

TARTU UNIVERSITY

Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

School of Slavonic and East European Studies

Navdeep Sadra

**SENTIMENTS AND STATECRAFT: A LONGITUDINAL
ANALYSIS OF UK-RUSSIA RELATIONS FROM 2010 TO 2023**

MA thesis

Supervisor: Professor Andrey Makarychev

Tartu 2024



Authorship Declaration

I have prepared this thesis independently. All the views of other authors, as well as data from literary sources and elsewhere, have been cited.

Word count of the thesis: 24,057

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Sadra', written in a cursive style.

Navdeep Sadra, 19th May 2024

Non-exclusive licence to reproduce thesis and make thesis public

I, Navdeep Sadra, (personal code: 39711040111) herewith grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to the work created by me [SENTIMENTS AND STATECRAFT: A LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS OF UK-RUSSIA RELATIONS FROM 2010 TO 2023], supervisor Andrey Makarychev,

- reproduce, for the purpose of preservation, including for adding to the DSpace digital archives until the expiry of the term of copyright;
- to make the work specified in p. 1 available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives until the expiry of the term of copyright;
- I am aware of the fact that the author retains the aforementioned rights;
- I certify that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe other persons' intellectual property rights or rights arising from the personal data protection legislation.

Abstract

Britain's foreign policy in recent years has come to be dominated by discussions about Russia. Many decisions are made and framed with this nation in mind, whether over international or domestic security. Despite the attention given by policymakers, there is no prevailing narrative for how the recent period of Tory governance has led to this outcome. The aim of this study is thus to provide a comprehensive overview of UK-Russia relations from the British perspective, covering 2010 to 2023. It follows the shifts in attitudes due to changes in UK Prime Ministers and events. The research shows that the sentiment score has generally fallen from the highs of the early 2010s under David Cameron and is much lower now in the 2020s under Rishi Sunak. Driving these changes are critical junctures, with the most detrimental to relations being the 2022 full-scale invasion. This incident shows that international affairs are, so far, more important for relations than bilateral incidents, like the Salisbury case. Another takeaway is that changes in Prime Minister did shift sentiment significantly, with populists like Boris Johnson showing greater extremes in their attitudes towards Russia than technocrats like Theresa May. These findings are pivotal in understanding the future of British foreign policy in that relations with Russia will depend more on the outcome of these international issues and the character of the Prime Minister. However, at present, projecting the results from this research forward, it appears that relations will remain strained, if not worsen, for the foreseeable future.

List of Illustrations

Table 1 – Summary of the Literature Review	41
Figure 1 – Overall Sentiment by Year	43
Figure 2 – Linear Regression Analysis of Time on Sentiment	44
Figure 3 – Sentiment by Type of Affair	46
Figure 4 – Two-sample T-Test of UK PM Statements by the Type of Affair	47
Figure 5 – Sentiment by Type of Event	49
Figure 6 – ANOVA Test of the Key Events & Sentiment Scores	50
Figure 7 – Q-Q Plot of Sentiment Scores	51
Figure 8 – Sentiment by Year for David Cameron	53
Figure 9 – Sentiment by Year for Theresa May	53
Figure 10 – Sentiment by Year for Boris Johnson	54
Figure 11 – Sentiment by Year for Liz Truss	54
Figure 12 – Sentiment by Year for Rishi Sunak	55
Figure 13 – Sentiment by PM	56
Figure 14 – ANOVA Test of Prime Ministers & Sentiment Scores	57

Acknowledgements

I thank my supervisor, Andrey Makarychev, for his advice and guidance. This support made me feel confident and ready to tackle this academic endeavour. I also want to acknowledge all my family and friends, especially Daria Smirnova and Lewis Batho, whose companionship was pivotal in providing the solid social foundation I needed to complete my work.

Table of Contents

Introduction	8
Chapter One – Emotions, Sentiments & Relations	13
1.1 – Emotion & International Relations	13
1.2 – Emotions & Sentiments.....	15
Chapter Two – Methodology	18
2.1 – Academic Usage	18
2.2 – Research Applications	20
2.3 – Methods	22
2.4 – Data Collection & Analysis.....	23
2.5 – Limits	26
Chapter Three – Literature Review	27
3.1 – New Labour	27
3.2 – David Cameron.....	30
3.3 – Theresa May	34
3.4 – Boris Johnson, Liz Truss, and Rishi Sunak.....	37
3.5 – The Key Findings	39
Chapter Four – Results	42
4.1 – The Overall Period	42
4.2 – The Key Events	45
4.3 – The Different PMs	52
Chapter Five – Discussion	59
5.1 – The Overall Trend	59
5.2 – The Critical Event	62
5.3 – Leadership Changes	66
Conclusion	71
Bibliography	74

Introduction

In a statement to Parliament, Rishi Sunak (2023), the UK Prime Minister [PM], pinned the blame for the global instability people were enduring on the actions of one nation, Russia. His remarks painted a picture of a brutal regime that had to be isolated economically, militarily, and politically. This was not a novel or fringe position at the time, but one already held in the Intelligence and Security Committee [ISC], whose Russia Report (2020) previously drew attention to the maligned influence coming from the Kremlin. This image of a Russian adversary frames how the UK thinks about security, defence, and foreign affairs. While the antagonism between the two nations is now well established, how this outcome came about is still being determined. Given that there is no prevailing narrative, this research explores the recent developments and Tory Governments to try and pinpoint the catalysts that have led to this downward trend. The thesis thus examines this era and series of Tory PMs to show how UK-Russia relations developed from 2010 to 2023.

As the basis for this investigation, the research focuses on specific events already identified as flashpoints by the few authors covering this period. For instance, in existing papers, bold statements highlight the importance of various incidents. Some state that 2018 was the lowest point for relations due to the Skripal poisoning (Allan & Bond, 2022; Kustowska, 2021; Chinonso, 2018). More recent works dispute this and highlight Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 instead (Ellison, 2023; Saragih, 2023). A few even go back to 2014, when Crimea was annexed, as the critical juncture for ties (Gromyko & Ananieva, 2014). Rather than accepting any of these accounts as correct, this research thoroughly explores each flashpoint by measuring their impact on the remarks made by the UK PM at the time. The study thus showcases how the UK's posture towards Russia has changed by conducting a sentiment analysis of these statements. A substantive and significant negative decline following these events is expected if they were the pivotal turning points in relations.

The longitudinal nature of this examination also helps address another factor: the changes that occur under different PMs. Following David Cameron's resignation in 2016, there has been a quick succession of leaders, each with a separate agenda. This study will show if, with each change, the UK's remarks became more critical, which is a general assumption but has yet to be proven (Ellison, 2023). An analysis of these actors will also reveal if significant shifts in sentiment came about due to their demeanour and political situation. By including this focus on the leader, the paper also provides a study of PMs like Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss,

who have yet to be covered in depth by the existing literature. Consequently, the sentiment analysis of these leaders reveals new patterns and relationship changes, offering a deeper understanding of the recent dynamics between the two countries and helping further explore the reasons for the current poor state of relations.

Research Questions

- How have UK PM statements about Russia developed from 2010 to 2023 in terms of sentiment?
- How did UK sentiments towards Russia change depending on three major events: the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and the poisoning of Skripal in 2018?
- Did changes in who the PM was significantly impact the sentiment of UK statements about Russia?

Hypotheses

- [H1] In a comparison of UK PM statements about Russia, those made in the later years had lower sentiment scores than those made in the early years.
- [H2a] In a comparison of UK PM statements about Russia, those focusing on international affairs had lower sentiment scores than those about bilateral affairs.
- [H2b] In a comparison of UK PM statements about Russia, those focusing on the full-scale invasion of 2022 had lower sentiment scores than those about the Salisbury poisoning.
- [H3]: Changes in PM led to significant shifts in the sentiment of statements towards Russia, indicating varying approaches and attitudes under different premierships.

Variables

The dependent variable is the same in all the hypotheses: sentiment, which represents the feelings towards Russia in statements made by the various UK PMs. These remarks are scored, and the positive or negative value is the feeling associated with a comment. The background for this idea comes from Alexander Mee (2021) and Dilin Liu (2018), who have used this variable in international relations. These authors understand sentiment as vital in human behaviour and decision-making processes, as people are affected by their subjective feelings. It is also a register of their perspective towards a given topic, such as relations with another country. These sentiments are often expressed via language, whether it be spoken or written. Textual data, which this paper primarily focuses on, thus provides a rich source of information for understanding the UK PM's attitudes, as these individuals often use words, phrases, and linguistic cues publicly to convey their sentiments.

The research also explores four independent variables when examining this sentiment towards Russia. The first variable [Time] covers the period of 2010 to 2023; it explores how statements evolved from the early Tory rule to the more recent period. The second variable [Type of Affairs] is binary; it determines whether an incident or event is international or bilateral. The former includes topics that involve multiple parties. For example, Russia's actions against Ukraine would be in this category. The bilateral incidents explore those directly involving Russia and the UK, an example of which would be Putin's state visit. The third variable [Type of Event] is categorical. It explores three critical junctures in relations highlighted in the literature: the 2014 Annexation of Crimea, the 2018 Skripal Poisoning, and the 2022 Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine. Regarding their names in this paper, the 2018 incident is sometimes referred to as the Salisbury case or poisoning, and the events in 2022 as the Russia-Ukraine War. An investigation of these events showcases which incident most impacted the sentiments expressed. Lastly, there is [PM], and this variable refers to the changes in leadership, which helps assess whether shifts in the UK executive significantly impacted the attitudes towards Russia.

Structure of Paper

The first segment of Chapter One deals with the studies of emotions in international relations; this provides the paper's foundation as it shows it is possible to conduct a more expansive

investigation that is not restricted to existing models, such as rational choice. Instead, various approaches in the broad field of emotions are viable. The subsequent segment then explores one of these subjects: sentiment. The link between the two and the development of the field allows the research to focus on this concept as a valid means of examining an actor, like a UK PM. Chapter Two then hones in on this idea and shows how the paper takes already established approaches to sentiment analysis and applies them to a new setting, UK-Russia relations. It also provides more details about this research method and that of historical analysis. While the former provides the raw data, the latter is used later in the study to explain and analyse these results. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of the UK's foreign policy regarding Russia by contextualising the data with the history of the relevant actors and events. Much of this history is established in the subsequent chapter.

In Chapter Three, the paper reviews the academic literature about UK-Russia relations in four segments. The first part focuses on the New Labour era, which showcases how the UK PM can affect the development of ties. It also establishes how international and bilateral incidents can significantly change the dynamics. The next segment then covers David Cameron's period and, in particular, examines one of these critical events: the annexation of Crimea. It appears as a significant turning point in the relationship. The following segment then explores articles written during Theresa May's premiership. It highlights the 2018 Salisbury case, which emerges to be another critical juncture. The last segment then covers the remaining Tory PMs from 2019 to 2023. This part demonstrates that Russia's war against Ukraine dramatically alters the dynamics and can be put in the same bracket as the above affairs. By the end of the chapter, it thus becomes clear why this paper investigates the temperament of the PMs and the events highlighted in each segment; these factors strongly affect the relationship between the UK and Russia, but it is unclear which is the most impactful.

Chapter Four then reports the findings from the sentiment analysis. It does this in three segments that review the hypotheses associated with each research question. After establishing the causal relationship between the variables, it visualises them with line graphs and boxplots. This depiction allows for an assessment of whether the initial results support or disprove the hypothesis. A statistical method, such as a linear regression, ANOVA test, or t-test, is also used to showcase the correlation's significance and help establish whether the null hypothesis can be rejected. This result allows the paper to explore each topic and reveal potential outliers. The first segment deals with the UK's attitudes towards Russia worsening over time. The second segment examines the events influencing the UK's sentiment. Lastly, the final segment covers

the impact on sentiment from different PMs. By the end, the chapter establishes the results for each hypothesis and lays the grounds for further discussion.

Chapter Five then goes through each research question and attempts to answer them with the findings from the previous chapter. The first segment discusses the UK's attitudes towards Russia for the whole period and how they have developed. In particular, there is a focus on the overall trend and the years 2014 and 2020, which appear anomalous. The next segment deals with questions about what events were more influential. It starts with discussing why international affairs were more impactful than bilateral incidents. This segment also explains why Russia's full-scale invasion led to the most robust reaction. Lastly, the final segment deals with the impact of leadership changes and explains why there are noteworthy differences and similarities. This part hones in on the temperament, formative experiences, and domestic situation that influenced the attitudes of UK PMs. By doing this, the paper provides more insight into how UK-Russia relations have developed while addressing some of the queries and expectations arising from the literature review. The paper then closes with a summary of the findings in a conclusion section, establishing what this research offers and the areas to explore further.

Chapter One – Emotions, Sentiments & Relations

1.1 – Emotion & International Relations

Emotions, such as fear, hatred, empathy, and compassion, possess a transformative power that shapes perceptions, policies, and political actions (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2008). Despite their profound impact, the field initially received limited attention in international relations [IR] scholarship, particularly within traditional theories like realism and liberalism. For instance, in a conference paper by Jonathan Mercer (1996), there was an acknowledgement that the subject lacked attention. Neta Crawford (2000) reinforced this message four years later, emphasising emotion's implicit and ubiquitous nature in world politics. She pointed out that the topic was under-theorised in IR and criticised the rational-actor paradigm's dominance, which led to this neglect. Since these contributions were made, advances in scholarship in the past twenty years have “sought to challenge realist assumptions and demonstrate the added value of considering the now vast topic of emotions in world politics” (Houde, 2023, p. 3).

For instance, the later work by Mercer (2005) illuminates the intricate interplay between emotion and reason in political decision-making. His study challenges the notion that choices are solely based on classical rationality. Instead of being seen as the opposite of rational, an emotional response is intricately woven with rationality. It is not an interference or deviation but central to what is considered logical for that actor (Mercer, 2010). An example would be a leader basing a decision on formative experiences. Suppose, in their youth, this actor saw the country invaded by a neighbour; then that experience would shape their emotional predisposition towards that invading state. Fear of that happening again could lead to choices that could worsen relations but improve their security against that neighbour. Thus, an emotional inclination impacts the actor's response.

On top of this, it may be a catalyst for risk-taking action. For example, the classical rational choice paradigm would have an actor make a cost-benefit analysis of available options. However, as Mercer (2010) has shown, emotions influence actors in this process by determining the risk's worth. A politician with a deep feeling of resentment or humiliation would be open to more risk-taking behaviour to remedy that situation, potentially with the aim of restoring a sense of lost pride. Harald Edinger (2023) supports this view, and his work highlights its role in the annexation of Crimea and the full-scale invasion. The text discusses how outrage, contempt, and fear significantly shaped Putin's foreign policy. In particular, a

feeling of a loss of greatness and trauma from the post-Soviet transition was one of the motivating factors in Putin's decision to attack Ukraine (Edinger, 2023, p. 760). Some commentators often decry this war as mad or lacking reason. However, acknowledging the role emotions play in what an actor deems reasonable makes it more logical why Putin has taken this decision. This case and others demonstrate that understanding the emotion behind these responses is thus essential for analysing actors on the international stage.

However, with the growth of this type of research comes debates in the scholarship, like the relationship between emotion and affect (Clement & Sangar, 2017). This discussion revolves around distinguishing between the two terms and understanding their respective roles in shaping political behaviour and outcomes. In various studies, they are operationalised and conceptualised differently. While emotions typically refer to a psychological state with cognitive and cultural components, affect is often described as more diffuse bodily sensations that precede conscious awareness (Clement & Sangar, 2017). The paper sees the difference in how the former might relate to lived reactions to specific events or stimuli, with anger as an emotion triggered by a perceived injustice. In contrast to this, affect operates at a subconscious level and can influence behaviour. Unlike emotions, it is often considered pre-reflective, as a person might experience a general sense of unease or excitement without pinpointing its cause (Clement & Sangar, 2017).

What also distinguishes emotions and affect is their individual manifestations and social dimensions (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2018). The former becomes intersubjective when shared and understood within a social context. For example, pride may arise from one's achievements but gains significance when recognised and validated by others in a social setting. Similarly, affective states can be shaped by cultural norms and social interactions, influencing how individuals perceive and respond to emotions (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2018). Therefore, understanding these nuances is essential for analysing their political implications, as emotion significantly shapes political attitudes, ideologies, and behaviours at the individual and collective levels. The latter is invoked with emotions such as solidarity or resentment, which can mobilise communities and drive political movements (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2018). By recognising the social and cultural dimensions, it is possible to better understand their role in constructing and contesting political identities and narratives.

Nonetheless, this raises an issue: How are emotions socially constructed and shared? As various academic works are trying to provide a framework accounting for this, and the fact

the study itself can bring into play different disciplines, the research addresses this issue by narrowing down the variety of emotional phenomena to an individual level focus by exploring UK PMs, and one that looks at the subject of emotions, sentiment. This aspect is further explored in the following segment, but it is worth pointing out here as it helps resolve this issue around the theorisation of emotions. Doing this makes it easier to proceed with a structure that offers a more holistic analysis of international politics as it accounts for a specific area of response by a specified actor (Ringmar, 2018). It avoids conceptualising a new way to account for how emotions are measured and function, as various authors already use sentiment and the level of analysis it covers is well established in the following chapter.

Nevertheless, understanding emotion is still relevant for this research because it provides the foundation for expanding the theoretical framework to include and offer a more comprehensive understanding of why political actors behave a certain way (Ringmar, 2018). For example, instead of solely focusing on state interests as the driving force behind foreign policy decisions, the paper can explore how these other dimensions above shape political attitudes and actions. It also sets the study's boundaries by distinguishing between affect and emotion. The paper primarily explores the latter, and while it is a vast topic that can cover issues such as political ecology, it can also hone in on international relations and, explicitly, the manoeuvres and machinations of the actors involved in foreign policy (González-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2020). Though active scholarly debates around conceptualisation and theorisation exist, this study avoids these issues. Firstly, it chooses sentiment rather than the broader subject of emotion. The second modification is that the level of analysis is clarified at the individual level with the UK PM as the research subject, and their connection to the state's foreign policy is by setting it. There is thus a way to account for the interplay between these different levels, which still allows for an overview of the UK's attitudes.

1.2 – Emotions & Sentiments

In the study of international relations, sentiment and emotion represent distinct but interconnected concepts that play essential roles in shaping an individual's perceptions and behaviours towards global issues, events, and actors. Sentiment refers to the overall tone or attitude towards a particular topic. It often involves the subjective evaluation of an individual's feelings, opinions, or perceptions, ranging from positive to negative (Liu, 2015). In contrast to

the above, emotion refers to a complex, multifaceted psychological and physiological response to stimuli that involve cognitive appraisal and behavioural expression; specific states, such as joy, anger, fear, sadness, or surprise, typically characterise it (Conte et al., 2023; Peters et al., 2004). While sentiment and emotion are thus related constructs by dealing with an individual's view, their conceptualisation, methodological approach, and theoretical frameworks differ.

While both can be relevant to the study of international relations, depending on the study's focus, research on emotions, like those discussed by Edinger (2023), primarily explores the psychological and social dynamics of experiences. This paper's primary concern is instead quantifying the emotional tone expressed in textual data. Therefore, this research focuses on sentiment. While the study of the former covers the underlying emotional state of an individual, it does not provide an apparent measure of how these states change over time or what that actor's attitude is toward a given topic. Sentiment can do this by registering an individual's feelings and contrasting them over a given period on various subjects (Liu, 2015). For example, David Allen (2018) used President Donald Trump's statements to indicate his attitudes towards several issues, including North Korea and climate change. Allen's article, utilising sentiment, distinguished Trump's tweets into positive and negative categories. The ability to sort out feelings and discuss foreign policy alongside global issues highlights how this research area and its associated computational method of sentiment analysis provide insight into an actor's disposition on topics about international relations.

Sentiment analysis is a field of research that analyses opinions and attitudes towards a given entity expressed through written text (Liu, 2015). These entities can include organisations, goods, services, individuals, events, policies and issues. A sentimental analysis of those above would highlight the underlying positive or negative feelings expressed about that subject. That is because a sentence expressing an opinion is subjective instead of objective (Liu, 2015, p. 2). For example, suppose a politician states they feel uncomfortable with the current level of inflation. In that case, a negative sentiment is expressed, which can help showcase how the person sees the current economic situation. It is worth noting that there does not have to be a strong reaction; a neutral stance can also be recorded, which may be revealing in that the statement's author may not care about the topic, is being diplomatic, or is careful not to state a clear position. The sentiment analysis of statements is thus a tool that can display and identify the attitudes expressed by individuals, like politicians, towards a given issue.

However, it is vital to consider the context as this could help complement this subjective determination of sentiment. For instance, an actor may have a strong feeling towards a given topic but does not state that clearly, given their precarious position in domestic politics. This curtailment could lead to a diplomatic response with no clear position. Therefore, for this paper, particularly in Chapter Five, there is some historical analysis to understand the pressures each PM faced during their premierships and when they made specific statements about Russia. These pressures include domestic and international developments from external actors like the EU and the US. The latter has historically been close to the UK post-WW2 and has influenced the foreign policy decisions the UK can make, as seen in the 1956 Suez crisis, where they pressured the British forces to pull out of Egypt (Garnett, 2017). Therefore, considering the political situation and external pressures is crucial as it enhances the sentiment analysis by explaining the influences on the actor's attitudes and policies towards Russia.

Combining sentiment with some contextual information also aligns with the ideas advocated by Roland Bleiker and Emma Hutchison (2018), who made it clear that a solely quantitative focus would struggle to capture the political impact of changes in sentiment. These feelings often work in non-linear ways, and they may not always directly cause political events but shape the discourse and the perceptions over time. Only a combination of methods can thus attempt to capture these intricate processes through which sentiment shapes politics. While it may seem unconventional, this paper's approach is then the recommended way to approach this subject matter (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2018). Instead of imposing uniform rules across methods, this research allows each to work according to its strengths and insights, which, when brought together, can facilitate a more nuanced understanding of how feelings affect the political dynamics being assessed.

Overall, the first part of this chapter shows that emotions are relevant to studying international relations, and the subsequent segment displays the link between emotions and sentiment. Together, they provide a bedrock for the study as it is now possible to focus on sentiment as a valid means of exploring the perspectives and actions of actors on the global stage. That is because the concept brings with it a well-established approach in the means of sentiment analysis, and the idea itself fits into a broader field that is now much more prominent. Nonetheless, to make this case more apparent, the start of the subsequent chapter also deals with previous uses of this concept; it shows the past applications and suitability for applying this method to the studies of UK foreign policy.

Chapter Two – Methodology

2.1 – Academic Usage

Sentiment analysis developed in the 2000s alongside the growth of social media and the internet. The former has enabled a constant flow of opinion data that could be mined and analysed, while the latter has allowed various digital platforms to take off (Liu, 2015, p. 3). For example, social media sites like X, formerly known as Twitter, enabled audience participation, engagement, and community. Its principal function is for people to express a view. Thus, it has been a source for many scholars who want to learn about how people perceive various topics, including politics. This is what Nathanael Chambers' (2015) article did. It used social media to collect data to model relations between nation-states. The author processed 17 months of Twitter data, over 2 billion tweets, to identify discussions about states, as this would be a way of aggregating opinions from different nations towards a specific state. By doing this, he could show that the public expressed opinions in line with their home country's formal relations in the two examined cases. The study thus demonstrated the potential of sentiment analysis; it showed how it could provide insights into the sentiments of one nation toward another as expressed by public opinion.

While academics like Chambers continue with this framework by focusing on the public for data, others have expanded on this tool to perform different forms of opinion mining. For example, Alexander Mee (2021) still uses social media to gain data but instead focuses on a specific audience: UK Members of Parliament [MPs]. The author analyses a large dataset of 185,970 tweets from 582 MPs over 12 months, alongside MPs' voting records on Brexit-related issues. The paper explores the relationship between the UK's decision to leave the European Union and the MPs. By performing a sentiment analysis on this dataset, the author demonstrated an association between Twitter use and MPs' Brexit stance, with Leave MPs tweeting less frequently than their Remain counterparts. The paper also employed computational methods, departing from previous typological methods involving human classifiers, which also showed the potential to adapt the existing sentiment analysis approach to serve different purposes.

Combining computational methods and exploring relationships has also allowed other academics to refine these approaches. For instance, Dilin Liu and Lei Lei (2018) also focussed on politicians. However, they were able to do a comparative analysis of the two US presidential

candidates in 2016, Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump. Like Mee's article, there was a focus on candidates' social media use, but this research differed in that it was not solely reliant on that medium. Speeches from Trump and Clinton, obtained via UC Santa Barbara's "The American Presidency Project", were primarily used in the dataset (Liu & Lei, 2018, p. 145). By doing this, the authors had more extensive data points to analyse, allowing for greater depth in the analysis. As a result, the article demonstrated that Trump's strategy of repetition and appealing to negative sentiments successfully mobilised his base, contributing to his victory over Clinton. Using sentiment analysis, the authors emphasised the effectiveness of machine-based research methods for sentiment and theme exploration in political discourses. It also showcased that other mediums and texts could be used to compile a dataset on a wide range of politicians.

Moreover, there is the potential to apply lessons or shift positions due to the analysis of such a topic. In his article, Rahat Gulzar (2023) demonstrates this by examining the temporal sentiments people express through tweets related to the Russia-Ukraine War. In particular, there was a focus on the geographic location of tweets, which could showcase trends within different nations regarding their responses to the outbreak of war. While most tweets expressed negative sentiments, denouncing the invasion, the levels of engagement were higher in places like the US than in other parts like Nigeria. The authors then discuss this information as helpful in determining policy, with places with low engagement as the potential target of advocacy campaigns to raise awareness. By understanding where people are expressing doubts or appearing unconcerned, stakeholders interested in changing that could target resources in these locations to change public attitudes about the war. Thus, the authors make it clear that their research would be helpful for policymakers, humanitarian organisations, and researchers involved with this topic.

Furthermore, research like this could also help understand and respond to ongoing developments, such as international negotiations. For instance, Elena Georgiadou's (2020) article examined public attitudes towards the Brexit negotiations. The research used a corpus of 13,018,367 tweets related to Brexit during the same timeframe of the withdrawal process. It found that remaining in the single market demonstrated more positive sentiment, while others, like a hard Brexit or no-deal scenario, were associated with negative sentiment. This analysis shows that sentiment analysis can provide a platform for governments to understand the public's preferences in complex political processes like Brexit. It also indicates that this approach can be valuable for decision-makers as a way of comprehending the outcomes of their choices in international negotiations. Like Gulzar's (2018) article, there is also an

acknowledgement that sentiment analysis has the potential to do more, as its applications can be taken further. Consequently, this paper aims to do this by building on the approaches made so far and expanding on them to analyse UK-Russia relations.

2.2 – Research Applications

This paper takes ideas developed by Chambers' (2015) article and uses them as a basis to focus on foreign policy. In particular, it maps out the relationship between the UK and Russia from 2010 onwards. As in Chambers' approach, sentiment analysis is used to register the polarity and strength of sentiment. This data can then be demonstrated graphically with charts that display trends over time, with peaks and troughs representing the rise and fall in positive and negative sentiment. This visualisation helps with analysis and understanding, especially when comparing and contrasting results regarding different individuals and events during this period. The change is vital as there are different actors, and not just a collection representing public opinion, which was the focus of Chambers' article.

Moreover, instead of using MPs, like Mee's (2021) article, this study hones in on the Prime Ministers of the UK from 2010-2023. This focus is because the leader of the executive branch in the British system is now regarded as having the most influential role in setting foreign policy (Garnett, 2017). Even though there is a Foreign Secretary who is officially responsible, they serve at the pleasure of the PM. This change came after Tony Blair's premiership; he adapted the governance model into a more presidential style and system, which means there is no longer a cabinet-led government as typified in the past with PMs like Clement Attlee. For example, Attlee delegated vast swathes of responsibility to his Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevan, as the PM was more focused on domestic policy. Nevertheless, since Blair, even Tory PMs like David Cameron and Theresa May have followed this Presidential model, thus making it more pivotal to study their relationships with other leaders as they attend significant summits and host foreign leaders like Putin and Medvedev (Garnett, 2017). Hence, this paper examines the PM's role in foreign policy as they are primarily responsible for significant changes and decisions. Any changes in relations will be present in the sentiment expressed in their statements.

The sentiment analysis approaches so far regarding the UK have focussed on the public or the MPs. Thus, this paper will be the first to examine the PM's statements solely. In order to

perform the analysis, this research will build on the methods of data collection taken by both Mee's (2021) and Allen's (2018) articles. The former showcased how social media was valuable for exploring politicians' opinions. That is because many have accounts on sites like X and regularly use them to talk about current affairs. Given that all the PMs have had an active presence on social media, the research will compile these statements into a new dataset. Alongside this, like in Allen's paper, speeches will also be used as they again showcase the opinions of the PM. These can be found already gathered on the Government's website, although they are not filtered, so speeches made by specific PMs are compiled into a new dataset. Lastly, this research adds a new medium, Parliament, as a data source. By using Hansard, it is possible to find the contributions made by all MPs, and thus PMs, while they were in the House of Commons. Again, the actors expressed their thoughts regularly, especially with a weekly event, Prime Minister's Questions. Compiling the contributions made by the PMs in all of these mediums adds to the depth of the analysis, with more data points to analyse. Thus, the dataset compiled for this research builds on the previous approaches to sentiment analysis and expands it to cover contributions made in physical and digital spaces.

Another way this research builds on prior work is by recognising the impact of international developments, like the war in Ukraine. As Gulzar's (2023) article shows, various countries worldwide, including the UK, are expressing their views about this issue. Russia is directly involved, so their actions here will shape how the UK PMs perceive them. That is why this sentiment analysis in the paper also focuses on such events, as they will impact ties. These developments are also not restricted to multilateral interactions; bilateral cases, such as the Skripal poisoning, are also looked at to see the effects on the relationship. By including these events, it will be possible to see what is more influential in shaping relations between the two countries. Sentiment analysis here thus provides insight into what is more detrimental to the relations, and this information will help inform policymakers and other researchers who seek to understand how issues have evolved and may change relations in the future.

Nonetheless, this understanding still requires acknowledging the characteristics of the actors involved. For example, each PM's formative experiences and demeanour will shape their response. An apparent example is proximity to the issue. David Cameron hosted Putin and met him on several occasions. These interactions would create an impression and filter how the PM would react to events concerning that leader. If Cameron had positive exchanges, that may colour how he deals with problems; it may be an incentive to be less critical. Another factor here is the approach. Cameron, being a technocrat, which in the UK context means an analytical

and expert-driven approach to policy-making, would contrast with populists like Boris Johnson, who criticise traditional political institutions and position themselves as outsiders who can bring about change (Campbell & Stewart, 2024). The second approach would induce more straightforward language, emotive rhetoric, and simple solutions to complex issues like UK-Russia relations to connect with their audience. These experiences and traits can be very influential and are thus essential to recognise when analysing the sentiments of UK PMs.

Consequently, this paper combines sentiment and historical analysis. The first provides the scope of the study by painting the broad strokes of the relations between the UK and Russia. Each interaction is scored by sentiment, which combines well with the second approach to hone in on specific issues raised by the PM about Russia. Allen's (2018) article used this combination to understand Donald Trump's views, and the same happens here in this paper to understand the views of each of the PMs. Although context, such as their background, is informative, a historical perspective is also brought up to help further contextualise responses. For example, understanding the political situation of Johnson will help provide more insight into how he navigated similar issues regarding Russia differently from Theresa May. By implementing this joint approach, it is thus possible to understand the relationship between the UK and Russia in greater depth.

2.3 – Methods

The research paper relies on quantitative data and sentiment analysis to analyse the statements made by the UK PMs about Russia. Focusing on tangible data here allows for a systematic approach. It helps identify patterns and trends, allowing for generalisations about the UK's stance towards Russia over the specified period and set of actors. Another element underlining this research is the use of deductive reasoning. This paper covers three research questions and their corresponding hypotheses, which the empirical evidence tests. The study thus examines this set of criteria to evaluate and verify results via statistical tests, such as an ANOVA test or linear regression. This approach ensures consistency and provides findings which can help confirm or reject these hypotheses.

While the research primarily utilises a positivist method, in Chapter Five, historical analysis is also used to help explain specific results and sentiment scores. For instance, if there was a sentiment spike in 2020, some context could help demonstrate why the score was so

positive. This introduction of secondary sources is complementary and practical when dealing with the impact of events brought up over several years, such as the Skripal poisoning. It provides the background for these incidents and the actors involved. This context is particularly informative as the paper covers five PMs; thus, understanding the circumstances of their responses provides more insight into the different results. It also provides the link between events and the trends in sentiment, which establishes the most impactful issue.

2.4 – Data Collection & Analysis

The data for this study covers statements from 2010 to 2023, which makes a longitudinal focus appropriate. Additionally, as there is a focus on different PMs, it is logical to consider all of their responses while in power. By doing this, there is sufficient material to discuss how each actor viewed Russia. It also allows for exploring trends and changes that occur throughout a single actor's time and even the whole period of Conservative rule. Events are still unfolding, and a UK general election will likely be in late 2024. Therefore, the cut-off for this period is 2023, as it gives the whole year to account for the current Tory PM's responses. If more time were afforded to the research, the analysis would continue. However, the restrictions make it imperative to focus on the 13 years that have already passed, which already feature five different Conservative PMs.

The previous section of the chapter outlined how PMs post-Blair have set the UK's foreign policy stance. Hence, the PM's statements are a good indicator of changes in policy and attitudes towards Russia. That is why the paper adopts purposive sampling; it focuses on these five Tory leaders during this period, as their views are critical to studying UK foreign policy towards Russia. If the study could continue, it could look at other ministers or gauge the public's perceptions. However, given time constraints, it is best to hone in on this specific population that can already help explore the topic thoroughly.

The sources of these PM statements are available on the internet. For example, the Parliamentary records held by Hansard's website contain all of the contributions made by a PM about Russia dating as far back as 200 years. Additionally, the official Government website, gov.uk, was another place for information. It held the speeches of each of the PMs on various topics, from G20 summits to cabinet meetings. Again, this could be filtered to find those explicitly mentioning or discussing ties with Russia. The civil service maintains the

Parliamentary records and the Government website, so they accurately reflect the views with transcripts or direct announcements. Lastly, each PM's X account was a source for comments about this topic. X's verified status also indicates that these are their direct views. As a result, all three mediums above are helpful for this paper as they contain the PM's genuine views about Russia, which form the primary data points of the study.

These statements were collected via computational methods. A code developed in Python was used to build a web scraper to gather all the speeches that were made. The scraper then placed all the relevant information in a table in a CSV file ready to be analysed. It also sorted out the information by the author of the statement and the year it was said. The scraper tool can repeat the process, target other sources with adjusted parameters, and filter the contents. For this research, using computational methods was thus convenient and reliable. Firstly, it sped up ascertaining all the relevant research material; secondly, it was testable. After running the scraper several times, it would yield the same results. This outcome shows that the code was consistent, thus increasing the reliability of the process by eliminating any potential human error that could have been made by manually gathering the data points (Shukla & Unger, 2022). This web scraping was also necessary as there was no existing dataset. So, for this research, a new one was made with the help of these computational methods, which held more than a thousand speeches, statements, and tweets made by these PMs.

When analysing this dataset, the research relied on an existing data mining software, Valence Aware Dictionary for Sentiment Reasoning [VADER]. This sentiment analysis module provided a continuous sentiment score, reflecting a speech's positive, neutral, or negative tone. Its lexicon is rule-based, with over 7500 words labelled with sentiment intensity. This research reconfigured the intensity with -1 denoting extreme negative sentiment and +1 extreme positive sentiment. The other studies that have used VADER, like Gulzar's (2021) article, showcase that its lexicon is well-suited for sentiment analysis, especially with data from social networks, such as X. Since one of the sources of statements was tweets by PMs, it was thus suitable to use this tool as it would be already familiar with this type of data. It could also be applied to the other sources, and after testing it on a small sample of Parliamentary and G20 Summit speeches, it could execute the same task again. Consequently, the results are valid as the pre-trained model identifies the sentiment in statements and is reliable by repeatedly producing the same results in its polarity scores.

The scores VADER produced targeted comments about Russia, as the Python code allowed it to filter the statements. It would ignore sentences that did not feature the keywords, which included all the various ways of talking about Russia, including the ministers in charge and Presidents during this period, such as Putin and Medvedev. By doing this, the sentiment analysis did not address other issues that were also present in the speeches. For instance, a lot of the remarks since the full-scale invasion have begun to focus on the UK's ties with Ukraine, and in particular, President Zelensky. In order for the tool not to blur the topic, the code accounted for these other actors and made it clear to focus only on the parts directly related to Russia. If the first sentence was relatively upbeat about Zelensky and the latter was critical of Putin, the tool would only pick up on the part relevant to this study, the second sentence. Therefore, these parameters ensured the analysis was valid by addressing only the UK's attitudes towards Russia.

2.5 – Limits

Time was one of the major limiting factors in this research. It impacted all of the processes and, specifically, the study period. For example, much data is available on the New Labour period that occurred from 1997 to 2010. However, processing those statements would be more difficult, especially as most speeches and meetings are not readily available online or in digitised archives. These are also not collated in one place, so a widespread search in a few places, such as national and Labour Party archives, would be required to gather these materials. This process would thus be very time-consuming to ensure that all relevant material covering the two Labour PMs, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, were present. Additionally, given that there was no widespread use of social media during their time in charge, there would be fewer data points to work with, making it harder to compare with the Tory PMs who were actively tweeting by their time. For these reasons, this research does not analyse the New Labour period.

Another constraint was due to financial reasons. This paper uses VADER, a sentiment analysis tool developed by Orange Software, to help analyse the statements. A new module could have been developed to analyse the UK PMs. However, besides training a new model, which would require lots of finetuning, there would be steep costs in making this tool. An entirely new Lexicon would have to be constructed, or the researcher would have to hire many contributors to help by crowdsourcing. Martin Haselmayer (2017) has done the latter. While it

helped improve the model's efficiency, the improvement margin was minor. Thus, for this research, it would not be justified to hire a team to code this new model or participate in the crowdsourcing activities needed to make a sentiment analysis tool. That is why VADER is used for this research. It helps analyse the statements, and even though it is not tailored to the PM's comments or the topic of this research, its use by others, such as Krivicic (2023), showcases the module's ability to cover various issues and research topics, including issues similar to this paper.

This financial constraint is also why the research focuses on the attitudes of UK PMs. The Russian speeches made by Putin and Medvedev would require a new sentiment analysis tool. That is because VADER is an English language model; it would be unable to comprehend other languages. A new lexicon would need to be made, which would require hiring others or crowdsourcing. Academics like Peter Braga (2020) have developed some models to cover the Russian language, but these use a different approach to VADER. Thus, any sentiment analysis would result in different scores, and thus, the lack of consistency between the two datasets would make a comparison of the two unreliable. Consequently, the research explores relations solely from the UK perspective.

Overall, this paper adopts various measures that help explore the UK's attitudes towards Russia. Firstly, it emphasises incorporating sentiment and historical analysis; secondly, the research type is deductive. These together provide the framework for a structured examination of the hypotheses of this paper. The chapter also showcases how the paper proceeds with the data collection and analysis. Both use computational methods, resulting in using VADER, a sentiment analysis module. This tool is helpful because it analyses the scraped data, which is part of a new data set containing the remarks of five Tory PMs. The scores it provides are then mapped in graphs, which help visualise changes in relations due to time, events, and different actors. While this tool can help accept or reject the hypotheses, it is worth noting that this approach has some drawbacks, which centre on issues around time and financial constraints. Therefore, given these limiting factors, the measures taken in this paper are appropriate as they still gather the relevant material and analyse it to address the research questions.

Chapter Three – Literature Review

3.1 – New Labour

In examining the relations between the UK and Russia, the diplomat Kozin (2003, p. 92) is relatively upbeat about the relationship. His account emphasises a long-standing and strategic partnership dating back to 1553. For example, he cites cooperation in various fields, such as trade, research, and security. In recent developments, the author points out a growing trend of Russian investments in the British economy, and at the time, Russia was among Britain's top five trading partners. All of this collaboration showcases closer ties, an idea the author is trying to stress with the notion that the bonds formed are based on mutual trust and openness. This article is the first piece to be written about the New Labour period under Tony Blair, and this shows in the article's optimism regarding future developments of the relationship.

One of the key indicators used by Kozin (2003, p. 93) to showcase this positive partnership was the ties between the leaders. For example, there are high-level interactions, which include summits and state visits. The latter was when President Putin went to the UK and was received by royalty at Buckingham Palace. By focusing on the leaders and how they act, it is possible to garner the state of relations. Their interactions and statements will reflect the relationships of their time. In examining Kozin's work, there is an impression that the relationship is solid as there is mutual recognition and respect. Putin and Blair look at each other as crucial partners in settling regional and global problems within the UN Security Council, G8, OSCE, and NATO.

However, the tone does change early on, as seen in the writings of Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and academic Greg Austin (2004). Writing the forward for the book, Cook expresses doubts about Russia. These centre on Putin's political reforms. Instead of establishing effective governance mechanisms, it appears to be regressive steps leading Russia away from democratic standards. Joining this concern is an acknowledgement from the authors that the end of the Cold War has brought about complacency with the "end of history" triumphalism and ideas that reforms would seamlessly lead to a Western-style liberal democracy (Austin, 2004, p. 4). This reaction shows that the optimism expressed by Kozin is now dissipating. Although it is only partially gone, both authors are still keen to express that Russia is a global influence and should be a force for good.

As a result of this view, it is clear why both authors still advocate for closer ties with Russia. Cook sees the solutions to the problems as re-engagement. This course of action is described as increasing “public scrutiny of the Russian situation in light of its commitments to European institutions, using high-level channels and quiet diplomacy, as well as the use of NGOs and community groups to have direct and indirect support to those championing liberal pluralism inside Russia” (Austin, 2004, p. 5). By taking these measures, Cook states that Russia can be steered to a path of modernisation with a democratic character. The relationship here seems paternalistic, as if Russia only has the capacity for modernisation with the input of nations like the UK. Although this can be perceived as an imposition, Cook stresses that these measures should not be forced but undertaken in a spirit of friendship and constructive support. Again, this reflects the optimism of this early era of New Labour and is similar to Kozin, where relations between the nations are generally positive, even if there are some issues.

In this text, a critical factor in the development of the relationship is the protection of human rights. For instance, Cook states, "Russia's protection of basic rights would affect the sort of bilateral relationship it could expect with Britain” (Austin, 2004, p. 5). While this is Cook's stated position, Austin deviates from this in his writing. Instead, he stipulates that the UK's two principal interests in Russia are political stability and a stable market economy. The latter shows more of a transactional relationship built on the financial gain from positive trading relations. By showing these differences, there are now multiple reasons why the UK is interested in Russia. Whether it be for the reasons outlined by Cook, Austin, or Kozin, all three are adamant that building on the relationship is beneficial and likely a state of affairs for the future.

The first significant challenge to this assumption of positive development comes from Edwin Bacon (2007). At this point, Blair is standing down for Gordon Brown, and Vladimir Putin is supposedly also leaving with Dmitri Medvedev taking over. The Blair-Putin relationship, which the previous authors pointed to as an example of the positive state of relations, is questioned. Bacon points out a declining relationship between the two leaders, reflecting the growing problems among their states. Initially, Blair was trying to be the critical interlocutor who could act as a bridge between Russia and the West. This link, however, has become less important due to the emergence of other European leaders and profound "value" differences between the two leaders (Bacon, 2007, p. 10). The latter is connected to the points made by Cook, who made this ethical element clear in New Labour's foreign policy. Thus, at

this time, domestic developments in Russia, which clamp down on NGOs and the independence of both the judiciary and business, have dashed their hopes for a liberal turn in Russia.

Andrew Monaghan (2007), writing shortly after, is also critical of the state of relations. The key incident he highlights is the poisoning of former FSB agent Litvinenko via plutonium on British soil. According to the author, this event shook the UK's thinking about Russia "like nothing else" (Monaghan, 2007, p. 3). Before, British statements about Russia remained positive, even with issues, but there was now a return to Cold War rhetoric. This callback to the previous century emphasises how perceptions had been significantly setback. Adding to this situation was the lack of cooperation over extradition. Russian authorities refused to hand over suspects, which increased a sense of mistrust and led Monaghan to conclude that the relationship between the two nations was drastically deteriorating. Given the impact this poisoning had on relations, it is thus evident that a study of relations has to include a thorough discussion of these sorts of incidents.

As the New Labour period ended, Maxine David (2011) assessed relations between the UK and Russia. She categorised the developments into three phases. The first phase, from 1992 to 2005, focuses on engagement and accommodation. David particularly mentions, like Kozin, the high-level visits and diplomatic engagement between leaders Blair and Putin. The next phase, from 2006 to 2008, is disappointment and disapprobation. Like Monaghan, she points to the Litvinenko case as a turning point. However, it is not the only source of tension as leadership and foreign policy are brought up. The former is disputing the success of Blair as an interlocutor, as Bacon mentions in his article. David similarly states that Blair's desire to be the go-between between the US and Russia strained the relationship as the UK often sided with the Americans, especially in the case of Iraq. Foreign policy decisions like this and the 2008 Russia-Georgia War have also caused a strain on relations, which shows that these international affairs can also have serious consequences.

Furthermore, continuing this downward spiral in relations, the next phase, which David (2011) ends on, is also critical. It goes from 2009 to 2011 and is called wary cooperation and pragmatism. The shift in approach emphasises interests over values, with trade as a priority. This change shows that the claims made by Cook were not proven, as human rights are no longer at the forefront. Instead, it is a more transactional approach, as Austin advocated in his work. Additionally, David continues on the same track as Monaghan by stating that a Cold War discourse has developed, which the UK media and politicians are utilising. Ultimately, this

highlights the downward spiral that occurred over the course of the New Labour period, which ended with this phase and the UK taking a pragmatic approach towards ties with Russia at the end of the 2000s.

Overall, this first segment demonstrated that relations during the New Labour era started optimistically but gradually became more distrustful as time passed. Three factors cause this change, and they are the main throughlines in many of the articles. The first is that the leaders themselves were a critical factor in the relationship. In this case, it mainly concerned Blair and Putin. Kozin and Monaghan demonstrate that they were a litmus test, with their interactions an indicator of how relations were going. That is why, for the rest of the paper, there is an emphasis on the leaders, specifically from the UK, as they will impact relations through their actions and showcase the level of relations via their reactions. The second factor was bilateral incidents. As Monaghan and David showcased, the Litvinenko case was a turning point that significantly impacted relations. Hence, the rest of the paper also considers the consequences of similar incidents on the ties between these nations. The last factor is international developments involving one of the nations. David points out that the UK's role in Iraq and Russia's in Georgia impacted ties, even though they were not directly engaged. Therefore, a similar focus is also on international developments and their role in the ties between the UK and Russia. The following segment will explore these factors and cover the Cameron era of relations from 2010-2016.

3.2 – David Cameron

Monaghan (2011) discussed the early stages of David Cameron's period as PM. In the beginning, there were ongoing issues that created continuing controversy. For example, regional integration issues and unresolved matters related to the Litvinenko murder persisted. The latter sees an inquiry bring up the topic again, further complicating the relationship between the nations as it highlights an incident of hostility. This case also evokes memories of the Cold War, which Monaghan sees as contributing to a sense of rivalry. The other factor is tied to the existing differences regarding NATO and EU enlargement in the post-Soviet republics. Russia sees this area as part of its sphere of influence and thus perceives this activity as encroachment by other powers. With Cameron and, thus, the UK firmly behind these

enlargements, it is a source of tension between the two states as they have competing regional interests.

Despite these political tensions, it is notable that there still is much cooperation, especially in trade relations. For instance, over 1000 British companies were active in Russia then. By using these links as a foundation, there were efforts to improve the overall relationship, with ideas of deepening trade, as seen in BP's deals with Rosneft over an energy partnership. These endeavours often occur with high-level meetings involving Cameron and his Russian counterpart, again showcasing the importance of the leaders and their attitudes. Cameron, being a newcomer, was able to use this as an opportunity to put ties on a new footing, which is why Monaghan has a sense of optimism, like Kozin, regarding the future. He concludes that there is potential for a "reset" in UK-Russia relations, although this requires significant work and both sides actively contributing to building a sustainable improvement (Monaghan, 2011, p. 7).

Two years later, Monaghan (2013) still had a positive outlook. Cameron, at this point, has met both Putin and Medvedev on several occasions in bilateral and multilateral meetings. The interactions appear constructive as the author cites the expansion of talks to foreign and defence ministers in 2013 with a "2+2" format in London (Monaghan, 2013, p. 10). While the leaders remain cautious, each side does state their readiness to resume relations. Again, this aligns with Austin's thinking, as there is a transactional approach to developing ties, especially in economic matters. However, it is notable that some common challenges induce both sides to come together. The international affairs focus on Afghanistan, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and international terrorism. These joint ventures thus show cooperation and allow the author to remain optimistic about the capacity to develop ties.

Nevertheless, Monaghan (2013) does express more reservations about the nature of the relationship than in 2011. While he continues showcasing the cooperation on these common challenges, there is the emergence of other international affairs that are of concern. The examples he cites revolve around turmoil in Libya and Syria. The former involves the UK's efforts to overthrow the regime of Gaddafi. The latter is the Syrian Civil War, where Assad battles then the Syrian Democratic Forces. In both cases, Russia supports the existing regime and is thus on the opposite side of the UK. This opposition, which includes vetoing UK resolutions on Syria at the UN, leads to condemnation. As neither side is willing to alter their positions on these significant points of tension, Monaghan (2013, p. 10) believes the economic

ties will continue to grow, but the attempts to build state-to-state relations will be slow and face ongoing tensions and regular setbacks due to the conflicting views on international issues.

The development of international affairs is also pivotal in Gromyko and Ananieva's (2014) work. For instance, they also cite tensions between the nations due to Syria. However, their article now covers a new factor, which centres on Ukraine and appears to have more dramatic consequences for the UK-Russia relationship. Ukraine's President in 2013 initially signalled to sign the EU Association Agreement, which Russia opposed and the UK backed. When the Ukrainian President changed his mind and opted for further ties with Russia, people in Ukraine protested, which led to the Maidan Revolution; following this, Russia annexed Crimea. It also sponsored insurgents in the Donbas region, which fought the Ukrainian army. During these events, the UK remained in step with the rest of the NATO allies and EU members who condemned Russia's actions. According to the authors, the UK's rhetoric thus evolved and became much more critical due to Russia's hostile actions against Ukraine.

Actions taken by the UK also backed up their rhetoric. There were EU sanctions on Russia, which Cameron fully supported (Gromyko & Ananieva, 2014). These included freezing bank accounts and imposing travel bans. Additionally, military cooperation and naval exercises, which resumed in August 2012, were suspended, and licences for exporting weapon systems were revoked. In the G7, Cameron was active in efforts to reduce energy dependence on Russia, which starkly contrasts with how things were going when Monaghan was writing. Even after Litvinenko's death, the UK was reluctant to speak out or take action; it prioritised its economic ties. That is why it is significant that the UK was enacting sanctions. However, it should be noted that this energy reduction under Cameron was not total, and economic ties continued. Nonetheless, these measures and, thus, negative attitudes towards Russia are a significant break from what came before, and that is what makes the authors see Ukraine as a critical factor influencing the future diplomatic and economic ties between the UK and Russia.

Unlike Syria and Libya, Ukraine caused a more seismic shift in relations, as it was heavily featured in the UK Parliament's assessment of UK-Russia relations (UK Parliament, 2015). This report was a briefing paper provided to "MPs and their staff with impartial information to support their work in scrutinising the Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents" (UK Parliament, 2015). What it supposed was that Russia, under Putin, had pursued a nationalist agenda, using military interventions and hybrid warfare tactics to protect its perceived sphere of influence, particularly in former Soviet states. The example

it honed in on was the aggression against Ukraine. The focus here on security and details on hybrid warfare is revealing as it shows how Russia is now clearly perceived as a threat to Eastern Europe and the UK. That is again tied to the case of the annexation of Crimea, and the report makes it clear that things have changed due to that course of action, which makes it more pessimistic than Monaghan regarding future relations. It sees these interventions and assertive foreign policy in Ukraine as determining how broader relations would develop.

Russia's actions have impacted relations, but not all academics take the view espoused by the Parliamentary report or Gromyko and Ananieva's article. For example, Osipova (2016) disputes the idea that it is a critical juncture in developing relations. She traces the relationship through time and proposes that the UK has no eternal allies or enemies but perpetual interests. The narrative underscores the UK's manoeuvring and adaptability in foreign policy to safeguard these national interests, which do not inherently conflict with Russia. While she agrees that recent events like the "Ukraine crisis" have caused a downturn in relations, the author maintains that this is not as drastic as other academics pointed out (Osipova, 2016, p. 25). The author points to the periods of economic cooperation and pragmatic diplomatic efforts to maintain ties. Her article then expresses hope for a pendulum swing in the opposite direction, anticipating a potential warming of bilateral relations in the future, indicating that the events in Ukraine are not detrimental to this shift. The article's cautious optimism about the potential for improved relations in the future again echoes the previous assessments made by Monaghan and even Kozin.

Osipova's work questions the significance of Putin's actions against Ukraine for the UK and its attitudes towards Russia. That is why the paper examines this international development, focusing on the annexation of Crimea in 2014. By examining the remarks and attitudes expressed by Cameron, this study can measure the impact of this incident on relations. It will help showcase whether it is a critical juncture, as proposed by Gromyko and Ananieva, or a temporary setback, as expected by Osipova and Monaghan. The latter will show a bounce-back in sentiment, whereas the former will show a continual decline since then. These results will also reveal its impact compared to other events during the premiership of different Tory leaders. This comparison with other leaders is because Cameron's era ended in 2016 with the Brexit referendum. After backing the Remain campaign and losing, he resigns and makes way for another technocratic figure, Theresa May. Therefore, the next segment examines her period in charge and how relations developed with Russia.

3.3 – Theresa May

Brexit featured heavily in the early part of May's tenure. For example, Jane Henderson and Eva Pils (2016) explore the potential impact on UK-Russia relations. They point out that the continuation of the sanctions against Russia is the issue that will be most seriously affected after Brexit. If May maintains them, the author posits that the UK will require new legislation as the withdrawal process could lead to removing the measures the EU put in place. However, they do state that it is still being determined whether the UK will retain its anti-Russia stance once it is out of the EU. That is because the UK has much to gain from the potential trade it can do with Russia. This lack of clarity indicates that even then, in 2016, there was the possibility of a change in the relationship between the two nations. This scenario runs against the ideas proposed by Gromyko and Ananieva but supports the views expressed by Osipova.

Nonetheless, Henderson and Pils (2016) state that the UK's participation in organisations like NATO and the Council of Europe, alongside developments in Ukraine, would affect the dynamics even in a post-Brexit environment. According to them, these organisations support the Ukrainian cause and, by extension, indicate that the UK would follow this track. Another reason for this alignment in foreign policy would be the UK's previous behaviour, which has been going hand in hand with US policy, especially in previous interventions and positions on the UN Security Council. Following the Americans means Russia would thus remain a security challenge for the UK, making a resumption of relations unlikely. The Americans also appear to be supportive of the Ukrainians at this point. These factors provide more credence to the arguments by Gromyko and Ananieva that the future of the relationship is primarily dependent on how things develop in Ukraine rather than on any specific changes from Brexit.

Writing shortly after Henderson and Pils, Tracy German (2016) still examined Brexit as it revealed the level of mistrust present in UK-Russia relations. Even though Russia's official stance was neutral over the referendum, members of the Remain campaign portrayed Putin “as one of the principal supporters of the Leave campaign” (German, 2016, p. 1). For example, May's chancellor of the exchequer, Philip Hammond, stated that Russia would be the only world power to “welcome Brexit” (German, 2016, p. 1). While this was intended to denigrate the case of leaving, the comment also showcases how Russia was seen as a malevolent actor who does not want the UK to succeed. Russian officials condemned this remark then, but UK officials made no retraction or clarification. In other words, they showed tacit approval. Thus,

ties between the two nations were not favourable as senior figures in the UK Government viewed Russia with some suspicion and were inclined to mention it for domestic political purposes.

German's (2016) article also argues that the annexation of Crimea is the cause of this level of distrust. For the UK, it epitomised a “disregard for international norms and principles”, which constitutes a threat to its national security and a “challenge to the rules-based international order” (German, 2016, p.7). This understanding of why there has been a downward trend in relations further supports the views of Gromyko and Ananieva, as it indicates that 2014 was a turning point for this change. Since then, cooperation has been replaced with an emphasis on Russia's hybrid warfare threat, echoing also the remarks made in the Parliamentary Briefing Paper.

Nevertheless, like Osipova, German's article leaves room for potential changes to the relationship, even in a positive trajectory. The author cites previous examples of cooperation that occurred even under periods of overt political mistrust. For instance, she mentions an “oft-overlooked aspect of the UK-Russia relationship, which is the cultural and societal link between the two countries” that occurs mainly on the individual level (German, 2016, p. 4). In education, at the time, over 3500 students from Russia were attending UK universities. Russian students were also a top source for the private education sector, particularly boarding schools. Additionally, scientific collaboration was well displayed and advertised, especially in the case of Tim Peake's journey to the International Space Station. These links give German a belief that while Ukraine has halted certain connections, others remain, and these could be a springboard for a more positive relationship in the future.

The Salisbury incident fundamentally challenges this narrative of potential cooperation during the May era. Mark Chinonso (2018) highlights it as the single act that sours the relationship to a new low. This case involved Skripal, a former Russian colonel and double agent for the UK, who was poisoned in Salisbury, leading to a diplomatic crisis. While the intended target of the assassination attempt survived, a British citizen who came into contact with a contaminated item died. May, in an address to Parliament, directly attributed the poison, the military-grade nerve agent Novichok, to Russia. By making this accusation, the PM was not being cautious, as had been the case during the Litvinenko murder. She was willing to call out Russia and take action by expelling their diplomats. This response from the Government showcases that the dynamics between the two nations had shifted. Kicking out the diplomats

visually and symbolically was the UK's way of showing that it was no longer interested in cooperating with Russia.

Chinonso (2018) also points out that derogatory remarks from British Government Ministers expressed this new sense of adversity and lack of diplomatic restraint. For example, the then Defence Minister, Gavin Williamson, said Russia should "go away and shut up" (Chinonso, 2018, p. 63). In response, his Russian counterpart described it as "the speech-making of a bad-mannered woman from a bazaar" (Chinonso, 2018, p. 63). Such language reflects the tensions of the time, as there was no backing down in either side's response. Instead, they both sought to make statements which caused more escalation. May stood by this response, and it is a notable deviation from Cameron, who did not sanction such remarks in his time as leader. This case shows that the different British administrations and the heightened situation have brought about changes. Thus, the responses reflect this and are thus much more critical of Russia as a result.

Writing at the same time, David (2018) also examines the Skripal poisoning and the UK's response. The author broadly supports the Government's actions, although the article expresses some reservations about the sustainability of a reactive strategy. In stark contrast to the pragmatism she was writing about at the tail end of the New Labour period, the author now adopts a view close to Chinonso, where Russia is a threat that needs to be confronted. She even goes further by saying that the UK should be more proactive in addressing the risks posed by Putin. The fact that she is making this argument shows how the relationship is now one of antagonism, where the states are considered firmly on opposing sides. This outcome is a departure from the transactional approach Henderson advocated. Equally, it does not suggest any chance for a resumption of ties or pendulum swing, as suggested by Osipova. Thus, this reading of events would imply that the Skripal poisoning is a critical juncture for UK-Russia relations.

The strong reaction caused by the incident is why this paper also examines it closely. By doing this, the research reveals whether it was consequential in turning the attitudes towards Russia. This bilateral event can also be compared with the international development of the annexation of Crimea. A comparison here can also showcase which was more impactful for relations, as various academics see each event as a turning point but cannot provide an empirical basis for their claims. This paper can resolve this query and the impact of different administrations. As Chinonso shows, the rhetoric May condoned seems a significant departure

from her predecessor's. Examining the attitudes and decorum of both leaders will help showcase whether there was a sense of continuity or marked change, especially as both are typically seen as technocratic Tory leaders. The latter would be significant as it, too then, would be a critical factor in how relations developed during this period. Nonetheless, the comparison for May ends in 2019 as the Tory party ousts her, and Boris Johnson, a populist politician, takes over as PM. The next segment deals with his tenure and the other successors until 2023.

3.4 – Boris Johnson, Liz Truss, and Rishi Sunak

At the start of Boris Johnson's tenure, academics were still assessing the impact of his predecessor. For example, Andrew Foxall (2021) saw May implement an assertive foreign policy. This strategy combined diplomatic, intelligence, and military capabilities to counter Russian aggression. Her speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet epitomised this approach. It underscored the importance of standing firm against Russia's attempts to undermine international institutions, stating, "We know what you are doing. And you will not succeed" (Foxall, 2021, p. 22). Foxall endorsed this oratory, although his approval did not apply to all her Ministers. In his recommendations to the Johnson administration, he suggested avoiding childish remarks like those made by Gavin Williamson. He was also keen to say that the UK should be balanced with meaningful engagement with the Russian people, promoting cultural exchanges and dialogues, which echoed the ideas of German's article. Thus, there was still a sense that relations could improve at the time regarding individuals rather than state-to-state relations.

Unlike Foxall, academic Vasil Sakaev (2021) still saw the potential for normalising the UK-Russia relationship with Johnson as PM and the circumstances he was facing. The catalyst for this change would be the impact of the pandemic on both nations. In particular, the economic challenges brought about by COVID-19 could prompt both countries to seek mutually beneficial cooperation, thereby mitigating tensions brought up by Skripal and Crimea. The author cites the existing and previous financial ties in energy, trade, and investment. This need for economic activity may lead to efforts to overcome sanction barriers and promote trade again. Thus, according to Sakaev, post-pandemic cooperation could drive political rapprochement, as shared economic goals often incentivise diplomatic engagement. This

argument is built on ideas of national interest, which would support the notions introduced by Osipova and Austin, who saw the UK's actions as transactional and built around its interests.

Joanna Kustowska (2021) also saw the potential for a rapprochement, but her reasons centred more specifically around Johnson. As a politician renowned for taking risks, he was willing to meet with Putin in 2020 despite the high tensions after the Skripal case. This meeting signalled a potential opening for diplomatic dialogue between the two countries. It was his character and outlook that, unlike May, would allow him to partake in such actions. The close relationships between some oligarchs and British politicians also showed how personal ties could influence the broader relationship. These oligarchs, who controlled various aspects of British media and culture, could use these levers to impact policy and attitudes. The PM was already exposed to this via his close association with Alexander Lebedev, who owned the Evening Standard Newspaper and lobbied for changes. Therefore, the ascension of Johnson made Kustowska believe normalisation could occur, as his previous ties and characteristics made him potentially open to such a result.

Nevertheless, a stark change occurs with the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia. The case for a resumption of relations was dropped as Johnson became a prominent supporter of the Ukrainian cause. For instance, academic Hendra Saragih (2023) points out that the PM frequently made public statements condemning the invasion, urging Russia to cease their military activities and emphasising the importance of upholding international law. He even personally engaged in diplomatic talks and discussions with Russian counterparts, including Putin, to convey these demands. When these proved fruitless, the PM became a keen advocate for sanctions on Russia, supporting Ukraine with weapons, and coordinating efforts with NATO allies. These actions show how a change to the geopolitical situation resulted in Johnson taking a more hardline position, which sidelined Kustowska's ideas of normalisation as the UK became one of the most vocal critics of Russia.

While the PM had previously demonstrated adaptability in his approach towards Russia, adjusting strategies in response to changing circumstances, the severity of the situation in Ukraine, and ideas of legacy were pivotal for the emergence of a more confrontational approach. Saragih (2023) notes that the latter is especially critical for understanding this change in response. The effectiveness of the UK's diplomacy efforts would shape a part of Johnson's legacy as PM. Thus, the actions taken regarding the Russia-Ukraine War are made with that in mind. In other words, as an individual, Johnson also contributed to the change in UK-Russia

relations as he deliberately acted in a way that he believed would enhance his standing both in the UK and internationally. That is why this paper also explores his attitudes and background. This analysis would help us understand why Johnson reacted as he did, which appeared more forceful than his previous behaviour.

Another factor that could have led to this reaction is the history between the two nations. Academic James Ellison (2023) showcases that the confrontation was a long time coming following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the Salisbury poisoning in 2018. The author traces the roots of the current situation to these events and how they allowed perceptions to shift after each incident. Thus, the war would be the culmination, or the final straw, which convinced the UK to disregard its connections with Russia. By presenting events this way, Ellison paints the current relations at a nadir. However, it is notable that other academics have expressed this sort of reaction during 2014 and 2018. Therefore, further evidence must be provided to showcase the impact of the war on relations. That is why this paper also focuses on the current conflict and explores the impact on attitudes of not just Johnson but also the subsequent PMs who took over.

Johnson resigned in 2022, and Liz Truss took over. Truss was in charge for over a month before she too resigned, and Rishi Sunak took charge. Given that both have been in power recently, the literature has not thoroughly explored their administrations. So, this paper will also include them in the study and attempt to understand their actions and reactions towards Russia. The Truss period is short, but what is clear is that the full-scale invasion was still heavily featured in her speeches and that she was a populist figure (Campbell & Stewart, 2023). Thus, there is material that can be studied to showcase the impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on relations as well as a change in PM. Truss's time can be compared to that of her predecessors and her populist successor, Sunak. Again, the war comes up repeatedly, and while the situation is still unfolding, by going up to 2023, the study can still cover much of his tenure and contribute to a new discussion not touched upon by the academic literature so far.

3.5 – The Key Findings

This paper can add to the existing discussion and debate around UK-Russia relations. It will provide a picture of how relations have generally developed, confirming or rejecting the ideas prevalent in the literature that there has been a decline since 2010. For example, Ellison

highlights how ties in 2022, following the full-scale invasion, have hit new depths. This idea builds on others who comment, with each new incident, about a souring of relations, indicating a fall from 2010 onwards. Nonetheless, the idea of normalisation and potential for positivity from authors such as Osipova does challenge whether there was a severe decline. After all, their predictions would not be so optimistic if it was a nonstop downward spiral. Adding to this is Monaghan, who pointed to the eagerness early on during Cameron's tenure as PM in making deals. Therefore, in its longitudinal focus, the research can address this contested depiction of UK attitudes by showcasing whether it was a continuous decline or a more turbulent trend, as hinted by a few.

In addition, the first section highlighted that bilateral and international incidents were critical to this development. For example, literature written in Cameron's era showed that the annexation of Crimea was a significant turning point. Some academics, such as Gromyko and Ananieva, even saw it as a critical juncture. However, this view was challenged by academics writing in May's era. They would point to 2018 and the Skripal poisoning as being more detrimental. Complicating this idea is a set of academics who advocate or forecast better relations during both periods. The oscillation between cooperation and confrontation thus raises questions about the impact of these events and whether they were as critical as portrayed. On top of this, some have also considered the current Russia-Ukraine War to be the most significant issue. With all these competing claims on the most consequential incident, this paper seeks to settle the debate by analysing all three and comparing their impact via sentiment analysis. This research can then showcase which had the most significant impact on UK responses towards Russia.

Lastly, this research can also address the role of individual leaders in determining attitudes and policy. As the first segment showed, the individual in charge plays an essential role in developing ties. While much has been written about Blair and his actions, fewer pieces cover the Tory leaders who succeeded him, such as Johnson, Sunak, and Truss. The paper can thus examine each of the Tory leaders post-2010 to showcase their impact on relations. For example, Monaghan points to the importance of ties between Cameron and Putin on the UK's foreign policy. Kustowska uses a similar logic but applies it to Johnson and his ties to Russian oligarchs. There is, however, no emphasis on May's links with any notable individuals. Another aspect is that each PM brings a different political situation and demeanour. The latter is based on the groupings in the literature, where Johnson, Truss, and Sunak were populists, whereas Cameron and May were technocrats. Each would suggest a different disposition and thus react

to Russia differently. Nonetheless, it is unclear how vital these traits and connections were; therefore, this research can address this by contrasting the sentiment towards Russia under these different PMs.

Table 1 – Summary of the Literature Review

	<u>David Cameron</u>	<u>Theresa May</u>	<u>Boris Johnson</u>	<u>Liz Truss</u>	<u>Rishi Sunak</u>
International/Bilateral Affairs Focus:	International	Bilateral	International	International	International
Critical Event:	Annexation of Crimea 2014	Skripal Poisoning 2018	Full-scale Invasion 2022	Full-scale Invasion 2022	Full-scale Invasion 2022
Emphasis on Connections with Russian Elites/Politicians:	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Political Demeanour:	Technocrat	Technocrat	Populist	Populist	Populist

- *A table showing a breakdown of key findings for each PM according to existing literature*

Chapter Four – Results

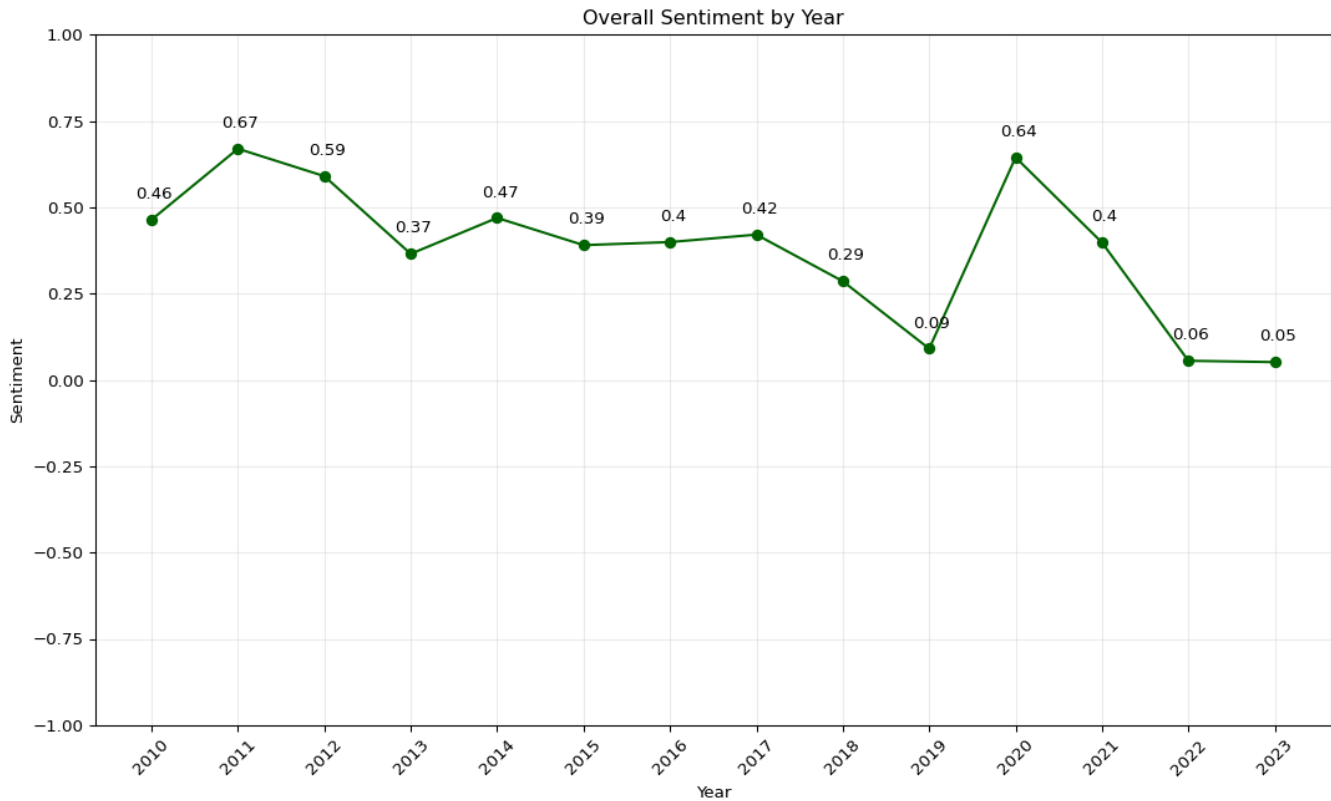
4.1 – The Overall Period

[H1] In a comparison of UK PM statements about Russia, those made in the later years had lower sentiment scores than those made in the early years.

Saragih (2023) and Ellison (2023) have claimed that relations have worsened. In fact, several academics picked out various years as low points, and some use words such as a downward spiral to describe the trajectory and general trend. Taking the view that relations have soured over time, the paper posits that attitudes became worse as time progressed. This outcome is down to the emergence of more incidents throughout this period, such as the annexation of Crimea, which caused divisions. During these events, the UK PM was on the opposing side due to their foreign policy aims, which clashed with the Russian counterpart's assertive approach. These disagreements led to more critical remarks from the UK PM about Russia. Consequently, the harsher rhetoric signalled that ties were not as crucial for each side, leading to distrust and caution prevailing over the early optimism Monaghan spotted in 2011. Thus, sentiment scores have deteriorated from then to 2023.

Data collected from Hansard, X, and the UK Government website are utilised to test this hypothesis. In particular, these sources provide the remarks made by UK Tory PMs about Russia. The dependent variable [DV] is Sentiment. It is an interval-level variable, also titled “Sentiment” in the statistical tests. As it uses the VADER sentiment analysis module to produce the score, the data is numerical and includes decimal values. The independent variable [IV] is Time. It is also an interval variable, showing years from 2010-2023. In the statistical tests, it is referred to as “Date”. In total, there are 1102 observations, reflecting the number of remarks directly concerning the subject matter of Russia made by the UK PMs.

Figure 1



- A line graph showing the mean sentiment towards Russia from UK PMs by year

Figure 1 displays the sentiment of UK PMs towards Russia from 2010 to 2023. The data is plotted on a scale of -1 to +1, with a score close to the latter showing highly positive statements and the former highly negative scoring remarks. A line graph here is suitable as it visually represents the trend or movement of the data over time, which allows for a quick assessment of whether the values are increasing, decreasing, or remaining relatively stable. The graph can also be used as a reference to determine the precise mean values without the need for detailed calculations or interpolations, as the points are all labelled. Lastly, the slope and direction of the line provide insights into the magnitude of changes, allowing for a trend visualisation in attitudes over the long run.

As Figure 1 indicates, the trend shows an overall relative decline in attitudes. The mean sentiment has fallen from a high of 0.67 in 2011 to a low of 0.05 in 2023. While this implies that attitudes towards Russia have worsened, it is notable that it is not a gradual or steady fall. In fact, there is a spike of positivity, with a high of 0.64 in 2020, before again decreasing over the next few years. Another spike occurred in 2014, although this is not as large as the former. Still, this is significant given that this is when the annexation of Crimea takes place. Also, from

2014 to 2017, there seem to be small changes, but it appears stable, with sentiment scores of around 0.4. Therefore, when examining the graph, there is a case for suggesting that with time, attitudes have gotten worse, but the idea that it has been a spiral or steep decline is in doubt.

Figure 2

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	1,102
Model	1.8529899	1	1.8529899	F(1, 1100)	=	75.79
Residual	26.8943659	1,100	.024449424	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Total	28.7473558	1,101	.026110223	R-squared	=	0.0645
				Adj R-squared	=	0.0636
				Root MSE	=	.15636

Sentiment	Coefficient	Std. err.	t	P> t	[95% conf. interval]	
Date	-.0109331	.0012559	-8.71	0.000	-.0133972	-.0084689
_cons	22.13965	2.535114	8.73	0.000	17.16545	27.11386

- *A linear regression analysis of the expected effect of progression of time on sentiment*

Figure 2 is a linear regression analysis, which helps show the relationship between the two variables of Time and Sentiment. It reveals that the constant is 22.13965. It also shows that the coefficient is -0.0109331. This result means that if the IV were to increase by one, then there would be a fall in the DV by this amount. Another notable finding is that the R-squared number is 0.0645, which indicates that Time offers a relatively low predictive power regarding values of Sentiment. Only 6.45% of the variation is explained by the IV. As this amount is relatively low, this is not a good fit. However, the p-value is 0, demonstrating a 0% chance that the relationship has occurred by chance. This result then indicates a statistical significance.

Figure 1 indicates a weak negative correlation with the nature of the decline in sentiment; Figure 2 reinforces this assessment by revealing a relatively low R-squared number. This suggests the relationship is not very substantial as another element might be impacting the difference in outcomes. Therefore, while the null hypothesis can be rejected as the p-value shows statistical significance, caution is needed when dealing with the hypothesis, as another variable might be used to account for the deviation in results. The factors affecting the results could be the incidents mentioned in the causal chain between the variables. Hence, the next segment explores how bilateral and international affairs impact the sentiment score. Additionally, to see their influence, there is an examination of three major events: the

annexation of Crimea, the Salisbury poisoning, and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Examining these factors will make it more apparent what is significantly affecting UK-Russia relations.

4.2 – The Key Events

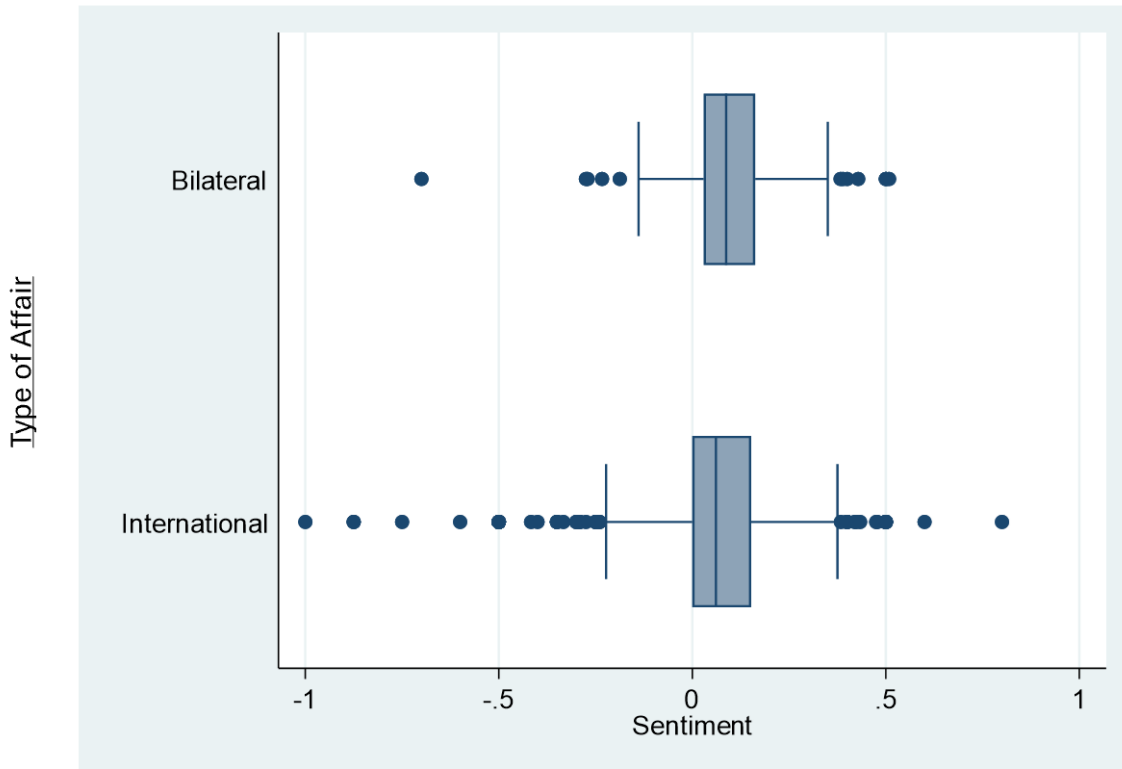
[H2a] In a comparison of UK PM statements about Russia, those focusing on international affairs had lower sentiment scores than those about bilateral affairs.

As shown in Chapter Three, various academics have pointed to specific events that have detrimentally impacted relations. However, there is no consensus on what has led to the most significant change. These incidents fall into two types of incidents: bilateral affairs, where the matter directly involves the two nations, and international affairs, where there are multiple actors and only one of the nations is directly engaged. The paper posits that incidents of an international nature have had a more prominent impact than those of a bilateral nature. That is due to the former causing a bigger problem. For instance, the UK is keen to promote the international rules-based system. Russia, in its interventions in Syria and Ukraine, challenges those rules by breaking norms—the latter involving the annexation of Crimea. Thus, the UK, seeing this as a considerable problem with the potential for escalation and worldwide ramifications in more revanchist behaviour, is more critical of these acts than those of a bilateral nature, which may involve lower stakes. Therefore, these international affairs involving Russia lead to lower sentiment scores from the UK PM, who criticises these actions more harshly.

Again, data collected from the same sources are used to test this hypothesis. The DV is also the same as in the last segment, an interval-level variable, Sentiment. However, the IV is, this time, the Type of Affairs. It is a dichotomous nominal variable, with affairs being international or bilateral. In the statistical tests, it is referred to as “IR”. There are also 1102 observations, although when split into the two categories, 872 remarks concern international events, and 230 are about bilateral incidents.

Figure 3

Sentiment by Type of Affair



- *A boxplot showing the distribution of sentiment according to whether the remark by the PM is concerning bilateral or international affairs*

Figure 3 shows the relationship between Type of Affairs and Sentiment. In particular, it helps by showcasing the interquartile range [IQR], median, and outliers. In Figure 3, a horizontal arrangement is also helpful in comparing the two categories of international and bilateral. The boxplot shows much overlap between the two variable categories. The IQR is practically the same, although the median is higher for the bilateral scores. Another notable difference is that the most critical outliers, with the lowest sentiment scores, are for the international category. This boxplot thus challenges the hypothesis as there appears to be no major difference between international and bilateral affairs. However, it is not easy to come to an assessment with this visual representation; thus, a further statistical test is needed to investigate the results further.

given the differences between the two categories, a further study may be beneficial as it could help explain what is causing this result. That is why there is another hypothesis to test the impact of specific events.

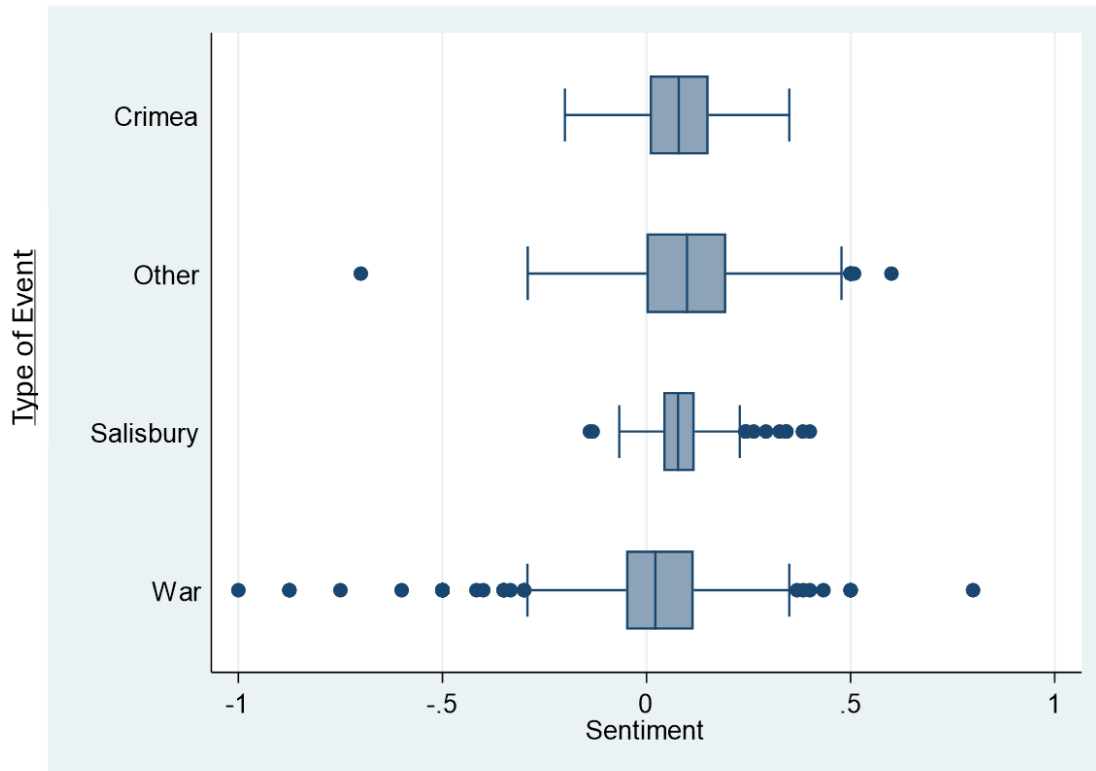
[H2b] In a comparison of UK PM statements about Russia, those focusing on the full-scale invasion of 2022 had lower sentiment scores than those about the Salisbury poisoning.

The idea that as a result of the invasion of Ukraine, UK-Russia relations have come to a nadir indicates that Ellison (2023) sees this event as the most impactful on the UK PM's attitudes and rhetoric. This paper thus examines this claim and posits that if it is true, the event has led to lower sentiment scores than other events, such as the Salisbury poisoning, which academics like Chinonso (2018) believed caused the harshest reactions. The reason why the former could be more detrimental is that it raised the stakes to another level. Whereas the poisoning led to casualties, the numbers involved do not compare to the war. Additionally, when the war broke out, the UK PM was Boris Johnson, a populist. His style of rhetoric, picking up on the stakes and the lives lost, is more stark than that of the technocratic Theresa May. Following this, the subsequent Tory leaders embraced Johnson's populist approach and continued with this oratory. Therefore, the remarks regarding the war are way more critical than those of preceding events.

The DV is still Sentiment. The IV is now the Type of Event. It is a categorical variable, with the incidents covering the Salisbury poisoning, the 2014 annexation of Crimea, the Russia-Ukraine War in 2022, and others, including all the remarks not associated with the events above. The statistical tests refer to it as "Key Events". Again, there are 1102 observations, although when split into the four categories, 229 are about Crimea, 383 for the war, 374 for others, and 116 for Salisbury.

Figure 5

Sentiment by Type of Event



- A boxplot showing the distribution of sentiment scores by the key event the UK PM is addressing

Figure 5 shows the impact of the events on the sentiment score. The category War does have a larger IQR than Salisbury, which shows a more widespread distribution of scores. Although, it is not the largest as that is the category for Other events. Another notable point is that the median is lower for War than Salisbury. This result indicates that the former has more critical remarks than the latter. The outliers make this more apparent, with many having extremely negative scores. War has the most critical outliers, but it also has the most positive data point. Altogether, this shows that the discourse around Russia and War seems more adverse than the Salisbury poisoning. However, there is still some overlap between boxes, and thus, further statistical analysis is needed to showcase whether differences between the categories are significant.

Figure 6

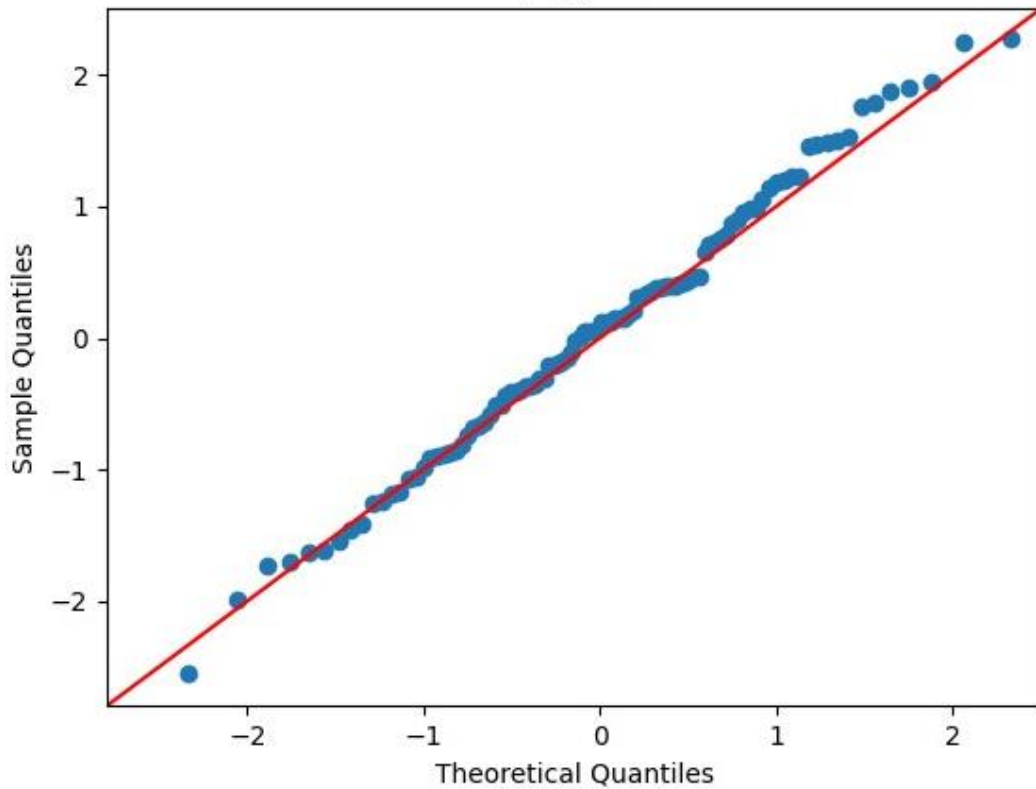
Number of obs = 1,102 R-squared = 0.0578
Root MSE = .157065 Adj R-squared = 0.0552

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob>F
Model	1.6602524	3	.55341748	22.43	0.0000
KeyEvents~t	1.6602524	3	.55341748	22.43	0.0000
Residual	27.087103	1,098	.02466949		
Total	28.747356	1,101	.02611022		

- *An ANOVA test of the Key Events and its effects on the Sentiment Scores*

Figure 6 shows a significant effect of the type of events on sentiment, as the p-value [Prob>F] is less than the chosen significance level. This result means that the differences between the categories are statistically significant, and the null hypothesis can be rejected. However, it is still difficult to determine whether the results are substantive. The margins involved are minimal, as the Means Square [MS] result of 0.02611022 shows. Also, going back to Figure 5, it is clear that scores overlap between the various categories. Thus, it is best to be cautious about accepting the hypothesis, as the expressed attitudes may not have shifted by much to impact relations drastically.

Figure 7
Q-Q plot



- A Q-Q plot showing the normal distribution of data (sentiment scores)

The prerequisite for an ANOVA test is normally distributed data. In order to check this, a Q-Q test was performed, as shown in Figure 7. The data points for sentiment scores follow a straight-line pattern, which means it is plausible to state that the data is normally distributed. Hence, the results of the ANOVA test are valid. Looking at these findings, it is apparent there are differences in the sentiment scores, and in terms of the two categories of focus, War has had a more detrimental impact than the Salisbury case. Figure 5 highlights this, with the former having more critical scores and a lower median. Again, caution is needed to deal with why, as the R-squared is approximately 0.0578, suggesting that about 5.78% of the variance in sentiment can be explained by the type of event. There could thus be another factor driving these differences, such as the actors involved. That is why the final segment examines their impact on the sentiment scores, as this would reveal whether changes in who is in charge significantly impacted relations.

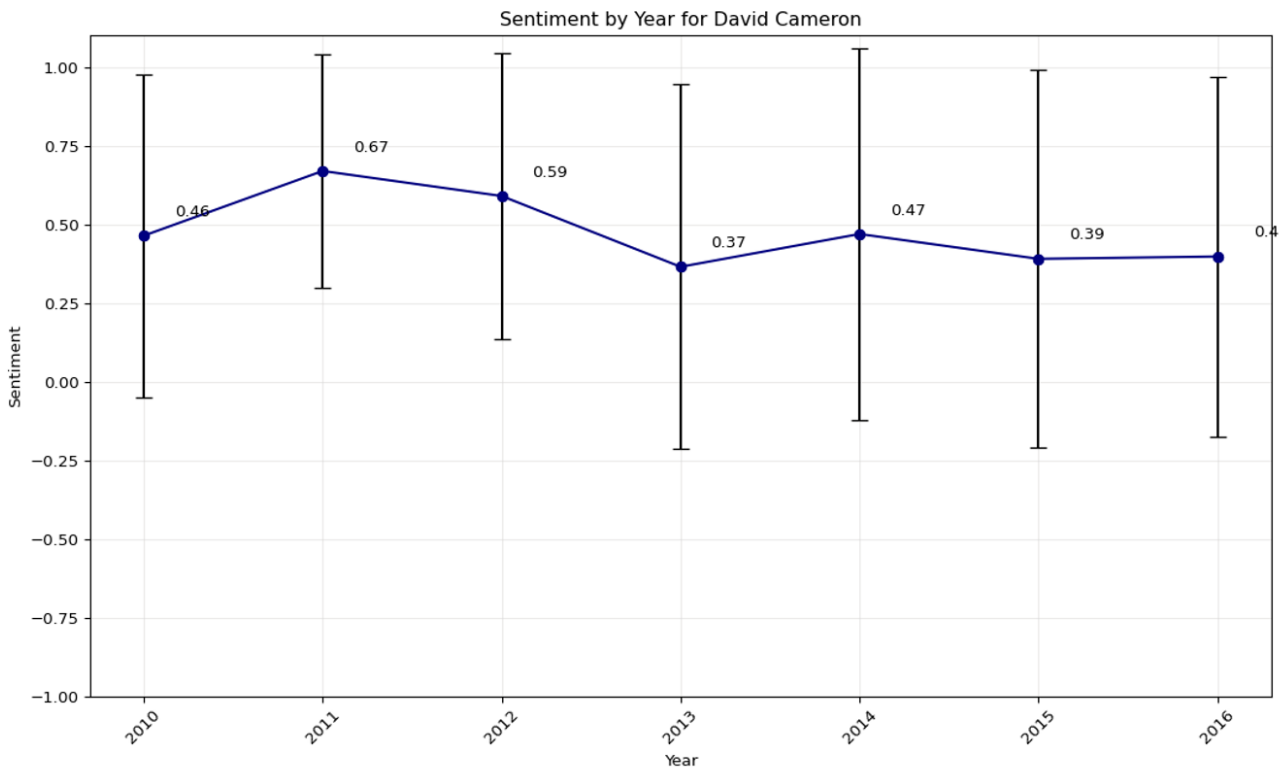
4.3 – The Different PMs

[H3]: Changes in Prime Ministers led to significant shifts in the sentiment of statements towards Russia, indicating varying approaches and attitudes under different premierships.

Kustowska (2018) stated that Boris Johnson was in a position to improve relations because of his ties to certain oligarchs. Besides these links, it is possible that his character also comes into play as his risk-taking behaviour would allow him to consider options his predecessors, such as Theresa May, could not. The research thus proposes that when there were changes in the Prime Minister, the sentiment towards Russia changed as each leader brought with them a different approach. For example, Boris Johnson was also a populist, so his expression of his own opinion was more pronounced than a technocratic or diplomatic remark. Combined with his willingness to take risks, he is likely to make more positive or negative statements towards Russia. Conversely, May was a more technocratic and more cautious figure, so her responses would be less emotive and more measured. Thus, the sentiment towards Russia should also reflect this with scores that do not vary as much as Johnson's.

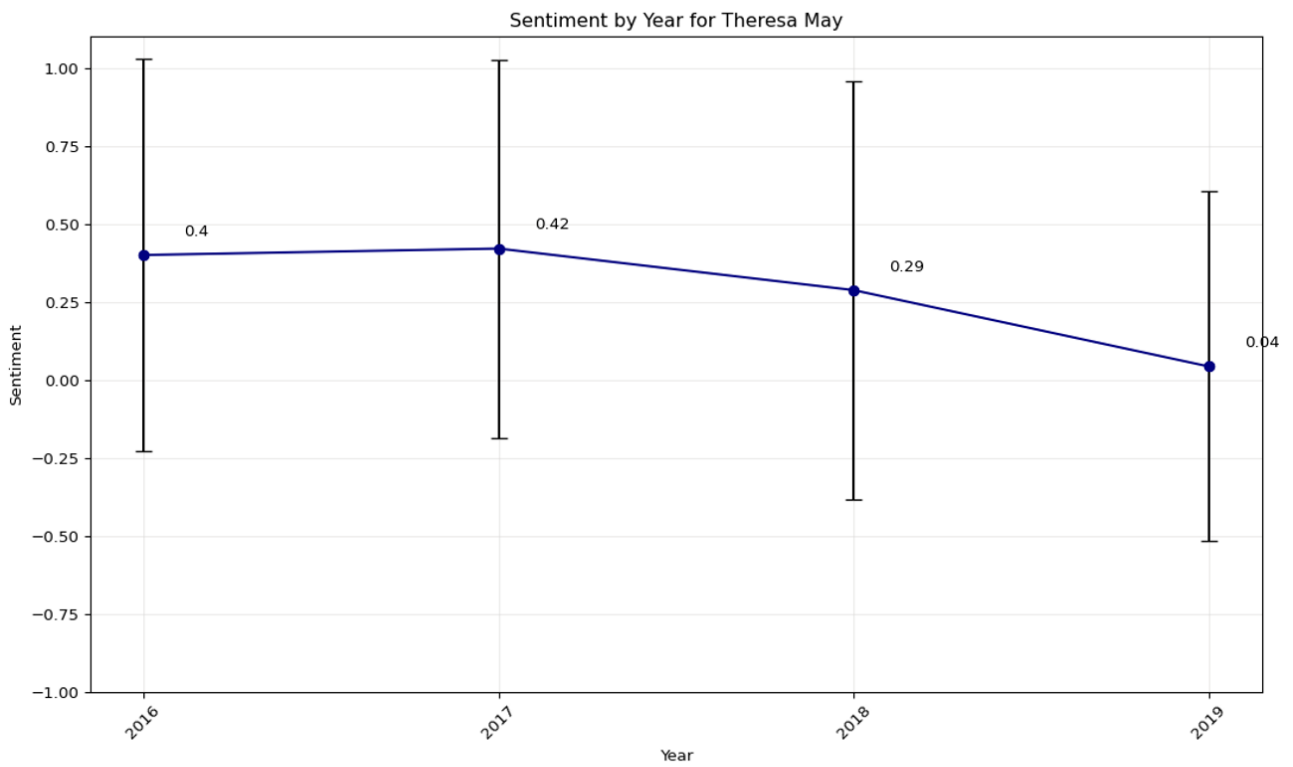
The DV remains the same. The IV is the Prime Minister. It is a categorical variable featuring the five UK PMs from 2010 to 2023: David Cameron, Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss, and Rishi Sunak. In the statistical tests, it is referred to as “Author_cat.” Again, there are 1102 observations.

Figure 8



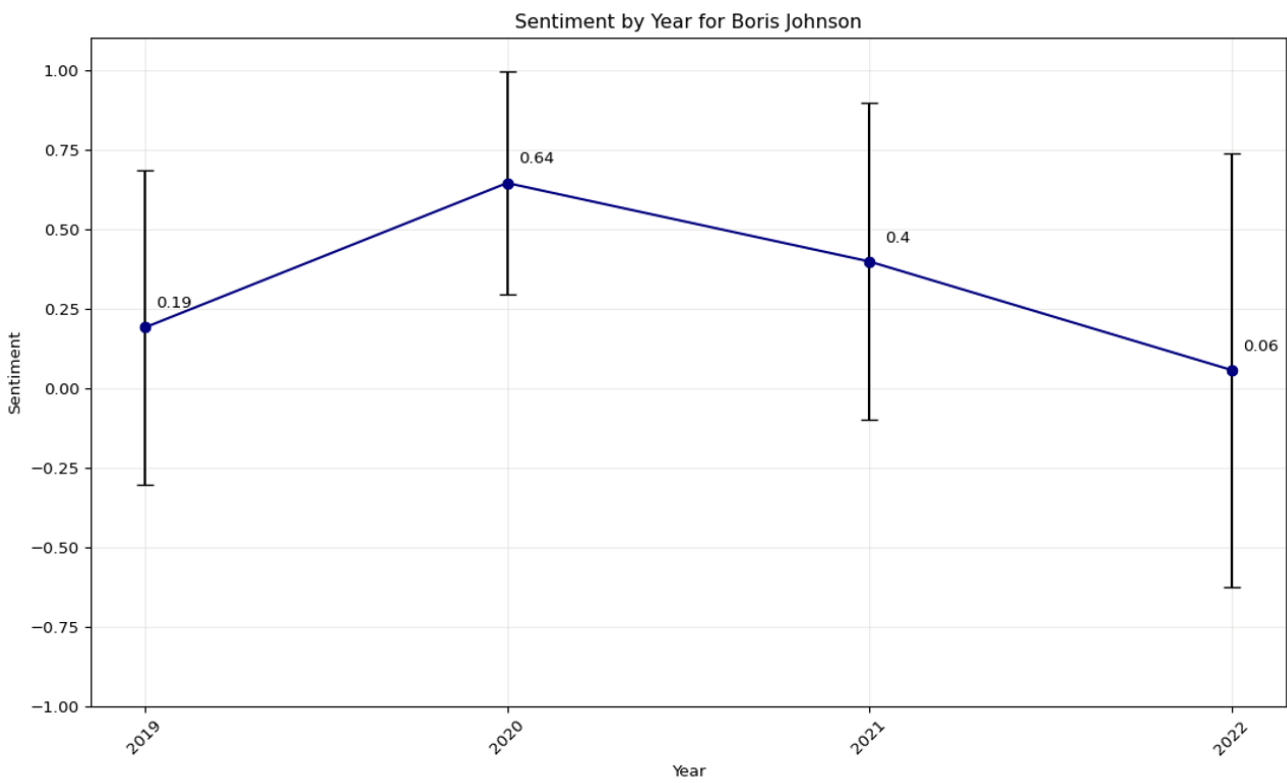
- A line graph showing standard deviation and the changes in mean sentiment towards Russia during the era of Cameron

Figure 9



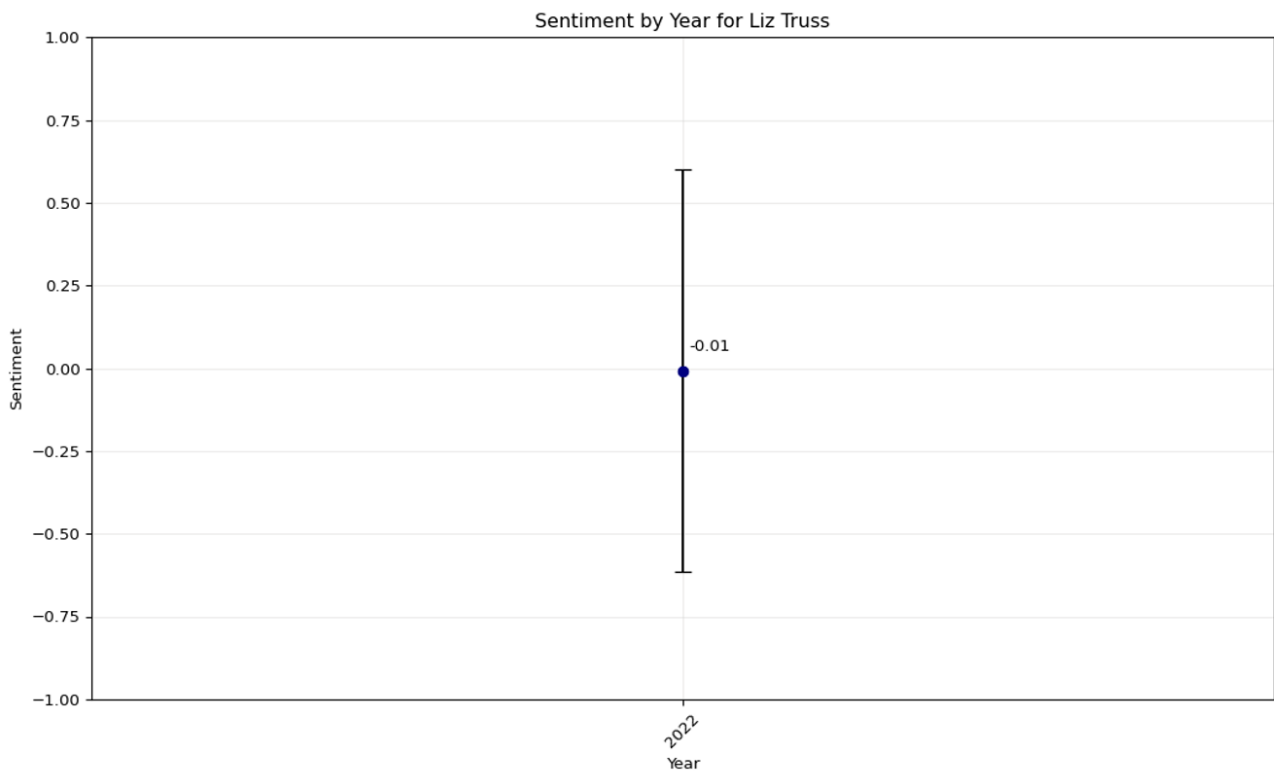
- A line graph showing standard deviation and changes in mean sentiment towards Russia during May's era

Figure 10



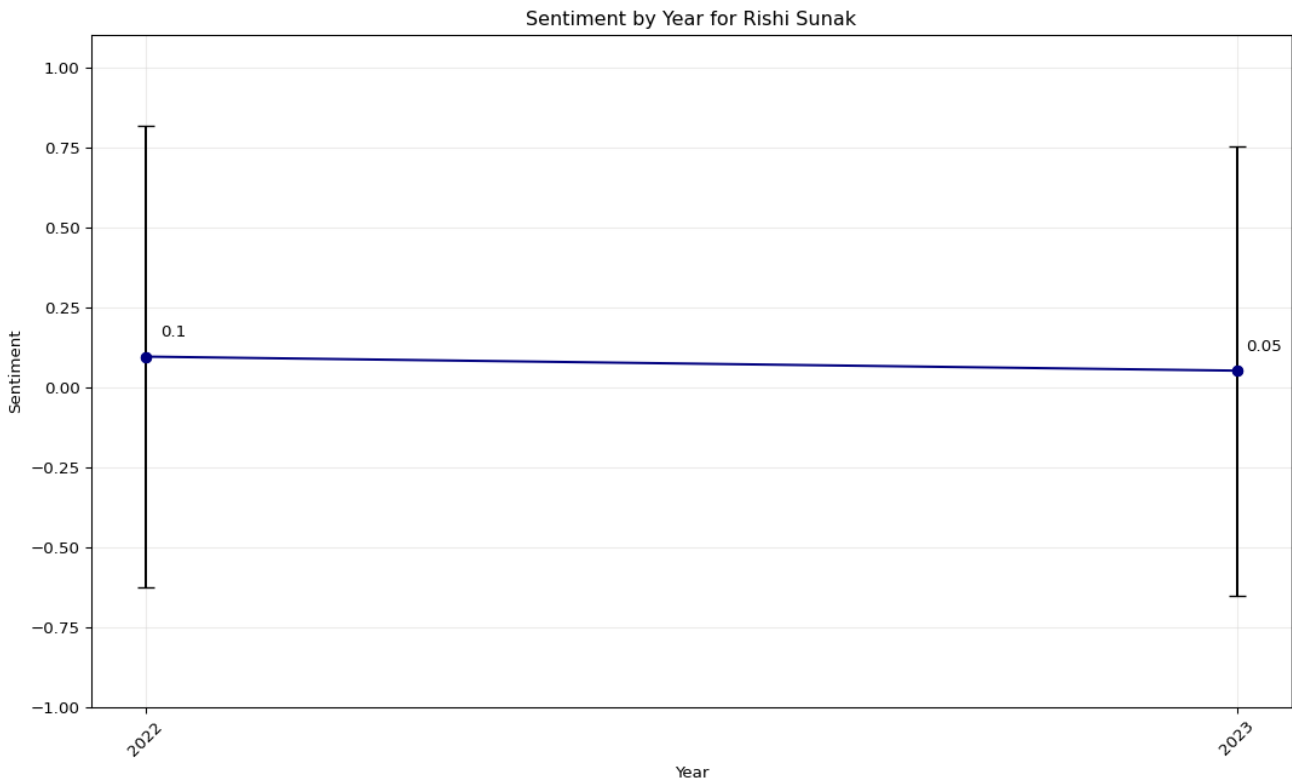
- A line graph showing standard deviation changes in mean sentiment towards Russia during Johnson's era

Figure 11



- A line graph showing standard deviation and changes in mean sentiment towards Russia during the Truss era

Figure 12



- A line graph showing standard deviation and the changes in mean sentiment towards Russia during Sunak's era

The above line graphs show the sentiment towards Russia during the different Premierships. What is notable is that the mean scores do fluctuate and, at times, defy expectations. For instance, in Figure 8, David Cameron is not critical during the year of Russia's annexation of Crimea. His responses for 2014 saw an improvement compared to the previous year. In fact, the decline in his premiership occurs from 2012 to 2013. This result would indicate that the PM then was not as concerned with the developments involving Ukraine as compared to others, like Johnson, who, in Figure 10, has made much more critical remarks during the full-scale invasion of 2022. This outcome is also notable as it goes against what the academic literature has put forth. Gromyko and Ananieva have been highlighting the event in 2014 as a critical juncture for relations. However, examining Cameron's rhetoric shows it to be not as pivotal for him as there is no significant fall in sentiment.

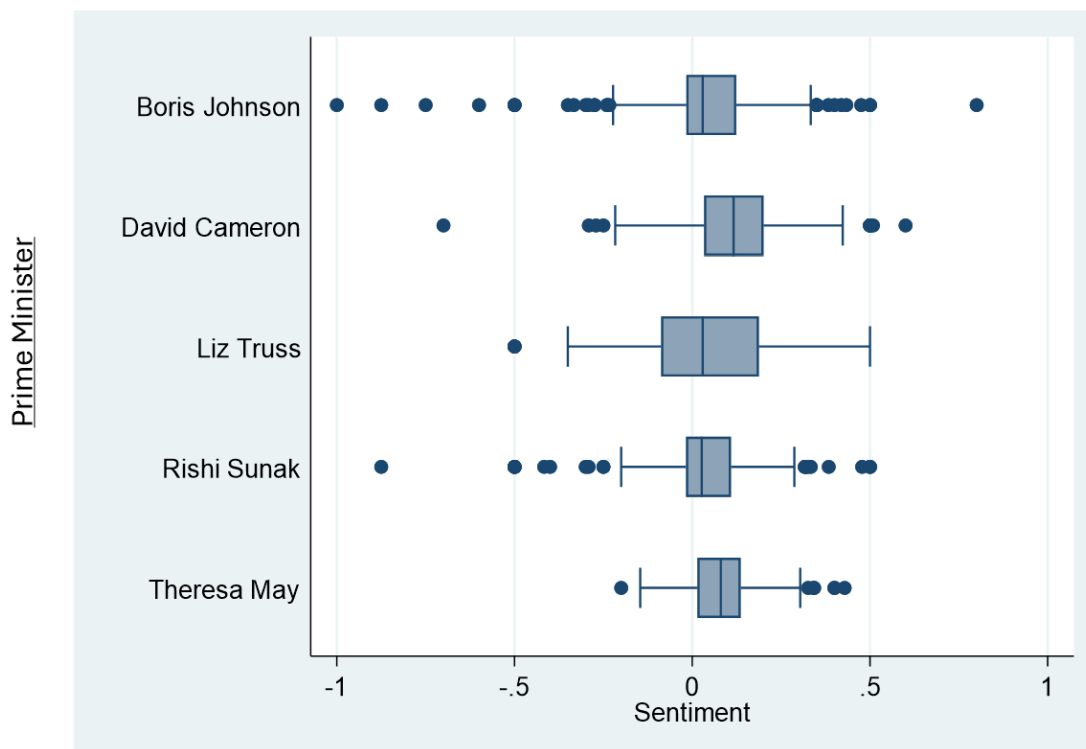
Another surprising result is in Figure 9, which shows that the Salisbury poisoning initially did not cause as huge a reaction as suggested in the literature by academics like Chinonso, who pointed to it as a turning point with an uptick in harsh rhetoric. Theresa May

did become more critical that year, but there was no sharp decline. Nonetheless, the downward trend continues afterwards, which could indicate a lag time in outcomes. For instance, the incident could still be pivotal in shaping relations, but May does not react as intensely during the immediate aftermath of the incident. Again, this contrasts with Figure 9 and Johnson's response, which is much more intense and immediate in the invasion's aftermath. These two events and how the PMs reacted thus highlight differences in sentiment, which come about from who was in charge. Thus, the character of the PM may be a decisive factor in how sentiments towards Russia changed.

Adding to this idea that the person in charge mattered is the differences in sentiment during years of change. When Johnson takes over from May, there is a more positive sentiment score, rising from 0.04 to 0.19. Truss taking over in 2022 in Figure 11 brings out a drastic decline with the only negative mean sentiment score of -0.01. In the same year, when Sunak succeeds her, there is a slight improvement in sentiment, which is 0.1 in Figure 12. The only notable exception to this pattern is the handover from Cameron to May, where there is a sense of continuity with the same score of 0.4. Nonetheless, the other changes do indicate that there usually is a shift in sentiment whenever a new person becomes the PM.

Figure 13

Sentiment by PM



- A box plot showing the distribution of sentiment towards Russia by different UK PM

Figure 13 showcases the sentiment differences during different premierships. The median scores for Johnson, Truss, and Sunak seem similar, close to 0, whereas May and Cameron are more favourable with higher scores. While Truss has the lowest mean, as shown in Figure 12, she also has the largest IQR, as seen in this boxplot; this result could be due to the low number of statements, 37, made in her 45 days in charge. Whereas the others have many more data points to refine their scores, there are fewer results to hone in on for her, and thus, there appears to be a more vast distribution. Another notable feature is that Johnson has the most critical outliers at the opposing ends of the spectrum, indicating a more polarised response than the others. These differences in sentiment give weight to the hypothesis that notable changes have come about from the person in charge. Nonetheless, there is still a lot of overlap in the IQR with all PMs, so a further statistical test is needed to support this idea.

Figure 14

	Number of obs =	1,102	R-squared =	0.0567	
	Root MSE =	.157225	Adj R-squared =	0.0533	

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob>F
Model	1.6299661	4	.40749153	16.48	0.0000
Author_cat	1.6299661	4	.40749153	16.48	0.0000
Residual	27.11739	1,097	.02471959		
Total	28.747356	1,101	.02611022		

- *An ANOVA test of the different Prime Ministers and their effects on the Sentiment Scores*

Figure 14 shows the significance of the results between the two variables. The p-value associated with the F-statistic is 0. This result shows strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that at least one of the coefficients is non-zero. The difference between the scores is thus significant, but there needs to be more clarity in showing them to be substantive. The R-squared number is 0.0567, which means that about 5.67% of the variance in sentiment score can be explained by the type of author of the statement. This relatively low

outcome suggests that the model may not capture a large portion of the variability in sentiment and that other factors may influence the score. Therefore, caution is needed when approaching the hypothesis as, while there is a case for a significant relationship between the variables, it is not clear that the differences in scores are substantive. Still, the results indicate that the changes in PM affect sentiment, as the average difference between the observed values of the dependent variable and the values predicted by the model is 0.157225.

Overall, this chapter provides results that require further investigation and analysis. In segment one, the relations overview showcases a decline from 2010 to 2023. Nonetheless, there has not been a steady fall, and there have been spikes in positivity in 2014 and 2020, which do not conform to the ideas presented in the literature. In segment two, international affairs have led to a more negative reaction from the UK. In particular, the 2022 full-scale invasion has the most critical reaction. While this supports the views of some scholars, it clashes with others who have posited the Salisbury case as the lowest point of relations. In segment three, the person in charge affects the sentiment towards Russia. However, it does not inherently explain why this occurred for all the PMs. Therefore, the following chapter deals with the above points for each segment, using historical analysis and context to expand on the causal links provided so far and provide new explanations for these results.

Chapter Five – The Discussion

5.1 – The Overall Trend

How have UK PM statements about Russia developed from 2010 to 2023 in terms of sentiment?

The data from Chapter Four shows that from 2010 to 2023, there has been an overall fall in sentiment towards Russia. For example, Figure 1, the line graph, shows a negative correlation between the early years and the lower sentiment scores of the latter period. However, it is relatively weak, which is also raised in the linear regression. The graph also shows that there is no steady decrease or steep decline. There were even some spikes of positivity that appeared in 2014 and 2020; these were unexpected and require some closer examination. Still, putting these seemingly anomalous results aside, there is an apparent decline in that there is no stabilising sentiment score after the spike; a steep drop follows each. The correlation of this decline is also statistically significant, according to the findings in Figure 2. So, it is possible to proclaim that the UK's attitudes worsened with time.

This outcome would align with the views of Gromyko and Ananieva (2014), as well as Ellison (2023). These authors have described this downward trend in relations. However, each person attributes a different cause for this result. The first pair put forward the case that the annexation of Crimea is the critical juncture that leads to the worsening of ties. Ellison does factor in this event but sees it as more of a gradual process, like chipping away at ice; there is a culmination of incidents that eventually lead to this big reaction and souring of relations. In terms of the causal narrative of the previous chapter, both of their works further the idea that the emergence of critical events has contributed to the divisions and the harsher line the UK has taken. Nonetheless, neither side offers nor provides an account of the anomalies in 2014 and 2020, where positive sentiment rises contrary to their narrative.

The 2014 case appears especially puzzling as it counters the idea that Crimea was a critical juncture. If it were a pivotal point, there would be an expected decline in the year. Instead, the opposite occurs. This result could be due to the transactional nature of the UK's foreign policy, which a few authors in the literature mention, especially during the early period. While this was a significant event that caused division, the UK's priorities at the time were to prioritise the mutual benefits of cooperation. For instance, Monaghan (2013) is repeatedly keen

to express the advantages David Cameron gained from the trade and security agreements made in the 2010s. The latter was especially pertinent as events in Afghanistan and Libya were still unfolding, so the UK's markedly muted response could also have been an effort to gain Russia's assistance on the Security Council for the other issues, which had already occurred in 2012 with the initial intervention in Libya (Stewart, 2023). Therefore, these links in trade and security could have clouded the UK response.

In 2013, there was also the escalation of the Syrian Civil War, which was another theatre that put the UK and Russia on opposite sides. Cameron was keen to support the Syrian Democratic Forces, while his Russian counterpart was supportive of the Assad regime (Stewart, 2023). Although Russia had not got directly involved at this point, it was already a source of tension, with votes on the Security Council being vetoed. These clashes are the potential driver of negativity in 2013. However, at this point, the idea of achieving a compromise was still touted. Thus, it would be in the same category as Libya and Afghanistan, where the UK would be measured in their responses to the annexation of Crimea to foster an environment that would still lead to a mutually beneficial outcome in the other foreign policy issues.

On top of this, Monaghan (2013) suggests that normalisation was still being discussed and desirable for both parties. That could be another reason why there was not a steady decline, as each administration contemplated bridging the divides and restoring economic relations. This could have affected the rhetoric as the UK would still be trying to improve its ties, which a wave of criticism in 2014 would not bring about. This thought process could also explain the rise in positive sentiment in 2020 as Johnson takes over and, as Kustowska (2021) argues, is in a position to potentially improve the relationship, which at the time would be helpful given the struggles both nations faced with the pandemic. Thus, this idea of the UK still trying to have a positive relationship, even after events such as the Skripal poisoning, due to the transactional economic benefits a new UK administration saw it could bring, does explain why there were positive points in the data.

This causal narrative does not downplay the impact of the incidents like Russia's aggression in 2014. They could still be impactful, but their usage comes retrospectively, with leaders citing them in later criticisms of Putin and his foreign policy. For example, various academics mention Crimea when they also talk about the Skripal case as part of several actions Russia has taken which pose a problem for the UK. The same could occur with Theresa May citing Crimea during her criticisms of Russia. This idea of some lag time in the event's impact

on sentiment could also explain the 2018 downward turn. Reading the literature, it would seem there would be an immediate steep decline, but this does not occur until later in the data when the Crown Prosecution Service [CPS] states there is enough evidence to charge Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov. Long after the incident, this outcome allows May to be more vocal about Russia's actions. Whereas before, there were primarily insinuations that Russia was behind the case, now she has grounds to accuse Putin's regime directly, which leads to this more considerable fall in sentiment later.

The last point raises the idea that the temperament and circumstances of the PM do matter, as with May; she was more diplomatic in her language than her Defence Minister during the Skripal case. This comparison of characteristics also applies to the different PMs, which could be another reason for no steady fall or rise in sentiment. These leaders operate in different contexts, with distinct behaviours and experiences informing the policies. As pointed out above, Johnson could be more positive in 2020 as he then faced a new problem with COVID-19. That being said, there are inheritances from each leader to the next, with developments in Ukraine also featuring heavily in Johnson's period. However, he reacts differently to these, with a sharp decline in sentiment, contrasting with Cameron and his approach. This outcome could be due to their different motivations, with the transactional idea no longer driving policy. Equally, it could be the personality differences of the leaders, with one being more brash than the other. Regardless of which is more pertinent, the person behind the decision affects how attitudes towards Russia have developed.

Nonetheless, the idea that relations have generally fallen is still the overall outcome. The data matches the expectations of some of the academics, although it is not as Gromyko and Ananieva (2014) suggested, with immediate turning points or points of continual decline. Instead, a fall occurs over the course of different administrations as they wrestle with the changing circumstances and international events. There is a time lag with specific events, such as the Salisbury case, and a jolt in sentiment whenever a new PM takes over, bringing different operating styles and reactions into effect. While it is still suitable to be cautious of accepting the hypothesis with great certainty, it is still plausible to state that UK-Russia relations have soured from 2010 to 2023.

Projecting forward with these findings indicates that sentiments will remain low, if not worsen. This is due to the results in Figure 2, which indicate the fall in sentiment as time goes on. There is a decrease of -0.0111925 with an increase in time. Nevertheless, there are reasons

to be cautious about this prediction. Ellison has put forward the case that relations have hit a nadir, which indicates this is the lowest point, implying that it either continues or improves from now on. A counter to this idea is to remember that various academics have declared the lowest point in relations, such as in 2018, only for it to worsen. So, the sentiment could continue to decrease. However, it is hard to say with any certainty as it depends on the various factors mentioned in this segment, such as the development of events or changes in leadership. Each has shown that they can affect the sentiment score, so it thus depends on how these develop, as they will drive relations in a positive or negative direction. The following two segments explore each causal factor further to showcase how they have contributed to changes in the UK's policy towards Russia.

5.2 – The Critical Event

How did UK sentiments towards Russia change depending on international and bilateral affairs, and what is the impact on sentiment of three notable events: the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and the poisoning of Skripal in 2018?

The data from Chapter Four shows that from 2010 to 2023, international affairs caused a more considerable fall in sentiment towards Russia than bilateral incidents. For example, Figure 3, the boxplot, shows a lower median sentiment score. However, it is notable that the differences here appear relatively small, and there is some overlap in the IQR. The boxplot also shows outliers for both categories, although those concerning international affairs are more polarised in their scores and are more numerous. Still, putting these outliers aside, there is an apparent significance in the difference when looking at the results of the two-sample t-test in Figure 4. There is no overlap between the true means for each category, and the p-value shows that the results are statistically significant. Therefore, it is feasible to argue that the UK's attitudes worsened more due to the development of international events.

This outcome does not match some of the literature review's expectations. For example, Chinonso (2018) suggested that bilateral incidents would be the critical determinant of relations. In particular, there is a focus on cases such as the Litvinenko and Skripal poisonings. The former is still being cited and investigated in the Cameron period, while the latter is a supposed critical juncture during May's premiership. Given that these events directly involve both nations, there would be fewer mitigating factors, actors, and influences that could temper

sentiments. The UK should then be free to react with no constraints. Also, these cases are violations of norms and security agreements, which highlight an indirect attack on the other state by killing and attempting to kill its citizens. On both occasions, Russia's refusal to extradite the suspects also indicated a disregard for the UK. According to Chinonso, these circumstances should thus lead to some of the most stark reactions; however, as the data shows, this did not occur.

Conversely, these extra influences, such as international bodies, could have prompted the UK to have stronger reactions when, for example, the UK is confronting problems that threaten the member nations at NATO summits. Russia, with its aggression against Ukraine, is now constantly spoken about at these meetings as an enemy. This portrayal would lead to a more negative sentiment score for the UK, as they typically align with the views agreed upon by NATO's Secretary General and its other constituent nations. Another organisation that could have a similar effect is the EU. When the UK was a member, it would face the same pressures to promote a shared narrative to showcase unity. Although most of its leverage would end with Brexit, the UK still cooperates heavily with the regional body by staying in agreements like the Windsor Framework. Therefore, its influence would still be there, but it would not be as imperative as NATO, which underpins the UK's security, defence, and foreign policy (Garnett, 2017).

One of the nations that serves as a cornerstone in NATO is the US; it also influences the UK and would thus impact the sentiment regarding international affairs. For example, many PMs have, since the end of World War Two, been keen to emphasise the "special relationship" each nation has with the other (Garnett, 2017). This bond also implies a certain closeness regarding foreign policy, with one former Tory Government Minister caricaturing it as the UK response being "finding out what the US was doing and doing a little less" (Campbell & Stewart, 2023). Given this closeness with the US, the UK would also take many of its positions at the UN Security Council or at various bodies such as the G20. With the US having an unsettled relationship with Putin's Russia, the UK mirrors responses closely, and thus, the sentiment. Therefore, when the US was, for instance, criticising Russia's actions in Syria, the UK would reflect these concerns and treat them with similar severity.

Many often see this "special relationship" as one-sided, as there is no reciprocal outcome when there are UK initiatives or issues (Buruma, 2021). For example, the Skripal case took place at a time when the US President was trying to foster good relations with Putin, as

seen in Trump's 2018 Helsinki summit conference (BBC, 2018). As a result, the reaction to the poisoning was not as severe as it could have been, as the UK could not take a more critical line without the backing of the US. There was a coordinated expulsion of Russian diplomats amongst the NATO allies, but that was the extent of the consequences. This idea conflicts with the one put forward by Chinonso (2018), as even though the case is bilateral in that it directly concerns Russia and the UK, the structures in place, with the US being the critical link in security, still play a vital role. It is a limiting factor that prevents the UK from setting and determining its foreign policy and responses.

Nonetheless, the UK is not entirely bound to the rhetoric and policies of the US or other organisations, even those that involve actions concerning Russia. For example, Boris Johnson was willing to take a more cavalier approach during the full-scale invasion of Ukraine than his counterparts, especially in providing diplomatic and military support to Ukraine. While then-US President Biden supported the Ukrainians, Johnson was ahead of the curve with his robust appeals and actions, especially compared to other NATO allies like Germany and France, who were more cautious and willing to accommodate Putin initially. The former was even unwilling to provide offensive capabilities, and the latter, with President Macron, engaged in personal diplomacy by going to Russia. This case shows that the person in charge matters as they have some agency to steer the direction of UK foreign policy. It also showcases the importance Ukraine now has in shaping UK-Russia relations.

The data in Chapter Four supports this idea of importance, as the Russia-Ukraine War caused considerable changes in sentiment. For example, in Figure 5, the boxplot showcases that the event had a lower median and IQR than the annexation of Crimea and the Salisbury case. The only exception is that the Other category did have a slightly more negative score, as shown in the first whisker of the corresponding boxplot. Nonetheless, there were many more negative results at the extremes for the category of War that were marked as outliers given the difference in score, but this could also be the genuine level of negativity the action caused. The ANOVA test, Figure 6, revealed that the differences between the events were statistically significant. These findings thus indicate that out of the events, both bilateral and international, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine had the most detrimental impact on the UK's sentiment score.

This outcome matches the expectations of Saragih (2023) in the literature, who considers this to be a critical juncture in relations. For example, she clearly emphasises the

UK's unprecedented actions regarding the aid it provides to Ukraine: military, intelligence and humanitarian. Sanctions are also more severe, targeting prominent officials and oligarchs like Roman Abramovich's assets. However, what is not explicitly clear is why this Russian aggression is treated more severely than the previous aggression in 2014. Ellison (2023) would posit that it is the final straw of a series of provocations by Russia. Thus, the previous cases of appeasement, whether in Georgia in 2008 or Crimea in 2014, have appeared to fail, so there is now a more confrontational response, which leads to this rise in negative sentiment from the UK PM.

Applying the ideas of Gromyko and Ananieva (2014) suggests that Ukraine has been important since Crimea and that this reaction is a consequence of how dire things have become concerning the situation. In this narrative, the negative sentiment comes directly from the initial aggression, and the result now is a logical outcome from the failure to find a resolution to the fighting, which also occurred throughout the years in the Donbas region. Gromyko and Ananieva also stated that developments in Ukraine would dictate UK-Russia relations, as this is a vital flashpoint in Europe, which, if left unresolved, would lead to an escalation in violence and confrontation. This idea slightly accommodates Ellison's argument, but it focuses on the culmination of actions about Ukraine, with the full-scale invasion being the last straw that soured relations.

Nonetheless, examining the data, there may be more credence to the idea that the role of individual actors mattered here. The shift in sentiment when contrasting the two events comes with a change in the US and the UK administrations. Focusing on the latter, Johnson had a different set of objectives, as suggested in segment one. This idea aligns with Monaghan's (2013) ideas of interests and, in this case, those of the actors; Cameron's did not lead him to prioritise Ukraine as his focus was elsewhere. Equally, this logic could be applied to the influences on the UK, such as NATO or the EU. With time, their motivations could have changed, and the current situation in Ukraine is now taking precedence, given changes in personnel at the top posts. It is worth noting that this idea is not mutually exclusive, and a combination of factors from the above authors could have led to this turn in sentiment. However, the data hints that the leadership may have been the pivotal factor in why international affairs, particularly the 2022 full-scale invasion, negatively impacted sentiment. That is why the next segment takes a deeper dive into the data and context regarding leadership changes in the UK to demonstrate how sentiments towards Russia shifted.

5.3 – Leadership Changes

Did changes in who the Prime Minister was significantly impact the sentiment of UK statements about Russia?

In Chapter Four, the data shows that from 2010 to 2023, the different Tory PMs did have different sentiment scores from each other. For example, in Figure 13, there are different medians. The IQRs also vary, as seen in a comparison of David Cameron and Liz Truss, where there is a straightforward visual difference, with the latter having a smaller range of data points. Boris Johnson also appears to have the broadest score range when including and contrasting his outliers to the other PMs. A closer look at these differences with the ANOVA test in Figure 14 also shows that the results are statistically significant. These findings thus suggest that changes in PM matter, as there are notable differences in the sentiment scores of statements about Russia.

This outcome does support the ideas proposed by Kustowska (2021). For example, she states that Johnson is a risk taker, and that would allow him to improve relations with Russia. His temperament thus matters as it leads to this spike in positivity that we see in the line graph in Figure 10, where in 2020, sentiment goes up considerably when contrasted to the previous year under the more prudent Theresa May in Figure 9. Adding to this is the idea that both have very different approaches to politics and, thus, foreign policy. Johnson is a populist figure, whereas May is a technocrat. The former approach would encourage a more emotive expression with statements at the extremes in terms of positivity and negativity. That is because the phrases are more direct and charged to provoke a reaction from an audience. The technocratic style would induce the opposite response, with a more measured statement focused on details. In contrasting these two PMs, the differences in results could thus exist due to their different dispositions.

However, a counter to changes in PM mattering would be looking at the results in Figures 8 and 9 between Cameron and May. There does not appear to be a change; instead, there is a level of consistency. In Cameron's last year, the mean sentiment score average was 0.4, the same score as May's in her first year in charge. In fact, prior to the 2018 Salisbury case, the scores stabilised around this mark with only a few fluctuations. While this showcases a similarity and would indicate no drastic shift, this lack of change supports the proposed ideas. These Tory leaders are considered technocratic in their leadership and political styles. Even at

the time of her accession to the role, many clearly stated that May came from the same political wing of the party as Cameron, both being One Nation Tories (Stewart, 2023). So, similarities here in sentiment make sense as they use similar approaches to their responses and statements about Russia.

The same logic applies to Johnson and his successor, Rishi Sunak, who appears to come from the same mould. After the full-scale invasion, their average sentiment is close. For instance, Sunak in Figure 12 is much closer to Johnson's in the previous year, with a mean sentiment between 0 and 0.1. Additionally, the boxplots in Figure 13 show that the IQRs for the PMs are similar, and the medians are not too far apart. Even their outliers show that they have very negative scores, although Johnson's are still the more extreme. These occur as Sunak embraces the populist rhetoric of his predecessor. Even though ideologically they have some differences regarding the economy, on other matters, such as Brexit and foreign policy, they are closely aligned and thus share a similar narrative about Britain's role in the world (Campbell & Stewart, 2023). This closeness thus translates into similar attitudes towards Russia: both are very critical post-2022.

Nevertheless, this idea does encounter an issue when accounting for the statements of Liz Truss. She is much closer ideologically to Johnson and was unofficially designated his heir after it was clear there would be a new leader (Holland & Sandbrook, 2022). Her statements thus should be closer to those of Johnson's, but they are much more antagonistic; as shown in Figure 10, her average mean sentiment is -0.01. This result could be because she was only in office for a very brief period, and thus, the few statements Truss made about Russia at that time slightly skewed the outcome more negatively. That is because the domestic problems she faced led her to make more extreme, and in this case, jingoistic comments to project strength both abroad and at home (Holland & Sandbrook, 2022). Truss was thus still embracing populist rhetoric, but the few remarks she made and the imperilled political position she found herself in led to this more hostile stance. This outcome showcases that temperament does matter, as does the political context of the time, with the domestic situation here leading Truss to become more antagonistic.

Understanding the domestic political situation is also crucial when looking at the rise in sentiment from the last year of May to Johnson. In this case, Johnson was still critical of Russia, although not to the same degree. According to Kustowska (2021), this result was due to Johnson's ties to certain Russian elites, like Alexander Lebedev, who have some sway in the

domestic political situation by owning influential papers like the Evening Standard. Therefore, he was friendly to these elites to avoid losing their agenda-setting influence. Interestingly, this idea also coincides with the ISC report (2020) findings, which found Russian influence via their elites' links with UK politicians. No specific names were in the paper as it was only published in a redacted form, which may have benefitted Johnson and given him some cover for his connections. On top of this, the pandemic also occurred shortly after, and that, as explained in the previous segments, could have factored into the decision-making. The mutual problems arising from this crisis would induce both sides to seek cooperation to stimulate a recovery, especially after the lockdowns, which halted much economic activity. So, these are reasons to be positive towards Russia compared to May, who did not face these pressures.

In 2022, the political situation again influenced Johnson's thinking, with the PM occasionally using the war to distract from domestic troubles he faced. For example, during scandals like Partygate, where the PM was fined for partying during the pandemic, Johnson would turn to foreign policy matters and even go to Ukraine. It served as a way of moving the news agenda onto the issues he was more comfortable discussing (Campbell & Stewart, 2023). This change is not to say Johnson did not care about the issue, but that it was politically expedient for him to bring it up at times. Similarly to Truss, it allowed him to project strength by showing the public his vital work with partners in Ukraine. As a result, the impact on policies against Russia became a tool for his premiership; being critical was signalling support for his ally Ukraine and attempting to change the domestic narratives, which discussed the Government's many scandals at the time. Therefore, domestic issues are one of the reasons for the increase in negativity in Johnson's attitude towards Russia.

Framing domestic issues through the context of the Russia-Ukraine War is another way this Government, particularly Sunak, has tried to deal with them. For example, energy prices and inflation issues are brought up as the consequences of the actions taken by and against Russia (Campbell & Stewart, 2023; Sunak, 2023). Putting the blame for the squeeze on living conditions on another nation excuses Sunak of any culpability. Like Johnson, he can use the war as a cover for his record and change the narrative of Government failures to one about the exogenous shocks from a hostile nation's actions. This political convenience is why Sunak is also very critical in his statements. Again, it is hard to say whether he genuinely believes in supporting Ukraine or if it is just a ploy to undercut criticisms. Regardless, the result is the same: the PM connects the domestic problems to those concerning Russia, which leads to more antagonistic attitudes and policies.

Nevertheless, the context does not always lead to an uptick in negativity. It can induce the opposite effect, as seen in the periods of positivity under Cameron. In 2012, the UK hosted the Summer Olympics. Putin was one of the guests and watched judo with the PM. Here, the positive experience of hosting the event also affected proceedings with Russia, as Cameron admits it framed relations in a better light (BBC, 2023). Like Blair, Cameron could invite the leader over to be seen as an interlocutor between the West and the East. This idea emerged as Cameron tried to chart new relations with these powers, such as China and Russia, after the downturn at the end of New Labour. The goodwill generated from the mega sporting event thus allowed for this personal diplomacy, which was a success regarding UK-Russia relations as both leaders left feeling satisfied (BBC, 2023). This outcome shows that the positive atmosphere brought about by the Olympics also transferred to UK diplomacy and is one of the reasons why the sentiment in Figure 8 was relatively high, 0.59, in 2012.

This case of Cameron and Putin conducting personal diplomacy also shows that experience matters, and having direct dealings does impact sentiment. It allows a leader to get a reading and measure of their counterpart, which could improve relations as there is a greater understanding of each other's positions and demands. These interactions could also inform the type of responses, as previous successes or failures would instruct what to say or do in a given situation. In Cameron's circumstances, his positive and transactional ties, which saw initial developments in trade and security, would cloud how he responded to the annexation of Crimea incident. These past engagements would allow him to look past Russia's actions and soften the criticisms of the activity, especially during the initial event, as it would not serve his motives to be highly critical. Until then, the cooperation with Putin had been fruitful, so it would make sense not to jeopardise any future cooperation by being antagonistic. This disposition would explain the relatively high sentiment score in Figure 8 that persists throughout his period.

Nevertheless, experience or dealings can be challenging to explore. For example, Sunak has yet to meet Putin. Thus, the other two factors would be more critical in his case: Sunak's demeanour and the domestic political situation. Another problem with this idea of experience comes from declaring who is essential for this or what memory is vital unless the actors are actively declaring it themselves. For instance, although he did not hold any official post, Lebedev and his ties with Johnson could fall into this category, given that he is an oligarch close to the Russian regime. Consequently, while this idea is potentially helpful in explaining Cameron's actions, more information from the PMs is needed to showcase such differences in the leaders and their dealings with Russia. That is why it is more informative to focus on the

type of political approaches and situations more easily found in the literature and the history of events.

Looking closely at these two factors, it seems more understandable why each PM has different sentiment scores. For example, when considering the type of politician or tradition, it is possible to explain why the attitudes of May and Cameron are similar. They are technocrats from a similar wing of the party, and in this, they will share a similar narrative of Britain's place in the world, including its relations with other nations. The technocratic approach would also induce a more diplomatic response, leading to less of an immediate reaction, but instead one that could occur over time. On the flip side, Johnson, Sunak, and Truss all embrace populist approaches, which leads to their similar responses and attitudes, which are more emotive and thus contrast with the other two PMs. The other factor influencing the sentiment is the domestic political situation, with pressures and problems under Johnson and Truss leading to them using the full-scale invasion as cover. This usage then produces a more critical attitude towards Russia as it is politically convenient. It does not always lead to an adverse reaction, as Cameron's example shows where the constructive developments generated from a mega sporting event also led to positive sentiment. Therefore, it can be said that it did matter who the PM was at the time, as their demeanour and the domestic issues they faced both contributed to the setting of foreign policy towards Russia.

Conclusion

When addressing the first research question, it is apparent that the UK PM's sentiment towards Russia has generally fallen from highs in the early 2010s to considerable lows, especially in 2022. However, there has not been a steady decline with time. Instead, there have been spikes of positivity, like in 2020. Regarding the second question, remarks about international affairs were more critical than bilateral incidents and, in particular, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 caused the lowest sentiment score compared to the other critical junctures of the annexation of Crimea and the Skripal poisoning. Lastly, changes in PM did matter, as the shifts in sentiment that occurred with them were statistically significant. Nonetheless, this should be understood in the context of each PM's political situation, as these caused different pressures that informed their choices. Another consideration here is their demeanour: the technocrats, May and Cameron, shared similar attitudes, as did the populists, Johnson, Truss, and Sunak.

These findings are informative when it comes to understanding British foreign policy. Firstly, it shows the importance of Ukraine and international affairs to the current UK-Russia relations. Johnson, Sunak, Truss, and even, to a lesser degree, May have referred to Russia's aggression in this theatre in their common critiques. For the first three, it was even their most serious issue regarding foreign affairs during the years this paper examined. Often, they emphasised the idea of a common struggle and opposition to Putin. Although this closeness to Ukraine and antagonism to Russia is more of a recent turn in relations, as the Cameron era demonstrated ambivalence during the 2014 annexation, the current trend indicates that these issues will continue to shape policy and, thus, attitudes towards Russia. Consequently, special attention should be paid to how events play out in the current Russia-Ukraine War, as this issue will be a pivotal factor driving the UK's foreign policy.

Another key takeaway is that fluctuations in policy occur with leadership changes. For example, attitudes shift with each PM pursuing their own agenda. The biggest of these shifts can be seen from May to Johnson; alongside the spike of positivity that follows, there is a change in demeanour, which comes with changing from a very technocratic leader to a populist one. As a result, there is a more polarised effect on attitudes, with the PM now able to make more brash comments and, as shown in Truss, more overtly hostile remarks. This outcome is due to the leader being the one who steers the direction and nature of British foreign policy in the current system. Going forward, it is thus vital to follow any changes in PM closely as these would also bring a potentially drastic change to UK-Russia relations.

Lastly, the longitudinal analysis presents an overview of a tumultuous period. Despite the literature showing an early optimism for the trajectory of relations with Kozin's (2003) predictions, or even later under Monaghan (2011), Osipova (2016), and Kustowska (2021), their optimistic forecasts of a substantive and positive pendulum swing did not materialise. Instead, there has been instability and gradual enmity, which aligns much more with Ellison's (2023) austere vision. Sentiment analysis here is beneficial as it provides a way to check these existing narratives and, in this case, provide a new broad account of how relations have developed. Ultimately, it is a story of decay, with a turbulent decline in UK attitudes towards Russia from 2010 to 2023 brought about by critical events and changes in leadership.

While the paper is the first to do a comprehensive sentiment analysis covering the Tory period in Government, this research has some areas for improvement worth addressing. The reliance on VADER means that the variance in scores could be closer if a specifically trained new model were used for this method. This idea of making a more accurate tool is thus a recommendation for future research on this era and the actors involved. Adopting that approach could contrast results with this paper and ideally provide more precise measures of sentiment by tuning it to the specific type of language used by each PM. The latter could also be more feasible in the future with the rate of improvement in machine learning systems. Therefore, a rerun of the experiment with the same data would be helpful as it could explore more nuances and provide more insight into the initial results found in this paper.

Another potential improvement could come from future research addressing the weight attributed to the words spoken and written by the PMs. With all the pressures outlined, there is an assumption that the remarks are still genuine and based on potential incentives raised in the literature, as it is difficult to prove without more insight into the motivations behind their actions. That is why a future paper would benefit from interviews with the PMs. This addition would allow for more inquisitive probing by asking why they made certain decisions or chose to make such remarks towards Russia. For instance, there could be questions about Cameron's actions during the 2014 annexation. The interview could shed more light by either supporting or rejecting the idea that his priorities were elsewhere, such as the surge in Afghanistan and the crisis in Syria. This answer could still be managed by the actor and, with hindsight, changed to suit an agenda. However, the additional comments would still give the researcher more information to help deduce the reasoning behind the UK's foreign policy choices.

By involving additional sources, the research could also include the other Ministers and data that will become available with time. In the case of the former, by being present in meetings about the UK's foreign policy, these Ministers could complement the interviews made by the PMs in determining the timeline of events and cross-referencing the ideas being discussed. Regarding the latter, the 2000 Freedom of Information Act currently restricts access to Government documents about these events. However, in 20 years, most of these will be available in the National Archives. Examining these papers could reveal more about the factors affecting the UK's policy towards Russia. A future study would thus help assess the findings of this paper with the new evidence providing insight into the background of decisions. Nonetheless, for this paper, there is still enough evidence to address the research questions with sufficient detail and results.

Overall, the paper's contribution to the literature on UK foreign policy is significant in three ways. Firstly, it provides a picture of relations that aligns with the ideas of authors like Ellison. Secondly, while the broad time frame limits the ability to produce a more detailed analysis of specific years, it conversely opens up possibilities for future research with notable comparisons that can be further explored, such as the rationale changes from Cameron to Johnson regarding Ukraine. A closer study on this issue, in particular, could help answer one of the questions emerging from this paper: Why was the UK not more alarmed in 2014? Lastly, the sentiment analysis in the paper also offers a new way to explore British foreign policy, serving as a proof of concept for future studies that wish to study other areas. For instance, relations with Russia during the New Labour period could be covered, or attitudes towards another nation, such as the US, could be made to assess the relevance of the "special relationship" and whether it is reflected in the expressed sentiment. The potential for this type of analysis is thus vast, and its usefulness is apparent by providing in this paper an overall picture of UK-Russia relations from 2010 to 2023, showcasing particularly the PM's attitudes and the events that had the most consequential impact.

Bibliography

- Allan, D. and Bond, I. (2022) 'A new Russia policy for post-Brexit Britain', *Chatham House*. pp. 1–8.
- Allen, D. & McAleer, M. (2018) President Trump Tweets Supreme Leader Kim Jong-Un on Nuclear Weapons: A Comparison with Climate Change. *Sustainability (Basel, Switzerland)*. 10 (7), 2310-.
- Austin, G. (2004) *Political change in Russia: Implications for Britain*. London: Foreign Policy Centre.
- Bacon, E. (2007) UK-Russia Political Relations. In: Monaghan, A. (ed.) *The UK and Russia: A troubled relationship. Part one*. Russian Series 07/17. Swindon, UK: The Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, pp. 13-23.
- BBC (2018) *Trump sides with Russia against FBI at Helsinki Summit*, *BBC News*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44852812>.
- BBC (2023) *Putin vs the West*. BBC. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p0dlz7gc/putin-vs-the-west?seriesId=p0dlz7p8>.
- Bleiker, R. & Hutchison, E. (2008) Fear no more: emotions and world politics. *Review of international studies*. 34 (S1), 115–135.
- Bleiker, R., Hutchison, E. (2018). Methods and Methodologies for the Study of Emotions in World Politics. In: Clément, M., Sangar, E. (eds) *Researching Emotions in International Relations*. Palgrave Studies in International Relations. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Braga, P. (2020). RUB Corpus and Code. Project repository. Available at: https://github.com/pjbraga/rub_corpus_and_code.
- Buruma, I. (2021) *Britain's Special Relationship Fantasy has been exposed*, *Foreign Policy*. Available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/09/13/britains-special-relationship-fantasy-has-been-exposed/>.
- Campbell, A. and Stewart, R. (2023) *The Rest is Politics*. London: Goalhanger Podcasts. Available at: <https://open.spotify.com/show/1Ysx8g1Iw42gESAtegrFaH>.

- Chambers, N. et al. (2015). Identifying Political Sentiment between Nation States with Social Media. 65-75. 10.18653/v1/D15-1007.
- Chinonso, M.K. (2018) 'Russia-United Kingdom diplomatic crisis over Salisbury nerve agent attack: An analysis', *International Journal of Law and Public Administration*, 1(1), p. 58.
- Clement, M. & Sangar, E. (2017) *Researching Emotions in International Relations: Methodological Perspectives on the Emotional Turn*. 1st edition. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Conte, B. et al. (2023) From Values to Emotions: Cognitive Appraisal Mediates the Impact of Core Values on Emotional Experience. *Emotion (Washington, D.C.)*. 23 (4), 1115–1129.
- Crawford, N. C. (2000). The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationships. *International Security*, 24(4), 116–156.
- David, M. (2011) 'A less than special relationship: The UK's Russia experience', *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 19(2), pp. 201–212.
- David, M. (2018) UK-Russia relations: poisoned chalice or silver linings? *Palgrave communications*. 4 (1), .
- Edinger, H. (2023) Hooked on a Feeling: Russia's Annexation of Crimea Through the Lens of Emotion. *Political psychology*. 44 (4), 749–767.
- Ellison, J. et al. (2023) 'The war in Ukraine', *Cold War History*, 23(1), pp. 121–206.
- Foxall, A. (2021) *How Russia 'positions' the United Kingdom*, *Council on Geostrategy*. Available at: <https://www.geostrategy.org.uk/research/how-russia-positions-the-united-kingdom/>.
- Garnett, M., Mabon, S., & Smith, R. (2017). *British Foreign Policy since 1945* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Georgiadou, E. et al. (2020) Big data analytics and international negotiations: Sentiment analysis of Brexit negotiating outcomes. *International journal of information management*. 51102048–102049.

- German, T. (2016) UK-Russia relations and the Brexit debate: advancing integration or mutual mistrust? *Global affairs (Abingdon, Oxfordshire, UK)*. 2 (5), 503–511.
- González-Hidalgo, M. & Zografos, C. (2020) Emotions, power, and environmental conflict: Expanding the ‘emotional turn’ in political ecology. *Progress in human geography*. 44 (2), 235–255.
- Gromyko, A. and Ananieva, E. (2014) ‘The Current State of Russia-United Kingdom Relations’, *Russian International Affairs Council*, 19, pp. 13–29.
- Gulzar, R. et al. (2023) Analyzing the online public sentiments related to Russia-Ukraine war over Twitter. *Global knowledge, memory and communication*.
- Haselmayer, M. & Jenny, M. (2017) Sentiment analysis of political communication: combining a dictionary approach with crowdcoding. *Quality & quantity*. 51 (6), 2623–2646.
- Henderson, J. and Pils, E. (2016) ‘The impact of Brexit on relations with Russia and China’, *King’s Law Journal*, 27(3), pp. 473–488.
- Holland, T. and Sandbrook, D. (2022) *The Rest is History*. London: Goalhanger Podcasts. Available at: <https://open.spotify.com/show/7Cvsbcjhtur7nplC148TWy>.
- Houde, A.-M. (2023) Emotions, International Relations, and the everyday: Individuals’ emotional attachments to international organisations. *Review of international studies*. [Online] 1–19.
- ISC (2020) *Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament ‘Russia’*. rep. London: Cabinet Office, pp. 1–47.
- Kozin, V. (2003) From Ivan IV and Edward VI: 450 years of diplomatic relations between Russia and Britain. *International affairs (Moscow)*. 49 (2), 92–99.
- Krivicic, A. & Martincic-Ipsic, S. (2023) “Analyzing Sentiment of Reddit Posts for the Russia-Ukraine War,” in *2023 46th MIPRO ICT and Electronics Convention (MIPRO)*. [Online]. 2023 MIPRO Croatian Society. pp. 1709–1714.
- Kustowska, J. (2021) ‘Russia-United Kingdom relations after the year 2018. condition and predictions’, *Reality of Politics*, 18(4), pp. 101–115.

- Liu, B. (2015) *Sentiment Analysis: Mining Opinions, Sentiments, and Emotions*. Cambridge University Press.
- Liu, D. & Lei, L. (2018) The appeal to political sentiment: An analysis of Donald Trump's and Hillary Clinton's speech themes and discourse strategies in the 2016 US presidential election. *Discourse, context & media*. 25143–152.
- Mee, A. et al. (2021) Sentiment analysis using TF–IDF weighting of UK MPs' tweets on Brexit. *Knowledge-based systems*. 228107238-.
- Mercer, J. (1996). *Approaching Emotion in International Politics*. Paper Presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Diego, CA.
- Mercer, J. (2005) Rationality and Psychology in International Politics. *International organization*. 59 (1), 77–106.
- Mercer, J. (2010) Emotional Beliefs. *International organization*. 64 (1), 1–31.
- Monaghan, A. (2007) 'The United Kingdom and Russia: A Divergent Relationship?', in *The UK and Russia – a Troubled Relationship Part I*. Shrivenham, Oxfordshire: Conflict Studies Research Centre (Russian Series), pp. 1–9.
- Monaghan, A. (2011) *UK-Russia Relations: A bad case of mutual misunderstanding (s)*, FPC Briefing: *UK-Russia Relations*. Available at: <https://fpc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/1320.pdf>.
- Monaghan, A. (2013) *Russia's relations with France and the United Kingdom*, *Russian Analytical Digest (RAD)*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-a-009920731>.
- Peters, E. M. et al. (2004) An Emotion-Based Model of Risk Perception and Stigma Susceptibility: Cognitive Appraisals of Emotion, Affective Reactivity, Worldviews, and Risk Perceptions in the Generation of Technological Stigma. *Risk analysis*. 24 (5), 1349–1367.
- Ringmar, E. (2018). Eugene Gendlin and the Feel of International Politics. In: Clément, M., Sangar, E. (eds) *Researching Emotions in International Relations*. Palgrave Studies in International Relations. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

- Saragih, H.M. (2023) 'British coercive diplomacy under prime minister Boris Johnson to Russia as an effort to resolve the Russia-Ukraine conflict', *Ilomata International Journal of Social Science*, 4(4), pp. 648–662.
- Sakaev, V. T. et al. (2021) The Dynamic of Developing of the Relations between Russia and Great Britain during the President Vladimir Putin's Third Term (2012-2018). *Cuestiones políticas*. [Online] 39 (68), 315–322.
- Shukla, D. and Unger, S. (2022) 'Sentiment analysis of international relations with Artificial Intelligence', *Athens Journal of Sciences*, 9(2), pp. 91–106.
- Stewart, R. (2023) *Politics on the edge: A memoir from within*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Sunak, R. (2023) *G20 Summit Volume 737, Hansard*. Available at:
<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2023-09-11/debates/7D172DF9-C3C2-475A-A087-E6A69418D66E/G20Summit?highlight=russia#contribution-FDA44923-B468-43D3-9A17-98E8339E3FEF>.
- UK Parliament (2015) *Russia and relations with the UK, UK Parliament*. Available at:
<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/key-issues-parliament-2015/foreign-affairs/russia/>.