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# MODERNIZATION OF RUSSIA'S FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

Tuomas Forsberg et al.

## Abstract

*This chapter looks at Russia's modernization in the field of foreign policy and external relations. We distinguish between four different approaches to Russia's foreign policy modernization: military, economic, soft power, and ecological. Each approach opens up a different perspective on what is meant by modernization, and what this means in terms of Russia's foreign policy. Russia's overall modernization has not followed a single paradigm, and the end result has therefore not been in line with any particular theoretical projection – since Russia has enough leeway to resist global trends. But neither has it been an outcome of Russia's own ideas of modernization, since the global environment has been resistant to Russia's own approaches. Russian foreign policy remains multi-dimensional, and contains within itself several tensions. Placing Russian foreign policy modernization in this context, we suggest a new vocabulary conceptualizing the tensions with two major antinomies; global processes versus nationalistic closing, and great powerness versus economic interdependency. Russia cannot avoid these tensions, nor is it an impotent agent; it must find ways to mediate them.*

## 6.1 Introduction

Tuomas Forsberg et al.

Modernization in Russia is normally seen as a merely internal matter of the country, but to an important degree it is also a matter of foreign policy and external relations. In fact, the task of foreign policy, as stated in the concept of foreign policy, is to create “favourable external conditions” for Russia's technological modernization. (Concept 2013, Article 4b) Although this objective has been retained in the new version of the concept (2016, Article 3b), the conflict in Ukraine has demonstrated that Russia is ready to risk good relations with partners in the West for military adventure abroad. Yet, at the expert level, debate on the role of foreign policy in Russia's modernization continues (Freire and Simão 2015).

Some Russian analysts have argued that country's current foreign policy – which aims at boosting Russia's position as a traditional great power – is an *obstacle* to the country's true modernization (Trenin 2010). This view was emphasized during the Medvedev presidency, which envisioned technological modernization and Russia's integration to Western institutions as complementary tasks. Since 2012 and return of Putin to the presidency, the focus has been on military-led economic modernization, accompanied by a prioritization of Russia's strategic national interests (Pynnöniemi 2014). The events in Ukraine have reinforced this trajectory, although it is clear that when it comes to Russia's strategic thinking and view of the world, there is more *continuity* than *change*. The under-performance of Russian economy and institutions create challenges for technological development, and ultimately, for Russia's aspirations to the status of a great power. This has led to calls for radical change of Russia's foreign policy, especially towards the post-Soviet space (Timofeev 2017, 6).

Russian foreign policy has developed through several phases and has all the time been enforced both by the international development and domestic constraints. The Cold War was nearing its end when

US President George H. W. Bush promised his Soviet colleague Mikhail Gorbachev that NATO would not seek to expand into the area controlled by the Warsaw Pact or the Soviet Union. According to Jack F. Matlock, the last US ambassador to the Soviet Union, Bush gave this promise on his own behalf and it was *not* binding on the next presidents. The turning point was 1997, during the administrations of Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton. The Clintons, who were on friendly terms with Yeltsin, hesitated when Eastern European countries began to voice their wish to join NATO. According to sources inside the Democratic Party, Vice President Al Gore played the key role in making the decision, as he believed he had better insight into European affairs (Kivinen 2016). His argument was that Eastern European countries must be able to decide on their military alliances as sovereign states, without Russia having a veto.

The direction of Russian foreign policy had also changed compared with the early years of Yeltsin's presidency. At first, Russia believed it could well become part of the Western alliances, that is, the European Union and NATO. Yet, the Primakov Doctrine, established in 1994, stressed the importance of Russia's independent role as a superpower. And Yeltsin was not particularly fond of the United States boasting of victory in the Cold War: "I don't like it when the United States flaunts its superiority. Russia's difficulties are only temporary, and not only because we have nuclear weapons, but also because of our economy, our culture, our spiritual strength...Russia will rise again! I repeat: Russia will rise again!". (cf. Kivinen 2016)

Many of the most experienced foreign policy experts in the United States became worried. When the US Senate ratified NATO's expansion in 1998, George F. Kennan, one of the most renowned experts on Russia in the United States, said that the Senate's decision was a tragic mistake: "It shows so little understanding of Russian history and Soviet history. Of course there is going to be a bad reaction from Russia, and then [the NATO expanders] will say that [they] always told you that is how the Russians are – but this is just wrong." (cf. Friedman 1998.) What followed, indeed, was a spiral of reactions and counter reactions, which today manifests itself more and more clearly as a classic security policy dilemma reproducing the legacies of the Cold War zero-sum game, with elements also of a sphere of influence competition between major powers.

When NATO began to expand instead of being dismantled, Russia started to make its own moves with China. An alternative military alliance was being prepared in Shanghai as early as 1996. In the first phase, military resources in border regions were reduced. In conjunction with this, Russia and China began to resolve their old border disputes concerning the Ussuri River islands. These disputes had led to armed conflict in 1969, indeed they got close to starting a war. The relations between the two countries had been so bad that the Soviet Union had even spoken of a preventive nuclear attack against China. After the expansion of NATO, however, Russia made major concessions to China, and step by step a new alliance between the two countries was established.

At the Dushanbe summit of 2000, the members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) stated that they were unanimously against interventions in the internal affairs of other countries under the guise of human rights, and that they supported one another in maintaining national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and social stability. The original members of the organization were Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Uzbekistan has since joined the organization, and India and Pakistan were admitted as full members in 2017.

The SCO is not officially aimed against any country, but the United States has not been permitted to join, not even as an observer. In fact, the talk about this alliance focusing only on crisis management operations is pure hypocrisy, much like similar statements by NATO before its collision course with Russia (Kivinen 2017). The SCO organizes manoeuvres annually and cooperates extensively on the training of military officers. Even the Nordic states started to pay attention to this when, during

Russian military rehearsals, two ultramodern Chinese warships appeared on the Baltic Sea, ostensibly to practice the “protection of cargo ships” with the Russians.

Sovereign democracy is the Kremlin’s direct ideal response to the “colour revolutions” of 2003–05: no Western interference will be accepted in the name of democratic values. Although Russian ideological dimension in Russian foreign policy is flexible, this concept has been there ever since. By sovereign democracy, Vladislav Surkov, chief ideologist in Kremlin at the time, wanted to underline the fundamentally modernizing character of his national project, whose mission is to guarantee Russia “the nationalization of the future,” as the title of one of his principal programmatic texts explains (Laruelle 2008). Surkov distinguished himself, however, by his moderate anti-Westernism; his positive reading of globalization, his refusal to indulge in traditional Soviet nostalgia, and his belief in a Russia that is open to the rest of the world. Thus we can see that even in the emphasis of own ideational approach global interdependencies cannot be neglected.

Russia’s attempts to modernize its foreign policy can be analyzed in the intersection of the structural pressure of the global environment, within which Russia is embedded and its own agency based on the beliefs and perceptions of country’s leadership of this environment and self-conception of Russia’s place therein. In terms of structural pressure, four approaches provide a framework to understand interaction between foreign policy and Russian modernization. According to Anthony Giddens (1985: 310-311) these are ‘the four institutional clusters associated with modernity’. First is the realist theory, which does not see any qualitative change in the nature of the international system, except the technical evolution that puts pressure on modernizing the armed forces. The second approach is the liberal idea that modernization means a shift from *military* to *economic* power, as the goals have also shifted from possessing territory to acquiring wealth through production, commerce, and trade. In this sense, competition has moved from geopolitics to geo-economics. The third alternative way of viewing the structural pressure of modernization, also a liberal view of sorts, is to regard the world becoming less dependent on material resources and developing into an information-based, global society in which soft power resources are concerned with the management of information flows and opinion that translates into attraction and image, are key to national success. Finally, modernization in terms of green theory can be seen in terms of needing to adopt a more ecological policy due to the structural pressure of climate change and other environmental challenges.

In this chapter we take the above-mentioned approaches as a rough guideline to ask how Russia views the relation between modernization and foreign policy, and what kind of choices the country has made in this respect. From the perspective of agency, Russia has certainly been trying to boost its position as a great power by following *all* of these modernization paradigms. It has sought to modernize its armed forces, but it has also aimed to improve its competitiveness in world markets, energy in particular, and its economic modernization in cooperation with international partners. Moreover, Russia has also strengthened its soft power capabilities – and to some extent, but to a *much lesser degree* – it has even developed its role as an ecological ‘green’ power.

In many ways, Russia’s foreign policy thinking when it comes to modernization is thoroughly Western. Russia has developed its foreign policy in response to the European political-philosophical trends and often imitated them. This is perhaps most visible in the level of strategic thinking that is based on the realist paradigm whereby the world is seen as a competitive arena between major powers. Yet, the arena can also be seen as cooperation among equals in the form of a great power concert. The core tenet of Russia’s foreign policy in this regard, is to get acknowledgement for its great power status from the United States that is portrayed as the leading power (Clunan 2009; Larson and Shevchenko 2010; Nitoui 2017). However, in regular intervals, Russian foreign policy thinking dwells in an abyss of ‘exceptionalism’. The emphasis on unique Russian values and cultural-historical practices is used as a form of criticizing the West in some specific instance and at the same time, it serves as a legitimization of Russia’s actions (or inactions). Thus, paradoxically, Russia’s foreign

policy thinking is rooted in realist tradition that prioritizes strategic balance (between the great powers), yet, frequently seeks legitimation from theories and ideas that place emphasis on identity and culture.

We may pinpoint other similar type of paradoxes, for example, while an aspiration to use soft power in the facilitation of “favourable external conditions” for technological-modernization is clearly stated, such services are usually brought from Western companies, while the Russian state agencies pursue active measures in the Soviet style, i.e., intimidation through deception and subversion rather than consent (Pynnöniemi 2016). Furthermore, while Russia clearly wants to enhance its position in all four directions (modernization of armed forces, development of geo-economic power, soft power, and a status of ‘green power’) it is simply the case that pursuit of all these goals simultaneously is not possible. In fact, such an effort may lead to many unintentional consequences. In the following, we will explore Russia’s choices in respect to four paradigms of modernization: military, economic, cultural, and ecological and consequences for Russia’s foreign policy.

## 6.2 Modernization of Russia’s security and defence

*Hanna Smith and Katri Pynnöniemi*

The realist theory of modernization is relatively succinct when it comes to the general dynamics. First of all, states need to keep up with the pace of the progress of military technology in the struggle for power and prestige. Furthermore, states have an incentive to emulate military reforms carried out by the leading powers (Waltz 1979; Gilpin 1981). To a great degree, this applies to Russia.

For Russia, military modernization has always seen as essential for being a great power. The end of the Cold War placed huge challenges onto military modernization, because the old view was neither sustainable nor necessary any longer. A revolution in military affairs indicated that the time of mass armies was gone and the new way of prevailing in military contest depended on the ability to project force from the air with the help of new technology. Nuclear weapons still remained important, but these military assets were also themselves in need of modernization. Indeed the question for Russia was; to what extent was military modernization at all compatible with the old concepts and weapon systems? So far, Moscow has largely been upgrading its existing platforms rather than investing in entirely new ones. The equipment that Russian Armed Forces have is still more reminiscent to the Soviet Cold War armaments than anything based on an entirely new paradigm.

Russian efforts to strengthen its military power in pursuance of its goal of gaining international recognition as a great power has a long pedigree. Military modernization has always had significant domestic dimensions throughout history. The first famous modernization of Russia by Peter the Great in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, which was an essential element in Russia’s quest to become a European great power, focused first of all on the army and navy. However, it also involved the transformation of broader Russian society, based on distinctly European influences in the sphere of education, culture, administration, science, and technology. A century later, the Russian victory in the Napoleonic wars was very much down to Aleksander I, whose military reform had enabled the victory. Yet, as the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed, Nicholas I sought to maintain Russia’s great power status whilst pursuing conservative domestic policies and resisting any attempts to modernize Russian society and internal affairs, including, of course, the military. Russia’s defeat at the hands of Great Britain, France, and Turkey in the Crimean War at the end of his reign showed how the country’s comparative power had declined. Internal stagnation had contributed to external problems, brought into sharp focus by a major military defeat. Subsequently, under Alexander II, Russia concentrated first and foremost on domestic issues. Alexander III sought to revive Russia’s great power status through vigorous efforts

to boost the Russian Empire's economic and military power. Although he was viewed as a conservative, Alexander III focused on economic modernization, primarily as a way of building Russia's military power and international status. During his reign, the system of domestic surveillance grew to new heights, but in foreign policy Alexander sought to avoid conflict since the Russian government and generals alike were too acutely aware of their military inferiority to Germany. Nicholas II showed little inclination to modernize the Russian army, but drew heavily on military symbolism himself and regarded the army as a major bearer of Russian power. This encouraged him to try to boost Russia's status in European affairs, firstly through war with Japan in 1904-05, which ended in humiliation and was one of the causes of the 1905 Revolution in Russia; and secondly by going to war with Austria-Hungary in 1914 – the First World War – with disastrous results for Russia and the tsarist system.

In the early years of the Soviet Union, both Lenin and Stalin were acutely aware that the country was well behind the Western powers in terms of economic development and military capability. The failed war with Poland in 1920 underlined that weakness. The Soviet Union sought to modernize and build up its military strength in order to defend the country from what was considered imminent threat of Western imperialist attack. With the help of the rapid industrialization of the 1930s, the Red Army and Soviet Union came out of the Second World War as one of the victors. The Soviet Union's superpower status was founded on this military victory, and its possession of nuclear weapons. In the context of increasingly fierce military Cold War rivalry with the United States, the defence industry and military spending were prioritized over all other areas of public spending and investment, even while the economy was stagnating.

To a greater extent than in comparable countries, Russian historical experience serves as a guideline for today's Russia. The Kremlin has come to the conclusion that Russia will have difficulties to maintain a great power status without a military capability that answers to 21<sup>st</sup> century needs.

When the Soviet Union fell, Russia inherited around 2.8 million servicemen from the Soviet armed forces, plus a large quantities of tanks, aircraft, and other military equipment. Although the quantity of material and personnel assets Russia had at its disposal for the basis of a new national military force were impressive, much of it was not suitable for the world that was emerging. The character of war had changed from the ideas of a traditional army marching over the borders to conflict situations, be they ethnic conflicts, peace operations, or separatism and insurgencies. The armed forces Russia had after the fall of the Soviet Union was one based on mass mobilization and conscription, which was configured and trained predominantly for high-intensity warfare in the European theatre (Bluth 1996, 75-6). Russia's conventional military disintegrated throughout the 1990s owing to the lack of funds and structured reforms. As one observer put it, "... 1990s and much of the 2000s, troop readiness, training, morale, and discipline suffered, and most arms industries became antiquated" (Nichol, 2014). This had huge consequences to the country's international image as a global great power actor.

The country's political elite promised to restore the Russian military to its former glory on many occasions. Modernization ideas were copied from the West. Russians used buzzwords such as 'network-centric warfare'. The need to professionalize, and to create rapid reaction forces were discussed from the beginning. The talk of military modernization that had all the same words as in the Western rhetoric, did not match Russian realities. Several substantial programmes for reorganization were announced throughout the 1990s, but they failed to result in fundamental transformation (Renz 2010: 58). There were several reasons for this. The 1990s for Russia was full of challenges, including big economic problems. However, a case can be made that lack of a clear vision for the direction of the Russian military reform, was one of the major problems (Odom 1998).

When Putin rose to political prominence at the turn of the millennium, he pledged to restore the country's rightful place in the world. In a televised address broadcast on the eve of the presidential elections in March 2000, Putin confirmed that, as future president, his aim was to restore Russia's international standing, and that the military would play an important role in this process. He stated, 'On 26<sup>th</sup> March we are electing not only the head of state but also appointing the Supreme Commander because the President, by virtue of his office, is simultaneously the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Russia is one of the biggest countries in the world and a strong nuclear power. This is something that not only our friends remember.' Indeed, the new president made military-related matters a priority from the outset, and the rapid economic recovery boosted that development.

Russian military reform thus progressed with the intention of making Russia a fully-fledged great power. It was often stated that there were two schools of thought: on one side the civilian proponents of reform, who wanted have 'leaner but meaner' army and wished to bring them under the civilian control, and the conservative generals who supported the old concept of a mass, but upgraded, military. The first Putin administration tried to balance between these two demands, taking into account evolution of warfare and its meaning for the development of Russian armed forces, and the same time, the roots and traditions of Russian military thinking. Rosefielde (2005, 88-89) has argued that this implies simultaneous modernization of nuclear capabilities, advanced conventional weapons, information warfare tools, precision-guided munitions, high-tech combat aircraft and anti-stealth radar etc.

However, it was the war with Georgia in 2008 that served as a trigger for the announcement of extensive military modernization in the autumn of that same year. Russia was able to secure its objectives (aborting Georgia's swift integration into the Western structures and creation of permanent tensions within the country), but the military operation revealed weaknesses of Russia's armed forces. In particular, there was widespread agreement that the Russian military performance showed major shortcomings in coordination, command and control, as well as a lack of technology and weaponry fit for the new generation wars (Bukkvoll 2009; Vendil Pallin and Westerlund 2009). As a result of these debates, the value of conscription and mobilization was questioned, while the need for smaller but more flexible professional units was highlighted. Moreover, there was a push towards the paradigm of 'new' wars and asymmetric conflicts instead of traditional inter-state war. And at the same time, Russia's international status was also damaged. With the army Russia used in Georgia, the general view was, Russian army will not become a global player for very long time.

The situation highlighted the urgent need to modernize Russian military. The 2008 modernization programme particularly emphasized the problems that surfaced in the Georgian war; the efficiency of command structures and communication systems, the need for more rapid reaction, and the lack of unmanned aerial vehicles and precision weapons. It was a package that would allow the Russian armed forces to overcome the shortcomings of that recent war and other previous military interventions and to finally do away with the Soviet legacy force (Klein 2012, 30). The programme was to make the Russian military more useable by increasing its overall efficiency and cost-effectiveness. This was done by streamlining central command bodies, decreasing the size of the officer corps, which had made the Russian military particularly top-heavy, cutting the number of military units in favour of a smaller number with permanent readiness status, and driving up the recruitment of professional soldiers in order to lessen reliance on conscription (Sinovets and Renz 2015, 5).

An important element of the programme was the updating of weapons and equipment with a view to moving from a figure of 10% of hardware classed as "modern" in 2008, to 30% by the end of 2015, and to 70% by 2020. Noteworthy here is the fact that since the start of the 2008 modernization, Russian defence analysts have cautioned that discussions of the desirable or existing proportion of

“modern” equipment in the Russian armed forces can be misleading. This is due to the fact that the meaning of “modern” equipment was too ambiguous. As Dmitry Gorenburg (2012) noted,

...when Russian officials discuss their goals for procuring modernized weaponry over the next 10 years, they never define their terms. They do not have a list of what types of armaments are considered modern. In some cases, systems that are based on 20-50 year old designs are described as modern. This inevitably leads to the conclusion that the MoD (Ministry of Defence) is implicitly defining modern equipment as any equipment that was procured in the last few years, rather than actually based on new designs.

A core task of the programme was expressed in the very name of the reform: “new look”. The armed forces was to go through major revision of operational level practices, incorporate modern weapon systems into their arsenal, and perhaps most importantly, raising a new generation of soldiers capable of fighting those new type of wars. The last task was hard to achieve since the Russian military service suffered from severe image problems, relating to salaries, working conditions, and bullying (*dedovshchina*). In one of the pre-election articles in 2012 Putin argued that “Our aims in the sphere of defence and national security cannot be achieved unless...servicemen...are highly motivated – and unless, let me add, the Russian public shows respect for the Armed Forces and military service.” Part of the 2008 modernization project was to provide competitive salaries, better service conditions, and welfare provisions, including housing and pensions. These changes improved the image of military service and left servicemen with a new sense of purpose and pride in their profession (Giles 2016, 16-7).

The 2008 modernization project resulted in a growing number of professionals in rapid-reaction units in Russia’s armed services. The airborne forces (VDV) benefited especially. Already containing fully professional elite regiments since 2002, the VDV came to have more than 50% of its staff serving under contract by 2015. The percentage of professionals serving in specialist positions also grew, such as those involving the operation of advanced equipment and weaponry (Lavrov 2015). These improvements were demonstrated in Crimea 2014, where VDV units acted swiftly and in cooperation with other rapid-reaction forces from the special forces reconnaissance brigades and naval infantry (Marcus 2014; Bartles and McDermott 2014, 57). Moreover, Russia started to use private military companies or paramilitaries with no official status. The most famous of these mercenary groups has been Wagner, which has deployed men in the Crimea, Eastern Ukraine, as well as in Syria.

Despite many improvements in performance of Russia’s armed forces, some important shortcomings have remained. The slow pace of technological modernization in Russian (military) industry means that Russia has retained its traditional position behind the main competitors in (military) technology development. The Western sanctions also target the military-industrial sector and this create obstacles for its development. Moreover, the Russian defence industry has not been able to deliver consistently across all categories of weapons systems. This has resulted in deficiencies, particularly concerning global power projection capabilities. For example, the emphasis that has been placed on the Russian navy in the modernization project is part of the aim of global power projection, but this is precisely where the Russian armament programme has encountered the most serious problems (Cooper 2016: 49).

The military operation in Crimea in February 2014 showed that despite the shortcomings, reform of the armed forces had brought some tangible results. With the lapse into long-term conflict with the West, Russia is using ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Syria as testing ground for new weapon systems and places to circulate military personnel to get combat experience. What is more, the performance of Russian troops in Crimea and later in Syria has restored the image of the armed forces at home and abroad. This is less so in the case of eastern Ukraine, for a simple reason that Russia’s performance record is more mixed, and therefore the Kremlin has little to capitalize from that conflict.



It is still important to note that Russia's quest to gain undoubted great power status based *on military might alone* has never been sustainable, and has never led to lasting results. These lessons from the past have shed doubts on the promise of Russia's recent military revival over the long-term as a vehicle towards international recognition as a great power. As Fyodor Lukyanov (2016) acknowledged: "There is no doubt that during the past few years, Moscow has achieved some successes in its quest to regain international stature. But it's difficult to say whether these gains will prove lasting. The Kremlin may have outmanoeuvred its Western rivals in some ways during the crises in Ukraine and Syria, [...] but Moscow's failure to develop a coherent economic strategy threatens the long-term sustainability of its newly restored status."

To conclude, Russia has followed the realist paradigm by modernizing its armed forces and doing so by emulating Western models. Yet, simple emulation was not possible since the political context in which these models were applied was, to large extent, different from the Western institution-based political structure. Yet, the realist paradigm continues to be the dominant frame in Russian military thinking.

### 6.3 Resource economy and modernization of Russia's foreign policy

*Tuomas Forsberg*

The liberal theory of modernization sees the world moving away from military competition towards integration and interdependence, where economic competence is defined in terms of productivity, the attraction of investments, trade surplus, and access to the market. The idea of war becoming obsolete and trade becoming the primary mode of interaction between societies was a powerful idea before the First World War among the liberals of the time (Moore 1970). It started to gain more prominence again towards the end of the Cold War. In IR theoretical literature Richard Rosecrance's (1986) made the case that it is trade, not military might that is essential to prosperity, power, and peace. In his view, the shift in international politics started to take place already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but Germany and Japan, having been forced to abandon their militarized policies after the Second World War were often seen as the primary examples of nations that have flourished because of economic rather than military assets. Edward Luttwak (1990) popularized the idea that "methods of commerce are displacing military methods" as the world was moving from "geopolitics to geoeconomics". As liberal theory would have it, if there is a choice between guns and butter, modern societies would choose butter.

It is for most people rather obvious that Russia cannot ignore the structural force of the global economy. The collapse of the Soviet Union is seen as the primary example of this. The role of economic reform was central for Gorbachev's *perestroika*-related modernization efforts, and the integration of the Soviet Union into market economy system was a key part of that programme. In addition to domestic inefficiencies, the Soviet system also suffered from the restrictions put on foreign trade and investments. As we all know, the attempts backfired.

Russia's economic recovery and stronger integration with world economy started only in late 1990s and gained pace under the Putin presidency (Letiche 2007). Through the 2000s Russia's economic growth rested on two pillars: private consumption and export of energy resources. The latter pillar was exploited for foreign policy purposes: the energy resources formed a key to Russia's strategy to wield international influence. Putin himself has both underscored the energy resources for Russia's position, but also dismissed the talk of Russia as an "energy superpower" that would use energy as a weapon (Rutland 2008 and Hedlund 2014). Instead, Putin signaled that Russia will be a reliable and stable supplier of energy to foreign customers.

Despite the phenomenal growth of Russia's economy in the 2000s, the pressure for economic modernization did not disappear. The global financial crisis of 2008 brought the question of the *sustainability* of Russia's economic system and the quality of innovation in the Russian economy to the fore (Sutela 2012). The presidency of Dmitri Medvedev (2008-12) was shaped by a clear modernization agenda most starkly put forward in Medvedev's (2009b) article *Go Russia*, a call to arms to radically restructure the Russian economy, away from the resource sectors and towards high tech and innovation. Ambitions were set high; the target was that Russia would become one of the leading economic powers in the world, after the US and China.

President Medvedev's modernization agenda included a clear external dimension. Russia concluded Partnership for Modernization agreement first with Germany (2008) and later with the European Union (2010) and with number of other EU member states. (Makarychev and Meister 2015; Romanova and Pavlova 2014). Yet, the positive momentum proved to be short-lived. The previous pattern of relations once again became quickly visible, with the initial enthusiasm of a fresh beginning soon getting bogged down due to differences concerning the meaning of modernization and the consequent way forward in its implementation (Larionova 2015).

The key problem lay in the different understandings concerning what modernization actually entailed. For the EU, at stake was a democratic modernization of Russia, the key issues being good governance, fighting corruption, and encouraging improvements in both civil society and the Russian business environment, including the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). For Russia, the partnership boiled down to a much more conservative and technocratic approach that did not challenge the fundamentals of the existing model. For Laure Delcour (2011) "whether EU and Russian views on modernization are compatible (and the degree to which they are compatible) remains to be seen", but she believed that Russians relied on a more narrow understanding on modernization, focusing on economic diversification and new technologies, whereas Europeans had a broader concept including education, freedom, and civil society. Indeed, after Putin's return to the presidency in 2012, it soon became clear that "modernization" in partnership with the EU had been a Medvedev-era project and the common agenda of modernization virtually ceased to exist as a consequence of the conflict in Ukraine.

Already before that conflict, Russia has been calling for a stronger role for itself in setting a new global agenda and looking for alternatives to the existing liberal – often Western-dominated – institutions. Speaking in his role as prime minister, Putin outlined the Russian alternative vision at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2009, calling for "a more equitable and efficient global economic system" with a major role reserved for Russia in the process (Putin 2009). Yet, the Ukraine conflict made Russia more like an outlier of the global system (Aalto and Forsberg 2016). In March 2014, the leading Western states and Japan excluded Russia from the G8 meetings. Instead, Russia was actively present at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and decided to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) initiated by China (Kuchma 2015). With its attempts to set up a regional development bank and a currency reserve pool, the BRICS remained a cornerstone of Russia's attempts to develop alternatives to the Western-led global economic institutions. These attempts did not, however, lead to a major restructuration of the global economic system, and the prospects were deemed only limited.

Since the conflict in Ukraine, an autarchic turn in Russia's foreign policy has become more palpable. Putin has advocated mercantilist views of national economy, which from the liberal point of view are seen as obsolete. Putin has not been willing to take national debt because that would increase the power of creditors and undermine Russia's sovereignty. In many areas, he prefers to develop domestic production instead of relying on foreign imports. Foreign sanctions, in this light, were seen as an opportunity rather than an impediment.

Integration is the third framework in the post-Cold War world. It represents cooperative prospect in the international system in which elements of Cold War legacy and sphere of interest game create conflictual approaches. Russia has been excluded from Western integration processes, and is now developing the Eurasian Union into its means of integration. In 1999, the doors of EU were opened – at least in principle – to Turkey, but Russia was shut out of Western integration in a manner that seemed final. Even though the EU is Russia's largest trading partner, the relationship between Russia and the EU has not been smooth, and not even the partnership agreement has been renewed.

The former Soviet Republics established the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Rather than becoming a strongly integrated entity, the CIS became a tool for controlled disassembly. However, when the strengthening of Russia in the 2000s led to the growth of its importance in the area of the former Soviet Union, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Russia established a customs union in 2010. The next step was taken in 2015. While goods move freely between countries within the customs union, the purpose of the Eurasian Union is to also allow the free movement of capital and labour. This requires an extensive system of common norms, and in this respect the Eurasian Union has been following the EU's example. Furthermore, a commission has been established for the Eurasian Union, much like in the EU. At the same time, Russian plans emphasize that the union is purely about economic integration and not about surrendering political sovereignty to the union. From the problems related to the euro, the Russians have learned that creating a common currency may not be necessary.

What is this new union about? The plans are based on an important geopolitical reality. As its name suggests, the Eurasian Union is located between two major economic areas: the European Union and China. The EU is the world's largest economy, while China is growing rapidly and is already Russia's most significant trading partner as an individual country. By creating a major market area between these two entities and based on common rules, in the best-case scenario, positions can be strengthened in both directions.

But what is this strengthening of positions actually about? Is it about integration and the clarification of rules that benefit both the West and the East? Or is it more about creating institutions that are under Russia's sphere of power? The development of Russian pursuits is not a new question in the context of the EU. In the former countries of the Warsaw Pact and in the Baltic countries, the EU has been primarily seen as Russia's challenger in the battle between spheres of interest, whereas many of the old member states of the EU – Germany, France, and Italy in particular – have emphasized the mutual benefits of the interdependency between Russia and the EU. In Russia, there has been a tendency to see the EU's neighbourhood policy as a political game concerned with spheres of interest. In conjunction with the Eurasian Union, these questions are now re-emerging, and with renewed energy.

Kazakhstan and Belarus have minor economic significance in terms of Russia's interests. However, the process of tying Central Asian countries to the Russian economy also strengthens other relations; for example, within the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the SCO. Several Central Asian states are likely to join the Eurasian Union.

In terms of spheres of interest, the actual battle took place in Ukraine. In fact, the Ukrainian crisis can be seen as a collision between two competing integration processes, which turned into a battle between spheres of interest and, eventually, a military conflict. However, from the point of view of structuration theory, this development can be interpreted as an unintended result of several processes that were not completely under the control of any of the participants.

For the time being, the European Union seems to go about its business, pretending that the other union does not exist. Russia, however, is proceeding towards the Eurasian Union with determination. In terms of the relations between Russia and the EU, the key issue is whether this will be seen as being about common *interests* or a battle between *spheres of interest*. This is probably a matter of both

integration and spheres of interests for both unions, which certainly makes the situation complicated. If the continuation of the Cold War becomes the prevailing framework for international interaction, and integration processes are increasingly seen as exclusive spheres of interest, we are headed towards increased tensions, and perhaps a new arms race. This will make it more difficult to manage major common challenges related to climate change and new security threats, to name just two of many examples.

To conclude, Russia has adopted parts of the liberal modernization agenda but within the limits of a wider realist framework. Thus liberalism prevails only to the degree it does not challenge the needs to preserve state sovereignty and Russia's position as a geopolitical power. This has become even clearer during the past decade, when Russia has attempted to create an alternative economic world order and has adopted economic policies based more on autarchy than integrationist logic.

#### 6.4 Crafting Russia's public image: soft power and information influence

*Tuomas Forsberg and Sirke Mäkinen*

Another liberal idea puts more emphasis on cultural and ideological elements than military or economy in the global evolution of power. Joseph Nye has suggested that the key to success in today's global environment is soft rather than hard, that is, military and economic power. For Nye (2004), "soft power" is the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce, use force, or give money as a means of persuasion. Moreover, he suggests that soft power rests on three resources: the country's culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when others see them as legitimate and having moral authority). The main government policies of soft power are public, multilateral, and bilateral diplomacy. Nye's definition of soft power is based on the idea that instead of a strict dichotomy the difference between hard and soft power is better to be conceived as a continuum where punishment is the 'hardest' of the hard power instruments, followed by compulsion and inducement. These are then followed by the soft power instruments, starting with agenda-setting, persuasion, and finally attraction, which is the softest of these power instruments.

Russia too has followed this development, but in its own way reflecting soft power as a technique of manipulation than positive perception of the role of soft power. Moreover, in Nye's (2013a; Nye 2011) view, Russia has made the mistake of thinking that government is the main instrument of soft power. Indeed, as the concept of soft power has been contested and misunderstood, we have elsewhere used the concept of cultural statecraft to highlight the top-down role of these strategies (Forsberg and Smith 2016).

In the 1990s, Russia was not yet able to invest much in public diplomacy and it was not regarded as the first priority. Russia's post-Soviet public image was not very negative in the West, but Russian leaders increasingly felt that their message was not being effectively disseminated, and that news reportage on Russia was mainly focused on poverty and criminality. The more conscious effort to develop instruments to reach foreign audiences started in the context of the Second Chechen War in 1999-2000, when Russia pursued a worldwide information campaign trying to convince the international audience that the Chechen separatists were cruel terrorists and that Russia's military operation was therefore justified (Herd 2000). However, Russian authorities started to pay more and more attention to soft power after, and partly in response to, the series of upheavals (so called the colour revolutions) in the post-Soviet space (see e.g., Cwiek-Karpowicz 2013, 50; Fekluyinina 2008). Improved economic resources also encouraged this path of development.

In the 2000s, Russian authorities incorporated the notion of soft power in their lexicon and the concept was explicitly referred to in the main official documents and statements. In the 2013 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, soft power is defined as “a comprehensive toolkit for achieving foreign policy objectives building on civil society potential, information, cultural and other methods and technologies alternative to traditional diplomacy”. The Concept emphasizes the role of Russian language and culture: according to the Concept, one of the basic aims of Russia’s foreign policy is “promoting the Russian language and strengthening its positions in the world, disseminating information on the achievements of the peoples of Russia and consolidating the Russian diaspora abroad” (ibid.). For Putin (2013a), “the correct use of ‘soft force’ mechanisms is a priority, such as a stronger position for the Russian language, promotion of Russia’s positive image abroad and ability of organic integration into global information flows.” Foreign Minister Lavrov argued that “today it is obvious that without the proper use of a solid resource of “soft power” it is impossible to effectively defend the interests of a state in the world”. In his view, soft power is based mainly on spreading the Russian language and culture but “also broaden opportunities for people to get an education in the Russian language” (Lavrov 2012).

Russian authorities emphasized the negative dimension of soft power as a tool of Western influence. The Foreign Policy Concept (2013) warns about “destructive and unlawful use” of soft power by some other states, that is, intervention in “internal affairs” and destabilization with the precept of human rights situation. Here the role of the United States in the post-Soviet space is implicitly referred to. In the new version of the foreign policy concept (2016), the concept of ‘soft power’ is no longer viewed as alternative to traditional diplomacy but an “integral part of efforts to achieve foreign policy objectives”. Soft power is understood as a tool of persuasion (the goal is to project “unbiased” and “objective image of the country”), yet the overall frame is the military-political competition for power that takes place also in the information space (2016, Article 28). When the comprehensive conservative project was launched after 2010 in Russia, the ideological dimension of foreign policy was enforced as well. However, the conservative project is not a single, clearly-defined ideology as existed during the Soviet years. Rather, Russia is articulating various arguments of religious or cultural conservatism flexibly, and varying the approach for individual cases. For example, the cultural closeness of Shia Islam and Christian Orthodoxy is used in relation to Iran but not to Saudi-Arabia. In the latter case the common narrative of ousting U.S. NLG-competition is in use.

In its public diplomacy, Russia’s aims and strategies have definitively been different when it comes to the area of the former Soviet Union on the one hand, and the West and the rest of the world on the other. As for public diplomacy techniques, Saari claims that Russia’s public diplomacy in the post-Soviet space “draws strongly on the Soviet Public Diplomacy tradition: propaganda, cultural diplomacy, political influence techniques” (Saari, 2014). The logic of action is, according to Saari, that of pressure and manipulation (a similar argument made by Cwiek-Karpowich 2013). In the CIS area, Russian authorities have strengthened institutions related to public diplomacy, such as *Rossotrudnichestvo* – The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation – focusing, as the long name tells us, on forging ties with people living in the area of the former Soviet Union. This agency was reformed in 2008 from the Russian Centre of International Scientific and Cultural Cooperation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (*Roszarubezhtsentr*, 1992-2008) (Mäkinen 2016). Other notable institutions are the Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Foundation, and the *Russkiy Mir* Foundation, aimed at promoting the Russian language and Russian values, created in 2007, as well as , the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) (see e.g., Kudors 2010; Feklyunina 2008; Wilson 2012, 2015; Simons 2014; Saari 2014).

Before the annexation of Crimea, Russia’s public diplomacy in the West has been based on attempts to attract and persuade. After the annexation, Russia’s active ‘information campaigns’ in the West have focused on the framing and shaping of the perception of the current world order, and have

become one of Russia's primary goals. Russian leaders conceive attempts to constantly improve one's own image and to distort the image of the others as an integral part of the power struggle in international relations (Primakov 2013). One of the key institutions in this field has been Russia Today, later just RT – a TV channel directed to foreign audiences – which was launched in 2005. In addition to English, it also broadcasted in Arabic and Spanish. In 2013, the *RIA Novosti* news agency was taken over by *Rossiia Segodnya* and its budget was significantly strengthened. The Sputnik news agency, launched in 2014, is the brand used internationally for RIA Novosti, replacing the Voice of Russia radio broadcasting service. For the Western audience, Russian media outlets offer an alternative view of world events, and in particular, they highlight the problems that the West ignores or wants to deny in their own societies, or are related to their actions elsewhere in the world. On one hand, Russia propagates its own “truth” about the various international crises and but even more importantly, it casts a suspicion on the mainstream interpretations. Robert Orttung and Christopher Walker (2014) argue that, “in settings with media pluralism, Russia's goal is not to persuade audiences of the virtues of Kremlin policy but to create confusion and raise doubts about the facts of a given issue.” Peter Pomerantsev (2014) argues similarly that, “The point of this new propaganda is not to persuade anyone, but to keep the viewer hooked and distracted—to disrupt Western narratives rather than provide a counternarrative”. For example, in the context of the Ukraine crisis, the key has not been to persuade the Western audience that Victor Yanukovich was a perfect leader, but to represent the power shift as an illegal revolution and the new power holders as a fascist junta. On the other hand, Russia directly attacks the West by using the technic of “whataboutism”, already seen as a tool of the Soviet propaganda, namely the tradition of countering any accusation by pointing to alleged similar faults in the opponent's own conduct or character. It uses the same arguments as the critical opponents but just returns them independently of whether the facts are comparable or not (Khazan 2013). Again, in the context of the Ukrainian crisis, Russia's information campaign immediately after the occupation and annexation of Crimea focused more on accusing the United States and the West in general of its past sins, such as the Kosovo or Iraq wars, rather than justifying the action itself.

Moreover, Russia has also promoted the desired political message ranging from Putin and Medvedev's Twitter accounts, to paid Youtube videos of Putin's speeches, to the use of “troll armies” in the Western social media and on Internet (Sindelar 2014). Another part of Russia's public diplomacy is the Valdai Discussion Club, an annual gathering of foreign experts with the Russian president and other prominent members of the Russian foreign policy elite, which had its first meeting in 2004. Additionally, Russia has exercised its soft power by hosting international ‘mega’ events, both summits, such as the 2012 APEC summit in Vladivostok, the 2013 G20 summit in St. Petersburg, and various sports events, such as the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014, and the FIFA World Cup in Football in 2018. Hosting the Formula One Grand Prix race in Sochi since 2014, and establishing the Kontinental Hockey League (KHL), which has run since 2008, have been seen as important image-building projects. In the field of culture, Russia is particularly famous for its literature, music, and ballet. These assets have also been exported, albeit this sector has not been in the forefront of Russia's soft power.

Education, in particular higher education, makes up one important part of Russia's soft power toolkit. During the Cold War, education was certainly part of the ideological struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States (cf. Tsvetkova 2008). On the level of discourse, it has been argued that post-Soviet Russian authorities also engage in *educational diplomacy* (Mäkinen 2016), i.e., that there is a political rationale for promoting Russia's higher education abroad. This is done partly through attempting to recruit more international students to Russian universities, especially focusing on the post-Soviet space and offering tuition-free education. In those post-Soviet countries in which Russian is an official language, or where there is a significant Russian-speaking minority, Russian universities are extremely attractive, for instance due to low costs (or tuition-free education), geographical proximity, social links, the perceived high quality of education, plus the ability to study in Russian

(Mäkinen, forthcoming). The case is very different in the EU – Russian universities may attract only a marginal group of students, who either have roots in the post-Soviet space or those who are interested in studying the Russian language or the ‘Russian case’ as part of their field of study, or who might find access to education to a field which is not available in their home country (ibid.).

Russia has also promoted its own perception of history, in particular, its (or the Soviet Union’s) victory over fascism in the Second World War as part of its international image. This has also been an important part of strengthening the compatriot community living in the former Soviet territory. Ideological flexibility creates contradictions, even rather obvious ones. Russia is presently building relations with Israel based partially on joint interpretations of the fight against fascism and the spread of disinformation about Ukrainian fascist groups during the conflict. On the other hand, Russia has channeled funding to right-wing groups in Europe. Thus, historical events and interpretations of their meaning serve both in creating a positive image of Russia and in operations of malign influence during the crisis itself (Pynnöniemi 2016). The Orthodox Church is increasingly viewed as an instrument of cultural statecraft. The process of disintegration between Moscow Patriarchate and Ukrainian Orthodox Church that started in autumn 2018 shows the contradictory effects of using military and cultural instruments. Military actions have eroded long-standing cultural goodwill and institutional structures that would otherwise be cooperative.

It is sometimes claimed that Russia does not have the same appeal abroad that the Soviet Union enjoyed, because it no longer has an alternative set of values to offer to the rest of the world. Fyodor Lukyanov (2013), for example, thinks that Russia lacks an ideological foundation on which to develop an agenda that appeals to other countries. However, together with Putin’s third presidency, the situation started to change. Still in 2012, Konstantin Kosachev (2012), the then head of *Rossotrudnichestvo*, defined Russia’s soft power method as resting on “three pillars: cooperation, security and sovereignty” (Kosachev 2012, October 7). Russia, he said, is ready to “cooperate and assist in independent development”. In addition, Russia is capable of offering smaller countries real sovereignty and considerable independence. Russia advocates “a dialogue without imposing its own cultural code in the form of “universal values”. According to Kosachev, this is similar to the Chinese model, as China “tries to expand its influence without interfering in the internal affairs of other states or imposing some civilizational models upon them” (ibid.). Russia’s soft power method may be successful in the post-Soviet space because of cultural and linguistic ties and Russia’s ability to support its partners economically, including energy resources (Kosachev 2014, May 14; see Mäkinen 2016).

At the same time Russia’s soft power is represented as an ideological alternative to the Western world. (Keating and Kaczmarek 2017). “Western liberal values” and “more ancient civilization values rooted in traditions, religion, and basic ethic norms (respect for the elders, help to one’s neighbour, family, honour, dignity and love for the homeland)” (Kosachev 2012, October 7 and December 27) are juxtaposed, and Russia is represented as the main bearer of these ‘traditional values’ (for similar argumentation in Putin, see e.g., Tsygankov 2015a, 291; Mäkinen 2016).

Notoriously, the key point of value contestation has been Russia’s negative attitude towards sexual minorities and their rights. In his annual state of the nation address, Vladimir Putin (2013b) declared that Russia was ready and willing to defend “family values” against a tide of liberal, Western, pro-gay propaganda “that asks us to accept without question the equality of good and evil.” The traditional values that Russia is defending “have made up the spiritual and moral foundation of civilization in every nation for thousands of years.” As a strategy of influence, the defence of traditional values is interesting because it often resonates with the same people or segments in the West that have been regarded as Russophobic. For Lukyanov (2013), ideas based on conservative values are, however, not generally very appealing because by definition they are incapable of spurring progress.



The questions related to success and effectiveness are always very difficult to answer in a reliable and objective manner. Firstly, success should always be measured in relation to some goals, and it is not always clear what the goals are: are the goals of Russian cultural statecraft something immediate or some wider goals, are they set by the actor in question, or by the researcher reviewing them? Secondly, success should be related to costs: we can talk about effectiveness but it is better to talk about cost-effectiveness. Furthermore, effectiveness should be evaluated in terms of counterfactuals: often it is not certain how widely Russia's point of view is accepted, but to ask how widely would Russia's point of view be accepted without the presence of Russia's cultural statecraft? It is true, for example, that many people in Germany in 2014 sympathized with Russia and were not in favour of imposing sanctions, but they may have been thinking in that way because of economic interests, or because of the tradition of German '*Ostpolitik*' rather than having been persuaded by Russia's cultural statecraft. Any argument about effect is methodologically difficult to trace in the absence of such direct counterfactuals.

We have thus very little reliable information of the effects of Russia's public diplomacy and soft power as a whole. The image and public perception of Russia in general is negative, particularly in the West (Greece being an exception), and in Japan. And it has not improved much either; quite the contrary, since 2014 it was getting worse due to the conflict in Ukraine. According to the international survey of the PEW Research Center (2014), Russia's image was largely favourable only in Vietnam, Ghana and China, of which Vietnam had the most favourable view (75% viewed Russia favourably). The soft power index of the English media company Monocle ranks Russia far behind all other great powers. Additionally, its capability to affect the perception of the key facts related to the international crises is rather limited. For example, with regard to the crash of MH17, a CNN/ORC poll in July 2014 found that the overwhelming majority of Americans believe that the crash was caused by a missile launched by a Russian-sponsored separatist group in the Eastern Ukraine.

In pre-Crimea evaluations, the main reason for why Russia's public diplomacy had failed was that the image that Russia had offered did not correspond to the 'reality' in the field – that is, the projected image did not correspond to Russia's domestic and foreign policies (Feklyunina 2008; Avreginos 2009; Osipova 2012; Cwiek-Karpowich 2013). Osipova (2012) suggested to employ "public diplomacy by deed", "Russian leaders should consider adjusting both their foreign as well as domestic policies so that they better reflect the positive image they are trying to project abroad". From Nye's point of view, Russia's weakness in soft power projection is "the curtailment of liberties, the weakness of the rule of law, and an image of corruption", these do not attract foreign publics. Sochi could have produced soft power, but "if Russia does not step on this message by following them with repression. That was a mistake China made after the Beijing Olympics" (Nye 2013b).

Russia has paid increasing attention to soft power and cultural aspects of statecraft. However, this does not mean that 'soft' power would replace 'hard' power, and in particular, in Russia's case, soft power has been a way to complement hard power in its attempts of becoming an 'ever greater power' with the ability to use both soft and hard sources as tools of power. Russia's soft power has also suffered from the fact that mismatch between deeds and action; its soft power has been instrumentalized and based more on information campaigns than actual persuasion.

## 6.5 Ecological modernization

*Nina Tynkkynen and Veli-Pekka Tynkkynen*

A fourth and probably growing theoretical perspective onto the type of structural pressures states face in the present era, sometimes labelled anthropocene in order to underline the fundamental historical



shift in the global conditions, is ecological. According to the green theory, states are no longer able to focus on their short term interests but they have to tackle the environmental challenges and climate change in particular as a collective long term goal (Eckersley 2007).

Environmental issues have evolved as a crucial element of the foreign policy of basically any state since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was organized in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Simultaneously, the end of the Cold War presented an unexpected opportunity to harness the foreign policy of the US and other major global players to a grand strategy of environmental rescue (see Matthew 1996). Global and transboundary environmental problems imply that what once was national and domestic is now the subject of foreign policy. Yet at the same time, environmental foreign policy cannot be separated from domestic affairs. Perhaps more than any topic of foreign policy, environmental issues are about the intertwining of domestic and international affairs, as most environmental problems have their roots at the local level but their solution requires global action. Moreover, sometimes environmental issues are used to create leeway for non-environmental political purposes.

Russia has had a twofold starting point towards global environmental politics. On the one hand, climate change is felt at its starkest in the Arctic area, but on the other, Russia sees the exploitation of resources as central to its national strategy and does not yet regard the effects of climate change as fully negative. Russia is currently committed to nearly all major international environmental policy processes and agreements (Funke 2005). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, it played a particularly active role in climate policy negotiations for the enforcement of the Kyoto Protocol, the climate pact which extended the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and committed state parties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2008-2012.

Yet, recent research on Russia's environmental foreign policy demonstrates that Russia's encounters with international environmental politics often reflect more general foreign and domestic policy goals, and are used as platforms for image-building and benefit-seeking rather than for the promotion of environmental goals (see Korppoo, Tynkkynen & Hønneland 2015). During the 1990s and 2000s, a significant amount of foreign assistance funds flowed to the Russian state to facilitate environmental protection (see, e.g., Darst 2001). When funding was not available, environmental concerns were mostly omitted (see, e.g., Shkaruba et al. 2018). Furthermore, environmental argumentation in terms of concern about the anticipated environmental impacts of, for example, climate change has been almost completely absent in the domestic discourses (comp. Tynkkynen & Tynkkynen 2018). Environmental arguments have rather been used to obtain benefits from foreign actors and to underline Russia's leading role as a 'green' contributor to the global politics. This rhetoric was heard in summer 2017 after the declaration of President Donald Trump about the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. President Putin stepped into the limelight, telling the world that after the US withdrawal, Russia will naturally take the leadership in global climate policy as it has also achieved significant reductions in its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (President of Russia, 2010). This highlighted also how Russia wanted to stress the need for modernization thinking in ecological issues.

On top of the contrarian stance on global environmental leadership, which during Putin's third term gained a firmer foothold, and the present regime continues to utilize Russian nature and the environment as a tool of its foreign policy. For example, the discourse on Russia as a great ecological power is widely used, less so as an established concept but more as a narrative to promote Russia's foreign-policy goals (Tynkkynen 2010; Korppoo, Tynkkynen & Hønneland 2015).

Russia's utilization of natural resources, industrial emissions, and greenhouse gas emissions decreased significantly during the 1990s, not due to deliberate environmental policies, but rather caused by a sharp decline in industrial production following the collapse of the Soviet planned economy. Therefore, Russia is projecting itself as a do-gooder in international environmental

negotiations. Even if Russia is keen to collect image points in international arenas, little domestic action on global issues has so far followed (Korppoo, Tynkkynen & Hønneland 2015; Tynkkynen 2014).

A telling example is the Year of the Environment 2017, an all-Russian programme launched by the state. It focuses on traditional environmental issues at the local-regional level; waste and sewage management development in towns and cities, as well as the establishment of new nature protection areas (mainly in the peripheral Far North), and investment in air and water pollution abatement technologies in industry. Climate mitigation projects are fully absent among the 250 projects funded during the programme. Regardless of the local focus and lack of climate mitigation efforts, the Year of the Environment is utilized as a foreign policy vehicle. For example, it is used in the Russian state controlled English-language media to argue that Russia is a) a modern nation taking care of its people and of nature, b) a do-gooder in providing ecological services for the global community, and c) a reliable and environmentally responsible provider of energy, oil and gas, for the global community, especially for the main market, Europe (Tynkkynen 2018). In addition, this state-led narrative includes a statement that the sanctions set by Western nations on Russia since the onset of the war in Ukraine are hurting the environment, because due to the sanctions Russian oil and gas companies are not able to acquire and utilize state-of-the-art technologies in oil and gas extraction. This is an example of the utilization of the environment in promoting the pivotal objectives of the Putin regime, such as the maintenance of the high level of oil and gas production and export providing much-needed rents. This is elementary, if not a prerequisite for maintaining a grip on power both in the domestic and foreign policy fields.

The engagement in international environmental processes has certainly influenced the evolution of Russia's environmental policies and brought new discourses to Russia (Oldfield, Kouzmina & Shaw 2003). However, influencing Russian *policy* remains extremely difficult for foreign and domestic actors alike. Introducing ideas into the Russian debate through collaboration with lower-level actors has become possible, but such ideas are often randomly picked up by the executive level only if they happen to support the right goals (Korppoo, Tynkkynen, Hønneland 2015, 142). The diffusion and evolution of environmental norms, discourses, and practices in the Russian context is, therefore, majorly dependent on geopolitics and foreign policy interests that drives decision-making in Russia.

In sum, there are some signs of an ecological modernization in Russia when it comes to its foreign policy. However, these aspects of foreign policy have remained confined to a relatively minor role.

## 6.6 Conclusions

*Tuomas Forsberg et al.*

This chapter has looked at Russia's modernization in the field of foreign policy and external relations. The chapter distinguished between four different approaches to Russia's foreign policy modernization: military, economic, soft power, and ecological. Each approach opens up a different perspective on what is meant by modernization, and what it means in terms of Russia's foreign policy.

Russia's overall modernization has not followed a single paradigm, and the end result has been neither in line with a particular theoretical projection of the demands of modernization – since Russia has enough leeway to resist global trends. But neither has it been an outcome of Russia's own ideas of modernization, since the global environment has been resistant to Russia's own concepts of, and attempts at, modernization.

The end result has been neither in line with a particular theoretical projection of the demands of modernization. Russia clearly aspires to define and apply its 'own model of modernization'. Yet, this is more a question of specific way of argumentation (and self-perception), rather than a practical task

to implement. Russia's strategic choices follow realist theory and are often in conflict with the liberal vision of the world and domestic politics. On the other hand, in terms of economic policy, Russia has sought to imitate Western models and practices, yet resisting the political transformation in accordance with these models.

In the field of soft power, Russia has means and resources to facilitate a positive image of the country, as well as to target others via malign influence operations. However, success in actively creating havoc and destabilizing opponents in both Europe and the US has undermined Russia's ability to use soft power in those same target areas. The contradiction between ideals and actual practices is perhaps felt most concretely in the context of ecological modernization. There, the Russian state strategic interest are in contradiction with the ideals, although some sectors of economy or segments of public clearly are in favour of more ecologically-ambitious choices.

Russian foreign policy remains multi-dimensional and contains within itself several tensions. As we have argued in general terms, linear modernization does not exist for Russia, nor indeed for any other state. Over the last quarter century, the initial worldwide optimistic hope for a trend toward globalization and democratic transitions has been met by major obstacles. The rule-based international order has been challenged and, in many countries, democratic developments arrested, while authoritarian regimes persisted, or were replaced by similar regimes. In a number of new – and even established – democracies, political rights and civil liberties have recently been put into question because of their limited capacity to perform successfully enough to resolve numerous issues. At the same time, security challenges refer to globally-recognizable processes threatening entire human communities, destabilizing governmental systems, and hampering positive human development. At the apex are climate change, serious environmental destruction, hunger and poverty, and even the risk of nuclear war. In this global context, economic interdependencies exist, but they do *not* provide for an inevitable progression to a more civilized and cooperative international environment. Putting Russian foreign policy modernization in this context, we would suggest a new vocabulary conceptualizing the tensions with two major antinomies: global processes versus nationalistic closing, and great powerness versus economic interdependency. Russia cannot avoid these tensions, nor is it an impotent agent; it must find ways to mediate them. Let us examine the challenges more closely.

#### (1) Global processes versus nationalistic closing

The disintegration of the Soviet system occurred simultaneously with emerging cultural globalization. The disintegration facilitated the inclusion of new independent states onto the global circuit of ideas and images. A new geopolitical sphere has emerged, in which a group of countries tackle socialist legacies while they also tackle global challenges common to all regions of the world. The development trends or challenges related to cultural globalization can be recongnized as accelerated consumerism, digitalization, global media flows, liberalization of trade, new forms of mobility, and the neoliberal practices of social policy. Running parallel to these tendencies in the transformation of the political systems, and these same developments are linked to globalized processes that shape their political reactions and responses. The demands of the global market and division of labour set practical constraints on national-level politics over the longer perspective, and require decisions concerning the role and tasks of the state within society. Economic growth demands legal regulation across borders and sufficiently reliable rules in domestic markets. The ageing of the population and global migratory flows create a need for both national and cross-border solutions, and bring out the deficiencies in systems of weak interest representation. Questions of gender and inclusive citizenship are also linked to these issues. Furthermore, digitalization changes the nature of work and societal structures, and thereby creating pressure towards political decision-making to find new solutions for growth and development. In particular, a hyper-networked, multi-platform media sphere, together with participatory media audiences, change the creation and proliferation of information flows.

Nationalistic values, conceived as an integral part of national cultures, offer an ostensibly secure and stable foundation amidst the social tensions developing as the result of the increasing migration, globalized economy, and multiculturalism. In Russia the whole political scene is more or less nationalistic. In his latest statement, Vladislav Surkov (2019) the ideologist of sovereign democracy declared Russia a frontrunner in a new world of de-globalization, re-sovereignization, and nationalism (Pynnönniemi 2019). As we noted earlier, back in 2008 he was still much more open to global interaction. At the same time in the real world, the transnational flow of capital, resources, and media practices keeps integrating the region's citizens into global processes and intersectional communities beyond the boundaries of nation-states. Nationalistic approaches create new tensions and may lead to losing out on a long term global role.

The antinomy between global processes and nationalistic interests is not merely ideological. It has strong economic and ecological dimensions as well. The Russian role in global ecological problems shows how complex the issue is in fact. Despite its vast natural resources, politically-motivated, fossil-fuel reliance has impaired Russia's position as a leader in world climate policy and in clean energy. Russia does have the *potential* to become a global leader in renewable energy and climate policy, and a central provider of environmentally-sound gas. Combining Russia's great power aspirations, its ecosystem services, and energy potential in different arenas may enable this change, which would increase the resilience of Russian society. On the other hand, if Russia is unable to rid itself of the resource 'curse', it will erode its resilience, tempt itself to utilize energy and other flows as a geopolitical weapon, and undermine the country's role as a global leader in climate governance. Consequently, Russian economic and foreign policy antinomies are intertwined in a complex and unpredictable way.

## (2) Military great powerness versus economic interdependency;

Liberal theory puts a lot of hope in economic interdependency. As we have seen, Russia has adopted aspects of the liberal modernization agenda but has done so *within* the limits of a wider realist framework. Thus liberalism prevails only to the degree it does not challenge the need to preserve state sovereignty and Russia's position as a geopolitical power. This antinomy is not a mere ideology, but has strong structural basis in economic interdependency on the one hand, and military might on the other hand. International interaction on these issues is a dynamic process. Using its own resources, Russia tries to make moves within this antinomy, yet it is not able to define the international system as a whole, and it has to take into account resources, recognitions, and uses of statecraft by other states and international organizations as well.

Interdependency is mutual, and in economic terms Russia depends on maintaining good relations with European markets as much as the EU depends on Gazprom to supply its demand. As we argued in the previous section, Moscow's ability to coerce its energy customers as an energy superpower is constrained by financial and environmental factors. (See also Aalto et al. 2014) Although asymmetrical relations may exist for individual countries, more interconnected global markets imply that wielding asymmetric trade as a political weapon is tempered by the increased ability of dependent states to diversify their demand and to raise the political consequences of economic disruption. The structural constrain on the cooperative approach is becoming more significant because the EU has a long term strategy to seek alternative interdependencies.

The complexity of this antinomy is visible in the Ukrainian crisis. Russia's own integration process was confronted with EU, and a sphere of interest conflict turned into actual military action by Russia. As the next step, Russia received informal recognition of its sphere of interest in military terms, at the same time losing cultural goodwill and cooperative prospects for its domestic modernization. Russia is trying to seek new markets and support from Asia, and to some extent is giving in to China.

Yet at the same time, the Russian foreign policy modernization model is imitating the West, especially the US, and the Eurasian Union has adopted the four freedoms representing the key values of the European Union.

In the post-Cold War era, the possibility of major armed conflict between the major powers has largely been replaced by proliferation of conflicts between non-state actors (e.g., terrorist organizations, international organized crime, nationalist movements, etc.). At the same time, technological development (artificial intelligence and social media platforms) plus increased social and economic interconnectedness are creating new means for political, military, economic, and information influence, which may further disrupt the strategic balance between the major powers, and political stability within specific societies. The relative decline of US power, and China's growing military and economic power are now challenging a world order based on liberal-democratic institutions. Russia's ability to cope with these changes is critical for its aspiration to consolidate the country's great power status.