

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

**What does Russia mean? The Interpretation of Russian Foreign
Policy within the Russia – Ukraine Gas Disputes**

BACHELOR THESIS

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Argine Kostanyan

BRATISLAVSKÁ MEDZINÁRODNÁ ŠKOLA LIBERÁLNYCH ŠTÚDIÍ

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Policy within Russia – Ukraine Gas Disputes**

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Argine Kostanyan

Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is the work of my own and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All uses literature and other sources are attributed and cited in references.

Bratislava, April 30, 2014

Argine Kostanyan

Signature: _____

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Committee members: Doc. Samuel Abrahám, PhD, Prof. František Novosád, CSc., Mgr. Dagmar Kusá, PhD, Prof. Silvia Mihaliková

Chair of Defence: Doc. Samuel Abrahám

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Abstract

Daná bakalárska práca poskytuje interpretáciu Ruskej zahraničnej politiky v rámci rusko- ukrajinských plynových sporov. Táto práca je založená na teórii sociálneho konštruktivismu za účelom preskúmania, čo boli hlavné kroky ruských politikov a čo je dôležitejšie, prečo to boli práve tieto kroky. V prípade teórie sociálneho konštruktivismu je dôležité si uvedomiť, že svet, v ktorom žijeme je našim konštruktom. Preto poskytujem analýzu diskurzu prezentovaného oficiálnymi dokumentami Ruska, novinovými článkami Ruska a zahraničia. A na základe realizácie výskumu takýmto spôsobom som prišla k nasledujúcim bodom. Moje hlavné tvrdenie je, že v rámci rusko-ukrajinských plynových sporov. Rusko vytvorilo svoj vlastný obraz politických krokov za účelom ich legitimizácie. Po návrate na medzinárodnú scénu sa Rusko usiluje posilniť svoju pozíciu a snaží sa stať krajinou, ktorá bude zahrnutá v rozhodovacích procesoch o globálnych otázkach. Jej cieľom je presvedčiť medzinárodnú komunitu, o tom, že je racionálnym aktérom. To akým spôsobom Rusko vysvetľuje a definuje svoju politiku poukazuje na to, že sa usiluje o jej legitimizáciu.

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Autor bakalárskej práce: Argine Kostanyan

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Abstrakt

This thesis provides the interpretation of Russian policy within Russia- Ukraine gas disputes. I based my work on the social constructivist theory for the purpose to explore what were main actions of Russian policy makers and what is even more important to explain why they happened. In social constructivism theory it is important to realize that world we live in is under our construction. Thus, I provided an analysis of the discourse presented in official Russian documents, articles of Russian newspapers, as well as international broadcasters. And implementing my research this way I came to following points. The major claim of my thesis is that within Russia- Ukraine gas disputes Russia created its own image about policy actions that it undertook for the purpose to legitimize them. After Russia came back on the international relations scene, it has an aspiration to strengthen its position and become a country that will be involved in decision making processes about global issues. Its aim is to convince the international community that it is a rational actor. And study of Russian personal explanation and definition of its actions shows that it tries to legitimize them.

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Introduction

It is very hard and even impossible to have an objective and plain view of things that happen. This is because we live in a world that is completely interrelated, in a world where certain actions do not have to mean what they used to, in a world in which it is impossible to observe and process all the data. That is why we have different interpretations of events that arise, disparate opinions about the intention that led them and then we take various perspectives and positions on their following managing.

In this context the Russian foreign policy within the Russia – Ukraine gas disputes can be equally perceived as ambiguous and with many questionable concerns. There are a lot of opinions upon to which there is up till now no agreement and it is surrounded by many objections, which have not been proven. That is why this topic is all along interesting and in need of investigation.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia reappeared on the stage of the world politics and started to have a significant role in the international relations. As the indispensable recourses became that what decide about the states power in international relations Russia with its leading position in production of natural gas, of crude oil and many other natural resources became an actor which has a great potential to be a future great power.

However, whether it will be in Russia possible depends on how it is perceived on the political and international scene. “By studying how officials themselves justify their policies and how these policies are then perceived in the broader social and international settings, we have an opportunity to develop a rich understanding of a particular state action, as well as tentatively assess the chances of this action’s success or failure” (Tsygankov, 2012).

Thus, my thesis will use the case study of Russia – Ukraine gas disputes of 2005/2006 and 2008/2009 years to investigate and interpret Russian foreign policy. First, I will present the actions of Russian policy makers that they had undertaken and what were the consequences of these particular actions. Here emerges the problem of Russian using of energy resources as a political tool. Gazprom a company to a great extent controlled by government becomes a new “weapon” of Russian foreign policy. What

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is seen behind the Russian use of gas is “rewarding the loyalty” and on contrary “punishing the enemies”. One of the other actions which are observed from Russian side are the attempts to strengthen its position in the energy market, namely diversification of energy routes to increase its ties toward the European Union which provides the greatest gas income to Russia, being stable recipient of Russian gas and consuming around 70% of Russia`s overall exported gas. However, these ties from Russian side are cautiously met with European Union, because as events during the crisis 2009 showed being dependent on Russian gas can make vulnerable a certain state`s economy and at the same time its security.

But this is only one of perspectives and there are more views in international relations discourse. An interpretation of these actions represents another important part of my paper, namely the interpretation of official documents in order to understand how state actions are viewed by those who are immediately responsible for them, how they themselves justify their policies. This will enable us to look behind the action that we see and will help us to understand their motivations. At the same time I will present views of the international community concerning these actions, the purpose of which is to observe their perception whether they are gaining international recognition or are in contrast with them. And then I will provide some other examples of Russian policy to have an opportunity to compare and examine if other relevant cases are going in the same direction.

This is the purpose of my thesis to analyse and interpret Russian foreign policy in the context of “gas wars” and to offer a deeper view on this issue by providing an analysis of the discourse. The main research questions is to identify what was really behind Russian policy actions and what it aimed to achieve?

Thesis Statement

The way how Russia interprets its own policy that it is refusing the accusation of using energy resources as a foreign policy tool; namely its effort to depoliticize the Russia – Ukraine gas disputes, by this all it tries to legitimize its own actions, seeks to integrate and cooperate with Europe and pursues to be more successful within the international relations.

CHAPTER 1: Theoretical Part

The aim of this part of my thesis is to introduce the theoretical framework upon which my research is based and present the main concepts that are going to play key role in this work. First of all, I will introduce social constructivism as a theory that I used to investigate my topic. I specify reasons why I decided right for this international relations theory. And then I will bring forward methodology that I am going to follow in my research.

1.1 Social Constructivism

The way I am going to interpret Russian foreign policy is by application of social constructivism as a one of three main international relations theories. This kind of approach enables to analyze Russian foreign policy from a new perspective. There are many opinions and reflections about Russia as a great power and descriptions about its aggressive geopolitical policy but a lot of them lack the explanation why it came to be this way.

That is why it is necessary to implement social constructivism attitude which contrary to the assumptions of realism or liberalism believes that the world is socially and historically constructed rather than an inevitable consequence of human nature or of any other essential characteristics of world politics. Alexander Wendt calls two increasingly accepted basic tenets of constructivism: “(1) that the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and (2) that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature” (Wendt, 1999, p. 1). For understanding the context in which some actions happened is important to have a possibility to detect their meaning, exactly this context provides us the answers to questions, what influences these actions or on the other side what enabled them to happen.

Constructivism claims that any political actions should be perceived as a social phenomenon and thus they cannot be adequately understood without fully exploring the context in which they were formed (Clunan, 2009). There are two main questions that emerge in constructivism approach to issues; “why” question refers to reasons

that could influence particular actions as well “how and in which context” questions that concern time and place which can also have a great impact on matters.

In constructivism theory it is very important to realize that world is under our construction, so it is changeable according to us. This interrelation is mutual, people and policy makers affect and shape values, norms, rules and views about things and these at the same time affect our behaviour. Regarding to this it is relevant to recognize actors who determine the official discourse and those who oppose them. Concerning this it is also important to investigate language and rhetoric as a methods and means by which actors establish the discourse. As Weber argued: “We are cultural beings endowed with the capacity and will to take a deliberate attitude toward the world and to lend it significance” (Weber, 1949, p. 81). The ability of actors to interpret the meaning and significance of their actions differentiates the social from the natural sciences. This again shows the importance to detect who the real actors of political actions because they have a power to construct, form or change norms, rules and identities which particularly affect the conception of themselves are. So, for the purpose of the interpretation of foreign policy, it is substantial to research the ideas which political actors express, follow what they wish and clarify who says what.

1.1.1 Five Steps to Interpret State Policy

As a theoretical basis for this work I use a method built on insights from constructivist literature developed by Andrei Tsygankov (Tsygankov, 2012). It proposes a technique for establishing the meaning of foreign policy action on several interrelated levels: state-based, society-based, and international. This method provides a deeper view on some political actions. It presents not only chronology of political action that was implemented and its possible reasons and consequences but moreover gives us opportunity to predict the chances of this action`s success or failure. And that thanks to an investigation of its recognition from the side of state, society and on the international level.

Five steps which are necessary for developing a reasonable interpretation of state policy are, first, recording state policy; this step implies the series of state actions that taken together constitute a social reality open to interpretation. Second; the interpretation of official documents; examining this we can detect motivation of these

actions. The next step is location policy within the national school of interest, its perception by society and on a state level, who accepts it and why. It is crucial for politicians to get a domestic approval of their actions, because citizens of a state are those who legitimize their power and who fund the policy actions. Fourth step, tracking international recognition, concerns international reaction. It is inevitable for political actors to be successful on this stage because on the international reaction depends much in these days and it is almost impossible to gain some goals if they are not in accordance with other states. And the last point is comparing the policy to other relevant cases what presents us direction which state goes and vision or ideals that it pursues.

1.1.2 Rhetorical Action

One of the concepts on which I will focus in my work is a notion of *rhetorical action*. Rhetorical action is a concept created by Frank Schimmelfennig which is based on a question: why do *arguments* matter? He claims that “actors are assumed to belong to a community whose constitutive values and norms they share (Schimmelfennig 2003, 62). However, in specific decision-making situations actors often want to keep their own position or pursue selfish, egoistic interests that are in competition with community values or norms. And right causal mechanism of rhetorical action describes how the actors are brought to focus on their collective interests and in the same time honor their obligations as community members. The medium of this influence is *legitimacy* (Schimmelfennig 2003). Individual actors have to realize what kind of behaviour is legitimate and likewise what kind of arguments are legitimate. This realization allows and forces the actor to argue for the purpose to justify their political goals on the ground of institutionalized identity, values, and norms. The case, particular state starts strategically use of norm-based arguments is called rhetorical action. The concept of legitimacy is important because lack of it can have powerful effects on actors. And it can lead to costs or even rejection or exclusion from desired community.

CHAPTER 2: Practical Part

In this part of my work I will illustrate the benefits of the approach of social constructivism as an advantageous theory and method for the interpretation of Russian foreign policy. Particularly the case study of Russia – Ukraine gas disputes designates a great example on which can be demonstrated many of the aspects of this international relations theory. The chapter will consist of five parts which are connected in a way to offer a logical and comprehensible interpretation of Russian foreign policy. In the first part I will present the significant impact of the social and historical context that enabled some political actions to become possible. The second part will concern the actions that Russia had undertaken toward the Ukraine which will serve as a material of interpretation. The third part will focus on describing how Russia itself views these actions as being immediately responsible for them. In the fourth part these perspectives will be compared to international perception of the issues and in the last part will be portrayed how is this Russian policy connected to other relevant cases.

2.1. Political and Social Background of Russia

For the followers of the theory of social constructivism it is existential to examine the environment of the society which one seeks to understand and interpret. “Central to constructivism is the understanding that international politics is guided by intersubjectively shared and institutionalized norms, rules, ideas, beliefs and values held by actors (or agents)” (Paul R Viotti, Mark V. Kauppi, 2010, p. 280). Intersubjective means shared by people and institutionalized means these collective ideas are established or constituted in the society as a social structure of institutions, practices, and identities. “These shared norms and rules set expectations about how the world works and what constitutes legitimate behaviour” (Paul R Viotti, Mark V. Kauppi, 2010, p. 280). That is why it is important to look at political, social and historical background of a country, particularly; to realize why certain events could or even should come into being.

2.1.1. Russia as an Energy Superpower

When it comes to the debate on natural resources anyone can without any doubt claim that at this point Russia is the world's richest country. It contains over 30% of all the natural resources in the world. Russia holds the world's largest natural gas reserves, the second-largest coal reserves, and the ninth-largest crude oil reserves. Furthermore, it leads also in timber reserves, it has the third-largest deposits of gold, the second largest estimated deposits of rare earth minerals and also covers almost a tenth of the world uranium production, being the 4th largest producer in the globe. It is the largest producer of crude oil and the largest producer and exporter of dry natural gas. Additionally, it is one of the top producers and consumers of electric power in the world (Analysis, Independent Statistics and, 2012).

The current stage of international relations is characterized by the increasing role of the energy factor in world politics. It now appears that vocabulary of current international relations was revised and updated to include terms and conditions fitting the circumstances of the present decade. Some of the concepts of international relations were redefined and new ones emerged because “new forces” are now at work. For example, the term - “security” was previously defined in a very narrow way, exclusively in military terms. However, with the substantial change of our world after the Cold War it was inevitable to broad it to gain new dimensions. And at that times attention was directed also on natural resources as on the component of international relation that determines a lot. Exploitation of renewable natural resources and lack of access to natural resources can lead to the outbreak of violent conflict. Scarcity of renewable resources can, in combination with other social factors, contribute to macro-level violent outcomes such as ethnic clashes and insurgencies (Homer-Dixon, 1999; Shannon O'Lear, Paul E Diehl., 2011; Brown, 2005). Indispensable resources and energy especially become more and more important in the contemporary world and on the fact of possessing (and, on the contrary, absence) of them largely depends development of economies of certain states. States which have a natural access to resources, gain an obvious advantage. From one side possessing them sustains stability and security in their own country and at the same time also provides the possibility to gain the profit from other countries. And from the other side, the countries which lack resources are compelled to adapt their policies

and actions to get them to be able to satisfy their citizens' needs. This leads to an aggravation of the international competition for access to resources, and ownership over them occurs to be one of the factors in the foreign policy of the states. So, Russia as the largest producer and exporter of energy is now irreversibly involved in the global energy processes. And thanks to its huge scales of energy supplies compared to other countries and consequently its ability to influence world markets and get a preferred policy outcome Russia has a great potential to become a great power.

2.1.2 Putin`s ascend to Power

In the sphere of the economy, rising world prices of oil, gas and other commodities from 1999 helped Russia to recover from its post-Soviet crisis. However, new environment of higher prices could not preserve the long-term economic stability of the non-market system of Russia by which intra-CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) gas prices were set. As European import prices were rising sharply in the same way rose losses to Gazprom of providing cheap gas to Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. These economic changes were coinciding with political changes, namely with Putin`s accession to power in the end of 1999 and his pursuit of a strong state policy. Putin was seeking to stabilize the situation in his country by centralizing the mechanisms of government. Also the gas sector was moved under his control and oil companies were forced to pay more taxes (Krutikhin, 2012). Putin further strengthened his position in the gas sector by using transitional intermediates whose role was to weaken the bargaining power of other CIS countries, mainly Ukrainian ability to lead direct negotiations with Turkmenistan. This policy ensured Russia the recovery of its economic power and enabled it to focus on gas as its main product of future profit. Since then Russia has become a powerful player on the international gas and oil market. Under the strict governmental control over the energy resources, the Kremlin started using its energy power for political purposes (Gidadhubli, 2003, p. 2025).

2.1.3 Nationalization of Gazprom

In Russia the key energy resources and enterprises of their extraction, production, transportation and processing are to a great extent concentrated in the hands of the state controlled group of companies "Gazprom". The Russian government holds

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around 50,002 % of shares in Gazprom represented by the Federal Agency for State Property Management, Rosneftegaz, and Rosgazifikatsiya (OAO Gazprom, 2003 - 2014). As was mentioned above, taking into account the significance of the resources in the world economy of the 21st century this allows the Russian government to base on the potential of Gazprom while it is resolving serious foreign policy problems. This indicates that a nationalization of Gazprom has enabled the Russian government to politicize Gazprom's functions aiming to use Gazprom as nationalized political weapon. Yet, as the monopoly, literally, became one of the institutions of Russian government in terms of economy contribution. And the Kremlin used it to penetrate the European energy market to secure its own interests there. The gas dispute with Ukraine was first clear indication that, exactly Gazprom became the main political tool of the Kremlin. "One media stated that from now the main body of the Russian government which is responsible for the foreign policy is no more the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but Gazprom" (Панюшкин, Валерий; Зыгарь, Михаил, 2008, p. 79). Now Gazprom faces various threats such as lack of pipeline ownership and its organization is in a state of decline, not only are its gas reserves in decline, but the organization has failed to renew its infrastructure and field exploration enough to stop this decline (Панюшкин, Валерий; Зыгарь, Михаил, 2008, p. 101; Strejcek, 2011, p. 4).

CHAPTER 3: Recording State actions

In this section the main actions of the state are presented which together constitute a social reality open to interpretations. These are the events which became possible because of circumstances and conditions described in previous part.

3.1 Russia – Ukraine Gas Crisis of 2005/2006

For several years before January 2006 in Putin's Russia, the ground was being prepared in gas sector policy for the conflict that appeared. Gazprom started to stand for CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) export prices to be raised to European levels (with new price between \$160-230 per 1,000 cubic meters (Stern, 2006, p. 6)) and wanted to reorganize transit managing. The Ukrainian side agreed to pay higher prices only over time, stating that it cannot allow yourself to accede on these prices and that its industry would become unprofitable with gas above \$90. The proposal to increase Ukrainian import prices to European levels, previously used as a lever of persuasion on a generally cooperative Ukrainian leadership, became an ultimatum which led to January 1 of 2006 when the supplies of gas from Russian side were halted and at this point started the crisis of 2006. The cut-offs affected gas supplies not only in Ukraine but also in European countries that are dependent on Russian natural gas. The crisis was settled by a series of compromises. The agreement ended the use of Russian gas as barter payment for transit services, and opened the way for Russia to move Ukrainian prices towards European levels. Further there was designed the balance of control of transit arrangements away from Ukraine, by consolidating RosUkrEnergo's role as a supplier what gave Russia a powerful position in the Ukrainian domestic gas market.

This crisis had considerable consequences both on the relationship between Russia and Ukraine and Russia and Europe. On the Russian side, the reduction in export volumes of gas from January 1st till 3rd of 2006 appeared to be a tactical mistake in terms of relationships with European customers and this led to a loss of trust towards Russia. Europe perceived these actions rather as Russian unreliability as a supplier than Ukraine's unreliability as a transporter. However, taking into account the fact that Europe is dependent on Russian supplies, the prospect of Russia losing the

relationship with Europe is excluded. The much greater danger emerged before Ukraine and Belarus and that is the Russian plan to minimize its dependency on Ukraine and Belarus as transit countries and projects of direct pipelines, such as Nordstream European pipelines. On the side for Ukrainians this crisis and with its disadvantageous consequences harming Ukrainians caused concerns regarding the Ukrainian government being weak and unable to oppose its larger neighbour.

3.2. Russia- Ukraine Gas Crisis of 2008/2009

Revenues from the gas export to Europe were of high importance for Russia while Ukraine was experiencing difficulties paying for the gas and trying to replace this source of energy with alternatives (Simon Pirani, Jonathan Stern, Katja Yafimava, 2009, pp. 1-6). All these led to various disputes between Ukraine and Russia on the issues of gas prices. The relations between countries worsened more in February 2008 when they failed to negotiate about gas prices and because of Ukrainian inability to pay its accumulating debts for previous gas supplies until 31 December. Russia demanded \$2.2 billion including all the penalties; Ukraine claimed only \$1.5 billion. Along with the money, Naftogaz sent a letter saying that if Ukrainian supplies were cut, it would divert to its customers volumes bound for Europe, as it had in 2006. Gazprom had been publicly threatening to cut off Ukraine for two weeks already. On January 1 it did so (Pirani, 2009, p. 3). On January 7 the dispute turned to real crisis when all Russian gas flows through Ukraine were halted for 13 days cutting off supplies to Europe, most of which depends on Russian gas and some of them completely depending on it. Throughout the crisis the Russian and Ukrainian sides blamed each other for the cut-offs. Thus, on January 11 and 12, countries agreed to allow the European Union as independent observers to monitor the situation in an attempt to solve the crisis, but the mission brought little success. Russia continued to argue that Ukraine did not open the valve so gas could not reach its customers and so Ukraine is stealing gas assigned to Europe. And Ukraine argued that Russia sent gas to the wrong direction.

The disputes were resolved on January 18, when Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and his Ukrainian counterpart Yulia Tymoshenko agreed a new contract that

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covered the next ten years. This crisis had a great impact on the economies of Russia, Ukraine and Europe and in addition it had a very negative and possibly even irreversible impact on the reputations of both Russia as an energy supplier, and Ukraine as a transit country. And it is impossible to determine with certainty who was responsible for interrupting gas flow to Europe. The results of the conflict were: sharp increase in prices of gas in Ukraine, complete elimination of Turkmen gas supplies on territory of Ukraine what means the monopolization of Gazprom of all gas supplies to the country, removal of an intermediate company of “RosUkrEnergo” being accused of lack of transparency and another result was that Ukraine provided guarantee of purchases of certain amounts of Russian gas, which subsequently were criticized because of their overestimation. “Tymoshenko was accused of signing the ‘most disadvantageous contract in the history of Ukraine’” (ИА REGNUM, 2011).

CHAPTER 4: Establishing an Official Explanation

In the previous chapter there were described the main events of Russia – Ukraine Gas disputes as well as mentioned causes and consequences of these conflicts. However, to have a more precise picture of the situation and to understand the meaning of these actions, we need to examine these actions also in another way. And in this work will be applied the approach of social constructivism to understand how and in which context the events happened. Founding on this theory it should be assumed that any foreign policy action is as a social phenomenon and then it cannot be adequately understood without fully exploring the context in which it is formed. By analyzing how political actors themselves perceive their policy and how they justify their actions we have a possibility to capture their motivations and understand what they aim to achieve. Here it is important to find out who were the actors of the main political decisions, what were the topics they talked about and what was the rhetoric and metaphors they used. The purpose of this investigation is to look behind only events and further seek to understand a vision that informs state actions. Metaphors, predicates, types of expressions, sentence structure, punctuation, examples – that all will serve us to develop a perspective about the visions.

Accordingly, in this section I am going to provide some of the Russian positions within Russia - Ukraine gas disputes in 2005/2006 and 2008/2009 years how they were set up and established in an official documents of the Russian Federation and expressed by main political representatives. Thereby there will be paid attention on the content of documents. Then, I will explore and focus on actors who took a part in these gas disputes and were forming and directing the discourse. And I will observe the rhetoric which individual actor used. By this I primary mean nomination of certain things and use of metaphors.

In the framework of establishing an official explanation I used the statements expressed by Vladimir Putin who was the president during the first Russia - Ukraine gas crisis and the prime minister during the second one and by Dmitry Medvedev who was the president at that time. By observing this fact that the president was personally dealing with this concern we may conclude that energy diplomacy is a base of Russian policy and presents the issue of a greatest importance. At the same time the

reality that Putin being the prime minister during the Medvedev's presidency was still acting within this gas conflict and was the one who conducted negotiations is evidence that he was a real holder of power and decision maker.

4.1. Depolitization of the Crisis

“I must say, that this, first of all was not our initiative, Creation of Common Economic Space *is not Russian initiative*” (Putin, 2005).

“We want to minimize our infrastructure costs and make our economies more competitive on the world market. This is the main task. *There is no political component*” (Putin, 2005).

“I want to draw the attention of the Government of Russia to the fact that the negotiations on energy between *economic entities should not, in any case, affect the development of bilateral relations between Russia and Ukraine. This is the most important*” (Putin, 2005).

“What we need *maximally- maximally! Depoliticize this question*” (Putin, 2005).

In a time when gas disputes between Russia and Ukraine just started to emerge, Ukraine was considering a Russian aggressive energy policy as a reaction to its new government and its direction to the West. Thus, Putin for the purposes to keep Ukraine on East was emphasizing the community of the Common Economic Space as an economic and not political project. Russian official actors from the very beginning of the disputes were trying to depoliticize this conflict; it emerges in official documents of Russian government all the time. We can perceive that Russian rhetoric concerning this is very strong; this is seen by frequent use of exclamation marks and through emphasis on this matter.

Taking into account the causes of the gas crisis as they were described in the previous section it may be concluded that the main theme of disputes was a matter of prices.

“The President stressed that only the interaction in accordance with market rules will ensure *the future of normal, good relations between our countries*” (Putin, 2005).

“The President emphasized that an agreement on energy cooperation gives the Russian-Ukrainian relations a new quality: they are becoming *truly cooperative, transparent and market*” (Putin, 2006).

“Energetic cooperation must be based on *single unified principles*” (Putin, 2006).

“Ukraine *has enough resources* to purchase necessary volumes of Russian gas *under market prices*” (Putin, 2005).

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Analysis of these statements shows Russia in a better light. As the rise of prices was a major cause of the conflict, thus, it is important for Russia to interpret its actions. And representatives of Russian policy justify their actions as needed to achieve effectiveness in the economic sphere and actually to improve relations with Ukraine (and also with other former Soviet states). Ukraine was one of the last countries that were pursuing gas from Russia under old prices and the sharp rise of them was a shock for Ukrainian economy. The country informed that it will be incapable to pay for gas and asked for gradual increase of prices. However, Russia stated that Ukraine has enough funds to be able to do so. Generally, the position of Russia seems to be fair, it refers to rules and principles and aims to attain a more transparent and clear functioning of the economy. This can be connected to its aim of depolitization of the economy because previous prices were the outcome of former Soviet policy.

Similar statements followed during the gas crisis of 2008/2009 but these disputes become even more aggressive because they were followed by more nuances like European involvement into the crisis and harmful effects on it what caused even “information war” between Russia and Ukraine arguing who is responsible for these damages.

“The issue of gas supplies to European consumers and gas relations between Russia and Ukraine *is not political*. For Russia it is an issue of fulfilment of economic obligations. But, unfortunately, this problem has become a hostage of disagreements in the leadership of Ukraine and its inability to take appropriate decisions in the existing situation” (Medvedev, 2010).

“And that's our goal - to show *who actually was involved in the stealing of gas*. What is the Ukrainian position on this topic?” (Medvedev, 2009).

“Unfortunately, *there continues the blockade* of supplies from side of Ukraine. And despite all the efforts made by the Russian side, despite the emergence of observers from the European Union, despite reaching agreements on several issues, nonetheless valve from the side of Ukrainian border and has not been opened” (Medvedev, 2009).

“*Neither Russia nor European consumers should be dependent on the situation of Ukraine's political elite*; on the way how they there divide and share the gas; and on that who sits on which chairs. We must carry out their duties properly, as it is established *by the contract*: sign these contracts on time and pay according to these contracts on time” (Medvedev, 2009).

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The gas crisis of 2008/2009 years detected new problems between Russia and Ukraine and led to escalation of the situation between these countries. The rhetoric of Russia towards the Ukraine worsened and focused on new issues. Used examples provide a negative assessment from of Ukrainian policy makers and the fact that they should not be perceived as reliable and serious partners until they arrange their situation at home. Russia blamed Ukraine for its unwillingness to agree on contracts and following violation of them. It also accused Ukraine for its inability to solve its own domestic problems what Russia indicated as a cause of their gas cut-offs. And in addition to it, was blaming Ukraine for stealing gas. Russia claimed that Ukraine was responsible for the blockade of supplies. During this crisis Russia suffered from Ukrainian irresponsibility as a transit country what puts it in a very disadvantageous state before the European Union. And we can see that it uses language to show that Russia was in the same position of harmed country like Europe. We can also observe how Russia is trying to prove the claiming that it used all its efforts and means to correct the situation and help Europe in every possible ways.

4.2. Analysis of media discourse in Russia

4.2.1 Russian Media

In case of Russian media it is important to state that their media are not fully free and in many cases they are very much influenced by the government. According to Freedom House report Russia is considered to be one of the world`s most repressive and dangerous media environments “in large part due to legal pressure and attempts to control broadcast media outlets” (Freedom House, 2009, p. 3). “The capacity of the state to limit media autonomy is enhanced by three intertwined factors.” First, the government continues to have control over a great amount of the media, second point is about the capacity of the state to limit media autonomy thanks to its interconnection with the business sector and finally the weak legal system of the country provides minimal protection of the media (Becker, 2004, p. 152). But still it is important to investigate how Russian media are writing about these issues and how are these events perceived at the state level.

4.2.2 A Question of Price

“Ukraine is ready to transition to *market prices*, but it so far must be determined”(Новости России, 2005).

“Gazprom refuses to supply gas to Ukraine upon to *compromised price* of \$160 per 1,000 cubic meters. It intends to demand for fuel at the rate of world prices – \$ 220-230 per 1,000 cubic meters”(Горжей, 2005).

“There *can be no debate* about the price of \$160 per 1,000 cubic meters”(Горжей, 2005).

“Ukraine will buy gas under the *European prices* - \$ 230 per 1,000 cubic meters. What concerns gas transit, according to words of Viktor Khristenko, *Russia has already paid the Ukrainian side \$ 1.25 billion and is ready to pay further*” (Нереба, 2006).

“The price of issue? - Billions of dollars, because *Kiev was not only stealing gas, but was maybe even reselling in Russia bought discounted gas under the market prices, i.e. twice more expensive*”(Известия, 2009).

Observation of the first two examples informs that the crisis situation started because Russia requested Ukraine to shift to market prices. And that this shift is inevitable and cannot be discussed. The way how it is expressed suggests that it is not a decision or intention of Russia itself but they are as though forced to take these steps. This once again shows that the price was a central topic of crisis 2005/2006. It is illustrated by examples of many newspaper articles. Another aspect of prices can be investigated on these examples and it is the way how Russian newspapers tend to name it. The used epithets are: *market, European, compromised, discounted, twice more expensive and price of \$160*. First two nominates price that Russia aims to establish and by naming them as *market and European* Russia implies them as a standard and present as fair. Another examples concern old price and the way how they are described signify that this lower price was an exemption for Ukraine. And then it should be acceptable for Ukraine to transit on new prices. It is not about Russia to be bad now, but more about it being too good and generous in the past. Thus in Russian newspaper there is highlighted ambition of the country to agree on market price. And that not only regarding Ukraine, but rather Russia wants (or pretends) to change its own market and form it on general standards. “In the future we should not use any special privileges and preferences concerning any countries” (Medvedev, 2009).The last example concerns crisis of 2009 year and it is felt that used rhetoric become harsher. In that

case there is not only twice mentioned that Ukraine was favoured by lower prices in the past but Russia further blames Ukraine for stealing gas and tells about the possibility of reselling it with double profit.

4.2.3 Concept of a Contract

One of another topics which appears in media discourse is the issue of a contract. It is important to approach this aspect because absence or violation of a contract can lead to crisis and this is exactly what happened between Russia and Ukraine.

“And the position of Ukraine in this situation from the legal point of view is faultless, as we have an *agreement* till 2009 about the price of 50 dollars for one thousand cubic metres Kiev has already hinted, that not only will rise in the price for transit of the Russian gas in the European Union (...) but also will *reconsider the agreement on basing the Black Sea fleet in Sevastopol*” (Okrivs, 2005).

While Yushchenko and Timoshenko continue disputes about how beneficial are new contracts between Gazprom and Neftgaz, (...), *in Russian monopoly already discusses the prospects of further cooperation* with our country (Долинчук, 2009).

“*Because the contract for gas supplies has not been signed, the company “Gazprom” controlled by the Russian government, turned off the valves through which Ukraine received a neighbour’s gas*” (Гергеба, 2006).

Examining the first example we see that gas agreement between Russia and Ukraine depends also on other contracts between these two countries. That points out the problem of politicization of the issue because of the interrelation of economy and policy. And in the above mentioned example we see that Kiev threatens Russia to reconsider the agreement on basing the Black Sea fleet in Sevastopol. It is strange to see Russia in a position of the country that can be blackmailed or threatened, because we used to see it on the other side of practising this kind of policy. However, when we look at further actions concerning this question it ceases to be strange that much. During the presidency of Victor Yushchenko the Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko declared that the lease will not be extended and that the fleet will have to leave Sevastopol by 2017 (UNIAN, 2008). It must be admitted that the interconnection of these two contracts had influence on each other in future development of relations between the states. In 2010 “Russia agreed to a 30 percent drop in the price of natural gas sold to Ukraine, in exchange for permission to extend

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Russia's lease of a major naval base in the Black Sea port of Sevastopol, (...), for 25 years" (Ivan Watson, Maxim Tkachenko, 2010). This once again shows how different are the perspectives on things and also how the Russian media go along with official explanation and view on issues. This example also implies that agreement about prices and gas supplies has an impact on other political questions as well. That is why contract represents a considerable topic within the Russia - Ukraine gas crisis. It is important and needed for both sides and I would claim that for Russia even more what can be observed on next two statements adverted above. While Ukraine politicians were not sure about newly made contract, Russian political and what is more important, economical actors looked for further prospects of cooperation, because exactly contract provided them the potential to act and gain some new goals. Likewise the last example refers about the significance of the contract for Russian side. In accordance with a statement Gazprom halted gas supplies because the contract was not concluded. Russia cuts off Ukraine and in the same time Europe from gas supplies and that had enormous consequences for it but still it undertook this action although it had to count with future effects. This demonstrates the importance of it accompanying with significance to act according to it.

CHAPTER 5: Tracking Policy's International Recognition

In previous part there was described how Russia itself perceives and interprets its political actions. However, this image does not have to be the same as one depicted within the international relations scene and it is also very unlikely to find this kind of view, for example, in Ukraine. We live in a globalized world where individual states became more connected and interrelated with each other. And from one side, this contributed to individual states to associate and form communities on a base of common principles, values or goals. Subsequently, it made easier to achieve these goals or to strengthen some values or principles because of greater amount of people sharing them. "By providing moral, diplomatic, financial and institutional support for the state, the outside world legitimizes its behavior and encourages it to stay on the chosen path and not deviate to revisionist behavior" (Tsygankov, 2012, p. 9). But from another side, it made more difficult for some states to implement the kind of actions that are not in accordance with the majority. States became more dependent on each other, both in a positive and negative way. "A foreign policy may generate hope for success when it is supported at home, yet it will not be successful until it is supported by its targeted outside audience." Thus, in addition to the national discourse, the state needs to objectivize the meaning of its policy also on an international level (Ibid). In the next section I will provide detailed discourse analysis of articles taken both from Ukrainian newspaper and international (mainly European) broadcasters. And I will direct my attention on reactions from representative members of the international community, will distinguish which parts of policy were accepted and rejected and what is more important why that happened.

5.1. Analysis of international media discourse

5.1.1. Russian Gas as a Tool of Foreign Policy

"It is logical that after the collapse of the USSR, Russia has *transformed the energy business in the instrument of state policy*" (Stadilna, 2006).

"Russia *wishes to tire out us in Common Economic Space*. Besides it tries to manage to get for herself absolutely other prices *to strike on our economy*" (Okriivs, 2005).

"... *Russia* in the early days of the new year *tried to expose Ukraine in an unattractive role in areas of instability, simply accusing it of stealing gas*" (Stadilna, 2006).

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In the provided examples emerges the most important aspect that distinguishes international point of view from the Russian one. And that is a political element of using gas. The mentioned examples concern Ukrainian perception of Russian use of gas. First statement generally expresses Ukrainian opinion about gas becoming the instrument of Russian government. The next two examples argue about concrete experiences of Russian abusing of gas as a tool of its foreign policy. There is a great amount of views on Russian using gas as a foreign policy tool. In the past the energy relations between certain states were observed solely in economic terms such as trade, financial investments, and demand – supply relations. However, this kind of approach is very limited and insufficient because now gas is used also on the political level and these geopolitical and geostrategic aspects must be taken into account. That's why we are also talking about “energy policy” and “energy diplomacy”. Gas production of Russia is monopolized by the state and as a nationalized company it is subjected to government. That means that the Russian government has all the Russian gas policy under its control and this allows it to manipulate with it independently and how it considers as appropriate. What is seen behind the Russian using of gas is “rewarding the loyalty” and on contrary “punishing enemies”. “As in the days of the Warsaw Pact, loyal allies are rewarded with ample amounts of subsidized energy, at great cost to Moscow” (Newnham, 2011, p. 138). Today are the recipients different because we cannot talk about the Warsaw Pact but the principle remained the same, the countries that are loyal to Russia are subsidized by gas for lower prices. Running such a policy is usually described right on Russia – Ukraine Gas Crisis. Many scholars and media argue that this policy was implemented after the “Orange Revolution” which changed direction of Ukrainian policy to the West. “Accordingly, during the tense electoral campaign the Kremlin and its surrogates openly brandished the “gas weapon” (Yasmann, 2006). As the leader of one pro-Moscow Ukrainian organization said, “what else but gas could convince the people of Ukraine that it's better to be a friend of Russia than the EU and NATO?” (Yasmann, 2006). It was made clear that a vote for Yuschenko was a vote for winters with no heat, shuttered factories, and economic collapse. After Yuschenko's final victory at the end of 2004 these threats began to be put into action (Newnham, 2011, p. 140). Russia changed its view on Ukraine like a partner and friend and started to perceive it like an enemy. And the following gas cut-off could be understood as retribution. Sudden increasing of gas prices, demanding

payment of Ukraine's accumulated debt for gas service. And if successful, Gazprom's demands would have bankrupted Ukraine. These all were the results that are considered as politically motivated. Today there is discussion that Russia is trying to use again its tools of gas to get Ukraine into the Eurasian Union. This is illustrated on the second example mentioned in a chart, where Ukraine claims that Russia is trying to get it to Common Economic Space what is a project of economic integration of post-Soviet states. And also that by its gas policy it is picturing Ukraine in bad image before Europe, claiming that it was Ukraine's fault that European countries were cut off the gas for a few days and that Ukraine was stealing European gas. And for Ukraine it is a political concern as it is a long-term aim of the country to integrate to the European Union.

5.1.2 "Harmed Europe"

"Some countries, including Bulgaria and Slovakia, *rely almost entirely on Russia for gas, pumped via Ukraine*" (BBC, 2009).

"They have *had to shut down industrial plants and domestic heating systems, find alternative sources of gas or switch energy plants to oil. People have struggled to heat homes and schools*" (BBC, 2009).

"Slovakia declared *a state of emergency* and rationed gas supplies to industry. Hundreds of thousands of people in countries like Bulgaria, Bosnia and Moldova were *left shivering in the middle of a particularly harsh winter*" (BBC, 2009).

While Russian media were concentrated on "price and contract" as a main concepts and matters of discussion since right these factors altogether with Ukrainian incapability Russia perceived as causes of following situation, in Europe, on the other side, the main topic was its own situation of harmed and suffering side. And this is displayed by provided examples. These statements relate the problem of dependency of the European Union on Russia and inform about its vulnerability towards that country. Energy relationship and gas supplies from Russia to Europe started in early 70ties. And nowadays Russia, namely Gazprom occupies the leading position in the European gas market. And in this time Europe is existentially dependent on Russian gas. It is the greatest recipient of Russian energy and around 40% of its total gas import comes from Russia (Rehn, 2008). What is also very important is to realize that some of the European countries (all Baltic countries, Finland, Slovakia) are totally (on 100%) dependent on Russian gas. Today Russia is connected with Europe by twelve

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pipelines and there are projects for further diversification of them. “However, there is different understanding and using of term of diversification. While some European countries would like to extend the variety of gas suppliers or other energy resources, Gazprom and Russia are working on extending of a number of transport routes and number of recipients” (Strejcek, 2011). “Taking into account the tendency of changing the structure of energy consumptions and their decisive intention to increase ecological compatibility of energy can be claimed that dependency of European gas consumers on imports from Russia is not going to decline, but will have the tendency to increase” (Симонов, 2012, p. 249). This raises the worry from the side of the European Union because it becomes a security problem. Particular states seek to remain independent and want to avoid political and economic influence or pressure from sides of other states or political and economic actors. And they are suspicious about Russia to use gas as a foreign policy tool.

Thus, the rhetoric used by European broadcasters is understandable. They all concentrated on the view of harmed Europe, the idea of consequences that European citizens experienced after the gas shortage. We can observe a gradation of rhetoric as crisis followed. First, there is just stated that some countries are almost entirely dependent on Russian supplies. Then, statements introduce specific cases when people were struggling to heat their homes and schools and were forced to shut down some of the heating systems and look for alternative sources of gas. This kind of framing cause on emotions and feelings and later the state is labelled as an “emergency” with emphasis on particularly harsh winter.

“As gas flows restarted, the EU's energy commissioner said he had no grounds to support Russia's claims that Ukraine had been stealing gas on its way to Europe - *one of Russia's justifications for cutting supplies*” (BBC, 2009).

“Ukraine has warned that there could be serious problems with gas supplies for European Union countries if its dispute with Russia is not settled soon” (BBC, 2009). “(...) the pressure in their pipelines fell after Russian gas giant Gazprom cut off Ukraine's supply” (BBC, 2009).

“Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko called on Russia to ‘*stop the blackmail*’ and *work out an agreement*” (BBC, 2009).

“The EU does not intend to support any of the parties in the gas conflict, earlier warned the Czech Deputy Prime Minister Alexandr Vondra. He said: This is a commercial dispute, and all the details of all agreements in Europe. But he urged Moscow and Kiev to resolve the conflict as soon as possible” (KMnews, 2009).

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There is no direct accusation of Russia being fully responsible for this situation, but from the citations we see that it is definitely presented in the negative image of the aggressor (“gas giant Gazprom”). The main message that follows from stated examples is that Russia blames Ukraine for being responsible for the situation, but Europe does not have a tendency to support this point of view. Europe sees the Russian position against Ukraine as a way to hide its own fault and justify its actions. Europe runs a business with Russia, thus it is fully responsible for gas supplies. And Europe is not interested in situation between Russia and Ukraine, but is more focused on its own problems what is obvious from previous analyses of “harmed” Europe as a main theme of media. For it, the most important was to solve this problem.

5.1.3. Impacts of the Crisis

"If the agreement is not honoured, it means that Russia and Ukraine can no longer be regarded as reliable," warns Mr Barroso(Rodgers 2009).

“It was *utterly unacceptable that European gas consumers were held hostage* to this dispute between Russia and Ukraine,” he added. “We *must not allow ourselves to be placed in this position* in the future” (BBC, 2009).

“He (Putin) said the problem was not with Russia, but *Ukraine*, adding "that's why we believe it's necessary to develop, *as soon as possible, alternative transit routes*” (BBC, 2009).

“Most experts have suggested that the *gas war between Russia and Ukraine goes far beyond the confrontation between Moscow and Kiev*. (...) Marek Siwiec said that the problem which arose in connection with the gas conflict, should be defined as a *pan-European, as is endangered not only the independence of Ukraine and also Europe's energy security*” (Stadilna, 2006).

However, this crisis had a great impact on European relationship towards Russia. The first example reports Europe lost a trust in Russia being a reliable partner for gas supplies. Europe never fully trusted Russia, but after direct damages that gas cut-offs caused they realized how much they are vulnerably in position to Russia. Thus, in a second example we can observe that Europe in any way does not want to be dependent on Russia and it is indicated that it together must solve this problem and do not allow ourselves to be placed in this position in future. After the crisis there were gradually adopted legislature measures on gas topics. Closer dialog take place within

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the European Union and subsequently agreed on Regulation concerning measures to safeguard security of gas supply and repealing Council Directive. After being harmed by these disputes Europe adopted the position of caution. It realized that dependence on Russian gas might lead to possibilities that Russia will use its energy policy to political influence and pressure over it. It showed to Europe that dependency on such a partner like Russia may threaten its security and make it more vulnerable. In these terms it is important to look also on Russian position. Because Russia is actually even more dependent on Europe's demands and incomes of gas. Many times is overlooked or maybe even disregarded the fact that Russia is as much dependent on Europe and that the energy relationship between European Union and Russia does not look the way that one state is a winner and another loser. However, it used to be considered that Europe has no other option than to purchase the Russian gas and that Russia is misusing this in political terms. Then it would not work at all, because one of the sides would not be interested in it. Actually, Russia is even more vulnerable in relationship to Europe than Europe to Russia, because around 70% of its exported gas goes to European Union (Rehn, 2008). "Russian budget is dependent on gas incomes from Europe and Gazprom, Russia does not want to threaten the stability of gas supplies directed to Europe by bilateral, financial and political disputes with Ukraine or Belarus" (Strejcek, 2011, p. 33). The cut off or decline of gas supplies from the Russian side to European countries will inevitably cause substantial damage and harms for the Russia itself. This would have several aspects: "financial (loss of profit), economical (Russia voluntarily breaks one of the strongest ties with the West in the face of the EU), reputational (degradation of the country image in the world), political (Russia would grant its radical opponents who repeatedly declared of such possibility and this would inevitably strengthen their positions on the West according to other issues)" (Симонов, 2012, p. 250). So, it is important to have an approach from the both sides to be able of objective analysis on this issue. The third example indicates Russian preoccupation about the issue and suggests developing alternative transit routes. In his statement he once again justifies Russian position in a matter and blames Ukraine for its irresponsibility. There is also emphasized that alternative routes should be developed as soon as possible. It is important to notice that Putin does not talk about alternative pipelines but rather transit routes pointing out that transit (not supplies) was a problem in this crisis. And taking into account European worry about

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dependency on Russia this kind of language and structure is advantageous for Russia. The last example suggests that gas war between Russia and Ukraine goes beyond these two countries and endangered security of Europe. However, still because of interdependence of Russia and Europe on each other their gas connection continued and even followed by diversification of pipelines what had positive effect for both Russian and European sides.

The investigation of international media discourse brought a lot of significant results. What I find as most important is Russian skilful use of language and rhetoric. The analysis of discourse provides many examples of this. It shows the European view on crisis concerning mostly its own situation what they found as the most important matter. Europe viewed itself as a harmed country from Russian and Ukrainian side. But still it considered Russian policy actors to be guilty for this situation, because Russia was their economic partner responsible for gas supplies. And after being cut-off from gas Europe experienced its dependency on Russia and realized possible threats. This invoked distrust towards it but still it agreed on creation of other pipelines and future cooperation what once again refers to interdependence of these two sides.

CHAPTER 6: Comparing Policy to Other Relevant Cases

The final step in interpreting policy involves a comparison to other cases. The actions of one state and the policy vision upon which they rest cannot be fully independent from other actions that state undertakes. This is because they are determined by historical and social context of the certain country, because its actions are founded on some ideology or principles and because they are usually implemented by the same actor. And in case of Russia we can base on the assumption that they are performed by a single person, i.e. the President Putin because it's an authoritative form of government which is known as „Putinism“ (Safire, 2000). But the country does not have to be labeled by „Putinism“ or any other stigma for the purpose to carry out its policy in one direction. „Therefore, one can expect a reasonable degree of consistency across several types of the vision- inspired policies“(Tsygankov, 2013). This enables us to guess which direction certain state plan to proceed and what are its ambitions or prospects. And the method how it can be investigated is right by comparing policy to other relevant cases.

I want briefly link gas disputes from years 2005/2006 and 2008/2009 with events that took place in recent time between the same countries. Euromaidan, the Ukrainian Revolution of 2014, Ukraine– European Union Association Agreement, Crimean Crisis- these all are events that have a lot in common with Russia- Ukraine gas disputes that happen in recent years and they all present a great example of leading a policy in one direction. Euromaidan presents a wave of demonstrations that explode after November 21 of 2013 with public protests demanding closer European integration. On November 28–29, Ukraine was supposed to sign an Association Agreement with the EU that will expand their „political and trade ties, security cooperation, and cultural connections. It focuses on core economic and political reforms while promoting democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, good governance, a market economy and sustainable development,” as well as “enhanced cooperation in foreign and security policy and energy” (Motyl, 2013, s. 52). However, Ukrainian President Yanukovich suspended preparations for signing it and by this showed his orientation towards the Russia in order to keep tight relations with Russia. This crisis led to Crimea crisis and consequently to pro-Russian unrest in Ukraine.

Conclusion

This thesis provides the interpretation of Russian policy within Russia- Ukraine gas disputes. I based my work on the social constructivist theory for the purpose to explore what were main actions of Russian policy makers and what is even more important to explain why they happened. To achieve that I provided an analysis of the discourse presented in official Russian documents, articles of Russian newspapers, as well as international broadcasters.

And implementing my research this way I came to following points. The major claim of my thesis is that within Russia- Ukraine gas disputes Russia created its own image about policy actions that it undertook for the purpose to legitimize them. After Russia came back on the international relations scene, it has an aspiration to strengthen its position and become a country that will be involved in decision making processes about global issues. Its aim is to convince the international community that it is a rational actor. And study of Russian personal explanation and definition of its actions shows that it tries to legitimize them.

In the context of my focus on Russia- Ukraine gas disputes and their representation by Russian and international media I bring my findings: concerning the content of media discourse, Russia was addressing price and contract as the most important topics, because according to it, right these along with Ukrainian incapacity and domestic situation were the causes of the crisis. On the other side, Europe was concentrated on its own position in this situation and the main theme of international discourse was the concern of Europe as a harmed country and connected to this dependency on Russian gas supplies, need of diversification and revaluation of energy providers. Another matter of the discourse was the political aspect of the gas crisis. Russia from the very beginning had a tendency to depoliticize the situation. It was not only ignoring the political aspect of the matter but even emphasizing and calling for no interrelation of political and economic (price, contract) components. Actually, there was mentioned political point of view on things but not concerning its own policy, on the contrary, when it was speaking about Ukraine. European attitude regarding this was opposite and accordingly media were stressing politization of the crisis. Moreover they were

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also worried about dependency on Russian gas as a possible threat from the Russian side. In the case of responsibility for crisis position was once again different. In Russian newspaper Ukraine was presented as an enemy. It can be even claimed that no prices or contract but rather Ukraine itself was a reason of crisis emergence. Because if the situation in the country was normal and arranged that should be no problem for the country to transit on market prices or signs the contract. Related to this Russia viewed itself being an equally harmed country as Europe. “It is their internal affair, but unfortunately we all are in position of hostages by the system of power that has developed there. We, in fact, are hostages of the political crisis that recently broke out in Ukraine”. However, European media did not shared this position with Russia and actually viewed Russia being responsible for formed situation considering that Russia has obligation to guarantee gas supplies despite other circumstances

This shows that Russia was trying to justify its policy for the purpose to expose it as legitimate, because if Russian’s actions will not be perceived as legitimate this can lead for significant future costs like Western countries will look for alternative energy providers, Russian membership in G8 may be threatened and so on.

So, going back to five steps that I used to interpret Russian foreign policy I summarize that, (1) political actions that Russia performed during gas crisis were shift to market prices and signing the contract with Ukraine, (2) officially by Russian representatives that was established as a necessary step for future normal relationships with other countries and here was stressed that it should not in any way be perceived as a political step, (3) on state level these actions were accepted what is seen from Russian media discourse, but here it is important to note that Russian media are not fully free to express their opinion, (4) on international level they did not meet recognition and that is why Russia made so much effort to justify and explain them (5) and comparison to other relevant cases shows that Russia does run aggressive policy towards the Ukraine. Its actions from recent months resemble kind of actions from remote years. But again, Russia justifies them and states them as a legal, claiming that it was reaction on NATO’s policy “(...) for Putin, the recent Ukrainian revolution was just the latest episode in a long-term and *cynical game the West* has played to try to bring former Soviet republics (...) into the Western orbit, including

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through externally sponsored ‘regime change’” (Taylor 2014, 93-94). And it is similar situation concerning Crimea crisis which is internationally labeled as *annexation* of Crimea, but Putin names it like *rehabilitation*(Putin 2014). Another policy that Russia leads is a project of Eurasian Union and generally Eurasian ideology becomes more and more popular in contemporary Russia.

It seems that today Russia has intention to expand its governance and up till now it succeeds. The case of Russia- Ukraine gas disputes on which my thesis was focused also demonstrated this. Although, many view this crisis as Russian great fault and loss mainly because it worsen its relationship with Ukraine and many European countries I have to disagree. During my research I came to conclusion that Russian explanation of its actions on official as well as on media level varies from international media discourse. It presents that Russian and international points of view were not only different from each other, but even in contrast frequently contradicting each other. Nevertheless, Russia was still able to achieve its goals and develop the project of diversification of pipelines what gave it economic profit in the form of increase of gas supplies and also secured these supplies for its independence from transit countries.

In the beginning I partly based my thesis statement on assumption that Russia uses energy as political instrument. However, now I would assume that not gas and energy resources are the most relevant instruments of Russian foreign policy but rather that are language and rhetoric. This issue needs further investigation to be proved, but I think that it would be interesting and beneficial for this topic to research it from such a standpoint.

Resumé

Daná práca sa sústreďuje na interpretáciu Ruskej zahraničnej politiky v rámci plynových sporov rokov 2005-2006 a 2008- 2009. Teoretickým rámcom tejto práci slúži teória sociálneho konštruktivismu ako jedna zo základných teórií medzinárodných vzťahov. Dôvod, prečo som si vybrala túto práve teóriu ako základ mojej práce je, že na rozdiel od realizmu a liberalizmu vníma svet nie ako daný, ale práve naopak je našim konštruktom. Takyto pohľad umožňuje interpretovať ruskú zahraničnú politiku z novej perspektívy, pretože sa sústreďuje na kontext a okolnosti, pri akých boli určité politické kroky vykonané. V danej teórii je dôležité si uvedomiť, že všetko je našim konštruktom a môže byť zmenené podľa nás. A čo sa týka zahraničnej politiky, tak rozhodujúce je si skúmať idey, ktoré jednotliví politickí aktéri vyjadrujú, sledovať, čo si želajú a čo hovoria, pretože takým spôsobom pridávajú zmysel veciam.

Metóda, ktorou sa riadim za účelom interpretácie Ruskej zahraničnej politiky je postúp vytvorený na základe sociálneho konštruktivismu a navrhuje skúmanie politických činov na troch stupňoch, ako štátnom, sociálnom a medzinárodnom. Výhodou tejto teórie je, že poskytuje nielen chronológiu politických udalostí a jej možné príčiny a dôsledky ale okrem iného nám poskytuje možnosť odhadiť, či daná politika bude úspešná alebo nie. Tento postúp zahŕňa päť krokov, ktoré sú potrebné a interpretáciu politiky. To sú, záznam politických činov, interpretáci oficiálnych dokumentov, ktorých preskúmaním môžeme odhaliť motivácie týchto činov, ďalej vnímanie týchto činov na štátnej úrovni v rámci domácej spoločnosti, následne sledovanie medzinárodného uznania alebo odmietnutia týchto činov a posledným krokom je porovnanie s inými závažnými prípadmi, a teda politikami, ktoré vedie určitá krajina na to aby sme pochopili je celkové smerovanie. Dôležitým pojmom mojej práce je rétorika, pretože jednotliví politickí aktéri využívajú práve jazyk a rétoriku na ospravedlnenie svojich činom čím sa snažia legitimizovať pred ostatnými krajinami.

V praktickej časti mojej práce na príklade prípadových štúdií Rusko-ukrajinských plynových sporov ukazujem výhody teórie sociálneho konštruktivismu. Najskôr opisujem politické a sociálne pozadie Ruska, ktoré nevyhnutne vytvára podmienky pre

uskutočnenie určitej politiky. V prípade Ruska poukazuje na túto krajinu ako energetickú supervelmoc, čím myslím jej potenciál, ktorý môže využiť na scéne medzinárodných vzťahov. Ďalším dôležitým aspektom Ruska je Putinov príchod k moci a s ním súvisiaca nacionalizácia Gazpromu, čo poukazuje na štátnu kontrolu plynových zdrojov Ruska. Toto považujem za najdôležitejšie politické a sociálne okolnosti, ktoré prispeli k tomu, že sa uskutočnili plynové krízy nasledujúcich rokov. V ďalšej kapitole predstavujem priebeh týchto kríz a hlavné udalosti, ktoré s nimi súviseli. V nasledujúcej kapitole predstavujem oficiálne vysvetlenie tejto krízy aktérmi, ktorí za ňu boli nevyhnutne zodpovední. V tejto časti si všimam ako Rusko vysvetľuje svoje vlastné činy. Prvá vec, ktorá sa tohto týka je depolitizácie tejto otázky. Ďalej venujem pozornosť konceptom, ktoré Rusko nazýva príčinami krízy, čo sú otázka ceny a dohovoru. V rámci domácej interpretácie diskurzu rozoberám nie len oficiálne dokumenty ale i médiá, čo v však v prípade Ruska nie je až tak veľký rozdiel z dôvodu, že media sú značne podriadené vláde. Ďalej sa presúvam na medzinárodnú úroveň a sledujem ako tieto udalosti krízy vníma Ukrajina a Európa. Tu môžeme pozorovať odlišné názory, na medzinárodnom úrovni sa táto kríza vníma ako agresívna politika Ruska, a Európa rovnako ako Ukrajina to označujú ako používanie plynu ako prostriedku zahraničnej politiky. Hlavnou témou európskych médií je „trpiaca Európa“ a teda Európa vníma túto krízu ako zodpovednosť iných a ona sa do tejto situácie dostala nespravodlivo. Ďalej spomínam dopady krízy, čo sú: strata Európskej dôvery voči Rusku ako k zodpovednému dodávateľovi plynu, objavujúci sa problém závislosti na Rusku a teda bezpečnostný problém. Avšak, v tejto časti poukazujem na Ruskú závislosť na európskych príjmoch, ktoré sú dokonca značnejšie ako Európska závislosť na Rusku. V poslednej kapitole predstavujem iný prípad Ruskej politiky, ktorý sa týka súčasnej Ukrajinskej krízy.

V závere práce zhŕňam svoj výskum. Analýzou diskurzu som prišla k záveru, že tým ako Rusko píše o udalostiach, ktoré vykonalo sa snaží ospravedlniť tieto činy a legitimizovať svoju pozíciu. A to všetko za účelom dosiahnuť väčší úspech v rámci medzinárodných vzťahov. A keďže pozícia zahraničných médií je odlišná a dokonca vo veľa prípadoch opačná, Rusku sa zatiaľ darí to, čo si zaumieni a to vďaka tomu ako používa rétoriku a vysvetľuje svoje vlastné činy.

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