The practice of the rhetorical unconscious of political correctness in Polish newspaper coverage of the Ukraine crisis

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to comprehensively study Polish national identity discourse, and examine to what extent it automatized framing of newspaper coverage of a protracted event such as the Ukraine crisis in the period from late November 2013 until mid-March 2014. Lining out the key tensions of the discursive position of Poland as between 'Europe' and 'the East', the analysis will show, by turning its focus to Ukraine, that the Oriental discourse of Eastern Europe did not negatively impact upon Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine. Instead, the paradigm for the same had been the Eastern mission exercised through European soft power, and this, as argued, was especially visible during the ongoing Ukraine crisis. The findings of the study of coverage in *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita* suggest that the papers accept the Polish diplomatic stance on the Ukrainian cause as national mission. While the openly Orientalist discourse of the past was only observed in relation to Russia, the frames adopted reveal a persistently unequal portrayal of Ukraine as the little brother in need of guidance, resting on the assumption that such guidance is desired universally in Ukraine.
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“Great symbols of Ukraine:

Yanukovych’s opponents became a symbol of an enduring battle for freedom and Western values – who in that very West would lasted all these months protesting? Now they can become a symbol of unification […]

The events can furthermore be regarded symbolic of an awakening of Polish diplomacy. It has been long since the actions and words of the foreign minister and prime minister, which, since a couple of hours, the whole world is listening to, aroused such a sense of pride. […]

Sadly, there is one more symbol – that of Russia’s ruthlessness. The country demonstrated that, for the reconstruction of its empire, it is capable of unleashing hell in Ukraine.”


Introduction

The crisis in Ukraine, which began last November with protests on Kiev’s Maidan square following the decision of the country’s ex-president Victor Yanukovych not to sign the association agreement with the EU, has been termed the “biggest crisis of 21st century Europe” by leading European diplomats, as it saw much unprecedented escalation: the continuous protests escalated in February, followed by tense diplomatic negotiations with Yanukovych, his consequent leaving of office, the takeover by the Ukrainian interim government, and the Russian military presence in Crimea form early March, the referendum to join Russia, and, indeed, the ongoing protests in Ukraine’s Eastern parts. If events were closely monitored by international media, they arguably received even more attention in Poland. For observers it must have seemed as if the crisis in Ukraine was both a personal and a matter of state for Poles. The “countless gestures of solidarity in Poland since the protests in Kiev began in November” were acknowledged internationally, and singled out as exemplary in contrast to that of the country’s fellow post-Communist states. In particular, Polish diplomatic efforts were viewed as

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1 Unless otherwise indicated, translations are those of the author.
2 “‘Biggest crisis in 21st century Europe’; UK foreign minister on situation in Ukraine’ (2014, 03 March), Euronews.
3 ‘Poland and Ukraine: Neighbours and brothers’ (2014, 03 March), The Economist: Eastern Approaches.
4 ‘Czech and Slovak views on Ukraine: More timid than the Poles’ (2014, 06 March), The Economist: Eastern Approaches.
successful in the crisis, and the Polish foreign minister Radoslaw Sikorski was considered to be the potential “saviour” and “new leader” of Europe.

The above cited article, published in the Polish newspaper Rzeczpospolita, exemplarily illustrates that the portrayal of the crisis rests on a number of assumptions on the role and identity of Poland, Ukraine, and Russia. This paper aims to dissect those assumptions in the present coverage, and to contextualise them with the larger Polish identity discourse as automatising a particular narration of events. The relevant discursive cues, as will be argued, become particularly visible for an event that bears the opportunity for positively distinctive identification.

**Objectives**

As Levintova and Hopf argue, national discourse reflects in the image of the self and the Other in public opinions, as well as in foreign policy of a country. For Poland, it is argued, national discourse is permeated by the historically produced and reproduced understanding of itself as European, versus its geographic East as backward and savage. The findings of the newspaper coverage illustrate the persistence of the dominant narrative of Polish Europeanness in contrast to Russia and Ukraine, albeit, as will be shown, it markedly transformed with regards to the latter: what began as a pro-Ukrainian elite-mission that contrasted with continuous images of Ukrainian backwardness in Poland, appears to have become accepted as the prevalent discourse. While much more sympathetic towards Ukraine, such narration retains the notion of Polish superiority.

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7 See this paper, pp. 5-6.
The study will first set out to delineate key insights from literature on national identification, and situate them in the larger debate on discursively entrenched ethnic markers of 'European' versus 'Eastern', a tension which, as will be shown, is crucial to the Polish understanding of the self. It will be argued that the need to emphasise a positively distinctive identity impacted on exclusive national story-telling in multiple ways. Cultural works which express such practice of the rhetorical unconscious as defined below, discursively differentiated Poland from its Eastern neighbours; as will be shown with a focus on Ukraine, historic discourse significantly shaped the image of the Other in Poland. In contrast, however, foreign policy will be contextualised as guided by ideas of an Eastern mission by soft power means. The overall research question which this paper will attempt to answer in its analysis of Polish newspaper coverage of the events in Ukraine from November 2013 - March 2014, is to what extent the image of the Polish self and the Other - Ukraine and Russia -, informs the framing of the crisis. Critical discourse analysis serves as indicating the epistemological position for this study, in its attempt to interrogate and contextualise present knowledge with past discourse. The present media narratives will be analysed through a dissection of the frames through which events have been portrayed; the totality of the frames allows to draw modest conclusions on the overall present discourse as narrating the Ukraine crisis during the time-frame studied.8

The Ukraine crisis appears to present an opportunity for positively distinctive identification, and hence is revealing in terms of the singularisation of discourse which automatises an unconscious rhetoric of political patriotism.

8 In line with limitations Levintova (2010: 1344) suggested for discursive analysis in newspaper coverage, this study refrains from making universal claims as to its findings and acknowledges the subjectivity of an interpretivist approach. While the sample of articles studied can be regarded as representative of the newspapers' positions to a certain extent, it is reasonable to assume that the consideration of a different, or larger set of articles would have lead to different conclusions.
Polish politics and respectively aligned media - which usually display a high
degree of antagonism - will be illustrated as forming an rather harmonious
concert, as Polish diplomacy is assessed favourably, and the Europeanisation
of Ukraine appeared accepted as Polish mission. As will be pointed out, such
singularisation of narrative necessarily marginalises any possible dissenting
voice.

**Conceptual framework**

This study is interested in the ways in which understanding of the self and Other are constructed so as to weave a common-sensical fabric, and create a lens through which events are represented. The way to begin, therefore, is by asking how such understanding is produced, and the conceptual framework that suggests itself for this purpose is that of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is an epistemological approach which treats language as social practice, as “signifying a particular domain [...] from a particular perspective”. Linguistic scholarship was very influential on the method: in the early 20th century, Wittgenstein noted the necessary contextuality of language and rejected the notion that it could, at any time, be neutral or value-free. CDA is frequently used to study the ways in which language serves to manifest or legitimise power, how it relates to those with most influence on public discourse, the ways in which it is ideologically tied up. Van Dijk argued that knowledge is encoded socially in both the content and the style in which it presented. Fairclough established such an explicit linkage between language use and social structures, arguing that it is “always

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simultaneously constitutive of (i) social identities, (ii) social relations (iii)
systems of knowledge and beliefs”. 13 Social constructivist thought adopted a
position which seeks to uncover the myths underpinning our understanding,
applying discursive investigation explicitly to the study of collective
identity: 14 Hopf, in his critique of traditional International Relations studies,
argues that a state’s identity, closely intertwined with the discourse around its
characteristics, crucially informs domestic and foreign policy choices. 15 One
key tool of CDA is the appreciation of knowledge in socio-historical context.
Scholars such as Habermas stress the context of knowledge and use of
language as embedded historically and underpinned by “underlying
conventions and rules”. 16 The emphasis of language as instrumental -
especially by Foucault, whose theories were highly influential for
interrogating the hegemonic discourse - led to CDA being a popular method
to investigate racial or gender bias in the media. For this study, however,
power over language is less relevant. 17 While it is true that discourse
legitimises authority in producing its existence as if common sense, the Polish
element, it will be shown, is primarily illustrative of the power that lies in
language. 18 The example of Polish national identity discourse in relation to
Ukraine and Russia illustrates that language and the knowledge it produces
of the self and Other - rather than consciously instrumental - are produced by,
and reproduce, an automated frame which suggests certain interpretations of
an event such as the Ukraine crisis. The question of ‘who started it and why’ is
therefore less important than the inquiry of how persistent discourse is, and

14 Crotty defines social constructivism as a position which holds that “all knowledge, and all meaningful reality as
such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings,
‘Discursive Identities/Identity Discourses and Political Power’ in Mole, R. (ed.) Discursive Constructions of Identity
York: Cornell University Press.
17 Gramsci developed the concept of hegemony, which involves predominance over discourse and thus can signify
to what extent it informs the ways in which unexpected events are viewed. Levintova’s study on the image of Russia and Poland in their respective newspapers precisely draws on such social constructivist position that does not assume a “direct causal link” by which elites seek to maintain positions of power,\textsuperscript{19} but holds that public discourse informs views of the public and politicians’ actions in “more or less unconscious ways”.\textsuperscript{20} Indeed, the argument put forward here is that discourse operates by ways of the rhetorical unconscious, in structures of social meaning, which are formed by, and re-inform public discourse.\textsuperscript{21} Thus, critical discursive analysis forms the conceptual framework for this study in the way in which it considers the reproduction of narratives on identities over time,\textsuperscript{22} and “integrates […] available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive ‘events’ are embedded”.\textsuperscript{23}

\textit{Section One}

\textbf{Theorising the construction of the self and the Other}

\textit{Exclusive national identity}

The scholarly debate on national identity can be regarded as decided by the constructivist over the primordialist camp.\textsuperscript{24} In line with the critical discursive epistemological stance, from a social constructivist perspective, the nation-state is a creation. Barth argues that none of the characteristics of groups -

\textsuperscript{21} Kress and Hodge’s (1979) work, which pointed to the inter-linkage of social meaning with discourse, “was subsequently accepted by researchers from different traditions, such as sociolinguistics, formal linguistics, social psychology or literary criticism”, Titscher; Meyer; Wodak; Vetter (2000), p. 145.
\textsuperscript{23} Wodak (2000).
according to Prizel, nations share language, religion, geographic location, collective memory and cultural practices. The scholar's theories were very influential to subsequently published works on ethnic and national identification. Gordon, in her analysis on Polish national minorities in the countries of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth argues, that a sense of collective identity is not formed through an introspective process: it proceeds necessarily exclusively, in relation to those who become perceived as “Other”. Barth refers to such mutually exclusive attribution of characteristics as ethnic markers. Levintova employs those very markers to analyse the existence of pre-Communist narratives in Poland and Russia. Özkirimli argues that the particular choice of narrative or salience-making of characteristics over others should form the centre of analysis around the nation-state. The mutually exclusive construction of nations as an ongoing process is an important consideration for this study. It is argued that once ascribed and discursively produced as common-sensical, ethnic markers, while bearing the capacity to transform, will not change rapidly. This is because, firstly, such ascription implies essential characteristics, and secondly, these become unconsciously reproduced by all kinds of actors of the public discourse. Lastly, one frequently missing dimension in the process of identification and acceptance of mutually exclusive ethnic markers needs to be introduced. Mole notes that the reason for successful collective identification can be explained by psychological factors: as it is impossible to tediously assess all human

30 Ibid., pp. 1339-1361.
experiences anew, demarcations are unavoidable: such categorisation and identification is the fulfilment of our “basic human need for cognitive parsimony”. What is more, human psychology requires us to be part of a positively distinctive group, as the creation of collectives necessitates a certain positioning of these groups against each other. As Mole furthermore argues, such identification creates dependency upon self-esteem on the group’s achievements.

**Oriental Eastern Europe**

It was illustrated that national identity is constructed in relation to an Other, and that the ethnic markers which bundle this exclusive identity inform public discourse. While research such as Levintova’s focuses on national identity construction versus another nation, this paper argues that the larger geopolitical context is crucial for understanding the dynamics of identity-creation, particularly in the case of Poland. It will be shown that the Polish self-understanding can be viewed as a result of its historically peripheral position between the broadly defined East and West. The most influential scholarship on the “power of labelling, othering and exclusion inherent to presumably neutral geographic terms”, arguably is post-colonial thought. Said’s work, in which he showed how European ascriptions of backwardness and savagery to other regions ultimately served as justifications of colonialism, can be regarded as central to this school of thought. As Riabchuck notes in his critique of the notion of Eurasia, terminology which “is rather political, cultural, and ideological than purely geographical”, serves as

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a demarcation against the more proximate East.\textsuperscript{37} As he illustrates, Kundera and other Eastern European intellectuals and scholars criticised such Othering early on:

\textquote{‘Eastern Europe’ became like a stigma that signified the inferiority of the region, its primordial backwardness, lack of political freedom, of civic liberties, of rule of law”}.\textsuperscript{38}

The intellectuals started using the terminology of Central and Eastern Europe to circumvent what they viewed as a classification of inferiority.\textsuperscript{39} Indeed, as the stigma of Eastern European does not provide much scope for positively distinctive Polish identification, analogous to Zizek’s observation that, for “any South European country the Balkans start behind its Southeastern border”,\textsuperscript{40} Poland considers itself Central European. However, as characteristics ascribed to the region remained entrenched in public discourse and consciousness, this endeavour had very limited impact.

Especially in the last decade, a number of publications addressing the label of Eastern Europe and the exclusive effect of the creation of an European identity, started from such a Saidian notion. Kuus argues that post-colonial theory illustrates the EU’s enlargement processes as the “production of alterity”, with its institutions manifesting European identity in opposition to a purportedly essentially different Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{41} The scholar holds that while such discourse is inconsistent and fluid - as it implies the possibility to transition into becoming fully European - instead of leading, as might be assumed, to the dissolution of Eastern Europe, only to its multiplication.\textsuperscript{42}

Neumann’s \textit{Uses of the Other}, which draws on Said’s theories, too, was influential for research on the discourse of Otherness of Eastern Europe. Zarycki’s analysis of Poland’s discursive “Uses of Russia” takes Neumann’s

\textsuperscript{37} Riabchuck (2011).
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p. 484.
position that “the mythical East has historically been one of the significant others in the formation of European identity”. Ostrowska’s work, which will be relevant in the analysis of Polish cultural works on Ukraine, contends, on the basis of Neumann’s theories, that all of the “many ‘East’s in the world” serve as signify something. In line with this study’s conceptual framework, the construction of a region, rather than being a consciously instigated project, should be viewed as a practice discursively perpetuated by many. In this respect, Dainotto notes that the idea of what constitutes Europe was produced by “a rhetorical unconscious: what has been said and written about and around Europe over centuries [...] determines what we think and do about it”.

Stenning, in her critical analysis of Area Studies, appeals for a re-examination of the separate study of the geographies of Eastern and Western Europe. Although the scholar acknowledges certain historically distinct experiences, she argues that continuing to treat Eastern and Western Europe as separate results in overlooking the connections; she proceeds to demonstrate, with examples of the role of Poland in current international politics, that the Polish case constitutes such a linkage between the supposedly separate geographic and cultural units. The question raised by Stenning as to the Polish belonging lies at the heart of this paper. As Poland continues to be viewed through an Eastern European prism by research in the West, the national understanding of the self underscores European identity, which, in the regional discourse, appears as more positively distinctive. As Killingsworth et al. argue, “while Poles regarded themselves as an

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44 A small number of scholarship engaged with the essentialisation of Eastern Europe and Russia in Polish cultural works; these works will be referenced below.
48 Ibid., p. 379.
ineffaceable part of Europe, Western Europe (the ‘real’ Europe) did not share their sense of belonging”. As the scholars note, Poles are aware of the asymmetry in their relationship with Western Europe in many ways. The lack of presence of Poland in the narrative of Europe contrasts with Western Europe having been the focal point of Polish discourses, especially among the country’s elites. As Killingsworth et al. point out, the “nineteenth century spiritual and political national elites [...] created the myth of Poland as the eastern flank of Western Europe”, as being its Easternmost stronghold of values.

'Remembering' Polish European Past: Exclusionary narration of what constitutes Poland

Poland’s emphasis of European belonging requires a concerted exclusionary narration of historic events, what Porter referred to as “an ideologically loaded conceptual framework that gives specific meaning to the past and helps determine what is remembered and what is forgotten.” As will be shown below, this plays out strongly in the ascription and entrenchment of own versus Eastern ethnic markers. In line with the argument of the unconscious rhetoric in the process of identity narration, rather than viewing such singularisation of discourse as deliberately manipulative practice, the European narrative “penetrated the level of explicit argumentation to the realm of reflexive linguistic practice”. This will be shown with reference to Zarycki’s centre-periphery paradigm, which illustrates the need for Poland’s

51 Ibid., p. 359.
53 Ibid., p. 292.
discursive delineation against Russia. The way in which such Polish superiority has been narrated will be exemplified by cultural works, which, in their reference to Polish history, demonstrate a practice of such unconscious political patriotism.

**Excluding Russia**

As was illustrated above, the discursive construction of national identity requires positively distinctive ethnic markers. The Polish case is one of peculiar preoccupation of such positioning, as Zarycki argued, due to its peripheral geographic and discursive position. The scholar views both Poland and Russia as “peripheries in relation to the broadly defined West”.\(^5^4\) He categorises different usages of Russia in Polish discourse, all of which make the latter appear positively distinctive. According to Zarycki, one important frame which narrates Poland as European, morally superior, is the silencing or explicit rejection of Russian influence on Poland in political, economic or cultural terms. Narratives of Polish inner resistance, immunity, have especially been prominent retrospectively, after times of Russian authority over Poland. Zarycki references a newspaper article on the Polish 18\(^{th}\) century partition, in which the author suggests that from Russian occupation, Poles merely remembered the omnipresence of Vodka, and a type of primitive carriage.\(^5^5\) On the other hand, Germany had been allegedly recognised as “wise even if strict father”.\(^5^6\) The scholar observes a peculiar constraint on Polish public discourse, referencing Tazbir's conception of “political patriotic correctness” and the pressures on Polish 19\(^{th}\) century writers to narrate Poland's Europeanness, but notes that such strains persists until present.\(^5^7\) Such narration, however, neglects that many Polish writers and intellectuals,

\(^{54}\) Zarycki (2004), p. 596.  
^{56}\) Ibid.  
in fact, preferred the idea of the Slavic civilisation over Western Europe: in fact, preferred the idea of the Slavic civilisation over Western Europe: the East was viewed, “even if less sophisticated, [...] as being organic, spiritual, humane, based not upon greed but upon true Christian values”. It appears that the grand oppositional narratives surrounding the “mythical East”, of “body - mind [...] barbarian - civilised, totalitarian - democratic” and others, which served for Europe to delineate itself discursively from the East, were discursively utilised in Poland to either more fervent demarcation, or to express fascination. This analysis argues, however, that the Orientalisation of Eastern Europe does not pertain to Russia exclusively, although the country does play a particular role.

In the prevalent pro-European narrative, Russia was framed as the ultimate Other. Misiak’s analysis of the national epics directed by Andrzej Wajda’s, Pan Tadeusz [Pan Tadeusz: the last Foray of Lithuania] (1999), and Katyn (2007) illustrates rejection of Russia exemplarily, and can be viewed as a practice of unconscious patriotic political correctness. Misiak understands Wajda’s films as “an integral part of Polish political and cultural discourse, deeply rooted in the national tradition”. The choices of the themes are telling in themselves. Pan Tadeusz, an adaptation of the work of the same title written by the national writer Adam Mickiewicz, narrates the story of the Polish-Lithuanian military support of Napoleon against the common Russian enemy. The high morale and discipline of Poles in terms of obeying national culture is shown “on multiple occasions”. Mickiewicz’s work had already caused Russian-

61 While this study acknowledges that the observation of an Oriental discourse on Russia is not new per se, it is necessary to contextualise it with the Polish self-understanding, in order to study how the same was visible during the Ukraine crisis. As will be demonstrated below, the current crisis presents an opportunity to study how such narration plays out in what is perceived as a race for the future of Ukraine - progress or backwardness -, and reveals insights into the present Polish confidence against its Eastern neighbour and its European identity.
63 Ibid., p. 31.
Polish tensions during the Soviet Union, as the popular play had become “an occasion for symbolic articulation of moral superiority over the Russians”, and was banned for decades; evidently, the narration of savage Russia could not be practised amidst the official narrative of Soviet brotherhood. The allocation of dichotomous ethnic markers in a way which appears exaggerated to a critical audience as historically flawed, Wajda feeds into positively distinctive Polish national identification, achieved through various visual, stylistic, and narrative elements. In Pan Tadeusz, the depiction of Russian soldiers could hardly be more pejorative: they “not only […] lack skills, courage, and wisdom, but they are also presented as a corrupted crowd. Their leader […] turns out to be a sly national traitor”. A crucial message of the film is the Polish positioning towards the West, as Pan Tadeusz leaves “no doubt” about the alliance with France being the right choice for Poland.

Hardly a better example of Polish national identity discourse versus Russia than Katyn could be found. The killing of 20,000 members of Polish intelligentsia during World War II by the Soviet military, indeed, continues to be a major tension between Russia and Poland at present, and is the focus of Wajda’s most recent film. Katyn narrates the story of morally superior Poles who survived Soviet occupation thanks to their “unusual strength”. The film illustrates as-if natural Polish aversion against anything Soviet, as the characters surviving the massacre are shown in their difficult struggle holding their heads up high, while “Jerzy, the only Polish character who overtly sways toward communism, quickly realizes his mistake and commits a spectacular suicide”. The significance of cultural works of such high

65 Ibid.
67 Ibid., p. 31.
68 Ibid., p. 32.
69 Ibid., p. 27.
70 Ibid., p. 34.
visibility in public discourse can hardly be overstated. Wajda's works are expressive of, and feed into the discourse on Russia and the East in general, while underscoring Polish Europeanness, a practice that can be viewed as that of the rhetorical unconscious.

**Polish religiosity as proof of European belonging**

Porter's historic constructivist study questions the seemingly “inextricably intertwined” position of Catholicism with Polish national identity, which, as he notes, is accepted by most scholarship.\(^{71}\) His scrutiny of Polish history reveals important moments of uncertainty, which, as he notes, had been explained away in “delicate rhetorical maneuvers in order to sustain [Catholics’] story against the threat of dissident voices”.\(^{72}\) One uncomfortable historic reality for Catholics, as Porter argues, was the strong influence of Calvinists in the Polish senate of the 16\(^{th}\) century. The de facto religious fragmentation of the country at the time came to be framed as tolerance of foreigners in expectation of acceptance Polish Catholic culture.\(^{73}\) As he shows, religion gradually became an important ethnic marker of the Polish self, signifying one’s European identity versus the Orthodox East, and could be discursively used to out-argue Polish Eastern belonging due to it Slavic language.\(^{74}\) Poland’s frequently cited role as ‘Bulwark of Christendom’ is crucial in this respect. Zarycki argues that “Poles credit themselves with [a number of instances of] saving Europe, or at least particular countries such as Belgium and France, from the Russian threat”.\(^{75}\) The country’s success in the 17\(^{th}\) century battle against the Ottoman Empire in Vienna is the most frequently cited example.\(^{76}\) The scholar furthermore points out that the idea of

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\(^{72}\) Ibid., p. 291.

\(^{73}\) Ibid., pp. 291-292.

\(^{74}\) Ibid., p. 289.

\(^{75}\) Zarycki (2004), p. 611.

\(^{76}\) Ibid., p.610
the East as a threat acquired symbolic value for Polish national identity, standing for “the numerous sacrifices made by Poles over the centuries for the sake of Western Europe”. Lastly, a crucial element of the Polish Eastern discourse related to the religious narrative is the historic self-conception of “a messianic nation entrusted with bringing Western values to other Slavic nations”, thus bound to a mission to Europeanise the East. As will be shown below, the Eastern mission myth, albeit revised, persists until present.

**Narrating superiority over Ukraine**

The Polish discourse on Ukraine is generally less researched. It, too, needs to be considered in the larger context of Eastern European narratives. As will be argued, the image of Ukraine in Poland, until very recently was marked by such Oriental themes. This is reflected in the ethnic markers attributed to country and people - as will be demonstrated in the following section – and is thus suggestive of persistent narration past public discourse. Henryk Sienkiewicz’s work *Ogniem I Mieczem* [With Fire and Sword], as well as the 1999 film adaptation by Jerzy Hoffman is crucial in this respect. As Gombrowicz, poignantly commented,

“it is difficult to find a comparable example of the captivation of an entire nation, or of a more mesmerizing hold on the imagination of the masses in the history of literature”. 79

While Sienkiewicz wrote the book during the Polish partition of the 19th century, it takes the reader back to the times of the 17th century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, around its peak time, when the Polish gentry

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77 Ibid.
The discourse on religiosity combined with the historic role of Polish suffering under aggression from both Germany and Russia, the country’s national identity bears a significant element of martyrdom and sacrifice. Thompson points to the symbolic value of Polish religious sites: “there is hardly a church in Warsaw that does not have some kind of memorial inside or outside”, Thompson (2005). This way, it can be argued, churches serve as double reminders of Polish suffering.


successfully suppressed the uprising of the Ukrainian Cossacks:

the “current territories of Poland and its immediate eastern neighbours (Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania) once formed the ‘largest realm of early modern Europe’ – the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, established in 1569”.

and thus are a time-frame very suitable for positively distinctive identification. While the Polish intellectuals Gombrowicz and Milosz criticised With Fire and Sword for “its historical mystification, its conceited image of the nation, and its shameless promotion of the dominant Roman Catholicism”, its permanent place in the school curriculum and general prominence remain overwhelming until present. Sienkiewicz’s dichotomous assignment of ethnic markers as civilised, Catholic, noble Poland versus the savage Ukrainians – Cossacks and Tatars - are criticised universally by the relevant scholarship. Ostrowska illustrates examples of the book’s Orientalisation of land and people: the “countryside is portrayed as ‘untamed,’ ‘a savage landscape’ with ‘immense seas of blowing, head-high grass where only eagles, hawks and vultures [soared], with fleeting grey wolves running the night’”; the Ukrainian peasants are referred to as a dehumanised “black mob”.

The Ukrainian scholar Tarnavsky notes that, through the nature of the theme picked by Hoffman, by default, the director failed to depict Ukrainians as anything other than “wild and uncivilised”, as “the work remains essentially Sienkiewicz’s”. However, other assessments of the film adaptation interpret a somewhat more nuanced image of the Other. Ostrowska, too, views the film as re-enacting dichotomous categories: in line with the argument of the Orientalisation of the East, she notes that both the book and the film “attempt to attach Polishness to the western paradigm by

83 Ibid., p. 511.
appropriating its discourse of orientalism”. However, she holds that stylistic elements of the novel and visual elements of the film reveal national identity self-doubts and an ambiguous attitude towards the East. Ostrowska argues that the logic of Orientalisation operates on denigration to the extent of fascination of the Other, relocating suppressed characteristics to the foreign place; such fascination, as she holds, is visible in the description of the main Ukrainian adversary Bohun as dark, but of Ukrainian beauty. Furthermore, an element of sympathy for Bohun can be interpreted in the film’s final scene, when the camera follows him through the “female gaze of the Polish heroine”. As Ostrowska emphasises, this reveals Polish ambiguity towards the East, with open Orientalisation contradicting the simultaneous desire for proximity. Arguably, a retrospective notion of regret for the falling apart of the Commonwealth and the disunity between Poland and Ukraine could be interpreted here. Ostrowska contextualises the timing of the publication of both the book and the film as indicating a sense of direction for Poland in a changed international context, thus - in line with this paper’s argument - as practice of the rhetorical unconscious of political patriotism: the narrative of civilised Europe versus the backward East aided both Polish self-esteem during the times of partition, and explained away potential doubts in terms of Polish EU membership. Hauser too, views the film in the context of political events of the time. Her focus lies on the analysis of what she refers to as linguistic codes: The dominant language of the film is Polish, and the true Polish characters, in a typical fashion of dominant culture, insist on speaking Polish exclusively. The dominant code is thus asserted with the assumption “that the 'others' must know it”; however, various languages are spoken throughout the film with frequent switching. The scholar illustrates, with the

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86 Ibid., p. 512.
87 Ibid., p. 515.
88 Ibid., p. 506.
example of Bohun's switching between Polish and Ukrainian, his awareness and acceptance of the dominant culture, hence the “unequal 'brother nations' relationship”.  

90 Hauser concludes that such usage of linguistic codes positions the Cossack as subordinated, domesticated Other, while the Tatars serve as the ultimate Other in the story:

“Hoffman replaces the Ukrainians...who constituted the ‘other’ helping to define Polishness for Sienkiewicz a century ago, by those who are less threatening to the present Polish reason of state: the far-away oriental Tatars (who also had been, conveniently, exterminated by Soviet Russia), and demonic homosexuals, represented by a transvestite and a witch.”  

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The scholar regards such usage of familiarity and difference as an future-orientated message, an expression of the desire to “revise the Eastern mission myth”,  

92 as reinvigorating the vision of Poland as the Bulwark of Europe, which legitimises its entry into the EU, while turning its gaze Eastwards.  

93 As shall be argued below, Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine since 1989, and especially during the crisis from autumn until spring 2013-14, indeed suggests that Poland is seeking to complete the revolution of 1989, with European tools of soft power.

To greater or lesser extent, research on With Fire and Sword found depiction of Ukraine as Eastern, subordinate and backward in comparison to Poland. Indeed, in Polish history-narration, Ukraine too, has come to be viewed through an Oriental lens. The centre-periphery paradigm necessitates Polish discursive positioning in Europe, and can help explain selective history-telling and remembrance. Zarycki remarked on the complexity of Polish identity as a combination of minority complex toward the West,  

94 and - with reference to Kurczewska - a superiority complex directed Eastwards, as he refers to it, an imperial complex.  

95

90 Ibid., p. 314.
91 Ibid., p. 317.
92 Ibid., p. 306.
93 Ibid., p. 310.
94 Albeit he attributes this fact to a post-colonial setting, which prompts frustration with persistent material relative deprivation despite independence. This paper disagrees with this notion, as Polish efforts to emphasise European belonging can be traced to centuries before.
“a conviction of the special status of Poland on the international scene, or at least in Central-Eastern Europe, has survived and is clearly visible in a majority of Poland’s elites. In particular, it includes a paternalistic or simply arrogant attitude toward Eastern neighbours”. 96

Polish self and Ukrainian Other recently

‘What are Ukrainians like?’ - Perception of the Other in line with past discourse

I argue that the overall framework of Orientalisation as reinforcing the perception of superiority narration of history, had a profound impact on the contemporary image of Ukraine in Poland. Tarnavsky was unsurprised by the way Ukrainians were depicted in With Fire and Sword, seeing that “in a recent poll reported in the Ukrainian press, Poles rated Ukrainians as the most despised ethnic group”. 97 During the decade following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, indeed, Polish public opinion on Ukrainians went from bad to worse. Konieczna’s thorough poll of 2001 for the Polish Institute of Public Affairs confirms the very negative attitudes in Poland towards Ukraine. 98 The author introduces the report by noting the persistence of historically shaped views of the Other, which, as she notes, are rarely ever based on personal encounters but narratives retold. 99 Konieczna’s proposition that there “is much reason to assume that With Fire and Sword continues to shape Polish views of Ukrainians until present,” 100 is an important explicit linkage of the Orientalist discourse shaping public opinion of today, which other research on the negative results failed to observe. However, the historically tainted view on Ukraine remains a singular mention, rather than forming a key point.

96 Ibid.
99 Ibid., p. 13.
100 Ibid., p. 12.
Konieczna’s findings of the most common associations with people and country show that “Ukrainians are regarded as an intolerant, aggressive and reckless people”, as well as cruel and vindictive; economically, Ukraine is seen as a “country of disorder, poverty and backwardness”. While most Poles had “close to no knowledge” on the political system in Ukraine, the characteristics they came to associate with the country indicate that the most non-European associations were attributed. Crucial in this context is Konieczna’s observation that Ukraine seemed to be regarded, rather than a nation-state, as a people inhabiting a designated territory. Similarly, most Poles starkly underestimated it both territorially as well as population-wise. A further telling aspect of Konieczna’s research compared the image of a Ukrainian's characteristics the Polish auto-stereotype. The most commonly attributed characteristics, religiosity, proneness to alcohol abuse, as well as hospitality, are those which Poles, too, most frequently attributed to themselves. Konieczna’s comparative analysis of sympathy, perception of proximity to the country versus that towards other nations is very revealing in light of the discursive practice of the rhetorical unconscious by the many, which appears to have permeated peoples conceptions: she notes that

“Poles regard Ukrainians (together with Belarussians and Russians) as an East European people, to which Poles express the least sympathy. They furthermore have a comparatively strong perception of difference and distance towards Ukrainians”.

In fact, Ukrainians were rated as the least liked nation among all eight others. Highest sympathy was expressed for Western European nations, a circumstance, as Konieczna seems to imply, which could be explained by

101 Ibid., pp. 7-20.
102 Ibid., p. 19.
103 Ibid., p. 21.
104 Estimates could lie around 4 times below the actual figure, p. 24.
105 Ibid., p. 8.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid., p. 28.
intensified Polish aspirations towards EU membership.\textsuperscript{108} While the current political context is important to consider in terms of discursive positioning in what is perceived as a crucial moment for the nation, the image of Ukraine in Polish minds needs to be contextualised in the larger discourse. It is the long entrenched ethnic markers which acquire a heightened sense of psychological urgency at a time when a positively distinctive identity becomes all the more important.\textsuperscript{109}

\textit{Contextualising 'Ukrainophilia' of Polish elites}

From Fedorowicz's analysis of Polish foreign policy directed Eastwards, it is evident that of all its ex-Soviet neighbours, the Polish-Ukrainian bond has been by far the closest throughout the last two decades.\textsuperscript{110} As noted, Poland was the first country to recognise Ukrainian independence, and both countries early on - in 1992 - signed an important symbolic declaration of mutual commitment to good neighbourly relations, with explicit reference to “history and tradition as the foundation for the renewal of Polish and Ukrainian relations [ ...as well as] the ethnic and cultural links between the Polish and Ukrainian nations”.\textsuperscript{111} The close bond between the two former presidents Kuchma and Kwasniewski - both in office since the mid-90s - was regarded as a breakthrough and beginning of a comprehensive “strategic partnership”.\textsuperscript{112} Brzezinki, in the early 1990s, enthusiastically assessed the Polish-Ukrainian cooperation as a “breath of fresh air” in the region, and noted the countries’ joint strategic power in terms of their capabilities and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{108}Ibid., p. 27.
  \item \textsuperscript{109}As noted above, ethnic markers are not eternally fixed, albeit they do not change rapidly or promptly. Konieczna found that the more sympathetic respondents were to Ukrainians, the more they perceived a similarity between Poles and Ukrainians. Ibid., p. 29.
  \item \textsuperscript{111}Ibid., p. 539.
\end{itemize}
According to Fedorowicz and Szeptycki, Polish elites' high interest in Ukraine and the international advocacy of its neighbour could progressively be observed as Poland joined the NATO and EU. Indeed, elites were frequently referred to as eagerly engaged in relations with Ukraine. Copsey observes that Poland’s pro-Ukrainian foreign policy today is, across the country’s political spectrum, almost unconditionally supported. He argues that this can be explained by

“the liberals, inheritors of the ideals of the émigré journal Kultura...they can count in their ranks the overwhelming bulk of the foreign policy community. [...] They fervently believe in the Polish-Ukrainian strategic alliance as a strengthening force for good in the region”.

Founded in 1947, the Paris-based Kultura was issued monthly throughout the decades of communism, reaching its Polish readership via underground distribution. Kultura’s chief editor Giedroyc is viewed as setting the publication’s political tone. As Ulanowska points out, he had been convinced of the eventual breakdown of the Soviet Union, and had appealed for Poles to sympathise with their neighbours, which, once political transformation was possible, would become its key partners. The writer especially emphasised the crucial role of Ukraine for Polish Eastern partnership, and stressed the importance of Poland as the Bulwark against Russia. As Copsey notes, while Giedroyc was the most prominent advocate of such ideology at the time, it was in line with earlier writings such as Baczkowski’s, which similarly

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114 Fedorowicz (2007), 545.
emphasised the importance to cooperate with former Commonwealth states.\textsuperscript{120}

Blacker, similarly to Copsey, established a link between the ideas promoted by \textit{Kultura} and Polish foreign policy, referring to Poland’s international advocacy for Ukraine as its self-imposed “mission”.\textsuperscript{121} Indeed, while in the past, Polish elites’ attitudes towards the country’s Eastern neighbour could best be characterised as imperial, and domination was understood in terms of Poland’s hard, military power, the present strategy is determined by the affirmation of its European identity, hence in need of corresponding means. Even prior to joining the EU, Poland had declared its intention to considerably shape the Union’s foreign policy to the East, which then found expression in the Eastern Partnership (EaP).\textsuperscript{122} This way, as noted by Cianciara, Poland attempted to integrate and legitimise its foreign policy objectives in the EU framework.\textsuperscript{123} Klatt views this endeavour precisely as an illustration of Polish adoption of European soft power,\textsuperscript{124} in an attempt to further export what is understood as European values Eastwards. By doing so, Poland instrumentally demarcates itself from this very East, and is able to manifest its European identity. The Polish identity discourse which bears a historically entrenched missionary element as part of the narrative of religiosity and general moral superiority over the East, combined with the revised mission promoted by \textit{Kultura}, are arguably the main discursive

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., referencing Baczkowski (1939).

\textsuperscript{121} Blacker, U. (2013) ‘Prizes and Politics: Poland, the EU and Ukrainian Culture’, \textit{Ukraine Analysis: Current Politics in Ukraine}, December 5. The scholar argues that the liberal elite project of embracing Ukraine as European plays out in the cultural sphere, too: The fact that a Polish committee granted the 2013 Angelus award for Central European literature to the Ukrainian Zabuzhko, whose work \textit{Museum of Abandoned Secrets} deals with difficult interwar relationship of both countries and presents Ukrainian nationalism in a favourable light, is arguably a well-meaning but patronising gesture of symbolic acceptance, as opposed to “substantive engagement with that other”. The promotion of the Ukrainian viewpoint, according to Blacker, can be seen as the employment of a soft power strategy which is “aimed at redefining Ukrainian culture as properly European, which helps steer Ukraine as a state towards the EU.”

\textsuperscript{122} As one particular strand of the overall EU framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which Poland had criticised as too Southern-focussed.


influences on the elitist project of Europeanising Ukraine in particular, which has been central to the EaP throughout.\textsuperscript{125} Dempsey interpreted the persistently committed Polish Eastern mission as the attempt to “complete the unfinished revolution in Eastern Europe”.\textsuperscript{126} This understanding, indeed, is in line with the discursively promoted Polish understanding of the self as defined above. As much as Poland’s political elites appeared committed to the country’s Eastern mission by European means, for the largest part, average Poles, it must seem, were less enthusiastic. Konieczna’s findings indicate that, just over a decade ago, they certainly did not share sentiments of cultural and ethnic similarity referenced in the declarations of good-neighbourly relations.

\textit{Poland – Ukraine – Russia: A zero-sum game?}

Szeptycki noted that the overt Polish support for Ukraine resulted in the deterioration of its relations with Russia.\textsuperscript{127} Indeed, the role of Russia as Poland’s “natural adversary in the region [of Eastern Europe]” was acknowledged even in the first document proposing a comprehensive Eastern Partnership.\textsuperscript{128} When scholars and policy-makers emphasise that an independent, democratic Ukraine is in the Polish national interest,\textsuperscript{129} Russia with its, as stated, “imperial ambitions”\textsuperscript{130} often seems to loom large. For both countries a zero-sum game is implied, in which Poland and Ukraine can choose to either cooperate with one another, or with Russia instead. Szeptycki regretted that Polish-Ukrainian political and economic cooperation did not further intensify following the Orange Revolution,\textsuperscript{131} one reason, as he notes,\textsuperscript{132} A number of scholars investigated to what extent the troublesome periods of the countries' 20th-century history, such as the Polish-Ukrainian war following WWI, as well as the massacre of the Polish minority in Volhynia in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{125} Ciancara (2008), p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Dempsey, J. (2014) ‘Poland’s unfinished revolution in Eastern Europe’, Carnegie Europe, February 27.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Szeptycki (2010), p. 10.
\item \textsuperscript{128} Cianciara (2008), p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{130} Szeptycki (2010), p. 6.
\item \textsuperscript{131} A number of scholars investigated to what extent the troublesome periods of the countries' 20th-century history, such as the Polish-Ukrainian war following WWI, as well as the massacre of the Polish minority in Volhynia in
\end{itemize}
being the prioritisation of Russia in Polish foreign policy at the time. A study of Ukrainian journalists' opinions on Poland similarly found them disappointed in such perceived stagnation, which was attributed to Yanukovych's 'Russia-first' policy. Fomina’s and Ryabinska’s study reads like an argumentation, that, in this zero-sum game, Ukraine would be better off choosing Poland. A critical analysis must prompt the question whether the findings of the survey, too, might be informed by the discourse of the Polish self-understanding, and thus overemphasise Ukrainian associations of Poland to equal with progress. Fomina and Ryabinska’s report details, in great length, the journalists’ accounts on Poland as a historic gateway to Europe, it being a role model to Ukraine in many respects.

While this enthusiastic view seems to contradict the study’s findings that Ukrainian media generally do not cover Poland at all, the report further suggests this was largely due to the fact that the country is a safe and quiet place.

In general, the national-conservative PiS [Law and Justice] party, lead by Jaroslaw Kaczynski, positions itself strongly against Russia, while the liberal-conservative PO [Citizens' Platform] - currently in government - is considered to take a more pragmatic stance and has, in recent years, attempted to improve Polish-Russian relations, which was heavily criticised by the former.

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During the Ukraine crisis, PO similarly positioned itself discursively firmly anti-Russian. This way, all crucial elements of the Polish national identity discourse as well as elites’ conception of the revised Eastern mission presented a particular moment for identification which lead to exceptional degree of singularisation of discourse that affirmed Poland's positively distinctive identity.

Section Two

Media Analysis

Research Material

In the first section of this paper, I attempted to line out how the identity discourse of the self and Other in Poland came to be shaped through selective narration of the Polish past. As noted at the outset, Levintova as well as Hopf hold that national identity discourse informs the image of the Other in people's minds and furthermore foreign policy objectives. While opinions on Ukraine in Poland were until recently arguably strongly shaped by the selective history narration that positively distinctive national identification requires, Polish foreign policy was found to be attached to a revised mission that embraced the cooperation with Ukraine as a way of affirming European identity as defined by its soft power.

At present, the media can be regarded as “the principal institution of the public sphere”.\footnote{Curran, J. (1997) 'Press History', in Power Without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain: Press and Broadcasting in Britain; Curran, J; Seaton, J. (eds.). London, New York: Routledge, p.29.} Especially for relatively suddenly occurring events which people do not experience directly, the media have a central role in communicating, and thus shaping the discourse. They constitute the major feed of knowledge which becomes the basis for further communication and
dissemination of narratives. As was found, indeed, the majority of Poles derive their images of the Other from mass media, and Konieczna’s study confirms this with regards to Ukraine in particular. Her report especially mentions *Rzeczpospolita* (RP) and *Gazeta Wyborcza* (GW) as papers which try to accommodate the rising interest in Ukrainian affairs by offering coverage on a range of issues on the country in multiple sections. This study, too, for an analysis of Polish newspapers, will focus on these papers. They remain among the most widely read in the country: recent figures suggest a circulation of around 185,000 for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, and 63,000 for *Rzeczpospolita*. While sales have been declining for both papers over recent years, this does not necessarily have to suggest a drop in readership, as the newspapers’ websites are widely used. What is more, both papers remain the two most cited national sources in the country, a fact that confirms their status as most trusted sources of information and illustrates their influential position with regards to shaping the representation of events in the country.

The analysis of coverage from *RP* and *GW* represents that from across the general “ideological spectrum of the Polish mainstream media”. *Rzeczpospolita* is firmly rooted in the Christian national tradition, a reason that led to its decade-long ban during communism. The paper has a conservative profile and “close ties to Law and Justice”. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, on the other hand, is regarded as a liberal publication. In allegiance to Solidarność

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137 Moscovici, a leading scholar in social representations studies, described their function as serving firstly people’s orientation in the “material and social world; secondly, to enable communication”. Moscovici,(1973), in ‘Social Representations Theory’ (2013), Changing Minds.org.

While social representation studies are more concerned with the ways in which representations, meanings ascribed to events, are received and further communicated, the starting point of the scholarship helps to illustrate the importance of the key institution of discourse, the media, which are the primary medium.


139 Around 72% of Polish adults reported exposure to such coverage. Konieczna (2001), p. 22.

140 Ibid., p. 17.


144 ‘Rzeczpospolita’ (2014), Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung.
Search engines on the websites of both papers formed the starting point of the research to identify relevant articles for *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*: the keyword 'Ukraine' was entered on 19 March, 2014. For both *RP* and *GW*, a number of 150 articles was first considered. Excluded were repetitions, minor, very short pieces, as well as articles marked as “[RELACJA]” for *RZ*, and “RELACJA NA ZYWO” for *GW* - live reports on recent developments in Ukraine, due to the peculiar style of news-telling of this format. As the search results included articles from various sections of the paper, domestic, international, and opinion, the research will follow this random setting in order to give a very rough, cross-cutting picture of the framing adopted in the paper overall. In addition, articles were considered which were interlinked with those prompted by search engines. A number of 63 articles was finally analysed for *Rzeczpospolita*, and 67 for *Gazeta Wyborcza*. The researcher attempted to identify articles from across the time-frame of interest, beginning in late November 2013 with the escalation of the protests, and ending in mid March 2014 with mounting unrests surrounding the referendum in Crimea. However, in correspondence with erratic developments of the crisis, coverage was not evenly distributed; furthermore, certain key events such as the negotiations between Yanukovych and the EU’s foreign ministers under the participation of Sikorski on 21 February present

145 The first independent self-organised body allowed – and then banned, due to its extremely high popularity – in the Soviet Union, formed in 1980. Working underground for years after, it eventually co-shaped Poland’s post-Communist future in the round-table agreements of 1989. Solidarity bears high symbolic value for Poland until present, which will become evident in the analysis below.
146 *Gazeta Wyborcza* (2014), Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung.
revealing discursive events of Polish national identity.

The study of news agencies and press releases in the context of news framing lies beyond the scope of this paper.

**Methodological approach to data**

This study is interested in how far the pre-existing context, the discourse on the Polish self and Other as defined in the paper’s first section, is visible in media representation of the Ukraine crisis. A critical approach, as noted at the outset of this study, seeks to interrogate the currants of the pre-conceived understanding which informs the perpetual practice of such unconscious rhetoric. In order to comprehend the present dimensions of the Polish identity discourse, news texts were analysed and categorised according to the way in which they depicted the events. In this way, recurrent frames of representations were identified. Frames, according to Hervik, precisely form “the discursive cues […] used to evoke, or align, its message with certain pre-existing understandings”.148 Entmann furthermore defined framing as a selective process, always suggestive of a particular “definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”.149 Such selection, as is argued here, occurs through the process of the rhetorical unconscious, which automatises the understanding of new contexts according to past representations. The consideration of intertextuality is crucial in this respect: news texts cannot be seen as singular, but as serially connected in reaction and reference to one another, thus forming a narrative.150 Such intertextuality is genre-bound, as Fairclough points out with reference to Bakhtin’s writings, as texts of a genre are exposed

to its particular constraints.\textsuperscript{151} The dissection of different but recurring frames of news stories will shed light on the overall discourse, which can be contextualised with the “pre-existing understanding”.\textsuperscript{152} The nature of the intensive engagement with news items identified through this method, as Maneria and ter Wal note, necessarily puts restrictions on the size of the data set; the recurrence of a certain mode of discourse, though, can be observed through some quantification,\textsuperscript{153} and, indeed, this is will be of key interest. This paper, due to the nature of the events studied which were rapidly evolving as well as stretched out over a period of time, attempted to do justice to its project by choosing the following procedure: firstly, the articles were studied and categorised according to recurring frames of representation, in order to appreciate the overall discourse in contextualising the different frames identified together. In a second step, a deeper investigation of a selection of articles will reveal certain discursive representational mechanisms, with particular emphasis on the underlying assumptions which arguably can be contextualised with preformed understanding of Polish identity discourse. An in-depth linguistic analysis of the sentence-level cannot be undertaken, as this study attempts to shed light on larger, repetitive discursive frames as events of interest unfold; it focusses instead on tools considered “global”.\textsuperscript{154} Thus, paradigm for the dissection of frames is to identify implicit and explicit argumentation of the news text in consideration of such global, discursive elements as established by Maneri and ter Wal, as well as Tankard:\textsuperscript{155} a very significant indication for a frame is the chosen topic of a news item, and its headline as setting the tone of the article; the organisational structure of the text including subheadings, pictures and

\textsuperscript{151} Fairclough defined a genre as bearing its characteristic, as if automatised use of language in "a socially ratified way...in connection with a particular type of social activity". Fairclough, N. (1995).\textit{Critical Discourse Analysis}. Boston: Addison Wesley, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{152} Entmann (1993), p. 52. in Hervik (2011).
\textsuperscript{153} Maneri ; ter Wal (2005).
videos included will furthermore be important.¹⁵⁶ A further very significant clue for the discursive analysis, moreover, is the authorisation of speech for certain actors, through interviews or quotation patterns.¹⁵⁷ This reveals not only the implicitly accepted status and level of knowledge of the speaker assumed to be of interest to the public; it represents a choice of discursive positioning towards an issue by not letting someone else speak. The style of narration constitutes a further indicator for the frame adopted. This concerns both the order in which information is presented, as well as any particular style of story-telling, such as scene-setting or inclusion of dramatic elements. The study of frames chosen for news coverage needs to consider which possible narratives were excluded. One crucial aspect will be the assessment of Polish leadership during the crisis. The fact that, as will be shown, it has been assessed favourably, reveals the persistent mechanisms of the rhetorical unconscious which invite a politically patriotic framing of events. Indeed, assumptions of Polishness according to the above defined discourse in combination with the revised Polish Eastern mission will be shown as informing coverage on the Ukraine crisis 2013-14 across the mainstream political spectrum.

Findings

Rzeczpospolita

The table below illustrates the larger frames of representation identified for RP-articles. As the length of the period studied does not allow to detail all articles per date, coverage was summarised in a way so as to broadly correspond to events occurring at the time, and summarising time frames where articles either covered the same event, or where the stalling of

¹⁵⁶ Although only Gazeta Wyborcza utilises such visual elements in a way as to significantly underscore the argumentation of the article.
developments in Ukraine led to less and miscellaneous coverage.

**RP - Table of discursive frames**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Poland should intensify its efforts, and take an assertive stance in the EU</th>
<th>Visualisation of events</th>
<th>Poland displays good leadership and this is recognised by others</th>
<th>Triumph over and demarcation against Russia</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>06 – 09/12/13</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 – 16/12/13</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As noted above, *Rzeczpospolita*, as a Christian-conservative paper, is generally regarded as rather critical of the government in power. An analysis of the types of discursive frames adopted for narrating the events in Ukraine between late November and mid March, however, revealed a markedly pleased assessment of the leadership. Polish diplomacy, headed by the foreign minister Sikorski, as will be shown, is represented as playing a positively crucial role in the crisis. The articles which expressed criticism did so with respect to a lack of further action in supporting what was regarded pro-democratic, pro-European movement in Ukraine. As is evident from the table, the positive assessment of Polish political leadership peaked over the negotiations with Yanukovych on 21 February. Similarly, analysis of the framing of Sikorski’s meeting with the Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov on 19 December, narrated in an overall discourse of Polish-Russian fundamental difference, reveals pride in the former as adopting a firm stance against his Russian counterpart. The criticism of the EU’s lack of support for Ukraine tends to be framed in a way that Poland should intensify efforts to convince its fellow EU members of the right course of action, resting on the assumption of Polish expertise; this reveals frustration with a hampered pursuit of the Eastern mission. Criticism directed at the government for failing to do more, as will be shown through an intertextual position that treats news texts as interdependent, reveals that the same is outweighed by subsequent coverage which appears more persuasive.

158 The popularity of the PO-aligned Sikorski, as will be shown, indeed appears to have grown considerably, as his diplomatic endeavours were domestically and internationally recognised. Sikorski, having studied in Oxford and worked in Washington for several years, is one of not many Polish politicians with an international background, and his ‘European profile’ is pointed out by media coverage in some instances; thus, by extension, Sikroski appears to affirm Polish European identity.

159 This, notably, contrasts with in an article assessing governmental achievements halfway through term when Sikorski’s accomplishments were rated as “sufficient” only. The reason, however, was his alleged ambitions for international office.


34
Exemplification of rhetorically practised political patriotism

Polish diplomacy as sensible and well informed, universally recognised as such

One of the earliest articles in the dataset is an interview with the Polish foreign minister, titled “Sikorski for Rz: Ukraine as a lesson to Eurosceptics at home”. The heading serves as a reminder of the Polish past and affirmation of having followed the correct, European path, while simultaneously affirming the foreign minister’s expertise on wider issues of economic and social transformation of Central and Eastern Europe. Sikorski’s position in the interview remains unchallenged, as he elaborates on Poland’s determination to return to Europe following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and expresses sympathy for Ukrainian protests, while demanding reforms.

An interview with the esteemed ex-president Aleksander Kwasniewski at the beginning of December credits Polish diplomacy in relation to Ukraine. While the crisis constituted one of several topics covered in the interview, considering intertextuality, it reads as a response to an earlier published comment by Kaczynski, who criticised the lack of governmental presence on the Maidan square at the end of November. Kwasniewski’s point that such presence would breach general rules of diplomatic conduct remains unchallenged and thus has a persuasive effect.

Affirmation of the importance of Poland in the EU and recognised as such by its European allies - with particular emphasis on Germany - was visible in an article dated 19 December, titled “Germany and Poland speak with one voice

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160 Talaga, A.; Bielecki, J. (2013, 27 November) 'Sikorski dla "Rz": Ukraina nauczką dla rodzimych eurosceptyków', Rzeczpospolita.
161 A similar affirmation of Sikorski’s status is repeated in an article in which the foreign minister is presented as a key actor in the EU, and explains the specifics of the Union’s proposal to Ukraine. 'Sikorski: oferta UE dla Ukrainy pozostaje na stole', (2013, 12 December) Rzeczpospolita.
162 Bielecki, J. 'Oligarchowie stawiają na Europę' (2013, 03 December)
163 'Kaczyński w Kijowie: wspieramy europejskie dążenia Ukraińcy' (2013, 01 December), Rzeczpospolita.
on Ukraine”.\textsuperscript{164} The argumentation, with the German foreign minister reportedly meeting Sikorski, proceeds to inform that Steinmeier had “changed his mind”, and further, that Berlin “trusts Warsaw more and more on Eastern foreign policy”, suggest that Polish expertise is persuasive. An article sympathising with the protesters on Maidan square as tensions rose in mid-February, describes Sikorski deliberating with EU partners on this, noting in a similar vein that “Brussels is beginning to listen more and more attentively to the Polish voice”.\textsuperscript{165}

A very notable moment of the practice of the rhetorical unconscious of political patriotism, as was indicated above, could be observed in the coverage of EU-foreign ministers' negotiations with Yanukovych, 21 February. Considered an extraordinary success, the event presented a moment of Poland’s positive distinctiveness, and critical coverage remained absent. The titles of articles covering the negotiations give indicative cues of the high level of trust to Polish diplomacy. Quoting the Polish MEP Prostasiewicz, one article titles “If the agreement works out, Sikorski should be awarded the Nobel peace prize”,\textsuperscript{166} finding no objection to his statement. Several articles displayed awe for the foreign minister in making the impossible happen. This is reflected in titles such as “The diplomatic maneuver of Kiev”,\textsuperscript{167} as well as simply “Apocalypse”.\textsuperscript{168} The latter article uses very literary, emotive language in visualising the battle scenes, starting off with describing how “Yanukovych is bathing Maidan in blood”, after which the reader is taken to the setting of diplomatic negotiations, which are described in a manner suggestive of an emergency operation: “The feverish diplomatic treatments and talks lasted the whole day”. Another article expresses sympathy for the protesters’

\textsuperscript{164}Jendroszczyk, P. (-2013, 19 December) ‘Niemcy i Polska mówią jednym głosem w sprawie Ukrainy’, \textit{Rzeczpospolita}.
\textsuperscript{165}Piechal, T; Giziński, J. (2014,19 February) ‘Majdan się nie poddaje’, \textit{Rzeczpospolita}.
\textsuperscript{166}‘Protasiewicz: Jeśli porozumienie zadziała, Sikorskiemu należy się Nobel’ (2014, 21 February), \textit{Rzeczpospolita}.
scepticism of the agreement, while referring to the same as the result of a "marathon", the "maximum of what could have been achieved". The article which served as an introduction to this paper, titling “Great symbols of Ukraine”, simultaneously moves the country discursively Westwards by calling it “the most important place in Europe”, after which it Orientalises Ukrainians in admiring their un-European passion “who at all in the West would hold out protesting for months any more?”. The article proceeds to suggest the protests to be a “symbol of unification”, notably excluding the possibility of Ukrainians not sharing a unequivocal stance on closer ties to the EU. The author furthermore sees. A more assertive affirmation of Poland’s achievements in the crisis, in holding up the “awakening of Polish diplomacy”, as fostering the highest “ sense of pride” in a long time, could hardly be possible.

The unequivocally enthusiastic assessment of Polish diplomacy is complemented by an article covering an opinion poll conducted for RP, published shortly after the negotiations. It illustrates citizens' approval of the Polish “diplomatic mission”: “The majority (71%) had a positive opinion [...] Only every fifth respondent was critical”. Respondents were said to be divided over the question whether the government should intensify its efforts, with 43% considering them adequate, while 40% thought more should be done. The article proceeds to describe pro-Ukrainian protest marches in a number of Polish cities, after which it appears critical of PiS' negative comments on the government, following the party's earlier vow to back governmentally-led foreign policy. The article ends with the direct quotation of a Polish political scientist, who argues that the renewed dissent of PiS can

171 A similar article titled “Maidan does not trust anyone”, details the desperate situation of a protester, whose brother chose to sympathise with Russia and tore the family apart, expresses understanding of protesters’ confusion, and their failure to recognise the agreement with Yanukovych as the “real earthquake” that it was. Piechal (2014, 22 February) 'Majdan nie ufa nikomu', Rzeczpospolita.
be explained by their need to rhetorically distinguish themselves for their electorate, and the argument has the effect of de-legitimising the dissent. In this instance, RP appears to be willing to deviate from the party allegiance for what is implicitly accepted as the higher good: solidarity for Ukraine in unity of the Polish party spectrum are presupposed as desirable and beneficial domestically and internationally, and the absence of the same results in criticism towards those dissenting. The practice of the rhetorical unconscious of Polish identity, as is argued, can help contextualise such framing. While an article published in late February details PiS’ antagonistic efforts as, titled, “Total war – so business as usual”, it ends on the note “heavily wounded was only one victim: the Republic of Poland”.173 Again, disunity is framed as highly damaging without the provision of reasons why it would have such detrimental consequences.

The Polish leadership is furthermore reported as receiving universal approval through utilisation of speakers. An Ukrainian ambassador, who evidently presents an expert opinion,174 is cited as acknowledging the successful “multi-level engagement of Poland”, singling out Sikorski’s merit in particular. The importance of Polish efforts over those of other foreign ministers which were involved, is in line with the discourse that Poland has a key role to play in Ukraine’s fate, and is the country’s only reliable advocate in Europe.

The recognition of Polish engagement for Ukraine jointly with the narrative of its relevance as representative of the Western value community, is further visible in RP-articles published at the end of February, covering the session of the Polish National Security Council, as well as Sikorski’s meeting with the American foreign minister. Early in the article, the foreign ministry’s press release is quoted that “Kerry thanked the minister for his engagement in the peace process”.175 The recognition of Poland as a highly significant party in

175 ‘Sikorski z sekretarzem stanu USA o Ukrainie i Iranie’ (2014, 27 February), Rzeczpospolita.
this “peace process” is, indeed, exhausted in almost any thinkable way: coverage on the situation of the Tatars in Crimea is titled as them “pleading for Polish help”, and Polish efforts for the EaP are furthermore seen as the reason for why protests broke out in late November, as they instilled “the vision of European integration” in Ukrainians’ minds. Telling in this context is an interview with Tyahnybok, the leader of the controversial nationalist party Svoboda. The title of the interview “We are immensly grateful to Poles for their support”, is indicative of the friendly, conciliatory tone of the article. Rather than facing critical questions on the party’s ideology and agenda, Tyahnybok is encouraged to elaborate on his personal views on Poland: the entire second page of the interview details the relations of the two countries, which he holds as “neighbours, brotherly nations” despite past hardships. Thus, as it is evident from the newspaper coverage included for Rzeczpospolita, Polish diplomacy has been portrayed as universally acclaimed – in political unity domestically, supported by Polish citizens as reflected in opinion polls cited, by Ukrainian diplomats and regular citizens, and lastly by its EU-partners, and other Western allies, the United States.

The Polish voice in the EU as remedy for the Union’s past mistakes

While Poland at times is narrated as an exemplary European actor, in RP-articles which appealed to intensify European efforts, Polish engagement was presented as the only promising solution: in late February, an article titled “all the sins of Europe” lists the community’s failures to take pro-Ukrainian

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179 This is only dealt with in the questions as to whether Tyahnybok supports European integration, which he said the party “always supported”, and on the Pravy Sektor, to which the party leader can comfortably respond that these are the radicals.
agency in the past.\footnote{Wapiński, M.; Kowal, P. (2014, 24 February) ‘Wszystkie grzechy Europy’, \textit{Rzeczpospolita}.} A “more active Poland”, as the last subheading reads, would alleviate this, provided the country would “recognise this historic moment and sets the tone”. Poland’s depiction as simultaneously European and as expert on “the East”, through the advocacy for which it can demonstrate its Europeanness, is very much in line with the Polish national identity discourse. Disappointment was expressed in Polish leadership for failing to stronger advocate Ukraine in the EU setting, as its prioritising Moldova over Ukraine in EU re-negotiations of the EaP.\footnote{Słojewska, A. (2014, 10 February) ‘Na ratunek Partnerstwu’, \textit{Rzeczpospolita}.} However, in consideration of intertextuality, this position was arguably balanced out by a longer and more comprehensive article which regarded the lack of mention of Ukraine as it being a special case and hence in need of “separate politics”.\footnote{Słojewska, A. (2014, 10 February) ‘Więcej wsparcia Unii Europejskiej dla Mołdawii’, \textit{Rzeczpospolita}.}

\textit{Poland as Europe – Russia as Orient}

Very early in the crisis, an article dated 27 November positions Poland against Russia in its race for Ukraine as linguistically staged on lively Maidan square, and the heading indicates who allegedly was the winner of this battle for the hearts and minds: “On Maidan, they praise Poland and criticise Russia”.\footnote{Reczpospolita (2013, 27 November).} The article starts with emphasising Ukrainian recognition of Polish “success” and Russia as “blocking progress”, a narrative very much in line with the Polish historically formed understanding of the self. The article details the numerous presence of Poles on Maidan which, as in the words of a young Pole interviewed, is “overwhelmingly positively” received by Ukrainians; this is literary exemplified by their outcries of “thank you” and their singing of the Polish national anthem.\footnote{The frame of Ukrainians’ appreciation of Polish agency for the country is recurrent, as exemplified by an article from 05 February, which lists the most accomplished politicians for the Ukrainian cause. ‘Polacy zdominowali
Further framing built around the contrasting of Poland and Russia as antithetic in every respect, was visible in coverage of the countries’ foreign ministers’ meeting in mid-December. One article’s literary setting is suggestive of a boxing match, in which, from the outset, Sikorski is constructed as superior. His quotation, “Poland and Russia are divided by their philosophy on action”, reads as a bold confrontation to the Russian counterpart. Lavrov’s allegedly defensive position is dwelt upon, and the article concludes by contextualising the lack of Russian forcefulness, and, indeed, its bid for cooperation, as proof of that “the Kreml understood the strengthened Polish position in the EU”. Another article covering the meeting titles tellingly “Russia gives us Ukraine as a present”, and sets out by suggesting that Russia “admitted its defeat”. Subheadings narrating that “Poland can no longer be isolated” stylistically support the discourse of the country’s strength. One article lauds the currently firm stance of the government against Russia, while the reminder is issued that Poland should never again forget that, as is titled, there are “Two Worlds: Russia is in the second one”. Such extreme discursive distancing against Russia exemplifies Oriental discourse in similar ways of the narratives defined in section one.

With the beginning of March and the Duma approving Russian military presence in Ukraine, the focus of the articles of in this study turns to Russia, and Ukraine as instrumental to the same. A representative piece is titled “Europe can stop Russia”, and ends by appealing to European action against “Putin's imperial ambitions”, which might even transform “the authoritarian regime he constructed”. In RP coverage as analysed in the sample, Russia’s role in the region is never contextualised with de facto economic dependence

of Ukraine on the former. Rather, grand narratives on Russia are commonplace, which appear to blindly reverberate the Oriental discourse on the country in a rhetorical practice of patriotism. This is well illustrated in the “Duet: Russia and Ukraine”, where two Polish MPs present their views on the crisis. The West and Russia, in the words of PO-member Zaleski, pose a “clash of two divergent conceptions of progress-building: Russia tied itself to the archaic idea of territorial vastness”, while Europe appears as a “magnet, luring with attractive values and an open way of organising society”; furthermore, the “pro-Western choice of our neighbour [...] first and foremost symbolises the failure of the authoritarian model”. The question remains why such unitary Ukrainian pro-European choice is presupposed in light of increasingly visible dissent in Eastern parts of Ukraine against the interim government in Kiev at the time. Rather than offering substantial analysis on the reality for Ukrainians on the ground - East and West in the country -, a tendency to frame the protests in Ukraine according to own experiences of the past is visible.Waszczykowski, the second MP positioning itself to the crisis, has an even more radical stance on Russia. He sets out by arguing that the government should never have considered closer cooperation with Russia, and that the Eurasian Union “can only be implemented with tanks”, thus reducing Russia to military aggression. Both views appear, rather than being an analysis of the concrete situation in Crimea or its contextualisation, as a reverberation of historic discourse on Russia. While consensus among Polish political parties and media appears to be that of Russia “never taking Ukraine seriously as a nation of its own”, the strongly pro-European frames must prompt the question as to what extent this projects own narratives onto Ukraine.

Other Orientalist coverage reads as scare message, detailing a Polish

190 Ibid.
cardinal’s appeal to “pray for Ukraine”, where the author proceeds to detail
the decision of a leading member of the Russian-Polish forum of citizens’
dialogue to leave for moral reasons.\textsuperscript{191} An interview with a high-ranking
Polish general starts with concerned author’s question whether “Russia
declared war on Ukraine”,\textsuperscript{192} to which the general responds “Not yet. Putin
did not make such a decision just yet”, implying that it should nevertheless be
expected very soon. In coverage of an extraordinary session of the parliament,
Poland’s readiness to impose “tough sanctions” on Russia is stressed – in the
title -, as well as the unitary stance of all parties behind the government’s
actions in this respect.\textsuperscript{193} An interview with PiS-member Brudziński
emphasises his party position. It revolves around questions of the Russian
threat, and “for whom Putin now poses a problem”;\textsuperscript{194} the MP responds that
all ex-members of the Eastern block should feel threatened. He proceeds to
expand – in line with the party position – on the ex-president Lech
Kaczynski’s “realistic assessment of Russian politics,” arguing that the “naive
notion” should be abandoned that “we, after the Soviet empire, now live in a
safe world”. The latter comment appears to be directed at the government in
office. The interviewer encourages Brudzinski to elaborate on the mistakes of
Polish leadership in this respect, which has the effect of solidifying the
absurdity of the idea that Russia could be seen as anything else than an
aggressor.\textsuperscript{195} References to Russia, however, are missing any current
contextualisation, and continue to be made on a basis preconceived ideas on
the true character of Russia. A deeper investigation as to what precisely is
occurring with regards to Russian military presence in Crimea is not offered
by any article in the sample; instead, it appears that numerous principles and
references to the past serve as basis for inferences on future scenarios. An
\textsuperscript{191} ‘Kard. Nycz: módlmy się za Ukrainę’ (2014, 03 March), \textit{Rzeczpospolita}.
\textsuperscript{195} Overall, the current Polish Eastern policy is presented in a positive light, when Brudzinski dismisses the
criticism of a fellow party member issues towards Sikorski.
article from mid-March titles “Putin has no intention of stopping”, suggestive of the worst indeed. It reads as if the author had certain proof that “On Monday, Moscow started a diplomatic campaign with the aim to render all of Ukraine dependant on Russia”. The final passage of the article offers hope in introducing the adversary: “The West can still thwart the plans of the Russian president”, and gives the floor to the Polish foreign minster who announces stricter sanctions on Russia, which “might even lead to the downfall of Putin’s regime”. These, notably, are almost the same words as the above mentioned coverage of late February; in a video interview with the renowned journalist Woycicki at the bottom of the article, he repeats the difficult economic situation the Russian government would find itself in. Such double-verification has a more persuasive effect.

Gazeta Wyborcza

Table of discursive frames

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<th>Unity in solidarity</th>
<th>Ukrainian European aspirations acc. to Polish model</th>
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The identification of narrative frames for *Gazeta Wyborcza* proved somewhat more complex, as it presented a more nuanced picture. Despite this, as will be shown, the frames adopted centred around familiar themes of the Polish national identity discourse: Poland was narrated as an actor that represents the European community of values, understands its regulations, and is influential in setting the agenda for important issues such as the Ukraine crisis. Another frame which revolves around progress and Europeanness, is the narration of Poland as role model to Ukraine. However, there is also an understanding of positive demarcating of Poland in its solidarity towards Ukraine, a commitment that, as is argued, implicitly distinguishes it from other EU- members. The usage of Russia as antithetic to Europe is common to both papers.

*Exemplification of rhetorically practised political patriotism*

*Poland as gatekeeper of European values*

A prominent frame of coverage sympathetic towards the governmental line is Poland as rule-abiding European agent. This is usually narrated by presenting either Sikorski’s or the prime minister Donald Tusk’s position on Ukraine as committed, but rational advocate of Ukraine. On 28 November, *GW* referred
to the interview the former gave to RZ about the crisis.197 This short piece can be understood as a response to criticism directed at the government, that more financial support should be granted to Ukraine. As already indicated in the title, Sikorski is quoted as rejecting to “bid against Russia”, and that it is due to Ukrainian reluctance to reform that European financial support will not be given out to waste.198

Similar to coverage of early December, a number of favourable articles on Polish diplomacy's as exemplary in the European context, appeared in late January and early February: reportage of Sikorski attempting to persuade fellow EU members of a necessary common defence,199 as well as of Tusk's campaign to inform and advise the same on the situation in Ukraine,200 suggest their status and authority internationally. In early March, Prof. Rotfeld suggests forming a Ukraine-focussed working group in the EU, making proud reference to Poland as a European country that understands the Union's cause better than its old member states, as it is willing to sacrifice for those in more dire need. In this respect, he refers a Polish MEP's declaration that the country's EU budget has been raised to accommodate "the needs of the poorest", to which the French president at the time allegedly responded: "I feel ashamed that the new countries had to teach us a lesson on European solidarity".201 In this context, the Polish ex-president Kwasniewski’s view i. He explicitly expresses approval of the Polish governmental actions in the crisis as doing "precisely everything that needed to be done. Mobilising the NATO is the right move."202 Kwasniewski’s recognised expertise on Eastern foreign policy gives his judgement a weight that is hard to

197 ’Sikorski w ”Rz”: Nie będziemy się z Rosją licytować’(2013, 28 November), Gazeta Wyborcza.
198 The same position is repeated only a couple of days later, where the journalist interviewing Sikorski does not oppose the foreign minister's view that Europe should not pump vast amounts into Ukraine corrupt domestic system", but has to expect reforms. See: Wróński, P. (2013, 01 December) ’Sikorski dla ”Wyborczej”: Czy Janukowycz oszukał UE? W ostatniej chwili zmienił zdanie, argumenty Rosji przeważyły’, Gazeta Wyborcza.
199 ’Sikorski: UE potrzebne są siły bojowe opłacane ze wspólnej kasy’ (2013, 01 December), Gazeta Wyborcza.
201 ’Prof. Rotfeld: Stwórzmy grupę pomocy dla Kijowa’ (2014, 07 March), Gazeta Wyborcza.
202 ’Kwaśniewski: Rosjanie robią, co chcą, a Zachód musi przyjmować te fakty’ (2014, 02 March), Gazeta Wyborcza.
overestimate, while his assessment simultaneously affirms Polish Europeanness by knowing, and accordingly acting, within Western institutions.

A sense of pride is furthermore visible in coverage on the foreign minister's subsequent visit to Ukraine. The picture heading the article "How Sikorski negotiated in Kiev" shows him surrounded by international politicians and camera men as everyone's attention is on him, while he speaks to the many microphones pointed at him. The picture had been used for an earlier article, too, but this time the colours are saturated in a way as to make Sikorski appear more tanned in comparison to those surrounding him. It rolls out the details of his negotiations with Yanukovych on 21 February. The article is written in a very literary style that visualises the battlefield scenario the diplomats found in Kiev, as "they understood they were at war." A change of scenery takes the reader to observing the German foreign minister caught up with his business, as he receives a direct, urgent, phone call from Sikorski who asks "Are you coming to Kiev with me?". Steinmeier did go, as implied, on Sikorski's initiative. In this article, both Poland as significant European actor, as well as one extraordinarily engaged for the Ukrainian cause, summarise the Polish self-understanding during the crisis fittingly. The article concludes with a video to the "ambitious and confident man of the world", presenting a brief summary of Sikorski's life achievements, illustrated with pictures of the minister in action - with occasional Polish or European flags in the picture -, underscored by powerful classical music that suggests importance and high status.203 The foreign minister furthermore received a lot of positive coverage in mid-March, as increasing international recognition reverberated domestically. As Sikorski appeared in political talkshows on CNN and BBC as an expert on the crisis, GW-coverage of this illustrated

203 In contrast, a portrait of another female politician who has been more vocal in recent months, is accompanied by a light-hearted, cheerful melody.
approval. The latest article included for this research is a piece titled "Sikorski benefitting from the crisis? He appears on BBC and CNN, and according to a Czech weekly, is 'Europe's new leader'". The article shows the cover page of the magazine, depicting the Polish foreign minister close-up, with a European map in the background. While the heading might lead the reader to expect a relativisation of this notion in the article, it only presents the highlights of the Czech coverage as considering Sikorski a leader who "changes European politics and history"; the above mentioned video appears once again.

Poland recognised as role model by Ukrainians

Another frame identified for GW-coverage across the period studied, is Ukrainian positive acknowledgement of Polish Europeanness: An article from early December, presenting the perspective of Ukrainians living in Poland, details people's disappointment in Ukraine “taking steps backwards” after “the nation did everything in its power to take small steps in the European direction”, while, in contrast, “in Poland so much has changed”. Complementary to Ukrainian citizens' longing to follow the Polish model, Ukrainian policy-makers with the same aspiration were given a voice. Andrey Sadovy, the mayor of Lviv, appears to receive special attention in this context, a fact that might be explained by a historic linkages of the city with Polish history, hence its perception as more European. An interview with him has the suggestive title “The Russians keep asking me why we want to join the Union”; it builds up narrative tension, with the interviewer asking what the

204 'Sikorski w BBC: Dla Europy nadeszła godzina prawdy' (2014, 12 March), Gazeta Wyborcza.
205 'Konflikt służy Sikorskiemu? Udziela się w BBC i CNN według czeskiego tygodnika jest "nowym liderem Europy"' (2014, 17 March), Gazeta Wyborcza.
206 Żbikowska, I.; Szymanik, G. (2013, 01 December) 'Ukraińcy mieszkający w Polsce o protestach w ich kraju: Nie chodzi tylko o Unię. Walczymy o to, by władze zaczęły traktować nas serio', Gazeta Wyborcza.
mayor responded, and him answering bluntly “the truth”. On further enquiry, Sadovy proceeds to elaborate on European values of justice and hard work paying off, referencing Polish success in this respect. Asked about possibilities to democratise Ukraine, Sadovy references Poland, and his strong statement resounds with the reader: “I hold, and I always repeat this, the best way is the Polish way, meaning a round table agreement. A dialogue between sensible people.”

Narration of Ukrainian appraisal of Polish Europeanness is in line with the observations above, in the public opinion survey on Ukrainian journalists.

Brotherhood: Polish solidarity for Ukraine and Ukrainians’ gratefulness

As is evident from the table above, the “march of the million” which took place in Kiev in early December, resounded in the media's heightened emphasis on Polish solidarity for its neighbouring country. It was then that GW initiated its campaign “Ми з Вами” [We are with you]. The paper asked readers and journalists to send in photographs of themselves holding placards of the slogan with the Ukrainian flag in the background. The achievements of the campaign are presented by an uncommented video, showing Poles of all ages and in all kinds of situations holding the placards; Ukrainian rap music suggests a sense of urgency and agitation. The positive response of Ukrainians is reported as “Euromaidan says thank you to Poles: the response to the paper’s initiative”. Indeed, the article reads like a response to the video of 05 December, emphasising from the outset the

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208 An article from late February picks up again on the frame of Lviv demonstrating its Europeanness. It describes how, despite no presence of security forces, self-organised and orderly things in Lviv remain. The subheading “Let us show that Lviv is a European city” is a quotation by Sadovy.


210 ‘Euromajdan dziękuje Polakom - odpowiedź na akcję “Gazety Wyborczej”’ (2013, 08 December), Gazeta Wyborcza.
universal gratefulness to Poles by a diverse Ukrainian nation: “women and men of all ages, alone or with their friends, smiling, dressed in winter coats and scarves, are holding up Polish flags on which is written 'thank you' in Ukrainian national colours”. A lengthy quotation of an enthusiastic Maidan activist is at the heart of the article; he expresses his overwhelming gratefulness for Polish pro-Ukrainian advocacy in the EU in recent years in general, and during the ongoing crisis in particular, speaking of “brotherhood” and “solidarity”. The narrative of Polish citizens’ initiatives in support of the Ukrainian protests receives a follow-up at the end of January: a three-minute video of a Polish pro-Ukrainian demonstration in Warsaw is shown, with people explaining their presence so that “every single Ukrainian […] knows that we support him”. The video follows the various activities on the square, such as fund-raising and medication collection, with its last minute depicting the demonstrators singing a solemn, Ukrainian song, in which the lines resound “to show that we are brothers”, after which the crowd cheers and begins to chant the rhyme: “Joint cause: Kiev-Warsaw”.

The frame of Polish solidarity for Ukraine is complemented by coverage on political elites who came to Kiev to demonstrate their support for the country’s opposition. Expressing the high expectations towards the march, as well as concern over Russian ambitions towards Ukraine, the article climaxes with reporting an united post-Communist satellite states’ support for the Euromaidan. It notes the explicit criticism of the Georgian president Saakashvili of Russian imperialism, and proceeds to quote the Polish MEP Jerzy Buzek, who justified Polish presence on Maidan with the belief “in freedom, independence, solidarity. We want to express our solidarity to you”. The twofold mention of solidarity gives it all the more weight. As illustrated above, in the Polish historical context, 'solidarity' bears a strong

symbolic meaning. On the micro-level of this text, it has particular significance especially with its overall anti-Russian sentiment. On the macro level, the framing of Polish solidarity for Ukraine can arguably be seen as an expression of Poland’s desire to complete the revolution of 1989. In an interview with Prof. Rotfeld on the same day, Polish solidarity is furthermore pointed out as particularly noteworthy, in fact, as the title “Too many of us on Maidan”,\textsuperscript{213} suggests, to the point of exaggeration. While Rotfeld positively acknowledges the presence of politicians from all parties and their laudable intentions, he argues that the “unequivocal truth [...] that we want a friendly Eastern neighbour, a nation with the same ambitions and respect for universal values”, might be mistaken for a hidden agenda given such numerous Polish presence.

Further framing of the exceptional and universal Polish pro-Ukrainian engagement appeared as the crisis intensified in mid-February. Civil society engagement was exemplarily shown in an interview with a Polish volunteer.\textsuperscript{214} The very visual description of the young girl's surroundings and the danger she finds herself in, are telling of how much, namely everything, Poles are willing to give for the Ukrainian cause. Other articles focus on the, as titled, political “Polish consensus on Ukrainian matters”,\textsuperscript{215} as Tusk, in his speech in parliament appeals to the need for unity. The article dwells on the extraordinary moment when, "after the prime minister's address, Kaczynski clapped – probably for the first time since the Civil Platform took office", climaxing with a direct quotation of the opposition leader: "it is hard not to agree with the prime minister". An interview with Sikorski, as well as another article on the negotiations with Yanukovych suggest the Polish commitment as having led towards betterment of the situation in Ukraine.\textsuperscript{216}

\textsuperscript{213} 'Prof. Rotfeld: Zbyt wielu polskich polityków pojechało na Majdan' (2013, 07 December), Gazeta Wyborcza.
The Europeanisation of Ukraine, as identified by the predominant discourse, seems accepted as an unquestioningly universal Polish interest in the coverage, and while Poland is presented as an European in every other respect, the extensive pro-Ukranian solidarity and advocacy presents an image of Poland as the caring brother, who is a moral agent and steps in even if it means putting himself at risk. The question just how united Polish political elites are over the Ukraine crisis was an ongoing matter of interest throughout the period of analysis. Only days after the cherished declaration of unity, GW asks whether the it is the "end of unequivocal agreement", referring to criticism by PiS memebers directed at the government, as to the timing and the content of the agreement with Yanukoych. The article is set up in an exchange of opinions, where the voice is first given to PiS representatives, while the presidential advisor has the final, persuasive word. He expresses bewilderment at the idea that the agreement benefitted Yanukovych, as he repeats twice that only someone braindamaged would suggest this. Another article dealing with the renewed party dissent puts Kaczynski and Tusk at opposition. Both in their own words, Tusk first expresses disappointment on PiS' breaking with the cross-party consensus, and defends Sikorski's negotiations as successful. Kaczynski's opposition remains moderate, as he acknowledges at the outset that Sikorski's words to the Ukrainian opposition "if you don't sign this agreement you will all be dead" were not harmful, but that "things turned out well". The opposition leader, however, criticises Tusk's hesitance to "make the impossible happen" for Ukraine as "un-Polish". Further coverage of the agreement, in consideration of intertextuality, appears supportive of the governmental position in presenting the foreign minister's perspective indirectly, and through interviews with him. Questions such as "what could have

happened without the agreement?”, are unprovocative and invite the foreign minister to elaborate on his success to have achieved "the only compromise possible", and that much blood would have been shed otherwise. At the end of the interview, the link to the video on the "ambitious and confident man of the world" is provided yet again. The debate surrounding his strong statement to opposition leaders on February, 21, appears concluded in his favour by an article on Yanukovych's abandoned estate. From describing findings of half-burnt documents on ordered snipers to shoot demonstrators, the article ends with a passage on Sikroski's statement which, implicitly, appears more than justified.

While the unequivocal support for the government with regards to the Ukraine crisis was reported as rather short-lived in late February, on 05 March, GW published an article titled "MPs display solidarity for Ukraine", accompanied by a picture of the full parliament with all members standing up with solemn faces. The parliamentary address to the EU is quoted as an appeal to "take up initiatives to support all democratic aspirations of the country". Another article covering the parliament's extraordinary session titles "With one voice on Ukraine", and literally gives the floor to Tusk - the picture shows him standing at a podium while being watched attentively by MPs -, who "guarantees" that Poland would support Ukraine in its aspiration towards closer cooperation with the European Union, and "reassures" that Poland is "no longer a country sensitive to repercussions" from sanctions on Russia. The climax of the article builds up when Tusk asks all MPs for their support, even in possibly future dire times. The answer appears in the next paragraph: "And support he got". The article ends with a direct quotation by

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*Gazeta Wyborcza.*


220 'Posłowie solidarni z Ukrainą [TREŚĆ UCHWAŁY]' (2014, 05 March), *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

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Kaczynski, who argues that "unity is indeed of uttermost importantance, and quarrels over specifics have no substance"..., concluding that "our stance is and will remain 'into Europe via Warsaw'. May it be this way". Indeed, political unity appears unquestioned this time, as articles published shortly after titled "What PiS is doing is beneficial to Poland, but not for PiS".²²² In the interview, MEP Kamisnki begins with grand notions of the Ukraine crisis resuting in "Poles finally perceiving that they are in this together". The interview is built around the consensus of such unity, as the interviewer prompts "It turns out that our political elites are mature enough, and passed the test in the event of real threat". Kaminski proceeds by detailing the exemplary demeanour of all political parties, the government in particular as "unusually strong but adequate". With regards to PiS, the MEP argues that despite his lack of sympathy for the party, "it lived up to the task", especially since its current course contradicted the usual rhetoric of the PO as pro-Russian and unpatriotic, hence impossible to cooperate with, a point which Kaminski reapeats twice. The frame centering around unity of solidarity of Polish political parties as desirable, and the fact that, for this time frame, it was perceived as accomplished, is in line with the disourse on the Polish Eastern mission, the completion of the revolution as a matter of utmost importance for the whole nation. The sacrifice PiS is paying for its unity policy is taken up by one more article from the database. It begins by describing angry riots in Cracow’s suburbs by anti-Ukrainian protesters, and moves on to the challenge of PiS member, who "in meetings with their electorate deal with grudges as to the advocacy for the Ukrainian cause, as "some are still convinced, that Ukrainians are murderers and not worth speaking to". Referencing an opinion poll from January, the article illustrates that Poles, indeed, have mixed views on this matter, as 41% assessed pro-Ukrainian political engagement positively, while 47% found it unjustified.

This number is surprising given that remaining coverage studied implied citizens’ universal enthusiasm for the Ukrainian cause. While the analysis of public opinion is beyond the scope of this paper, this situation arguably reflects the tensions of historic discourses and the elite position first promoted by Kultura. While conviction of the mission to Europeanise the East has been prevalent among the political leadership, the entrenched discourse of the savage East that included Ukraine - as reflected in the negative opinion polls cited above - has evidently not disappeared altogether. This possibility, however, appears to be close to silenced by the media.

It is interesting to note that coverage on political solidarity displays, across the period studied, has come to be accompanied by simultaneously published reports on citizens’ engagement. The article on the passionate Polish online boycott of Lukoil is set in a more critical tone as it elaborates on its futility given the impossibility to establish which oil is of Russian origin;\(^{223}\) however, the article ends with positive emphasis of the good intentions behind the campaign, "especially as it serves a noble cause."

\textit{Visualisation of situation in Ukraine: Appeal for more help}

In mid-February, when protests began to escalate once more, GW adopted a frame which focussed on visualising the scenes in Kiev, accompanied by an appeal directed at the Western community to intensify its support. This was done by presenting both the Ukrainian and Polish voice in the matter. Articles include coverage on the Youtube video “I am a Ukrainian”, as well as by the Polish chief editor of the Kiev Times, as titled “Driving the car, I see people on the streets. They are lying there, not moving.”\(^{224}\) An article by the Ukrainian ex-dissident Marynovych reads as a strong appeal “to stop 'expressing deep

\(^{223}\) Majdan, K. (2014, 05 March) ‘Czy bojkot Łukoilu ma sens? Uderza głównie w... Orlen’, \textit{Gazeta Wyborcza}.

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concern’ and “listening to Putin’s and Yanukovych’s propaganda”, but to act upon the values of the Western civilisation, which he had “always been admiring”.225 Another appeal to the Western community to intensify support for Ukraine was presented in Mazyarski’s emotive piece, in which he holds that "by paying the sacrifice of blood, Ukraine morally acquired the right to community membership", and one way to acknowledge this would be to set up a memorial for "the fallen ones”, the "martyrs", in Brussels.226 By using such drastic, religious language, Europe is glorified as the epitomy of human striving, which is strongly in line Polish identity discourse.

Narrating the Russian threat and exclusivity of discourse

The framing of Russia in GW as antithetic and threatening to Ukraine and Europe did not always appear in isolation, but in conjunction with reports on Polish solidarity and Ukrainian European aspirations; in such cases a judgement was made as to what frame appeared argumentatively prevailing. The coverage on both countries' foreign ministers’ meeting in late December, similarly presented Lavrov in a comparatively negative light; a commentary of the Polish ex-foreign minister explicitly criticised Sikorski for having ever considered cooperation with Russia, and as acting against Polish national interest.227

In early March, similarly for GW, coverage increasingly turned to Russia. Reports initially were quite evenly split between the idleness of the Western community, while others bore a triumphant note that "Ukraine chose the


Another piece, however, adopted a more pragmatic position which appears sympathetic to the governmental stance: in its argumentation line it suggests a moral victory for Sikorski, but notes that despite differences, “business as usual” continues, and that Russian-Polish relations are in de facto better than is generally assumed, a stance which is not criticised in the text.


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West, and the military threat only solidified this choice”. The Ukrainian historian Hrycak suggested, as the title indicates, that "the Russian world order broke down" and the country would "no longer have a say in Ukrainian politics in the future", while others accounted for Putin’s "defeat", and him losing "all the pieces of the puzzle". Such Russian aggression was further assessed as causing an irreversible rupture of Russian-Ukrainian relations. Drastic historic references were made, as in an interview with the government member Cimoszewicz, in which he was asked whether Putin would now "proceed with his imperial march to Berlin?", while Cimoszewicz’s response takes away some of the initial edge, by noting that Putin’s ambitions are more likely to extend to central Asia, the interviewer appears more interested in extreme scenarios, as the following question is "who operates the nuclear button?". The overall framing is one in line with the view of Russian dissident Ivanov, who holds that "the deeply entrenched Russian imperial illness" requires a "unitary and very forceful response". In a side comment, Ivanov notes that there is no such thing as "one Ukraine, because the difference between Lviv and Donetsk is the same as that between France and Germany. The Ukrainian nation is still in its making, it does not even have one language in common," which, however, is not picked upon by the interviewer. In a general frame of Russia as antithetic to Poland, an article addresses the views of Poles who have a counter-discursive opinion: "Polish defendats of Putin: [...] they grow thanks to funding by the Kreml". The article on the national *Political Observer* begins by referring to the paper as "hardly known in Poland", while it goes on to detail its pro-Russian and anti-Western

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228 Smoleński, P. (2014, 01 March) 'Hrycak: Zawalił się rosyjski porządek świata', *Gazeta Wyborcza*.  
229 Ibid.  
230 Paweł Wróński (2014, 02 March) 'Nie powinniśmy Ukrainie składać obietnic, których nie potrafimy wypełnić', *Gazeta Wyborcza*.  
231 Grochal, R. (2014, 04 March) 'Cimoszewicz: Nie możemy robić w portki przed Rosją', *Gazeta Wyborcza*.  

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coverage, which, further, Russian media "cited as independent Polish media voice". While its chief editor is quoted as denying links with Russkyi Mir - a Kreml-funded foundation with the aim to promote Russian language and culture globally – the article ends with a long passage on the organisation’s activities, which creates a lasting impression that links must exist. It is not of concern here to assess the concrete situation of existence of linkages; what is significant, is this news text being a rare example of coverage of counter-discursive voices in Poland. The implication remains that a Pole who holds a divergent opinion, must have his statements funded by the Kreml.

Counter-discursive views

The marginal cautioning frame gave weight to experts’ opinion on the region, who warned of the complexity and sensitivity of the situation. Such coverage presents an article early in the sample; it recounts the position of Lech Walesa,236 and titles: “Walesa: Brussels cannot replace Moscow for Ukraine. Who will give them hot water and power once Russia turns it off?”. It follows the ex-President’s argumentation who sets out to appeal that the dependency of Ukraine on Russia is much underestimated, and that only “theory-politicians” would advice Ukraine to cut its links with Russia. The author does not question Walesa’s statement which appears to counter the general assumption that the Polish post-89 path was the only and right choice. Referencing the hardships Poland experienced in the 1990s, Walesa asks whether things really had to be so difficult. The Ukrainian divide is only addressed by one other article analysed in this research.237 Rather than a reflection of reality, the author views it as a product of the Party of the Regions’ division of electoral districts, and it consequently being instrumental

to certain interest groups, but most importantly, serving Putin as a useful propaganda tool. A deeper investigation as to possibly differing levels of enthusiasm pro European integration in Ukraine, however, remains completely absent. In a similar vein, frames which would caution against rushing to Europeanise Ukraine, or warn against militarising counter Russia remain, apart from very few examples, marginal. In early March, an interview with the German Ukraine expert Lang was published. The scholar argues, prompted by the question why the West should respond, that it should "ease tensions", in the same way it refrained from much action during Russia’s intervention in Georgia; only this way, he argues, "was the conflict frozen", and in the long term the country could still pursue closer cooperation with Europe";\(^\text{238}\) this view remains unopposed by the author. However, a frame which does not employ a strong anti-Russian tone in combination with appeals to maximal mobilisation, or would detail various Russian subversive attempts, is not employed.

Conclusion

This paper critically examined the portrayal of a crucial period of the Ukraine crisis in Polish newspapers, as to the extent to which such coverage reflected a practice of the rhetorical unconscious of political correctness in relation to the self and Other. Its conclusions are based on an exemplary analysis of discursive in mechanisms, as revealing of such assumptions. Delineating focal points for national identification which require positive distinctiveness versus another, Polish discourse was found to be, due to the country’s discursively peripheral position between 'Europe' and 'the East', in need to adopt a vigorously Oriental narrative of the Eastern Other and the European self. As was illustrated, this involved selective interpretation of

Polish history to manifest the 'correct' narrative of Polishness; prominent Polish cultural works served to illustrate such denigration of the lands and people East of Poland. With a consequent emphasis on Ukraine, the paper proceeded to analyse – against the backdrop that dominant identity discourse shapes assumptions permeating public opinions as well as foreign policy paradigms - how such identity narratives impacted upon these two spheres in Poland in more recent history. It was shown that the image of Oriental Ukraine which had discursively been proliferated, had impacted negatively on public opinions Poles held on the country. In contrast, it was argued, a strand of discourse that was formulated around an ideology of the revised European identity narrative, had guided the country's political elites to pursue ever closer cooperation with Ukraine, with the aim to eventually Europeanise it, as national mission for the last 25 years. In this way, while Polish diplomacy was, in comparison to that of other EU-member states, rather engaged for the Ukrainian cause during the crisis, this paper contextualised the efforts as a continuity of political elites' earlier commitment. In light of the - until recently - negative image of Ukraine in Poland on the one hand, and political elites' 'Ukrainophilia' on the other, an analysis on newspaper coverage sought to shed light on what assumptions of the self and Other have come to be predominant in the main institution of public discourse nowadays. The level of support for Polish diplomacy, the reportage of sympathy for the opposition movement, and lastly the portrayal of the role of Russia were found to be key indicators of such discourse.

Indeed, a dissection of the framing of news articles in Rzeczpospolita and Gazeta Wyborcza largely revealed an automated cross-cutting affirmation in practice of political patriotism, of Polish identity as European and guided by the revised Eastern mission myth. A strong tendency was identified to single out Polish achievements for Ukraine as exemplary, as universally recognised by its citizens, and furthermore by governments of fellow EU-member states.
and the United States. The urgency of Polish political unity as a key theme of coverage in both papers similarly reveals the assumption that the crisis requires the highest level of national attention, a mission indeed. The portrayal of Russia as permeated by historical references and future hypotheses presented as if certainty, reveals the persistance of the Oriental discourse on the Polish Eastern neighbour as antithetic to Europe. The triumphant undertone over Russia in a number of articles suggests confidence, arguably derived from the general recognition of Polish achievements.

While the Ukrainian opposition movement is portrayed in a sympathetic light, a paternalistic stance continued to permeate the framing of events. Firstly, Ukrainians were almost unquestioningly, and in absence of in-depth analysis, reported as unequivocally pro-European; secondly, the protests were framed as modelled according to the Polish example set 25 years earlier, rather than investigated more closely as something *sui generis*. The newspaper coverage, while in acceptance of what started as an elitist project of the Eastern mission by European means, thus, is nevertheless formulated on the implicit notion of an unequal brotherly relation between Poland and Ukraine.

While this paper found the study of the portrayal of the Ukraine crisis in newspapers as automated by a rhetorical unconscious of political patriotism worthwhile especially for the Polish case, it does not suggest that identity discourse as reflected in media portrayals is a phenomenon unique to Poland. In fact, the tendency of pre-conceived understanding of the self and Other as automatising particular framing of coverage of the Ukraine crisis was pointed out by the scholar Gabriele Krone-Schmalz for German media:²³⁹ she pointed out that academia should endeavour to study the ways in which notions of the self and the Other are produced and re-produced, which is precisely what

²³⁹ Zapp (2014, 16 April) 'Das darf nicht sein', NDR.de: Das Beste am Norden.
this paper attempted to do in relation to Poland. National identity discourse is a powerful lens through which new events come to be viewed, and the singularisation of narrative, as was argued, is even more prominent in a case which presents the opportunity for positively distinctive identification.

It was shown that the revised Eastern mission myth, in line with Polish identity narrative, guided foreign policy and was accepted across the country's political spectrum, exemplarily demonstrated through Poland’s leading papers. The coverage in Rzeczpospolita and Gazeta Wyborcza furthermore suggested high levels of Polish citizens' support for the Ukrainian opposition movement; indeed, larger-scale protests in Poland organised in support of Ukraine, as well as a number of local initiatives proclaiming "Ми з Вами", might lead to the assumption that the previously elitist project of the Eastern mission had a trickle-down effect so as to be viewed as a nation-wide project by many Poles. This would imply that the Oriental understanding of Ukrainians, as promoted by discourse exemplified in With Fire and Sword was revised. However, isolated coverage noted that a number of Poles continued to reject its Eastern neighbour on this very basis, thus, citizens’ support might not be as universal as the media portrayal of everyone’s solidarity might suggest. Hence, further research into the extent to which public opinion on Ukraine is permeated by an understanding of Eastern mission versus the discourse of the savage Other is needed.

The protracted crisis in Ukraine coincided with the 10-year anniversary of Polish EU-membership. As Poland celebrated the event as an “opportunity seized”, the foreign minister Radoslaw Sikorski, once again, flagged the country’s struggle as a model for Ukraine:

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"Ten years is no more than an historical eyeblink. A quarter of a century covers a single generation. And yet, in this short time, we have managed to transform our part of Europe. Looking back at our success, we hope it can be replicated by those currently implementing tough reforms in our neighbourhood – and often paying for it in blood, like the heroes of the Maidan. Poland’s example proves that their struggle is worth every effort."

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