to the

[817] Alexander Korolev, 'Theories of Non-Balancing and Russia's Foreign Policy,' *Journal of Strategic Studies* 41, no. 6 (2018): 889.

structural conditions under which states would act a certain way. The Ukrainian crisis is a good example:

Structural realists self-declare to focus on the international system and not concern themselves with the internal makeup of states, individual foreign policy decisions, or questions of 'who is responsible' for specific conflicts.[818] However, on occasion, assumptions regarding the motivation of individual state actors find their way into theory and analysis. In an early formulation of hegemonic stability theory, Robert Gilpin, for example, suggests that declining powers might take greater risks in trying to defend their relative position. This fundamental condition applied to nuclear powers as well, he argues. 'A nation still might start a war for fear that its relative strength will diminish with time, and an accident still might precipitate unprecedented devastation. It is not inconceivable that some state, (…) a declining superpower, might one day become so desperate that it resorts to nuclear blackmail in order to forestall its enemies.'[819] Joseph Nye (although not a representative of structural realism) applies this logic to Russia, which he considers to be 'a very real threat to the international order' because it is in 'long-term decline.' 'Indeed,' he argues, 'Russia's malaise may make it even more dangerous, given the tendency of declining states to become less risk-averse.'[820]

This indeterminism is part of the reason why realism has earned the unfortunate epithet of the 'stuff happens' theory of International Relations.[821] What

[818] See Chapter 1; Anders Wivel, 'Explaining Why State X Made a Certain Move Last Tuesday: The Promise and Limitations of Realist Foreign Policy Analysis,' *Journal of International Relations and Development* 8, no. 4 (2005); Kenneth N. Waltz, 'International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy,' *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (1996).

[819] Robert Gilpin, 'The Theory of Hegemonic War,' *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4 (1988), 613.

[820] Joseph Nye, 'The Challenge of Russia's Decline,' *Project Syndicate*, 14 April 2015, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/russia-decline-challenge-by-joseph-s--nye-2015-04.

[821] A slightly modified quote from a discussion at an annual convention of the ISA, as recounted by Stefano Guzzini, 'Realism as a Critique of Militarism and National Primacy,' *Danish*

'happens,' however, is also dependent on the analyst and if they cater to a particular audience. Structural realism, in this sense, tends to have an answer ready not only when things go wrong but also when a wager pays off for one of the conflicting parties. That way, the theory may rationalise the irrational and frame risky behaviour as advantageous even when it was self-defeating.[822] In this particular case, what 'happened' is assertive policy action on the part of Russia, culminating in its annexation of Crimea and support for separatists in south-eastern Ukraine. With this outcome in mind, structural realists argue that Russia acted the way it did because of its relative power position in the international system. However, their analyses differ with respect to how that position is characterised. As indicated above, some scholars argue that Russia acted out of a position of strength.[823] Others suggest that Russia is weak and trying to cement its status and influence while it still can, even at disproportionate cost.[824] Because of this internal contradiction, arguments based on power, of which structural realist theory is the most prominent example, are 'nearly tautological and unfalsifiable,' as Elias Götz and Neil MacFarlane observe.[825]

According to the perspective applied – i.e. assuming either a 'strong' or a 'weak' Russia – the relative power of Western states shifts accordingly. The relative power of 'the West' can also become the primary variable driving the narrative. Starting from these propositions, an assertive Russia could have either been

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Institute for International Studies, 8 December 2017, https://www.diis.dk/en/research/realism-as-a-critique-of-militarism-and-national-primacy.

[822] On this, see also the discussion further on in this chapter on the 'rationality' of annexing Crimea.

[823] For example, Simon Saradzhyan, 'Is Russia Declining?' *Demokratizatsiya* 24, no. 3 (2016).

[824] For example, Andrej Krickovic, 'The Symbiotic China-Russia Partnership: Cautious Riser and Desperate Challenger,' *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 10, no. 3 (2017).

[825] Elias Götz and S. Neil Macfarlane, 'Russia's Role in World Politics: Power, Ideas, and Domestic Influences,' *International Politics* 56, no. 6 (2019): 718.

As Neil MacFarlane pointed out to me in conversation, the contradictory nature of assessments of Russia's power position tends to resolve itself if one considers the possibility of Russia operating from a strong position regionally and from a weak position in the international system as a whole.

emboldened by Western weakness or acted as a challenger to the global hegemon. It cannot be both. Either the balance of power is tilted in Russia's favour or not. As long as structural realists do not set forth a self-contained logic – that is, one that is independent from any particular case – of what to look for in terms of how power is distributed and how the states involved are expected to behave, they will remain exposed to this criticism.

Analysis assuming a liberal perspective often takes domestic politics as its point of departure.[826] Assertive foreign policy, in that reading, results from authoritarian tendencies in Russian politics and elites' aversion to democratisation efforts and popular movements backed by the West.[827] For former US ambassador and political scientist Michael McFaul, it seems clear that 'Russian foreign policy did not grow more aggressive in response to US policies; it changed as a result of Russian internal political dynamics.'[828] McFaul traces the Ukraine crisis back to mass protests in the aftermath of the fraudulent 2011 parliamentary elections – the first internal attack on the Putin regime. The government openly accused the US of fomenting a colour revolution in Russia, which ushered in a permanent shift towards more nationalist, combative rhetoric on the part of elites. For Putin, framing the US and Europe as adversaries has, at the very least, some welcome side effects pertaining to his domestic rule. Ivan Krastev and Stephen Holmes, for example, suggest that Putin has leveraged the Ukraine crisis to distract from domestic weaknesses, 'crush isolated domestic resistance,' and, as an added benefit, 'make a

[826] On similarities and distinctions between 'liberal' theories on FPA and 'Innenpolitik' approaches, see Chapters 1 and 2.

[827] The general logic is outlined in the conclusion, 'Foreign Policy as the Continuation of Domestic Politics by Other Means' in Cadier and Light, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Ideas, Domestic Politics and External Relations*. See also: Thomas Ambrosio, *Authoritarian Backlash: Russian Resistance to Democratization in the Former Soviet Union* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

[828] Michael McFaul, Stephen Sestanovich, and John Mearsheimer, 'Faulty Powers: Who Started the Ukraine Crisis?,' *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 6 (2014).

divided Europe look impotent in its moral outrage.'[829] Here, as in the other examples mentioned, the 'background assumption is that concerns over regime security shape Moscow's international activities,' as Götz and MacFarlane observe.

Nuanced liberal accounts will also point out the interconnections between the domestic and international spheres as causes of change and continuity in foreign policy. Allen Lynch, for example, 'blames' Russia's assertive turn both on domestic politics and Western policies towards Russia – more precisely on the interaction between the two systems. Authoritarian and interventionist patterns had been established already under Yeltsin and consolidated as an 'arbitrary personalist regime' under Putin with a 'strong imperial imprint.'[830] Similarly, Andrew Wilson lists a challenge to the authoritarian economic and political system established in Ukraine and Russia after the Cold War, and Putin's need to consolidate his domestic rule as two of the main reasons for intervention in Ukraine.[831]

While liberal analyses generally do not withhold criticism of Vladimir Putin and point out the corruption, cronyism, or kleptocracy he has established, they do not suggest a change of power in the Kremlin would be a panacea. Mark Galeotti, for example, describes the Russian system of government as an 'adhocracy,' run by a group of Putin loyalists 'constantly trying to second-guess and please the boss.'[832] Despite this top-centred system, Putin is 'just one guy,' as the title of Galeotti's

[829] Ivan Krastev and Stephen Holmes, 'Russia's Aggressive Isolationism,' *The American Interest*, 10 December 2014, https://www.the-american-interest.com/2014/12/10/russias-aggressive-isolationism/.

[830] Allen C. Lynch, 'The Influence of Regime Type on Russian Foreign Policy Towards the West 1992–2015,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 49, no. 1 (2016): 101. See also Roy Allison, *Russia, the West, and Military Intervention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Allison identifies 'the perceived challenges to Russia's domestic political structure' as one of the key reasons for Russian backing of the Assad regime.

[831] Andrew Wilson, 'The Ukraine Crisis Brings the Threat of Democracy to Russia's Doorstep,' *European View* 13, no. 1 (2014): 67.

[832] Mark Galeotti, *We Need to Talk About Putin: Why the West Gets Him Wrong* (London: Ebury, 2019), ch. 1.

penultimate chapter reads.[833] Put differently, in accounts informed by liberal theory (or those emphasising the dynamics of domestic politics), established structures are more durable than one person's immediate influence on governance.[834]

Relatedly, liberal or domestic politics-centred accounts are not entirely convincing in their argumentation that fear of a colour revolution, also referred to as the 'democratic-spill over thesis,' is driving Russian foreign policy. The Russian opposition today is dominated not by avid liberals 'pushing for Western-style democracy' but nationalists, as Götz and MacFarlane note.[835] As the previous chapter argues, to Putin and the kleptocrats, the perceived challenge by democratisation is not to the stability of the regime but to *their* regime. As MacFarlane suggests, 'Putin and his colleagues have taken the democratization of neighbouring countries, notably Ukraine, to be a compelling threat, not so much to Russia, but to the structure of power and profit he and his colleagues have attempted to build in Russia.'[836]

Constructivist analyses root the crisis in the interactions between Europe, the US, Russia, and Ukraine, rather than attempting to pinpoint singular causes or put blame on any one side.[837] They add an important analytical layer by mapping out the ideational and discursive space that acts as a permissive environment for the conflict to unfold. Studying discourse on Russian national identity until 2014, Ted Hopf, for

[833] Ibid., ch. 10. Lynch makes a similar argument, stating that 'the removal of Putin from power will not *in se* change that regime type or key challenges in Russian–Western relations.' Lynch, 'The Influence of Regime Type on Russian Foreign Policy Towards the West 1992–2015.'

[834] Notable exceptions being analyses that combine domestic politics with psychological traits and the life experience of decision-makers. Examples of this kind of approach as applied to the Ukraine case are introduced further on in this chapter.

[835] Götz and Macfarlane, 'Russia's Role in World Politics: Power, Ideas, and Domestic Influences,' 719. For an exhaustive treatment of the deficiencies of the democratic spill over thesis, see Oisín Tansey, 'The Problem with Autocracy Promotion,' *Democratization* 23, no. 1 (2016).

[836] S. Neil MacFarlane, 'Kto Vinovat? Why Is There a Crisis in Russia's Relations with the West?,' *Contemporary Politics* 22, no. 3 (2016): 351-52. On Russia's system of rent-seeking, see: Karen Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2014).

[837] For example, Robert Legvold, 'Managing the New Cold War: What Moscow and Washington Can Learn from the Last One,' *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 4 (2014).

example, suggests that changes in these discursive patterns made the annexation of Crimea 'thinkable,' 'natural,' and 'possible.' He also points out that Russia could have annexed Crimea anytime in the last 25 years. The reason it happened when it did was 'contingent circumstances' and an 'unfortunate concatenation of events,' which speaks to one of the major shortcomings of constructivist explanations in that they can identify the necessary but generally not the sufficient causes of an event or development. Another strand of constructivist research relies on identity that is defined along ethnic lines or a form of 'bio-politics.' The typical argument is that Putin felt called upon to protect the rights and heritage of Russian 'compatriots' in the region.[838] A similar notion is reflected in Gerard Toal's conceptualisation of 'affective geopolitics' which takes account of ways in which biology, experience, and affect are mixed into human culture.[839]

In general, constructivist explanations of Russian foreign policy, and its intervention in Ukraine more specifically, face the following challenges: while they are uniquely suited to demarcate the ideational space within which policy is made, they have a hard time modelling agency. Much of constructivist analysis is staked on discursive patterns without specifying what, or who, causes these patterns to change, and for what reason. Often, the problem is one of establishing causality: if the argument is that Putin shifted from being predominantly a realist power-maximiser to a nationalist ideologue, for example, what caused this change? His accumulated life experience, geopolitical imperatives, the fact that it seemed opportune with a view to

[838] Philipp Casula, *The Road to Crimea: Putin's Foreign Policy between Reason of State, Sovereignty and Bio-Politics* (Zürich: University of Zürich, 2014).

[839] Although not necessarily an example of constructivist scholarship: Gerard Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017). See also: William E. Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 75.

domestic politics, or neurophysiological changes in his brain – and which of these factors came first?

The literature on status cannot be clearly located within any one of the three paradigms, although it is frequently associated with the constructivist school. A core tenet of these accounts, Russia pursues a strategy of social competition as a response to a perceived slight. Examples for Chapters 4-6 included the airport dash of Russian paratroopers in the final stages of the Kosovo conflict or its resolute campaign against Georgia as a response (at least in part) to the perceived stubbornness with which NATO expansion had been carried forward. Further perceived humiliations followed between 2008 and 2014: for example, Western criticisms of fraud in the 2011 Russian legislative elections and support for the resulting opposition protests, and, perhaps most alarming to Russian elites who were already wary of colour revolutions and democratisation – the use of air power to dispose of the Libyan regime in March 2011.

Social identity theory suggests that some of the same dynamics that marked earlier episodes in Russian-Western relations were at play in the prelude to the Ukraine crisis, leading Russian elites to adopt a strategy of social competition: the EU's offer of an association agreement as an unambiguous counter concept to Russia's Eurasian Economic Union; the West's acquiescence to the removal of a pro-Russian president in the absence of articles of impeachment and the hasty embrace of the new cabinet; repeated appearances of high-ranking American politicians and old 'Cold Warriors' in front of protestors in Kiev; or the alleged involvement of Western intelligence services and NGOs in the Euromaidan movement. This thesis does not evaluate any of the evidence that has been put forward to support the latter charge. However, as far as perceived slights go, the perception is enough. It is not hard to see

how Putin and other Russian officials could have received the impression that Western actors took liberties to determine Ukraine's political future while denying Russia the same. For example, in a leaked phone conversation between Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and the US ambassador to Ukraine, the two American officials appear to be hand-picking cabinet members for a new Ukrainian government.[840]

The concept of status adds a crucially important layer to an analysis of the Ukraine crisis, as pointed out by Forsberg et al. in the introduction to a special issue on status concerns and Russian foreign policy. While it cannot provide a full explanation in and of itself, status makes many aspects of Russian behaviour more understandable: first, status accentuates how important Ukrainian politics is as a determinant of Russia's role as the regional hegemon.[841] This is echoed by Larson and Shevchenko: 'great-power status carries with it the expectation that (…) smaller states, especially within its region, will defer to its wishes on foreign policy. Great powers usually exploit such privileges to gain material and strategic benefits.'[842] Forsberg et al. go on to suggest, secondly, that 'anger about the West and its perceived ignorance over Russia's social status during the past make Russia's resentfulness vis-à-vis the West and its attempts to create new "rules of the game" in the relationship more comprehensible.' This has also been one of the core tenets of Chapter 5 in this thesis. Lastly, the concept makes it understandable how the Russian leadership came to view the use of military force in Ukraine as a 'necessity' rather than recklessness, as rationalist frameworks tend to frame it. A logical consequence

[840] 'Ukraine Crisis: Transcript of Leaked Nuland-Pyatt call,' *BBC*, 7 February 2014, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26079957.

[841] Tuomas Forsberg, Regina Heller, and Reinhard Wolf, 'Status and Emotions in Russian Foreign Policy,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014): 267.

[842] Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, *Quest for Status: Chinese and Russian Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 233.

of the fact that status played a role in the outbreak of the crisis, it must also be taken into account when trying to find a solution.[843]

Finally, analytically eclectic approaches have produced persuasive and insightful explanations not only because they contrast or string together different perspectives but, in some cases, yield concrete benefits from their integration. Notable examples would be the volume on Russian foreign policy by Andrei Tsygankov, which is one of the main reference works for this thesis, or, focused on the case at hand, a multifaceted analysis by Roy Allison. Relatedly, the introductory chapter by Neil MacFarlane and Elias Götz to a special issue of International Politics on Russian foreign policy includes not only an overview of different theoretical perspectives but also an insightful discussion of the 'perils and promises of analytical eclecticism.'[844]

7.3. Affective realism in the Russian intervention

Same as eight years before with respect to Georgia (and in 1999 pertaining to the Kosovo crisis), Russian justifications of its actions in Ukraine were primarily couched in legal language. This was particularly significant in this case. For one thing, by framing the change of power in Kiev as an 'unconstitutional coup,' Putin sought to legitimise the notion that the rules of the game of regional security had changed and Russia now had the right, if not the obligation, to intervene if required.

Since the ouster of Yanukovych, Russian officials had begun to accuse the US and its European allies of having worked with activists inside Ukraine to engineer the overthrow of the legitimate government. In a press conference on 4 March, Putin

[843] Forsberg, Heller, and Wolf, 'Status and Emotions in Russian Foreign Policy,' 267.

[844] Götz and Macfarlane, 'Russia's Role in World Politics: Power, Ideas, and Domestic Influences.'; Götz, *Russia, the West, and the Ukraine Crisis*.

expressed a similar sentiment and also reserved Russia's right to intervene militarily in Ukraine on 'humanitarian grounds,' if necessary:

> Our partners, especially in the United Sates, always clearly formulate their own geopolitical and state interests and follow them with persistence. Then, using the principle "You're either with us or against us" they draw the whole world in. And those who do not join in get 'beaten' until they do. (…)[845]

Scholars are rediscovering the utility of psychology in studying foreign policy. An excellent showcase of the value of different psychological perspectives, as well as their methodological limitations, has been provided by Tuomas Forsberg and Christer Pursiainen. They find that cognitive and psychological phenomena like groupthink, belief systems, personality, and emotions can help makes sense of Russia's 'higher willingness to take risks in the context of the Ukrainian crisis.'[846] Their multifaceted analysis provides a launchpad from which to explore the applicability of affective realism in this case.

There is another category of scholarship on contemporary Russian foreign policy that combines elements from all three theoretical strands discussed in the previous section. A kind of successor to the Cold War tradition of 'Kremlinology,' these accounts are centred on both the life experience and psychological traits ascribed to Vladimir Putin – outlining how his background in the KGB shaped Putin but also how he himself continues to shape the system around him. In that way, such explanations take account of the structural imperatives of geopolitics, the dynamics of domestic politics, as well as the role of ideas in demarcating the political landscape.

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[845] 'Vladimir Putin Answered Journalists' Questions on the Situation in Ukraine,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 4 March 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20366.

[846] Forsberg and Pursiainen, 'The Psychological Dimension of Russian Foreign Policy: Putin and the Annexation of Crimea,' 220.

The war with Georgia and especially its intervention in Ukraine led to increased interest in Russian foreign policy and has yielded an abundance of such semi-psychological publications focused on the Russian leader and those around him. Examples of 'Putinology' have been produced by long-time scholars of Russia and the Soviet Union, experts at think tanks, and writers of long-form journalism. Some observers have drawn a direct connection between Russian foreign policy and a set of psychopathologies afflicting its leader.[847] Others are reminded of the Cold War and argue that Putin is, too. His actions were driven, for example, by nostalgia, his career background, and Soviet acculturation and aimed at resurrecting the old empire. It is no surprise that these accounts are often informed by liberal-institutionalist thought.[848] Some authors suggest that the interplay between psychological attributes and ideological substratum is to blame for Russia's assertive turn towards its neighbours and the West.[849] They vary in terms of quality, methodological approach, and analytical rigor. Some, as Forsberg and Pursiainen criticise, are reminiscent of poor examples of old Kremlinology 'in that much of it is based on the art of second-guessing the inner dynamics of an opaque system' – it

[847] Ian Robertson, 'Inside the mind of Vladimir Putin,' *The Telegraph*, 24 February 2015, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11431850/Inside-the-mind-of-Vladimir-Putin.html; Ivan Nechepurenko, 'How the U.S. Struggles to Crack the Putin Code,' *Moscow Times*, February 8 2015, http://www.themoscowtimes.com/article/515584.html; Fiona Hill and Clifford G. Gaddy, 'Putin's Personality Disorder: Russia's President May Like to Look Tough, But He's Weaker Than You Think,' *Foreign Policy*, 15 February 2013, http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/02/15/putin-personality-disorder.

[848] Nathan Gardels, 'Interview with Zbigniew Brzezinski,' *The World Post*, September 3 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/03/zbigniew-brzezinski-nato-putin-ukraine_n_5760068.html; Lilia Shevtsova, 'Falling into Putin's Trap,' *The American Interest*, 10 March 2014, https://www.the-american-interest.com/2014/03/10/falling-into-putins-trap/.

[849] Mark Galeotti and Andrew S. Bowen, 'Putin's Empire of the Mind,' *Foreign Policy*, 21 April 2014, https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/04/21/putins-empire-of-the-mind/.

cannot be dismissed out of hand but 'has not evolved in a cumulative and integrative manner with the aim of theory building or development.'[850]

In a sense, affective realism, as applied to this particular case of Russian foreign policy, is part of that literature in that it incorporates psychological variables in a wider assessment of structural, organisational, or ideational explanations. Contrary to what has been referred to as psychological profiling or 'psychohistory,'[851] affective realism does not rely to the same extent on conjectural evidence derived from a person's past. Put differently, when referring to the decision-making of Vladimir Putin, this perspective envisions less of 'Putin the hardened rowdy from the Petersburg courtyards' or 'Putin the conniving ex-KGB agent' but a human agent. No doubt a capable and intelligent human, who is operating in a very particular environment, but one who is subject to some of the same rational or irrational behavioural patterns that everyone else is.

In doing so, affective realism also attempts to steer clear of an oft-criticised bias in scholarship on Russian foreign policy (both contemporary and during the Cold War). Dmitri Trenin and Bobo Lo describe it as follows: 'there exists an implicit assumption that Russian policy-makers behave inherently less rationally than their foreign counterparts, being driven not so much by concrete national interests as by highly subjective and even personal impulses.'[852] Although some notable Russians might, interestingly, counter:

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[850] Forsberg and Pursiainen, 'The Psychological Dimension of Russian Foreign Policy: Putin and the Annexation of Crimea,' 223. See also: Leon Aron, 'Putinology,' *The American Interest*, 30 July 2015, https://www.the-american-interest.com/2015/07/30/putinology/.

[851] Peter Loewenberg, 'Psychoanalytic Models of History: Freud and After,' in William McKinley Runyan (ed.), *Psychology and Historical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[852] Dmitri Trenin and Bobo Lo, *The Landscape of Russian Foreign Policy Decision-Making* (Moscow: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 8.

> Of course, we are less pragmatic, less calculating than representatives of other peoples, and we have bigger hearts. Maybe this is a reflection of the grandeur of our country and its boundless expanses. Our people have a more generous spirit.[853]

The approach presented in these pages does rely on linguistic research suggesting that Russian language and culture are more emotionally expressive than others.[854] That choice relates more to methodology and the amenability of the case of Russian foreign policy, however, than a presupposition of there being anything distinct or abnormal about 'Russian' reasoning and decision-making faculties.

It has been mentioned that there is an inconsistency in structural realism (if one tries to look at structural realist scholarship as a coherent whole) pertaining to the connection between power and state behaviour. The theory does not allow for a clear determination as to under what conditions should we expect an increasingly powerful state to behave aggressively. There are ontological reasons for this shortcoming. In its purest form – i.e., based on a close reading of Kenneth Waltz with respect to its main ontological entities – structural realism and rationalist theories more broadly treat 'threats' as objective phenomena, emanating from attempts to alter the balance of power. Failures to correctly interpret threat (or what might appear threatening to the other side) are down to 'fuzziness' in the system. For example, the intricacies of domestic politics, psychopathologies of actors, or communication errors may all introduce deviations from rationality. In a purely state-centric and balance-of-power-based theory, none of these deviations can be represented. However, its simplicity is also one of the main charms of structural realism. Greater power gives rise to offensive motives, presenting a threat to competing states.

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[853] Vladimir Putin, 'Direct Line with Vladimir Putin,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 7 April 2014, http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/7034.

[854] See Chapter 3.

Evolution of the theory and practical applications of structural realism have introduced a whole range of amendments and exceptions to this simple logic. Perhaps most importantly, realists have introduced assumptions about actors' psychology. It has even been argued that their preoccupation with the system of states has obfuscated realism's true ontological foundations in human nature.[855] This self-declared disregard for how political agents come to make their choices becomes problematic when affective, cognitive, or social-psychological claims become central components of the theory. Stephen Walt's balance-of-threat theory, for example, introduces 'hostile intentions' to explain outcomes in international politics that escape strictly balance-of-power based analyses.[856] By attempting to deconstruct the transmission mechanism between power and state behaviour, however, theories like balance-of-threat not only modified but ruptured the simple logic prescribed by Waltz (who, as has been discussed, never intended to produce explanations of any one state's behaviour).

Returning to the case at hand, structural realists have argued everything from Russia acted out of strength, to Russia acted out of weakness, to Russia seized the opportunity presented by a weak West. This illustrates several problems with structural realist analyses staked on threat. First, they do not foresee a mechanism to determine, a priori, when the balance of power shifted from Russia to the West (or vice versa) to a degree that would constitute a threat and precipitate policy action. Second, it falls short of explaining why Russia views NATO as the gravest threat to its security, as evidenced by its official foreign policy concept and suggested by

[855] See Annette Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), 3.

[856] For example, why, in the 1940s, states with a significantly greater aggregated power base allied against the perceived threat of Nazi Germany. Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).

much of the scholarship on Russia in international affairs. As Tsygankov convincingly argues, that importance cannot be explained without understanding Russians' historically developed perception of the alliance, policy-makers experience in dealing with NATO representatives since the end of the Cold War, or without the help of ideational concepts like identity, culture, and values.[857] In objective terms, i.e. based on an assessment of material factors, the threat is more difficult to establish. Initially, Russians viewed NATO as a relic of the Cold War. Potential enlargement was not deemed threatening, as many analysts blamed the initiative on organisational inertia.[858] Even after the most recent phase of enlargement, experts suggested that NATO presence on the Russian border amounts to more of a 'speed bump' than credible deterrence.[859]

Götz and MacFarlane point out that Moscow's fixation on NATO and the West more broadly is baffling from a power-political viewpoint, given that a much more substantial threat looms right across its 4,200 kilometre south-eastern border: China.[860] Not only does China surpass Russia in every conceivable metric of material power,[861] the sparsely populated Russian far east is much more vulnerable to territorial incursions than the densely populated and historically battle-tested west of the country. The seeming lack of attention is interesting but could also be explained by occupational blindness in academic IR and think tanks, especially in the West. Russian foreign policy, in other words, might be oriented westwards because scholars are saying that it is, and future policy-makers in higher educational

[857] Andrei P. Tsygankov, 'The Sources of Russia's Fear of NATO,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 51, no. 2 (2018).

[858] Nikolai Patrushev, 'Vyzov Prinyat,' *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 22 December 2005, in: ibid., 102.

[859] Jorge Benitez, 'NATO Summit Special Series: Estonia and Latvia,' *Atlantic Council*, 3 July 2016, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/nato-summit-special-series-estonia-and-latvia.

[860] Götz and Macfarlane, 'Russia's Role in World Politics: Power, Ideas, and Domestic Influences,' 718.

[861] With the notable exception of nuclear capabilities.

institutions on both sides are internalising and thus further perpetuating this sentiment.

It ought to be pointed out, though, that preoccupation with East-West dynamics likely afflicts analysts in the US and Europe more than it does their Russian counterparts. A look at the research agenda of Russia-based think tanks points to a growing focus on Sino-Russian relations, with the biggest centres having established ongoing research projects on that topic.[862] At the same time, the bulk of analysis strikes a friendly tone towards Beijing – emphasising the benefits of economic cooperation and working towards multipolarity in the international system. The Carnegie Moscow Center, for example, runs a project on growing Chinese influence in the region and the world, with the allusive title *Pax Sinica*. The same is true for official policy. The latest Russian foreign policy concept, for example, contains no shortage of references to what is wrong with NATO but has nothing bad to say about China.[863] That tendency to hold back, in and of itself, could be indicative of how 'real' the Chinese threat is to many Russian policy-makers.

By focussing on material power and the structure of the system, realist explanations like those provided by Mearsheimer accentuate the role of great powers – the US and, by extension, NATO – while downplaying the causal importance of other actors and the variety of their interests and motives: the EU, a supranational organisation, which, through extending an association agreement to Ukraine, played a key role in the start of the crisis; powerful member states with diverging economic and security interests, especially towards Russia; different factions within American politics from neoconservatives to former Cold warriors; or Ukrainian separatist

[862] For example, at RIAC, the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy, and RISI.

[863] 'Kontseptsiya Vneshney Politiki Rossiyskoy Federatsii,' Press Service of the Foreign Ministry, https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/official_documents//asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/2542248.

leaders, whose motivations range from avid nationalism and xenophobia to a hunger for power, to name but a few groups of actors with a substantial stake in the crisis. The Ukraine crisis cannot be reduced to a conflict between 'two sides' (i.e., the West on one and 'Putin and his compatriots' on the other).[864]

7.4. The decision to take Crimea

There are two possible trajectories leading Vladimir Putin to decide to take control of the Crimean Peninsula and annex it to the Russian Federation: first, plans for Crimean integration had existed all along and the unrest following the Maidan protests provided a welcome pretext to act. Second, the decision was an impulsive one, 'hastily conceived' as a response to the ouster of president Yanukovych, as Daniel Treisman suggests.[865] These are not mutually exclusive. Given how smoothly the operation was conducted, plans for a military operation in Crimea in the event of a political crisis engulfing Ukraine had likely been prepared well in advance; while the decision to execute them was promoted by a combination of factors – crucially the perception that the revolutionary momentum in Kiev had accelerated in late February. Timing matters when it comes to situating the annexation of Crimea within the larger picture of Russian foreign policy towards neighbouring states. As Roy Allison wrote in 2014, 'whether we judge these actions to have been impulsive or calculated, tactical or strategic, exceptional or the harbinger of more serious transgressions to come,' reflects our understanding of Russian motivations for intervention and what will determine its foreign policy going forward.[866]

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[864] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin.'

[865] Daniel Treisman, 'Why Putin Took Crimea: The Gambler in the Kremlin,' *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 3 (2016).

[866] Allison, 'Russian 'Deniable' Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules,' 1256.

An equally important aspect of contextualising the annexation of Crimea is who was involved in the decision and what influence they had. Steven Lee Myers writes of a decision taken quite hastily on 25 or 26 February by a group of KGB veterans: 'Sergei B. Ivanov, Mr. Putin's chief of staff; Nikolai P. Patrushev, the secretary of the security council; and Aleksandr V. Bortnikov, the director of the Federal Security Service.'[867] It is likely that Defence Minister Sergey Shoygu was also present.[868] Apparently, the Security Council and Foreign Ministry were informed after the fact.[869] What is striking about the way in which Putin personally recollected the meeting is how the topic of Crimea did not come up until the very end, almost as a side note. After discussing general security aspects pertaining to the situation in Ukraine and as the men were parting, 'I said to my colleagues: we must start working on returning Crimea to Russia.'[870] Given the strategic and symbolic significance of Crimea and the existence of military plans for safeguarding the Sevastopol base, it seems highly unlikely that these men (and other close associates of Putin) had not pondered scenarios involving the takeover of Crimea in private conversations prior to 25 February.

Much of the theory-driven analysis on the Crimean campaign has settled on the issue of *rationality*. In explanations of political crisis and conflict escalation, the concept is sometimes thrown in rather nonchalantly. Enough reason to ask what analysts mean, exactly, when they write of rational behaviour in the context of the Crimean intervention. Technically, rational behaviour would imply that Putin and

[867] Steven Lee Myers, 'Russia's Move Into Ukraine Said to Be Born in Shadows,' *The New York Times*, March 7 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/08/world/europe/russias-move-into-ukraine-said-to-be-born-in-shadows.html.

[868] Forsberg and Pursiainen, 'The Psychological Dimension of Russian Foreign Policy: Putin and the Annexation of Crimea,' 226.

[869] Myers, 'Russia's Move Into Ukraine Said to Be Born in Shadows.'

[870] 'Vladimir Putin Describes Secret Meeting when Russia Decided to Seize Crimea,' *The Guardian*, 9 March 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/09/vladimir-putin-describes-secret-meeting-when-russia-decided-to-seize-crimea.

those around him carefully calibrated the benefits of 're-integrating' the peninsula against the cost and risks involved. The potential consequences included: a full-scale war with a recently modernised Ukrainian army – possibly supplied with additional Western weapons or even directly supported by NATO troops; Western sanctions of an unknown scale targeting the Russian economy and select individuals and eroding support for the government among the Russian public and Putin's associates; a strong nationalist backlash in Ukraine, cementing its European orientation; and unconditional Western support for the Ukrainian government, irrespective of its political composition. Among the more predictable variables was the price tag: integrating Crimea into the Russian Federation would require investments of several billion dollars every year and would give the Kremlin little more influence on the peninsula than it had when it was part of Ukraine.

Despite the complexity of the calculation, input factors are often broken down into simple categories. However, one might argue that simplification is the main task of theory. What might be more problematic in this case is the reduction of the output to a simple binary – rational or irrational. To give one example from an overall instructive and well-supported analysis by Galeotti and Bowen: 'the annexation of Crimea,' he writes, 'by any rational calculation, did not make sense. (…) The Russian Black Sea Fleet's position in the Crimean seaport of Sevastopol was secure until 2042.'[871] Does the existence of a lease on Crimean naval facilities suffice to determine whether intervention was rational or irrational? Leaving aside the 'unknowns' like the nature of a Western response or the scale of economic repercussions, one must ask whether it would have been any more rational for Putin

[871] Mark Galeotti and Andrew S. Bowen, 'Putin's Empire of the Mind: How Russia's President Morphed from Realist to Ideologue – and What He'll Do Next', *Foreign Policy,* 21 April 2014, http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/04/21/putins-empire-of-the-mind/.

to assume the Sevastopol base was 'safe' no matter what. It stands to reason that the Russian leader doubted whether the Kharkiv pact would be worth much if Ukraine became part of NATO.[872]

The case of Crimea presents perhaps the most telling example in this thesis of an aforementioned fallacy in rationalist frameworks: the assumption that actors have preferences that are complete, transitive and reflexive and that can be, at least theoretically, retraced by the analyst. When the stakes are as high as they were in the spring of 2014, can we truly expect a political leader – any political leader – to evaluate the benefits, costs, and risks involved in a particular course of action in an unbiased and objective way? Even under the assumption that non-intervention could mean losing access to the Black Sea, was Putin's Crimean gambit worth the cost? As costs, benefits, and risks are evaluated differently depending on actors' relative positions, the question cannot be answered without assessing how he and others involved in the decision perceived the situation.

With a view to costs and benefits, the tendency of framing the annexation of Crimea as a 'gain' for Putin illustrates another shortcoming of a rationalist view. According to this simplified view, Putin the 'preference-maximiser' sought to harness the turmoil in Ukrainian politics and score a geostrategic 'win.' This ignores the widespread perception among Russian elites that Crimea, despite having been gifted to Ukraine in 1954 by Khrushchev, was still somehow considered part of Russia.[873] To Putin, Crimea was his to lose. However, as Chapters 2 and 3 argue,

[872] Arguably, Ukrainian NATO membership had become a faint possibility after the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008, at the latest. This does not make the phenomenon of NATO enlargement as a persistent spectre in Russian security policy (for instrumental, affective, or other purposes) any less intriguing.

[873] Ted Hopf, '"Crimea Is Ours": A Discursive History,' *International Relations* 30, no. 2 (2016).

political operatives tend to have a perceptual bias towards negative information.[874] The dread of losses is a much stronger, even visceral, motivating factor than the possibility of gains – particularly under already tense conditions as in February 2014.

This psychological finding has already found its way into the IR literature in the form of prospect theory.[875] Its application to Russian foreign policy in the Ukraine crisis is discussed by Forsberg and Pursiainen: Putin, the theory suggests, was ready to take the risk of invading Crime because he 'had interpreted the political developments in Ukraine in early 2014 as a loss of the preferred status quo.'[876] While prospect theory enables a more differentiated representation of relative preference orders, it generally does not stipulate a mechanism by which framing occurs. Prospect theory in FPA could be criticised, therefore, for deviating from rationality as and when necessary to match the fundamentals of the case being studied. Similar charges have been brought up against neoclassical realist approaches, which would evoke bounded rationality and violate the parsimonious logic of structural theory on an ad hoc basis.[877]

Appraisal theories of emotion, by cautioning the analyst to the relative importance of concerns across time and different actors, can also be of use in this case. One actor's perceived gain does not translate into an equal loss to another. Western politicians, analysts, and defence planners likely underestimated the weight

[874] See also Dominic D. P. Johnson and Dominic Tierney, 'Bad World: The Negativity Bias in International Politics,' *International Security* 43, no. 3 (2018).

[875] On the theory: Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, 'Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk,' *Econometrica* 47, no. 2 (1979); Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, 'Prospect Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis,' in *The International Studies Encyclopedia*, ed. Robert A. Denemark (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing, 2010); Jack S. Levy, 'Prospect Theory, Rational Choice, and International Relations,' *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1997); Jonathan Mercer, 'Prospect Theory and Political Science,' *Annual Review of Political Science* 8, no. 1 (2005).

[876] Forsberg and Pursiainen, 'The Psychological Dimension of Russian Foreign Policy: Putin and the Annexation of Crimea,' 229. See also Sarah Sloat, 'An Interesting Theory That Could Explain Vladimir Putin's Risky Behavior,' *The New Republic*, 19 March 2014, https://newrepublic.com/article/117077/vladimir-putinsrisky-behavior-could-be-explained-prospect-theory.

[877] On neoclassical realism and the levels of analysis, see the discussion in Chapter 2.

of concerns associated with Crimea of their Russian counterparts – those concerns not being limited to the territory and historical significance of Crimea but its symbolic value for Russian regional dominance. As Tsygankov summarises, 'support for Crimea and hostility toward the Ukrainian revolution must be understood as a reflective reaction to what the Kremlin views as neglect of Russia's values and interests and unjust treatment by the West.'[878]

Affective realism, as outlined in the theoretical and methodological sections, builds on the 'negativity bias' and extends it to the affective realm. Decision-makers, it is argued, treat adverse scenarios as more likely – partly because they have to, as the consequences of negative outcomes would be felt much more severely. In making predictions, the human brain is reliant on affect.[879] As some psychologists suggest, emotions and affectively charged experiences shape our expectations of the future even before we have become fully cognisant of our environment, and they might be sufficiently intense to uphold these expectations even if new information runs counter to them. In that way, our affective disposition prepares us for the worst but also selects for the kind of information that would affirm our expectations – thereby enhancing existing negative biases. As a result, decision-makers over time may come to experience phenomena such as hypervigilance, conspiratorial thinking, or even persecutory delusions.

Whether Vladimir Putin has been impaired by any of these conditions, we cannot know. However, the framing of his choices in late February of 2014 was likely impacted by worst-case thinking; and his decisions taken under the influence of the negative affective valence associated with these adverse outcomes. Not only

[878] Tsygankov, 'Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy,' 29.
[879] On the underlying logic, see Lisa Feldman Barrett, *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain* (London: Pan Books, 2018).

did he risk losing what he had already attained through his work on the Eurasian Economic Union.[880] Putin did not want to become the Russian president who lost Crimea 'for good' – and with it, naval access to the Black Sea, an inestimable amount of public support at home, and a great deal of standing as a provider of regional security (paired with a sense of betrayal of ethnic Russians living on the peninsula). In light of all this, *not* taking the chance presented by the crisis in Ukraine must have almost seemed like a sure loss.

In a speech on 18 March welcoming Crimea and Sevastopol as two new subjects of the Russian Federation, Putin styled himself as a protector of Crimean sovereignty: 'our Western partners have stepped over the line, behaved crudely, irresponsibly and unprofessionally. (…) Without Russian sovereignty over Crimea, both Russia and Ukraine can lose it.'[881]

Arguments based on status and related concepts such as prestige, honour, and recognition also face some challenges explaining the (ir)rationality of Russia's Crimean adventure. Much of it, as has been discussed, is associated with constructivist theory. The assumption is that Russian foreign policy is primarily directed westwards at its 'significant other,' either Europe, the US, or 'the West' more broadly, which has been proposed by eminent theorists and area specialists alike.[882] If that is so, why would Russian leaders decide on a course of action that will outrage those they seek status from (or rather, of whom they seek their status to

[880] Bukkvoll, 'Why Putin Went to War: Ideology, Interests and Decision-Making in the Russian Use of Force in Crimea and Donbas,' 278.

[881] Vladimir Putin, 'Address by President of the Russian Federation,' Press Service of the Kremlin, 18 March 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603.

[882] Iver B. Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations*, Second ed. (London: Routledge, 2016); Robert English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2000); Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*; Anne L. Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

be recognized by)? The question is pertinent not only for Russia's annexation of Crimea and its support for separatists in eastern Ukraine but also its earlier invasion of Georgia and its backing of the universally detested Assad regime in Syria. Nicholas Onuf, in his foundational text on social constructivism in IR, expresses the paradox well: 'military capability, as a crucial measure of standing, should not be treated as an asset, to be expended in the pursuit of some other interest like security, because its depletion will adversely affect one's standing.' Put differently, military power can enhance status only when it is not used.[883]

The paradox can be broken down to how theories of status account for perceptual differences regarding the impact of certain behaviours on status. A persuasive response is provided by Jonathan Renshon.[884] States continually assess their status by comparing themselves with a select group of significant others.[885] In that way, Renshon's conceptualisation of status integrates two seemingly contradictory attributes. State's self-defined status aspirations are fundamentally based on material factors – above all, economic resources and military capabilities. At the same time, his version of status is perceptual and intersubjective, i.e., dependent on recognition and deference by others. Even when status is defined as a 'club good,' i.e., a condition that is technically attainable for everyone up to a point of congestion, it is not a static category. Taking the club of great powers as an example, a state is either a member or not. However, the 'total supply' of status in terms of group membership is limited and there is positional competition. In other

[883] Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 281.
[884] Jonathan Renshon, *Fighting for Status: Hierarchy and Conflict in World Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).
[885] Ibid., 140-48.

words, there is only a limited number of seats at the table and one state's ascension is another's demotion.

One way that states actively seek status is, as the title of Renshon's book suggests, is through fighting. Taking a rationalist approach, he explains how conflictual behaviour can be aimed at enhancing status and suggests another way of looking at Moscow's Crimean calculation as far from irrational. Forsberg and Pursiainen offer a similar interpretation: 'there is a fine line between assertiveness and anger in Russia, and hence displays of anger often reflect superiority and determination, convey an image of effectiveness and can also increase a politician's domestic popularity.'[886] Renshon's argument draws on other (mainly social-psychological) perspectives on status as well as general IR theory. With respect to the latter, Renshon adopts one of the core propositions from the structural realism of Robert Gilpin. The 'most prestigious members of the international system,' Gilpin suggests, 'are those states that have most recently used military force or economic power successfully.'[887] In the absence of economic power (in global terms), resorting to force to assert itself in the region might seem like an expedient option for contemporary Russia. One might object that Gilpin, like other structural theorists, referred to war between great powers as opposed to regional conflicts between unequal adversaries – much less one that is thought by 'hybrid' or 'non-linear' means, as some have categorised Russian operations in Ukraine.

[886] Forsberg and Pursiainen, 'The Psychological Dimension of Russian Foreign Policy: Putin and the Annexation of Crimea,' 240. See also Mark N. Katz, 'Assertive, but Alone,' *The World Today* 63, no. 11 (2007): 29-30.

[887] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 32.

7.5. Conclusions

'Russian actions may combine the rational and the irrational, as well as short- and long-term considerations."[888] This assessment made by eminent scholars of post-Soviet affairs might seem self-evident, or even trivial. Yet it is worth keeping in mind when studying the causes and consequences of Russian foreign policy that there is not one simple truth to be found – a monocausal explanation for everything. The Russian intervention in Ukraine is reducible neither to geopolitics, domestic power struggles, ideology, or personal whims but a combination of these and other factors. Those dismissing analytical eclecticism as a 'laundry list' explanation[889] need at least be cautious of the fallacies of preeminent narratives.

The association agreement offered to Ukraine by the EU, for example, is more than meets the eye. Beyond an innocuous free trade agreement, its importance can be explained by what it signified to the Russian leader – it made a mockery of his own efforts to build an integrated economic space and institutionalised a permanent loss of influence over Ukraine. As summarised by Hill and Gaddy, it would have weakened Russia's position in Europe and rendered the Eurasian Union useless.[890] Put differently, it touched on a number of affectively valenced concerns far beyond the economic realm. Besides, the security dimension of the agreement was unambiguous. The document explicitly called on all parties to 'promote gradual convergence on foreign and security matters with the aim of Ukraine's ever-deeper

[888] Wood et al., *Roots of Russia's War in Ukraine*, 19.

[889] A term coined by critics of neoclassical realism. See Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, and Steven E. Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[890] Fiona Hill and Clifford G. Gaddy, *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*, Brookings Focus Books (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2013), 363.

involvement in the European security area' and 'taking full and timely advantage of all diplomatic and military channels between the Parties.'[891]

The security dimension of the agreement prompted John Mearsheimer, for example, to interpret it as 'a backdoor to NATO membership.'[892] Because of its focus on power and group interest and its disregard for justificatory rhetoric (in analytical terms), realism is quite suited to hypothesise about the 'true' concerns involved. However, there are few conceptual tools in structural realism and rationalist frameworks in general to account for subjective differences in hierarchies of concerns (or preferences, in rationalist parlance). As a consequence, when crisis erupts, analysis can twist and bend to match the outcome, which might produce a stimulating argument but few practicable lessons to apply to future developments in Russian foreign policy. Incidentally, the status literature faces a similar challenge given the innate subjectivity of its central dependent variable. Liberal theory tends to embed analysis within a normative outlook. Russian philosophers of science have referred to this phenomenon as kon'yunktura.[893] Among other things, it denotes ways in which researchers adapt to the current political regime or intellectual environment – at worst inhibiting them from even considering interpretations of events not supported by the prevailing climate of thought. The Innenpolitik tradition (of the kind that is independent from liberal theory) is a heterogeneous analytical enterprise in that it does not subscribe to any one brand of theory but might fall prey to the 'art of second-guessing the inner dynamics of an opaque system.'[894] Constructivism lays

[891] 'Association Agreement,' Official Journal of the European Union, 29 May 2014, https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2016/november/tradoc_155103.pdf, Article 4.

[892] McFaul, Sestanovich, and Mearsheimer, 'Faulty Powers: Who Started the Ukraine Crisis?'

[893] For example, Ivan A. Gobozov, 'Istoriya i Moral,' *Filosofiya i Obshchestvo* 1 (2010), 5-19.

[894] Forsberg and Pursiainen, 'The Psychological Dimension of Russian Foreign Policy: Putin and the Annexation of Crimea,' 223.

out how the cultural climate makes political change possible but remains muted with respect to who drove it, and for what reasons.

The multifarious ramifications of *fear* for Russian foreign policy have been outlined in Chapter 6. Fear of encirclement and isolation affectively affirms leaders' concern of a challenge to their rule and self-rationalise more visceral fears for their physical security. Suffice it to refer to these sections and note that the same affective dynamics unfolded in the case of Ukraine – a country with an even greater role in Russian historically ingrained security perceptions than Georgia. The speed of Yanukovych's banishment and the West's unapologetic advocacy for political change in Kiev surely sent a chill down the spine of Putin and those in his inner circle. Galeotti makes a thought-provoking argument, describing the threat to the Kremlin not as one borne by tanks and missiles but cultural influences, economic pressure, and political penetration. This is, in their eyes, a civilizational threat aimed at making Russia a homogenized, neutered, subaltern state.'[895]

Chapter 5 described a shift in Russian elites' affective attitude from resentment to contempt – verbalized by Vladimir Putin's passionate speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference. The events of early 2014 might be the clearest portrayal of that contemptuous attitude on the foreign policy stage: a policy that lays claim to an active part in global security but also, in a more unambiguous and pugnacious way than before, regional dominance. One that views liberal values and Western political ideals not only as a deception from underlying strategic objectives but, in and of themselves, a threat of cultural homogenisation. Putin, it can be inferred, sees it as

[895] Mark Galeotti, 'NATO is a Symbol that Russia is Always an Outsider,' *Intellinews*, 11 July 2016, https://www.intellinews.com/stolypin-nato-is-a-symbol-that-russia-is-always-an-outsider-101714/.

his calling to carve out a counter concept that protects not only Russian sovereignty but also cultural self-determination.

8. CONCLUSION

Scholarly assessments of Russian foreign policy, based on the major theoretical schools in IR, have produced a wide range of conclusions. Analysis informed by liberal theory traces Russian foreign policy back to authoritarian tendencies in domestic politics; among social constructivists, some scholars suggest that Russia's assertive turn is the product of a process of identity formation in relation to Europe; while notable structural realists have emphasised that Russian actions in places like Georgia or Ukraine are the obvious result of a misguided, ideologically driven Western policy which had neglected systemic imperatives. Predictions of future Russian conduct staked on these explanations vary accordingly, as do policy prescriptions for the EU or US. Russian-Western relations appear to have taken unexpected turns, blindsiding experts.

In part, that is due to deficiencies of all the major theories with respect to modelling the behaviour of individual decision-makers in the social context. Structural realism and liberalism rely on the assumption of rational actors, whereas much of the constructivist scholarship, emphasising the intersubjective nature of the social world, offers no distinct theory of actorhood. Both rationalist and constructivist models rely on a traditional, 'cognitivist' outlook – focussing on factors that can be known and understood – which does not reflect the state of the art in decision science. Against this background, the question that motivated this research is whether we are missing something in studying patterns of change and continuity in Russian-Western relations, and more generally, in analysing foreign policy. Are scholars making good enough use of all the explanatory tools available?

Affect and emotion, this thesis suggests, present us with phenomena that have been comprehensively studied across psychology, linguistics, and neuroscience and which are, to an extent, generalisable. Recent contributions from these fields enabled new ways of conceptualising human thought and behaviour and sparked an 'affective turn' in the social sciences. Perhaps most importantly, the work of Antonio Damasio showed that affect and cognition are closely intertwined processes. This has hardly made affectivity easier to grasp. However, the complexity of emotion should not discourage attempts to integrate them in our research. In fact, it might be because of their multidimensionality that emotions offer analytical leverage and present us with new approaches to working on some of the thornier epistemological and methodological issues in FPA and IR more broadly: the gap between theory and practice, the debate over the primacy of structure or agency, or the choice of a level of analysis.

Official Russian discourse on foreign policy, the empirical investigation shows, is rich in affective expressions, particularly those connected to anger and its variants, corroborating some of the claims made by scholars invoking status concerns. Starting in the late 1990s, elites' growing anger over the nonrecognition of Russian great-power status and the perceived inability to influence Western policy diminished their willingness to cooperate. By the year 2007, the quality and intensity of elites' affective disposition towards the West had changed from resentment to a phenomenon more akin to contempt, promoting distinctly more assertive action tendencies. The thesis also suggests that affectively valenced concerns are the product of a long historical trajectory, not merely idiosyncratic preferences of individual leaders or markers of a newly revisionist Russia. A by-product of the empirical investigation, it is argued that methodological qualms over the analyst's

inability to distinguish between genuine and instrumental displays of affect may be exaggerated. When vital concerns are impacted, what is privately felt is often congruent with what is publicly expressed. Finally, references to security concerns may be indicative of more deeply felt fear concerning a challenge to Russian civilizational values and the stability of the regime.

8.1. Theory and foreign policy

Some explanations of foreign policy relying on rational choice theory or concepts from cognitive psychology allude to the impact of affective dynamics without setting out the psychological micro-foundations of the assumptions made. We can justify this from a methodological standpoint, because not every work of social science can define everything down to its smallest component parts. However, some of the phenomena that feature prominently in predominant narratives seem well worth investigating more deeply. For example, it is taken for granted that leaders send 'costly signals' to lend credibility to their position without detailing why it might be advantageous to accept a political or financial loss or restrict one's own freedom of action. Similarly, 'emotional commitments' have been invoked to explain why states go to war even when it is not in their rational interest – without laying out how such commitments are formed and manifest themselves. Other accounts bring up fear, outrage, or humiliation in a diplomatic or security context without specifying whom these phenomena impact, in what ways, and what the probable consequences are.

The preceding chapters do not constitute an effort to disprove other perspectives, however. In fact, in many instances, affective science corroborates claims made in rationalist or constructivist explanations. A framework centred

around affect offers another way of breaking down diffuse concepts such as national interest or status by thinking about how actors' concerns are influenced by situational factors. In this way, they complement prevailing analyses of foreign policy. The objective is to showcase the usefulness of affect as a lens on foreign policy, connecting material capabilities, governing structures, ideas, and the individual. In the spirit of Graham Allison's insightful study of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the main purpose of 'conceptual lenses' is to compare and contrast. Structural realist, social constructivist, and liberal theory have, therefore, been drawn on throughout the empirical parts of the thesis to embed the affective perspective in the broader context of scholarship on Russian foreign policy and to highlight which questions other theories can or cannot answer.

FPA has always been closely tied to political philosophy and theory. However, scholars are rightly asking whether a multi-layered, interdisciplinary research area like FPA still needs to be guided by the abstract principles provided by traditional social scientific theory. The life sciences offer a vast resource of empirical findings as well as theoretical propositions on the basis of which we could form hypotheses regarding the psychological and social processes involved in foreign policy. Would it not make sense, therefore, to abandon rigid theoretical frameworks in favour of impartial behavioural analysis? Chapter 2 argues that a principal commitment to theory is necessary to establish causal claims and to evaluate them against prevailing hypotheses. Without the intellectual substrate provided by theory – in this case, by classical realist thought – it becomes harder to integrate social-psychological claims into explanations of complex political developments. As Walter Carlsnaes suggests, we need to impose some form of second-order intellectual 'structure' onto the

'exceedingly messy first-order domain' that is foreign policy-making.[896] 'Case studies are never just the aggregate of facts. Even to the most dispassionate analyst, theory provides guidelines on asking the right questions: what are the inputs and outputs of foreign policy; how do decisions affect the distribution of power among states, the domestic political landscape, and the relative position of the leader himself/herself? Simply put, could decision-makers' motivations be interpreted in ways other than those that an initial observation of the collected data suggests?

The focus of this thesis has been on the realist school of thought. Interestingly, approaches centred on psychology have been somewhat ostracised since the advent of structural theory, despite the paradigm's historical foundations in human nature. At times, it seemed that scholars were at liberty to ascribe any particular character to states – defensive, offensive, aggressive, revisionist – while claims regarding the mental constitution of their leaders were deemed unscientific, hypothetical, or reductionist. Many central arguments in the realist tradition are, whether acknowledged or not, based on psychological assumptions. At the same time, only a small proportion of realist theory and analysis professes to be about the individual. Scholars have adopted a structural perspective in FPA despite the caveats issued by Kenneth Waltz. Even when analysts recognise that the theoretical lacunae of structural theory are difficult to resolve without at least considering first-image explanations, these are often constrained by the assumption of rational actors and a cognitivist outlook. In addition to being suboptimal models of decision-making, these constraints complicate the integration of findings from the life sciences.

[896] Walter Carlsnaes, 'Actors, Structures, and Foreign Policy Analysis,' in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, ed. Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Timothy Dunne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 114.

When Waltz argued that human nature was constant and therefore unsuitable to explain change in international politics, he assumed that classical realists drew a direct connection between human nature and behaviour. However, partly because their political theories were less rigorous (which draws criticism in and of itself), classical realism allowed for greater liberties in applications to case studies. Morgenthau and his predecessors understood that even though human nature might be unchanging, behaviour was dependent on a range of additional factors. Political action might be decisively shaped by enduring psychological dispositions but is also conditioned by the social context. If classical realists regarded human nature as fixed and the nature-nurture relationship as a one-way street, how could they have explained changes in our social institutions and practices[897] or the emergence of transnational movements – issues with which classical realists did engage at length?

Classical realists warned of the fallacy of treating states as unitary, homogenous actors. When we speak 'of the power or of the foreign policy of a certain nation,' Morgenthau suggested, 'we can only mean the power or the foreign policy of certain individuals who belong to the same nation.'[898] He and other classical authors describe a symbiotic concept of the psychology of individuals, the state, and the international system, which still holds plenty of insights into how we might productively study international politics today. For when it comes to political theory, as Morgenthau argued, 'novelty is not necessarily a virtue (…), nor is old age a defect.'[899] The aspect of classical realism that has been particularly valuable in developing the framework presented in this thesis is their intuitive understanding of

[897] Although some realists might argue that the character of political institutions has not changed much over the time.

[898] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Sixth ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1985), 117.

[899] Ibid., 4.

the interplay between affect and cognition. Rather than painting a purely deterministic picture of human nature and resulting behavioural responses, they attempted to bring the complexity of phenomena like human emotion to bear in the theory.

Morgenthau's take on the profession of political science serves as a reminder of the many pitfalls involved in translating analysis into policy. Crucially, he warns against putting on the epistemological and methodological blinders of the narrow discipline of IR and deceiving oneself that the social world can be replicated in the analysts' mind. Asked why he does not justify his position against 'fashionable' trends in the field – behaviourism, systems analysis, game theory, or simulations – Morgenthau countered that 'epistemological pretences and methodological innovations' generally do not advance the cause of truth:

> Nothing I have read and learned in recent years has dissuaded me from my conviction that the theoretical understanding of international politics is possible only within relatively narrow limits and that the present attempts at a thorough rationalisation of international theory are likely to be as futile as those which have preceded them since the seventeenth century. These attempts run counter to the nature of the empirical world they are dealing with, and are likely to issue in a dogmatism which overwhelms reality for the sake of rational consistency.[900]

The theoretical discussion in Chapter 2 is also intended to combat the image of classical realists as detached power calculators. Morgenthau reflected that his realism was aware of the moral significance of political action, just as it recognized that good morals and the 'requirements of successful political action' would frequently clash with one another. Realism, therefore, should not make it appear 'as though the stark

[900] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*. Fourth ed. (New York, NY: Knopf, 1971), preface to the fourth edition.

facts of politics were morally more satisfying than they actually are, and the moral law less exacting than it actually is.'[901]

Finally, a factor that attests to the value of classical realist literature is these authors' varied backgrounds, the interdisciplinary interest evident in their writings, and their record as consultants, activists, and critics. Thucydides' dissatisfaction with historical writing made him the first 'scientific historian' and, albeit through later interpretations of his work, an important political theorist. Machiavelli sought to work out the tension between morality and the need to amass power, all while writing a practical guide for the political leader. Hans Morgenthau was a lawyer turned political scientist, who also taught courses on Greek philosophy. Some of his writings on decision-making and the challenges confronting political operatives suggest he would have been equally successful as a clinical psychologist. At the very least, this intellectually rich and versatile literature provides contemporary political scientists with a promising research agenda on the role of human nature.

8.2. Affective realism in Russian foreign policy

The epistemological foundation of affective realism is provided by appraisal theories of emotion, particularly the work of Richard Lazarus.[902] The basic premise is that emotions are adaptive responses indicative of the appraisal of environmental conditions for the individual's well-being. In a holistic sense, well-being depends on whether individuals consider what is transpiring to be conducive to, or obstructing, their most valued concerns. Appraisal determines the intensity and quality of the affective response but also likely action tendencies and physiological responses.

[901] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations.* Sixth ed., 12.

[902] Richard S. Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991).

Lazarus' work was ground-breaking because it specified the role of cognition in generating an affective response. Appraisal theory also introduces a conceptual pathway to integrate agency, making it possible to distinguish whether something was caused by oneself, someone else, interpersonal circumstances, or environmental factors outside anyone's control.

The choice of (or rather, the focus on) the distinct emotions of fear and anger, in their different manifestations and levels of intensity, has several reasons. They are the most significant affective phenomena in classical realism and the realist literature more broadly. Thucydides listed fear as the most powerful motive in politics alongside prestige and self-interest; Hobbes believed it played a crucial role in creating our social institutions; Machiavelli advised the prince that it was much safer to be 'feared than loved' because the 'dread of punishment' never fails; and Morgenthau begins his survey of international politics with a reference to anarchy as presented by Hobbes. Realists' preoccupation with 'bad' feelings was not coincidental. Focusing on the negative has proven essential to human evolutionary success and survival. It is safe to assume this trait has also left an imprint on international politics. Finally, the psychological and sociological literature lists fear and anger as part of the commonly recognized primary emotions.

Despite its foundational role in the discipline, fear has been studied predominantly within rationalist frameworks of deterrence, bargaining, or strategic choice. The ways in which the subjective experience of fear or loss aversion impacts decision-makers on a personal level has received comparatively less consideration. If some events in international politics are based on psychological processes, as seems to be an assumption underlying all of our traditional IR theories (if only implicitly), it

stands to reason that the mechanisms by which these phenomena unfold should receive more attention.

Granted, fear might not be the first emotion that comes to mind when thinking about hard-nosed state leaders like Vladimir Putin. However, most affective phenomena also have a communicative function to indicate that a vital concern has been impacted – which is most obvious in the case of anger or outrage. However, affective science suggests that all emotions have physiological manifestations. Specific 'microexpressions,' for example – contractions of facial muscles that last for just a split second – cannot be suppressed or concealed. Physiological 'activation' can precede a full cognitive appraisal of a situation, according to Lazarus. And even when sociocultural norms, identities, or values should put constraints on the individual's behaviour, emotions often override them.

On this basis, the framework of affective realism was developed. Its three dimensions of appraisal, action tendencies, and attitude describe ways in which affective responses are generated and what reactions are probable or possible. The arrangement and sequence of these dimensions and its components is to be understood in a didactic way that enables us to follow the logic of appraisal to the generation of specific affective responses. To identify the workings of affect across dimensions, Chapter 3 points to representative semantic indicators. In the same way that affective realism, as a whole, is complementary to alternative approaches, the impact of action tendencies on foreign policy decisions should not be mistaken for causal claims but in a probabilistic fashion. Feelings do not dictate decision-makers' behaviour but play a much bigger role than models based on rational choice, cognitive psychology, or constructivist theory tend to suggest.

Emotions point to the psychological micro-foundations of social action. Fear and anger – as distinct emotion concepts and through their various manifestations – can supplement rationalist and constructivist explanations of Russian behaviour. One form of manifestation is as a general emotional disposition, indicative of a deeper and relatively stable orientation of foreign policy elites. The other form is of higher intensity and helps explain individual decisions, or turning points in Russian-Western relations, such as those following NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999, the terrorist attacks on the US on 11 September 2001, or allegations of Western involvement in the Colour Revolutions of 2003-2005. However, the thesis makes no claim to providing a comprehensive account of Russian-Western relations over the last thirty years, or even a balanced summary. The objective is to compare and supplement explanatory frameworks surrounding events of high affective salience.

The 1990s

The empirical investigation begins in the 1990s. Conditions in Russia during that decade are well represented in *The Patriotism of Despair* by Serguei Oushakine.[903] The book examines the affective underpinnings of the transformation of Russian society after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Political chaos, economic hardship, corruption, the ideological void left by socialism and feelings that 'we have no motherland' instilled a sense of inferiority and ontological insecurity versus Europe and the US, which had the privilege to continue as before. Oushakine also shows that in the absence of ideology and a commonly accepted cultural foundation, trauma itself can become a constitutive element of society.

[903] Serguei A. Oushakine, *The Patriotism of Despair: Nation, War, and Loss in Russia*, Culture and Society after Socialism (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016).

Against this backdrop, the decision of the US and its European partners to take military action against Yugoslavia in 1999, despite vocal protest from Moscow, marks a crucial turning point in relations. To this day, the NATO bombing campaign is used as an example of US hegemonic ambitions, pursued outside the common framework of international law, in the guise of humanitarian intervention. It challenged the post-Cold War role Russian policy-makers foresaw for the UNSC among international institutions but more importantly, their self-image. Apart from the humiliation, Russians agreed that NATO intervention set a dangerous precedent. Among the elite, it implanted fears of Western-backed insurgencies in the 'near abroad' and destabilisation in Russia's own peripheral regions. The resulting defiant attitude helped in formulating a common vision of a Russian Federation that should restore its rightful status as a great power.

Testimony of Russian officials throughout the 1990s is indicative of what they perceived to be an unfavourable social hierarchy, paired with an inability to take action. Yeltsin's admission that the taking of Pristina airport in the aftermath of OAF had 'no military significance,'[904] for example, represented a kind of 'posturing' that 'smacked of desperation.'[905] Vladimir Putin, too, in his earlier speeches expressed that he was wary of US intentions but balancing against them would overstretch Russia's resources.[906] Iver Neumann points to another striking facet of Putin's earlier addresses: he refers to the state he rules as having 'a discontinuous history.' The absence of 'we-ness,' the condition that ties together 'a number of relevant identities

[904] Boris N. Yeltsin, *Midnight Diaries* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2000), 266.

[905] Bobo Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Reality, Illusion and Mythmaking* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 55.

[906] Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, Fourth ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 139.

(…) in the concept of an 'us' with some degree of permanence in time and space,'[907] is fertile soil for perceived inferiority.

2000-2007

Russian-Western relations took a remarkable turn during the first eight years of the new millennium. Closer economic integration with Europe and material support for the US in its 'war on terrorism' turned into an open confrontation with the West over Georgia. To some extent, this shift might have been precipitated by external developments: both Russia's improving economic performance and the rise in terrorist incidents in Russia and around the world provided Vladimir Putin with a free hand in foreign policy. Turning away from the reactionary moves of the Yeltsin years, Putin tried to take a more proactive role on the international stage. This was underpinned by numerous trips abroad, especially to neighbouring states, his tenacious efforts in the area of non-proliferation, and a streamlining of the foreign policy apparatus, which left the president with fewer but loyal advisors.

In accordance with Putin's pragmatism and supposed abandonment of geopolitical competition was his hope to change the configuration of the international system into a multipolar concert of powers. Putin outlined these designs early on in his first term in a new foreign policy concept. The unipolar world order backed by US economic and military might had substituted international law with new doctrines of 'limited sovereignty' and 'humanitarian intervention,' which had led to wars and instability in Europe and around the world. Multipolarity, on the other hand, awarded full recognition to the principle of sovereignty and accounted for the realities of globalisation and interdependence. In that sense, the 'Putin Doctrine' was also a

[907] Iver B. Neumann, 'Russia's Europe, 1991–2016: Inferiority to Superiority,' *International Affairs* 92, no. 6 (2016): 1390.

product of its times, as many in the early 2000s believed in the positive influence of globalised commerce on international peace and stability.

The most significant change under the new president, however, concerned Russia's relationship towards Europe. The West, and Europe more specifically, had always been the most important counterpart in international politics – its 'significant other,' as it has been referred to.[908] Russia's deep emotional connection to Europe is exemplified by the degree to which the country's self-image is tied to how it is seen, or how Russians think it is seen, by 'Westerners.' Chapter 5 introduces the argument that along with a shifting construction of Russian identity vis-à-vis Europe – from Europe as a model to Europe as an aberration – the attitude towards Western centres of power changed from resentment to contempt. The argument mirrors a thesis put forward by Neumann, who writes about a shift from an 'inferiority' to a 'superiority' complex at the level of Russian collective psychology. Among elites, the change in the quality of the affective attitude promoted vastly different action tendencies, along with a newfound sense of self-confidence and lower willingness to cooperate.

The different manifestations of anger, the way they are conceptualised in this thesis, depend on the degree to which the 'other' side is believed to recognise one's influence and status. When an 'other' is also perceived to be particularly powerful, resentment or contempt may be accompanied by fear. Especially in the presence of supposed threats, resulting perceptions of one's place in the social hierarchy (actual versus ascribed) determine whether the 'self' will be primed toward cooperation or acting as a spoiler. If the response leans towards 'fight,' affective dispositions can be further intensified by the presence of narratives of enmity or corresponding

[908] *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations*, Second ed. (London: Routledge, 2016); Robert English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2000).

ideologies. Towards the end of Putin's second term, his contemptuous attitude and sense of an 'unjust' world order were on full display. Most famously, when he launched his verbal tirade against US unipolarity at the 2007 Munich Security Conference.

2008-2014

The Russian-Georgian war in August 2008 was not a direct result of the downward trend in relations between Russia, Europe, and the US. However, the emergence of an embedded, almost institutionalised, contemptuous attitude towards the West surely lowered the threshold and aided Russian elites in the process of rationalisation and ex-post justification of determined military action against Georgia. This conflict presents an important case for the framework of affective realism for several reasons: it marks a watershed not just in Russian-Western relations but in post-Cold War international security more broadly. The discourse surrounding the confrontation is particularly rich in affective expressions and the nature, sources, and purpose of these expressions vary widely between the main actors. Most strikingly, the Russian claim that intervention was mandated by the 'Responsibility to Protect' – even in the absence of Security Council approval – required some rhetorical spin, as it was a complete reversal of its position on OAF.

The affective view also helps us understand why, in the eyes of the Russian leader, a forceful response to developments in Ukraine might have been unavoidable. Had Russia not intervened, it would have lost its influence over Kiev, and with it its voice in European security, for good. Even more saliently, the way Yanukovych was chased out of his country probably sent a chill down Putin's spine and increased his resolve to avoid similar developments in Russia at any cost. A perspective that pays heed to the energising force of affect can also accommodate a more unconventional

interpretation of Russia's annexation of Crimea: in marked contrast to an improvised reaction to a popular uprising, some in Moscow might have seen events in Ukraine as a welcome occasion to finally take the shackles off of Russian foreign policy. As one Russian columnist suggested, until 2014, maintaining the 'illusion of having common values with the West' had at times been 'psychologically uncomfortable' for the Russian leadership. Crimea presented an opportunity to take a leap outside the familiar 'framework of the partnership paradigm.' It proved to be a 'liberation' and an end to the 'hypocrisy' of the pre-2014 years.[909]

[909] Vladimir Frolov, 'Diplomatiya Osvobozhdeniya,' *Vedomosti*, 26 November 2015, https://www.vedomosti.ru/opinion/articles/2015/11/27/618588-diplomatiya-osvobozhdeniya.

8.3. Concluding thoughts

Affect plays a crucial role in decision-making. Information must be affectively valenced to enable rational thought and decision-making. At the same time, an affective response cannot be generated without prior cognitive appraisal. In spite of this, most of the work on emotion in IR still situates the phenomenon within a rational choice framework and assumes decision-makers operate according to the logic provided by computational theories of mind. The same is true for most of contemporary realist theory, including neoclassical realism, and FPA guided by its propositions. Other aspects of lived experience, if they are considered, are secondary to the assumption of the rational actor.

The framework of affective realism, which has been developed in this thesis and applied to Russian foreign policy as a plausibility probe, is intended to highlight some of these shortcomings of prevailing frameworks and contribute to a more holistic explanation. The theory and methodology sections have introduced the argument that such an approach, which is centred on the impact of affective processes on the decision-making of elites, should work particularly well in the case of a semi-authoritarian system like contemporary Russia. Consequential foreign policy decisions are made under the centralised control of one person: Vladimir Putin's choices are rarely challenged, either because those around him dread the consequences of disagreement or because they have been selected (or self-selected) on the basis of congruence with the president's vision. The homogeneity of the in-group has favoured the emergence of a shared affective disposition towards Europe and the US that has become decidedly more combative over the course of Putin's reign. Linguistic and sociological research, which has argued that Russian culture

and language are highly 'emotionally expressive' also suggests that this case may be amenable to an affect-centric approach.

This raises the question how applicable affective realism may be to other case studies in FPA. As the recent example of US foreign policy under Donald Trump shows, provided that domestic politics constitutes a permissive environment, even the foreign policy of an established democracy can be driven by the 'impulses' of one individual. This example,[910] and more generally, the pivotal role of affect in any decision-making process irrespective of the system of government, suggest that affective realism might indeed 'travel' well to other cases, as long as some conditions are satisfied. First, official documentation of the foreign policy agenda of the primary subject and some first-hand testimony on decision-making are available. Second, there is an established literature in FPA on the case in question, i.e., a sufficient body of analytical pieces, informed by competing theoretical paradigms, in the context of which the affective perspective can be set. Third, relevant concerns can be identified, regardless of whether they are the explicit or implicit focal points of foreign policy. Fourth, individuals – state leaders, officials, or other elites – have the capacity to directly influence the contents and conduct of foreign policy. This would impede the application of affective realism to, for example, a functional organization like NATO or a supranational union like the EU. Finally, it would be desirable if linguistic, sociological, or socio-psychological research on the main actor were available to facilitate the detection of meaningful affective displays, i.e., those expressions that are indicative of underlying affectively valenced concerns.

[910] Trump is mentioned because he epitomises an 'impulsive' leader. However, he likely was an exception in US foreign policy practice and the applicability of the affective approach to other cases cannot be judged solely on the basis of this example.

It is important to remember, however, that affective realism cannot provide a comprehensive, self-contained explanation of any case. Even if we assumed that foreign policy was determined solely by emotions, it would not suffice to explain the outcome. Russia might have decided against the annexation of Crimea in the exact same 'affective scenario' and with the same weight attached to the relevant concerns, if just one structural condition had been different. For example, if Russian special forces could not have been mobilised as rapidly or if Washington had anticipated the move and sent a clear warning against Russian involvement. Action tendencies that are based on appraisal processes, as outlined in Chapter 3, can merely offer an indication of foreign policy choices in a probabilistic manner – whether the observed behaviour is plausible in terms of affective psychology – but do not provide conclusive evidence or provide the basis for reliable predictions.

A brief recapitulation of prevailing theoretical narratives on contemporary Russian foreign policy helps identify where affective realism has sought to make a contribution and enables a concluding assessment of how well this approach fares. Structural realist analyses have converged on the claim that Russia acted defensively in response to what it had to interpret as a mounting Western security threat. In terms of providing succinct, internally coherent, and unconventional (in public policy, attention and reach may be just as important as the quality of the argument) ex-post explanations, structural realism is hard to beat. However, because it is difficult to apply to multivariate scenarios, it tends to lack predictive power. By the very nature of its parsimony and rigid parameters, it does not lend itself to form hypotheses on how any one state (or state leader) is going to (re-)act. This promotes hindsight bias on part of the analyst. Foreign policies that were evidently highly fraught with risk but turned out to be 'successful' are rationalised after the fact. One example would

be Russia's 'airport dash' in June 1999 and subsequent interpretations that this move strengthened its hand in negotiating peacekeeping specifics.

Russian foreign policy analysis informed by 'liberal' theory has tended to be opposed to structural realist conclusions. While the term does not denote the same, uniform explanation across cases, liberal accounts often assume a similar, Western-centric vantage point. Starting from this normatively charged position, Russian foreign policy often serves as an inverse template of US foreign policy. As a consequence, liberal explanations of Russian behaviour tend to dovetail with the official US foreign policy line. Evidently, when policy prescriptions precede analysis, explanations of state conduct are somewhat constrained. Furthermore, a liberal position might blind the analyst to seeing how the impact of the policies of one's 'own' side are being perceived. For example, *why* it is that NATO expansion, recognising Kosovo's independence, or the construction of a missile defence system in Europe are met with such fierce rejection by Russian officials is an important question in and of itself that is often left unaddressed.

Such questions are not easy to answer. Russia's 'fear' of NATO, for example, is not supported by an assessment of 'hard,' i.e. primarily military-related, security factors. In the early 1990s, Russia viewed NATO as a relic of the Cold War, now devoid of a purpose. Its plans for enlargement were misguided, driven by organisational inertia, but posed no real threat. Even after the most recent phase of enlargement, experts suggested that NATO forces on the Russian border posed no credible deterrence. Why, then, do Russian leaders keep referring to the alliance as the number one threat to national security? The answer has to be socio-psychological: NATO's purpose has come to be viewed as mounting a perennial attack on Russian culture and values. The threat posed by the alliance is thus not

being perceived as a military but primarily a psychological or ontological one (aside from considerations of the usefulness of an external threat for domestic political purposes). That, of course, still leaves another 'rational' reason on the table – namely the identification and accentuation of a substantial external threat for instrumental purposes, i.e., to enhance and maintain domestic cohesion.[911]

Across theoretical accounts, reference is frequently made to primordial fears of encirclement and invasion, citing different reasons: structural realists refer to the balance of power, liberal analysis studies how security threats shape domestic actors' preferences and the process of making foreign policy. Both, it can be argued, disguise ontological foundations based on assumptions about human nature. Consequently, they do not outline the mechanisms by which these phenomena operate. Fear of encirclement rests on both social and psychological factors. Through a process of socialisation, the historical precedent of multiple land invasions has implanted a sense of insecurity in Russians. In part, this has been, and continues to be reinforced by the size of the country and the associated challenge of protecting its vast borders. In education, culture, folklore, religion, and state customs, narratives of Russia as a 'besieged fortress' have created an image of the state as an 'embodied condition.'[912] In other words, many Russians deeply care about territorial security in ways that seem unfamiliar to Western observers. There is no reason to assume the Russian leader would not care about the same – and many more reasons why he should care, including to save his own skin.

Someone who is fearful has a higher tendency to identify future threats (including ones that do not exist) and they are worse at calculating the costs and risks

[911] Once again, my thanks to my supervisor, Neil MacFarlane, for pointing this out.

[912] Gerard Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 46-47.

of their choices. As a result, they might behave in a way that – even if intended as defensive – is seen as threatening by others. Once fear grips the political apparatus, it can become self-sustaining through narratives, doctrines, practices, and institutions emphasizing enmity or aggression. These effects are not limited to the social space but have physiological manifestations – e.g. in elevated adrenaline or cortisol levels.

Niccolò Machiavelli, in his treatise on leadership written for Lorenzo de' Medici, suggested that a prince (or a state leader) should have two fears:

> (…) one internal, concerning his subjects; the other external, concerning foreign powers. From the latter, he can defend himself by his effective arms and his effective allies. (…) concerning his subjects, when external affairs do not change, he has to fear that they may be plotting in secret. The prince will protect himself against this danger by avoiding being either hated or despised and by keeping the people satisfied with him.[913]

In other words, the prince should fear foreign invasion and popular uprising. Since the late 1990s, Russian leaders have been quite vocal about both kinds of fear, including frequent references to Western-backed insurgencies in the 'near abroad' or even within the Russian Federation. The threats they reacted to, in their own experience, might have been of a different nature, though. Rather than a military invasion, the threat perceived by elites is a challenge to a system of government they have constructed – in their mind, undoubtedly, with hard work – which provides for their livelihood and physical well-being and that of their peers. Russian officials have suggested as much by expressing their aversion to democratisation and regime change. Warnings of Western incursion using a security vernacular are more frequent, but it is quite possible that Putin and those around him conjure up images of encirclement to express and self-rationalise other, more existential anxieties.

[913] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Peter E. Bondanella, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 63-64.

An argument could also be made that the burgeoning literature on status concerns and the consequences of status denial, at its core, relies on anger (and relatedly, perceptions of what constitutes unfair treatment). However, the connections between the concept of status and the emotion of anger are rarely made explicit. This thesis suggests that anger is both a consequence of status denial, as well as a signifier of the beginning of an attempt to restore status and dignity. Engaging with the psychology of status seeking, at the individual level, is a worthwhile exercise because it enables us to hypothesise under what circumstances particular concerns matter most to decision-makers. Anger and its various manifestations, such as disdain, resentment, outrage, or contempt, are useful (to the social scientist) in that regard because they want to be expressed. They are, in a sense, important communicative tools. Along with the phenomenon of self-deception, which often tends to accompany anger, their expression has an almost cathartic function.

Fyodor Dostoevsky describes this connection in his novel The Brothers Karamazov, which also makes the point that even when an initial offence may be negligible, once anger and contempt have taken root, they can transform into a more permanent attitude:

> He who lies to himself and listens to his own lies reaches a state in which he no longer recognizes truth either in himself or in others, and so he ceases to respect both himself and others. (…) He who is false to himself is also the most likely to feel offended. After all, it is sometimes very gratifying to feel offended, is it not? A man may be perfectly well aware that no one has offended him, that he has imagined it all and put about a lie just for the sake of it, blown it out of all proportion so as to attract attention, deliberately picked on a word and made a mountain out of a molehill – he may very well realize all this, and yet be the very first to

> take offence, to the point of deriving enjoyment and pleasure from it, and so fall into a state of real animosity.[914]

A striking feature of the literature on status in international politics is the range of competing hypotheses about the implications of unfulfilled status aspirations. Even when analysis is staked on the same social-psychological theory, the resulting assessment of Russian motives – and resultant policy prescriptions – may be diametrically opposed. This is best illustrated by the lively debate on the proper use of Social Identity Theory:[915] Stephen Ward[916] argues that chief proponents of the theory in IR[917] have misused it to make an unfounded case for accommodating Russia's status concerns.

Status matters for several reasons.[918] Status gives states higher weight in international negotiations, lending more legitimacy to their positions and interests. High status provides a robust basis for 'soft power.'[919] Status as 'reputation for power' may also have very real effects on how the material power base of a state is

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[914] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Karamazov Brothers*, trans. Ignat Avsey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 56.

[915] Henri Tajfel and John Turner, 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict,' in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1979).

[916] Steven Michael Ward, 'Lost in Translation: Social Identity Theory and the Study of Status in World Politics,' *International Studies Quarterly* 61, no. 4 (2017).

[917] Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, 'Shortcut to Greatness: The New Thinking and the Revolution in Soviet Foreign Policy,' *International Organization* 57, no. 1 (2003); 'Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy,' *International Security* 34, no. 4 (2010); 'Russia Says No: Power, Status, and Emotions in Foreign Policy,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014).

[918] T. V. Paul, Deborah W. Larson, and William C. Wohlforth, *Status in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Tudor A. Onea, 'Between Dominance and Decline: Status Anxiety and Great Power Rivalry,' *Review Of International Studies* 40, no. 1 (2014); Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State* (London: Routledge, 2008); Renato Corbetta, Thomas J. Volgy, and J. Patrick Rhamey, 'Major Power Status (In)Consistency and Political Relevance in International Relations Studies,' *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy* 19, no. 3 (2013); Reinhard Wolf, 'Respect and Disrespect in International Politics: The Significance of Status Recognition,' *International Theory* 3, no. 1 (2011); Wood Steve, 'Prestige in World Politics: History, Theory, Expression,' *International Politics* 50, no. 3 (2013).

[919] Tuomas Forsberg, Regina Heller, and Reinhard Wolf, 'Status and Emotions in Russian Foreign Policy,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014): 325.

assessed by others.[920] In the context of affective realism, status matters for the following reasons: to the side that status is being extended to, it bolsters a positive self-image. This is important because, as Jervis argues, we tend to alter our perceptions so that they are in line with a positive self-image.[921] And it stands to reason that a 'Russia that is sure of itself and its standing in the world is likely to make a more stable, predictable partner for the West.'[922]

One need not necessarily resort to affect to arrive at these conclusions. Without making social-psychological underpinnings explicit, a realist assessment of Russian foreign policy is more sensitive to its own understanding of national interest. As MacFarlane observed on account of Russia's initial post-Cold War turn towards 'realism' and 'state-centrism:'

> It is difficult to imagine an effective security structure blanketing Europe without the full and willing participation of the Russian Federation. (…) Russian perspectives on the international relations of the region display strikingly traditional qualities that differ considerably from the liberal vision. To the extent that the Russian understanding of interest, and of the principles and norms of international relations, departs markedly from that typical elsewhere in the region, the prospects for cooperative security structures are commensurately reduced.[923]

Analysing Russian foreign policy discourse, particularly more recent sources, I have found little reason to assume a divergence between what the Russian president expresses publicly and what he, or other members of the elite, experience privately – at least when it comes to the fundamental orientation of Russian foreign policy. With a view to domestic politics, espousing conservative values and using nationalist

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[920] Yuen Foong Khong, 'Power as Prestige in World Politics,' *International Affairs* 95, no. 1 (2019).

[921] Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 343.

[922] Jeffrey Mankoff, 'Russia and the West: Taking the Longer View,' *The Washington Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2007): 133. Although there is no reason to assume a more 'secure' Russia could not be 'anti-Western' at the same time and find allies to support this position. For pointing this out to me, I would like to thank my supervisor, Louise Fawcett.

[923] S. Neil MacFarlane, 'Russian Conceptions of Europe,' *Post-Soviet Affairs* 10, no. 3 (1994): 235.

rhetoric may be popular with those parts of the population and segments of the elite he is seeking support from.[924] However, the self-affirmatory function of affect and a whole suite of research pointing to the convergence of 'genuine' and 'instrumental' emotion would suggest that Putin believes what he says. Some policy concepts and expert analysis coming out of Western centres of power and intellectual hubs might benefit from working off of that assumption instead of self-sabotaging by producing ever more creative ways of unearthing Russia's 'true' or 'hidden' objectives. Even if we found conclusive proof of a gap between what Vladimir Putin claims to care about and what actually motivates his decisions – would that fundamentally change how we ought to interpret his claim to regional hegemony in the post-Soviet space, his pluralist understanding of sovereignty, or his vision of a multipolar world order – and suggest that Europe and the US can ignore Russian interests with impunity?

The choice is not between appeasement and deterrence, much like status accommodation does not equal reinforcing the 'Kremlin's delusion that Moscow is a global power.'[925] 'The question,' as posed by Larson and Shevchenko, 'is whether Russia can be induced to seek prestige by exercising more responsibility for global stability. Continued indifference to Russia's great power aspirations will encourage Russian elites' sense of injury and humiliation, possibly leading to further conflict.'[926] As an alternative approach, Larson and Shevchenko propose a 'continuing process' that involves 'formal summits, working groups, or strategic dialogues' with the goal that the US, Russia, and China 'acknowledge each other's

[924] *Why* certain rhetoric or sentiments appeal to parts of the Russian population or particular segments of its political elite is a different question altogether. Nothing I have written here should suggest that this question is not also of crucial importance to understanding contemporary Russian politics.

[925] Donald N. Jensen, 'U.S.-Russia Relations in 2013: A Year of Living Ambiguously,' *Institute of Modern Russia*, 15 January 2014, https://imrussia.org/en/russia-and-the-world/642-us-russia-relations-in-2013-a-year-of-living-ambiguously.

[926] Larson and Shevchenko, 'Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy,' 93.

achievements or pre-eminence in different issue areas, specialize in particular issues, or share leadership roles.'[927] Similarly, Pouliot suggests attributing more cultural-symbolic capital to Russia and refocusing the relationship between NATO members on domains where 'dispositions do not clash as easily as in the field of international security.'[928] And Cohen argues that 'the guiding diplomatic tenet must be recognition of Russia's parity with the United States as a sovereign nation and legitimate great power.'[929]

Moscow is not above course corrections. In the early 2000s, Putin turned away from excessive use of 'great power' rhetoric so as not to unsettle Western partners. He pursued pragmatic cooperation despite suffering diplomatic setbacks when the US invaded Iraq, rejected Moscow's plans for joint missile defence, pushed for NATO enlargement, and voiced persistent criticisms of the human rights situation and democratic deficits in Russia. And just one year after the August war, the Putin and Obama administrations attempted a 'reset' of relations. As with all issues, the hierarchy of affective concerns dictates the range of policy choices Russian leaders will consider. Russia may be quite willing to 'understand its relative status when military or economic issues are at stake,' as Forsberg argues. However, when its interpretations of 'international norms and questions of justice' are disputed, Russia is likely to act defensively.[930]

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[927] 'Lost in Misconceptions About Social Identity Theory,' *International Studies Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (2019): 1191. See also: 'Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy,' 95.

[928] Vincent Pouliot, *International Security in Practice: The Politics of Nato-Russia Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 238-39.

[929] Stephen Cohen, 'America's Failed (Bi-Partisan) Russia Policy,' *Huffington Post*, 28 February 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/stephen-f-cohen/us-russia-policy_b_1307727.html.

[930] Tuomas Forsberg, 'Status Conflicts between Russia and the West: Perceptions and Emotional Biases,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014): 323.

What might be called for is one of the principles of classic diplomacy – 'moderation and restraint, keeping a sense of proportion.'[931] Recapitulating a tiresome argument with his Russian counterparts at the Berlin Conference of January 1953, British foreign secretary Anthony Eden observed that 'it is usually prudent to be conciliatory on matters of secondary importance.'[932] 'By accepting the Soviet agenda we have saved much haggling and gained world good will. We shall need it.'[933] The essence of this anecdote is distilled by Martin Wight as follows: 'there is courtesy: seeking not diplomatic "victories," "triumphs," or "successes," all of which imply a defeated antagonist, but "agreements," which suggests common achievement; or perhaps seeking "victories" which come without being noticed.'[934] Or, as Eden advised, 'the best diplomacy is that which gets its own way, but leaves the other side reasonably satisfied. It is often good diplomacy to resist a score.'[935]

These observations might subject me to charges of doing the work of the 'Russland-Versteher' [or Russia apologists]. I should, therefore, state very clearly that nothing I have written in the preceding chapters is meant to endorse or justify Russian actions in Georgia or Ukraine, which were in violation of multiple international norms and laws. Although the fact that I have used terms like 'invasion' or 'annexation,' which are thoroughly absent not just from the official Russian position but also from most of the Russian scholarly treatment of these events should suffice to invalidate that these charges. If we want to know the objectives of Russian foreign policy, we first need to understand how its makers view their historical

[931] Martin Wight, Gabriele Wight, and Brian Porter, *International Theory: The Three Traditions* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991), 187.

[932] Anthony Eden, *Full Circle: The Memoirs of Anthony Eden* (London: Cassell, 1960), 61-62.

It should be noted, for completeness' sake, that the second part of that sentence reads 'though in dealing with the Russians these can add up to quite a bill.'

[933] Ibid., 65.

[934] Wight, Wight, and Porter, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, 187.

[935] Eden, *Full Circle: The Memoirs of Anthony Eden*, 356-57.

relationship with the 'near abroad,' how that translates into discursive practices and, ultimately, their affective makeup. As Toal very accurately puts it, the reflex to label or police any articulations of Russian geopolitical discourse as support of '"propaganda" or "information warfare," (…) serves US and Western geopolitical culture poorly and inhibits our ability to understand the contemporary geopolitical crisis in relations between Russia and the West. It also displays a lack of confidence in the outcome of any presentation of divergent narratives.'[936]

Affective phenomena matter to political science and IR because of the responses they tend to generate. Outrage conveys that a red line has been crossed and lends credibility to a threat. Contempt is more problematic than resentment because it prohibits diplomacy. Fear destroys trust while also encouraging risk-taking. All emotions, much like ideology and worldview, act as a filter through which an other's actions are perceived. The war in Georgia and annexation of Crimea did not result directly from a 'feeling.' However, the role of affect can also not be removed from the course of events – not in reality and, as I have attempted to illustrate, it should not be ignored in analysis, either. Understanding how these phenomena work in the political context might just help our efforts to avert future escalations.

[936] Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*, 11-12.

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