

Identity, Foreign Policy and the ‘Other’: The Implications of Polish Foreign Policy vis-à-vis Russia

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Executive Summary

This paper will demonstrate the role that national identity plays in the shaping of foreign policy practices of states. Prevailing definitions of identity are what become reflected as the national interest, which in turn becomes translated into certain foreign policy practices. It is the prevailing formulations of national identity and interest that become projected by and reproduced in foreign policy discourses and practices. Through the output of discourse, certain foreign policy options become legitimized as the ‘natural’ courses of action, whereas others become unacceptable. This paper will examine the evolution of Polish foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia following its 1989 transition from communism. By examining two key defining moments for Poland—NATO accession and the response to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine—a clear re-establishment and subsequent shift in the self-perception of the Polish state is uncovered. Moreover, the discourse demonstrates that the consistent determinant and subject of Polish foreign policy is Russia as the ‘other’. Russia has remained the key point of reference for Polish identity, the development of Polish national interests, and as a result, the foreign policy options that come to be the ‘natural’ choices for Poland. This paper concludes by explaining why the examination of the evolution of Polish foreign policy matters. It will be shown that there are broader implications for the Western world, now that Poland has re-established itself and is becoming increasingly more influential in regional and global affairs.

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List of Abbreviations

AA	Association Agreement
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe(an)
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EU	European Union
FM	Minister of Foreign Affairs
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PM	Prime Minister
US	United States of America
USD	United States Dollars
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Introduction

The collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) from 1989-1992 was the catalyst for a drastic shift in the foreign policy regimes of the states in the region. Warsaw Pact countries, including the newly independent former Soviet republics, regained much of their sovereignty and thus began to develop their own national agendas. In order for these newly sovereign and independent states to become relevant and to project their developing national agendas, these states began building their own foreign policy doctrines towards reflecting their emerging foreign policy priorities (e.g. security; maintaining sovereignty and independence). In the years following 1989, many of these states became democracies, overhauled their economies from command to market-driven systems, and have also sought and achieved greater integration with the West. This paper will consider the following question: *how can we explain the evolution of Polish foreign policy (vis-à-vis Russia) following the collapse of communism and the establishment of the Third Polish Republic in 1989?*

The shift in stance of the formerly communist states of CEE has broader implications for the Transatlantic Community and for the European Union (EU). Notably, amid the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, some of these states are playing key roles in how the West engages with the Russian Federation (hereafter, Russia). The Republic of Poland (hereafter, Poland) fits this description; it is a prime example of a state that has shifted itself into the West and is now playing a more prominent role in the broader Western engagement with Russia, through the frameworks of both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU.

This major research paper will explore how certain foreign policy decisions were and are being made possible in Poland, vis-à-vis Russia. It will be established that Polish foreign policy

decisions are largely driven by perceptions of Russia as the ‘other’, even where the decisions do not pertain solely to Polish-Russian relations or issues. Since 1989, there has been a major shift in Polish foreign policy. This will be demonstrated by the second and third chapters of this paper, which will examine two major foreign policy pursuits of Poland since it held its first partially democratic elections in 1989. The Polish effort to gain accession into NATO will be the focus of *Chapter II*. Subsequently, *Chapter III* will examine the Polish response to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.

The relatively short temporal divide between the two major foreign policy pursuits will demonstrate the drastic evolution in Poland’s role and the foreign policy that it exerts. Both the achievement of NATO accession and its response to the crisis in Ukraine are two key defining moments for the country. This is an important subject for consideration, as the change and factors at play in the dynamics of the Polish-Russian relationship now have an impact on the broader relations between NATO (including Canada and particularly, the United States of America) and Russia, as well as between the EU and Russia.¹ These two particular cases in the foreign policy pursuits of Poland were chosen precisely because they represent critical junctures, not only for Poland, but also for the West.

There are many alternative important moments after the Cold War in Polish foreign policy, such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq, accession to the EU in 2004, the 2008 Russo-Georgian War, and the 2010 presidential plane crash. However, these alternative cases do not represent major paradigm shifts such as those that are embodied by the two key cases examined in this paper. NATO accession was a complete readjustment in Poland’s identity, both at home and

¹ Bulent Aras and Fatih Ozbay, “Polish-Russian Relations: History, Geography and Geopolitics,” *East European Quarterly* 42 (2008): 27.

abroad; it was also a major shift in the prevailing security paradigm, the reverberations of which are still being felt. EU accession, which followed soon after, simply acted to further reinforce those same changes. The crisis in Ukraine represents a key moment for Poland to act towards strengthening the position that it has gained as part of the West, but it is also a key moment for the broader West in its engagement with Russia. Conversely, the other listed alternative cases represent less far-reaching, paradigm-shifting events that were at the binational or regional levels, rather than effecting the collective West.

Due to the past effects and future developments that the two key cases represent for the West, an understanding of Polish foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia cannot be neglected. It can shed light on potential future developments in the Western engagement with Russia, as well as developments still to come in the CEE region. This is of greater importance in the current context of the crisis in Ukraine and the heightened tensions between the West and Russia, which will be the basis of the discussion on broader implications in *Chapter IV*.

Fundamentals

This paper argues that an understanding of Polish foreign policy decisions cannot be developed without first exploring how Polish identity was defined after 1989, and how that identity formed the prevailing national interest. Adopting a constructivist approach is a useful way of examining Polish identity politics. Constructivism focuses on ideational factors and can help to explain how identity and interests are socially constructed. Alexander Wendt states “...that people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them. States act differently toward enemies than they do toward friends because

enemies are threatening and friends are not.”² This applies directly in the case of Polish foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia.

To better understand the concept of identity, it helps to explore what it is defined and constituted by. Rawi Abdelal et al. state that a collective identity is determined through ‘content and contestation’. ‘Content’ refers to what gives an identity its ‘meaning’—the constitutive norms, social purposes, relational comparisons and cognitive models that define and are found among groups. Constitutive norms are the guidelines that individuals follow in order to be members of a group, social purposes are the goals shared by individual group members, relational comparisons highlight what a group does not embody in contrast with ‘others’, and cognitive models are the worldviews of groups, based on their identities.³ ‘Contestation’ “...refers to the degree of agreement within a group over the content of the shared identity.”⁴

There is constant competition between members of groups; they continuously present alternative ‘meanings’ for their collective identity, some of which take hold and others that do not. Through the official discourse in states, the ‘content and contestation’ dimensions of identity can be explicitly observed.⁵ Through contestation, it can become clear which domestic groups or individuals do not identify with the dominant national identity, “[t]hey are then treated in a similar manner to the external others: They are alienated and used in the process to construct a coherent national identity.”⁶ It is by both defining the meaning of an identity and by alienating

² Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of it: the Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* 46 (1992): 396-397, accessed May 14, 2014, doi: 10.1017/S0020818300027764, 396-397.

³ Rawi Abdelal et al., “Identity as a Variable,” *Perspectives on Politics* 4 (2006): 696, accessed August 6, 2014, doi: 10.1017/S1537592706060440.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, 700-701.

⁶ Nizar Messari, “Identity and Foreign Policy: The Case of Islam in U.S. Foreign Policy,” in *Foreign Policy in a Constructed World*, ed. Vendulka Kubáľková (New York: M. E. Sharpe Inc., 2001), 230.

those that do not recognize or threaten that definition of the identity—both the domestic and external ‘others’—that a prevailing national identity is able to emerge.

The foreign policy of Poland is largely the product of the relationship with its defining ‘other’, which is Russia. Although not the only factor at play, historical experiences between the two states have had an impact on Polish national identity and as a result, the national interests of Poland. In the face of potentially undesirable consequences, certain foreign policy options are legitimized through official discourse as ‘natural’ ways to proceed. This paper will explore how certain foreign policy options became acceptable because of the Polish identity vis-à-vis Russia being manifested in the prevailing national interests. The relationship between Polish identity and Russia stretches far back to the times of the various Polish and Russian progenitor ‘states’, but the focus here will be on post-Cold War Poland.

For states, it is the collective identity that informs national interests. Following the Cold War, Polish identity—encapsulated as having been a victim of oppression and foreign occupation, while also being a ‘natural’ member of the West—played an important role in the shaping of Polish national interests. This will be demonstrated in *Chapter II*, where joining NATO is evidenced as a defined interest of Poland, aimed towards the re-establishment of its identity as a ‘natural’ member of the West. Subsequently, the Polish response to the crisis in Ukraine is evidence of the Polish national interest towards reinforcing the position that it has gained in the Western community, since joining both NATO and the EU. This too is an interest that has been defined by Polish identity vis-à-vis Russia, which will be demonstrated in *Chapter III*.

The discussion surrounding Polish identity has referred to rejoining the ‘West’ and thereafter to reinforcing the position of Poland in the ‘West’, but what is meant by the ‘West’ may be unclear. The ‘West’ once referred to the Western Christian civilization of modernity, or ‘Christendom’, which had its core initially in Europe, and then in Reform Protestant America. In the latter case, the ‘West’ was defined as representing the ideals of democracy, free markets, secularism and the rule of law, among other values.⁷ However, the ‘West’ now refers to what James Kurth terms as the ‘contemporary global civilization’, “...which represents the extension of the Western civilization to the furthest regions of the globe...”⁸, except that now multicultural society and universal human rights also represent modernity.⁹ Therefore, the ‘West’ now refers to the states of the world that represent modernity as defined above; from Turkey to Canada, from Finland to Australia, and from the US to Poland. By this definition, the Transatlantic Community—including NATO—and the EU are comprised by states categorized as ‘Western’, while also representing the largest collectives of ‘Western’ states.

Methodology

Examining what has legitimized Polish foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia since 1989 requires post-positivist analysis. Such an analysis should follow a qualitative methodological approach, where explanations can uncover how certain foreign policy options became possible in Poland. Discourse analysis fits these requirements. As Iver Neumann states:

Discourse analysis is eminently useful for such analysis, because it says something about why state Y was considered an enemy in state X, how war emerged as a political option, and how other options were shunted aside. Because a discourse maintains a degree of regularity in social relations, it

⁷ James Kurth, “The United States as a Civilizational Leader,” in *Civilizations in World Politics: Plural and Pluralist Perspectives*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (Cornwall: Routledge, 2010), 55-56, 59.

⁸ Ibid, 55.

⁹ Ibid, 61-63.

produces preconditions for action. It constrains how the stuff that the world consists of is ordered, and so how people categorize and think about the world. It constrains what is thought of at all, what is thought of as possible, and what is thought of as the ‘natural thing’ to do in a given situation.¹⁰

This applies in the context of Polish foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia, although ‘war’ has not been a recently legitimized foreign policy option. Rather, options perceived to enhance a lasting peace have prevailed. This has been embodied by policies aimed at ensuring the security and continuity of the state through integration with the West—initially via NATO membership—that became ‘natural’ courses of action. The discourse that legitimized this policy pathway prior to the Polish accession into NATO will be analyzed in *Chapter II*.

Discourse analysis allows the analyst to uncover how the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ are defined, produced and reproduced in foreign policy. As Jennifer Milliken states, “...discourses make intelligible some ways of being in, and acting towards, the world, and of operationalizing a particular ‘regime of truth’ while excluding other possible modes of identity and action.”¹¹ What Milliken means is that discourse puts limits on the options that can be considered by decision makers in the development of foreign policy. It is worth noting that decision makers themselves produce much of the discourse in states. A more specific method of discourse analysis, called *predicate analysis*, will be used to explore the legitimization of foreign policy choices in Poland vis-à-vis Russia.

Predicate analysis involves an exploration of the specific language used across a wide range of sources relevant to the study at hand. By examining ‘practices of predication’ (verbs,

¹⁰ Iver Neumann, “Discourse Analysis,” in *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, ed. Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash (Chippenham and Eastbourne: CPI Antony Rowe, 2008), 62.

¹¹ Jennifer Milliken, “The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods,” *European Journal of International Relations* 5 (1999): 229, accessed May 21, 2014, doi: 10.1177/1354066199005002003.

adverbs, adjectives attached to nouns), analysts can develop a big picture of how certain objects—Russia in the case of this paper—are portrayed, exposing the degree of their ‘social signification’ in the cognition of other objects—in this case Poland and its post-Cold War foreign policy priorities.¹² Predicate analysis is particularly well suited to the study of identity because “[a] set of predicate constructs defines a *space of objects* differentiated from, while being related to, one another.”¹³ In this case, there will be a focus on the predicate constructs of Poland and Russia contained within Polish discourse; it will be shown how discourse was used to differentiate one from the other, which helped to legitimize certain foreign policy pursuits.

For such an analysis, many different sources are needed to demonstrate clear social signification.¹⁴ This paper will mainly use primary sources, such as speeches, statements and policy documents. Primary sources are important because they provide official discourse that has emanated from influencers and key decision-makers. Furthermore, the discourse that will be analyzed comes from various different contexts. One important primary source that will be examined is the 1989 speech given by Lech Wałęsa at a joint meeting of the US Congress, prior to his being elected as the President of Poland. His speech was pivotal in that it was one of the first instances where Poland’s new ‘self’ was displayed in the midst of its post-communist paradigm shift. This speech is also rendered more important because of where it was presented, at a venue where the whole world could watch. While it preceded and did not pertain directly to either of the key foreign policy decisions examined in this paper, it exhibited underlying factors driving the future discourse that would be directly related to the key foreign policy pursuits of

¹² Milliken, “The Study of Discourse,” 232.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, 233.

Poland. It was effectively a starting point for the re-establishment of Polish identity, through the expression of new national interests.

Several other primary sources will also be examined. Statements made in the *Sejm* (Poland's lower house of Parliament) by Polish officials are a valuable source for discourse analysis. For example, as the conduits for the expression of foreign policy, Ministers of Foreign Affairs produce significant discourse. The annual parliamentary address on foreign policy by the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs (FM), Radosław Sikorski, is a prime example—especially since he has been a prominent figure throughout the crisis in Ukraine. FM Sikorski's 2014 parliamentary address is focused largely on the crisis in Ukraine and Russia.¹⁵ In his framing of the issues, FM Sikorski's statement is part of a broader discourse that has been legitimizing foreign policy responses, as well as further actions that may be taken collectively by the West. Such actions could include the imposition of additional sanctions against Russia, or the expanded physical presence of NATO in CEE.

Secondary sources such as scholarly journal articles, news articles and books will also be used for background information and supplementary evidence. Using these kinds of sources can help to corroborate any conclusions arising from the analysis of the official discourse. Secondary sources allow researchers to better substantiate arguments and to provide readers with volumes of useful information that can help develop better understandings of the discussion at hand.

By gathering and analyzing the predicate constructs found in the discourse related to the two major foreign policy pursuits in *Chapters II* and *III*—the pursuit of NATO accession and the response to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, respectively—a clearer picture of how they came to be

¹⁵ Radosław Sikorski, "Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Foreign Policy in 2014" (speech presented at the Foreign Minister's annual address to the Sejm, Warsaw, Poland, May 8, 2014), http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign_policy/goals_of_foreign_policy/annual_address_2011/.

acceptable should emerge. It is expected that Russia will be at the centre of legitimizing the foreign policy priorities that have emerged, and also that utterances of Russia in Polish discourse should appear fairly consistent, as generally negative representations. Triangulation is a process that can establish the validity of claims in qualitative research through the comparison of results from various different sources, in this case, the predicate constructs that are found within the relevant discourse that is being analyzed. The triangulation of predicate constructs found in Polish official discourse can help formulate the prevailing identity and interests of Poland.

That the basis of the foreign policy choices and strategies of states are guided by the national interest follows the same logic of how the national interest is guided by definitions of the prevailing identity within states at certain points in time. The composition of the national interests of states can vary across time and space, including but not limited to states' preferences of security, development, and how they interact with different elements of the outside world. Further explanation is warranted in order to show how socially constructed perceptions and identities—both of the 'self' and 'others'—come to exist and legitimize certain paths of interaction. Norms of interaction are constructed by society through historical experiences and collectively held representations of the 'self' and 'others'. These norms generate the national interest, which in turn allows for certain kinds of acceptable foreign policy options to emerge from the broader discourse within states. A review of constructivist literature can help to better understand these concepts, i.e. the relationship between identity and foreign policy.

Chapter I

Conceptual Framework

The 'Self' and the 'Other'

States do not simply possess an identity from time immemorial, nor do they act on the basis of always having had the same identity. Identities are the products of relations and interactions with 'others'.¹⁶ Therefore, the 'self' cannot exist without the 'other', and vice versa. Jennifer Mitzen discusses the basic need of states to have 'ontological security', which she defines as an internalized security in the perception of the 'self', "...which enables and motivates action and choice."¹⁷ Mitzen argues that all states need ontological security because to be insecure would mean that the identity of the state is threatened; all individual members of a state need to feel secure in their own identities for stability, which then collectively comprises the national identity of their state. Moreover, the state's national identity is best secured through differentiation with the identities of other states¹⁸ and by "...routinizing their relationships to other groups."¹⁹ This argument lends importance in the historical relationships between states, as the nature of those relationships influences how groups perceive one another and interact.

For states to consolidate the identity of their constituents (the population), they must differentiate themselves in ways that highlight their uniqueness. Throughout history, this has been achieved through the discourse that is produced in states. David Campbell notes that "...identity in the realm of global politics can be understood as the outcome of exclusionary practices in which resistance elements to a secure identity on the inside are linked through a

¹⁶ David Campbell, "Global Inscription: How Foreign Policy Constitutes the United States," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 15 (1990): 265-266, accessed May 17, 2014, doi: 10.1177/030437549001500302.

¹⁷ Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations* 12 (2006): 344, accessed May 17, 2014, doi: 10.1177/1354066106067346.

¹⁸ Ibid, 352.

¹⁹ Ibid.

discourse of *danger* with threats identified and located on the outside.”²⁰ He contends that boundaries are produced because of this differentiation, thereafter being manifested through foreign policy. Furthermore, Campbell says “[f]oreign policy is thus to be retheorized [*sic*] as a boundary-producing practice central to the production and reproduction of the identity in whose name it operates.”²¹ Again, the concept of differentiation between groups—the ‘self’ and the ‘other’—is used to bolster self-perception; this is how identity is formed. Identity and difference are mutually dependent and constitute one another; “...identity is constituted in relation to difference”²² and “[d]ifference is constituted in relation to identity.”²³ Therefore, the ‘self’ is constituted by having the ‘other’, and vice versa.

Essentially, states reinforce who they are by positioning themselves in relation to ‘others’, through the presentation of contrast in their experiences, norms, representations, values and ideals. Sharing theoretical similarities with David Campbell, the discussion on the ‘uses of the other’ conducted by Iver Neumann can be helpful. Neumann states that “[w]e become ego, it is said, via the internalisation of significant others’ objectification of ourselves. Our unity is located in the *regard de l’autre*.”²⁴ For Poland, Russia is the ‘other’, but not exclusively. Neumann shows that Russia has also been the ‘other’ for much of European civilization over the centuries. European representations of Russia—in its various forms throughout history—have portrayed it as the ‘barbaric east’ or as a potentially dangerous force, often of an unpredictable or

²⁰ Campbell, “Global Inscription,” 266.

²¹ Ibid.

²² David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 9.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Iver Neumann, *Uses of the Other: The “East” in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 5.

inferior nature.²⁵ After 1989, the CEE states readily used these representations to differentiate themselves and to demonstrate their being more European, in pursuit of Western integration.²⁶

Differentiation of the ‘self’ from a dangerous ‘other’ can also help states to project alignments of their values with potential partner states, to discover like-mindedness. This is what occurred with Poland and other CEE states post-1989. They were able to use “...representations of Russia in order to forge a self that owed much of its political success to being compatible with the Europewide [*sic*] representations of Russia.”²⁷ By aligning their representations of Russia with those held in the rest of Europe, the CEE states displayed their readiness to be a part of the greater European and Transatlantic Communities. What David Campbell terms as ‘conceptions of divergent moral spaces’ emerged²⁸, with foreign policy as the tool for the CEE states to maintain their moral position vis-à-vis Russia, in the eyes of the West. As the predicate analysis will show in *Chapters II and III*, for Poland, “[t]he negative images of Russia are not only widely shared, but after the fall of communism, they also became institutionalized in the formal discourse...”²⁹

Boundaries are produced through the exclusionary practices of states employed in their efforts to differentiate themselves. It is maintaining these boundaries, in order to support and reinforce identity, which becomes reflected in societal discourse and as a result, foreign policy. Along with the boundaries that are constructed between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’, “...standards of legitimacy [become] incorporated, interpretations of history [become] privileged, and

²⁵ Neumann, *Uses of the Other*, 111.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 158-160.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 144.

²⁸ Campbell, *Writing Security*, 73.

²⁹ Tomasz Zarycki, “Uses of Russia: The Role of Russia in the Modern Polish National Identity,” *East European Politics and Societies* 18 (2004): 598, accessed May 19, 2014, doi: 10.1177/0888325404269758.

alternatives [become] marginalized”³⁰ across the discourse that renders certain foreign policy strategies as acceptable. When looking at historical representation, particularly the role it has played in the evolution of Polish foreign policy in relation to Russia, “...it [is] important to understand that representations are historically and contextually contingent.”³¹ The specific experiences between states—both historical and contemporary—have differing effects on how their overall regimes of foreign policy evolve, and especially with regard to one another.

Immediately following the collapse of communism in 1989, Poland was free to dictate its own foreign policy priorities. Much like the other CEE states, Poland had lacked national sovereignty for a long period of time and therefore did not have a clear ideational path for how it should proceed. However, for a state like Poland, staying in limbo was not an option and a foreign policy pathway needed to be chosen. Stefano Guzzini describes this situation as a ‘foreign policy identity crisis’, which is exhibited through “...possible anxiety over a newly questioned or newly acquired self-understanding or role in world affairs...”³² He claims that as a result, the mobilization of geopolitical thought by the state is logical. Going through events such as Poland did in 1989 leads states to draw upon “...physical geography (mobilised often through strategic thinking) and human/cultural geography typical for discourses essentialising [*sic*] a nation.”³³ Guzzini even goes as far as arguing that such a resorting to geopolitics created the potential for a ‘resecuritization’ after the initial ‘deseuritization’ that came with the end of the Cold War.³⁴ ‘Deseuritization’ refers to the end of the Cold War NATO vs. Warsaw Pact paradigm, and ‘resecuritization’ refers to the possible revival of “...realism’s militarist and

³⁰ Campbell, *Writing Security*, 68.

³¹ Kevin C. Dunn, “Historical Representations,” in *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, ed. Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash (Chippenham and Eastbourne: CPI Antony Rowe, 2008), 80.

³² Stefano Guzzini, ed., *The Return of Geopolitics in Europe? Social Mechanisms and Foreign Policy Identity Crises* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 49.

³³ *Ibid*, 4.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 5.

nationalist gaze”³⁵ in the post-communist states. The latter concept will be revisited in the final chapter on implications, as it may come to be reflected in the responses to the crisis in Ukraine, i.e. an expanded NATO presence on the eastern frontier, along with continued Russian militarization.

The latter point relates directly to the need of states to establish ontological security even though doing so can ‘perpetuate physical insecurity’³⁶; “...states can become attached to physically dangerous relationships and be unable, or unwilling to learn their way out.”³⁷, as discussed by Jennifer Mitzen. This relates directly to the Polish-Russian dynamic and the Polish pursuit of NATO membership following the end of the Cold War. This dynamic is also now being reflected in the responses to the crisis in Ukraine. Strong condemnation of Russian actions, the advocacy of sanctions against Russia, and requests for the reaffirmation of security guarantees and a permanent NATO presence in Poland are examples—all despite the potential dangers to the Polish economy and security that may arise. The same applies for Russia in its continued attempts to influence the post-Soviet space, including its role in the crisis in Ukraine. History can help to partially explain the seeming perpetuity in the nature of Polish foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia.

Historical Background

The relationship between Poland and Russia has long been marred by tension and distrust. It is important to have a basic understanding of this historical relationship; it will be demonstrated to be both a precursor to, and important element in the legitimization of certain Polish foreign policy pursuits post-1989. The role of allies in Polish history is also important to

³⁵ Guzzini, *The Return of Geopolitics*, 48.

³⁶ Mitzen, “Ontological Security,” 354.

³⁷ Ibid.

understand. The difficult nature of the bilateral relationship goes back hundreds of years in the shared Polish-Russian experience.

Polish-Russian competition dates back to the 14th Century, when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was first created. The creation of the Commonwealth can itself be said to have occurred partly due to the rise of a ‘common Russian threat’ in the east.³⁸ From that time until the Partitions of Poland in the second half of the 18th Century, Poland and Russia fought many bloody wars. Following the Third Partition of Poland by the Kingdom of Prussia, Habsburg Austria and the Russian Empire in 1795—erasing it from the world map—Poland struggled through multiple insurrections against foreign domination in pursuit of freedom and statehood. The rebellions, which were predominantly fought against Russia, were all suppressed.³⁹

After 123 years of statelessness, Poland re-emerged following the First World War. However, its newfound statehood was short-lived as Poland was once more brought under Russian domination. At the onset of the Second World War, Poland was invaded and again partitioned, this time by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (hereafter, Soviet Union or USSR) and Nazi Germany as agreed upon in the *Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact*. Poland’s Western allies were slow to react, even though assurances of mutual defence had been given. After the war, it was agreed upon by those same allies that Poland would remain under the Soviet sphere of influence in order to appease the USSR. With its new Soviet-installed communist regime, Poland became subservient to Moscow. Thereafter until 1989, Poland was a communist People’s Republic and a member of the Russian-dominated Warsaw Pact alliance.⁴⁰

³⁸ Aras and Ozbay, “Polish-Russian Relations,” 28.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 28-29.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 29-31, 33.

In 1989, following years of growing anti-communist sentiment and increased pressure from the burgeoning *Solidarność* (Solidarity) movement, partially democratic elections were held and Poland established its first post-communist government.⁴¹ Poland has since acted to diminish Russian influence in the country and has re-established itself as a sovereign European state that is playing an increasingly more significant role in global affairs. This is reflected through Polish activities as a fully fledged member of NATO and the EU in the current context. This simplified history of the Polish-Russian experience is given to establish that it has been a relationship of great difficulty, which has been a prominent factor in modern Poland and the evolution of its foreign policy, vis-à-vis Russia. As previously stated, it is evidenced that Polish foreign policy is largely driven by its collective experiences, interactions and memories relating to Russia, which have been incorporated into Polish identity.

⁴¹ Aras and Ozbay, "Polish-Russian Relations," 31-32.

Chapter II

Returning to the West: NATO as the ‘Natural’ Choice

By many accounts, Poland is argued to be either a traditional part of the ‘East’, or as a part of the ‘West’. The argument for Poland as part of the East is one of ethnic origin and linguistics. Poles are a part of the Slavic ethno-linguistic group, sharing some common heritage and origins with Russians, Ukrainians and other Slavic peoples.⁴² From the Western perspective, the fact that Poland was a communist, Warsaw Pact country for so many years also contributed to an ‘Eastern’ labelling of Poland. However, many Poles see themselves as a ‘natural’ part of Western civilization⁴³, which the discourse analysis in this chapter will demonstrate.

As a majority Roman Catholic nation, Poland belongs to western Christianity and, as a result, uses a Latin-derived alphabet, as does most of the Western world. On the other hand, the Eastern states that predominantly practise Orthodox Christianity (e.g. Belarus, Russia and Ukraine) use variations of the Cyrillic alphabet.⁴⁴ Poland also has cultural and political traditions that many argue to be distinctly Western; for centuries Polish kings were elected under the so-called ‘Noble’s Democracy’, and the Polish state was inclusive of multiple ethnic and religious groups.⁴⁵ As Poland can easily be categorized as either Eastern or Western, it follows that both ideas are socially constructed, the latter of which has been drawn upon in Poland. States can draw upon certain characteristics to place themselves in one camp or to separate themselves from another, in order to achieve the greatest level of ontological security. Post-communist Poland has

⁴² “Slav,” Encyclopaedia Britannica Online, accessed July 3, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/548156/Slav>.

⁴³ Adam Michnik, “What Europe Means for Poland,” *Journal of Democracy* 14 (2003): 128, accessed April 28, 2014, doi: 10.1353/jod.2003.0083.

⁴⁴ “Slav.”

⁴⁵ “Norman Davies on Polish History,” October 25, 2008, accessed April 4, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OoSdneBLxw>.

drawn upon its ‘affinity with the West’ in order to ‘move back’ to being a part of the Western world, to re-establish its identity.

Re-Establishment of the ‘Self’

Excluding the brief Interwar Period, Poland went through an extended period of time where its decisions were made by others. Poland was not a sovereign state and had its orientation to the outside world largely dictated by foreign powers. In its various forms, Russia has been the most prominent bearer of this role. In 1989, Poland suddenly became independent and could make its own choices. ‘Sovereign state’ was a role that Poland was not used to. Immediately following the 1989 legislative elections—where the Solidarity Citizens Committee (which was in practice a political party) was the resounding winner—uses of the ‘West’ and the ‘East’ became prominent in Polish discourse. In terms of its post-1989 security, Poland had a number of options to choose from, which “...ranged from a reformed alliance with the Soviet Union, to neutrality, to the development of a pan-European security system led by the [Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe], to formation of regional security groupings, to membership in NATO.”⁴⁶ Discourse in Poland framed the situation such that the latter option became a legitimate and ‘natural’ course of action, which was made an official policy priority early on. Throughout the 1990s, there came to be increasingly less resistance to the push for accession into NATO and Poland was officially invited to join in 1997 and acceded to the organization in 1999.⁴⁷

Soon after the 1989 legislative elections, the discourse that was being expressed by prominent public figures in the state began to reflect the national interests of the new Poland.

⁴⁶ Joanna A. Gorska, *Dealing with a Juggernaut: Analyzing Poland’s Policy towards Russia, 1989-2009* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), 66.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 96-97.

One year prior to his 1990 election as the President of Poland, Lech Wałęsa—the leader of *Solidarność*, which had only recently won in the *Sejm*—was invited to address a joint meeting of the US Congress. An excerpt of his November 15, 1989 speech, in which he focused on freedom and peace in Poland, while drawing upon history, stated:

In 1945, Poland was—theoretically speaking—one of the victors. Theory, however, had little in common with practice. In practice, as her allies looked on in tacit consent, there was imposed on Poland an alien system of government—without precedent in Polish tradition, unaccepted by the nation—together with an alien economy, an alien law, an alien philosophy of social relations.⁴⁸

This excerpt contains a number of significant predicate constructs of Poland, its allies and the Soviet Union. The constructs of Poland contained in the passage project it as: a forsaken ‘victor’ of the Second World War, a victim of Soviet domination and betrayal by its Western allies, a unique nation that was never compatible with the systems imposed upon it, and also, as a resistor to those imposed ‘alien’ systems. By differentiating Poland from the Soviet Union, Lech Wałęsa constructed an image of Poland as a nation-state that has an entirely different identity. He also highlighted the underlying similarities that Poland shares with the West, by portraying its inherent incompatibility with the Soviet system. Conversely, the Soviet Union was constructed as the oppressor and imposer of all things un-Polish following the end of the war, and thus as the dangerous ‘other’ that had to be resisted and struggled against between 1945 and 1989. His statement also framed dominance by the USSR as being made possible thanks to the complicity of Poland’s allies.

⁴⁸ Lech Wałęsa, “Polish Solidarity Leader Address,” (speech presented at the US Congress, Washington, D.C., The United States of America, November 15, 1989), <http://www.c-span.org/video/?9914-1/polish-solidarity-leader-address>.

Through the predicate constructs contained within, the above portion of Lech Wałęsa's speech acted to remove any perceived Polish responsibility for its Cold War stance. Moreover, the inference of betrayal by its allies, which was alluded to numerous times in the speech (e.g. 'breaking of solemn pledges', 'Poles' abandonment'⁴⁹), is a construct that implied that Poland did not choose its fate. Instead, there was an implication that the West is guilty of betrayal in the past and that it therefore owed Poland a 'debt', whereby rapid accession into the West could be a step towards making amends. In the same speech, Lech Wałęsa further appealed to the West in his discussion of the changes seen in Poland:

Everything was achieved thanks to the unflinching faith of our nation in human dignity and in what is described as the values of Western culture and civilization. Our nation knows well the price of all this. Ladies and Gentlemen, for the past 50 years, the Polish nation has been engaged in a difficult and exhausting battle—first, to preserve its very biological existence, later, to save its national identity.⁵⁰

The predicate constructs of Poland in this passage have two dimensions. The first dimension is made up of constructs that define Polish identity as: holding Western values, being a part of Western civilization, and as being authentic and tangibly unique as a nation. By stating that Poland fought to maintain its 'very biological existence', Lech Wałęsa added an even quasi-racial aspect to the construct of differentiation from the Soviet dangerous 'other'. Admittedly though, he was likely referring to genocide that was perpetrated against Poles in the Second World War. The second dimension to the predicate constructs in Lech Wałęsa's passage showed another aspect of Polish identity, a feature that is in and of itself a commitment to maintaining the previously defined features of Polish identity. Restated simply, he defined part of Polish identity as an implicit need to protect and reaffirm its very national identity. This is most likely a

⁴⁹ Wałęsa, "Polish Solidarity Leader."

⁵⁰ Ibid.

result of Poland having been under foreign occupation and domination for extended periods of time; “[t]here is a trauma from partition and Russia is held responsible in the collective consciousness of the Polish people.”⁵¹

The key point to take from the passages in Lech Wałęsa’s 1989 speech is that a discourse for Poland to reintegrate with the West emerged, by drawing on history and differentiating Poland from the ‘other’ to the east (i.e. the Soviet Union and after 1991, Russia). This was done by displaying commonality with the West and by reinforcing Polish identity through mention of its struggles against oppression by ‘others’. It marks a beginning in the discourse that reflected an attempt to re-establish Polish ontological security, as Jennifer Mitzen might argue.⁵²

Alternatively, Stefano Guzzini would describe it as the ‘essentialization’ of the Polish nation, achieved through the use of ‘human / cultural geography’ in the midst of a foreign policy identity crisis, or as a reversion to geopolitical thought.⁵³ Integration with the West became the priority; “...Poland built its foreign policy around the objective of NATO accession while Russia vehemently opposed any eastward enlargement of the Atlantic Alliance. As long as Moscow’s *nyet* defined the pace and scope of the accession process, the NATO issue remained of paramount importance in Polish policy towards Russia.”⁵⁴ Essentially, Russian opposition to Polish NATO accession was perceived as all the more reason to join the alliance.

Legitimizing the Transatlantic Option

It is important to acknowledge that there were also political factions within Poland that thought joining NATO would be counterproductive and potentially dangerous. Some officials

⁵¹ Aras and Ozbay, “Polish-Russian Relations,” 33.

⁵² Mitzen, “Ontological Security,” 344.

⁵³ Guzzini, *The Return of Geopolitics*, 4.

⁵⁴ Gorska, *Dealing with a Juggernaut*, 21.

thought that it would be better to establish a pan-European security system rather than one that risked the exclusion and isolation of Russia.⁵⁵ However, even with alternative positions towards NATO accession being expressed in Poland, the discourse remained largely consistent in its construction of potential ‘danger to the east’ or of the Russian ‘other’, as well as the need to consolidate Polish identity by means of integration with the West. The idea for the inclusion of Russia was also driven by the idea that “...the exclusion of Russia from a NATO-dominated security system in Europe would reinforce Moscow’s attempts to increase its influence in the region...”⁵⁶ The current crisis in Ukraine could indicate that these concerns were well founded. Although, the skepticism towards NATO accession held by some officials in Poland—due to the unease surrounding potential Russian resurgence—demonstrates that they too were differentiating Russia as the dangerous ‘other’, only towards achieving different ends. Ultimately, NATO accession was given official priority status.

Immediately following the 1989 transition, issues with the Soviet Union continued to dominate the concerns of the Polish government. A prime example of such a concern is that following the Polish regaining of sovereignty, Soviet (Russian) troops remained in Poland. In an address to the *Sejm* on June 27, 1991, FM Krzysztof Skubiszewski discussed the Soviet plans regarding their withdrawal from Poland:

As of today, the Soviet side proposes withdrawal at the end of 1993. For us, this date is too far in the future, but the gap [between our timeframes] can be considered to have narrowed. In recent months, discussions have been focused on the settlement of financial and property matters, where there is room for compromise. Further, the Soviet side indicates that the reason for the requested later date is its lack of housing, barracks and military warehouses in the USSR. This argument fails to convince us, since the

⁵⁵ Gorska, *Dealing with a Juggernaut*, 71-73.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 75.

Soviet Union withdrew and continues to withdraw contingents from other countries on a much larger scale than in Poland.⁵⁷

This passage from the minister shows that distrust towards the Soviets remained on the Polish side, even though it was acknowledged that the potential for cooperation existed. FM Skubiszewski's predicate constructs of the Soviets are of: non-compliance with Polish demands, the potential for cooperation in other areas, and that the Soviets were being deceptive and treating Poland unfairly relative to other post-communist states. These constructs allude to a perception of potential ulterior motives behind the Soviet delay to withdraw its troops, whereby the minister portrayed Poland as again being victimized by the 'other', compromising its security.

After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Polish discourse continued to project the idea that danger could come from the east, and therefore, that further action should be taken to ensure the security of the newly re-established republic, identified as a sovereign and independent state. Integration with the West remained the priority. In April 1992, Minister Skubiszewski said that

security relations on our continent have lost their simplicity and may be geographically described as concentric circles progressing from the stable nucleus of the countries of the European Communities, the Western European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance, to the most unstable peripheries.... The most important danger zone in Europe, with regard to possible military conflicts, is the area extending between Russia, the Ukraine, and Rumania [*sic*].... The association of the three countries [Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland] with the European Community is relevant to their security but also to that of the West: the hard core of Europe will comprise a bigger territory.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Krzysztof Skubiszewski, "Polityka Zagraniczna Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Roku 1991, Exposé Przedstawione na 65. posiedzeniu Sejmu RP [*Foreign Policy of the Republic of Poland in 1991, Exposé Presented at the 65th Meeting of the Sejm*]," translated by Konrad Roberts (statement presented at the Sejm, Warsaw, Poland, June 27, 1991), <https://www.msz.gov.pl/resource/1daadebd-a66f-4159-ac9e-2b4d1cd9773d:JCR>, 27.

⁵⁸ Krzysztof Skubiszewski. "The Challenges to Western Policy of Change in Eastern Europe" (paper presented at the Conference on Britain and the Future of Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, All Souls College, Oxford, April 10-12, 1992), quoted in Neumann, *Uses of the Other*, 157.

FM Skubiszewski's statement reflects Stefano Guzzini's concept that states logically resort to geopolitical thinking during 'foreign policy identity crises', where possible anxiety over a newfound identity or role exists.⁵⁹ The minister's predicates constructed the West as the source of 'security' and 'stability', which would therefore make sense for Poland to become a part of, making specific reference to both the EU (via its predecessor organization) and NATO. Minister Skubiszewski's predicates constructed the lands to the east of Poland as the 'unstable peripheries' and as the most significant source of 'danger' for Europe. By using a core-periphery geopolitical description, FM Skubiszewski also indirectly labelled Russia as potentially the most dangerous element to the east, as Russia-proper would be in the geographically outermost 'concentric circle' of the 'unstable and dangerous periphery'. By reproducing the image of Russia as the 'other', legitimacy was removed from arguments advocating the inclusion of Russia in new security arrangements for Poland. His statement also attached equal importance to the security of the 'European Communities' by equating their security with the security of the Visegrád countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland), which he also said would become a part of a larger 'hard core' of Europe, and therefore part of the source of 'stability' and 'security'.

Maintaining the image of a dangerous 'other' to the east was important as a justification for Poland to develop an appropriate security policy that would buttress the position that it achieved in 1989, including enhanced autonomy and influence. In another parliamentary address in 1992, FM Skubiszewski stated:

⁵⁹ Guzzini, *The Return of Geopolitics*, 49.

On the other hand, the collapse of the USSR, that is, the elimination of some traditional risks, is associated with a clear destabilization to the east of our borders, but the development of the situation in the East has become difficult to predict. The international community, and its key members, show a high degree of helplessness. Thus, noting the lack of danger of war and the lack of a hostile attitude towards Poland from any country, we must be aware of the various other possible dangers. The rapid pace of change taking place in the immediate vicinity of Poland, in Europe and in the world, requires a concentration of effort towards long-term strategic objectives. Their implementation determines Poland's place among other nations.⁶⁰

This passage in the minister's address presented the USSR as a bygone threat once it had broken up, all the while acknowledging that the elimination of that threat had given rise to 'various other possible dangers'. The FM presented the construct of a new era for Poland when he stated that there was no 'danger of war' and a 'lack of hostility' towards Poland from all of its neighbours. Yet, the image of danger from the 'East' was simply readjusted; he also contradicted himself by stating that the 'rapidly changing world', which included 'a clear destabilization to the east' and an unpredictable 'situation in the East', did indeed pose 'other possible dangers'. As a result, Poland still needed to safeguard itself from the unpredictable 'situation in the East'. The potential for 'other possible dangers' was presented as justification towards the development of 'long-term strategic objectives', which some of the earlier discourse (i.e. Lech Wałęsa's speech) outlined to be the assurance of Polish sovereignty and independence through integration with the West. Lastly, by mentioning the 'place among other nations' for Poland, Minister Skubiszewski placed particular importance on how those 'long-term strategic objectives' would be pursued, towards the enhancement of Poland's international standing.

⁶⁰ Krzysztof Skubiszewski, "Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o Polityce Zagranicznej Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 1 kadencja, 14 posiedzenie, 3 dzień [*Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Foreign Policy of the Republic of Poland, term 1, meeting 14, day 3*]," translated by Konrad Roberts (statement presented at the Sejm, Warsaw, Poland, May 8, 1992), <http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Debata1.nsf>, paragraph 6.

As mentioned previously, pursuing NATO accession was adopted as an official policy objective early on, although there were resistant elements in Poland, Russia and the West. One of the earliest documents reflecting the new policy—*The Principles of Poland's Security Policy and the Security Policy and Defence Strategy of the Republic of Poland* of 1992—has a section on NATO that reads:

[NATO] remains the main factor of stability and security in Europe. We recognize the continued U.S. military presence in Europe to be necessary, because it positively affects the processes of political change in our region and it stabilizes the situation on the whole continent. Poland seeks membership in NATO. We will continue to build our system of communication, cooperation and political consultation within the various structures of the organization. We will work to create a network of bilateral agreements with individual members of NATO on matters of defence and security. We are interested in the development and intensification of cooperation within the framework of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, to which we belong.⁶¹

This statement of official Polish policy reiterated that NATO was seen as the main source of ‘stability’ and ‘security’, just as FM Skubiszewski stated in his description of the Western Communities as the ‘hard core’ of stability and security in Europe. The policy also indicated the official intention of Poland to integrate with the West, by way of NATO accession. Furthermore, the policy excerpt about the ‘positive effects’ on the ‘processes of political change’ emanating from the US NATO presence is significant foreshadowing for the Polish response to the crisis in Ukraine, which will be discussed in *Chapter III*.

As mentioned earlier, there were elements in Poland that were against accession into NATO. Such elements were also prominent in Russia and the West. Many people were afraid

⁶¹ “Założenia Polskiej Polityki Bezpieczeństwa oraz Polityka Bezpieczeństwa i Strategia Obronna Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej [*The Principles of Poland's Security Policy and the Security Policy and Defence Strategy of the Republic of Poland*],” translated by Konrad Roberts, Sojusz Północnoatlantycki [The North Atlantic Alliance], Homeland Defence Committee, Government of Poland, November 30, 1992, www.koziej.pl/files/Strategia_RP_z_92_r.doc, 11.

that NATO expansion eastward would draw outrage from the Russians, which could lead to unknown consequences. In 1993, Russian President Boris Yeltsin visited Warsaw and met with President Wałęsa. As a result of this meeting, a joint declaration was released, which stated that Russia accepted the Polish aspirations to join NATO and that it would not be in contradiction to Russian interests, much to the dismay of some Russian politicians. As Joanna Gorska notes, Polish officials were quick to take advantage of Yeltsin's acceptance of the Polish goal to join NATO.⁶² Following the presidential joint declaration, a spokesperson for President Wałęsa stated that "[n]ow the West has no argument to say 'no' to Poland. ...Until now the West has been using the argument, 'We don't want to upset the Russians.' Now we will see the true intentions of the West toward Poland."⁶³

The statement by President Wałęsa's spokesperson, Andrzej Drzycimski, constructed an image of the West as possibly refusing Polish accession into NATO on the pretext of appeasing the Russians. Drzycimski essentially called the West out—whether or not they were truly holding out to appease Russia—as a way of delegitimizing alternative security options for Poland and for gaining full Western support. This demonstrates how foreign policy practices "...always have to overcome or neutralize other practices that might instantiate alternative possibilities for identity."⁶⁴ Drzycimski's statement made clear that there was nothing left standing in the way of Polish accession into NATO and that the process should therefore proceed. Such a statement would have also been noted by Polish officials who were against NATO accession and favoured alternative security options, which were delegitimized and made unacceptable because they would endanger Polish national interests, and therefore, Polish

⁶² Gorska, *Dealing with a Juggernaut*, 80.

⁶³ Jane Perlez, "Yeltsin 'Understands' Polish Bid for a Role in NATO," *The New York Times*, August 26, 1993, accessed July 14, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/26/world/yeltsin-understands-polish-bid-for-a-role-in-nato.html?module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Ar%2C%7B%22%22%3A%22RI%3A13%22%7D>.

⁶⁴ Campbell, *Writing Security*, 71.

identity. Moreover, although Russia did change its stance back to opposing eastward NATO expansion,⁶⁵ the change in stance acted as an indicator that Russia wanted to maintain its ability to influence and potentially dominate the post-communist states. This idea was further reinforced by Russia's 1993 foreign policy and military doctrine, which made specific reference to Russia's special sphere of influence.⁶⁶

The pursuit of NATO accession by Poland was legitimized as the best way of re-establishing its identity, as a sovereign and independent state in the Western world. In 1989, having recently regained sovereignty from the Soviet Union, the Poles needed a way to ensure that their new identity and role—the internalized security of their 'self'-perception—would be maintained. Polish official discourse consistently drew on historical experiences, frequently presented in constructs depicting domination by the Russian 'other' and the legacy of abandonment by Western allies. Furthermore, the discourse also produced and reproduced Russia as the 'other' that could pose a danger to both Poland and the West.

Consequently, the official discourse legitimized the policy option to integrate with the West. Given the need to first establish security for the Polish state, NATO membership was made a 'natural' option, "...the Polish authorities considered the country's membership in NATO to be a priority, and all other state objectives, including those pertaining to Russia, to be of secondary importance."⁶⁷ The discourse also sent a message to the West, stating that it had a part to play in the continuity of a sovereign and independent Poland. The discourse legitimized

⁶⁵ Roger Cohen, "Yeltsin Opposes Expansion of NATO in Eastern Europe," *The New York Times*, October 2, 1993, accessed July 2, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/10/02/world/yeltsin-opposes-expansion-of-nato-in-eastern-europe.html>.

⁶⁶ Katarzyna Pełczyńska-Nałęcz, "How Far Do The Borders Of The West Extend? Russian/Polish Strategic Conflicts in the period 1990-2010," *Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich [Centre for Eastern Studies]*, 54-55, http://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/how_far_do_the_borders_of_the_west_extend.pdf.

⁶⁷ Gorska, *Dealing with a Juggernaut*, 96.

joining NATO as the best first step in re-establishing and safeguarding Polish national identity and interests, by ensuring security through integration with the West.

Poland's 1999 accession into NATO was a key moment for the country. Subsequent discourse reflects how it was a defining point in Polish history. At the 1999 accession ceremony, Polish FM Bronisław Geremek said “[f]or the people of Poland, the Cold War, which forcibly excluded our country from the West, ends with our entry into NATO.”⁶⁸ By stating that the Cold War only ended on that day, FM Geremek assigned special significance to achieving NATO membership; he implied that Poland was not secure until that very moment. His statement exerted a sense of relief, which he further expressed by saying that “Poland forever returns where she has always belonged: to the free world. Poland is no longer alone in the defense of her freedom.”⁶⁹ The Polish Prime Minister (PM) at the time, Jerzy Buzek, also expressed how NATO accession represented the dawn of a new era for Poland when he said that “[t]he dream of our nation to live in a free and secure environment has come true.”⁷⁰ The latter two statements signify that NATO membership marked the beginning of a shift in identity and role for Poland, to one as a part of the West—first in the framework of NATO, and five years later as a member of the EU.

⁶⁸ Bronisław Geremek, “Transcript: Albright, Other Remarks at NATO Accession Ceremony (Czech, Hungarian, Polish Ministers Hail NATO Membership),” USIS Washington File, March 12, 1999, accessed June 28, 2014, http://fas.org/man/nato/news/1999/99031211_tpo.htm.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ “New Members Join Nato’s Top Table,” *BBC News*, March 16, 1999, accessed July 8, 2014, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/297692.stm>.

Chapter III

A New Role for Poland: Responding to the Crisis in Ukraine

For Poland, the year 2014 marks the 25th anniversary of the fall of communism, the 15th anniversary of NATO accession, and the 10th anniversary of EU accession. These three anniversaries celebrate three major steps for Poland in its ‘return to the West’. Poland has re-established itself and has undergone a complete geopolitical shift into the West from being behind the Iron Curtain prior to 1989. Through NATO and EU membership, Poland has achieved perhaps the greatest level of security for the state in its history, yet the image of danger coming from the ‘East’ has re-emerged. Although there have been repeated attempts at reconciliation with Russia and towards improving bilateral relations, problems with Russia have remained prominent issues, driving Polish foreign policy responses. Poland now relies heavily on the security structures that it has become a part of through EU, and predominantly, NATO membership.⁷¹ That being said, Poland has also striven to develop its own military capability and economic strength, enhancing its potential for self-reliance.

Over the years since 1999, relations between Poland and Russia have remained turbulent and now the image of the Russian ‘other’ appears to have once again become prominent. A survey by the BBC indicates that in 2013 Poles had the second lowest positive perception of Russia out of a sample of eight mostly powerful European states.⁷² Since the Cold War ended, the relationship has suffered from a range of bilateral issues, including those related to overdependence on Russian energy, various trade disputes, the 1940 Katyń Forest Massacre, the

⁷¹ “Polish Foreign Policy Priorities 2012-2016,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, March 2012, accessed April 20, 2014, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/resource/d31571cf-d24f-4479-af09-c9a46cc85cf6:JCR>. 14-15.

⁷² “Views of China and India Slide While UK’s Ratings Climb: Global Poll,” *BBC World Service*, May 22, 2013, accessed June 29, 2014. http://www.globescan.com/images/images/pressreleases/bbc2013_country_ratings/2013_country_rating_poll_bbc_globescan.pdf, 37.

proposal for Poland to host an American anti-ballistic missile defence system, and also with regard to the 2010 air disaster near Smolensk in Russia, where Polish President Lech Kaczyński and many other Polish elites perished. Yet, none of these issues have affected Polish-Russian relations as negatively as the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.⁷³ The crisis is a key defining moment for Poland, as a state with a rising role in both the EU and NATO. Prior to examining the relevant discourse, a brief background of the genesis and progression of the crisis up until now is needed.

The Crisis in Ukraine

The crisis in Ukraine represents one of the most significant events on the European continent since the collapse of communism. This is a widely held perception among European experts and decision makers, which is important to note, as the positions that are taken by European states display those states' prevailing identities and interests. This has significance because the positions taken by the states could have significant effects on European or even global security.

The catalyst of the crisis was the decision by the now ousted Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich to not sign an EU Association Agreement (AA) on November 21, 2013.⁷⁴ This was largely as a result of Russian pressure.⁷⁵ The signing of the AA would have been a success for the Eastern Partnership (EaP), which is a Swedish-Polish EU initiative with the aim of bringing the EaP states—Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine—closer to the EU. The EaP was designed to culturally, economically, and politically enhance the willing

⁷³ "Playground Turned Player," *The Economist*, June 28, 2014, accessed July 10, 2014, <http://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21604688-poland-carries-new-clout-international-stage-playground-turned-player>.

⁷⁴ "Ukraine Crisis Timeline," *BBC News*, July 5, 2014, accessed July 5, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26248275>.

⁷⁵ "Ukraine Protests: Kiev Makes U-Turn on EU Association Deal," *Spiegel Online*, December 13, 2013, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/ukraine-protests-kiev-makes-u-turn-on-eu-association-deal-a-938933.html>.

partners' relationships with the EU, if they display a "...shared commitment to international law and fundamental values—democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms—and to the market economy, sustainable development and good governance."⁷⁶ The EaP requires the partner countries to strive towards certain minimum standards to be able to sign AAs. Since its inception, the EaP has increasingly become the subject of Russian discontent, as the EaP is seen as a direct threat to what Russia perceives as its sphere of influence.⁷⁷

The root of the crisis in Ukraine is also attributable to the lack of progress made in Ukraine after the 2004 Orange Revolution. Polish FM Radosław Sikorski stated that "Ukraine missed her chances before, after the Orange Revolution..."⁷⁸ Instead of making necessary reforms, Ukraine experienced growing corruption, a reversion towards authoritarianism, and also the re-‘election’ of pro-Russian President Yanukovich in 2010, despite his having been ousted six years prior.⁷⁹ Although the issue is clearly more complex and can be attributed to many historical factors, for the purposes of this paper, ‘crisis in Ukraine’ will refer to the period following Viktor Yanukovich’s decision to back out of the signing of the AA.

After President Yanukovich decided not to sign the AA and subsequently signed an economic agreement with Russia, pro-EU demonstrations broke out in cities across Ukraine, most prominently in the west of the country and in the capital city of Kiev. The largely peaceful

⁷⁶ "Eastern Partnership," European Union External Action, accessed July 3, 2014, http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/index_en.htm.

⁷⁷ Dominik Tolksdorf, "Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius: Russia Puts a Spoke in the EU's Wheel," *The World Post*, November 29, 2013, accessed July 6, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dominik-tolksdorf/eastern-partnership-summit_b_4351506.html.

⁷⁸ "Ukraine Peace Deal Negotiator & Foreign Minister of Poland Radek Sikorski on Fareed Zakaria GPS," *CNN*, February 23, 2014, accessed July 6, 2014, <http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2014/02/23/ukraine-peace-deal-negotiator-foreign-minister-of-poland-radek-sikorski-on-fareed-zakaria-gps/>.

⁷⁹ Ute Schaeffer, "Failed Revolution – Ukraine Heads Back to Soviet Past," *Deutsche Welle*, May 8, 2013, accessed July 14, 2014, <http://www.dw.de/failed-revolution-ukraine-heads-back-to-soviet-past/a-16794088>.

Maidan demonstrations in Kiev deteriorated into violent clashes between the Ukrainian *Berkut* riot police and more radical elements (e.g. *Right Sector*) that embedded themselves in the broader protest movement. The clashes left hundreds of people dead, injured and missing.⁸⁰ With the aim of ending the violence, the FMs of France, Germany and Poland brokered a deal between President Yanukovich and Ukrainian opposition leaders. In the agreement, plans for an early election, the formation of a unity government, and the re-adoption of the 2004 constitution were outlined.⁸¹ However, in the words of Minister Sikorski, President Yanukovich ‘skipped town’ without implementing the agreement.⁸²

Subsequently, an interim government was formed by the opposition and members of Yanukovich’s Party of Regions, which explicitly declared the temporary nature of the new government, and also that fresh presidential elections would soon take place. Russia condemned the interim government and declared its actions to be a *coup d’état*. Pro-Russian demonstrations also erupted in the predominantly Russian-speaking regions of southern and eastern Ukraine. In late February, Crimea was clandestinely annexed by Russian forces and—although not recognized by the West or Ukraine—has also been unilaterally incorporated into Russia. The oblasts of Luhansk and Donetsk in eastern Ukraine—known as the Donbas region—affirmed their non-recognition of the new government, stated their goals to secede and join Russia, and held referenda through which they declared their independence.⁸³

⁸⁰ “Ukraine Crisis Timeline.”

⁸¹ Ian Traynor, “Ukraine Opposition Leaders Sign Deal with Government,” *The Guardian*, February 21, 2014, accessed June 21, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/21/ukraine-president-says-deal-has-been-reached-opposition-bloodshed>.

⁸² “BBC HARDtalk with Radosław Sikorski, Poland’s Foreign Minister,” March 11, 2014, accessed June 10, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvuWHEU9dVY>.

⁸³ “Ukraine Crisis Timeline.”

The rebellion in the Donbas region now resembles a fully fledged civil war, which threatens to escalate further with the spectre of more Russian intervention looming. However, at the request of President Putin, the Russian parliament rescinded the law allowing for intervention in Ukraine. Petro Poroshenko, the recently elected and internationally recognized Ukrainian President, has vowed to bring peace to Ukraine by whatever means necessary. Initially, he attempted to introduce a ceasefire on the part of the government, but the rebels did not reciprocate the gesture or adhere to demands of disarmament. In the latest developments, Ukrainian government forces have made significant progress in their military offensive into Donbas,⁸⁴ while a Malaysian Airlines passenger jet that was flying over the region has crashed, killing all 298 people on board. This is widely suspected as having been a missile attack conducted by Russian-supported separatists, drawing international outrage.⁸⁵ It is also becoming increasingly evident that Russia has been allowing militants to enter Ukraine to join the pro-Russian insurgency, while also supplying them with heavy weapons and armoured vehicles.⁸⁶

The Russian annexation of Crimea and support for the insurgency in Ukraine has drawn condemnation from the West. Poland has been one of the most vocal states in its condemnation and criticism of the Russian actions and interference. The crisis has sparked calls from the eastern most states of NATO and the EU, including Poland, for a reaffirmation of the security commitments that are laid out in the provisions of both organizations. To ease concerns, there have been small NATO deployments of troops and equipment to Poland, Romania and the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). Poland has specifically requested a permanent

⁸⁴ "Ukraine Crisis Timeline."

⁸⁵ "MH17 Plane Crash: First Victims Arrive in Netherlands," *BBC News*, July 23, 2014, accessed July 23, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28431943>.

⁸⁶ "Unblinking Putin," *The Economist*, June 21, 2014, accessed July 8, 2014, <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21604561-west-should-impose-fresh-sanctions-deter-more-russian-meddling-eastern>.

deployment of NATO troops onto Polish territory as part of the reaffirmation of NATO's *Article 5* security guarantees. The West, including Canada, has also imposed sanctions against Russia and pro-Russian rebel supporters in Ukraine, with Poland pushing for the imposition of additional punitive sanctions. Lastly, Poland has been and remains a proponent for Europe to take further actions towards diminishing the Russian ability to influence and destabilize Ukraine and the rest of Europe. Due to Poland's role in the EaP Initiative, its membership in both NATO and the EU, and its close proximity to both Ukraine and Russia, it has been highly active throughout the crisis. The following analysis will demonstrate the above claim.

The Drive for a Response

Given that Poland has integrated itself militarily, economically and politically into the West, its new main priority has become one of ensuring the continuity—ontological security—of its new role alongside the other Western states. This is especially the case now, in the context of the crisis in Ukraine. In fact, Poland has taken the crisis as a potential opportunity to enhance its position within the Western framework. The Polish official discourse on Russia—long dismissed as overly anxious and ripe with Russophobia—is now projecting the paradigm of Poland as an ‘eastern expert’ of the West. Poland's identity vis-à-vis Russia has led to its being one of the most vocal European states regarding the crisis; bringing Ukraine into Western structures is seen as a way of diminishing Russian influence and enhancing Polish security.⁸⁷ Furthermore, Polish discourse projects an image of itself as being an important bulwark for the protection of the collective West from the Russian ‘other’.

⁸⁷ Olga Shumylo-Tapiola, “Why Does Ukraine Matter to the EU?” Carnegie Europe, April 16, 2013, accessed July 10, 2014, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/2013/04/16/why-does-ukraine-matter-to-eu/fzq3#>, paragraph 17.

The reproduction of the Russian ‘other’ in Polish discourse became much more prominent following the Russian annexation of Crimea and is being produced with much less subtlety than before Poland ‘returned to the West’. This is easily explained given Russia’s recent aggressive actions towards Ukraine, and also towards Georgia in 2008. Differentiated images of the West and Russia are now being reproduced at a high frequency as a result of the Russian transgressions, and are playing a significant role in the legitimization of current and future foreign policy responses.

FM Radosław Sikorski has been a particularly visible figure from the onset of the crisis in Ukraine. He has been consistent in his condemnation of Russian actions, and in his push for more punitive sanctions being imposed by both the EU and NATO. In an interview on BBC’s *HARDtalk* on March 11, 2014, FM Sikorski responded to a question on how adequate the response to Russian actions has been, saying that

it’s an hour of truth; are we going to let borders in Europe be changed by force? Are we again going to allow one leader of Europe to send his troops to a neighbouring country on the pretext of ethnic grievances? We know the precedents and we know how dangerous they are, and nobody wants sanctions. Poland has a lot of trade with Russia. We should not do this enthusiastically.... [but] the risk of allowing Russia to go further and invade Ukraine proper is even bigger and the cost would be bigger too.⁸⁸

Minister Sikorski’s statement displays a fundamental change that has occurred in the role and identity of Poland. Firstly, the minister used the term ‘we’ to describe Poland, together with the West. The statement also demonstrated that the construct of Russia as the dangerous ‘other’ has regained prominence. In fact, Russia’s role as the ‘other’ for the EU and NATO has been reinforced by its actions, which go against Western values and are contrary to the international

⁸⁸ “BBC HARDtalk with Radosław Sikorski.”

legal standards to which Russia has made commitments. Speaking of ‘dangerous precedents’, FM Sikorski constructed the Russian actions—guided by Russian President Vladimir Putin—as unacceptable behaviour, invoking memories of Hitler and Stalin by referring to ‘one leader of Europe’ that acts aggressively and remains unchecked.

The most important part of FM Sikorski’s statement is in how he brought up the Polish-Russian trade relationship. The minister placed greater importance on stopping and punishing Russia than on protecting Polish economic interests that may be damaged as a result. This demonstrates that even though there could be significant costs, Polish identity shapes the kinds of policy options that are seen as acceptable or ‘natural’, while other options are delegitimized and become unacceptable despite any associated material benefits that they could derive. In discussion on a response to potential Russian military incursion into eastern Ukraine, Minister Sikorski stated that “...we will reluctantly have to impose further sanctions. And I say reluctantly because I know it will be politically and economically painful.”⁸⁹ This is important because some Western allies of Poland also have significant economic relationships with Russia, such as Germany and the United Kingdom; in a way, his statement constructed an example for them to follow. By downgrading the importance of economic interests in comparison with that of the upholding of Western values and international law, FM Sikorski gave legitimacy to the punishment of Russia for its actions, even though it could hurt Poland and its Western allies. It was a way of mobilizing the support of Western allies.

This view that more punitive sanctions against Russia are needed is widespread among Polish officials, and is also being expressed by other key influencers. One strong example is

⁸⁹ Mark MacKinnon, “Poland Presses for a Shift from Russian Energy as Ukraine Standoff Escalates,” *The Globe and Mail*, April 24, 2014, accessed July 11, 2014, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/poland-presses-for-shift-from-russian-gas-as-ukraine-standoff-escalates/article18182218/>.

Leszek Balcerowicz, who is a former Minister of Finance of Poland and was also behind Poland's 'Shock Therapy' reforms after the fall of communism. In a recent interview with the Ukrainian national news agency, УКРІнформ [UKRInform], he stated that

[s]anctions are a factor that negatively affects the Russian economy, but they are required to stop Russian aggression in Ukraine. This should also be accompanied by specific action of the West to ensure that the majority of Russians do not depend solely on government propaganda, which is extremely manipulative. I remember Soviet times, and for me what can now be seen on Russian television is even worse and more deceitful.⁹⁰

Leszek Balcerowicz, as a highly influential man in Poland, restated that it is clear what the response to the Russian actions should be—more punitive sanctions. Describing Russia as both 'deceitful' and 'aggressive', he stated that the West must collectively act to punish Russia—the dangerous 'other'—for how it continues to act towards Ukraine, in disregard of the sanctions that have already been imposed upon it. He pointed out that the Western efforts in the information war need to be ramped up, as Russian misinformation has reached a new level. Balcerowicz also said that

[t]he Russian economy is weak, it is already in stagnation, it is heavily dependent on energy exports and inefficient. In this regard, the Russian Federation is vulnerable to sanctions and the West should do it in the interest of not only Ukraine, but also the global security. If the aggression is paid, it will again be repeated in different places and at different times.⁹¹

Here, Balcerowicz reiterated that the importance of security, and therefore, the punishment of Russia, is greater than the importance of economic interests. Oftentimes, the energy dependence that Russia has fostered in Europe is presented as a European vulnerability. Conversely,

⁹⁰ "Leszek Balcerowicz: Delay in Imposing Sanctions against Russia Threatens Loss of Credibility in EU," УКРІнформ [UKRInform], July 10, 2014, accessed July 11, 2014, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/leszek_balcerowicz_delay_in_imposing_sanctions_against_russia_threatens_loss_of_credibility_in_eu_323613.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Balcerowicz has constructed this energy dependence, rather, as a Russian ‘capital dependency’ on Europe. This echoed an earlier statement by FM Sikorski that “[w]e should play to our strengths. Our strengths are that Russia needs our money more than we need Russia’s oil and gas. Because we have other suppliers , like Canada...”⁹² Moreover, Balcerowicz stated that continued European purchases of Russian energy—business as usual—will only act to positively reinforce Russian aggression, with the threat of similar actions to follow as a result.

In another portion of FM Sikorski’s BBC *HARDtalk* interview, the minister dismissed, as unfounded, the Russian invocation of the pretext of ethnic grievances given that Russians and Russian-speakers were not being persecuted in Ukraine.⁹³ This presented an image of deception coming from the Russian side. Also, when questioned over allegations that radical elements of the Ukrainian protest movement had been trained in Poland, Minister Sikorski responded that “[i]t could not have happened and it did not happen and that’s the disturbing part of what President Putin says. He also says that these are not his troops in the Crimea, when we know they are.”⁹⁴ His statement again portrayed President Putin, and therefore Russia, to be both deceptive and aggressive, while as a representative of Poland, the minister constructed an image of Poland as having a clear understanding of what was actually going on in Crimea.

Differentiation is continuing to play an important role in rallying an appropriate collective response towards Russia. Russia, which is personified through President Putin, continues to be portrayed as the dangerous ‘other’. One month after the Crimean invasion, President Putin admitted that Russia had in fact militarily intervened,⁹⁵ which again reinforced

⁹² MacKinnon, “Poland Presses for a Shift.”

⁹³ “BBC HARDtalk with Radosław Sikorski.”

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Yuras Karmanau and Vladimir Isachenkov, “Vladimir Putin Admits for First Time Russian Troops Took Over Crimea, Refuses to Rule Out Intervention in Donetsk,” *The National Post*, April 17, 2014, accessed June 21, 2014,

the social construction of the dangerous Russian ‘other’. Moreover, since the beliefs of Polish officials about Russian actions proved to be correct, there was also a bolstering of the construct of Poland as an expert that has a special understanding of the situation in the East. This represents the new element being produced in the discourse; there has been a portrayal of Poland as a Western country, which has a special expertise in dealing with Russia and the EaP states.

During the Russian intervention in Crimea, Polish discourse projected a heightened degree of seriousness for the situation, as well as the perception that Poland understood how to deal with Russia. When Crimea was first acknowledged as having been invaded by Russia, Polish PM Donald Tusk—recognizing what Russia was doing—stated that

[t]he world stands on the brink of conflict, the consequences of which are not foreseen. ...Not everyone in Europe is aware of this situation. ...Ukrainians have to find today that they have real friends. ...Europe must send a clear signal that it will not tolerate any acts of aggression or intervention.⁹⁶

With Russian forces amassed along the eastern Ukrainian frontier and also in Crimea and Transnistria, PM Tusk’s statement painted a grim picture of the security situation in the region. By stating that conflict was near and would have ‘unknown consequences’, he constructed an image where the worst case scenario was plausible, and that there must therefore be a higher sense of urgency among Western allies for a rapid and effective response. PM Tusk’s construction of the situation in Ukraine was one of appeal to the West for help, much like those made during the pursuit of NATO accession and in the previous statements of this chapter that constructed the punishment of Russia as being more important than economic interests.

<http://news.nationalpost.com/2014/04/17/vladimir-putin-admits-for-first-time-russian-troops-took-over-crimea-refuses-to-rule-out-intervention-in-donetsk/>.

⁹⁶ Matthew Day, “Ukraine Crisis: ‘World Stands on Brink of Conflict,’ Warns Polish Prime Minister,” *The Telegraph*, March 2, 2014, accessed June 20, 2014,

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/10670931/Ukraine-crisis-World-stands-on-brink-of-conflict-warns-Polish-prime-minister.html>.

Regression of the 'Other'

Russia continues not only to be portrayed as the 'other', but in the current context of the crisis in Ukraine and its involvement, Russia is portrayed as the 'other' in regression. At the June 2014 Wrocław Global Forum, FM Sikorski stated that "...sometime in the last decade, Russia ceased to be a candidate member of the West"⁹⁷ and that instead, "...Russia decided that it is a competitive pole of integration, a competitive pole with us."⁹⁸ FM Sikorski also included Poland in the West by once again referring to the West as 'us'. Minister Sikorski's predicates drew a clear boundary between Poland and Russia. This was done by his explicitly stating that Russia could have joined the West, that it chose not to be a part of the West, and by stating that Russia is a 'competitor' rather than a partner for the West, including for Poland. 'Russia in regression' was also constructed in Leszek Balcerowicz's previous statement outlining the heightened level of information manipulation by the Russian authorities.⁹⁹ In May 2014, FM Sikorski also stated in the *Sejm* that "[r]ather than becoming more democratic and modern, Russia is taking another turn in its tortuous history."¹⁰⁰ These statements all construct an image of a Russia that is going in the wrong direction and of a Russia that remains the unpredictable and dangerous 'other'.

The same kind of discourse has been produced by many prominent public figures in Poland. In a statement also made at the Wrocław Global Forum, Minister of Defence Tomasz Siemoniak also constructed a negative image of Russia:

When it comes to Russian policy... I'm pessimistic. ...We well remember in this part of the world that an imperial idea has been driving Russia for 300

⁹⁷ "Plenary Conversation: The Transatlantic Partnership in Question with Stephen J. Hadley, Radosław Sikorski, and Frederick Kempe," Wrocław Global Forum, June 8, 2014, accessed June 15, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUxpF-iT9Os>.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ "Leszek Balcerowicz: Delay in Imposing Sanctions."

¹⁰⁰ Sikorski, "Address by the Minister."

years. ...What is disquieting is that this imperial concept...is enjoying such a support in Russian society and among its elites. ...We are afraid that the painful tendency that we know so well can escalate.¹⁰¹

In his statement, Minister Siemoniak reproduced the dangers emanating from Russia. By stating that the ‘imperial idea’ has been a defining feature of Russia for centuries, he presented an image of Russia as a state that has long had and retains its expansionist interests, making reference to Polish historical experiences as ‘the painful tendency that we know so well’. The latter statement reproduced the image of Poland as a country with a unique experience and understanding concerning Russia, an image that has been presented time and again throughout the discourse. The image of the Russian dangerous ‘other’ was further reinforced when the minister added that much of Russian society and its elites were in support of the ‘imperial ideas driving Russia’, further raising the level of seriousness of the threat emanating from Russia. FM Sikorski also described Russian imperial ideas when he said that Russia has the view that “...the collapse of the Soviet Union was a catastrophe and a humiliation, and the choice of former Soviet republics to become independent nations was an historical injustice.”¹⁰²

This construction of Russia as the ‘other’ that is in the midst of regression, alongside its resurgence of power, is being projected to allies of Poland. By repeatedly presenting the dangerous, unpredictable Russia, and the need to take action, only certain kinds of foreign policy choices come to make sense as the ‘natural’ courses of action. On June 3, 2014, a press conference was held for Polish President Bronisław Komorowski and US President Barack Obama, who was visiting Warsaw to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the fall of

¹⁰¹ “Panel Recap: Poland’s Siemoniak: Russia-Ukraine Crisis a ‘Wake-Up’ For NATO on Defence Budgets,” June 5-7, 2014, accessed June 15, 2014, <http://wroclawglobalforum.com/welcome/art/87/0>.

¹⁰² Sikorski, “Address by the Minister.”

communism in Poland. When asked if he was concerned over a Russian resurgence, President Komorowski stated that

it is difficult not to notice that something has changed to the east of the borders of NATO; that, again, we are heading toward the aggression with the use of armed forces against one's neighbor. A few years ago it was Georgia; now it is Ukraine, with a special focus on Crimea. President Putin didn't hide—he didn't hide that these were elements of the Russian armed forces, and this is something that we have to acknowledge—just the same way Russia never hid that for the last four years it has increased its defense budget twofold.¹⁰³

In the same manner as Ministers Siemoniak and Sikorski, President Komorowski constructed an image of a turn for the worse being represented in Russia's actions. President Komorowski's predicate constructs of Russia include that it is as aggressive it has been in the past, acting blatantly, and that it is in a state of rapid militarization. The blatancy of Russian actions was constructed by stating that President Putin did not hide his actions, which is reality referred to how President Putin probably knew that he could not conceal the Russian intervention for very long. Moreover, by first mentioning the 2008 Russian intervention in Georgia and subsequently the recent annexation of Crimea, President Komorowski demonstrated that a pattern of bellicose behaviour is being exhibited by Russia. Rather than referring to problems brewing east of Poland, he referred to the problems as being a concern to the east of the NATO alliance as a whole, reaffirming the need for collective Western action.

In the same press conference, President Komorowski also stated that "...we are watching the crisis situation developing across the eastern border of Poland and across the eastern border

¹⁰³ "Remarks Made by President Obama and President Komorowski of Poland in a Joint Press Conference, Belweder Palace, Warsaw," The White House, June 3, 2014, accessed June 20, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/03/remarks-president-obama-and-president-komorowski-poland-joint-press-conf>.

of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, across the eastern border of the European Union in Ukraine.”¹⁰⁴ This statement again re-presented the image of Poland as an integral part of the West and as an important frontier for the Western security apparatus, while again reinforcing the image of the dangerous Russian ‘other’. An important factor here could be that the President was in the presence of US President Barack Obama, who one day later declared the American commitment to the security guarantees of the NATO alliance for Poland.¹⁰⁵

Given the opportune timing of the 25th anniversary of Polish Freedom Day on June 4, 2014, it was possible for Polish officials to more effectively use Polish historical experiences regarding the struggle for freedom, statehood, and Russia; history was used to substantiate the claims for the kind of response that is needed. In his speech at the commemoration ceremony at Castle Square in Warsaw, President Komorowski proposed that

[t]here is no freedom without solidarity with the countries of the Eastern Partnership, especially with Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine. I wish to express those words clearly in the presence of the President-Elect of Ukraine, Mr. Petro Poroshenko, as our solidarity in a very particular way is needed for the Ukrainian nation, the nation that is facing a threat of aggression, and is facing immense challenges of modernization. There is no freedom without solidarity with Ukraine.¹⁰⁶

President Komorowski’s use of ‘solidarity’ is a direct reference to the memory of how Poland first regained and re-established itself as a sovereign democratic state by means of the *Solidarność* movement. By doing so, President Komorowski was presenting the potential for Ukraine to follow suit. He constructed an image of possibility for the most successful EaP countries to also become successful Western states. President Komorowski again reiterated the

¹⁰⁴ “Remarks made by President.”

¹⁰⁵ “25th Anniversary of Polish Freedom Day,” C-SPAN, June 4, 2014, accessed June 5, 2014, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?319743-2/president-obama-polish-freedom-day-speech>.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

need for the West to support Ukraine's pursuit of a similar path that Poland took, especially in the face of real danger being posed by Russia. Lastly, the President's statement that 'there is no freedom without solidarity with Ukraine' equated the survival of freedom in the West (and by extension, Poland) with freedom in Ukraine. Once again, the construct of the idea that the West cannot afford to remain indifferent in helping Ukraine and in responding to Russian actions was reproduced.

The constructs of the need for a Western response and the improvement of the Western ability to respond are likely to be given more importance in their continued expression in Polish discourse until the Polish national interests of security and continuity as part of the West are reaffirmed. In his Annual Address to the *Sejm*, Minister Sikorski outlined how the situation may come to proceed, from the Polish perspective:

The Ukrainian crisis has also laid bare the shortcomings of Community policies. The EU's ability to respond to crisis situations is still limited. This has become apparent both during the Ukrainian crisis, and earlier during the Arab Spring. The Neighbourhood Policy continues to be inconsistent at times because it lacks the sense of co-responsibility of all Member States for its two dimensions – the Eastern and Southern one. Also, there are no solidarity mechanisms that would protect Member States and [the] EU's partners against such forms of pressure as trade embargoes or energy blackmail. We finally came to realise one thing: when kleptocracies collapse under the weight of their elites' greed, as was the case with Ukraine, [the] European integration of countries covered by the Eastern Partnership will reappear as the only attractive civilisation option.¹⁰⁷

His statement described the 'shortcomings' and 'limited ability' of the West to adequately respond to the crisis, identifying the problem as a 'co-responsibility' for Western countries. This reinforced the image whereby a reassessment and reaffirmation of the security apparatus of the West is required and that the frontier states, such as Poland, should not have to face such

¹⁰⁷ Sikorski, "Address by the Minister."

problems alone. FM Sikorski's allusion to the lack of 'solidarity mechanisms' for the collective protection of Western states against discrimination in economic dealings acted to legitimize responses such as PM Tusk's proposed energy union, as well as the push for the diversification of European energy sources. The latter point could also act as an impetus for the expediting of the development of shale gas resources in Poland. Lastly, FM Sikorski stated that for EaP states with governments resembling the ousted Yanukovich Regime in Ukraine, which are easily swayed by Russian pressure (i.e. Belarus), the only attractive and potentially successful option is integration with the West. In his reference to 'kleptocracies', Minister Sikorski could also be referring to Russia itself.

The Polish discourse in the context of the crisis in Ukraine demonstrates an increased production of Russia as the dangerous 'other'. The continued differentiation of Poland—as part of the West—and Russia in the discourse has reinforced the old images of 'us' and 'them', while producing new ones. Representations of Poland as an essential element of collective Western security and as an 'eastern expert' that well understands Russian actions and intentions, as well as how they should be responded to, have been reproduced extensively. The Polish national interests of ensuring state security and attaining the reaffirmation of its position in the West are easily deduced from the predicate constructs found across the official discourse. These national interests are likely to be translated into the foreign policy responses of Poland and the broader West in the near future. This is especially true because Poland is not alone among concerned EU and NATO member states that want security and also desire the reaffirmation of their positions within the West in the face of Russian resurgence. The foreign policy responses that are emerging from Poland could have a profound impact on the broader relationship between the

West and Russia, as well as on how the crisis in Ukraine and the situations in other EaP countries develop. It is also probable that there will be a significant impact on Russia.

Chapter IV

The Broader Implications of Polish Foreign Policy

The evolution of Polish foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia has significant implications for the Western world, including for Canada. In terms of the period immediately following 1989, Poland sought Western integration via NATO accession rather than pursuing territorial defence or security frameworks that were more self-reliant and inclusive of Russia. In terms of the crisis in Ukraine, Poland has sought to contain and punish the Russian ‘other’, and to reaffirm its identity as a key state for the safeguarding of Western security. The constructs of role and identity produced in the discourse reflect new and seemingly static elements of Polish national identity vis-à-vis Russia, which through the discourse have legitimized as ‘natural’ certain courses of action that have been and will be translated into the foreign policy responses of Poland and the West.

Due to historical experiences, the need for Western integration, and its identity vis-à-vis Russia, Poland has drawn on uses of Russia as the ‘other’. Initially expressed in the discourse relating to the pursuit of NATO accession, the use of Russia as a dangerous ‘other’ has been reinvigorated in the midst of the crisis in Ukraine. As a NATO and EU member with increasingly more economic and political power and influence, uses of the ‘other’ by Poland will have a greater impact on its Western allies. Moreover, the actions taken by Russia have themselves acted to further reinforce the perception of Russia as the ‘other’ in the Western perspective. Although the legacy of the Soviet Union ensured that there was already a differentiated image of Russia, this image has now been galvanized by Russian involvement in the crisis in Ukraine.

Given the limited scope of this paper, it is not feasible to cover all of the implications for the West with regard to Polish foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia. The outcome of the crisis in Ukraine could lead to any number of scenarios. Consequently, the implications at hand will be based on known information and the most likely scenarios. The implications that will be discussed represent potentially the most significant outcomes, including the remilitarization of relations between the West and Russia, as well as the resulting economic and political challenges that are likely to persist amid ‘resecuritization’.

Securitization refers to how states increasingly draw on geopolitics and, as a result, militarist thought¹⁰⁸, in order to establish greater security for themselves when threats are perceived. This case represents a potential ‘resecuritization’ because a new militarized boundary in Europe could be forming, as the Iron Curtain did during the Cold War. The ‘resecuritization’ of the post-Cold War, post-NATO and EU expansion frontier, including part of the West, Russia and the states within what Russia considers its sphere of influence—the states that stretch from the Russian Kaliningrad exclave to Azerbaijan—has already begun and will continue. As a result, political and economic relations will be strained, particularly stemming from Russia’s interference in Ukraine, its push for the formation of the Eurasian Union, and its continued use of energy for geopolitical leverage.

The Military Dimension

Due to its identity in relation to Russia, Poland has been one of the most vocal countries in its response to the crisis in Ukraine and towards the Russian involvement. In response to the crisis, NATO member states have deployed temporary air and sea policing forces along the

¹⁰⁸ Guzzini, *The Return of Geopolitics*, 48.

eastern frontier and have stationed minor land reinforcements in Poland, Romania and the Baltic States. The frequency of military exercises in the region has also been increased.¹⁰⁹ However, no long-term solution to the perceived ineffectiveness of the current Western security framework and response has yet emerged. As a result of Russian aggression towards Ukraine and concerns over the perceived ineffectiveness of the Western response, the situation is likely to soon change. NATO may decide to increase its permanent presence in Poland and other eastern member states, as part of a reassessment and reaffirmation of the capabilities of the alliance, as well as its security guarantees. Such a development would break with the 1997 *NATO Russian Founding Act*.

The 1997 *Founding Act* was created to improve NATO-Russian relations in the midst of the NATO decision to extend membership invitations to a number of states, including Poland. The *Act* established a NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council, which is a high level forum to enhance consultation, cooperation and joint-decision making between the two parties.¹¹⁰ Moreover, the *Act* also outlines a commitment by NATO against any deployment of nuclear weapons and towards limiting the deployment of conventional forces on the territories of new NATO member states (those that joined in 1999 or after).¹¹¹ Currently, NATO has suspended all military and civilian cooperation with Russia¹¹² and developments in the near future could entail the permanent deployment of NATO forces to Poland and other eastern NATO states, which would break with the 1997 *Founding Act*.

¹⁰⁹ Adrian Croft, "NATO to Consider Longer-Term Response to Ukraine Crisis," *Reuters*, June 2, 2014, accessed June 23, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/02/ukraine-crisis-nato-idUSL6N00J5C520140602>.

¹¹⁰ Jack Mendelsohn, "The NATO Russian Founding Act," Arms Control Association, May 1997, accessed July 3, 2014, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/1997_05/jm.

¹¹¹ "27 May. 1997: Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation signed in Paris, France," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified October 12, 2009, accessed July 3, 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_25468.htm.

¹¹² "Ukraine Crisis: NATO Suspends Russia Cooperation," *BBC News*, April 2, 2014, accessed July 9, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26838894>.

Conversely, it is important to note that Russia has broken its commitments under the 1994 *Budapest Memorandum*. This agreement, which outlined the Ukrainian nuclear disarmament and accession to the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*, also stipulated that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine would be respected by all parties.¹¹³ By annexing and unilaterally incorporating Crimea into its territory, and by continuing to support rebels in eastern Ukraine, Russia has not respected Ukrainian sovereignty or territorial integrity.

The military responses of both NATO and the EU to the crisis in Ukraine are likely to represent a ‘resecuritization’ of the greater CEE region, which will be manifested through both increased militarism and physical militarization. The Russian government will oppose any boost in eastern NATO deployments, as they would be perceived—or at least presented—as being a direct threat to Russian national security and interests in its ‘near abroad’. This would all be regardless of the fact that in recent years Russia has by far been the most aggressive state in the region. With the exception of the US, the United Kingdom and Greece, the eastern NATO member states are the only ones to have maintained levels of defence spending near or above the 2% of national gross domestic product NATO requirement.¹¹⁴ NATO member states may now need to seriously reconsider their defence budgets. As opposed to the communist era ‘Iron Curtain that stretched from Stettin (Szczecin) to Trieste,’ a new hard dividing line may once again be appearing in Europe.

¹¹³ “Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine’s Accession to the Treaty on the NPT,” Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the United Nations Office and International Organizations in Vienna, February 6, 2014, accessed July 7, 2014. https://www.msz.gov.pl/en/p/wiedenobwe_at_s_en/news/memorandum_on_security_assurances_in_connection_wit_h_ukraine_s_accession_to_the_treaty_on_the_npt.

¹¹⁴ James Rosen, “NATO Head: Europeans Must Spend More on Defense,” *The Tribune*, July 8, 2014, accessed July 10, 2014, <http://www.sanluisobispo.com/2014/07/08/3143939/nato-head-europeans-must-pay-more.html>.

On September 4-5, 2014, a NATO Summit will be held in Wales, where it is likely that a reassessment of the alliance will occur. This Summit comes at a time when a number of the eastern most NATO allies have expressed serious concerns over Russian aggression and the current situation in Ukraine, with Poland being particularly vocal on the subject. The discourse has demonstrated that Poland considers Russian actions in Ukraine as a potential threat to its, and by extension, the West's security. Given the prevailing national interests being expressed, calls for the reaffirmation of the security commitments stipulated in *Article 5* of the *North Atlantic Treaty*¹¹⁵ and under the *Mutual Defence Clause, Article 42.7* of *The Lisbon Treaty*¹¹⁶ are logical. PM Tusk said that

[w]e know from our history that guarantees can be empty. The guarantees of serious countries about Ukraine's territorial integrity also turned out to be guarantees of a doubtful qualityWe want Poland to be defended by the military, not only by words written in a treaty.¹¹⁷

The Polish demands for a tangible reaffirmation of its security guarantees have been legitimized throughout the discourse. An image has been constructed of Poland whereby it embodies an essential role as a frontier state that is key to the safeguarding of Western security against potential dangers from the Russian 'other' and the unpredictable situation in the East.

The projection of this image of Poland across the discourse, including its role as an 'eastern expert', is likely to draw Western support. This was recently evidenced through the implementation of broader sanctions by the US on the Russian financial, defence and energy

¹¹⁵ "The North Atlantic Treaty," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified December 9, 2008, accessed July 3, 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm.

¹¹⁶ Oana Topola, "How Common is CSDP? Solidarity and Mutual Defence in the Lisbon Treaty," *European Security Review Briefing* 4 (2011): 2, http://www.isis-europe.eu/sites/default/files/programmes-downloads/2011_artrel_631_esr53-briefing4-solidarity-mutuality.pdf.

¹¹⁷ "Ukraine Crisis: Poland Calls for 10, 000 NATO Troops on its Territory," April 2, 2014, accessed July 1, 2014, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/ukraine-crisis-poland-calls-for-10-000-nato-troops-on-its-territory>.

sectors.¹¹⁸ This will also likely be reflected in forthcoming NATO and EU responses to the downing of the passenger jetliner that resulted in the deaths of many EU citizens, suspected as a missile attack conducted by insurgents that are supported by Russia in Ukraine.¹¹⁹

A reaffirmation of the security commitments of NATO for its eastern member states, which include Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia, could necessitate significant contributions from the more geographically western NATO allies, including from Canada. This could also entail an expectation by eastern NATO allies, or a renewed internal mandate, for increases in defence spending across the alliance. Canada has already deployed six CF-18 Hornet fighter jets to Poland, with FM Sikorski referring to Canada as ‘one of the pillars of NATO’.¹²⁰ Gratitude and hope have also been expressed regarding American military deployments and commitments to Polish security that were recently made. President Komorowski stated that

the decision of the United States of America to deploy American troops to Poland is really very important for us, both as an element of deterrence, but also as a reconfirmation that we do not really accept any limitations concerning the deployment of NATO troops to Poland imposed for some time or suggested for some time by a country that is not a member of NATO.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Michael Birnbaum and Karen DeYoung, “U.S. Expanding Sanctions against Russia for its Support of Separatists in Ukraine,” *The Washington Post*, July 16, 2014, accessed July 18, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-to-expand-sanctions-against-russia/2014/07/16/a4a008a8-0d21-11e4-b8e5-d0de80767fc2_story.html.

¹¹⁹ Peter Spiegel, “MH17 Crash Galvanises EU Opinion on Tougher Russian Sanctions,” *The Financial Times*, July 18, 2014, accessed July 18, 2014, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/05993cb0-0e6c-11e4-b1c4-00144feabdc0.html#axzz37qvhMbvZ>.

¹²⁰ Paul Wells, “The Interview: Radoslaw Sikorski Speaks with Paul Wells: Poland’s Foreign Minister on Russian Aggression, National Minorities, and Why All of Europe Should Be Concerned,” *MacLean’s*, May 1, 2014, accessed July 2, 2014, <http://www.macleans.ca/politics/worldpolitics/the-interview-radoslaw-sikorski-speaks-with-paul-wells/>.

¹²¹ “Remarks made by President.”

His statement showed how Poland wants the security advantages of having NATO troops on its territory, but also a confirmation that the security commitments of NATO—as a defensive alliance—are meaningful. Also of note, President Komorowski’s statement reiterated that no other state can choose the path taken by another, with reference to Russian opposition to the deployment of allied forces to Poland and CEE, or to the pursuit of Western integration by Ukraine and other states that Russia perceives to be within its sphere of influence.

The ‘resecuritization’ of the region will proceed whether or not NATO decides to deploy forces to its more geographically eastern member states. The aggressive actions by Russia in Ukraine and Georgia coincide with its program of military modernization and increased defence spending. President Putin has led Russia into its highest level of militarization since the Russian Federation was formed.¹²² As a result, NATO and EU frontier states such as Poland have been actively developing their own military capabilities. The official discourse in Poland has demonstrated awareness that it cannot rely solely on protection from abroad, which has been exemplified by repeated references to past betrayals by its allies. However, because Poland participated in the military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, there is an expectation for the reciprocated support of Polish security. With reference to participation in both campaigns, Minister Sikorski stated that “...we always did it on the basis of an implied bargain. We will send you expeditionary forces the more we feel secure at home.”¹²³ Furthermore, in 2013, Poland began a broad program of military modernization. The program is aimed at developing the

¹²² Nikolas K. Gvosdev, “Russia’s Military is Back,” *The National Interest*, October 4, 2013, accessed March 28, 2014, <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/russias-military-back-9181?page=2>, 1.

¹²³ MacKinnon, “Poland Presses for a Shift.”

indigenous defence industry, procuring advanced foreign systems and improving the organization of the armed forces. Poland is also developing its own missile defence system.¹²⁴

These military developments, as well as the greater frequency of military exercises being conducted on either side, will undoubtedly lead to heightened tensions between the West and Russia. They also ensure severe consequences in the unlikely scenario that a wider conflict involving the EU / NATO and Russia, or the countries in-between, breaks out. A NATO deployment of permanent forces or bases onto its eastern members' territories could exacerbate tensions further. This will undoubtedly have a negative influence on the economic and political relations between the West and Russia. This is especially the case with persisting calls, by countries like Poland, for more comprehensive punitive sanctions to be placed on Russia in response to its continued interference in Ukraine. This interference includes the Russian inaction towards de-escalating the situation and ending its support for the separatist insurgency, as well as the current escalation in rhetoric that has followed the Malaysian Airlines incident and evidence that suggests a degree of Russian complicity.

The Energy Dimension

The crisis in Ukraine has been an eye-opener for Europe, which has come to recognize that its overdependence on Russian gas and oil supplies can be a significant vulnerability. Not only has the crisis highlighted the European energy dependence on Russia, but it has also been a reminder that Russia is willing to use the dependency that it has fostered as a political weapon towards achieving its ends, while also causing divisions between Western allies (also a likely

¹²⁴ Andrew A. Michta, "Polish Hard Power: Investing in the Military as Europe Cuts Back," *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research: National Security Outlook 7* (2013): 1-10, http://www.aei.org/files/2013/12/18/-polish-hard-power-investing-in-the-military-as-europe-cuts-back_170557821177.pdf.

strategy of Russia). Given the prevailing perception of Russia as the dangerous ‘other’, which has been galvanized by its actions in Ukraine, Poland has sought to eliminate its vulnerabilities of energy overdependence and of being subjected to questionable business practices.

The business practices of Gazprom—Russia’s state-controlled gas company—have been demonstrated to be biased and politically motivated. For instance, Russia raised the price of gas for Ukraine by 80% in the midst of the ongoing crisis¹²⁵, and it also bases its gas prices for client-states on their access to alternative energy sources. States with more alternative energy sources receive more favourable pricing, whereas countries such as Poland and the Baltic States that rely more heavily on Russian supplies are subject to discriminatory, monopolistic pricing practices, even though they are less affluent and geographically more proximate.¹²⁶ For instance, Gazprom’s gas price for the United Kingdom is between 200-325 USD / 1000m³, whereas Poland pays over 475 USD / 1000m³.¹²⁷ Furthermore, the crisis in Ukraine has demonstrated the unreliability of energy supplies from Russia, especially since Russia has again cut off gas supplies to Ukraine (a major transit country for European supplies), as of June 16.¹²⁸ This has occurred numerous times over recent years.

A major implication of Polish foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia could come to be represented by success in the push for a Europe that is less dependent upon Russian energy sources, and a Europe that acts with greater solidarity in its energy dealings. After the onset of the crisis in Ukraine, PM Donald Tusk proposed a European energy union. This energy union would entail the development of greater interconnections of energy infrastructure between EU

¹²⁵ “Ukraine Crisis: Russia Halts Gas Supplies to Kiev,” *BBC News*, June 16, 2014, accessed July 9, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27862849>.

¹²⁶ Glenn Kates and Li Luo, “Russian Gas: How Much Is That?” *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, July 1, 2014, accessed July 10, 2014, <http://www.rferl.org/content/russian-gas-how-much-gazprom/25442003.html>.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ “Ukraine Crisis Timeline.”

states, as well as the purchasing of energy supplies as a collective bloc customer, which would mitigate unfair pricing practices and arbitrary treatment, while ensuring a more consistent supply.¹²⁹ Echoing similar statements made regarding NATO, Donald Tusk stated that “[t]he Ukraine crisis and the energy union is a test of what the EU is all about. It is a battle to decide what is more important: bilateral relations with Russia or internal relations within the EU.”¹³⁰ Europe will need to overcome significant differences in order for such a proposal to be put into practice, and also to be able to mobilize an effective concerted response. However, it bodes well that the EU constituent states have already been able to overcome such significant differences in the past.

The push by Poland for an energy union has been accompanied by calls to diversify the mix of energy in countries that find themselves overly dependent on Russian supplies. These states no longer want to be subjected to the Russian leveraging of energy supplies and unfair pricing practices, or to the unreliable nature of the supplies coming through Belarus and Ukraine. Furthermore, these states, including Poland, now see that a dangerous precedent is set by continuing to pay while not implementing appropriate responses to Russian transgressions. The official discourse in Poland has demonstrated recognition that the positive reinforcement of Russian actions, by conducting business as usual, cannot continue because it will only act to promote further Russian transgressions. This is especially true given that Russia relies on its energy exports, as stated by Leszek Balcerowicz. Russian energy exports account for 66% of the country’s total exports, which in turn generate 33% of its budget revenues.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Christian Oliver, “EU Energy Market: Pipe Dream,” *The Financial Times*, July 9, 2014, accessed July 10, 2014, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/c6dd6c38-ea3c-11e3-afb3-00144feabdc0.html#axzz375MiB8FF>.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, “Russia’s Economic Crisis Deepens as EU Readies Fresh Sanctions over Ukraine,” *The Telegraph*, July 1, 2014, accessed July 11, 2014,

By moving away from Russian sources of energy, along with the probable imposition of further punitive sanctions, Russia may be rendered more cooperative. The Russian economy has already suffered as a result of sanctions that have been imposed upon it, which have also been accompanied by the diminished confidence of investors. It is estimated that by the end of 2014, the capital flight from Russia could account for around 100 billion USD, while the value of the rouble has dropped significantly and the Russian economy is now in a state of stagnation.¹³² A drop in the amount of energy purchases from Russia by European countries would only worsen the Russian economic situation, which would be a strong incentive for Russia to increase its cooperation. However, to date, Russia has not exhibited willingness to change its position or its level of involvement regarding the crisis in Ukraine.

The Polish foreign policies of energy diversification preceded the crisis in Ukraine because Poland recognized that the overdependence on Russia could be damaging. The crisis in Ukraine and the apparent unwillingness of Russia to revert to the upholding of international legal standards have shown the other major European countries that dependence on Russia is a bad thing. This is now being evidenced in the difficulties between the EU and Russia over the Russian-led South Stream pipeline project, of which construction has been partially halted. The EU is now investigating whether the project broke competition laws when it gave out construction tenders, and is also conducting an anti-trust probe into the dealings of Gazprom.¹³³

The realization that overdependence on Russia is a weakness could be the impetus for the expedited development of alternative sources of energy across Europe, as well as the accessing

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/economics/10939504/Russias-economic-crisis-deepens-as-EU-readies-fresh-sanctions-over-Ukraine.html>.

¹³² Evans-Pritchard, "Russia's Economic Crisis."

¹³³ John Lough, "EU Plays Hardball with Russia on Gas Issue," *The Moscow Times*, June 19, 2014, accessed July 14, 2014, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/eu-plays-hardball-with-russia-on-gas-issue/502214.html>.

of alternative sources from abroad. Canada and the US could play important roles in the provision of energy to Europe. FM Sikorski has specifically cited the potential for Canada to help in diversifying the Polish energy portfolio via the liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in New Brunswick¹³⁴, as Poland will soon be completing its own LNG terminal in the port city of Świnoujście.¹³⁵ The US could also play a significant role thanks to its ongoing shale gas revolution and the possibility that it could re-legalize oil exports.

It is possible that in recognition that Russia can no longer be allowed to be the predominant source of energy for Europe, the Polish position will be strengthened. In recent years, major deposits of shale gas have been discovered in Poland, but have yet to be developed due to environmental opposition, the loss of some interested parties, and excessive government red tape.¹³⁶ The development of this resource could provide numerous opportunities for Poland in the region, as many purchasers of Russian energy eagerly look elsewhere to meet their energy needs. Whether or not this can happen in a timely manner will depend on the ability of Poland to overcome the issues that are currently hampering its shale gas development efforts. The development of this resource would enhance both Polish and European energy security by diversifying the energy mix, while Poland could also benefit from the injection of capital that would be derived from shale gas exports and reduced energy imports.

The energy dimension of the implications of Polish foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia could play a crucial role in the evolution of the broader dynamics in the region over the years to come.

¹³⁴ MacKinnon, "Poland Presses for a Shift."

¹³⁵ "Świnoujście LNG Terminal and a Gas Pipeline System Provides Energy Security for Poland," February 11, 2014, accessed July 12, 2014, <https://www.premier.gov.pl/en/news/news/swinoujscie-lng-terminal-and-a-gas-pipeline-system-provides-energy-security-for-poland.html>.

¹³⁶ Konrad Krasuski and Marek Strzelecki, "Poland Delays Tax to Prevent More Exits by Shale Gas Explorers," *Bloomberg*, May 22, 2013, accessed July 21, 2014, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-05-22/poland-delays-tax-to-prevent-more-exits-by-shale-gas-explorers.html>.

If the EU can end the objectionable practices of Russian state-controlled energy companies, while also diversifying its energy supply, Russia could face increased economic difficulty. This will be a slow process, but is likely to proceed. This may in turn give rise to various other possibilities, including the potential for larger scale popular unrest in Russia, as well as in Belarus. This is rendered all the more possible in consideration of the following section.

The Political Dimension

The efforts of the EU to integrate Ukraine and the other EaP states have been increased in the midst of the crisis in Ukraine. Poland, as one of the key states of the EaP Initiative, has been deeply involved in advocating such efforts. Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have now signed AAs with the EU.¹³⁷ While the AAs signal a strengthening of economic, cultural and political bonds with the EU, the most significant aspect of the agreements is the enhanced political association. It was the initial refusal to sign the AA by former Ukrainian President Yanukovich that sparked the crisis in Ukraine, which escalated into the current state of war in the east of the country. Viktor Yanukovich's decision now appears to have been in vain.

The signing of the AAs by Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine signals their shift away from the Russian sphere of influence and towards the EU. The signing of the AAs by these states is a commitment by them to uphold the Western principles of democracy, free market economics and human rights, among others. While the upholding of these principles is not guaranteed and entails a difficult reform process, the signing of the AAs raises incentives to do so and allows for the possibility that liberal-democratic principles and norms can become increasingly diffused into those societies. As people across the eastern borders of the EU and NATO become gradually

¹³⁷ Roman Goncharenko, "Ukraine Takes a Step Closer to the EU," *Deutsche Welle*, June 26, 2014, accessed July 10, 2014, <http://www.dw.de/ukraine-takes-one-step-closer-to-eu/a-17737239>.

more exposed to the benefits of Western institutions, they may come to more readily accept them. By signing AAs with the EU, states such as Ukraine raise their chances of reform and enhance the prospects for them to develop into Western-type states. This would prove nearly impossible in the absence of the AAs.

The most significant political implication for the West is that the crisis in Ukraine represents a major test on the abilities of both NATO and the EU, as multinational organizations, to produce effective and concerted responses. For instance, if NATO and the EU fail to reaffirm their security guarantees for the member states that feel the most vulnerable in the face of Russian resurgence, such as Poland, those states may pursue alternative methods of achieving their security. The credibility of both NATO and the EU is on the line. Furthermore, if the EU fails to produce a response that the frontier states of the West perceive to be adequate in addressing Russia's behaviour, they may lose faith in the institution, which could significantly weaken the collective influence of the EU. However, it is likely that NATO and the EU will produce effective responses.

Concluding Remarks

This paper illustrates how the Polish republic has experienced a drastic shift in identity and role since its 1989 transition. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that Polish foreign policy decisions—including those that do not pertain solely to Russia—are guided by the relationship with and perceptions of the Russian ‘other’ (initially, the Soviet ‘other’), which have been incorporated into the prevailing national identity and interests of Poland. Certain foreign policy options—pursuing NATO accession and the responses to the crisis in Ukraine thus far—have been legitimized through Polish discourse as ‘natural’ pathways to follow, while other foreign policy options have been delegitimized as unacceptable, despite any potential material benefits associated with them.

Poland succeeded in re-establishing its ontological security—the internalized security in the perception of the ‘self’¹³⁸—by moving ‘back to the West’. This was done through discourse that constructed images of its troubled past with the Russian ‘other’, the unpredictable security situation in the East, the past betrayals of its allies, and most importantly, Poland’s ‘natural’ affinity with the West and its norms and principles. The goals of re-establishing Polish identity, as well as ensuring the continuity of a sovereign and independent Polish state were achieved first through NATO accession, and thereafter by gaining EU membership. This enabled Poland to exert greater autonomy and influence in its foreign policy, by using its newfound identity and role within the Western framework.

The crisis in Ukraine has presented Poland with an opportunity to exert its newly acquired influence. By once again using differentiation to draw a boundary between itself and

¹³⁸ Mitzen, “Ontological Security,” 344.

the Russian ‘other’, Poland has legitimized the policy options of reaffirming the NATO and EU security guarantees, as well as pursuing the punishment of the Russian ‘other’, despite the material benefits associated with other foreign policy options vis-à-vis Russia. Differentiation between Poland and Russia now acts to construct a boundary between the broader West and the Russian ‘other’ because Russia is presented as breaking with Western norms, principles and international law, while Poland is presented as part of the West. In light of the continued support for the separatist insurgency in Ukraine by Russia and its suggested involvement in the recent shooting down of the Malaysian Airlines passenger jet, among other things, the predicate constructs in Polish discourse vis-à-vis Russia have been demonstrated as prudent. The Russian actions have enabled Poland to present itself as an ‘eastern expert’ that understands how to best respond to and interact with Russia and the EaP states, while also producing images of Poland’s importance for collective Western security.

Aside from the fact that Russian actions have simplified the formulation of a collective Western response, Polish foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia also influences the broader Western engagement with Russia. In the near future, there could be serious implications stemming from Polish calls for a tougher punitive response to Russia; such calls are also likely being echoed in the other frontier states of the West that feel vulnerable (i.e. the Baltic States and Romania). The military dimension of the response could reflect a remilitarization of the Western frontier in CEE, aimed at countering Russian aggression and militarization in the region. The security guarantees of NATO and the EU are likely to be reassessed and reaffirmed. This could require increased involvement of the Canadian Armed Forces in Europe, as well as increased defence spending.

There will also likely be consequences for the political and energy-related dimensions of relations between the West and Russia. Calls for greater solidarity in European energy dealings with Russia (e.g. Poland's proposed energy union) and the push for the diversification of the European energy mix will become more prominent. Canada and the US could play key roles in European energy diversification. Such responses could break the European overdependence on Russian energy and end the iniquitous practices of Russian state-controlled energy firms towards their various client-states. The heightened tensions between the West and Russia may also represent the impetus for a strengthened effort towards bringing the EaP states closer to Europe, further diminishing Russian influence in the region. Lastly, whether or not NATO and the EU can respond in an effective and concerted manner in the face of Russian resurgence will affect the credibility of the organizations and could result in changes to the status quo of the Western paradigm.

All of the above implications will likely result in worse relations and heightened tensions between the West and Russia in the years to come, unless a shift is seen on the Russian side in the immediate future. The prevailing identity and interests of CEE states, particularly Poland, Russia and Ukraine, could render this to be much more challenging. From the Western perspective, the perceptions of the dangerous Russian 'other' have reached a level unseen since the Cold War. In the midst of the crisis in Ukraine and recent related developments, neither side may be willing or able to 'learn their way out' of the current dynamics of interaction and will consequently remain attached to the prevailing 'physically dangerous relationship'¹³⁹ that is perceived. It is with prudence and optimism that we should hope otherwise and proceed.

¹³⁹ Mitzen, "Ontological Security," 354.

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