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Europe in conflict – an analysis of European discourses in
light of the Ukrainian crisis

Master's thesis

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I hereby declare that I have written this Master's thesis at hand independently.

All works and major viewpoints of other authors, data from other sources of literature and from elsewhere that has been used for writing this paper has been referred to.

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Abstract

The main goal of this thesis is to create understanding on how the EU sees the events in Ukraine and creates itself through the articulation of a self and other. This official discourse, articulated through the readings of EU political elite, is seen as hegemonic. Discourses radically opposing the official discourses – viewed as counter-hegemonic discourses – are analysed to see how these hegemonic views are challenged by political parties carrying an anti-European theme. To achieve this a poststructuralist approach to discourse, language and identity is adopted. The theoretical framework is based on the works of Lene Hansen, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe.

For the analysis of the official discourses, key texts produced by EU political leaders were selected. The analysis of the hegemonic discourse was conducted through a creation of a timeline around key events – the beginning of protests of Maidan, the annexation of Crimea and the outset of violent clashes in the Eastern Ukraine. The oppositional or counter-hegemony discourses will be analysed through the readings of texts produced by two far-right political parties – Jobbik in Hungary and British National Party in the UK.

The results of the analysis show that by the official discourse, the events in Ukraine, especially the Maidan protests, are depicted in a way as to offer legitimacy for the EU and the values underpinning it. At the same time these events, and the annexation of Crimea in special, are seen as threat to the very idea of Europe. Within the official discourse, the identity of the EU is created through a linking to the values underpinning the Union and through a differentiation from Russia. The ‘degree of otherness’ of Russia changes during the unfolding of the events and becomes more negative after the annexation of Crimea.

While Europe was seen to stand for peace, mutual prosperity and stability, Russia is seen as aggressive, self-interested and not respectful of international laws. The official discourse depicts Russia as being stuck in the outdated Cold War mentality of bloc against bloc and the logic of spheres of influence thus opposing itself to the Union as a rival. It is precisely this world view that is strongly rejected by the official discourse.

As for the counter-hegemonic discourses, as was to be expected, both were very similar in the way in which they viewed Europe, Russia and the events in Ukraine and

were radically different from the official discourse. The events in Maidan are not linked to a general desire of the Ukrainian people for European values and way of life but are seen as orchestrated by the US. The main negative other for the counter-hegemonic discourses is the US and not Russia, the latter is viewed as a role model. Neither of the two political parties has much good to say about the EU describing it as an imperialistic colonizer doing the bidding of the US. It should also be mentioned that even though the two parties expressed rather similar discourses, the BNP was in several aspects more radical than Jobbik.

The analysis conducted in the thesis shows that the counter-hegemonic discourses do try to offer a radically different meaning to the idea of Europe and to the events in Ukraine (and how they are linked). The findings of the comparative analysis stretch far beyond the discourses emanated from the two parties and key speakers of the EU. The conclusions are illustrative of deep splits within the European identity, which in current times is faced with many challenges both from within and out, of which the events in Ukraine are just one of the catalysts.

Keywords: hegemony, counter-hegemony, Ukraine, post-structuralism, the European Union, identity, discourse theory, key events

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List of abbreviations

AA – Association agreement

DCFTA – Deep and comprehensive free trade area agreement

EaP – Eastern Partnership

EP – European Parliament

MEP – Member of the European Parliament

HR/VP – High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and
Vice-president of the European Commission

Introduction

Ukraine has been among the foreign policy priorities of European politics for well over a year - ever since the Euromaidan protests of 2013 which started when the (then president) Yanukovych decided not to sign the long prepared association and the deep and comprehensive free trade area (DCFTA) agreements with the EU in the Vilnius summit. From peaceful protest to violent clashes and civilian casualties – the events in Ukraine have kept unravelling with an unexpected speed and direction. With the removal from power of Yanukovych and the taking of Crimea by Russia, the EU found itself faced with a reality unlike which had not been seen for decades. Events have quite rapidly evolved into an armed conflict within (or right at) the borders of Europe.

The foreign policy of Europe and the actual policies adopted play a crucial role in not only for the present and future of Ukraine but for the Union itself. The turn of events in Ukraine possesses a challenge to the European identity and the essence of EU by forcing it to ask itself what its role should be in the light of what being European represents and what the Ukrainian events constitute for the idea and future of Europe. The EU was created as a peace project meant to unite European countries in a land of prosperity and stability. However, the Union is in crisis and threatened from within by the rise of the popularity of political parties that are often extremely anti-European.

It is for these reasons that this thesis takes an analytical look at the European discourses surrounding the events in Ukraine. The reason for doing this is to understand the various discursive approaches to questions of European identity that have risen in the light of the Ukrainian events. Questions such as what is Europe and what does it mean to be European? The main goal of the thesis is to create understanding on how the EU sees the events in Ukraine and itself through a study of its discourse regarding the events in Ukraine. Discourses radically opposing it are analysed to see how these views are challenged by political parties carrying an anti-European theme. The following questions will be asked:

1. What is the official discourse of the EU surrounding the events in Ukraine – how is the EU and its role in the Ukrainian events seen? What kind of identity is created for Europe?

2. What are the oppositional/anti-hegemony discourses on Ukraine expressed by far-right political parties within the member states of the EU? What are their common denominators – how much and in which way do they differ?
3. Has the discourse (official) evolved in any way throughout the unfolding of the Ukrainian events?

To achieve this a poststructuralist approach to discourse, language and identity is adopted. The theoretical framework will be based on the works of Lene Hansen, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. The poststructuralist approach makes no differentiation between discursive and the material but sees all our access to reality as possible only through language. Discourses are viewed as playing a major role in the production and development of identities. The latter are viewed as discursive, political, relational and social. Thus discourses always articulate a 'self' and an 'other'. The degree of differentiation between the self and the other may vary. In addition, poststructuralist approach views identity and foreign policy as mutually constitutive and strongly linked. Discourses are seen to be in constant struggle to fix meaning in their own way thus producing different identify and self/other formations.

Hegemony is the expansion of a discourse or set of discourses into a dominant horizon of social orientation and action. (Torfing, 1999: 101) The official discourse expressed by the political leaders of the will be seen as hegemonic. This hegemonic discourse and its construction of the events in Ukraine and European identity will be seen as challenged by counter-hegemony discourses. These counter-hegemony discourses are seen as expressing radically different views of the Ukrainian crisis and EUs role within it from those of the official discourse. These discourses are in constant struggle with the official discourse in trying ascribe meaning to events in their own way and thus they produce strongly different readings of facts and events.

The official hegemonic discourse will be based on the analysis of speeches and statements made by most prominent EU officials – the president of the European Commission, the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, the president of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy since the best source for EU classical discourses is in Brussels.

The official discourses will also be analysed for discursive change. For this a temporal layout will be adopted through the use of *key events*. Key events are moments in which important facts manifest themselves thus bringing about changes in foreign policies and identity constructions. The key events around which the timeline will be built are: the beginning of protests on the Maidan square, the annexation of Crimea and the outset of armed fighting in the Eastern Ukraine.

Counter-hegemonic discourses will be interpreted through the use of the discourses of two far-right political parties, within the EU member states which by nature are EU critical. The two political parties selected the Jobbik from Hungary and the British National Party (BNP) in the UK. These discourses are seen as anti-hegemony discourses that are radically different from the official discourse of the Union. The hope is to identify the areas in which these anti-hegemony discourses oppose to the EU in both their view of the events in Ukraine and subsequent construction of European identity and self/other dimensions.

The first chapter will set the theoretical framework of the thesis. As was mentioned above, this thesis is based on a poststructuralist approach to discourse analysis. Thus the main ideas of post-structuralism will be explained, with emphasis being put on the understanding of the relationship between discourses, languages and identities. In addition it introduces the basics of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory and its most important concepts.

The second chapter begins with the description of the methodology adopted in the thesis and is followed by the account of textual materials chosen for official discourse analysis. Main emphasis is put on the actual analysis of the official discourse – in three stages, which are determined by key events previously described. Chapter ends with short conclusions drawn from the analysis of the official discourse.

The third chapter begins by explaining the choice of textual material for the Jobbik discourse, followed by the analysis of the discourse regarding the events in Ukraine. The same logic is observed regarding the second half of the chapter, in which the background to the British National Party will be given and choice of textual material analysed will be provided followed by the actual analysis of the discourse. Here too, the chapter will end with the conclusions of the main findings. The overall findings of the thesis will be brought out in the final conclusions.

Theoretical background

IR theories and post-structuralism

In poststructuralist perspective, foreign policy is understood as a discursive practice and thus it is argued that foreign policy discourses articulate and intertwine material factors and ideas to such an extent that they cannot be separated from each other. Discourses are viewed as inherently social due to the fact that, when attempting to institutionalize their understanding of the identities and policy options at stake, the policy makers address both the opposition and the wider public. The poststructuralist approach to identity sets it apart from liberal and constructivist studies of ideas as a variable in foreign policy analysis. To poststructuralists, identity is not something that can be had independently of the discursive practices. (Hansen 2006:1) Post-structuralism can be drawn to show that identities matter for foreign policy and that it is possible to study them systematically by adopting a theory of discourse. (Hansen 2006:5)

What ultimately sets posts-structuralism apart from constructivism in IR studies is the latter's inclination to possibly stable situations and a lesser interest in language as such, while post-structuralism views language as paradoxical and a system with its own oddities and meaning, ever fragile and contingent. (Waever 2001:23) Post-structuralism approaches language as a system of meaning while mainstream IR (including mainstream constructivism) sees it more as a way of representing external reality. (Waever 2001:24) Language is seen as constitutive for what is brought into being and as social and political. It is an inherently unstable system of signs that generate meaning through a simultaneous construction of identity and difference. (Hansen 2006:17)

Social constructivism comprises a range of new theories about culture and society, with discourse analysis being one of them (and the one most widely used). (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:4) Jorgensen and Phillips bring out four premises which are shared by all social constructivist approaches. Firstly, they all take a critical approach to taken-for-granted knowledge. Our representations of the world are not reflections of the reality but rather products of the way we categorize the world. Secondly, they state that our knowledge and view of the world is historically and culturally specific and a contingent product of interchanges among people. Thirdly, they maintain that our knowledge and

understanding of the world is created through social interaction. And lastly, they state that within a particular understanding of the world, some actions become natural while others become unthinkable. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:5-6)

Constructivism helps the modern IR gain a more complete picture of what makes the world hang together. (Checkel 2004:230) Checkel distinguishes between three variants of constructivism: conventional, interpretive and critical/radical variants. The first of these – conventional constructivism – examines the role of norms and identities in shaping international political outcomes with process-tracing case study as a methodological starting point. Interpretative constructivists are more committed to a deeply inductive research strategy that targets the reconstruction of state/agent identity and with methods encompassing a variety of discourse-theoretic methods. Critical scholars add a normative dimension by probing the researcher's own implication in the reproduction of the identities and the world he/she is studying. Discourse-theoretical methods are again used with an emphasis on the power and domination inherent in language. (Checkel 2004:230-231)

To constructivists, reality is a product of social interaction (Berenskoetter 2011:648) and it has the objective of inquiring how “we construct the world we know in a world we do not”. (Berenskoetter 2011:649) The study of identity formation and its impact on international politics is central to constructivist work. Humans are capable of self-reflection and are able to ask how they, both as individuals and as collectives, come to establish a sense of Self and what consequences this has on their behaviour. (Berenskoetter 2011: 649) Neither are scholars as researchers of these processes detached observers recording objective facts, but agents partaking in the creation of knowledge and, hence, in what we call reality. (Berenskoetter 2011:649)

What is discourse and discourse analysis?

The concept of discourse is a contested one - it is used often but with various meanings depending on different contexts and approaches. There is no clear consensus, among the series of interdisciplinary approaches that engage in discourse analysis, as to what exactly discourses are or how they should be studied (Jorgensen and Phillips

2002:1). It is for this reason that I will dwell upon the various understandings and interpretations of 'these aspects.

Discourse is the space in which intersubjective meaning is created, sustained, transformed and becomes constitutive of social reality. More simply said, it is the space in which humans make sense of the material world and attach meaning to it and where representations of the world manifest themselves. (Holzscheiter 2013:3) Jorgensen and Phillips propose a simplified preliminary definition of a discourse as a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of it). (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:1) There are many different approaches to discourse analysis, with none of them being uniquely "right"- different approaches fit different issues and questions better or worse than others. (Gee 2011:10)

Both of the previously mentioned understandings of discourse carry within themselves the importance of language for discourses. This is so because a starting point for all discourse analytical approaches is the structuralist and poststructuralist linguistic philosophy claim that all our access to reality is always through language. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:8) The emphasized role of language is what unites various approaches of discourse analysis. They all share the general idea that language is structured according to different patterns that people utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life. It is these patterns that discourse analysis focuses on. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:1) Discourse analysis is the study of language-in-use¹ (Gee 2011:8) and it engages with meaning and the linguistic and communicative processes through which social reality is constructed. (Holzscheiter 2013:3) There are many kinds of discourse theory which vary in their understanding of discourse and of the imbrication of language and political power struggles. (Torfinn 2004:1)

Rising from the previous it is believed that humans are thus not able to relate to the material world without discourse. This is never the less to mean that the material world does not exist outside discourse – it just can't be accessed by humans without discourse. (Holzscheiter 2013:3) In addition, another often shared idea is that the language we use

¹ Language in use is about saying, doing and being. By saying, doing and being, certain "games" or "practices" are enacted, which, in turn, give meaning to our saying, doing and being. These "games" or "practices" always belong to social groups, cultures or institutions and by enacting them we also sustain these social groups, cultures and institutions. (Gee 2011:16)

does not reflect our world, identities and social relations in a neutral manner. Rather, it plays an active role in both creating and changing them. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:1) Discourses are rather a framing of meaning and lenses of interpretation, than objective historical truths. (Hansen 2006:7) Different approaches to discourse analysis vary both on their understanding of the exact demarcation of the discursive and the material and on the way in which they view and approach language. Some look at the content of the language being used while others pay more attention to the structure of language and how this structure functions to make meaning in specific contexts. (Gee 2011:8) Relationship between discourses and language will be depicted in more detail in the coming chapter.

Specifics of Discourse analysis

A study of discourse asks for the social and political effects of using a certain kind of vocabulary on the one hand and the productive effects of a certain construction of reality on the agency, identity of individuals and groups. Thus discourse analysis examines what is achieved by using particular discursive repertoires and strategies and which dimensions of reality and options for political action are included and excluded by specific representations of reality. (Holzscheiter 2013:3)

Discourses organize knowledge systematically and thus they limit the options of what can be said and what not. Discourse analysis looks for the rules that govern what can and cannot be said, arguing, that discourse forms a system made up of a layered constellation of key concepts. (Waever 2001:28) There are certain arguments and things that can sound sensible or powerful at a certain time period or place but are absurd at others. (Waever 2001:28) Discourses are made of statements and the unity and coherence of a discourse is made by the regularities exhibited by the relations between different statements. (Waever 2001:28) Rules govern the formation of statements, but these rules can't be seen independently of the statements themselves. (Waever 2001:28-29)

Discourse analysis should zoom in on discourse and the structures that organize it thus delivering coherent, well-structured constraints on foreign policy. (Waever 2001:28) Structures within discourse condition possible policies and overall policy must hold a definite relationship to discursive structures. (Waever 2001:27) Discourse analysis

approaches begin by identifying the discourses within which interactions take place in a particular issue-area of international politics. (Epstein 2010:342) Politically contextualized discourse analysis combines the analysis of how texts seek to create stability with the analysis of whether these constructions are being challenged within the larger public and political domain. (Hansen 2006:30)

Discourse analysis works with texts; it does not try to uncover the actors' hidden agendas, secret motives or their true thoughts. When analysing discourse, one works with public texts and uses them for what they are, not as indicators of something else. What interests the researcher are the shared codes which are used when actors relate to each other, not what the individual decision makers really believe or what the shared beliefs among a population are. (Waever 2001:26-27) It is the discourse itself that is the object of analysis. The analyst must work with what has actually been said or written, exploring patterns in and across the statements and identifying the social consequences of different discursive representations of reality. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:21)

Discourses have no definite and permanent boundaries since people are always creating new ones, changing the old ones, and contesting and pushing the boundaries of current discourses. (Gee 2011:37) Discourse theory doesn't see the conditions of possibility as inherent to the human mind, but takes them to be a structural feature of the contingently constructed discourses. Thus discourse theory focuses on the historical formation of the discursive conditions of social being not on observable facts or deep meanings. (Torfing 2004:10)

In doing discourse analysis we gain knowledge about a context in which a piece of language has been used and use this information to form hypotheses about what that piece of language means and is doing. On the other hand the piece of language is closely studied and we ask what we can learn about the context in which the language was used and how that context was constructed (interpreted) by the speaker or writer and listener(s) or reader(s). (Gee 2011:20)

Discourse scholarship cannot agree on any best way to study international politics from a discursive perspective – discourse analytical approaches should be tailored to the empirical subjects studied rather than vice versa. However, though this is legitimate, it does not imply that the analyst needn't uncover his or her analytical procedures. All

discourse studies should be replicable and achieve a greater potential for generalization through comparison between different cases. (Holzscheiter 2013:18)

Classification of approaches to discourse analysis

Torring provides a classification of discourse analysis into three generations. The first generation defines discourse in the narrow linguistic sense of a textual unit which is larger than a sentence and thus focuses on the semantic aspects of spoken or written text. (Torring 2004:6) The second generation sees discourse in a broader way by not restricting it to written or spoken language but by extending it to a wider set of social practices. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is seen to belong to this generation. CDA is developed mostly by Norman Fairclough and is inspired by the works of Michael Foucault. The II generation also sees discursive practices as ideological – social classes and ethnic groups produce ideological discourses in order to maintain their hegemonic power, or to establish a counter-hegemony. Power and discourse are seen as mutually constitutive, meaning we can't have one without the other, since discourse regulates actions by means of shaping the social actors identities, capacities, and relations of subordination. (Torring 2004:7-8)

The third generation further extends the notion of discourse to cover all social phenomena. Discourse no longer refers to a particular part of the social system but is coterminous with the social and social meaning becomes partially fixed in and through discourse. The third generation is unified by a broad understanding of discourse as a relational system of signifying practices that is produced through historical and political interventions. The most distinguished third generation scholars are Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, who, define discourse as the historically variable conditions of possibility of what we say, think, imagine, and do. Unlike the II generation they abandon the distinction between discursive and non-discursive thus claiming that discourse is co-extensive with the social. (Torring 2004:8-9) Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory is a poststructuralist theory, which has its starting point in the idea, that discourse constructs the social world of meaning which can never be permanently fixed. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:6)

Both the II (Critical Discourse Analysis) and the III (Laclau and Mouffe) generation discourse analytical approaches draw on structuralist and poststructuralist language theory, but they vary as to the extent to which the poststructuralist label applies. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:6) Laclau and Mouffes approach can be seen as more poststructuralist than Norman Faircloughs' critical discourse analysis. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:6)

Core themes in poststructuralist discourse theory

Torfinn summarised five core themes in poststructuralist theory based on the works of Laclau and Mouffe. First argument is that all forms of social practice take place against a background of historically specific discourses, which can be defined as relational systems of signification. Whatever we say, do or think is conditioned by discourse, which on the other hand is modified and transformed by what we are saying, thinking and doing. Secondly, discourse is constructed in and through hegemonic struggles that aim to establish a political and moral-intellectual leadership through the articulation of meaning and identity thus discourse is a result of political decisions. This hegemonic articulation of meaning and identity, according to the third argument, is intrinsically linked to the construction of social antagonism, which involves the exclusion of a threatening other that stabilizes the discursive system while, at the same time, preventing its ultimate sure. The fourth argument is that a stable hegemonic discourse becomes dislocated when it is encountered by events that it fails to explain, represent etc. Fifthly, the dislocation of the discursive structure means that the subject always emerges as a split subject that might attempt to reconstruct a full identity by means of identifying itself with the promise of fullness offered by other political projects. (Torfinn 2004:14-17)

Discourses and language

As stated previously, language plays a crucial role in discourses and their analysis since all discourse analytical approaches share, as their starting point, the claim that our access to reality is always through language. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:8) To

poststructuralists, it is only through the construction in language that things are given a meaning and a particular identity. (Hansen 2006:18) Epstein summarizes three key premises regarding the relationship between language, agency and identity on which the discourse approach operates. First, language is effective and to speak means also to act. Secondly, social actors are speaking actors and third, actor behaviour is regulated by pre-existing discourses that structure the field of possible actions. (Epstein 2010:343) What the discourse analysis approach studies is the way in which actors define themselves by stepping into a particular subject-positions carved out by discourse. (Epstein 2010:344)

There are four points on which, according to Jorgensen and Phillips, all discourse analytical approaches agree to. Firstly, language is not a reflection of a pre-existing reality. Secondly, language is structured in patterns of discourses which, thirdly, are maintained and transformed in discursive practices. And lastly, the maintenance and transformation of the patterns should thus be explored through analysis of the specific context in which language is in action. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:12)

Languages, as identities, are social (not a private property of the individual but a series of codes and conventions needed to make one comprehensible) and political (a site for the production and reproduction of particular subjectivities and identities while others are simultaneously excluded). (Hansen 2006:18) The relationship between language and reality is arbitrary – the world does not dictate the words with which it should be described. The meaning of individual signs is determined by their relation to other signs. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:10) and one element is valued over its opposite (Hansen 2006:19)

Meaning, being constructed through the discursive juxtaposition between a privileged sign on the one hand and a devalued one on the other, leads to a conceptualization of identity in relational terms and as being constructed along two dimensions (Laclau and Mouffe 1985 in Hansen 2006:19) However, in poststructuralist discourse analytical approaches, these signs are not seen as fixed – signs still acquire their meaning by being different from other signs, but the signs from which they differ can change according to the context in which they are used. This, however, isn't to mean that words are open to all meanings, just that they can't be fixed with just one or more definitive meaning(s). (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:11)

Language should thus be addressed from a differential understanding, according to which meaning is located in the differences among concepts. Language becomes a system and we will be able to study its structure as a separate stratum of reality. Since everything that includes statements about meanings has to involve an understanding of these systems there is a discursive element to be found in more or less anything we could find interesting. (Waeber 2001:28) Language is an element of the social at all levels. Languages define certain potential and possibilities while excluding others. (Fairclough 2003:24)

What is important in poststructuralist view of language is that language is viewed always having a political dimension. To Gee all language is always “political” in a deep sense, when using language, social goods² and their distribution are always at stake (Gee 2011:7). Politics can’t be conducted without language and the use of language in the constitution of social groups leads to what we call politics (Chilton and Schaffner 1997:206). Discourse of any kind is thus political since it serves as a site of struggle, a semantic place in which meanings are produced and/or challenged (Seidel 1985:45). In addition language becomes a strategic resource used to gain and hold power. Political statements are not neutral utterances but rather function as a means to achieve political goals create allegiances, oppositions and present an image of national unity. (Hudson 1978:41;61)

Discourse analysis can illuminate problems and controversies in the world and show issues about the distribution of social goods. (Gee 2011:10) People’s differential access to different identities and practices, connected to different sorts of status and social goods, is a root source of inequality in society. Since different identities and activities are enacted in and through language, the study of language is integrally connected to matters of equity and justice and intervening in such matters can be a contribution to social justice. (Gee 2011:30) Thus language becomes closely linked with notions such as power, hegemony, antagonism and social struggle – all of which will be more deeply discussed in the following chapters.

Approaches on analysing language can be divided in two – a more descriptive approach and a critical one. The first looks at language to see how it works in order to

² Gee defines social goods as anything some people in a society want and value. (Gee 2011: 5)

understand it. The second on the other hand aims to add a more critical aspect to the previous goals by also speaking to and, perhaps, intervening in social or political issues, problems and controversies in the world thus applying their work. (Gee 2001: 9)

Discourse and identity

Discourses play a central role in the making of identities (Epstein 2010:328) and thus the question of identity is at the ontological and epistemological centre of poststructuralist discourse analysis. (Hansen 2006:37). In the poststructuralist research agenda, identity is seen as discursive, political, relational and social. By being discursive and political, the representations of identity are seen as to place foreign policy issues within a particular imperative optic, one with consequences for foreign policy. To see identity as discursive means that there are no objective identities that are located in some extra-discursive realm and thus, identity cannot be used as a variable against which behaviour and non-discursive factors can be measured. To view identity as relational means to see it always being given through reference to what it is not and to see it as social, means to understand it as established through a set of collectively articulated codes. (Hansen 2006:6)

The conceptualization of identity as discursive, political, relational and social implies an articulation of a *Self* and one or several *Others*. (Hansen 2006:6) Identities are constructed inter-subjectively in a social relationship with significant others taking the form of enemies, rivals or friends. (Berenskoetter 2011:650) Waeber states that identity is a relational concept, which is produced through, and produces itself, juxtapositions between selves and others. (Waeber 2001:24) The analysis is not focused simply on who we are, but on the ways in which one conceives this *we* through the articulation of different layers of identity in complex constellations of competition and mutual definition. (Waeber 2001:25) The other may be constructed through geographical, political and temporal representations and the degree of difference (*'degree of otherness'*) of the other may vary significantly. (Hansen 2006:6-7) Methodologically one should therefore begin by identifying those terms that indicate a clear construction of the other

or of the self and the location of these designated signs within a larger system. (Hansen 2006:41-42)

Politicians often present the adoption of certain policies as caused by a particular representation of identity. (Hansen 2006:26) A construction of a link between identity and policy makes the two appear consistent with each other and allows for the legitimacy and enforceability of the foreign policy. (Hansen 2006:28) States, just like individuals, position themselves in relation to other states by adopting certain discourses and not others. These discourses operate as important principles of coherence for statehood. (Epstein 2010:341) A noteworthy feature of international politics is the relative stability of state positioning in the international fora – regardless of the changes in leadership, its line tends to remain relatively consistent. Explicit decisions to change positions of course bring about a change in discourses. (Epstein 2010:341)

According to Hansen, identity is constructed through discourse and foreign policies draw upon representations of identity for their legitimacy. Identity and foreign policy are mutually constitutive and cannot be separated from each other thus making it impossible to create a causal relationship between them. (Hansen 2006:1-5) There are however limitations on foreign policy makers on which policy can be promoted and thus which representations of identities can be articulated. These external constraints are not objective material factors constituted outside of discourse but situating in, or products of, older and competing discourses. (Hansen 2006:30) As particular constructions of identity underpin and legitimize policies, the broader ambition is to show how these constructions impose particular constraints on which subjects can gain legitimate if circumscribed presence and which foreign policies might in turn be meaningfully proscribed. (Hansen 2006:37)

Hansen proposes four analytical steps to systematically analyse identity construction. These steps are as follows: a) the concept of identity should be able to assume degrees of otherness; b) identity construction involves not a single self-other dichotomy but a series of related yet slightly different juxtapositions that can be theorized as constituting processes of linking and differentiation (establish the meaning of each sign); c) the construction of identity in foreign policy discourse can be analysed through a consideration of how identity is always spatially, temporally and ethically situated (the

interlinking of these dimensions of identity construction provides a possibility for analysing differences between discourses and their changes over time); and d) discourses can be seen as organized within a field of debate. (Hansen 2006:37-38)

Discourse theory holds that identity is shaped in and through its relation to other meanings, and singular meanings or identities should always be analysed in specific discursive contexts that condition how they are constructed and interpreted. (Torfinn 2004:14) Identity is constituted through the linking and differentiation of a series of signs, and one will usually focus on one in particular and analyse how this privileged identity is constructed through the processes of linking and juxtaposition. (Hansen 2006:45) Analytically, the construction of identity should be situated within a careful investigation of which signs are articulated by a particular discourse or text, how they are coupled to achieve discursive stability, where instabilities and slips between these constructions might occur, and how competing discourses construct the same sign to different effects. (Hansen 2006:42)

Discourse theory

The theory has its roots in Michael Foucault's ideas. In his studies Foucault focused on the rules that govern which statements can be accepted as meaningful and true in a particular historical epoch. He also developed a theory of power and knowledge. According to Foucault, power does not belong to any particular agent but is spread across different social practices and power provides the conditions of possibility for the social. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:12-13) Power is seen as both a productive and a constraining force. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:14)

Laclau and Mouffe describe discourse as and thought the following concepts:

“[W]e will call *articulation* any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call *discourse*. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call *moments*. By contrast, we will call *element* any difference that is not discursively articulated.” (Laclau and Mouffe 2001:105)

The discourse theory developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe has its starting point in the poststructuralist idea that discourse constructs the social world in meaning and due to the inherent instability of language, this meaning can never be permanently fixed. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:6) Thus the key word for the theory is *discursive struggle* – meaning that different discourses (each of them representing particular ways of talking about and understanding the social world) are engaged in constant struggle with one another to achieve hegemony (to fix the meanings of language in their own way). (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:6-7)

Laclau and Mouffe do not distinguish between discursive and non-discursive dimensions of the social – discourse itself is fully constitutive of our world. (Laclau and Mouffe 2001:107) The perceived denial of the existence of the material, often used to critique Discourse Theory, is however incorrect. In the view of Laclau and Mouffe, “*What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence.*” (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 108) To them discourses are material in the sense that both social and material objects do exist however they possess no meaning in themselves. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:35)

Their discourse theory carries the overall idea that social phenomena are never finished or total and that meaning can never be truly fixed. This opens up the way for constant social struggles about definitions of society and identity, with resulting social effects. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:24) The overall aim is to map out the processes in which we struggle about the way in which the meaning of signs is to be fixed and the process by which some fixations of meaning become so conventionalized that we begin to think of them as natural. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:26) In the words of Laclau and Mouffe:

“[I]n an articulated discursive totality, where every element occupies a differential position — in our terminology, where every element has been reduced to a moment of that totality — all identity is relational and all relations have a necessary character./.../ Everything is so necessary in it that modifications of the whole and of the details reciprocally condition one another. The relativity of values is the best proof that they depend closely

upon one another in the synchrony of a system which is always being threatened, always being restored. The point is that all values are values of opposition and are defined only by their difference. (Laclau and Mouffe 2001:106)

To Laclau and Mouffe a discourse is understood as a fixation of meaning within a particular domain in which the meaning of each sign is determined by its relation to other signs. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:26) Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory suggests that we focus on specific expressions in their capacity as articulations by asking what meanings they establish and what meanings they exclude by positioning elements in particular relationship with one other. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:29) A discourse is always constituted in relation to an outside (what it excludes) and it is always in danger of being undermined by it. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:25)

Key concepts

As stated before, for Laclau and Mouffe there is no objective material reality – material reality does exist but humans have no access to it that is not mediated through discourse. Thus discursive and non-discursive are inseparable. Since all access to reality is through discourse, the meanings of social phenomena are never fixed. Different discourses, each structuring the world in its own way, compete to define what is 'true' within a particular aspect of the world. (Rear p.5)

Laclau and Mouffe have adopted the notion of the *sign* from the linguistic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure. The *sign* is conceived as the relation between an acoustic image (the *signifier*) and a concept (the *signified*). These signs constitute a system in which no element can be defined independently of others. (Laclau 2007:542) Jorgensen and Phillips explain this through the use of the analogy of a fishing net – all signs can be thought of as knots in a fishing net, deriving their meaning from their position in the net (their difference from one another). However unlike the fishing net, the signs are not permanently fixed – their position may change and they may acquire new meanings. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:25)

A discourse is a fixation of meaning within a particular domain and all signs in a discourse are *moments*. Discourses are organized around *nodal points*, around which meaning is partially fixed. These nodal points are privileged signs around which other signs are ordered. These other signs acquire their meaning from their relation to the nodal points (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:26) and are empty in themselves. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:28) A discourse is established as a totality in which each sign is fixed as a moment through its relation to other signs by the exclusion of all other possible meanings that the sign could have held. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:26-27)

Meaning and identity are constructed through a series of signs that are linked to each other to constitute relations of sameness and of difference. (Hansen 2006:42) Being a woman is defined with words like emotional, motherly, reliant and simple. This is the *process of linking* (positive identity). This series of links is at the same time juxtaposed to the series of links of what it means to be a man. A man, in the same manner, would be defined as rational, intellectual, independent and complex. This contrasting is the *process of differentiating* (negative identity). (Hansen 2006 19.20) Thus one should begin by identifying the signs articulated by a particular discourse or text and analyse how these signs are coupled to achieve discursive stability, where instabilities and slips might occur, and how competing discourses construct the same signs to different effects. (Hanesn 2006:42)

In Laclau and Mouffe theory, signs whose meanings have not yet been fixed and which have multiple potential meanings are defined as *elements*. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:27) *Floating signifiers* are elements which are particularly open to different ascriptions of meaning. They are the signs that different discourses struggle to invest with meaning in their own particular way. Nodal points as well are floating signifiers but whereas the term nodal point refers to a point of crystallisation within a specific discourse, the term floating signifier belongs to the ongoing struggle between different discourses to fix the meaning of important signs. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:28)

Discourses are in constant conflict in trying to fix the meaning of certain signs. They each try to structure signs as if they all had fixed and unambiguous meanings in the total structure. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:33) Yet no discourse can be fully established and the conflict with other discourses that define reality differently is ever persistent. This

constitutes a *struggle* over the creation of meaning. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:47)
There is always room for struggles over what the structures of meaning should look like, what discourses should prevail and how meaning should be ascribed to individual signs. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:29)

The term *key events* refers to situations where important facts manifest themselves on the political and/ or media agenda. Discourses often provide different readings of facts and events when trying to engage and contest each other by challenging policy, identity and the logic through which they are linked. Mapping debates around key events can be used to construct a timeline which in turn can be employed when empirical material is selected. (Hansen 2006:32)

Hegemony is the expansion of a discourse or set of discourses into a dominant horizon of social orientation and action by means of articulating unfixed elements into partially fixed moments. (Torfing, 1999: 101) To Laclau and Mouffe “*Hegemony will allude to an absent totality, and to the diverse attempts at recomposition and rearticulation which, in overcoming this original absence, made it possible for struggles to be given a meaning and for historical forces to be endowed with full positivity.*” (Laclau and Mouffe 2001:7)

When discourses become hegemonic, the social practices they structure can reach the level of *common sense*, in that their origins and intrinsic contingency are forgotten. However no discourse is capable of becoming completely hegemonic and thus the domination of a particular discourse is never complete or permanent. Every hegemonic order is susceptible of being challenged by *counter-hegemonic practices*, which attempt to disarticulate it in order to install another form of hegemony. These counter-hegemonies may take place naturally through a day-to-day communicative practices which challenge existing discourses, or they might be a deliberate and strategic act by interests groups to gain discursive dominance. (Rear; p.8)

Empirical part

Methodology

This thesis adopts a poststructuralist approach to the relationship between discourse, identity and foreign policy, basing mainly on the works of Hansen, Laclau and Mouffe. The official discourse expressed by the political leaders of the EU is seen as a hegemonic discourse in the sense that it is dominant on the social, political and media fronts. This hegemonic discourse is challenged by counter-hegemony discourses – in the thesis expressed by two European far-right political parties. The counter-hegemonic discourses are seen as trying to ascribe their own meaning to the Ukrainian crisis and to what this means for Europe and its identity.

The empirical part of the thesis begins by the analysis of the official discourse – the representations of the self and the other within the official discourse will be ascertained. This will allow to investigate the identity formation – the way in which the self and the other is constructed in the light of the Ukrainian crisis – of the official discourse and, since identities and policies are linked, the implications of this identity on foreign policy. Establishing the official discourse will serve as a starting point to the following analysis and as a point for differentiation of the counter-hegemony discourses.

The official discourse will be based on the readings of the speeches, statements, and articles etc. of EUs political leaders – the faces representing the Union on a day to day basis. These people are the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Important fact in this respect is that within the time period under the view, each of these positions has gone through a change in the persona who is carrying the position. These institutions are chosen for the identification of official discourses as they carry the responsibility of representing the Union, their statements are widely depicted in the general public (media etc.) and they carry strong political impact and legitimacy. The sources used for the official discourse of the EU are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Textual material for the analysis of the official discourse on the events in Ukraine

EU:	President of the European Council President of the European Commission + Commissioner of Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
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The European Council is the institution that sets the general policy directions of the EU but it is not a legislative institution. It comprises of the heads of state or government of the member states. This institution is particularly important for the Unions foreign policy as the latter field is one of the policy areas in which the overall competence of the Union is the lowest. Foreign policy is regarded as a policy area that is more in the competence of individual member states. Thus the European Council plays an important role in setting the overall tone and course of the EU foreign policy. The President of the Council however is the representative of the institution and its public face communicating its decisions to the wider public.

The European Commission is the responsible with the composing of legislative propositions to the Parliament and the Council. It is also tasked with the commitment of protecting the general interests of the Union as a whole (and not the interests of individual member states). Thus this institution is especially important when it comes to policy proposals of the EU regarding the events in Ukraine. It is the commission who represents and defends individual policies adopted by the Union to the wider public. The president of the Commission is the face of this process. To complement the material key texts produced by the Commissioner of Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy will also be added. These texts include, for example, speeches made to the European Parliament regarding the events in Ukraine.

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy is also the Vice-President of the Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP) and is the official face of the European common foreign and security policy. The HR/VP is also the head of the European External Action Service (EEAS). As the face and main

coordinator of the common foreign policy, the HR/VP is often the first person to represent the Union in important foreign policy areas and is on the ground of where relative events are taking place (like Kiev) conducting EU diplomacy.

The official discourse is thus formed basing on the readings of the statements of the leaders of the three institutions described above – each of these institutions important in its own way. The official discourse is analysed through the construction of a timeline created by *key events* - situations in which important facts manifest themselves. These key events are: 1) the failure to sign the Association Agreement with Ukraine and the start of the Maidan protest in Ukraine; 2) the annexation of Crimea by Russia and 5) the beginning and escalation of an armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine. These key events are clearly visible in the official discourse as points in which changes to the discourse – especially in the construction of the other – appeared. The key events will be used to analyse the changes in discourses through time as each discourse responds to the events in the international arena.

Adding the oppositional discourse to the framework allows to analyse, as stated before, the hegemony of the official discourse. These counter-hegemony discourses are seen as expressing radically different views of the Ukrainian crisis and EUs role within it from those of the official discourse. These discourses are in constant struggle with the official discourse in trying ascribe meaning to events in their own way and thus they produce strongly different readings of facts and events.

The oppositional or counter-hegemony discourses will be analysed through the readings of texts produced by two European far-right political parties. Each of the parties will be analysed separately regarding their construction of the self and other and their views on the Ukrainian crisis in general. After which it will be analysed in which way these parties are discursively similar and where they differ. It is presumed that the counter-hegemony discourses of these parties are radically different from that of the official discourse, contesting the official discourse in many fields. The full sources selected for the collection of empirical data for counter-hegemonic discourses is listed in Table 2 on the next page.

Table 2: Textual material for the establishment of counterhegemonic discourses on the events in Ukraine – European Political Parties

Far-Right	<p>Jobbik in Hungary</p> <p>British National Party in the UK</p>
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The parties chosen are both far-right political parties that are active in Europe. The first of these parties – Jobbik – is based in Hungary and has its representatives in the European Parliament, showing that it is a considerable political force. British National Party (BNP) however is of lesser importance having little electoral success in recent years. Regardless the party is politically outspoken and voices its opinions loudly. These parties were selected for the analysis of the counter-hegemonic discourses because both parties expressed their views regarding the events in Ukraine in English and had easily accessible material that could be directly linked to their political views (not, for example, articles in which their leaders were simply quoted). In addition, since both parties are both far-right they would be able to complement each other (allowing to analyse the differences and similarities in far-right discourses).

Official discourse – choice and description of textual material

The official discourse of the EU regarding the events in Ukraine is based on extensive readings and re-readings of the official statements, speeches etc. made by the political leaders of the Union during the period of November 2013 – February 2015. This time period is chosen to reflect the evolution of the events in Ukraine with the beginning being the outcome of the Vilnius summit and the EU's response to it. The given time period is divided into three periods by *key events* that can be distinguished to have brought on changes in EU policies and minor changes in discourses. These periods are: a) the outcome of the Vilnius summit and the protests in Maidan; b) the annexation of Crimea and c) the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

The data collected carries 125 speeches, statements and letters etc. collected from the EU political leaders. Within this data there is 35 speeches and statements made by the previous HR/VP Catherine Ashton, 30 of them made by the previous President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy (out of which 16 are remarks, 7 speeches and 7 statements), 11 are made jointly by Herman Van Rompuy and the previous President of European Commission José Manuel Barroso (1 article, 1 joint letter, 8 joint statements, 1 joint message). 19 speeches belong to Barroso and 9 to Commissioner for Enlargement Štefan Füle. There is also 1 joint statement by Füle and Ashton. There are also 9 statements made by the current President of the European Council Donald Tusk (5 statements, 3 remarks, 1 speech) and 15 statements belonging to the current HR/VP Federica Mogherini (out of which 4 speeches given to the European Parliament).

All this material is collected through the screening of the vast amount of textual material published on EU web archives of the institution at hand. The published material is screened for its relevance to the events in Ukraine and only those speeches, statements etc. were selected that made explicit references to the events in Ukraine. The texts selected for analysis reflect the official EU political stance on Ukraine and thus carry EU identity articulations regarding the events in Ukraine and their foreign policy links. All texts chosen are easily accessible to the wider public and made by key EU politicians who carry the legitimacy and authority to speak on the matter. All texts chosen are available in English, though this may not, in all cases, be the original language in which they were produced since the French and German are also often used as EU working languages.

Analysis of the official discourse – the Maidan protests

In November 2013 the third Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius gathered the representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and the representatives of the European Union and the Heads of State or Government and representatives of its Member States to bring the Eastern Partnership (EaP) forwards by the signing of association agreements. Though much progress was made the failure to sign a long time negotiated Association agreement and DCFTA with Ukraine became

centre of attention for the media and politicians alike. Many felt this failure was the Unions fault and would compromise the future and credibility of the Eastern Partnership.

Ukraine's decision to postpone the signing was a disappointment for the Union. "*The Partnership is being tested by the decision of Ukraine not to sign the AA/DCFTA at this stage, but the European Union has come out stronger, because it did not compromise when faced with external pressure. It stood firm. It stood united /.../*" (Füle 10. December 2013). The external pressure referred here by Füle was Russia's economic and political pressure on Ukraine not to sign the agreements, which in the end came on top. Ukraine's signing of the AA/DCFTA would have not only led Ukraine closer to the EU but would have compromised Russia's desire to create an economic and political bloc named the Eurasian Union with Belarus and Kazakhstan. The sudden turn of president Yanukovich however made thousands of Ukrainians come out to the streets to protest in a way which received the world's attention. Ukraine not signing the agreements, is often referred to, by the official discourse as a challenge or a test to the EU. But, as demonstrated by the example above, the official discourse is attempting to reject the idea of it being a failure of the EU. Instead it is depicted as a manifestation of the strength and resilience of EU politics.

The Maidan protest were, from there on, depicted as a direct outcome and consequence of the Vilnius summit. "*The Vilnius Summit is continuing on the streets and squares of Kiev*" (Füle 10. December 2013). The events of Maidan are seen as "*an expression of the majority of the people in Ukraine in favour of European values – it was a "civilisation choice"*" (Van Rompuy 6. March and 7. March 2014) and puts Ukraine on the "*right side of history*" (Van Rompuy 7. March 2014). The Maidan movement was a "*democratic uprising*", "*a political and cultural shift*" and "*a clash of two political cultures*" powered by the "*yearning for a European way of life*" (Van Rompuy 8. April 2014). Thus the Maidan protest are shown in a positive light and as a change for the better for the Ukrainian people. Choosing democracy and civil rights is automatically tied with choosing the EU. The latter choice however is depicted as the right one, leaving the alternative, closer ties with Russia, in the negative realm.

From the previous examples it can be seen that the Maidan protests are presented by the official discourse in a manner designed to increase the legitimacy to the EU by making

it seem necessary and important. The union has, for a while now, suffered under a legitimacy crisis due to the severe problems with the Eurozone and the rise of anti-EU political parties within several EU member states like Greece, France and UK. It is also worrying that these, often extreme-left or –right parties gained a significant popularity before the 2014 EP elections and thus now hold a noticeable number of seats within the EP. These concerns and the way they are linked to the Ukrainian events can be illustrated by President Barroso’s speech:

“/.../ the populist forces, the extremist forces are negative forces that are today under a theme that is very often an anti-European theme, making the revival of all the demons of Europe, like extreme nationalism, like xenophobia, sometimes racism – these are negative values. It is important, in face of these challenges /.../ to have the courage to go out and fight /.../to explain /.../ why we care about Europe, why Europe is something we must cherish precisely to defend these values. And if sometimes in Europe some of us have doubts about how important these values are, just look at Ukraine. Those young people in the streets of Ukraine, with freezing temperatures, are writing the new narrative for Europe. Europe is not just the land of opportunity/.../Europe is the promise of hope and freedom. And I think the European Union has the right and the duty to stand by the people of Ukraine in this very difficult moment, because they are giving Europe one of the greatest contributions that can be given.”

(Barroso 9.December 2013)

The example above illustrates the way in which the events in Ukraine are strongly linked to the European idea and values and how these events are used to explain the necessity and *raison d'être* of the EU. Europe is connected to the values of freedom, democracy and rule of law. It also shows how EU's support for Ukraine is linked to these same values that the Union holds. It is seen as Europe's duty to help those who are striving towards freedom and democracy. In general the events in Ukraine are seen as to demonstrate that the values on which the EU was built upon are still relevant today, regardless of being taken for granted by so many in Europe enjoying the benefits the EU brings. The way in which the official discourse uses the events in Ukraine to gain

legitimacy for itself and show the necessity of the EU can also be illustrated by the following examples:

“The hundreds of thousands of pro-EU protesters we saw in Ukraine earlier this year show that the ideas underpinning the creation of the European Union are still very much alive and shared even outside its borders.”

(Füle 16. May 2014)

“Waving European flags and camping under open skies in freezing temperatures, the Ukrainian people demonstrated why Europe is important, what Europe means and what Europe stands for. The Ukrainian people stood for freedom, democracy and rule of law. These are precisely the values which are the core of the European Union. And, Europe will always stand with countries willing to engage in this path.”

(Barroso 12. September 2014)

The main criticism of the Maidan events aims to draw attention to the divided nature of Ukraine. It is often claimed that while the western part of Ukraine is pro-European, the east is more inclined towards Russia. Thus the Maidan protest cannot be seen to carry the will of the entire Ukrainian people and due to that it is not as legitimate. To this criticism Barroso states that *“it is not true that it is just in the Western part of Ukraine. No, most of the Ukrainians care about a future in peace and freedom”* (Barroso 9. December 2013). This shows that a future in peace and freedom is directly linked to a future closer to the EU. While it may be the case that everyone would want to live in peace and freedom, it may not automatically mean a desire to be closer to the EU.

Russia plays a crucial role in the discourse following the Vilnius Summit. This role is two folds. First, within this time period Russia is referred to as a common neighbour or *“strategic partner”* (Van Rompuy 28. January 2014) with whom common interests and goals can be found. Europe and Russia are seen as partners and this partnership is shown as something that is very desirable to the Union. And thus the EU reassures again and again the *“win-win”* nature of the association of the EU and Ukraine, where both Russia and the EU stand to gain. Ukraine’s stronger relations with the EU do not come at the expense of relations with Russia. The EU is ready to *“clarify”* this to the Russian

federation whilst “*fully respecting the sovereignty and independence*” of the shared neighbours and the bilateral nature of the Association Agreement and the DFTAs. (Van Rompuy & Barroso 25. & 27. November 2013; Füle 10. December 2013) The latter – respect for the sovereignty of the EaP countries – is a recurrent theme in the discourse. While recognizing Russia’s interests and concerns they are at the same time shown as of lesser priority than the principle of sovereignty.

The second view of Russia however is more critical representing Russia as “*dissuading the Ukrainian people from taking up new opportunities*” (Füle 20. December 2013) and as exposing external pressure on Ukraine depriving it of its right to decide for itself. Russia, in this aspect, is seen as the ‘other’ to the EU. While the Union respects the sovereignty of Ukraine and helps its people in their endeavours, Russia is doing the exact opposite and is not seen as to have Ukraine’s best interests at heart. Russia is indirectly accused of conducting geopolitical zero-sum games and secret agreements – “*The people of Ukraine, its independence and sovereignty should not become victims of geopolitical zero-sum games or secret agreements*” (Füle 10. December 2013)

Rising from this the official discourse often calls for a change in paradigms. For example: “*We need to change the perception that one region’s gain is another region’s pain. We in the European Union are against the mentality of block against block. We believe the European Union and Russia have all to gain from a cooperative attitude*” (Barroso 28. January 2014). It is shown that the fault in this lies with the Russian Federation while the EU is co-operative. This contrast can be illustrated by the following statement: “*EU and Russia coexist on the same continent and therefore must work together to ensure stability, prosperity, global security on basis of respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of our neighbours. Geopolitical rivalry has no place in this equation.*” (Füle 22. July 2014)

“*We denounce those who are trying to turn the Eastern Partnership into something it is not: a zero-sum game, a battle for the creation past centuries’ spheres of influence in the neighbourhood. This has never been the case. We will not adopt this mind-set.*”
(Füle 17. July 2014)

“The doctrine of limited sovereignty should belong in history books. And history belongs to those that embrace the future, not those who try to hijack it.”

(Barroso 13. May 2014)

This view of the EU rejecting all sorts of thinking in geopolitical terms or ideas of spheres of influence or blocs is also a recurrent theme in the official discourse. *“The outdated logic of the balance of powers is dangerous and wrong and we need to replace it with a logic of cooperation and dialogue.”* (Barroso 5. March 2014) This kind of thinking is seen as out dated and wrong, belonging to a time far gone. Europe is shown as not about rivalry or competition but about co-operation and mutual benefits. In this sense the EU is again differentiated from Russia with the latter being the one who is trying to recreate the past and the one viewing EU and its actions in the eastern neighbourhood in a competing way

As mentioned above, one of the often recurring themes in the official discourse is the right of Ukraine to make its own sovereign decisions. The EU will not force Ukraine to choose between itself and any other regional entity – Ukraine has the right to *“freely decide”* (Van Rompuy & Barroso 25. November 2013) and exercise its *“sovereign choice – a choice that should be free of external pressure and made in the interests of their own citizens – to take up the EU offer, which includes living up to necessary values and standards”*. (Van Rompuy & Barroso 27. November 2013) Thus it is portrayed that the EU is a neutral entity that is not interfering in or having influence over Ukraine. Meanwhile, as shown by previous statements, it is Russia who is exercising its influence and using unfair methods to forward its own interests in the region.

Association agreement in the official discourses is portrayed as *“a win-win”* (Van Rompuy & Barroso 25 & 27 November 2013); *“an attractive strategic vision”* (Van Rompuy & Barroso 27. November 2013), *“a compass”* (Van Rompuy 21. March 2014), *“a blueprint for political and economic reforms”* (Ashton 16. December 2013). Partnership with EU would bring *“long-term benefits”* (Van Rompuy & Barroso 27. November 2013; Van Rompuy 29. November 2013) – support for Ukraine’s economic situation, reform course, and modernization for a prosperous

and stable future for Ukraine. (Van Rompuy & Barroso 27. November 2013) Signing of which “*is a free choice neither imposed nor triggered by manipulation, provocation or violence*” and does not “*come for free*” with having “*strict criteria and benchmarks*” in place unlike that of Russia’s offering of unconditional loans. (Van Rompuy 8. April 2014) The conditional nature of the relationship between Ukraine and the EU is also something often expressed. Regardless of the situation in Ukraine, the Union is making no concessions and Ukraine is expected to fulfil the same criteria that every other country in the EaP. The EU is thus shown as firm and true to its established rules and procedures.

The official discourse describes the EU as “*a dynamic project*” (Van Rompuy 29. November 2013), “*a living entity*” (Van Rompuy 10. November 2014) which can only “*flourish as an integrated continent without dividing lines*” (Van Rompuy & Barroso 27. November 2013) “*European aspirations and European choice are not vain words. EU believes in close political ties and in the power of shared prosperity*” (Van Rompuy 29. November 2014). Europe is shown as something that is in constant development. This development means striving towards a Europe that has close political and economic ties thus bringing security and prosperity. The EU is the main engine in this process.

When the protests in Maidan erupted the official position called for restraint from violence and respect for fundamental freedoms. During this time period the situation was often referred to as “*a political stalemate*” (Füle 10. December 2013; Ashton 9. December 2013 & 16. December 2013) The Ukrainian authorities were seen to have a “*special responsibility*” for overcoming the “*stalemate*” (Van Rompuy 28. January 2014, Ashton 20. February 2014) and were on several occasions condemned for “*the unjustified use of excessive force*” (Van Rompuy 19. February 2014; Barroso 19. February 2014). Never the less the EU did not at any point call for the resignation of president Yanukovych – “*The president is the President*” (Ashton 21. February 2014). While the Union might have been unhappy about the president’s decision not to sign the AA/DCFTA, the official discourse shows no direct criticism in this aspect of the then president and government. From here on of the key words became “*de-escalation*” for which, until the annexation of Crimea, the responsible party were seen to be the Ukrainian officials. After the annexation of Crimea however the call and the responsibility for de-escalation is mostly aimed at Russia.

The EU is also seen to have “*a special responsibility*” to help Ukraine out of its current difficulties (Ashton 14. February 2014). Thus the EU’s role in the crisis is seen as to offer expert support for conducting reforms in Ukraine (Van Rompuy 19. February 2014); put to force targeted measures such as sanctions and visa restrictions against those responsible for violence (Van Rompuy 19. February 2014; Barroso 19. February 2014) and offer assistance to facilitate political dialogue (Barroso 19. February 2014). Dialogue is seen as the “*only democratic and peaceful way out of the crisis*” (Van Rompuy 21. February 2014, Ashton 27. January 2014). This however must be Ukrainian owned and led process (Ashton 16. February 2013) – “*Only one plan can work here: a Ukrainian plan agreed by Ukrainians and implemented swiftly*” (Füle 13. February 2014). In this aspect the Union is somewhat distancing itself from the process and putting the main responsibility on Ukraine. Regardless is shown as to have a onus in helping Ukraine due to firstly, the nature of the Maidan protests being an expression of the nation’s European aspirations, and secondly, due to nature of the Union itself: the values it adheres to and promises of a better live it can give.

Even though EU’s unity in dealing with the Ukrainian crisis is often mentioned, its true existence can be questioned, since occasionally, steps are not taken by the EU institutions but are coordinated by member states such as France, Germany and Poland. An example would be the facilitation of the agreement between the opposition party leaders and President Yanukovych (Ashton 21. February 2014).

There is also a hint for the European membership perspective for Ukraine in the official discourse, regardless of the so called “enlargement fatigue”. For example: “*We think, in the longer-term perspective, that this country looks for the same values that I, and the European Union, hold dear: the freedom of assembly, the basic human rights that people should have*” (Ashton 11. December 2013). Similar stance is taken by Barroso: “*/.../ our offer of political association and economic integration remains on the table, and does not constitute the final goal in our cooperation*” (Barroso 19. February 2014) and is also repeated by Füle “*the AA7DCFTA does not constitute the final goal in EU-Ukraine cooperation.*” (Füle 25. April 2014) Ukraine is seen as a potential member to the EU and thus is seen as a European country, sharing the values and principles on which the union is built. In this sense Ukraine is not an ‘other’ to the Union. This however on the backdrop that the EU expects Ukraine to fill the conditions set to it and share the

common values and objectives. (Van Rompuy & Barroso 25. & 27. November 2013)
These common values are democracy, rule of law, cooperation, multi-party system, and respect for fundamental freedoms (Van Rompuy & Barroso 27. November 2013).

On the 22nd of February, after the violence in the Madan square gained new dimensions, the Ukrainian parliament decided that president Yanukovich was incapable of fulfilling his duties and he was thus removed from power. However this was not touched upon by the official discourse. There is no mention of EUs stance on these events – there is no discussion on its legality, neither is there condemnation of it as illegitimate. It is presumable that the EU could not officially support the removal of an elected president from his position. Never the less, neither could it condemn it afterwards since that would go against other aspects within the discourse. The removal of Yanukovich brought with it the escalation of tensions and a worsening of the whole situation.

Analysis of the official discourse: Annexation of Crimea

The crisis in Crimea began in the February of 2013 and escalated from there on. By the end of February (the 28th) Russian military forces entered the peninsula and gained control over the area. Less than a week later Crimea joined the Russian Federation. From here on the official discourse adopted a more negative perception of Russia. While previously, Russia was seen as a partner for the EU, Russia's actions in Crimea made a partnership difficult.

Russia's actions in Crimea are portrayed repeatedly as aggression, a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and a threat to European security and international order. The language used became harsh and was directed directly at Russia (not ambiguously). This is a much stronger language used regarding Russia from that of the one depicted before the events in Crimea – thus the annexation of Crimea constitutes a *key event* in which the changes in the discourse can clearly be identified. After this key event the negative 'othering' of Russia intensified.

The EU is seen to have a "*special responsibility for peace, stability and prosperity*" in the European continent (Van Rompuy 6. March 2014). The events in Crimea

“reminded us, us that principles we cherish, like peace, cannot be taken for granted” (Barroso 5. March 2014) Europe needs to be united and joint effort needs to be made by the EU institutions and the member states in this dangerous world (Van Rompuy 7. March 2014). The annexation of Crimea touches on the chords of the European identity, as the EU was created just for this reason – to prevent such things happening in Europe. *“What is happening to the East of the European Union, in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine /.../ threatens the very security of Europe internally and the very idea of what Europe stands for internationally.”* (Barroso 21. September 2014)

Barroso also states that *“Recent events from Afghanistan to Africa and even more recently Ukraine have shown that for the sake of its own stability and security, Europe has to pay attention to old “frozen conflicts” and potential new flashpoints.”* (Barroso 4. March 2014). *“Crisis around Ukraine”* is seen as a *“matter of great concern for peace and security on the European Continent, reviving memories of a history which we thought was over”* (Van Rompuy 8. April 2014). The annexation of Crimea *“triggered the gravest threat to the European security order in decades”* (Van Rompuy 25. September 2014) being a *“situation without precedent with borders disregarded for the first time since the Second World War”* (Van Rompuy 10. October 2014).

From the previous two paragraphs three conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the Crimean events are also (like the events on the Maidan), in a way, shown as to give purpose to existence of the EU. Europe is meant to stand for peace in the continent, as it was created for, and this task should not be taken for granted, the peace enjoyed in Europe should not be taken for granted. Peace is a result of a unified Europe. Secondly, the annexation of Crimea is seen as a grave threat to European security as it is a revival of the time when Europe was in war. The annexation of Crimea is linked to WWII and thus to the Austrian Anschluss conducted by Hitler in the beginning of the war. The annexation is seen as a potential spark to a large scale war in EU neighbourhood, a war that will affect the entire continent. And thirdly, from the previous, the annexation of Crimea is linked to the European identity itself as peace in Europe is at the very heart of what Europe stands for.

The first policy outcome was a financial package of support for Ukraine – which, combined, would bring overall support of at least 11 billion euros within the next couple

of years from both the EU budget and from EU based international financial institutions. This policy was backed by saying that the “*international community should mobilise to help Ukraine stabilise its economic and financial situation which will in turn also contribute to political and social peace./.../ The situation in Ukraine is a test of our capability and resolve to stabilise our neighbourhood and to provide new opportunities to many, not just a few. We need to be up to this challenge.*” (Barroso 5. March 2014) “*This is certainly the most serious situation we are facing in the European continent in many years in terms of stability and threats to peace. We need to show our citizens and the people of Ukraine that we are up to this task.*” (Barroso 6. March 2014) Thus measures adopted in the wake of the escalation of the crisis in Ukraine are backed by their promises of bringing stability and maintaining peace in the region. It is also shown as a test for the Union and its unity – a test to which Europe must rise to so as to prove to the EU citizens that the Union is capable and relevant.

As the situation in Crimea did not improve the EU adopted a policy of implementing sanctions in three stages. Sanctions are “*not a question of retaliation*” or “*a goal in themselves*” but a “*foreign policy tool*” and a “*means to end*”. (Van Rompuy 20. March 2014) The hint here is that EU does not want to use sanctions but sees it as the only solution to stop Russian action against Ukraine. Regardless of being aware of the negative aspects that sanctions can have on EU economies, the EU did not “*relent*” since the “*stability of the European house itself was at stake*”. (Van Rompuy 25. September 2014)

The political actions taken by the EU regarding Ukraine are backed by claims of EU having a special responsibility. This responsibility can be seen to rise from both the fact that Ukraine is an immediate neighbour (Barroso 5. June 2014) and of the fact that the events in Ukraine began by the Ukrainian people demonstrating their desire to have closer relations to the EU. Barroso even states that the EU owes it to the people of Ukraine to support it. (Barroso 12. September 2014)

As the events unfolded the status of Russia changed. Van Rompuy called for the need to “*rethink EU-Russia relationship*” with Russia “*trying to restore a foregone world that will never come back*” (Van Rompuy 8. April 2014) Nevertheless the EU reiterated its willingness to “*revise the sanctions provided there is tangible progress*” – *trust can be*

rebuilt if promises are kept.” (Van Rompuy 25. September 2014) So all in all things can go back to normal if the Russian side meets the demands set by the Union.

The referendum held in Crimea after the Russian military troops took the peninsula over is often referred by the EU official discourse as “*so-called referendum*” and as “*illegal under the constitution of Ukraine and under international law*” (Ashton 17. March 2014). The referenda in Crimea is “*illegitimate and not credible*” and a “*way to stir up division among Ukraine’s communities*” (Van Rompuy 12. May 2014). From here on the policy of non-recognition, neither of the annexation nor the referendum, became integrated in the EU narrative. (Barroso 14. May 2014, Ashton 23. June 2014)

Before the European council meeting of 20/21 March of 2014 the language used, when talking about Russia’s actions in Crimea, was vaguer – calling it an unprovoked or illegal violation or as undermining towards Ukraine’s territorial integrity. However after the meeting Herman Van Rompuy, for the first time, called it an “*annexation*” and stating that “*there is no place for the use of force and coercion to change borders on the European continent in the 21st century*”. (Van Rompuy 20. March 2014) The first time Russia’s actions were described as an annexation by Catherine Ashton was at 3. of April 2014 at her speech to the European Parliament in the debate on foreign and defence policy.

Analysis of the official discourse: Armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine

The tensions in Ukraine evolved towards an armed conflict in March-April 2014 when armed individuals began seizing government buildings etc. in Eastern Ukraine. In the EU discourse these individuals were seen as separatist or separatist groups (Ashton 6. May 2014) on whom Russia was seen as to have considerable influence on and whose illegal actions are supported by “*strong Russian State sponsored nationalist propaganda*” (Barroso 29. July 2014). From here on the events are mostly described as a “*downward spiral*” or a “*spiral of violence*” (Ashton 23. June 2014) These groups were seen to be getting weapons and other equipment from the Russian boarder. However, Russia was not directly accused of arming them and sending its’ military troops to Ukraine. Instead Russia was seen as to allow the movement of people and weapons but not as directly

contributing to it. The end of August brought about a change and the “*presence and actions of Russian armed forces on Ukrainian soil*” (Van Rompuy 31. August 2014) and “*aggression against Ukraine by regular Russian military forces*” (Ashton 30. August 2014) is noted.

With the annexation of Crimea and the escalation of violence in the Eastern Ukraine, Russia’s “other” status was changed to a more threatening one by being the destabilizer of Ukraine and breaker of international law and thus contributor to war and conflict on the continent. Russia is “*contributing to the violence in the eastern regions*” and needs to “*contribute actively to de-escalation*” by “*using its leverage on the armed separatists*”, “*withdrawing its troops from the boarder*” and “*preventing the crossing of arms and weapons into Ukraine*”. (Van Rompuy 4. June 2014) A few examples of negative ‘othering’ of Russia:

“We are faced with the most serious crisis since 1945 – no question about that. We are witnessing a serious and dangerous attempt to dissuade the Ukrainian people from taking up new opportunities and the international community from helping to defend their freedom of choice. The belief that military force, economic coercion and destabilising antics will force or even convince us to drop our policies, values and principles, and accept the logic of the spheres of influence, expose ones fear for democratic development. /.../ The people of Ukraine, its independence and sovereignty should not become victims of geopolitical zero-sum games. This is not how politics is conducted in the 21st century.”

(Füle 25. April 2014)

“And these very days we have been sparing no effort to address what I believe is the biggest threat to Europe’s stability and security since the fall of the Berlin Wall: the situation in Ukraine. The current events started with the people of Ukraine expressing a clear wish to take their future into their own hands and come closer to the EU through an agreement which would give them political association and economic integration. Unfortunately. Instead of accepting the sovereign choices of Ukraine, Russia decided to interfere, to destabilize, and to occupy part of the territory of a neighbouring country in a

gesture that we hoped was long buried in history books. /.../ It is not just an issue for Europe, the US or the G7 group. It should concern the rest of the world as well, as it is a direct threat to international law and to international peace”

(Barroso 1. May 2014)

“The very essence of the problem was that Russia did not accept the sovereign choices of an independent neighbouring country because it had other designs for it. It resorted first to political and economic bullying, and then to outright aggression. We could simply not accept this behaviour. This would mean the explicit return of spheres of influence or limited sovereignty to the European continent.”

(Barroso 21. September 2014)

From the examples above, the following can be deduced. The events in Eastern Ukraine are compared to the WWII and the direct party responsible for them is seen to be Russia. The events are viewed as a grave threat to security and peace in not only Europe but the entire world. Ukraine is shown as the casualty of Russia’s actions while Russia is seen as aggressive and out for its own personal agenda stopping at nothing to achieve its geopolitical goals. Thus Russia is painted as disrespecting international laws, a destabilizer and a very strong negative ‘other’ to the EU. Meanwhile the EU is shown as to take a stand against this unacceptable behaviour and as a protector of peace, stability, international law and the interests of the Ukrainian people.

Within this armed conflict Van Rompuy states that *“the Ukrainian government has an obligation and a duty to restore order within its borders”* thus being recognized as having legitimacy to use force – *“Ukraine has the right to defend its territorial integrity.”* (Ashton 6. May 2014, Barroso 12. September 2014). To the EU there is *“no doubt that the armed fighters are terrorising and disrupting /.../ and are enjoying external support”*. *“Russia bears primary responsibility”*. (Van Rompuy 14. June 2014) Cease-fires that have been set to place are respected by Ukrainian authorities but have not ended the military hostilities, meaning that it is the rebels’ side who fails to keep them. (Van Rompuy 27. June 2014)

Regardless of Russia's actions, the EU kept the line that it isn't too late for Russia to co-operate and that all measures adopted by the EU (notably the sanctions and restrictions) are reversible and scalable. Thus the EU's message to Russia was "*to engage, to implement its part of the Geneva statement, to repeal the mandate of the Federation Council to use force on Ukrainian soil and to act as a responsible stakeholder or our community of nations.*" (Barroso 13. May 2014) "*Russia needs to choose if it wants to be a strategic partner or a strategic rival. If Russia chooses the latter path, to be a rival, we would all collectively have to take the political, economic and security consequences.*" (Barroso 12. September 2014)

As a result of Russia's actions the EU increased its' sanctions and restrictions towards Russia and adopted "*additional restrictive measures targeting sectorial cooperation and exchanges with Russian Federation.*" In addition a "*reassessment of the Russia EU bilateral cooperation with a view reducing the level of cooperation*" was adopted. The aim of these measures is "*bringing Russia to the conclusion that it is better to have a positive, constructive relation with Ukraine and the EU.*" (Barroso 12. September 2014) "*If the EU had not reacted with firmness, and in close partnership with the United States and our G/ partners, what would be at risk would not just be Ukraine's independence but the sustainability and the credibility of a multilateral order based on values, equality and the rule of law.*" (Barroso 21. September 2014)

Even though this is what the EU would want, it cannot pursue the important positive agenda of increased cooperation and exchanges with Russia "*when Crimea is illegally annexed, when the Russian Federation supports armed revolt in Eastern Ukraine, when the violence unleashed kills innocent civilians. /.../ Russia will find itself increasingly isolated by its own actions.*" (Barroso & Van Rompuy 29. July 2014)

Official discourse: Conclusions

The events in Ukraine are, by the official discourse, shown in a light that offers legitimacy to an EU in crisis. The Maidan protests are clearly linked to European values and way of life – stating that these are reasons for which the people of Ukraine came to the streets for. Through this the official discourse provides a reason for the existence of

the Union. The values on which EU is founded upon are shown as relevant and desirable, thus making the Union itself still relevant. The same theme of legitimizing the Union continues as the events in Ukraine escalated. After the annexation of Crimea and with the beginning of an armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, the idea and necessity of a unified Europe is shown through linking it to peace and stability in Europe. While Europeans themselves may take the values EU stands for and the benefits, such as peace and prosperity, it provides for granted, they are seen as relevant and desirable outside of the borders of the Union thus legitimizing the idea and existence of the EU.

The European Union is depicted through the values it stands for, such as peace, democracy and rule of law, and through the benefits it provides, such as economic stability and prosperity. European identity is created through a differentiation from Russia, thus Russia is depicted as the main, mostly negative, 'other'. The 'degree of otherness' did vary and changed as the events in Ukraine unfolded. In the beginning, Russia was viewed as both a partner and as someone viewing the Eastern neighbourhood in a dated manner – through the logic of spheres of influence. The EU however is shown as ready to co-operate with Russia and clarify the true nature of the EaP and AA/DCFTA. While not being shown in a fully positive light, Russia is not seen as an opponent. However, the annexation of Crimea by Russia drastically changed the way in which Russia is painted by the official discourse. From there on Russia became seen as violent and aggressive, stopping at nothing to achieve its own interests. As the conflict in Eastern Ukraine gained momentum, Russia's imaging as negative and threatening became even stronger.

Another often reoccurring aspect of the official discourse is the denial of any possibility of the motivation and logic on what Russia insists upon such as the logic of spheres of influence and the balance-of-power. For the EU, these notions are dated and do not belong in the 21st century but rather to the Cold War era. Russia is seen to be conducting geopolitical zero-sum games in the name of its right to have spheres of influence in its neighbourhood – the post-soviet states. The EU however is shown to want to co-operate towards a win-win solution for both the Union and Russia in their shared neighbourhood.

Oppositional discourses

Jobbik of Hungary

The Jobbik – Movement for a Better Hungary is, in its own view, a far-right principled, conservative and radically patriotic Christian party founded in 2003. Its fundamental purpose is protecting Hungarian values and interests. Jobbik is the third largest party in Hungary and at the 2014 European parliamentary elections, Jobbik won 3 seats out of a total of 21 with nearly 15% of the votes.³ The party's political leadership consists of: Gábor Vona (Chairman), Tamás Sneider (vice-president) and Márton Gyöngyösi (in charge of foreign affairs). The party is represented in the European Parliament by: Béla Kovács, Zoltán Balczó and Krisztina Morvai.⁴

Jobbik was chosen as one of the parties for the analysis of the counter-hegemony discourses within Europe because, firstly, Jobbik is a far-right anti-EU political party and thus expressing a counter-hegemonic discourse could be expected, and secondly, Jobbik was one of the few parties to express their views on their website and on social media in English. The analysis of the far-right anti-hegemony discourse of the Jobbik party in Hungary consists of 24 articles published on their website that make clear representations of the Ukrainian events and carry the statements of their political leaders. However due to the fact that several of these articles were published without a date, the referencing style within this chapter will be a little different. This will also affect the temporal differentiation of the evolution of the discourse. However is not of grave concern since the material collected is of lesser volume than the material collected for the official discourse and similar distinction on a temporal scale cannot be made. It is also important to note that, when in the case of the official discourses there were several institutions voicing opinions at the same time on the same issues, Jobbik speaks with a single voice. Thus one cannot expect to find an equal amount of empirical material. However each texts used voices clear self/other and identity dimensions.

³Jobbik homepage; http://www.jobbik.com/short_summary_about_jobbik; last accessed: 15.April 2015

⁴Jobbik homepage; <http://www.jobbik.com/meps>; last accessed: 15.April 2015

Analysis of the Jobbik discourse

The political leaders of Jobbik express – as was to be expected – a fundamentally different view of the events in Ukraine from that of the official discourse of the EU. According to Jobbik’s discursive approach the Maidan protests can be attributed to Western outside influence – mostly that of the US – to “*gain control over the Eurasian continent*”. The West had been “*violating the sovereignty of Ukraine for a long time by various means of political arm twisting*” and was supporting “*an extremist and explicitly chauvinistic opposition*” in Ukraine. (14) Jobbik’s official position and general view of the Ukrainian events can be generalized by the following:

“What happened in Ukraine was a coup d’état resulting in a regime change backed by the west and assisted by the US intelligence service. Let me quote Victoria Nuland who admitted that the US spent 5 billion dollars on stirring up and escalating the Maidan Square demonstrations and then she dictated a list to US ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt with the names the US wants to see in the new government of Ukraine.”

Márton Gyöngyösi (16)

The events in Ukraine are a “*geopolitical conflict*” in which “*Russia and the United States are waging a half cold, half hot war.*” (1) The Jobbik rhetoric sees a “*geopolitical game behind the Ukrainian armed conflict*” (7) between United States and Russia. This is not to “*necessarily mean an EU-Russia or a NATO-Russia conflict.*”(7) “*The war in Ukraine isn’t even fought by Russia and the Ukraine, it’s just the political game of the great powers.*” (15)

All in all the discourse portrays US as the main culprit and negative other (much unlike the official discourse). The American elite is accused of having “*lost their sense of reality*” and of trying to “*Americanize the whole world*”.(12) To Jobbik’s US is “*the worlds’ only current superpower*” (12) which has its foreign policy influenced by “*Neoconservatives, whose zeal to implement a monopolar world order puts any religious fanatic into shame*”.(12) “*The violent expansion and monopoly of the liberal political, economic and cultural value system of the United States*” is summed up by the phrase

“Neocon Jihad”, which is fought not only with weapons, but through “covert means” such as “waving the banners of liberty and democracy”, “placing the nation under the yoke of a loyal political elite”, “the propaganda machine of western media” and “breaking the backbone of the country’s economy.” (12) This is exactly what is seen to be taking place in Ukraine right now. The overall geopolitical interest of the US is seen to be the desire “to reach as far as the Russian border by annexing, or to use the politically correct term, by “integrating” the entire territory of Ukraine.” (20)

When in the official discourse the ties and co-operations between the EU and US are seen as a positive thing and a strength, the Jobbik discourse sees it as a bad thing through which the US imposes influence over the European nations. The US foreign policy is seen as trying to *“turn Russia against the EU”*. (2) The whole situation is described to be orchestrated by and only in the interests of the US. This view can be illustrated by:

“The destruction and market loss of companies producing goods for and the industries depending upon the Russian market as well as the enfeeblement of the multi-polar diplomacy of the EU countries serve but one interest: that of the United States of America. There is no European country that could profit from a conflict potentially instigated by the USA.” (5)

“The only party to benefit from the further intensification of the Russia-Ukraine crisis is the USA, since they could weaken Europe and Russia at the same time.” (12)

The EU is depicted as *“an institutionalized and bureaucratic structure used for the total economic deprivation and colonization of our country and the whole region”* (12) with leaders who have *“mostly been passive observers of the ongoing events.”* (17) The EU is used by the West to achieve its’ own goals and ambitions as illustrated by:

“Ukrainian crisis revealed Brussels’ lack of an independent foreign policy agenda and how exposed the EU was to the United States in terms of security, since the US treats our continent as a “geostrategic base.” (20)

The reason for the *“dumb and self-destructive”* behaviour of the European leaders, Gyöngyösi believes, is that *“the US blackmails the European elite”* with the collected

date from wire-taps that were used on its allies. (12) It is also seen irresponsible to offer Ukraine *“the hope of EU and NATO membership.”* (12) Jobbik, similarly to the official discourse, rejects the zero-sum logic stating that: *“the choice between East and West must not be an ‘either-or’ issue /.../ it must be based on an ‘East-AND-West approach.’*”(16) But it is the West in this regard making Ukraine choose between itself and Russia.

The West is accused of *“indifference”, “double standards”* and of *“conspiratorial silence”* towards the aggression showed by the Ukrainian army and the mass graves found in Donetsk. (6) The West is also called *“hypocritical to present Russia, who has been holding back in spite of their fears for the Russian minority in Ukraine, as the main culprit.”* (8)

NATO has adopted an *“openly anti-Russian policy”* (11) and its actions in the Eastern European region are seen as a provocation and thus a justification for Russia’s foreign policy. NATO’s *“irresponsible, aggressive and provocative policies have brought on the Ukrainian crisis”* and NATO is seen to *“keep intensifying the conflict with Russia /.../ all in an effort to promote US geopolitical interests.”*(11) *“NATO, the military-defence dimension of Euro-Atlantism, has degraded Hungary and the whole of Central-Eastern Europe into a toll of Western, and especially American geopolitical interests.”*(13)

Ukraine, or more its’ government is also shown in a negative light. As previously mentioned, the Ukrainian crisis is depicted as Western orchestrated. Ukraine itself is described as having been a highly unstable state ever since its establishment – *“a time bomb ticking away”*. (12) The current crisis in Ukraine is linked to the Orange revolution of 2004-2005. The latter is also seen as *“dress rehearsal”* for the West of the events going on right now. (12) The removal of Yanukovych from power is called a *“Coup d’état”* that was helped to be executed by the *“financial, media and intelligence support of the west”* for the crime of *“refusing to sign the EU Association Agreement designed to colonize his homeland.”* (12)

Jobbik considers the Ukrainian government *“illegitimate”* (8), *“chauvinistic”, “anti-Russian”* and *“anti-minority”*.”(9) The government is seen as to *“incite hatred among its own people, destroying and devastating everything in the interests of securing its own hold on power”* (17) The illegitimacy of the government is seen to arise from two

aspects. First, by the previously mentioned opinion of the government being placed to power by a US orchestrated coup. The second aspect from which the illegitimacy of the government rises is the use of military forces in the Eastern Ukraine.

“By attacking its own citizens with armed forces, the Kiev Government has forfeited the trust and loyalty of the local Russian community with Ukrainian citizenship. /.../ Kiev has violated the fundamental rules of democracy by waging war on its own citizens.”(4)

Within this discursive framework the aggressor isn't Russia but the Ukrainian government, who has begun a war against its own people and the West, with its' *“aggressive and irresponsible Euro-Atlantic war policy.”* (10) Jobbik considers the separatist forces fighting in the Eastern Ukraine *“rebel forces fighting for their freedom”* and thus they are referred to as *“freedom fighters.”*(17) The people fighting in Donetsk and Lugansk are *“dedicated patriots and freedom fighters, who confronted the aggression of the Ukrainian central power”* and not terrorists. (20) In addition to the accusation of *“unjustified aggression”* the Ukrainian leaders are also accused with mass graves being found on the areas taken over from them by the separatists, raising *“suspicion of crimes against humanity similar to the ones committed in the Balkan wars in the 1990s”* (6) and thus accused of genocide.(10)

Russia meanwhile is depicted more positively – as an *“atomic power”*, *“an example of enforcing one's own interests”* and as *“an ally”*. (9) Russia is seen as *“calm and responsible”* (20) with only acting in *“response to Western provocations.”* (12) Russia's' foreign policy through the eyes of Jobbik is shown by the following:

“Ever since the cold war, all they'd been asking for is to have a security zone (from the aspect of Russian security), which is free of CIA and NATO activity. /.../ what Russia obviously sees is that the West has aggressively penetrated its sphere of influence and is expanding there, overruling agreements made at the end of the cold war.”(16)

The latter statement justifies Russia's policy of spheres of influence while the West having spheres of influence is depicted negatively. Russia having a sphere of influence is

accepted and normalized, while the West expanding its own is not. The latter is illustrated by the following example:

“Russia obviously sees is that the West has aggressively penetrated its sphere of influence and is expanding there.” (16)

Regarding the annexation of Crimea Jobbiks leader Gyöngyösi stated that *“Russia was helping her own ethnic minority since the Crimean peninsula is predominantly populated by Russians.”*(3) Russia is seen as a protector of minority rights and a great example and an ally in that department. *“Russia is fighting for the rights of ethnic minorities living in Ukraine, so they also keep the rights of the Hungarian minority of the Lower Carpathians on the agenda.”*(3) Russia’s actions in Ukraine are understood and defended:

“As soon as the forces that had overthrown Viktor Yanukovych with Western assistance came into power, they immediately began voicing chauvinistic, anti-Russian, anti-minority and anti-Hungarian opinions; no wonder that Russia intervened in order to protect the Russian-speaking community.”(9)

In response to the statements, also voiced by the official discourse, regarding Russia’s military involvement in Eastern Ukraine Gyöngyösi finds them *“absurd allegations”* by the NATO, who *“cannot present credible evidence.”*(5) In the eyes of Jobbik, it is the US, who has military personnel fighting in Ukraine: *“thousands of mercenaries organized by the American Blackwater/Academi Company are fighting under Ukrainian banners”*. (12) So it would appear that it is a “pot calling the kettle black” type of situation.

Jobbik’s discourse also, similarly to the official one, notes the importance of information in today’s world. However when EU official discourse accused Russia of supporting the separatists with propagandist measures, Jobbik accuses the western media of silencing issues not supporting the Western presentation of events (10) and calls the western media *“unilateral, anti-Russian”*(12) and a *“propaganda machine”*(12).

Jobbik also takes a drastically different view regarding the Crimean referendum: *“Jobbik considers the Crimean vote as a triumph of a community’s self-determination. /.../ referendum was legitimate and valid, even though both the Ukrainian government*

and Russia exercised some pressure on the voting. /.../ the numbers spoke for themselves: nearly all local citizens want to belong to Russia. The West only stands for the self-determination of a community it is in the interest of the West.”(3) As an example of the last statement Kosovo is often used: *“It was double standards if Crimea was not allowed to have the self-government that Kosovo had been granted.”*(14) Thus the following position is adopted:

“If we respect the values of democracy, we cannot apply any double standards. Respecting democracy, people’s decisions and their right for self-governance in certain cases but not others is an odd and questionable practice.” (16)

The same attitude is adopted regarding the referendums hosted in the Donetsk and Lugansk area during the armed conflict in the Eastern region of Ukraine. *“Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary respects the elections held in the Donetsk and Lugansk Oblast as well as their outcome, even though the circumstances of voting were not ideal due to the armed conflict that had been going on for half a year. /.../ basic requirement of democracy was met, i.e that citizens must be allowed to make an independent decision about their own future.”* (4)

Another very different viewpoint between the official and the Jobbik discourse is the understanding of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. While the official discourse maintains the position of Ukraine being a sovereign country that’s territorial integrity must be respected, Jobbik states, that: *“The Ukrainian government itself has been detrimental to the unity of its own country. Any government using its armed forced to attack its own citizens loses its legitimacy, thus condemning the country to an inevitable disintegration.”*(10) And thus the territorial integrity of Ukraine is *“nothing but an illusion.”*(20)

Although these two discourses previously described are very different in their views they share quite a few policies. Just as the official discourse the Jobbik discourse calls for the need to resolve the situation with talk, to conduct investigations over the crimes committed in Ukraine and decentralization. However Jobbik also calls for a federal Ukraine:

“Firstly, we need to sit down and talk about the situation /.../ An impartial investigation of the tragedies of the past year should be conducted and responsibility should be taken by all sides for their wrongdoings /.../ At this point in time also decentralization, federalization of Ukraine should be considered.” (13)

However the opinion on policy matters differs between the discourses in regards the sanctions towards Russia. As in Jobbik’s discourse the EU stands nothing to gain from damaged relations with Russia and stands to lose economically from the sanctions adopted. Meanwhile the US wins. (5) In addition Jobbik states that: *“anti-Russia sanctions were not the appropriate measures in terms of solving the Ukrainian crisis.”* (19)

The Hungarian minority of *“150 thousand Hungarians in the Lower Carpathians”* in Ukraine is the centre of Jobbik’s policy concerns. It is both the reason for which Jobbik is so strongly invested in the Ukrainian crisis and its protection is also the policy priority for Jobbik and the *“aspects of cooperation with the EU and the economy can only come second”*. (18)

British National Party

The second source for counter-hegemony discourses in Europe is a UK based far-right political party The British National Party (BNP). Politically BNP sees itself as a nationalist party promoting the interests of the people.⁵ It opposes migration to the UK and is conservative in its views. The party has become a rather marginal political force in the recent years having experienced very little electoral success. Nevertheless the party discourse was selected for analysis due to its close ties to the Jobbik movement and the radically different discourse and the radically divergent construction of events in Ukraine it embodies from that of the official discourse. BNP discourse is characterized by an emotional rhetoric that carries with it strong judgements and calls for actions. The analysis of the BNP discourse consists of the reading of 27 texts (mostly articles)

⁵ <http://www.bnp.org.uk/introduction-0>

published and found on their website. These texts were scanned to make clear us vs them identifications and provide obvious assessments of the situation in Ukraine.

Analysis of the British National Party discourse

Similarly to Jobbik, the BNP sees the events in Ukraine as orchestrated by the use of foreign funds and intelligence, mainly the US, to advance the interests of the western elites. However, differently from Jobbik, the BNP is much more critical as to the motivators for this. The main beneficiaries of the Maidan and the subsequent events are named to be the *globalist elites* who are trying to create a *new world order*. This new world order would be a totalitarian *one world government* with the population serving the elites as slaves. The globalist elites are seen to both hate and fear Putin who is depicted as the only man that they can't beat, who can see through their agenda and who stand for the sovereignty of Russia. Due to this the globalist elite is using Ukraine to weaken Russia (2).

In this light Putin is shown as a hero, a saviour, a protector (1) who cares for his people. Putin is characterised as being wise, strong, steady, cautious and assured in trying to protect his people. (5; 12) All in all he is seen as a positive role model. The US president is at the same time referred to by his middle name – Hussein – (10) (11) which is an attempt to link him to the Muslim world and make him appear more negative.

As previously mentioned, the BNP sees the Maidan protests as organised by foreign elites, especially the US, to achieve their own goals. The Maidan events are not seen as a popular peoples uprising (13) – *we in the west have been fed the usual neo-con rubbish that the Ukrainian people are fighting for freedom, democracy and human rights* (3)– but as orchestrated and led by foreign forces to oppose Russia. The motivation seen behind US policy of organizing and supporting Maidan is its desire to weaken Russia and oppose Putin. Those people, who sincerely wished for changes in Ukraine are used by the foreign forces to achieve their own means. (2) (3) The Maidan uprising is portrayed as a military operation that is well organized and the Maidan square is compared to a war scene: */.../ The centre of Kiev resembles a front. This is an area which is completely outside the*

jurisdiction of the state. /.../ (2) The removal of Yanukovych from power is, as in the Jobbik discourse, seen as a coup and illegal. (6)

Regarding the annexation of Crimea, the BNP discourse declares that Russia did not invade Ukraine but had every right to protect its interests and assets. (6) Russia is even referred to as Mother Country for Ukraine (3) and Crimea simply as being given away by an incompetent Nikita Khrushchev to Ukraine as a gift (7). The self-declaration of Crimea is, once again, compared to Kosovo, and the western leaders are seen to be hypocrites (7). In February 2014, before the annexation of Crimea and before the beginning of the fighting in Eastern Ukraine, the BNP, remarks the high possibility of Ukraine splitting up. */.../ already it looks likely that the Russian parts of the Ukraine in the south and in the east will merge back into the Mother Country. /.../ (3)*

The conflict in Eastern Ukraine is viewed as a *civil war*. Unlike of the official discourse, which doesn't mention war in the least bit but uses wording like *crisis* or *conflict* instead. This civil war is fought by the Ukrainian illegitimate government against its own people to achieve the interests of the US. While in the eyes of the official discourse, the Ukrainian government's actions in the eastern part of Ukraine are an attempt to restore order and law in the region and defend its unity. Thus the official discourse depicts the people involved in the military actions in the region as separatists, both oppositional discourses name them as freedom fighters or – especially in the case of BNP – self-defence groups (17).

The downing of flight MH17 is fully blamed on the western governments, who in their organized the coup in Ukraine in the first place. This coup allowed the rise to power of the current government which, by its actions against the Russian minority, created the civil war. BNP plays with the identity of the culprit who actually shot the plane down. The reader is lead to believe that BNP is giving objective facts by depicting that both the Ukrainian military forces and the rebels might be at fault. However the reader is pushed more towards blaming the official government forces for the action with statements like: */.../it is very unlikely that their⁶pinned down and retreating bands would have had had the opportunity to capture such and advanced system./.../* Regardless of this, the plain

⁶ Here meant: the ethnic Russian rebels

being shot down by the separatist would have been a tragic case of mistaken identity, while the official forces would have shot the plane down due to incompetence. (19)

The main other to which BNP contrasts itself is the globalist elites / Zionists / neo-conservatives (similarly to Jobbik) who are mainly operating on the international politics arena through the US. So while Russia is seen as a positive other, the US is depicted as the main negative other carrying though the policy agenda of the negative elites. The discourse depicts the US and Russia as opponents due to the activities of the first. Russia is seen as simply reacting to the actions of the US to defend its own interests. Meanwhile Russia is portrayed as *wise* and *prudent*, contrasting the *rashness* and *interference* of the US and European governments supporting the violence. (4)

The exact reasoning of the motivation behind these US policies changes though time. In the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis and during the Maidan uprising, the US was simply seen as trying to oppose Putin and Russia. As the events in Ukraine escalated towards an armed conflict in the Eastern Ukraine however the main goal of the US policies was seen as to start a WWII in order to support the ailing banking system of the west. (9; 18) Thus the US is labelled a *warmonger* along with the EU and NATO and their leaders (16; 19) and the current situation in Ukraine is often compared to year 1914 (19) – the time when WWI began. *War in Ukraine could easily become war in Europe, war in Europe could too easily become World War Three.* (20; 21) To take the view of the West trying to start WWII even further, claims are made towards its intentions to start a first-strike nuclear war against Russia and China (25). Thus the west is painted in irresponsible, selfish and aggressive colours.

While not opposing the EU in particular, the Union is still regarded in a strongly negative light. The EU is seen as *Marxist* (1) and an imperialist *empire builder* (19), *immoral* (4), *corrupt* (8; 12), *weak and short-sighted* (9). *Once free governments tow the fascist totalitarian line of the lunatics in Brussels. Not one European political leader is prepared to stand up and say he EU is the totalitarian monster that it is.* (9) In this sense the BNP is much more EU critical than Jobbik was, which generally saw the EU as used and manipulated by the EU. Similarly to Jobbik, EU enlargement is not seen positively, but as an *imperialis expansionism* meant to gain more opportunities and money for the multinationals and the rich. (20, 24, 27)

BNP discourse has little positive to say about the new Ukrainian government – it is seen as a sham, a puppet for the west, as ultra-xenophobic fascists neo-conservative tyranny (8; 9). The elected president Poroshenko being called a *chocolate billionaire* in a clear reference to the eccentric (one might even say crazy) fictional character Willy Wonka. (17; 18) As the conflict in Eastern Ukraine emerged the criticism directed at the Ukrainian government became harsher. Ukraine, similarly to Jobbik discourse, is depicted as the aggressor. However in BNP discourse this is done in a much more radical way. For example: *Ukraine lunatic government of total freaks attack own people with tanks and aircraft.* (9) The new government is called *murders* on several occasions (11; 15; 17).

Policy wise, the BNP is most worried about Britain being dragged into another war and is threatened by the US foreign policy in Europe. It is through these aspects that the BNP rationalises its addressing of the Ukrainian crisis. Arising from this the BNP discourse asks for the EU (and the US) to withdraw from Ukraine, to stop supplying arms and money and to start promoting a peaceful dialogue. (22) Each of these policy proposals is exactly the same as those presented by the official discourse to the Russian Federation just vice versa – what the official discourse asks of Russia, the oppositional discourses ask from the EU.

Counter-hegemony discourses Conclusion

The two parties chosen to represent counter-hegemonic discourses within the EU were, as was expected in the beginning of this research, radically different in their discursive representation of the Ukrainian events from the official discourse. Also, as was expected, these discourses were rather similar in their construction of the self-other dimensions in light of the Ukrainian crisis. However, though in general rather similar, the BNP expressed a much more radical discursive approach to the Ukrainian conflict than Jobbik. This even more extreme radicalism might be one of the reasons behind the lack of support for the party.

Both parties viewed the Maidan protests as, not so much about European values and aspirations, and more as a US orchestrated yet another coloured revolution, which

ultimately lead to a coup. Both parties also name the forces behind the US foreign policies neoconservatives but the BNP also adds Zionists and globalist elites as influencing the events in Ukraine. Jobbik sees the motivation behind Ukrainian crisis as West's desire to oppose Russia and achieve the US geopolitical interests in the region. Meanwhile BNP sees the reasoning behind the Ukrainian events as the desire of the US to start a WWII in order to save the ailing banking system.

All in all both parties see the conflict in Ukraine as a war, unlike the official discourse, which references to the events as a crisis or a conflict. Similarly, both parties view this war as illegal and illegitimate – the Ukrainian government is seen to be killing its own people. Neither party has much positive to say about the Ukrainian government – naming it an illegitimate puppet of the west out to persecute its own minorities. It is Ukraine that is seen as the aggressor in the situation. The people fighting in Eastern Ukraine are called either freedom fighters, self-defence groups or rebels.

Arising from this, Russia and Putin are both depicted in positive colours. Russia is seen as defending its interests in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea is seen as Russia's legitimate right to protect its people from oppressive governments. Russia's president Vladimir Putin is seen as a role model and an example of leadership to aspire towards. He is depicted as strong, powerful and calculating. In addition neither of the counter-hegemonic discourses rejects the logic of spheres of influence and view it as something to which Russia has deserved. It is seen as a positive that Russia is defending its interests and its right to have spheres of influence in Eastern Europe, while the west is seen as invading and ever expanding.

The main negative 'other' for the counter-hegemonic discourses is the USA – whether it be led by Zionist or neoconservatives. The US is seen as to manipulate and use the events in Ukraine in its own favour to oppose Russia. The EU however follows suit and is dependent on US foreign policies. The Union is painted as bureaucratic and imperialistic – always trying to expand and colonize sovereign countries in Europe. It is the EU that is seen as interfering in Ukraine. Neither of the parties views EU in a positive light, however the BNP is much more negative towards the EU seeing it as a totalitarian fascist monster.

Conclusion

The main goal of this thesis was to create understanding on how the EU sees the events in Ukraine and creates itself through the articulation of a self and other. This official discourse, articulated through the readings of EU political elite, are seen as hegemonic. Discourses radically opposing the official discourses – viewed as counter-hegemonic discourses – were analysed to see how these views are challenged by political parties carrying an anti-European theme.

To achieve the aim set above a poststructuralist approach to discourse, language and identity was adopted. The theoretical framework was based on the works of Lene Hansen, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. The analysis of the hegemonic discourse was conducted through a creation of a timeline around key events – the beginning of protests of Maidan, the annexation of Crimea and the outset of violent clashes in the Eastern Ukraine.

The results of the analysis show that by the official discourse, the events in Ukraine are depicted in a way as to offer legitimacy for the EU. The Maidan protests and events that followed it are portrayed as to have risen from the desire of the Ukrainian people for the values of the EU and aspirations for a European way of life. Thus, even though much of what the Union stands for might be taken for granted within the populace of the member states, the values and principles underpinning the European identity are still relevant today and desired outside the Union.

On a different aspect, as the events in Ukraine gained momentum, they also became seen as threat to the very idea of Europe. This was especially the case with the annexation of Crimea and it bringing back painful memories of WWII. The EU was created as a peace project and thus conflict right at the borders of the Union is not only a security threat but a challenge to the values and ideas underpinning the European identity. It is for these reasons that the Union was determined to take decisive action against the outside threat.

Within the official discourse, the identity of the EU is created through a linking to the values underpinning the Union and through a differentiation from Russia. What is important to note here is, that through the adoption of a timeline established by key events, some changes in the official discourse can be seen. One of these changes is the rise in the

degree of otherness of Russia. In the beginning of the Maidan protests Russia was seen as a strategic partner simply approaching Ukraine with a zero-sum view – an obstacle which could be passed.

However this changed with the annexation of Crimea. While Europe was seen to stand for peace and wide spread prosperity and stability, Russia is seen as aggressive, self-interested and not respectful of international laws. The official discourse depicts Russia as being stuck in the outdated Cold War mentality of bloc against bloc and the logic of spheres of influence thus opposing itself to the Union as a rival. It is precisely this world view that is strongly rejected by the official discourse. Instead cooperation, mutual benefit and dialogue are seen as the desirable and modern way of conducting politics.

As for the counter-hegemonic discourses, as was to be expected, both were very similar in the way in which they viewed Europe, Russia and the events in Ukraine. The events in Maidan are not linked to a general desire of the Ukrainian people for European values and way of life. Instead they are seen as orchestrated by the US to achieve its own geopolitical goals. Thus, unlike from the official discourse, both counter-hegemonic discourses saw the US as the negative other and as the greatest threat, instead of Russia. The US is depicted as a geopolitical player out to thwart Russia.

However the discourses do differ on the exact motivation and drive behind US foreign policy. For the Jobbik discourse, the US is led by neoconservatives who wish to destabilize Russia and gain even more control over the world. BNP is more radical in the sense that the US is viewed as wanting to start WWII by instigating conflict in Ukraine in order to save its ailing banking system.

Neither of the two political parties has much good to say about the EU. Both view the Union as an imperialistic colonizer, always interfering in sovereign states. The EU is shown as doing the bidding of the US in all matters and having little if any foreign policy of its own. Here again the BNP discourse is more radical and critical towards the Union, labelling it a fascist monster.

Russia, the main 'other' of the official discourse, is seen by the counter-hegemonic discourses as a protector of minorities and its own interests. Russia is not seen as an aggressor but as simply reacting to the provocations of the West. In the same light, the Crimean annexation is not seen as illegal but as a natural progress of events. Russia's

president Vladimir Putin is seen as a great role model for the European leaders. He is seen strong, decisive, calm and calculative. Meanwhile Ukraine and especially its new government is depicted as an aggressor waging an illegal war against its own people for the benefit of the US.

As was expected, the official discourse differs radically from the discourses expressed by the two chosen far-right political parties thus making them counter-hegemonic. The analysis of these discourses shows that the counter-hegemonic discourses do try to offer a radically different meaning to the idea of Europe and to the events in Ukraine (and how they are linked). The findings of the comparative analysis conducted suggests that the deep splits in the EU identity construction stretch far beyond the discourses emanated from the two parties and key speakers of the EU. The findings are illustrative of deep splits within the European identity, which in current times is faced with many challenges both from within and out. The events in Ukraine are just one of the catalysts and evidence of such rifts.

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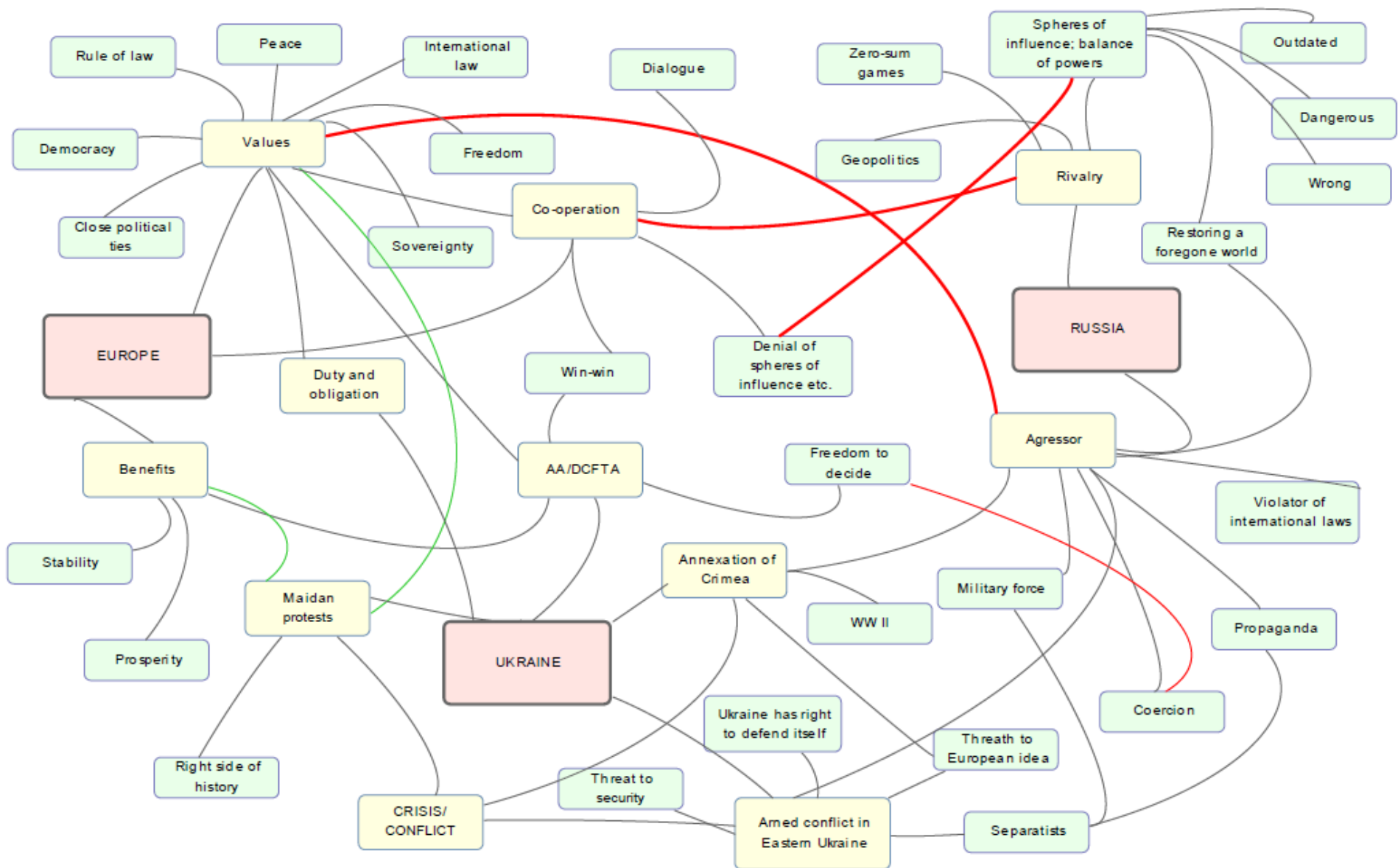
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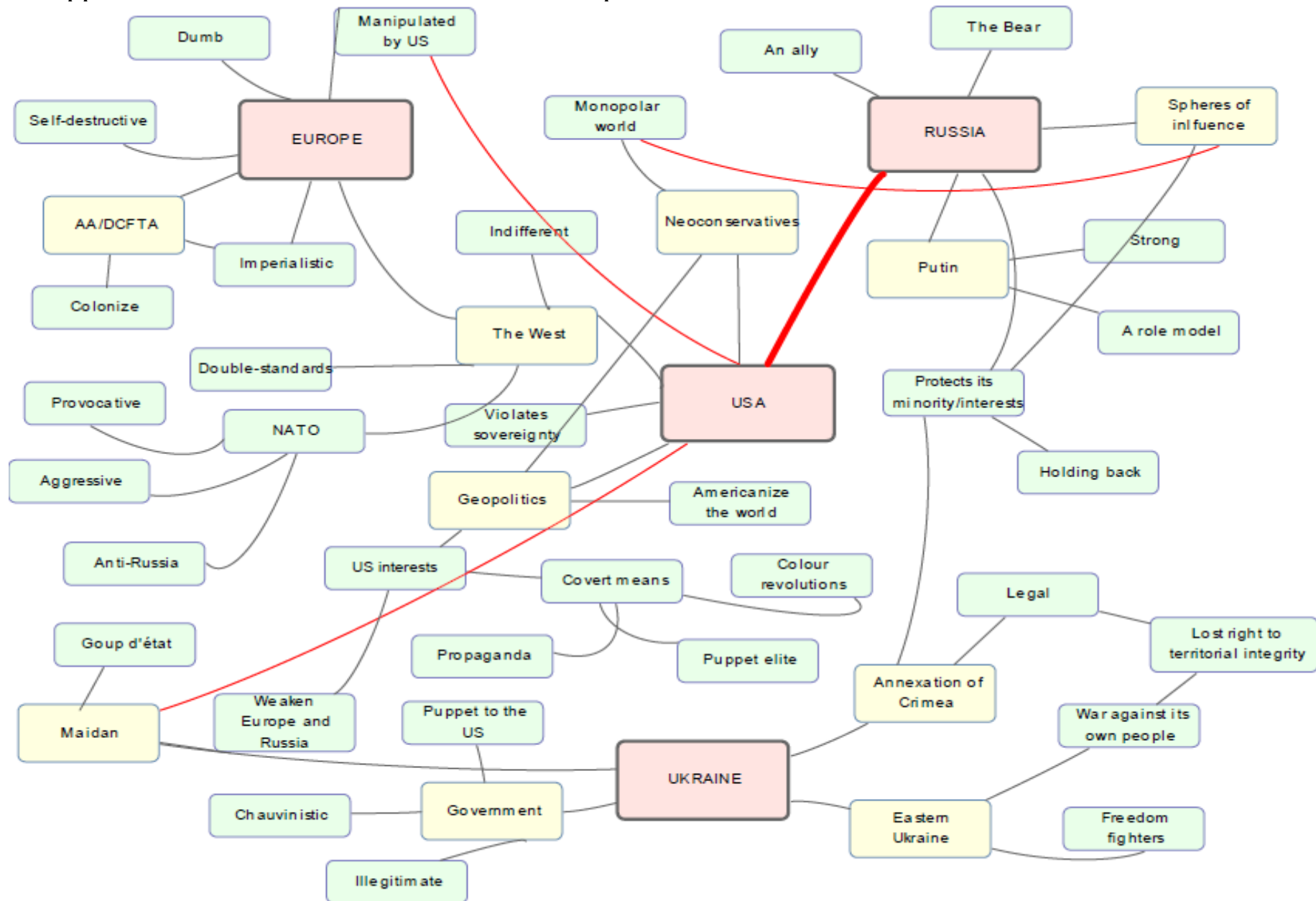
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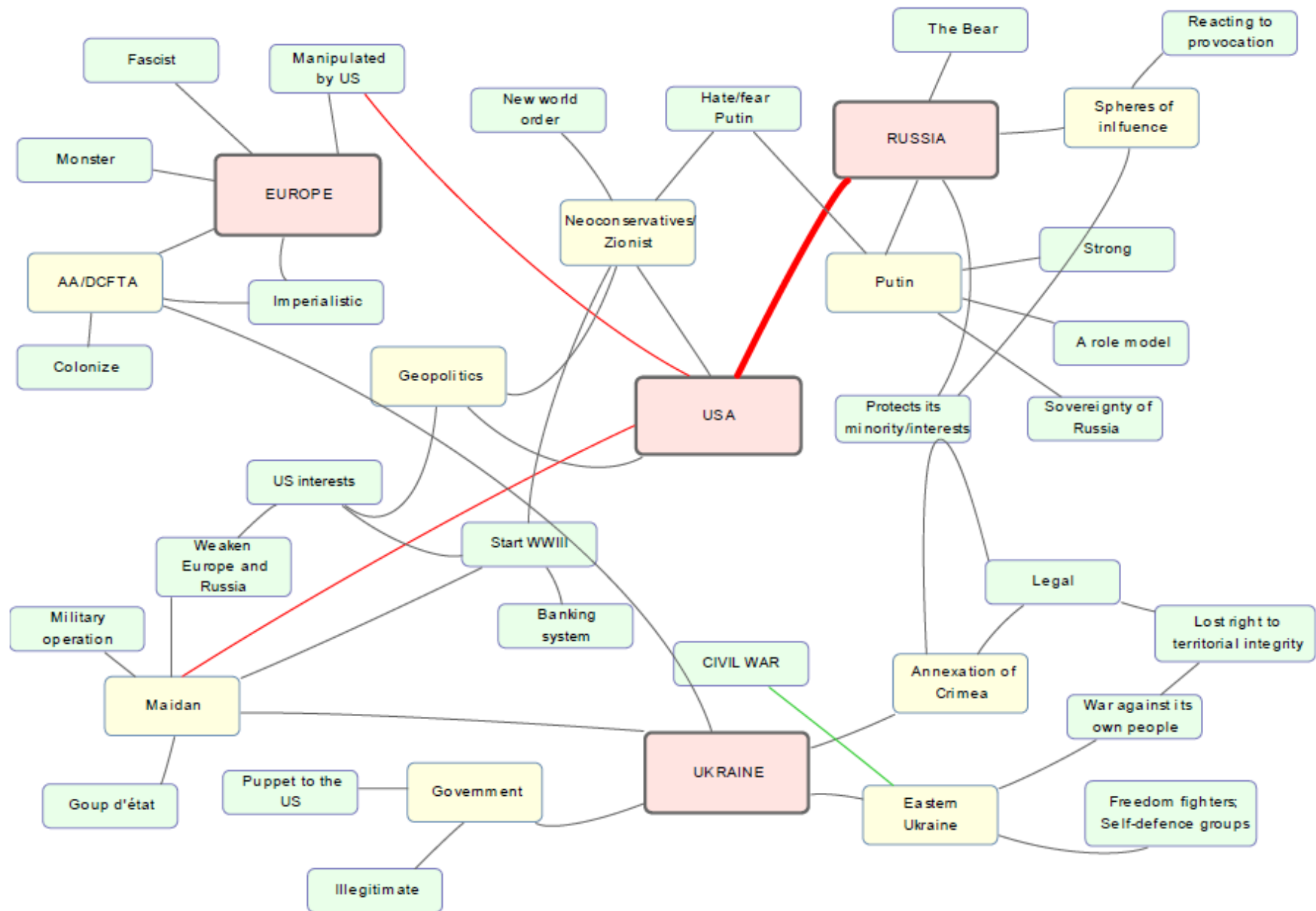
Appendix 1. Official Discourse Discursive Map



Appendix 2. Jobbik Discourse Discursive Map



Appendix 3. BNP Discourse Discursive Map



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