

EURASIANISM: A RUSSIAN MONROE DOCTRINE?

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Abstract

The ideology of Eurasianism stopped being a philosophical current and transformed into a Russian foreign policy foundation, justifying an increased international assertiveness by a special mission and a place in the Eurasian region. It is currently being used as a justification for Russia-led integration projects in the former Soviet Union. This thesis evaluates the utility of the concept for the creation of a Eurasian political unity and outlines the reasons for its prospective success or failure. Throughout my thesis I use a combination of different methods, such as qualitative data collection, small case studies, historical analysis and comparison. In order to illustrate the usefulness of Eurasianist ideology for further regional integration I use a comparative analysis with the similarly framed Monroe doctrine. Despite a number of theoretical similarities, the comparison shows a low practical probability of the success of a Eurasian project due to a number of empirical divergences. The thesis concludes with some recommendations concerning Russian foreign policy direction.

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To the memory of Alisa

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Introduction

Russian foreign policy development is not only an exciting and a fertile field for research because of the country's high relevance and influence on all the surrounding states, Russia has always been paramount to the development of Eurasia, as well as having a significant influence on the world processes in general. It is possible to distinguish certain key ideas and concepts in every nation's political thought. The period observed in the thesis, starting with the creation of the Russian Federation, can be characterized by an increased intensity of the Eurasist rhetoric and Eurasian political formations. An astonishing abundance of literature dealing with Eurasianism in Russian foreign policy is an important indication of Eurasianism's prominence in academic circles.¹ There is a great number of works on the Eurasian mentality, geopolitics and economy of Eurasian space. The novelty of this work lies in an attempt to compare the current Russian foreign policy outlook with a theoretically similarly framed concept of the American Monroe Doctrine in order to answer the following research questions: What are the underlying reasons and character of the development of the Russian great power ambition after the break-up of the USSR and how is Eurasianism helpful for the creation of a Russia-led post-Soviet "big space"?

¹ Didier Chaudet, *When Empire Meets Nationalism: Power Politics in the US and Russia*. Cornwall: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009; F.S. Fonzullini, and A.A. Sviridenko. *Eurasian Temptation: Modern Insight in the Problem*. Ufa, 2008; Marlene Laruelle, "Eurasianism - a Geographic Ideology." In *The Ideology of Russian Eurasianism or The Thoughts on the Greatness of Empire*, 104–190. Moscow: Natalis, 2004; A.V. Ivanov, U.V. Popkov and E.A. Tyugashev. "Eurasianism as a Viewpoint." In *Eurasianism: key ideas, values, political priorities*, 6–85. Barnaul: AGAU Barnaul, 2007; I.N. Karickiy, and V.F. Petrenko. "Eurasianism and the National Identity." In *Eurasian Mentality*, 21–45. Moscow, 2012; I.I. Orlik, "Neo-Eurasianism." In *Eurasianism: History and Modernity*, 22–44. RAN, 2009.

According to American scholars, the United States had taken steps towards realizing “de facto hegemony in Americas”² from the late 19th century through roughly 1933 (the advent of the Good Neighbor Policy).³ The abovementioned statement justifies the time frame, which was taken for the sake of the performed methodological comparison. The starting point of such a time period is the Washington conference,⁴ where the ideas of the Western Hemisphere were actively propagated and led to the exercise of strength and interference in Latin American affairs. On the other hand, as a starting point the Russian great power ambition period starts in 2004,⁵ when Putin’s government began pursuing a more assertive and expansionist foreign policy.

Eurasianism in this thesis is understood as a historically developed complex of ideas and concepts, that are striving to explain the essence, place and role of Russia, its government, culture, civilization as a unique mix of European and Asian components thus making it a distinct original civilization and legitimizing its bid for great power status. Striving for a balanced and unbiased evaluation of Eurasianism as a foreign policy tool available to Russian establishment for the realization of a Russia-led post-Soviet “big space”, I triangulated a wide range of domestic and foreign sources using qualitative data. A considerable number of sources on Russian great power restoration were found in the Central European Library. Moscow Public Library was instrumental for the perspectives of various authors on Eurasianism, especially modern Russian Eurasists. I was able to

² Peter Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World*. 3rd Ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

³ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. New York: Colombia University Press, 1977.

⁴ 1889-1890

⁵ Beslan tragedy, 2004; <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/~queir20r/classweb/pages/thebeslantragedy.html>

obtain many sources on Eurasianism in the Moscow State University Center of Conservative Studies.⁶

I used the literature discussing a shift in the Russian foreign policy outlook from a more liberal to a more assertive position,⁷ especially in the area of Russian special interests,⁸ and the preservation of the Russian post-imperial status⁹ in order to understand the current emergence of Eurasianism¹⁰ and the possible existing alternatives.¹¹ The literature on Russian usage of politico-military and politico-economic arena¹² provided a necessary understanding of the tools Russia employs to advance its “great power” ambition.

A number of Classic Eurasian sources have been analyzed in order to understand the premises and main messages of the Eurasian ideology,¹³ as well as a cultural¹⁴ and economic¹⁵ rationale for Eurasian integration.¹⁶ The discussions on the ideological coherence of Eurasianism and the possible ideological rivals of the concept (pan-Turkic

⁶<http://konservatizm.org/>

⁷Andrei Tsygankov, “Russia’s International Assertiveness: What Does It Mean for the West?” *Problems of Post-Communism* 55, no. 2 (April 2008): 38–55; Tsygankov, “The Post-Western World and Russia’s Search for a New Direction.” In *Russia’s Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, 201–221. Second. Plymouth: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers. Inc, 2010.

⁸ Alexandros Peterson, “The World Island in the XXI Century.” In *The World Island: Eurasian Geopolitics and the Fate of the West*, 81–112. Santa Barbara: Praeger Security International, 2011.

⁹Trenin, *Post-Imperium: A Eurasian Story*. Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Press, 2011;

¹⁰ Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia and Ukraine*. Cambridge Russian, Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies 103. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

¹¹Dmitrii Trenin, “Of Power and Greatness.” In *Russia: The Challenges of Transformation*, edited by Piotr Dutkiewicz and Dmitrii Trenin, 407–433. New York: New York University Press, 2011; Jeffrey Mankoff, “Back on the Offensive? The Former Soviet Union.” In *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*, 241–293. Plymouth: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers. Inc, 2011.

¹² Bertil Nygren, “Russia as a Regional Power.” In *The Rebuilding of Greater Russia: Putin’s Foreign Policy Towards the CIS Countries*, 218–249. Routledge Contemporary Russia and Eastern Europe Series. London: Routledge, 2008.

¹³N.S. Trubeckoy, “The Common Eurasian Nationalism.” In *The Foundations of Eurasianism*, 200–208. Moscow: Arctogaia Center, 2002; Trubeckoy, “The View on Russian History not from the West, but from the East.” In *The Foundations of Eurasianism*, 208–266. Moscow: Arctogaia Center, 2002.

¹⁴Trubeckoy, “The Common Eurasian Nationalism.” L.N. Gumilev, “I will tell you a secret: if Russia will be saved, that will be only as an Eurasian Empire.” In *The Foundations of Eurasianism*, 479–485. Moscow: Arctogaia Center, 2002.

¹⁵Savickiy, “The Continent-Ocean.” In *The Foundations of Eurasianism*, 305–324. Moscow: Arctogaia Center, 2002.

¹⁶P. N. Savickiy, “The Eurasianism as a Historical Fate.” In *The Foundations of Eurasianism*, 281–295. Moscow: Arctogaia Center, 2002.

movement)¹⁷ were paramount for determining the viability of the concept. A considerable part of my thesis was devoted to the thoughts of Alexandr Dugin. His works were revealing for the evaluation of the nationalist and chauvinist element in the Russian foreign policy in relation to the CIS region.¹⁸

Analytic discussions on the US-Latin American relations were necessary for the conduct of a thoughtful and revealing comparison of American imperial ideology and Russian Eurasianism. An analysis of dominant-subordinate states relations based on the examples of the Cold War US and USSR was helpful due to the existing match of the geographical area of the observed imperial projects.¹⁹ The evaluation of the Monroe Doctrine legitimacy and impact on the regional development²⁰ was an important source to obtain the needed criteria for comparison.

Two compilations of different authors' works were extremely important for a balanced evaluation of the Eurasian integration processes and Russia's future potential to create a Russia-led "big space" due to the fact that one of them was mainly advocating Eurasianism and urged for further integration,²¹ while another one compiled domestic and foreign liberal thinkers' perspectives on the Russian international position, whose advices

¹⁷ Ivanov, Laruelle

¹⁸ Alexandr Dugin, "The Threat for Russia and the Search for Identity." In *The Foundations of Eurasianism*, 759–766. Moscow: Arctogaia Center, 2002; *The Forth Political Theory*. St. Petersburg: Amfora, 2009; *The Foundations of Geopolitics*. Arctogaia Center, 2000.

¹⁹ Jan Triska, *Dominant Powers and Subordinate States: The United States in Latin America and the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe*. Duke Press Policy Studies. Durham: Duke University Press, 1986.

²⁰ Mark Eric Williams, *Understanding U.S.-Latin American Relations: Theory and History*. New York: Roulledge, 2012; Harold Molineu, *U.S. Policy Towards Latin America: From Regionalism to Globalism*. Oxford: Westview Press, 1990; Stewart Brewer, *Borders and Bridges: A History of US-Latin American Relations*. Praeger Security International. London: Praeger Security International, 2006.

²¹ 20 Years After the Break up of the USSR: "The Time to Gather Stones..." or The Eurasian Integration Today. Moscow: Kniginy Mir, 2012.

on the further development of Russia and post-Soviet region²² were clearly avoiding a Eurasist scenario. A considerable match of the arguments among these and other sources used give an increased credibility and validity to the findings and ensure a balanced and unbiased evaluation of the Russian foreign policy and the place of Eurasianism in the wider context of Russian political thought.

A field trip to Moscow in April 2013 was the most important contribution for my thesis, as there I gained a considerable number of domestic sources on Eurasianism, which were not available in CEU library. The interviews with prominent Russian scholars²³ and policy-makers²⁴ were very helpful for a critical evaluation of the current Eurasian integration process and the views of Russian intelligentsia on the future prospects of the Eurasianism integration. Semi-structured interview design has been used in all the conducted interviews.

The thesis had a number of limitations, first of all linked to the conduct of interviews. I contacted a number of scholars dealing with post-Soviet space and Eurasianism. A relatively small number of them replied, which nevertheless, have not precluded me from obtaining needed information. Another weak point of my interviews might have been the closed character of the Russian political system, which could mean my interviewees were strained in the expression of their opinion. However, after the interviews were conducted

²² Maria Lipman and Nikolay Petrov, eds. *Russia 2020: Scenarios for the Future*. Moscow: Carnegie Moscow Center, 2012.

²³ Arbatova, Nadia. Interview with Nadia Arbatova, IMEMO, April 26, 2013.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/afet/dv/201/201006/20100622cv_arbatova_en.pdf.

Mehdiev, Elnur. Interview with Mehdiev Elnur, MGIMO, April 25, 2013.

<http://www.mgimo.ru/users/document234078.phtml>. Nikitina, Yulia. Interview with Yulia Nikitina, MGIMO, April 26, 2013. <http://www.mgimo.ru/nikitina/>.

²⁴Interview with Alexandr Dugin, MSU, April 24, 2013. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksandr_Dugin.

I realized I obtained information necessary for answering the question.

In order to provide an answer to the research question, the thesis has been divided into three chapters and structured in order to discuss the following aspects of the research question: Chapter 1 **uses** process tracing and discourse analysis of the ruling party rhetoric and the official documents of the Russian Federation to describe and trace the development of Russian foreign policy since 1991. Through a historical analysis the 2nd chapter will disclose the underlying reasons for the reemergence of Eurasianism as a prominent philosophic and foreign policy ideology and discuss the attitude of various political scholars to the concept and its ability to unite the Eurasian geographical space.

The 3rd chapter is the centerpiece of the thesis, as it is intended to give a complex answer to the question concerning the utility of Eurasian ideology for Russian imperial ambition on the post-Soviet space. American Monroe doctrine is taken as an example of a successful imperial project of another regional hegemon. A methodological comparison of the two ideologies will provide a reader with the reasons for the alleged success of Monroe doctrine and bring his attention to the important divergences, which might affect the success of the Russia-dominated post-Soviet “big space”. For the purpose of the thesis, success would be determined as the ability of the ideology to legitimate the imperial pretensions of a hegemon state, with the US Monroe doctrine taken as an example of a successful imperial ideology.

Chapter 1. The Character and Manifestations of the Russian “Great Power” Ambition after the Break-up of the USSR

The chapter will outline and illustrate the development of Eurasist argument in Russian foreign policy after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in order to show a high prominence of the concept among the Russian political circles.

1.1. Situation after 1991

“These were the 1990s” is a phrase in a wide usage in the post-Soviet region. Apart from reflecting the plummeting economy, huge inflation and outrageous unemployment, this phrase describes a feeling of disillusionment, confusion and abandonment experienced by the people throughout an ex-Soviet “empire”. The ideological vacuum and frustration of the post-Soviet Russia of the 1990s various scholars characterize as “mental fermentation”²⁵, or “ex-superpower blues”.²⁶ Indeed, Russian people saw their ideology delegitimized, lost vast territories, and witnessed a disappearance of an imperial status, which was a part of Russia’s national identity at least since the 16th century.²⁷ The collapse of the bipolar world order existing for more than half a century prompted Russians to reevaluate the ideological foundations of their country's foreign policy and to derive necessary lessons. Russian liberals were in a vanguard of a new identity search in the 1990s and went to long lengths to reshape the foreign policy direction and rapprochement with the West. Unfortunately, no miracle happened and Russia did not

²⁵ I.N. Karickiy and V.F. Petrenko. “Eurasianism and the National Identity.” In *Eurasian Mentality*, Moscow, 2012, 41

²⁶ Skaidra Trilupaityte, “Culture or Power Politics? Post-Cold War Anti-Americanism in Russia.” In *The Political Consequences of Anti-Americanism*, edited by Richard Higgot and Ivona Malbasic, 74–91. New York: Routledge, 2008, 87

²⁷ Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy*, 240

jump to the level of economically developed democratic states, the reasons for that being the practical impossibility of such a rapid transformation and the Western inaction and indifference. Russian overtures to the West were not reciprocated,²⁸ no influx of FDIs or greatly expected economic help followed, which led to the feeling of a widely touted national humiliation, the sense of “wounded dignity” and anti-American sentiment.²⁹

1.1.1. Need for a New Idea

Still, in the 1990s there was no consensus on the national identity question and consequently the needed direction of foreign policy. Most of the scholars writing about Russian identity, stress the importance of a persevering search for a National Idea³⁰ after the dissolution of the USSR. Many of them also state that there has actually never been a clear understanding of what Russian identity is.³¹

The Russian empire was united by the idea of Moscow as a Third Rome and the Soviet Union was held together by the initial belief in the bright communist future. A newborn Russian state, however, still has not found its new identity.³² Having often times antipodal suggestions in mind, an urge for the creation of a strong unifying ideology³³ is supported by the representatives of all political spectrums in Russia. The following description of the development in Russian national identity and foreign policy outlook

²⁸ Jeffrey Mankoff, “Bulldogs Fighting Under the Rug: The Making of Russian Foreign Policy.” In *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*, Plymouth: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers. Inc, 2009, 61

²⁹ Trilupaityte, 87

³⁰ Alexandr Dugin, “Eurasia Above All: Manifest of the Eurasian Movement,” January 2001.

<http://arctogaia.com/public/eng/Manifesto.html>; Viktor Pirogenko, “The Universalism of the Russian Leadership.” In *20 Years After the Break up of the USSR: “The Time to Gather Stones...” or The Eurasian Intergration Today*, ZAO “Kniginy Mir”, 2012, 115

³¹ Tim McDaniel, *The Agony of The Russian Idea*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996, 29

³² Karickiy, 21

³³ Igor Chubais, *The Russian Idea. Russia Discovered*. Moscow: Akva Term, 2012.

will strive to show the evolution of Russian national self-perception and a great power ambition.

1.2.1. Russian foreign policy after 1991; the “liberal” period

There is little surprise that the ideology of the Soviet leadership that initiated the breakup of the Soviet Union propelled liberally minded Yeltsin to power right after 1991. The “independence euphoria” and the post-Gorbachev “New Think”-styled recognition of “universal human values” can be labeled “Atlantism”³⁴ or pro-Western liberalism. The failure of the “Communist experiment” as well as the dire economic situation made Russian leadership rethink their ideological premises and take an actively pro-Western stance. Liberal Russian government accepted America’s new arms reduction schemes and continued to support the America-initiated economic embargo against Iraq, 1995 NATO’s intervention against Bosniak Serbs in Bosnia³⁵ and many other clearly American foreign policy goals.³⁶ While being strongly supportive of the improvement of Russian-American relations, it is interesting to note how little attention Yeltsin government devoted to the ex-Soviet region. While known to have said that the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was “the only way to save what still could be saved”³⁷, it actually served little more than a means for a “civilized divorce”³⁸, not least due to the

³⁴ Mankoff, 242

³⁵ Vladimir Baranovsky, “For a NATO-Russian UN Intervention to End the War in Bosnia,” 02 1993. http://www.nytimes.com/1993/02/26/opinion/26iht-edja_1.html.

³⁶ Alexei Arbatov, “Russia’s Foreign Policy Alternatives.” *International Security* 18, no. 2 (1993): 43; Tsygankov, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 241

Trenin, *Post-Imperium*, 32

³⁷ Ingmar Oldberg, “Russia’s Great Power Ambition Under Putin.” In *Russia : Re-emerging Great Power*, edited by Roger Kanet, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 20

³⁸ Nikita Lomagin, “Forming a New Security Identity Under Vladimir Putin.” In *Russia : Re-emerging Great Power*, 31–54. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 43

ostentatious neglect and sovereignty-obsession of the Russian government, which believed the CIS was a burden that prevented Russia from modernizing and achieving its full potential as a great power.³⁹

1.2.2. Disillusionment with the West

Andrei Kozyrev was the Russian first Foreign Policy Minister under a Yeltsin government (1991-1996). He epitomized what current rightist politicians call kowtows to American interests and was responsible for a series of humiliating concessions to the US. The silent observance of the abuses of the Russian minorities in the Balkans, alleged failure to support the “Serbian brothers” and a generally uncritical pro-American policy reflected an absence of a clear concept of Russia’s national interest and eventually led to the renewed suspicion of the West and the disenchantment trickled down to the popular level. Not only the fact that the expected Western aid was miniscule for the radical transformation of a stagnant Russian economy,⁴⁰ but also the belief that the US took advantage of a benevolent and naïve Russian position to push Russia outside of its traditional sphere of influence⁴¹ made Russians cardinaly rethink its foreign policy stance. The rhetoric on the general consensus of the need to restore Russian great power status was becoming more prominent and the transition from Kozyrev to Jevgeniy Primakov reflected such a consensus.

³⁹ Prizel, 244

⁴⁰ Prizel, 247

⁴¹ Natalia Narochitskaya, “Russia in the New Geopolitical Realities.” In *20 years after the break up of the USSR*, 6

1.3. A Shift towards Centrist government and the Emergence of Great Power pragmatism

In the end of 1990s Russian political considerations shifted much more towards centrism.⁴² Considering how little Russia got for its concessions, the Kremlin's rethinking of its policy is hardly astonishing.⁴³ Primakov succeeded Kozyrev as Russian Foreign Minister in 1996. He and a newly appointed President Putin took a much more balanced foreign policy outlook and did what most Russians perceived as a protection of national interests abroad. The new course could have been characterized as a "healthy national egoism".⁴⁴ The time following 9/11 was a period of a significant rapprochement between the states, but Russia has not moved away from its newly adopted "great power pragmatism" and was much more thoughtful in the choice of common interests. In line with Russian cooperation in the war in Afghanistan, many Russian leaders supported an alliance with the West against common threats like international terrorism and proliferation of the WMD, but the previously preached "joining the West" has been solidly evaporated from the Russian political vocabulary. The discourse and the policies of the Russian government became more assertive in the international arena⁴⁵ and while there have still been some statements that "Russia should adopt fundamental European values", the stress on their compatibility with the Russian identity and national interests⁴⁶ became much more profound than it used to be during the rule of Russian Atlantists. Chechen war in 1999-2000 coupled with the Beslan tragedy in 2004 helped the creation

⁴² Mankoff, 63

⁴³ Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman. "Why Moscow Says No." *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 1 (February 2011): 122–13, p. 7

⁴⁴ Adam Zamoyski, *The Polish Way: A Thousand Year History of the Poles and Their Culture*, London: John Murrey, 1987.

⁴⁵ Andrei Tsygankov, "Russia's International Assertiveness..." 40

⁴⁶ V.P. Lukin, "New Century, Greater Concerns." *International Affairs* 48, no. 2 (2002).

of a strongman image of V. Putin and made a solid foundation for an embrace of a more assertive international position.⁴⁷

From then on, Putin's government's approach to foreign policy focused on enhancing Russians power and influence while preserving productive relations with the West.⁴⁸ It is commonly agreed among Russian political and intellectual elite that nuclear weapons and energy power were and are a solid foundation for a Russian bid for a post-imperial great power status.⁴⁹ The assurance of Russia's restoring power is well demonstrated by the proclamation of the Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Ivanov: "Russia has now completely recovered the status of a great power that bears global responsibility for the situation on the planet and the future of human civilization".⁵⁰ It is commonly acknowledged that the Russian leadership is currently taking a more Realpolitik-grounded view of foreign policy⁵¹, which can be best described by Putin's words: "Weak get beaten."⁵²

Trying to regain what has been lost during the Yeltsin's years, Putin puts a strong emphasis on the CIS region and directs his policy at returning ex-Soviet states into the Russian sphere of influence. He stated that a "close economic, political and cultural integration on the post-Soviet space is a time imperative".⁵³ His successor in 2008, Dmitri Medvedev, despite a relatively more pro-Western position, did not shift from this

⁴⁷ Tsygankov, "Russia's International Assertiveness...", 409; Sz. Biro Zoltan, *Russia's Foreign Policy: From Putin to Putin* (2000-2012). For Security in Democratic Societies. Foreign Policy Papers. Budapest: MTA Research Centre for the Humanities, 2012, 24

⁴⁸ Mankoff, 76

⁴⁹ Trenin, "Of Power and Greatness." 413; Trenin, *Post-Imperium*, 26, Interview with Alexandr Dugin, MSU

⁵⁰ Sergey Ivanov, "Triada Natsionalnih Cennostey", *Izvestiya*, July 14, 2006

⁵¹ Trenin, "Of Power and Greatness." 414

⁵² Lomagin, 40

⁵³ David Petrosyan, "The Armenian Crossroads." In *20 Years After the Break up of the USSR*, 206

course and announced CIS a “sphere of privileged interests”.⁵⁴ Russian Foreign and security Policy Principles (August 2008) and Foreign Policy Concept (July 2008)⁵⁵ reflect the regional interests of the Russian state and outline the increased concern with Western interference into the Russian sphere of “privileged interests,”⁵⁶ especially NATO expansion to Ukraine and Georgia, which will be illustrated further.

A renewed interest in the “near abroad”, the term coined by Centrists,⁵⁷ reflected the belief that unless Russia reestablishes close and intimate relations with the CIS, it will be isolated and marginalized within the international system.⁵⁸ Apparently, the relations with the CIS countries gained a doctrinal character ever since the centrists’ rise to power.⁵⁹ During Putin’s first Presidency Russian-Azeri relations improved significantly⁶⁰ and in 2001 Putin joined a new Moldovan president in the anti-Romanian stance of the Moldovan government.⁶¹

1.4. Eurasianism Takes Hold

Despite a clear strengthening of a national hold on world affairs, many Russians still feel the ideological vacuum⁶² and Great Power pragmatism has not helped much in this

⁵⁴ Dmitri Medvedev, Interview with Channel One, August 31, 2008.

⁵⁵ Marsel De Haas and Henning Schroder. Russian Analytical Digest. Bremen: German Association for East European Studies, June 18, 2009. <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/RAD-62.pdf>.

⁵⁶ Trenin, *Post-Imperium*, 27; Arbatova, “The EU-Russia Partnership: a New Context.” European Strategic Partnership Observatory (July 2012). http://www.egmontinstitute.be/papers/12/sec-gov/PB5_EU_RUSSIA_PARTNERSHIP.pdf.

⁵⁷ Sergey Markov, “Russian Political Parties and Foreign Policy.” Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia (n.d.): 137; Markov “Russian political party and FP”

⁵⁸ Pitzel, 250

⁵⁹ Nygren, p. 226, Tsygankov, Russian Foreign Policy, 242, Trenin, *Post-Imperium*, 26

⁶⁰ Nygren, 222

⁶¹ Nygren, 222

⁶² Tsygankov, *The Post-Western World*, 212

regard.⁶³ A great number of Russian scholars are sure Putin's pragmatism is still lacking a clear strategy⁶⁴ and consensus.⁶⁵ Anatoliy Chubais believes Russian elites of today are very inconsistent in their policies and rhetoric and gives an anecdotal comparison of current Russian leadership to the hypothetical German practice of demonstrating Hitler-depicted billboards one day and the federal chancellor's visit to Katyn in order to repent the Nazis' offenses the other.⁶⁶

A growing understanding of a need to be guided by a certain mission in foreign policy led to the emergence of the so-called "Eurasian" camp headed by a prominent Russian ideologue Alexandr Dugin. He agrees with Chubais on the need for a more consolidated national identity⁶⁷, though proposes a solution, which is absolutely opposite to the "liberal empire" of the former. Thus, the current political situation in Russia reflects a search of such an identity and Eurasianism seems to be one of the most prominent solutions to the problem.⁶⁸

The attitude to the concept is polarized at best. Pro-Eurasian scholars maintain that Eurasian premises of Russia as a distinct civilization whose survival depends on preservation of a way of life that is different if not contrary to the West⁶⁹ reflect the most viable idea for a disillusioned Russia.⁷⁰ Most liberal and Western critiques maintain that

⁶³ Tsygankov, 200

⁶⁴ Interview with Mehdiiev; Arkady Moshes, "Russia and the New 'Transitional' Europe." In *Russia 2020: Scenarios of Development*, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2012, 102

⁶⁵ Zoltan, 32

⁶⁶ Chubais, 338

⁶⁷ Dugin, *The Forth Political Theory*, St. Petersburg: Amfora, 2009, 168

⁶⁸ Karickiy, 35

⁶⁹ Pitzel, 256; Dugin, *The Forth Political Theory*, 267

⁷⁰ Pitzel, 256

Eurasianism is nothing more but an increased feeling of aggression and nationalism as a result of a “prolonged mass stress”⁷¹ and do not take Eurasist rhetoric seriously.⁷²

It is not the case with the Russian government circles though. The exchange of ideas is going both ways, with Russian government actively promoting and sponsoring Eurasian think tanks⁷³ and political organizations as well as getting a needed approval from the Civilizationist and Eurasist camp. Dugin, a theoretic of Russian neo-Eurasianism is known for his connections to Russian military circles and the FSB, and is said to have played a central role in drafting the 2000 National Security Concept.⁷⁴

Trying to identify himself and his ideas with the current leading foreign policy ideology (Putin’s Great power pragmatism), Dugin calls Eurasism a new “patriotic pragmatism”.⁷⁵ While demonstrating a strong support towards a current Russian government, Dugin is adamant in his depiction of Russia as having a unique civilizational mission that has to be realized and promoted by Russian government. Russian Eurasist Troickiy agrees with Huntington’s thesis of a civilizational factor as the major one in the division of nations⁷⁶ and depicts Russia as an important civilizational polar conditioned on the preservation of a uniquely Russian identity, a concept, which will be discussed further in the work. Curiously, the recognition of the Russian special civilizational role is shared by some representatives of the liberal political spectrum, for example a Russian liberal political

⁷¹ David Wedgwood Benn, “Post-Communism and the Russian Public.” *International Affairs* 89, no. 1 (2013), 178

⁷² Interview with Nikitina

⁷³ International Eurasian Movement, funded by the Russian President’s Administration; Mankoff, 67

⁷⁴ Mankoff, 67

⁷⁵ Dugin, “The Major Principles of Eurasian Politics.” In *The Foundations of Eurasianism*, Moscow: Arctogaia Center, 2002, 565

⁷⁶ Eugeny Troickiy, “The Slavic Unity: Power and Influence Factor of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Other Brotherly Nations.” In *Russia’s Road Towards a Neo-Empire: Eurasianism*, Moscow: Granica, 2013, 74

activist, currently serving as the Human Rights Commissioner of Russia, Vladimir Lukin who warned it is a mistake to ignore Russia's unique identity as civilization.⁷⁷

According to Andrey Tsygankov, during Primakov's years in service already Russian foreign policy "tilted more towards Eurasianism", which was manifested in the belief that Russia should play a pivotal role in the world and maintain its sphere of influence.⁷⁸ A considerable shift towards Eurasianism is often times connected to Putin's speech in Munich,⁷⁹ where he has famously declared that the "unipolar model is not only unacceptable but also impossible in today's world".⁸⁰ The Speech has shown that Russia is not going to put up with unilateral actions by other political actors, which are violating or endangering Russian interests⁸¹ and could have been summarized as "accept us as we are: treat us as equals: and let's do business where our interests meet".⁸² This has put an end to the Russian acquiescence to American "big brother" attitude and the previously acknowledged legitimacy and universality of the Western-style democracy.

Instead, Russia proposed its own, Eurasian version of democratic development⁸³, a well-known concept of "sovereign democracy"⁸⁴ coined by Vladislav Surkov, widely seen as the main ideologist of the Kremlin during his terms in office as a First Deputy of the Chief of the Russian Presidential Administration, from 1999 to 2011. Such a political proclamation invalidated previous attempts of the liberal government to "catch up with

⁷⁷ V.P. Lukin, and A.I. Utkin. *Russia and the West: A Community or Alienation?* Moscow, 1995.
<http://www.yabloko.ru/Persons/Lukin/lukin-outkin95-1.html>;

⁷⁸ *Primakov strategy* – integration of ex-Soviet republics; Tsygankov, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 243

⁷⁹ Tsygankov, "Russia's International Assertiveness", 40

⁸⁰ Putin's Speech in Munich, 2007. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8if0ELE0ow>.

⁸¹ Tsygankov, "The Post-Western World" 210, Tsygankov, "Russia's International Assertiveness", 38; Narochitskaya, 7

⁸² Trenin, "Russia's Coercive Diplomacy." Vol. 10. Carnegie Moscow Center, 2008.

⁸³ Nygren, 247

⁸⁴ Zoltan, 22

the West” and granted credibility to the creation of a Russian own democratic model adapted to local patterns⁸⁵ and called for the development at its own pace given its own conditions, a vision directly linked to the main postulates of Eurasianism and the Russian Idea.

Apart from the domestic policy part, the Centrist government has also performed a radical shift from a pro-US foreign policy to an outright suspicious and apprehensive attitude towards America as an antithesis to the Russian state and way of life. According to National security strategy until 2020 (May 2009), the main military threats for Russia come from the West, i.e. the USA and NATO.⁸⁶ Russian elite is outraged by the stated American derivation from the security guarantees, given during the Cold War period⁸⁷ and warned the US that in response to the construction of the American defense shield construction, Russia would have to move to the building of strategic nuclear weapons.⁸⁸

Clearly Civilizational rhetoric is visible in the recent Foreign Policy documents of the RF,⁸⁹ talking about the “emergence of a New World Order”, which clearly challenges a current unipolar situation. Thus, “Eurasia is back”.⁹⁰ The discussions about the sphere of privileged interest in the context of Russian challenge of the existing unipolarity are spiced by a growing self-perception of Russia as a Eurasian power.⁹¹ Foreign Ministry’s 2007 foreign policy review states Russia should promote “inter-cultural dialogue”

⁸⁵ Tsygankov, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 209; Tsygankov, “Russia’s International Assertiveness”, p. 39

⁸⁶ Marsel de Haas and Henning Schroder. *Russian Analytical Digest*. Bremen: German Association for East European Studies, June 18, 2009. <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/RAD-62.pdf>.

⁸⁷ Not to place a NATO army outside German territory; Tsygankov, “Russia’s International Assertiveness”, 43

⁸⁸ Trenin, “Russia’s Foreign Policy Outlook.” 67

⁸⁹ “Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation.” The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, February 18, 2013. http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D.

⁹⁰ Trenin, *Post-Imperium*, 16

⁹¹ Mankoff, 78

because of its pivotal position between Europe, the Islamic World and Asia. Putin's quote is remarkable in this regard: "Russia has always felt itself as a Eurasian state. We never forgot that the greater part of our country is geographically located in Asia. Although, we have to admit, this advantage has not been capitalized on to a possible extent".⁹² According to Mankoff, a renewed focus on the CIS states is perceived by the Russian government as the best way to utilize Russian great power potential.⁹³

First of all, Russia is going to a considerable extent to reestablish itself economically in the CIS region. Buying out important infrastructural assets⁹⁴ is one way to ensure its strong presence.⁹⁵ Examples are plenty. Russian electricity company OAO Unified Energy System of Russia now owns 100 % of Armenian electricity production and distribution, Russia has been making constant attempts at buying the Ukrainian pipeline system, which will be discussed further, as well as the remaining part of the Belarusian gas pipeline system.⁹⁶ Its increased economic presence even in explicitly confrontational CIS states speaks loudly to its desire to monopolize the CIS economic space.⁹⁷ The so-called Putin Doctrine proves that Moscow is striving for the political, economic, military and cultural reintegration of the former Soviet bloc under Russian leadership.⁹⁸

⁹² Putin, Vladimir. "Russia: New Eastern Perspectives." *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. November 14, 2000. http://www.ng.ru/world/2000-11-14/1_east_prospects.html.

⁹³ Mankoff, 71

⁹⁴ Kathleen J. Hancock, "The Semi-Sovereign State: Belarus and the Russian Neo-Empire." *Foreign Policy Analysis* no. 6 (2006): 117–136.

⁹⁵ A so-called "assets-for-debt solutions"; *Ibid*.

⁹⁶ "Russia Secures Ownership of Belarus Gas Pipelines." *News agency*. France 24, November 26, 2011.

<http://www.france24.com/en/20111125-russias-gas-deal-power-putin-belarus-pipeline-ukraine-lukashenko-moscow>.

⁹⁷ Bought gas pipeline in Georgia and 1 power station; Nygren, 244

⁹⁸ Leon Aron, "Putin's Doctrine." *Foreign Affairs*, August 3, 2013. <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/139049/leon-aron/the-putin-doctrine>.

Apart from the pragmatic capitalist attitude, which has been constantly emphasized by official foreign policy documents, its shift from the Centrist positions towards geopolitics can be clearly visible in the programme documents of *Edinaya Rossiya*⁹⁹ and well as the emerging pro-Soviet rhetoric and actions of the ruling party. In his 2005 annual address, Putin said, “the collapse of the USSR was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe”¹⁰⁰ and it “perished because of the misleading westward orientation of the Russian elites”.¹⁰¹ Alexandros Petersen in his book about Eurasia talks about the Russian government’s “frequent practice of reminding Russians of the Soviet Union’s past glory”¹⁰², which can be clearly seen in the names of the metro stations, public buildings and calendar events.¹⁰³ Clearly, Soviet glory is bleak without the vast territories Moscow had at its disposal during the Communist rule. According to Trenin, these were not only Russian nationalists who call Russia’s 1991 borders artificial.¹⁰⁴ Tsygankov also talks about the expansionist aspect of the Russian foreign policy.¹⁰⁵

1.5. Foreign policy in the CIS –the instances of the Eurasianist Manifestations

Clearly, the project of the Eurasian Union proposed by Putin¹⁰⁶ is the most outspoken evidence of the integrationist character of Russian foreign policy, or, a “coercive instrument available to Moscow.”¹⁰⁷ However, the Eurasian Alliance is still on paper and

⁹⁹ *Yedinaya Rossiya Programme Declaration*, 2011. <http://er.ru/party/program/>.

¹⁰⁰ Trenin, *Post-Imperium*, 27

¹⁰¹ Prizel, 256

¹⁰² Petersen, 91

¹⁰³ Lenin metropolitan, Lenin Public Library, vibrant 1 of May and Victory Day celebrations etc.

¹⁰⁴ Trenin, “Of Power and Greatness.” 409

¹⁰⁵ “Expansionist foreign policy is becoming more prominent.” Tsygankov, “Russia’s International Assertiveness, 211

¹⁰⁶ *Narochitskaya*, 12

¹⁰⁷ Zoltan, 30

its creation is not “a matter of days”¹⁰⁸, as the observer of the Russian Eurasian blog, V. Poluev, puts it. What makes more sense for the sake of the paper is to observe the hard facts of the recent years and try to understand how relevant has been the Eurasist outlook for the formation of the Russian foreign policy since the shift towards a more assertive international stance.

Both foreign experts and Russian official documents speak loudly of the importance of Ukraine for the Russian positioning as a Eurasian Empire¹⁰⁹ and to the fact that “Putin cannot afford losing Ukraine”¹¹⁰ if he is to keep Russian position as a regional hegemon. Due to the fact that Ukraine is a major contestant to Russian power in the former USSR, Russia is trying to build up relations with Ukraine as a priority partner within the CIS, and contribute to its participation in extended integration processes. In this context it is hardly surprising Russia gave a lot of attention to the Ukrainian presidential elections of 2004, which, allegedly, were to decide Ukrainian foreign policy direction for the next Presidential term at least.

According to many academics, CIS area has become an area of contestation among Russia and the West and the urge that “the West needs to be involved in Eurasia, particularly in the “New Eastern European” states like Ukraine,¹¹¹ could have been seen in the Presidential campaign of the major Presidential Candidates, both of whom were relying heavily on external funding. While not dealing with current American

¹⁰⁸ Poluev, Vladimir. “Eurasianism: from a trend to an outlook.” Odnako, May 15, 2013.

http://www.odnako.org/blogs/show_25612/.

¹⁰⁹ As Zbigniew Brzezinski famously remarked in *The Grand Chessboard*, without Ukraine Russia becomes a purely Asian Empire; Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *The Grand Chessboard*. 1st ed. New York: Basic Books, 1997.

¹¹⁰ Nygren, 229

¹¹¹ Peterson, 114

geopolitical ambitions, it is worth mentioning how much effort Russia put into securing its favored candidate's victory. The intense Russian political PR of Gleb Pavlovsky during 2004 Ukrainian elections¹¹² as well as the fact of premature congratulations of the pro-Russian candidate is empirical evidence of the intense Russian desire to keep Ukraine in its sphere of influence.

The gas conflicts¹¹³ which followed after the “Russophobe” President occupied office in Ukraine can be explained by Eurasianism as easily as they are by the economic necessity and the policies of “great power pragmatism”. The evidence supporting the latter is the fact that the same price ultimatums were offered to the “loyal” Belarusian side, which, however, resisted greatly the Russian acquisition of its pipeline system. As Dmitri Simes puts it, “Russia grudgingly accepts the Atlantist choices of its neighbors but refuses to subsidize them”.¹¹⁴

However, the timing of the gas prices ultimatums¹¹⁵ and the threats to build “alternative pipelines that would by-pass Ukraine”¹¹⁶ evidence the Russian “pipeline” diplomacy, or “energy imperialism”¹¹⁷ in Russian attempts to manipulate Ukrainian politics, undermine Ukraine's sovereignty and to punish Ukraine for the Orange revolution.¹¹⁸ American

¹¹² Mankoff, 250

¹¹³ In 2005 Gazprom insisted on a new price of \$160 per 1,000 cubic meters and in 2008 Gazprom threatened to cut off gas supplies to Ukraine because of unpaid debt of \$1.3 billion; “Gazprom May Cut Gas to Ukraine,” March 10, 2013. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7024294.stm>.

¹¹⁴ Dmitri K Simes, “Loosing Russia.” *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 6 (December 2007). <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63008/dimitri-k-simes/losing-russia>.

¹¹⁵ The alternative was buying up the national gas company

¹¹⁶ Nygren, 239

¹¹⁷ Peterson, 88; Tsygankov, *Russian Foreign Policy: From Gorbachev to Putin*, 231

¹¹⁸ Mankoff, 253

politicians like senators John McCain, Richard Lugar and Vice-President Dick Cheney called Russian oil politics an instance of “imperialism” and “blackmail”.¹¹⁹

Another profound and no less debatable instance of Russian great power exercise is the August 2008 war with Georgia. Even though even the most liberal in Russian political spectrum state it has been more “due to adventurous, reckless and brutal actions of a Georgian President,¹²⁰ they also converge on the perception that Russia overreacted.¹²¹ Its military response has been often times characterized as a great power manifestation.¹²² Interestingly, the armed conflict with Georgia is often cited as a turning point in Russian great power positioning by the various Eurasist scholars.¹²³ With its actions Russian leadership clearly aimed at undermining Washington’s credibility as a security patron in the CIS area and showed even stronger than the Munich speech that “Moscow is not willing to retreat beyond a limit.”¹²⁴ According to Vitali Tretyakov, Editor-in-chief of "Politichesky Class" magazine, the official recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia has been “the most important event at this time of Russian history, as it implies a “real start to the practical recreation of the Soviet Union”, to the “state-civilization”.¹²⁵

Having outlined an evolution of Russian foreign policy after the dissolution of the USSR and the strengthening of the Civilizationist rhetoric of the Russian government, it is important to show the reasons for the increased prominence of Eurasianism and assess

¹¹⁹ Tsygankov, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 220

¹²⁰ Trenin, *Post-Imperium*, 29; Peterson, 120

¹²¹ Interview with Nadia Arbatova; Zoltan, 25

¹²² Mankoff, 79, 243

¹²³ Interview with Alexandr Dugin; Trenin, *Post-Imperium*, 312

¹²⁴ Zoltan, 25

¹²⁵ Irina Pavlova “Down, Profil!” Grani.ru, September 23, 2008

the basic postulates of the ideology in order to understand how it can be employed by the Russian politicians for the pursuance of their political goals.

Chapter 2. Eurasianism as an Answer

The chapter will outline the reasons for Eurasian resurrections, its roots and main postulates as well as provide the reader with such important factors as public opinion and elites' willingness to actually implement the Eurasian projects, which is crucial for assessing the Eurasianism utility for Russian "great power" ambition.

2.1. Why Eurasianism is becoming so prominent today

In order to understand how Eurasianism can be employed for the great power ambition of the Russian leadership, it is instructive to reveal the reasons for Eurasianism prominence among Russian political circles.

Many scholars agree on the issue of Russian identity crisis. Up to this moment Russia has not moved much ahead in its cultural identity question and the identification towards Europe or Asia. An apparent triumph of capitalist Western ideology over Communist Russia created an inferiority complex among Russians and a feeling of abandonment and humiliation by the US.¹²⁶ Thus, Eurasianist premises of a distinct civilization and special role for Russian culture is performing a compensatory function and helps Russian people to find a needed mission in the international domain.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Trilupaityte, 86

¹²⁷ F.S. Fuzullini, and A.A. Sviridenko. *Eurasian Temptation: Modern Insight in the Problem*. Ufa, 2008, p. 29

Another reason quoted by Russian Eurasists is the bankruptcy of Russian Westernism, which could be seen in the political liberal-to-centrist shift too.¹²⁸ An existing Kremlin suspicion towards a liberalizing and democratizing evangelism emanating from the US and the belief that it is capitalizing on the Russian Westernizers in order to strengthen its positions in the post-Soviet space.¹²⁹ “Imitator brings minimum sympathy”,¹³⁰ - the quote of Trubeckoy perfectly sums up another widespread belief that the West will not accept Westernizing Russian state as equal because it would mean that Russia is still an “underdeveloped West”.¹³¹

Constructivist arguments can go as far as to suggest a quest for an ontological security¹³² and the need to create an external enemy to create a rationale for a hard line at home. The reasons, however, do not stop at the constructive level. There are many objective factors and mistakes by the West. According to Russian liberal thinker, Nadia Arbatova, Eurasianism is a mixture of Western mistakes and Russian post-Soviet complexes.¹³³ Not only the EU has currently no clear strategy towards Russia,¹³⁴ but also the US has missed a window of opportunity, which was open after 9/11.¹³⁵ An Iraq invasion has clearly marked a threshold in Russian-American relations.¹³⁶ American eagerness for NATO enlargement can be given as another justifiable reason for Russian apprehensiveness. And this is hardly surprising: no state would welcome the extension of a historically hostile

¹²⁸ L.N. Gumilev and V.U. Ermolaev, “Disillusionment Grief.” In *The Foundations of Eurasianism*. Moscow: Arctogaia Center, 2002, 270

¹²⁹ Ivanov, A.V., Popkov U.V., and E.A. Tyugashev, 28

¹³⁰ N. S. Trubeckoy “The View on Russian History, 285

¹³¹ Ivanov, 33, Narohnitskaya, 9; Dugin, *The Forth Political Theory*, 144

¹³² Jennifer Mitzen, “Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma.” *SAGE* 12, no. 3. *European Journal of International Relations* (2006).

¹³³ Interview with Arbatova

¹³⁴ Arbatova, “Russian and European Elites in a Mirror Reflection.”

¹³⁵ Many agree that the US took Russian help in the war on terrorism for granted; *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Zoltan, 19

military alliance up to its borders, no matter how often that alliance said its intentions were peaceable. Sergey Lavrov, Russian Foreign Minister since 2004, stated that a possible Ukrainian and Georgian joining NATO would upset the geopolitical balance and be a reason for Russia to “review its foreign policy”.¹³⁷ An intention to create a European missile defense shield seems to have been an unnecessary complication in the current international situation.

Actually the position of numerous Americans towards Russia is often enough to justify Russian concerns. Zbignev Brzezinski’s geopolitical writings suggest US has not abandoned a cold war mentality either. Andreas Peterson, advocating a more assertive position towards Russia, supports Brzezinski’s ideas when he writes that a world in which the “World Island”¹³⁸ is dominated by authoritarian, mercantilist, and potentially hostile powers is one where marginalized Western powers will find themselves split and dominated, strategically and economically, around the globe.¹³⁹ An answer to such geopolitically charged American outlook has been a reactionary identity suggested by Russian neo-conservatives, which was neither Communist nor cosmopolitan yet it was clearly anti-Western and anti-American.¹⁴⁰

Eurasian integration is currently mostly realized in the economic domain. Thus, the economic rationale is definitely a factor in the strengthening of a Eurasist trend. The disintegration of corporate and economic links with the CIS became part of the reason for

¹³⁷ Tsygankov, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 234

¹³⁸ Dugin calls it Eurasia in his “Foundations of Geopolitics”

¹³⁹ Peterson, 113

¹⁴⁰ E. Shiraev, and V. Zubok. *Anti-Americanism in Russia: From Stalin to Putin*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000, 76

Russia's monoexport economic specialization.¹⁴¹ Thus, there is a conviction that “without economic integration and organization of a surrounding economic region it will be almost impossible for Russia to secure the regional positions, make it to the stable development trajectory and get to the level of developed states.”¹⁴²

2.2. Elaborations on the Russian Idea

This ephemeral concept has come up in the wake of the Soviet break up and tends to dominate the Eurasist discourse from then on. The Russian Idea has been taking the attention of both Russian and foreign thinkers, who tried to give their understanding of the concept and its applicability in the Russian society. The section will draw certain links to the current Eurasism and estimate how utilitarian is the concept for the creation of an aspired “Greater Russia”. One of the most prominent Russian philosophers, Vladimir Solovyev, is the author of the so-called ideal model of society, which would represent a perfect Russian community and “the stardom of a universal religion”.¹⁴³ Clearly, the allusion to the universality of the Russian way of life could be utilized by the current Russian Eurasists and politicians, set to challenge a now existing status quo and to present their own version of the world.

Despite being positioned as a philosophical idea, the concept has always been more of an ideology than a culture. The quote by a famous Russian writer and thinker known as the "father of Russian socialism" and one of the main fathers of agrarian populism,

¹⁴¹ Andrei Areshev, “Challenges and Risks of the Integration.” In 20 Years After the Break up of the USSR, 16

¹⁴² L.Z. Zevin. “Post-Soviet Economic Space Evolution.” Society and Economy 3 (2008).

¹⁴³ Laruelle, 187

Alexander Herzen, - “Russia never had its individual culture”,¹⁴⁴ perfectly reflects the ephemerality of the idea, which is now being used for the political purposes of the current Russian elite. An integral part of the Russian Idea being an emphasis of the Russian “own way”, a negative self-definition of a society in relation to the West, is a great match to the existing disillusionment and suspicion towards the US.¹⁴⁵ Eurasianism is known to emerge as a “stick wand” answer to the crises in Russian society on a par with the Russian Idea serving as a self-esteem boost to the Russian people in the period of previously unsuccessful pro-Western orientation, those being the times of Peter the Great or Boris Yeltsin.

The main postulates of the Russian Idea, - a rejection of individualism, desire for community, some final goal as opposed to the personal enrichment and satisfied well-being¹⁴⁶ performed as an absolute moral imperative in the chaos of 1990s and appealed to a huge number of people in the newly created Russian Federation. The three major features associated with the Russian idea – an Orthodox Church, tsarist regime, peasant community,¹⁴⁷ became an object of nostalgia in the existing social disarray and were partly recreated in the Putin government. Indeed, the idea of a Good State¹⁴⁸ might have served a basis for the Gumilev’s idea of the “Government of Truth” and was often instrumentalized by the current Russian Eurasists for the legitimization and support for the current government.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. 27

¹⁴⁵ 50 % believe the west seeks to weaken the country; Wedgwood Benn, 176

¹⁴⁶ McDaniel, 25

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 31

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 52

2.3. Development of Eurasianism

In order to explain why and how the modern Russian establishment is using Eurasianism for the great power status restoration, it is imperative to gain an in-depth understanding of the concept itself and to situate it historically.

2.3.1. Classic Eurasianists

The birth of this political thought is normally attributed to Russian emigration of the 1920s. Classic Eurasists believed Russian people's ability to create a just "Organic society", which was, unfortunately, always interrupted by foreign and pro-Western minded elites, naming Peter the Great,¹⁴⁹ post-Peter dynasties, and Bolsheviks as alien and hurtful powers, preventing a natural development of a uniquely Russian civilization.

1921, when the first Eurasian "manifest", "Exodus to the East", was published among the Russian émigré community in Bulgaria, is considered an official birth date of Eurasianism.¹⁵⁰ Classic Eurasists adopted the main postulates of the Russian Idea, while adding an element of geographic determinism of the Russian median location. The emigration of Eurasist intellectuals was not a coincidence. While approving the ascendance to power of an organized and disciplined party¹⁵¹ and acknowledging Bolsheviks' unification of a geographical, economic and ethnic complex,¹⁵² they were very critical of the Bolsheviks' ideology as the one which comes from the West and is

¹⁴⁹ Didier Chaudet, 40

¹⁵⁰ Karickiy, 23

¹⁵¹ Dugin, "The Overcoming of the West." 511

¹⁵² Ibid. 256

premised on atheism and anti-ownership economic organization, both of which they considered oppositional to the Russian essence and Russian Idea.¹⁵³ Such a stance has brought them the title of “Orthodox” Bolsheviks”¹⁵⁴ or “Conservative Revolutionaries”.¹⁵⁵ Lev Gumilev claimed that the interchanging of the terms “Russians” and “Communists” is very dangerous for the formation of a Russian-led Eurasian Union of nations in the future,¹⁵⁶ which he envisioned as an absolute advantage for the increased “power and resistance”¹⁵⁷ of the Russian nation.

Classic Eurasists converged on the special role of the Russian world in the unification of Eurasian region and propagated a creation of a Common Eurasian nationalism.¹⁵⁸ Probably, their major contribution to the development of a Eurasian thought has been the reevaluation of the Mongol Yoke for the creation of a Russian nation and a special psychological type of Russian people.¹⁵⁹ Trubeckoy’s revolutionary denial of the Russian civilization descendance from the Kyiv Rus¹⁶⁰ gave a necessary legitimacy to the Eurasianist ideology and the necessity of Russian rapprochement with the East.

Classic Eurasists brought some crucial theoretical contributions to the idea of the unification and economic independence of Eurasian land mass. One of such concepts was

¹⁵³ “Eurasianism (1927) - a collective work of the first Eurasists.” In *The Foundations of Eurasianism*. Moscow: Arctogaia Center, 2002, 166

¹⁵⁴ Dugin, “The Overcoming of the West.” 512; Laruelle, 187

¹⁵⁵ Dugin, “The Eurasian Triumph.” In *The Foundations of Eurasianism*. Moscow: Arctogaia Center, 2002, 491

¹⁵⁶ L.N. Gumilev, and V.U. Ermolaev. 474

¹⁵⁷ Fonzullini, 22;

¹⁵⁸ Lev Gumilev, *The Rhythms of Eurasia: Epochs and Civilizations*. Moscow: OOO “Izdatelstvo AST”, 200, 6, Fonzullini, 68; Savickiy, “The Eurasianism as a Historical Fate.” 292, Laruelle, 149

¹⁵⁹ Trubeckoy, “The View on Russian History”; N. N. Alekseeva, “The Concept of Russia-Eurasia in the Philosophy of Eurasianists.” In *Eurasianism: The Theoretical Potential and Practical Applications*, Barnaul, 2010, 121; Dugin, “Eurasian Milestones.” In *International Eurasian Mission: Programme Materials*. Moscow: ROF “Eurasia”, 2005, 59

¹⁶⁰ Trubeckoy, “The View on Russian History...”

Gumilev's "topogenesis",¹⁶¹ which suggested a need to develop a national identity based on geographic location and traditions. Another important theoretic writing is called "Continent-Ocean", a remarkable legitimization of the economic autarchy of Eurasian territories and highlighting their unique way of social and economic development.¹⁶²

2.3.2. Modern view on Eurasianism

In the 1990s Eurasian ideology received a second birth and became more assertive and politics-based. Performing as a response to a profound moral confusion of the Soviet dissolution, Eurasianism received support among a considerable range of Russian scholars, who maintain an important linkage to the Eastern orientation of their predecessors when claiming that the official Western course of Russian elites has been the main evil for Russia.¹⁶³ It is hard to overestimate the impact of such scholarly assertion on the political shifts in the Russian government. The Collectivist call of modern Eurasists¹⁶⁴ as well as the justification of economic autarky in Eurasia as an answer to the financial monopolization of the modern transnational corporations¹⁶⁵ is well received among the creators of the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC or EurAsEC). Contemporary Eurasists advocate a civilizational framework for the aspired integrationist projects.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶¹ Lev Gumilev, *The Rhythms of Eurasia*, 8; Dugin, "The Eurasian Triumph." 491

¹⁶² P.N. Savickiy, "The Continent-Ocean." 322; Alekseeva, 115; Laruelle, 122

¹⁶³ Ivanov, 10

¹⁶⁴ Collectivism is the only way to survive in the unfriendly landscapes of Eurasia; Ibid. 31

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. 25

¹⁶⁶ Sergey Kara-Murza, "Trebuyetsya gegemon", *Izvestiya*, May 6, 2009

2.3.3. Neo-Eurasianism

The most well-known and popularized view on Eurasianism is currently the one of Alexander Dugin. The authority of Dugin is well known in Russia and far beyond. He gives lectures in Moscow State University, issues numerous books on Eurasianism, geopolitics and philosophy, and has numerous web sites and even a television line.¹⁶⁷ Many scholars acknowledge his influence on Russian foreign policy.¹⁶⁸ While Dugin himself maintains that Classic Eurasists can be characterized as the “Marxes of Eurasianism”,¹⁶⁹ his desire to become a Eurasian Lenin can hardly go unnoticed. Dugin’s “Foundations of Geopolitics” is the most widely read theoretical work on strategy and foreign policy in post-Communist Russia.¹⁷⁰ The outrageously expansionist and revisionist character of the book coincide with the Kremlin’s expansion of defense outlays at rates far outpacing those for other domestic programs.¹⁷¹

According to Dugin, a recipe for Russian great power reconstruction is a state looking very much like the USSR, both in terms of frontiers and authoritarian political system.¹⁷² I.N. Karickiy believes Dugin’s demotia,¹⁷³ which is supposed to rule the Eurasian Empire, is nothing but a justified authoritarian state, created by Putin’s government.¹⁷⁴ According to some scholars, Dugin’s extreme Eurasianism combines aspects of Nazi-style biological racism and anti-Semitism with a kind of geographic and cultural

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.evrazia.tv/>

¹⁶⁸ David Petrosyan, “The Armenian Crossroads.” 219

¹⁶⁹ Dugin, “The Eurasian Triumph.” 501

¹⁷⁰ Mankoff, 66

¹⁷¹ Aron, “Putin’s Doctrine.” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/139049/leon-aron/the-putin-doctrine>.

¹⁷² Mankoff, 65

¹⁷³ Dugin, *Foundations of Geopolitics*

¹⁷⁴ Dugin, “Eurasian Milestones.” 61

determinism.¹⁷⁵ While probably overestimating the radicalism of Dugin’s philosophical views, it is hard to deny an obvious imperialist challenge to the current post-Soviet balance of power, which, according to Dugin, must be changed in the nearest time, while the “window of opportunity”¹⁷⁶ for Russia is still open.

Apart from the Classic Eurasists’, the theoretical underpinnings of Dugin’s views have been a Mackinder’s concept of heartland¹⁷⁷ as a geographical axis of history,¹⁷⁸ the autarkic economic nationalism of Friedrich List¹⁷⁹ and the “big spaces” theory of Carl Schmitt¹⁸⁰. Dugin adopted the Russian Idea of the Russian civilization as the antithesis of the West, while definitely overstressing the extent of agony, when saying that it should be overcome and destroyed as an absolute evil.¹⁸¹ Probably, Dugin’s main divergence with Classic Eurasists in this regard is a shift of focus from continental Europe towards the US due to the fact that “the transatlantic West has separated into the US and the EU”. The official Manifest of the Eurasian movement explicitly advocates hostility to the American way of life.¹⁸² Interesting is Dugin’s debate on MTV as a classic representation of Atlantist way of life, which does not deserve more than hatred and disgust.¹⁸³ It is easy to agree with a low intellectual content of the channel; nevertheless, such a formulation

¹⁷⁵Ibid. 66

¹⁷⁶ Jeff Checkel, “Ideas, Institutions, and the Gorbachev Foreign Policy Revolution.” *World Politics* 45 (January 1993): 271–300.

¹⁷⁷ Laruelle, 119

¹⁷⁸ Dugin, “The Eurasian Triumph.” 497

¹⁷⁹ Praises Friedrich List for the economic nationalism writings and says that economic autarky is the only way for a successful development of post-Soviet economic “big space” and the creation of a Customs Union is the way for economic recovery; Dugin, *The Forth Political Theory*, 196

¹⁸⁰ Refers a lot to Schmitt’s “big spaces” and gives the example of Monroe doctrine as one of the best instances of a self-sufficient “big space”; Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*. University of Chicago Press, 1996.

¹⁸¹ Dugin, *The Forth Political Theory*. 162, Dugin, “The Threat for Russia”, 763

¹⁸² Dugin, “Eurasia Above All: Manifest of the Eurasian Movement”

¹⁸³ Dugin, *The Forth Political Theory*, 268

clearly does not reflect the basic ideals of Orthodoxy and respect, propagated by the Classic Eurasists.

Dugin himself states that his neo-Eurasianism largely adopted Eurasianist ideas, while adding the elements of traditionalism, geopolitics, and structuralism.¹⁸⁴ It is hard to overlook an underlying geopolitical message of the need for Russia to reemerge as a great empire, which could be carried out only in a case of Russian dominance in Post-Soviet space. Dugin believes the majority of CIS states are “failed states” and do not possess more than a virtual sovereignty.¹⁸⁵ Thus, the reabsorption of states like Ukraine and Kazakhstan into a Greater Russia¹⁸⁶ is viewed as a necessary precondition for the restoration of Russian might. His outspoken book “The Foundations of Geopolitics” states that Russian expansionism is an inseparable part of Russian historical development and national character.¹⁸⁷ Ivanov appears to be highly critical on the ability of such an expansionist foreign policy ideology to serve as the basis for the Eurasian integration.¹⁸⁸ Interestingly, Dugin’s contours of Eurasia diverge with those of Classic Eurasists and do not include Galicia,¹⁸⁹ thus clearly igniting secessionism in the CIS.

Another important characteristic of Dugin’s views is an overall positive attitude towards the past Communist regime,¹⁹⁰ which is very appealing to the incumbent government. A dangerous issue, from this perspective, is, however, the revisionist character of Dugin’s

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. 99

¹⁸⁵ Dugin, “Eurasian Critique.” In *Leviathan*, 1:177–188. Moscow: Eurasian Movement, 2011, 64

¹⁸⁶ Mankoff, 67; Interview with Dugin

¹⁸⁷ Dugin, *Foundations of Geopolitics*

¹⁸⁸ Ivanov discussion on Eurasian movement emblem - symbol of imperial expansion; Ivanov, 62

¹⁸⁹ Trubeckoy stated it was an inseparable part of the Eurasian space; “The View on Russian History....” 245

¹⁹⁰ Dugin, *The Forth Political Theory*, 211

critiques of Classic Eurasists,¹⁹¹ which does not accurately reflect the reality and gives unnecessary credibility to the Russian totalitarian past.

2.4. Eurasianism From the Other Side

In order to understand the utility of Eurasianism for the creation of a Russia-led “big space” a number of non-Eurasists’ sources have been analyzed. A summary of the main arguments is given below.

2.4.1. Domestic Nationalists

While a considerable number of this political current are pursuing a “fortress Russia” mentality,¹⁹² and are advocating the removal of ethnic minorities,¹⁹³ one of the most outspoken political parties, headed by the eccentric Zhirinovskiy assures the need to restore the pre-1917 frontiers of the Russian state.¹⁹⁴ The expansionist tendency is reminiscent of Dugin’s neo-Eurasianism, thus indicating a high level of nationalism in the current Eurasian writings.

2.4.2. Domestic Liberals

Despite a considerable influence of Eurasist ideology in the Russian political circles and among the Russian population, the impact of a more liberal current helps restrain Russian

¹⁹¹ Says that classic Eurasists assessed USSR just like Schmitt assessed the Third Reich and saw the legitimacy of an eternal empire in the Soviet ‘big space’; Dugin, *The Forth Political Theory*, 211; Dugin, “The Eurasian Triumph.” 492

¹⁹² Mankoff, 63

¹⁹³ DPNI – Movement Against Illegal Immigration; Rodina Party – removing ethnic minorities; Mankoff, 64

¹⁹⁴ Prizel, 259; Trenin, “Of Power and Greatness.” 409

foreign policy in the Centrist frameworks and should not be underestimated. For the sake of the work, it is imperative to give an alternative point of view, which will be further explained based on the written sources as well as in-person interviews with participants.

First of all, it should be noted that liberals have a different view on history when compared to Eurasists. Counter to Classic Eurasists, they state that Tatar domination did not result in a cultural symbiosis with the East, and that the return to oneself is a return to Europe.¹⁹⁵ Russian liberals claim that Russia's tragedy lies in its repeated bouts of "messianism cum belief in its inherent uniqueness",¹⁹⁶ and state that it is the rejection of post-imperial ambitions that would help Russia to move to progress. Opposite to Eurasists, liberals claim that Russia's restoration in the CIS is a way for the reassertion of nomenklatura's power and the re-establishment of a command economy.¹⁹⁷ Nadia Arbatova believes that Eurasianism is a mere substitution of Communism in Russian politics. Eurasianism is viewed as an indication of the fact that the era of geo-economics has replaced the era of geopolitics,¹⁹⁸ and thus as an obstacle to the priority focus on the economy,¹⁹⁹ the modernization of which is, according to liberals, incompatible with CIS integration.²⁰⁰ The major centers of liberalism, or Atlantism,²⁰¹ in Russia are the Carnegie Moscow Center, Gorbachev Fund and IMEMO.

¹⁹⁵ Chubais, 63; Prizel, 241

¹⁹⁶ Prizel, 241

¹⁹⁷ Sergey Markov, "Russian Political Parties and Foreign Policy." *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia*, 137.

¹⁹⁸ Mankoff, 72

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. 72; Interview with Arbatova

²⁰⁰ Prizel, 245

²⁰¹ Bears mainly negative connotations

The impression from the conducted interviews has been that Eurasianism is not seriously viewed among Russian intelligentsia, but is quite prominent among the Russian political elite,²⁰² which, clearly, is important for answering the question of the extent to which Eurasianism is being utilized in order to create a Russia-led post-Soviet “big space”.

Indeed, many liberal thinkers debunk the notion of a Eurasian destiny²⁰³ and Eurasian development as a “special way”,²⁰⁴ and state that Russia will be better off abandoning a current status-mania and exiting a “post-imperium” period.²⁰⁵ Liberals believe civilizationist approach is counterproductive and instead of solving a Russian national identity problem,²⁰⁶ it will only increase distancing from the West and strengthen a degrading image of Russia as a petrostate.²⁰⁷ Instead Russia is advised to lead by the power of example focusing on economy first.²⁰⁸ Liberal scholars stress an unnecessary high level of politicization of the current integration projects and claim that due to a different understanding of the concept, diverging interests of the potential candidates²⁰⁹ and the elites’ unwillingness to share power with “the center”²¹⁰ such politicization is unable to create an aspired Eurasian entity. Surprisingly, all of the interviewed scholars converged on the notion that Russia would benefit least of all the prospective members of an aspiring Eurasian Union, an assertion, which will be further discussed in the next chapter.

²⁰² Interview with Nikitina; Interview with Arbatova

²⁰³ “Russia is not a distinct civilization or a world into itself”; Tsygankov, “The Post-Western World, 206;

²⁰⁴ Interview with Arbatova

²⁰⁵ Trenin, *Post-Imperium*, 13

²⁰⁶ Interview with Nikitina,

²⁰⁷ Lilia Shevtsova in Tsygankov, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 213

²⁰⁸ Interview with Arbatova

²⁰⁹ According to Mehdiiev, Azerbaijan is not interested in integration at the current stage, as well as Moldova, Georgia and Armenia cannot join while there is an unsolved territorial dispute; Interview with Mehdiiev

²¹⁰ Interview with Mehdiiev

2.4.3. Foreign Scholars on Eurasianism

While the opinion of the Russian scholars is an important indication of the state and relevance of Eurasianist ideology in the post-Soviet region, the views of foreign experts are able to provide us an unbiased external perspective and a stunning variety of arguments. A commonly shared assumption is that Eurasianism is a novel radicalized messianic manifestation of Great Russian nationalism, which dwells on the restoration of the “pride in Soviet union, stripped of its former ideology,”²¹¹ and as such is either impossible or dangerous for Russia to adopt as a foreign policy. Foreign scholars agree that through the alleged links to the authoritarian Asian states,²¹² Eurasianism is currently used as a legitimization of a present conservative policy, and is harmful for Russian progress and development.²¹³ Brzeginski characterizes Eurasianism as a retrograde, xenophobic and mystic ideas system, which goes against the universal ideals of freedom, progress and the objective processes of globalization,²¹⁴ and whose imperial nature will only divert post-Soviet states from Russia.

²¹¹ A Jack, *Inside Putin's Russia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Jonson, Lena. *Russia and Central Asia: A New Web of Relations*. The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1998, 197

²¹² Fonzullini, 30

²¹³ German political scientist Ignatov believes that Russia should abandon coming up with political utopias and start shedding its semi-Asian character; Ivanov, 35

²¹⁴ Ivanov, 34

2.5. Russian Public's Opinion on the Restoration of the Great Power Status and the Eurasian Integration

While the informed opinions of the various political scholars is undoubtedly helpful for answering the research question of the given work, the need for a public support of any government ideology is hardly questionable. That is why the opinion of the Russian people on the further integration and Russian great power ambition is of an invaluable importance for evaluating the potential of Eurasianism to unify the nation for a common cause.

Despite the fact that the polls have always demonstrated that Russians support of strong connections with ex-Soviet republics,²¹⁵ a Russian public currently is much more isolationist and less confrontational than the Russian political elite.²¹⁶ For the sake of understanding the legitimacy of Russian imperial ambition, it is worth mentioning that only 30.4 % believe Russia should intervene abroad.²¹⁷ Karickiy states that the idea of a geopolitical expansion is very unlikely to inflame the poverty-ridden and disillusioned Russian people.²¹⁸ Moreover, according to recent sociological polls, the public offers no support for extensive civilizational projects and is well aware of the considerable financial and political costs of embarking on imperial projects”.²¹⁹

²¹⁵ Tsygankov, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 198

²¹⁶ Zimmermann, and Jack Snyder. “Russian People and Foreign Policy.” In *The Sources of Russian Foreign Policy After the Cold War*, edited by Celeste Wallander. Boulder: Westview Press, 1996; Stanislav Chernyavski, MGIMO Post-Soviet Center Director, states that Eurasian integration is still only an elites’ project and does not enjoy vast support from the public, intelligentsia and entrepreneurs; “The Difficulties of the Eurasian Economic Integration,” April 24, 2013. <http://www.mgimo.ru/news/experts/document237677.phtml>.

²¹⁷ Angus Reid Global Monitor Poll, “Russians Reject Army’s Intervention Abroad”. JRL 220, 1 Dec, 2008

²¹⁸ Karickiy, 41

²¹⁹ Tsygankov, “The Post-Western World” 208

In accordance with domestic liberals, Russian people believe that the way to great power status lies in the successful economic development.²²⁰ Regarding different meaning of Eurasianism for the various post-Soviet republics, it is worth mentioning that for Russia it means more of Asianism actually, which is hardly acceptable for the vast majority of the Russian population, who feel a greater attachment towards the West²²¹ and the desire to follow the European way of life instead of the Chinese one.²²²

2.6. Integration Willingness of the Political Elites of the CIS

In order to understand how helpful Eurasianism is for the creation of a Russia-led post-Soviet “big space” it is necessary to find out the opinion on the issue of the political elites who are actually supposed to promote a respective Eurasianist integration.

Kazakhstan and Belarusian leadership is known as the most ardent supporter of the integration. The idea was actually first stated by Nursultan Nazarbaev in 1994.²²³ An agreement for the creation of a Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) was signed in 2000 in Astana.²²⁴ Nevertheless, after there was a decision for the integration of Central Asian Cooperation Organization into the EEC, Nazarbaev initiated a new regional organization – called Central Asian Union,²²⁵ which clearly reflects the unwillingness of Eurasian elites to relinquish regional power to the Russian “imperial” center. Even Belarusian leader Alexandr Lukashenko, a staunch proponent of the Union State with

²²⁰ Tsygankov, “The Post-Western World” 216

²²¹ Wedgwood Benn, 176

²²² Zoltan, 31

²²³ Orlik, 23

²²⁴ Ibid. 34

²²⁵ Larysa Hoperskaya, “The Arguments of Central Asia.” In *20 Years After the Break up of the USSR*, 145

Russia, seemed ambiguous towards the EU-like integration project.²²⁶ Curious is Uzbekistani President Islam Karimov's concern that all these kinds of "supranational unities" can transcend the framework of economic interests and get a "political flavor and content".²²⁷ Apart from a competing vision of regional leadership by the Russian and Central Asian states,²²⁸ different interest of the energy producers and consumers²²⁹ also mean that energy consumers would try to distance themselves from Russia, rather than slipping into a more explicit energy dependency.²³⁰ An increased interconnectivity with other world actors is also an important factor, which precludes the regional leaders from the full support of Eurasianism as an ideology, heavily premised on autarky.²³¹ Clearly, the regional elites would like to stay relatively free in their dealings with the world and be able to develop independently without Russian approval for its relations with China, EU and the US.²³²

We can conclude that even though Eurasianism has a substantial support base among Russian political circles, its practical implementation might be hindered due to a low level of domestic and regional support. A more detailed elaboration of the Eurasianism prospects in Russian foreign policy will be provided in the next chapter.

²²⁶ Said a prospective Eurasian Union will never achieve a desired level of integration due to the fact that "our people are not ready yet for this kind of cardinal projects"; Antonia Hodasevich, "Lukashenko will not integrate out of the blue." *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, January 16, 2013. http://www.ng.ru/cis/2013-01-16/7_lukashenko.html.

²²⁷ Hoperskaya, 148

²²⁸ Sometimes an outright competition for a regional leadership— like in case with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan; Hoperskaya, 146

²²⁹ Moshes, 96

²³⁰ Nygren, 245

²³¹ Customs Union among others calls not only to increase the volumes of interregional trade but to decrease the member-states' trade with the third parties; Areshev, 32

²³² Mambetalin; Hoperskaya, 156

Chapter 3. Can Eurasianism Become a New Monroe Doctrine for the Post-Soviet Space?

In order to understand how helpful is Eurasianism for the Russian “great power” status restoration it is important to understand why actually Russia needs to regain a great power status that it has allegedly lost after 1991. After that a comprehensive analysis of theoretical and empirical underpinnings of Eurasianism and Monroe Doctrine will be provided. A high degree of interconnectivity between the concepts enables us to discern a range of similarities, which exist between the objectives and goals of the ideologies, while underlining a number of important empirical divergences, which can hinder the Eurasianist project in the future.

3.1. The Need for Great Power Status

Surprisingly, the views on the necessity of international prominence of Russia often coincide among the representatives of different ideological currents inside the Russian political spectrum. A practical necessity is often given as a universal explanation for the “great power” ambition. According to numerous scholars, being a great power is the only way for the Russian strategic independence and sovereignty to sustain given a current geopolitical situation.²³³ Most liberals believe that such status is a necessity for domestic economic and political development.²³⁴ A universal excuse for the alleged neo-imperial

²³³ Russia found itself encircled by states and regions far more dynamic than itself; Graham, Thomas. “Russia and the World.” In *Russia 2020: scenarios of development*, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2012, 26

²³⁴ Tsygankov, “The Post-Western World.” 178

whiff of Eurasist foreign policy²³⁵ is the notion that a Russia feels uncomfortable without stable unions and allies.²³⁶

The Russian restoration as a great power, however, is inextricably linked to its ability to become a civilizational alternative²³⁷ that is why Eurasianism is becoming so instrumental in this respect. Many current Eurasists maintain that without a further Eurasian integration the whole post-Soviet space is doomed for degradation²³⁸ equally as the fate of Russia as a state is very bleak.²³⁹ The adoption of a so-called “Putin doctrine” shows that the current Russian government gives credit to Civilizationist rhetoric and adopts Eurasianism as a legitimizing ideology for a Russian domination in the CIS, which is obvious from the Regional Priorities of the most recent Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation.²⁴⁰

3.2. Eurasianism and Monroe: What About Them?

The imperial ambitions of the Russian political and intellectual establishment is directly targeted at the creation of a Russian-led “big space” and derive a lot from the previous experience of its political and ideological opponent, the United States, who unilaterally proclaimed the Western Hemisphere an American “spheres of influence” and warned the Old World against meddling with it. The usage of “Eurasia” itself is somewhat

²³⁵ Mankoff, 242

²³⁶ Zoltan, 32

²³⁷ Fonzullini, 25

²³⁸ Orlik, 39

²³⁹ “If our country and our people are to remain on the map of the new millennium”; Dugin, “Eurasia Above All: Manifest”; Dugin claims that Russia either will be great or will be not; “Russia Can Either Be Great or Be Not.” In *The Foundations of Eurasianism*, 786

²⁴⁰ 42. Priority areas of Russian foreign policy include the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the CIS Member States; http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D

analogous to the US usage of the term “Western Hemisphere” when referring to the concepts and organizations dealing with the Americas.²⁴¹

Russian Eurasists’ elaborations on the Carl Schmitt’s theory of “big spaces”²⁴² and the nation’s right for the ban to interfere into the sphere of influence of a hegemon state give us some legitimate reasons to compare the theoretical underpinnings of the American concept of Western Hemisphere and a prospective Eurasian Empire, which is being actively pursued nowadays. According to Januz Bugajski,²⁴³ , Russia is in fact establishing its own version of a “Monroe doctrine”, which is based on an “asymmetric sovereignty” among the CIS countries and Russia.²⁴⁴

3.3. So What is It, Monroe Doctrine?

Dugin, expressing a visible enthusiasm for the idea of a Russian version of Monroe doctrine in the post-Soviet region,²⁴⁵ interprets the sense of Monroe doctrine as a necessity to ensure security and independence of one state through the strategic status of adjunct or neighborly nations,²⁴⁶ in this case being the protection of the US interests.

Secretary of State John Quincy Adams and unofficial presidential advisor Thomas Jefferson played the main role in the creation and proclamation of the doctrine. Monroe

²⁴¹ Marius Vacarelu, “To Build a Real Eurasia: Few Juridicial Ideas.” In *Leviafan*, 3. Moscow: Eurasian Movement, 2012, 223

²⁴² Dugin refers to Monroe doctrine multiple times and characterizes it as a greatly-needed ‘big space’ which derives its main postulates from the idea of an anticolonial strategy and suggests a willful alliance of all states of the region; Dugin, *The Forth Political Theory*, 199

²⁴³ <http://csis.org/expert/janusz-bugajski>

²⁴⁴ Nygren, 209

²⁴⁵ Interview with Dugin

²⁴⁶ Dugin, *The Forth Political Theory*. 200

and his Secretary of State John Quincy Adams drew upon a foundation of American diplomatic ideals such as disentanglement from European affairs. The three main concepts of the doctrine - separate spheres of influence for the Americas and Europe, noncolonization and nonintervention--were designed to signify a clear break between the New World and the autocratic realm of Europe as well as to show the strength and ambition of a new nation.²⁴⁷ The Monroe Doctrine was officially proclaimed in 1823. Its main postulates can be summarized as a proclamation of the Western Hemisphere as a region of free independent states and a sphere of privileged American interests and warning against further European meddling into this part of the world. The concept of Manifest Destiny embodied a “special moral endowment”²⁴⁸ and meant that the US had the right, granted by God, to spread its values across the entire American continent.

The creation of Panama, the imperial dominance over Cuba as well as a military intervention in Nicaragua²⁴⁹ were all attempts to dictate the US political will and subjugate the neighbor states to the American sphere of interest. The Roosevelt Corollary adopted in 1904, explicitly stated that the US, acting as a self-proclaimed international “police power” was empowered to perform direct intervention into the internal affairs of other Western Hemisphere states, if their actions (or inaction) posed a threat to American security²⁵⁰. Spanish-American War is often considered a a milestone event that tipped the balance of power.²⁵¹

²⁴⁷http://future.state.gov/when/timeline/1801_timeline/monroe_doctrine.html

²⁴⁸Williams, 79

²⁴⁹ Molineu, 44

²⁵⁰ Williams, 102

²⁵¹ Williams, 81

3.4. Eurasianism and Monroe Doctrine: Mirror Reflection

Having provided a reader with a short historical and theoretical overview of the Monroe Doctrine, I will outline a number of similarities between the theoretical objectives of the ideologies.

Similarly, a strong and unhindered appeal to imperialism has been used as a unifying force for the American newly born and Russian post-Soviet nations. The American Civil War left American people polarized and confused, while the dissolution of the Soviet superpower has led to a “profound moral crisis” among the Russian people. Eurasianism, like a Monroe doctrine, is utilized for the nation-building purposes in its usage of the ideas of a country’s empowerment in relation to the world, capitalizing on its unique identity and proclaiming a sphere of influence.

Monroe Doctrine has been widely used by American government as a tool to promote democracy and universal human values in the Western Hemisphere. Interestingly, currently Russian elites are taking the seat of American government of the XIXth century and are trying to prevent the so-called “Novus Ordo Seclorum” (New World Order)²⁵², pursued by the US, and to create a unique intercontinental world of Russia-Eurasia under the leadership of the overarching “Pax Rossica”.²⁵³ This is largely consistent with the classic Eurasists’ stand that the “universal values” propagated by the West is nothing more than an ethnic domination of a hegemonic power.²⁵⁴

²⁵² Narochitskay, 5

²⁵³ Laruelle, 126

²⁵⁴ Gumilev and Ermolaev, 469

Trying to establish a certain universality of their ideology both Eurasists and American thinkers are stressing its cosmopolitan character and utilizing the “melting pot” idea. Both foreign policy ideologies can be characterized by their negligence of nation-state. This is a crucial distinguishing feature of these cases, which allows us to draw a clear line with the expansionist foreign policies of the fascist states, such as Mussolini’s Italy or Hitler’s Germany. Both the United States and Russian Federation are not typical nation-states, which makes their claims of universality more credible and grounded. The mere creation of the US is an antithesis to a nation-state. An ideologue of neo-Eurasianism agrees with these premises when he says “the nation-state now is in agony”.²⁵⁵

Security concerns play a really important part in both cases. Numerous scholars maintain that the European presence in the neighboring areas posed a major security threat to a recently formed American nation. The US could not allow Florida or Cuba to be the outpost of European forces due to a geographical proximity and strategic role of the abovementioned territories.²⁵⁶ Current Putin’s concern with Eastern European states joining NATO or the stationing of anti-ballistic missiles in the proximity to the Russian territory remind all too much the 19th century American concerns. An increasing American presence in the CIS represents a fundamental challenge to Russian self-image as a Great Power, which was the case with European stationing in Latin America during the proclamation and reinforcement of the Monroe Doctrine. Thus, Russian attempts at

²⁵⁵ Dugin, “The Theory of a Eurasian State.”

²⁵⁶ Brewer, 37

“Finlandization” of the post-Soviet space are reminiscent of the Platt amendment²⁵⁷ enforced by the American state.

The stationing of the military bases is one way of ensuring a hegemon’s presence both in the case of 19h century America 21st century Russia. The American geopolitics understood the need for a naval preeminence as a basis for future American domination early on and advocated the creation of military bases as an important step for the expansion of American political influence and economic might. The US established military bases in Guantanamo, Panama and Puerco Rico as a logical support of the Monroe doctrine and as an important adherence to Mahan’s geopolitical critique.²⁵⁸ Nowadays Russia is trying to ensure its military presence in Crimea, Central Asia and North Caucasus. The Russian military-industrial complexes that operate in the CIS area are paramount for the Russian geopolitical prominence in the area. For example, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is a major Russian-dominated security alliance on the post-Soviet area. It can be seen as a created counterbalance to the NATO alliance.

Apart from the ideological and identity building functions, the Monroe doctrine and Eurasianism share a practical focus and have been employed by government officials in the US and in RF today due to an objective need for development in the social and economic sphere. A growing trade and shared industrial projects back in the 19th century America as well as the post-Soviet economic connections and infrastructure remaining

²⁵⁷ It restricted Cuba in the conduct of foreign policy, maintained a final say over their foreign policy; Williams, 96

²⁵⁸ Mahan, Alfred T. *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1890.

after the dissolution of the Soviet Union are solid arguments for the strengthening of relations and influence of the regional powers in their respective spheres of domination. American practical reasons for the increased interference in the Western Hemisphere are clearly visible in the construction of the Panama channel, which shortened the journey from California to the Caribbean by two thirds.²⁵⁹ Dugin's essay on the need to obtain the exit to warm seas as a major constituent part of the Eurasian ideology, show a similar concern for the improved connections and the convenience of navigation as a rationale for imperialist foreign policy.

Both ideologies are capitalizing on the solid foundations of national geopolitical and sociological thought as well as enjoying a wide support of the national intellectual elite of two respective states. Joseph Pulitzer and Williams Randolph Hearst were actively propagating the Monroe doctrine during its expansionist period (1898-1913) just as some modern Russian "norm entrepreneurs" are trying to adjust Eurasist ideas to the exercise of the Russian great power ambition.

Another unifying feature of the two foreign policy premises is a resistance and suspicion by the aspiring dominant power to any regional confederation, which does not include a hegemon, that being the US or Russia. Efforts by Latin American states to operate independently and to establish non-American ties have usually brought opposition from Washington.²⁶⁰ Equally Russia tends to perceive everything "without Russia as being

²⁵⁹ Williams, 101

²⁶⁰ Molineu, 21

against Russia”.²⁶¹ Russian attitude towards GU(U)AM is clear evidence of its apprehensive stance in relation to Russia-excluding structures. Despite a clear realist underpinning, both hegemonic states are known for a utilizing liberal foreign policy tools to a considerable extent, namely regional and global institutions. The United States of America is known to participate actively in the jointly created American institutions, utilizing them for the creation of their agenda and pursuing of the US goals. Modern Russia is known for its activity in the creation and participation in the regional political, military and economic institutions. Among the most important regional alliances Russia is a part of are Shanghai Cooperation Organization, CIS, CSTO as well as a Customs Union among Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. A proposed Eurasian Union is a clear sign of Eurasianism prominence in the Russian foreign policy outlook. There is no guarantee it will be ever created and the current political situation in the CIS. Nevertheless, the creation of American regional organizations later in the 20th century show that Russia still has some time to enforce its foreign policy imperialism.

3.5. “What’s In It For Us?” Methodological Comparison of the Empirical Potential of Two Ideologies

It seems that Russian political circles are utilizing Eurasianism for their goal of the great power reestablishment.²⁶² The success of such instrumentalization, however, is far from guaranteed due to a whole range of objective economic, political factors and constructivist perceptions of the concept by the nations concerned. The thesis aims to answer the question of the extent to which Eurasianism can be helpful for the creation of

²⁶¹ Interview with Arbatova

²⁶² *Yedinaya Rossiya Programme Declaration*, 2011. <http://er.ru/party/program/>. Foreign Policy Concept

a Russia-led post-Soviet “big space”. A comparison of the empirical implementation of theoretically similar geopolitical projects will allow us to understand the main reasons for the success of Monroe doctrine and to shed light on the current prospects of the Eurasian integration, promoted by the Russian elites. Thus, the observed outcome in the comparison is the success of the imperial ideology, while such factors as geographic location, economic potential, and integrative potential of a state are given for the purpose of determining the eventual success of the ideology.

3.5.1. Against the Status Quo

A major unifying similarity of the two foreign policy outlooks is a dissatisfaction of the two states with an existing status quo and a consequent foreign policy outlook directed against another great power, thus utterly paving the way for its exclusive regional domination in the given area. Nowadays the Russian political establishment wants the international community to acknowledge its sphere of influence, just as Europe was supposed to oblige to non-interference into American sphere of influence, according to the Monroe doctrine.²⁶³

Russia currently has a considerable leverage in CIS – a considerable percent of Russian-speaking population in the post-Soviet states,²⁶⁴ Russian troops in some states, control of oil and gas supply and energy infrastructure, and has a lot to offer to its neighbors – mainly natural resources,²⁶⁵ but also representing important labor market, source of

²⁶³ Molineu, 16

²⁶⁴ Peterson, 121

²⁶⁵ Dugin, “The Major Principles of Eurasian Politics.” 567

remittances for often impoverished CIS societies.²⁶⁶ Another factor talking in favor of the Russian imperial projects realizations is the fact that the US and EU, which has been traditionally opposed to Eurasianism, are now more engaged with dealing of economic crisis.²⁶⁷ “First in 70 years we live in the world without a global leadership” – states an American political scientist Yan Bremmer, illustrating the fact that the debt-ridden USA is currently less capable of the execution of a “global policeman role”.²⁶⁸ Monroe doctrine clearly had a go ahead due to Germany’s unification and as a result increased competition for power and colonies among the European states.²⁶⁹

Despite such a favorable comparative discourse, there is a very important geopolitical factor: location. Obviously, an isolated island position of the United States of America as well as a long distance to its main oppositional force, Europe, helps to explain the eventual success of Monroe doctrine, especially in the observed period. Russia can be perfectly characterized by Mackinder’s term “heartland”, as it is surrounded by other countries from virtually any side. Importantly, the main Russian opponent is not close, but is equally far as Europe from the US. Nevertheless, since the cases represent different historical periods, it is all too obvious that the technical progress which occurred from the observed time of Monroe enforcement has shortened distances in hundred times. Thus, America today can be said to be way closer than Europe used to be a century ago. The proximity and thus a political leverage of the main opponent **can** endanger the success of Russian Eurasianism to a great extent.

²⁶⁶ Oldberg, 20

²⁶⁷ Stregneva, Marina. “Eurasian Integrtrion in the Context of Russian-EU Relations.” Analytic. Russian Council of International Relations, March 15, 2013. http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=1546#top.

²⁶⁸ Jan Bremmer. *Every Nation for Itself. Winners and Losers*. Portfolio, 2012

²⁶⁹ Williams, 80

Due to the recent creation of many Latin American states in the observed period of time it is quite logical to assume they were neither economically nor politically coherent and thus were subject to great international influence, first and foremost the American one. Not saying that the modern post-Soviet states represent well-off developed nations, the aforementioned influence of other international actors does help these states to balance against the RF and exercise a more independent foreign policy than it has been possible for Latin American states during 1889-1933.

Another factor, interconnected to the importance of the location is the presence of other Eurasian powers that can pretend for the role of a Eurasian “civilization” polar. China, Iran and Turkey are trying to spread its influence in some parts of Eurasia²⁷⁰, namely in Caucasus and Central Asia. Due to this Eurasianism is facing a major ideological obstacle of the preferred attitude to the Turkish pan-Turkic movement as well as to the Islamic fundamentalism.

3.5.2. Messianism

A very important element of the two cases is a major focus on the role of the idea, belief and destiny. Both foreign policy instances are largely messianic in their nature, thus paying great attention to the civilizing mission, which their nation is destined to perform in the surrounding sphere of influence. American exceptionalism²⁷¹ and Manifest Destiny

²⁷⁰ Ivanov, 80; Hoperskaya, 148

²⁷¹ Is premised on the philosophy of Enlightenment and XVIII-XIX century progressive views of history and human perfectibility, combine with the XX century scientific foundations (the democratic peace and socialist peace theories) to

was used as a justification and explanation for the American “special obligation of the US to lead the region”.²⁷² The Russian elaborations on the shared destiny are used to support the desired “civilizational role in Eurasia”,²⁷³ building on the experience of the Russian imperialist expansion in the 19th century that has conquered most of the Eurasian area, deeply shaping the Russian national identity and the sense of exceptionalism. The utilization of the Russian idea and Eurasianism allows Russian intellectuals to point out the uniqueness of the Russian people and stress its special mission to be a linking force between the European and Asian civilizations.

There is a striking similarity in the civilizational underpinning of the supremacy justification, which has been used by the American and currently is used by the Russian Eurasist-minded intellectuals. According to the proponents of American exceptionalism, the Protestant American Anglo-Saxon had “unequaled energy”, a “genius for colonizing” and was “divinely commissioned to be his brothers’ keeper”.²⁷⁴ Similar expansionism justification can be observed in Dugin’s assertion: “Russians are a young ethnic group, powerful and thoughtful one. There are few like these on the planet”.²⁷⁵ Thus, even though classic Eurasists propagated the equal value of all the Eurasian nations, it can be easily refuted by their claims for being a leader in the Eurasian world.

There are several problems with such an idea, however. When comparing Eurasianism with Monroe doctrine basics, it becomes clear that while the Latin heritage of Christianity

produce moral imperatives for liberation and paternalism; K.J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American Foreign Policy: Is It Exceptional?” *European Journal of International Relations* 17 (November 2010): 381–403.

²⁷² Molineu, 21

²⁷³ Laruelle, 145

²⁷⁴ Williams, 86

²⁷⁵ Dugin, *Foundations of Geopolitics*, 120

and of Western culture clearly speaks to the legitimacy of American supremacy claims, the Russian Orthodoxy, which lies in the very heart of Eurasianism is hardly compatible with the Islamic religions of numerous Eurasian nations, even, given the peculiar heterogeneity of the Russian nation. Moreover, the main postulate of Eurasianism, Christianity, actually says more to the integration with Europe rather than Asia.

3.5.3. Social Darwinism

This concept seems to occupy an equally important place in the exercise of American foreign policy²⁷⁶ as well as in the Russian one in the observed historical period. The main urge of Monroe doctrine, mainly the European exclusion from the Western Hemisphere can serve as a clear-cut manifestation of American political ambition and claim for the superiority in the given geographical area. The Russian political elite seems to adopt a similar Realpolitik framework.

Despite the fact that Latin American states were often outraged by US military interventions, the propagated idea of a linked destinies and shared goals of freedom from the European colonization seemed to enjoy a considerable amount of legitimacy to an other wise unfounded premises for American interference.²⁷⁷ Some politicians in the CIS region officially acknowledge the legitimacy of Russian dominance.²⁷⁸ Nevertheless, while the assertion of the common history can be undoubtedly used to describe the Russian relations with other post-Soviet states, the struggle would have been mainly

²⁷⁶ Williams, 86

²⁷⁷ Molineu, 15

²⁷⁸ Nazarbaev N. A. *Evrasijskij Sojuz: Idei. Praktika. Perspektivi*. 1994-1997. M, 1997

directed against Russia, while the assertion of the common heritage would be perceived as a humiliation by many of the disillusioned post-Soviet nations. The contrast of post-Soviet relations with the newly formed and inexperienced Latin American states speaks for itself. The so-called “brotherly nations” Eurasianism is counting for have a long and extensive encounter with Russia and do not share the naïve beliefs and optimistic expectations, which Latin American states might have had in 1889-1933. The so-called “Soviet Syndrom”²⁷⁹ of the CIS states explains their perception of Russia as “a threat to their sovereignty”.²⁸⁰ Thus, a further integration has small chances for success, as there is an obvious lack of mutual understanding and friendship among the republics.²⁸¹

3.5.4. Are We The One? Assessing the level of territorial integration of Monroe doctrine and Eurasianism

Similarly, and unlike the other historical empires of Spain, Portugal, France or England, both the Monroe-proclaimed Western hemisphere and the Eurasian land massive are adjunct to the presumed hegemon. Such a geographical positioning of the hegemonic powers makes possible their territorial pretentions in relation to the neighboring area. It is true that the Monroe doctrine in 1889-1933 was using a Manifest Destiny concept partly for the territorial expansion. American imperialism was well embodied in the territorial acquisitions of Texas, California, and Louisiana. Nevertheless, during the most prominent reinforcement of American interference, which is considered to be in 1889-

²⁷⁹ Arbatova “Russian and European Elites”

²⁸⁰ Moshes, 101

²⁸¹ Areshev, 27

1933, no territorial acquisitions have been made in the adjunct areas.²⁸² The US was mainly preoccupied with the spreading of its sphere of influence and security concerns rather than an outright territorial expansion in its targeted region. Thus, while aimed at the domination of the vast lands of the whole American continent, the United States never intended to include Latin American states into the common state. When analyzing the rhetoric and the scholarly underpinning of the Eurasianist foreign policy, it becomes clear that the main goal of this ideology is to be transformed into a domestic policy imperative,²⁸³ that is the force to create and maintain a territorial entity, which would restore the Soviet Union territory under the different auspices. Some major technical issues like the center of the future Empire,²⁸⁴ the loyalty of its citizens and economic system are still not clear and might become a stumbling block on the way of Eurasian integration.

3.5.5. Integrating Potential of the US 1889-1933 and Current Russia

Another important criteria, which needs to be observed in the light of a messianic nature of the two ideologies is how much it reflects an actual potential of a hegemon nation to become a locomotive of the regional integration. Turning to Gumilev's claim on the nations' passionarity, it is all too obvious to observe the various degree of this ephemeral characteristic when talking about the nascent American empire during 1889-1933 and the current Russia as a splinter of a one time huge empire it used to be. While a growing American state was able to lead and inspire by the power of example, it can be hardly

²⁸² In Treaty of Paris of 1898 Spain relinquished all claim of sovereignty over Cuba, but did not cede it to the United States, so it became a protectorate

²⁸³Prizel, 258; Markov, 52

²⁸⁴ Ivanov, 83

attributed to a maimed, even though energy-reinforced Russian state. Trenin claims that it is more adequate to compare current Russian Federation with Weimar Germany, and calls modern day Russian patriot “unhappy and unanchored”,²⁸⁵ hardly an attractive example to follow. Another comment would be the ability to claim a universality of one’s ideas. The 21st century ideas must be kept by a stronger population. The indicators of poverty, HIV infection, demographic crisis in Russia do a convincing case for the Russians’ continuing weakness.²⁸⁶ The coefficient of viability in Russia is 1.4 out of 5, which is close to extinction²⁸⁷ and is the lowest on the whole post-Soviet space.²⁸⁸ Such indications clearly do not support Russian pretensions for regional leadership.

3.5.6. Economic Underpinnings of the Two Ideologies

While both foreign policy doctrines are greatly concerned with an economic imperative of integration, it is worth noting very different economic underpinnings of the stated ideologies. Laruelle states that even early Eurasists were attracted by a strong economic nationalism of the Monroe doctrine and were eager to adopt some ideas from such American proclamation.²⁸⁹ Having an autarkic element in the very heart of Eurasianism is reminiscent of the to American isolationism of the 19th century. The economic design of the observed imperial foreign policies, however, is diametrically opposite. Monroe doctrine was premised on an outraged capitalism, which, worth mentioning, did not bring much benefit to the dominated area, but was highly advantageous to the “metropolis”.

²⁸⁵ Trenin, “Of Power and Greatness.” 412

²⁸⁶ Tsygankov “The Post-Western World” 196

²⁸⁷ Fonzullini, 28

²⁸⁸ Nicholas Eberstadt, “The Dying Bear.” *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 6. Essays (December 2011), 210

²⁸⁹ Laruelle, 126

Eurasists were advocating a Collectivist and command economy style of an aspired integration. Clearly, declaring one's regional leadership²⁹⁰ bears significant economic costs, which, according to numerous political and economic scholars, will financially overburden Russia,²⁹¹ which, despite its vast territories and rich natural resources, comprises only 2 % of the world GDP.²⁹² In February 2001 then Security Council Ivanov stated, "all previous attempts to reintegrate the CIS states were too expensive and Russia should give up any kind of integrationist projects."²⁹³ A vested interest of the newborn Russian elite to maintain good relations with the West and an unrivalled trade level with the EU²⁹⁴ do not support the idea of autarkic economic organization either.

Moreover, many CIS states are currently trying to build a viable form of capitalism. Thus, an often times devastating consequences of the dissolution of an integrated Soviet economy do not preclude them from seeing Russia-created economic integration projects as a cabbala rather than a viable economic alternative.²⁹⁵ An increased interconnectedness of modern economy creates more alternatives and opportunities for the CIS states,²⁹⁶ they are eager to use.

Having analyzed the theoretical frameworks of the two ideologies, we can conclude that despite a high degree of similarity, there exist more obstacles to the practical

²⁹⁰ According to A. Areshev it will have to be even more important than Germany in the EU; Areshev, 24

²⁹¹ Nygren, 241; Maksimov, 34; According to Trenin, Russia cannot afford isolation; Trenin, "Of Power and Greatness." 423

²⁹² Trenin, *Post-Imperium*, 37

²⁹³ Tsygankov, *Russian Foreign Policy: From Gorbachev to Putin*, 231

²⁹⁴ Russia's main trading partner and investor; Bobek, Vito. Reflections on EU-Russia Trade Relations. For Security in Democratic Societies. Foreign Policy Papers. Budapest: Manfred Worner Foundation, January 2012

²⁹⁵ Hoperskaya, 160

²⁹⁶ Orlik, 36; Moshes, 106

implementation of Eurasianism due to a different historical time, location and a geopolitical configuration of a neighboring region.

3.5.6. Public Opinion

The experience of the creation of the world empires shows the importance of population support for the eventual success of any imperial body. The nationalist element was very strong in the US at the time of Monroe doctrine enforcement. It was largely supported by ambitious American nation and served as a cause of rally around the flag unifying effect. However, the question arises whether a reunification with the post-Soviet states is actually desirable by the Russian people and whether it is potent to perform a resuscitation of the Russian patriotism. The aforementioned polls suggest a negative answer.

Conclusion

Russia has the influence and resources needed for being a regional leader. Eurasianism is currently employed as an ideology for the abovementioned integration. The question I strived to answer was how helpful is Eurasianism for this purpose. I used the writings of Eurasianist scholars, Eurasianism critics' evaluations of the concept, public support and regional leaders' willingness to integrate, coupled with a comparison of the concept to a successfully implemented Monroe doctrine.

This thesis showed that while having a wide appeal due to its inclusive character and compensatory nature in relation to the West, Eurasianism is full of numerous ideological flaws and incompatibilities with the aspirations of people and ambitions of regional political elites. Different perceptions of the concept itself as well as often-divergent interests of the political representatives of the prospective participants make Eurasian integration very problematic and questionable. Moreover, an often times stated EU-modeled equal-based nature of a future alliance comes into doubt when a vastly different level of post-Soviet states is observed. Clearly, while declaring equality Russia will be more equal than others. Economic indications show that there is much more trade with EU than among the post-Soviet states and even if Eurasian integration could reverse the trend the attractiveness of such an alternative is very questionable due to the artificially created trade frameworks such union would presuppose as well as a necessary binding ideology and authoritarian nature of such a union, which would fell short of the Soviet experience.

The conducted comparison with a successful imperial project of the American Monroe Doctrine showed that despite a high degree of convergence in the ideological framing and objectives, a number of empirical obstacles will, most probably, preclude a successful implementation of a Eurasian project, which is neither economically feasible nor politically acceptable for the possible participants. Thus, despite a similarly appealing inclusive character of the ideologies, an already existing interstate experience coupled with an economic nature of integration play a considerable role in participants' desire for integration. Due to its theoretical underpinning Eurasianism is not much more acceptable to "near abroad" than a pure Russian nationalism.

Indeed, despite Putin's assertions that Russia has no territorial ambitions, many scholars contend that "in the worst of scenarios for the future, Russia may indeed have more ambitious long-term objectives in attaching portions of neighboring territories to a "Greater Russia". Putin is known to have remarked once "Ukraine is not even a state", which is representative of the overarching official opinion on Ukraine and interstate relations. An adoption of Classic Eurasist postulates such as Gumilev's *passionarity* for the pursuance of narrowly nationalist aims and the legitimation of the Russian regional dominance is reminiscent of the Nazis' utilization of the classic German philosophers for the legitimation of their expansionism and superiority is alarming and must not be overlooked. Talking about the political design, propagated by Eurasianism, a so-called "political correctness" of a Eurasian type²⁹⁷ is nothing more than an outright call for an ideological dictate. Eurasists' employment of the Russian Idea, which emphasized the

²⁹⁷ This, according to Dugin, should automatically exclude from the public, social and political life the elements, which reject the "Eurasianist project"; Dugin, "Russia Can Either Be Great or Be Not." 578

reliance on belief and enthusiasm, has multiple times backfired and led to a situation of elites' exploitation and the collapse of the economic prosperity of Russian people. According to Tsygankov, Eurasists have never actually been concerned with sustaining living standards but with the restoration of Russian political power only. A reevaluation of the Soviet past coupled with the urges for autarky does not seem to challenge Tsygankov's assumption. The question is how acceptable is such an ambition for the Russian people. The polls show political power is not a priority among the Russian population.

Usually a country creates its image by the welfare level of its citizens, scientific achievements and human rights situation as well as its capacity to innovate. If Russia is to create a viable civilizational identity, it has to adhere to democratic values and principles. The opposite would be the monopolization of a civilization idea for the elites' advancement and territorial expansion. Many of the pro-integration authors understand that due to the lack of strong economic and socio-political interest, the Eurasian Union will not be a stable form after the shifting of the political elites of the integration-advocating countries. These apprehensions are a good illustration of the Eurasianism instrumentalization of the current elites for the fulfillment of their narrow political interests and its low relevance to the actual political and geostrategic cultural interest of the post-Soviet states.

Russia will continue to maintain prominent positions in the CIS regions and pursue an integrationist foreign policy. Due to a low public support, the apprehensive attitude of the

neighboring regions, and Russia's objective inability to conduct a successful regional integration there is a low chance of the creation of a Eurasian Union. The success of such a Eurasian project will be conditional upon the continuation of the economic stagnation of the Western economies and oil price growth. Apart from the aforementioned factors, the non-intensive character of a prospective Eurasian economy and an unavoidable depletion of Russian and Central Asian natural resources will lead to a further degradation of the regional economics and consequential stagnation and social unrest. A closer economic and territorial integration with the post-Soviet region will not bring a necessary boost to the Russian economy and living standards. Neither does Russia need to reintegrate neighbor states to stay on the imperial level taking the examples of Britain or France, which continue to spread a considerable and valuable cultural influence and economic impact on their ex-colonies. A multidimensional economic, scientific and humanitarian cooperation without political or territorial integration of CIS states and the creation of a Russian-led "big space" is not only a preferable, but the only possible option for a successful future of the observed region.

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