

## Russia's Power in the Near Abroad, Illustrated in the Case of Ukraine



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\* Map retrieved from (Perry-Castañeda Library, 2014)

## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to assess Russian power in the near abroad and particularly in Ukraine in relation to Russian diasporas. In order to do so, three theoretical and analytical blocs have been constructed.

First, theories on the concept of power in International Relations are presented and assessed and particular attention is given to the transition of the study of power as resources to power as relational behavior. To this general framework is added an evaluation of the IR theories that inspire Russia's foreign policy and a link between the latter and theories of power is made.

Second, since theories on power do not include diasporas, a conceptual link between diasporas and power is made. It is attempted to identify the relevance of diasporas as a subject that has potential influence on the power relations between two states.

Third, a specific theoretical framework for Russian diasporas in the near abroad is defined. The analysis focuses on how diasporas are constructed politically and sociologically and on the link between diasporas and Russia's soft power.

Following this triadic power conceptualization, an account of Russia's power in the near abroad and Ukraine is given. In particular, the occupation of Crimea and the situation in the South-East of Ukraine will be assessed according to the power framework.

*Keywords:* Russia, Near Abroad, Ukraine, Crimea, types of power, hard/soft power, Russian diaspora

## Table of Contents

Russia's Power in the Near Abroad, Illustrated in the Case of Ukraine .....	1
Abstract .....	2
1. Introduction .....	5
2. Methodology .....	7
2.1. Delimitations .....	8
2.1.a. Theory selection .....	8
2.1.b. Time delimitations.....	8
2.1.c. Sources and source criticism .....	9
2.1.d. Hermeneutical and epistemological considerations .....	9
3. Contemporary World System.....	10
4. Power in International Relations Theories .....	11
4.1. Historical overview of the concept of power in IR.....	11
4.2. Barnett and Duvall's theoretical paradigm for analyzing power.....	12
4.3. J. Nye's theory of power: a tool for analysis and policy-making.....	14
4.4. Comparison between the two theories on the concept of power .....	16
5. Russia's Power .....	18
5.1. Russia's Power in the Near Abroad.....	21
5.2. Russian Power in Ukraine .....	21
5.3. Russia's Soft Power.....	22
6. Diasporas and the Concept of Power .....	28
6.1. Linking the concept of Diaspora to the Theories of Power .....	30
6.2. Russian compatriot policies: an instance of soft power?.....	31
6.3. Dissecting the Concept of Russian Diaspora.....	32
6.3.1. Brief Historical Overview.....	32
6.3.2. View from above of the Russian diaspora: Political Perspective .....	33
6.3.3. View from below of the Russian Diaspora: Sociological Perspective .....	34
6.4. Occupation of Crimea: an Instance of Hard Power or Smart Power? .....	39
6.5. The role of Russian diasporas.....	42
7. Power Abroad as Power at Home.....	45

8.Conclusion..... 46  
9.Further Research..... 48  
Bibliography..... 50

## 1. Introduction

“the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century”<sup>1</sup> - Vladimir Putin

“If we are attacked, we would certainly respond. If our interests, our legitimate interests, the interests of Russians have been attacked directly, like they were in South Ossetia for example, I do not see any other way but to respond in full accordance with international law. Russian citizens being attacked is an attack against the Russian Federation”<sup>2</sup> - Sergey Lavrov

Ukraine has been making the headlines worldwide since November 2013. After the refusal of the Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich to sign the Association and Free Trade Agreement with the European Union and the decision to gravitate to closer political and economic ties with Russia, Ukraine has plunged into political unrest, mass protests and geopolitical instability. Following the ousting of the President and the formation of a new government, the situation has further deteriorated with the Russian occupation and annexation of Crimea and the ongoing instability in the Ukrainian South-Eastern regions (gazeta.ru, 2014).

Against this political background, debates about the influence or the exertion of power by external actors have emerged: the political powers in question being the US, the EU and Russia. Media and political commentators have engaged in arguments over the significance of Ukraine in international affairs and over the kind and amount of power projected in Ukraine by the powers that be.

The power interplay among the actors involved is important to the assessment of the Ukrainian situation and therefore, an attempt will be made at understanding Russia’s power in Ukraine. At a first glance it may seem that Ukraine has been the proof of the struggle between the soft power of the EU (and US) and the hard power of Russia. A more detailed and critical assessment of the Russian power in Ukraine will be offered. Instead, the power of the EU (and US) will be assessed only occasionally and with the purpose of offering complimentary means to the analysis of Russian power.

Consequentially, the research question is *What kind of power does Russia have in the near abroad, illustrated in the case of Ukraine?* The latter can be broken down in more specific

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<sup>1</sup> (President of Russia, 2005)

<sup>2</sup> (RT.com, 2014)

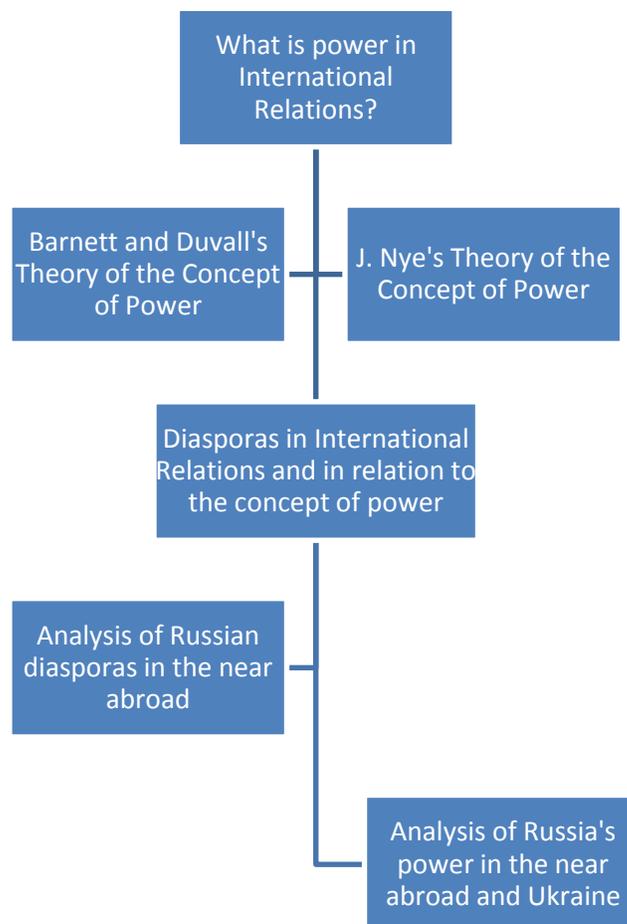
questions such as *What is power in International Relations Theory?*, *What is power from a Russian standpoint?*, *What is the role of (Russian) diasporas in power relations?*, *Why has Russia been able to occupy Crimea?*

## 2. Methodology

The thesis will start with a brief evaluation of the current world system and look at the major powers in world politics. After that, the concept of power in International Relations will be analyzed drawing parallels and divergences between different approaches to power. Next, the discussion of power will be restricted to the Russian Federation in relation to the post-Soviet states and particularly to Ukraine. Finally, emphasis will be placed on diasporas in IR and on Russian diasporas in the near abroad and their relevance to Russia's power.

The following diagram illustrates the main concepts that will be touched upon:

Figure 1: Structure of the thesis



This work will focus on the analysis of Russian power in Ukraine. Although a thorough comparison with the power of the EU (and US) in Ukraine will not be made, some features of the EU (and US) in relation to Ukraine will be considered in order to have a benchmark against which some characteristics of Russia will be analyzed. This is due to the necessity of presenting

Russia not in absolute terms, but also in relative ones. It is indeed fundamental for the discussion on power to specify whose power over whom?, and which kind power?

## **2.Delimitations**

### **2.a.Theory selection**

In this work no overarching IR theories will be used; instead, two theories on the concept of power will be adopted. They are not to be considered as exclusive to but rather as transversal to IR theories. Different aspects/dimensions of power will be linked to corresponding Realist, Liberal or Constructivist approaches.

The two theories on power have been selected because they pertain to the tradition of relational power analysis and because they attempt to offer a recent and comprehensive conceptualization of power.

In general, it can be said that this work contains three connected theoretical blocks: on power, on the relevance of diasporas in considering power and on specificity of the Russian diasporas in relation to Russia's power.

Since the focus is on the theoretical framework of power and Russian power in Ukraine, there will be no in-depth analysis of single events happening in Ukraine, exception made for Crimea, which will be approached as a case study of Russian power In Ukraine.

### **2.b.Time delimitations**

The discussion and analysis of the Russian power in general and in Ukraine will have as a temporal benchmark the period running from the start of the mass protests in Ukraine to the occupation of Crimea. Nonetheless, references to past events will be made in order to better understand the current power-relations between Russia and Ukraine.

At the time of writing the Ukrainian situation continues to dominate the news and debates on Russian power opposition to the US and the EU. The tensions in Eastern Ukraine might have implications on the analysis of Russian power in Ukraine; however, due to the difficulty of continuously updating the content of the this, this topic will not be assessed in detail.

### **2.c.Sources and source criticism**

The selection of sources for this work have been dictated by a principle of neutrality. An attempt will be made at considering both Western, Russian and Ukrainian (in Russian) sources in order to have a more comprehensive approach to the topic. A common denominator has been sought in both sides of sources and the interpretation of the events will be made through the prism of two theories on the concept of power. Nonetheless, there has been a preponderance of Western sources, especially as far as theories on power are concerned, since the Russian ones are not so extensive and quite recent.

Some sociological surveys on the public opinion in Ukraine will be assessed. For this point, Ukrainian and Western (mainly American) sources will be considered, since Russia does not have sociological instruments for the observation of public opinion in Ukraine.

### **2.d.Hermeneutical and epistemological considerations**

In the following chapters theories on the concept of power and IR theories will be examined in relation to Russia's power. They are predominantly Western theories, adapted to the Russian context. This fact, interpreted by means of Robert Cox's famous quotation "theory is always for someone and for some purpose" (Cox, 2010), means that Russia's actions are viewed through the Western conceptual prism and cannot properly account for Russia's Weltanschauung. This problematic point however is due to the fact that after the collapse of the Soviet Union there has been a lack of a fully-fledged Russian ideology, e.g. (Tret'yakov, 2013), and of a Russian national IR theory, e.g. (Tsygankov, 2013).

### 3. Contemporary World System

Before analyzing the concept of power, the world background on which states and other actors interact will be briefly presented. This introduction will provide a better understanding of the arena in which Russia can exercise its regional/international power.

Until December 1991 the world has witnessed the bipolar struggle for primacy between two superpowers: the US and the Soviet Union. With the collapse of the latter, the US has up till today remained the only uncontested superpower. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the US has been ahead the Soviet Union in terms of power and appeal also prior to 1991.

In the '60s-'70s the soviet Union had shown his prowess in the military, economic and technological fields, but later started to falter. Notwithstanding Soviet high culture, it could not compete with the US as far as popular culture and political values are concerned. Additionally, Soviet popularity decreased significantly with violent crackdowns in Europe (e.g. Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Poland in 1981) (Nye J.S., 2004, pp. 73-75). With the implosion of the Soviet Union, the US remained the only superpower for the years to come.

The Soviet Union has thus lost the Cold War, and most of the Eastern European countries, which were in the Soviet orbit, under the Warsaw Pact, have gravitated towards the democratic and economic attractiveness of the European Union: most of them joining the union, some aspiring to join, and some being in a gray area between attraction to the EU and Russia. To this point, the concept of Russia's power in the near abroad, and in particular the situation of Ukraine will be explored in the following chapters.

Without the Soviet Union, the US has remained the most pre-eminent military world power, the strongest economy and a leading force in popular culture.

Notwithstanding this feature, the US is not a boundless power. Because of the increasing relevance of international organizations and international law, a unilateral and imperialistic use of force is likely to be condemned by the international society, as seen with the Bush administration and the 2003 Iraq War waged without the backing of a UN Resolution.

As for the economic dominance, the US cannot act unilaterally in world affairs. This is so because of an intertwined global system which requires the interaction of other important players, such as the EU, China, Japan, WTO.

As for culture, instead, the US is the dominant one in general, but this does not necessarily mean that there are not other cultures competing in specific areas worldwide.

Although China is looming to contend or to overtake the US global power at some point in the future, as Moravcsik contends, international politics is about the present, and the US is and will remain the world's superpower in the foreseeable future (Moravcsik, 2010).

Along the already mentioned power there are others such as the BRICS, thereof Russia is a member. After the collapse of the Soviet Union Russia has maintained (or attempts to) its sphere of influence in the post-Soviet states (Russia's near abroad) with which it has historic, cultural, linguistic and economic ties.

A central observation is that the power of states is not fixed and is subject to changes. Two processes concern it: power transition among states and power diffusion away from the states to non-state actors. Whereas the first phenomenon is old as International Relations, the second has been increasingly catching on in the last century with the spread of NGOs and the Information Revolution (Nye J. , 2011).

#### **4. Power in International Relations Theories**

This chapter will focus on the concept of power. Power has been a focal point for IR scholars and at the same time a very controversial concept. In order to grasp the multidimensionality of power, two theories dealing with power in IR will be presented and critically assessed. But first, a brief historical overview on the study of the concept of power will be presented.

##### **4.a. Historical overview of the concept of power in IR**

The concept of power is as ancient as the study of International Relation. It goes from IR historians and political theorist such as Thucydides and Machiavelli, passing through Realists such Waltz and Morgenthau to today's IR schools of thought.

Initially, the power of a state was identified with its resources (e.g. population, territory, wealth, armies and navies). This view of nations competing in the international game by means of their resources or capabilities dominated uncontested the IR arena until the 1950s-60s (supported by Waltz and Morgenthau). At this juncture however, a power analysis revolution occurred: power was not to be analyzed in terms of possession, but in terms of relations. This relational notion envisages power as a type of causation: an actor changes (actually or potentially) the behavior of another actor. The relational approach to power in the second half of

the 20<sup>th</sup> century was influenced by scholars from psychology, philosophy, sociology and political science.

Power is thus to be analyzed not as a mono-dimensional concept (resources) but as a multidimensional one. There is no unanimity on the identification or pre-eminence of the dimensions of power (Cfr. below The two theories on power). Nonetheless, when analyzing relational power some of the dimensions of concern are *scope* (in what issue-area does A hold power over B?), *domain* (where, geographically, does A hold power?), *costs* (is it costly or cheap for A to influence B?), *means* (symbolic and normative, economic, military, diplomatic).

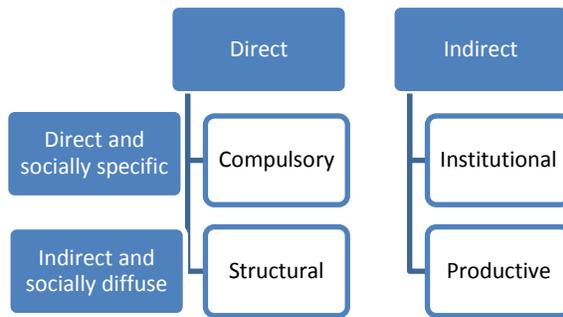
In parallel, another debate regards the faces of power. As a reaction to Dahl's one-face elaboration of power (A using force B to change B's behaviour), two other faces have been proposed in order to widen the understanding of power. The second face regards the ability of an actor to suppress some issues from the options of another actor, thus controlling the latter's agenda. The third face, instead, concerns the ability of an actor to affect the thoughts, wants and preferences of another actor. There is no agreement on the number and types of faces of power with some considering the three faces as being just re-adaptations and interpretations of one face, i.e. A changing the behavior of B.

Since "power works in various forms and has various expressions that cannot be captured by a single formulation" (Barnett & Duvall, 2005), in the following, two theories aiming at producing multifaceted conceptualizations of power will be assessed.

#### **4.b. Barnett and Duvall's theoretical paradigm for analyzing power**

Barnett and Duvall propose a theoretical framework for analyzing power in IR by creating a taxonomy of power hinged on four concepts of power: compulsory, institutional, structural and productive. They intend power as the ability of actors to produce certain effects and to delineate the condition of their existence, and thus voluntarily excluding persuasion as an element of power. Additionally, the four concepts of power are to be considered through two dimensions; first, the types of social relations by means of which power operates (social relations of constitution or production), second, the specificity of the social relations (direct and socially specific or indirect and socially diffuse).

Figure 2: Barnett and Duvall's conceptualization of power



The concept of compulsory power or direct control over another, draws broadly on Dahl's formulation: "power is [defined] as the ability of A to get B to do what B otherwise would not do". Moreover, three conditions are elicited: *intentionality* on part of A, *conflict of desires* between A and B, and *success* on part of A due to its material and ideational resources. Duval and Barnett, nonetheless, do not consider intentionality as being inherent to compulsory power. Since the latter is defined as a cause for B to alter its behavior, the effect of B altering its behavior does not require intention on part of A. Finally, for further clarification, the above-mentioned 'ideational resources' refer to symbolic and normative resources states and NGOs can use in order to shame or morally blame B so as to change its behavior.

Institutional power consists in the ability of A to influence the behavior of B in formal or informal institutions by means of norms and procedures. Unlike the compulsory one, institutional power is manifested in diffuse relations between socially removed actors. The institutional advantage and bias of A is derived from different sources: historical, economic, military, etc.

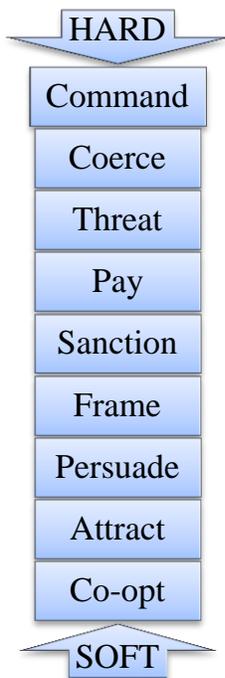
Structural power is defined as A being structured in function of B and vice versa, i.e. the social beings A and B are determined by the co-constitutive internal relations of their structural positions. The structure, however, does not produce equal power positions usually: the actors are allocated differential capacities and advantages and placed in a master-slave duality. Furthermore, this social structure configures the self-understanding and subjective interests of the actors.

Productive power lies in the constitution of all social objects through the determination of the system of signification and meaning. A and B are thus intertwined in networks of social power and they use discourse to determine the norms, meaning, customs and social identities of of A and B's subjects (Barnett & Duvall, 2005).

It must be noted that this theory owes its approach to Carr who, although declaring that power was the ambit of Realism, was one of the first to inspire a multi-level analysis of power. In his case the focus was on the different dimensions of compulsory power (military force, economic wealth, and public opinion or propaganda) (Barnett & Duvall, 2005).

#### 4.c.J. Nye's theory of power: a tool for analysis and policy-making

Nye in *The Future of Power* analyses the concept of power as in a spectrum of power behavior. The extremes of the spectrum are represented by hard power and soft power.



To this point, the concept of smart power is developed. With power consisting in general in the achievement of goals and outcomes, smart power is defined as the optimal desired outcome achieved with the combination of one's resources with the options in the spectrum of power behavior. Alternatively, it can be said that smart power equals the sum of hard power and soft power.

Military power is not to be considered solely in terms of resources, instead it has to be analyzed according to the spectrum of power behavior. Four kinds of power behavior emerge: physical coercion, threat of coercion, protection and assistance. Additionally, there are four modalities of this kind of power: fighting and destruction, coercive diplomacy, alliance and peacekeeping, aid and training. As can be inferred from the above mentioned sets, military power does not necessarily equal with hard

power, it may well produce soft power.

Economic power can be as well assessed in the spectrum of power behavior. The resources of economic power are the GDP, per capita income, technological progress, natural and human resources, political and economic institutions, and financial and competitive resources. Economic power can be both used to force another actor to comply with one's interests or it can be an instrument of attraction (successful economic performance).

The soft power of a country, instead, draws on three main resources: culture, political values and foreign policies. A country is in the position of wielding soft power when the three elements are perceived in a positive and legitimate fashion at home and abroad.

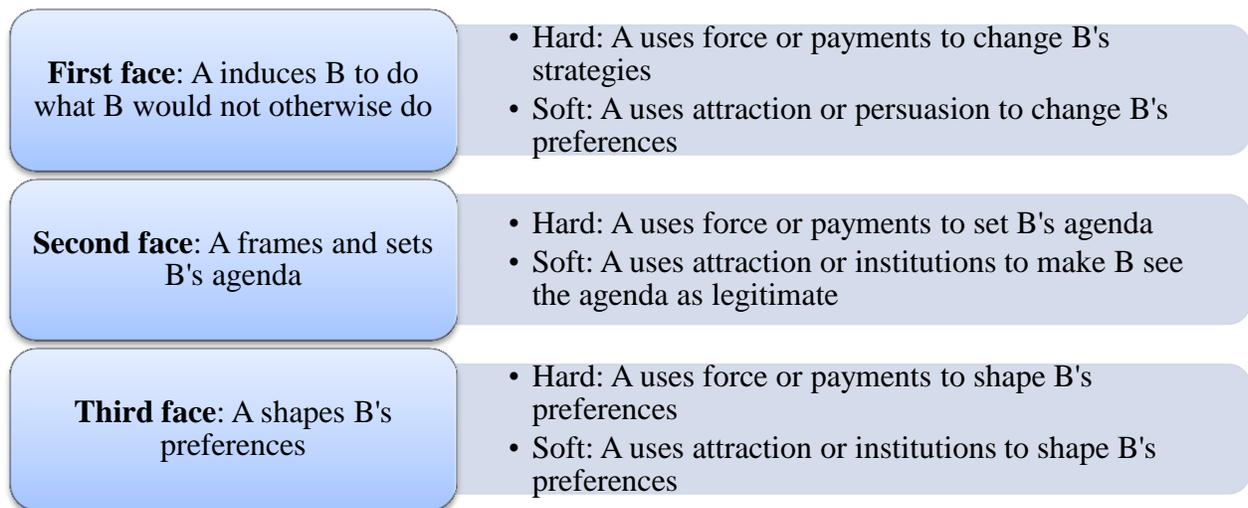
Soft power works according to two models: direct and indirect. The first one concerns government elites being influenced by other elites, while the second regards a two-step process in which the public and other third parties of a country are influenced, and they in turn affect the leaders of other countries thus creating an enabling/disabling environment.

Nye's conceptualization of soft power is all-encompassing. On one hand, soft power is considered a type of power as are military and economic power. On the other hand, soft power represents the extreme in a soft-hard power spectrum against which economic and military powers can be measured (Nye J. , 2011).

It is important to stress that, notwithstanding the essentiality of power resources (material, diplomatic, organizational, strategic ) in the assessment of power, the focus is on power behavior. The emphasis is on *how* one uses the resources, not on *what* are the resources.

Furthermore, behavioral power can be assessed by means of three faces or aspects (See Figure 3). The first face corresponds to commanding change, the second to controlling agendas, and the third one to establishing preferences. The three faces are also called the public, hidden or invisible faces in relation to the difficulty of the target at recognizing the source of power. As already mentioned, some collapse the three faces into one. Nye, however, emphasizes the need of a triadic study of relational power in order not to overlook the structural and co-optative features of the second and third faces. Although there is a higher conceptual proximity between the first face and hard power and, between the other two faces and soft power, all three faces of power integrate both the concept of soft power and hard power: hard power (force or payments) can be used to change, set the agenda or shape the preferences of B and in parallel, soft power can be wielded through all three faces of power: to change, legitimize or shape the preferences of another actor.

Figure 3: Faces of Power



#### 4.d. Comparison between the two theories on the concept of power

Two different theories one theoretical, the other normative and for policy makers

The first obvious similarity between the two paradigms is the conceptual proximity of compulsory power and hard power: A forces B to change B's behavior. The institutional power, instead, can be varyingly interpreted; it depends on how power is exerted according to the hard-soft power spectrum.

The first striking difference between these two theories is the concept of persuasion. Whereas Nye emphasizes the importance of persuasion and attraction in developing and wielding soft power, Barnett and Duval exclude persuasion a priori when conceptualizing power. However, a link concerning soft power between the two theories can be found. That is productive power

Soft power is a complex concept and is not ascribable only to persuasion and attraction, although the latter are fundamental elements. A parallel can be found between soft power and structural and productive types of power.

First, Nye stresses the importance for a country that wishes to increase its soft power to spread language and culture by means of cultural institutes, media, etc. In parallel, Barnett and Duvall describe productive power as the constitution of social subjects by means of systems of

knowledge and discursive practices. Language and culture obviously are systems of knowledge and discursive practices.

Second, Nye ascribes ideology as being constitutive of the concept of soft power (it goes without saying, ideology that is perceived positively by the recipient). Similarly, the other two authors define structural power as social relations of position that constitute actors and their capacities, and also their self-understanding and subjective interests. An instance of this power is the master-slave relation and it can be epitomized by the relations between capitalist states and peripheral ones, with the former imposing the economic and ideological structures on the latter.

An illustrative example of the two above-mentioned parallels is provided by Churchill who recognized the political and economic power of language and stated: “I am very much interested in the question of basic English. The widespread use of this would be a gain for us far more durable and fruitful than the annexation of great provinces” (Pennycook, 1994) in (Gaffey, 2005)).

As a corollary comment on Churchill’s statement is that in Marxist or Gramscian terminology the superstructure is superior in impact than the structure. Thus for Churchill soft power is a more effective power instrument than hard power (economic or military).

As the authors reiterate throughout their works the categories and types of power are not always mutually exclusive and sometimes there is a degree of mutual permeability. Conceptually then, productive power and soft power could be seen as having some proximity to compulsory power. The previously mentioned example of the English language begs the question: Has the spread of English been an instance of attraction (productive/soft power) or of imposition (compulsory/hard power)? The answer is both. Churchill achieved his goal by the use of smart power.

Since Barnett and Duvall, unlike Nye, exclude persuasion and cooptation from the study of power it is difficult to overlap the faces of power with the types of power. Nonetheless, it can be broadly said that the first face of power is closer to compulsory power, whereas the second and third faces are closer to institutional, structural and productive types of power.

Another difference between the two theories is seen in their approach. Whilst Barnett and Duvall simply offer an analytical paradigm for the study of power, Nye, beyond analytical instruments, has also a prescriptive theory for the wielding of power. Indeed, his study of power

is focused on the American power, and citing Cox “Every theory is for someone and for some purpose” it can be said that Nye’s theory is for the US with the purpose of bettering the wielding of American power.

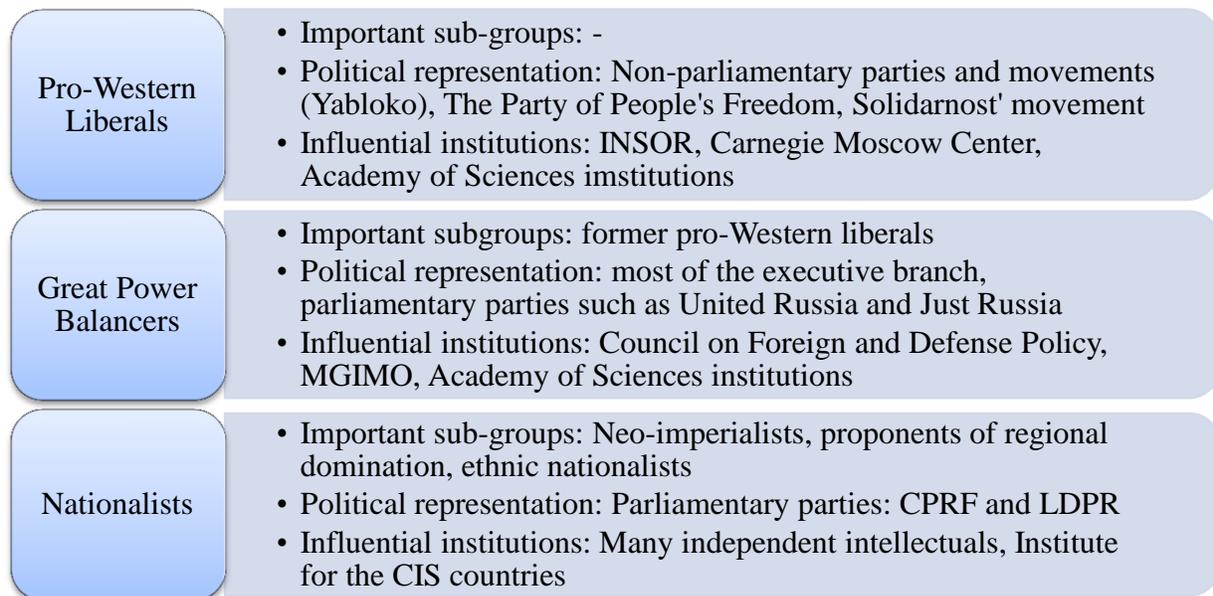
An important element that is left out in this theories is the potential power function of other subjects such as diasporas, apart from states, NGOs and institutions. In the following sections a link between power and diasporas will be made.

As a final note on the two theories on power, it must be remarked that they do not provide clear-cut taxonomies and concepts to testimony the theoretical controversy around the concept of power and the permeability of power. What they do provide is tools for dissecting and understanding some aspects of power.

## 5. Russia’s Power

There are three major Russian schools of thought concerning how Russian power should be projected outwards. They are illustrated by the following diagram:

Figure 4: Major Russian Leading Schools of Thought<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Diagram based on (Kuchins & Zevelev, 2012)

As can be seen in the diagram the Russian foreign political direction has been mainly influenced by the school of Great Power Balancers mainly because of its major political representation. However, there is a general agreement in media and academia over the fact that the orientation of the Russian foreign policy is influenced by the Nationalist's group (in particular by President Putin's political advisor Aleksandr Dugin).

This foreign policy configuration begs the question on how is it linked with conceptualizations of power.

This can be found in the IR theories which are the source the Russian schools of thought. It is worth mentioning that the IR theories are of Western origin, but their general concepts have been absorbed into the Russian context.

Consequently, the Great power balancers share similarities with the balance of power theory, which, as Baldwin observes, sees power as property (resources/capabilities) and places emphasis on military power and on the ability to win wars.

Whereas, the Nationalists group can be linked with Mearsheimer's Offensive Realism, which argues that states strive to get as much power as possible, "with hegemony as their ultimate goal" (Mearsheimer in (Baldwin, 2013). This IR side views power as resources, as well.

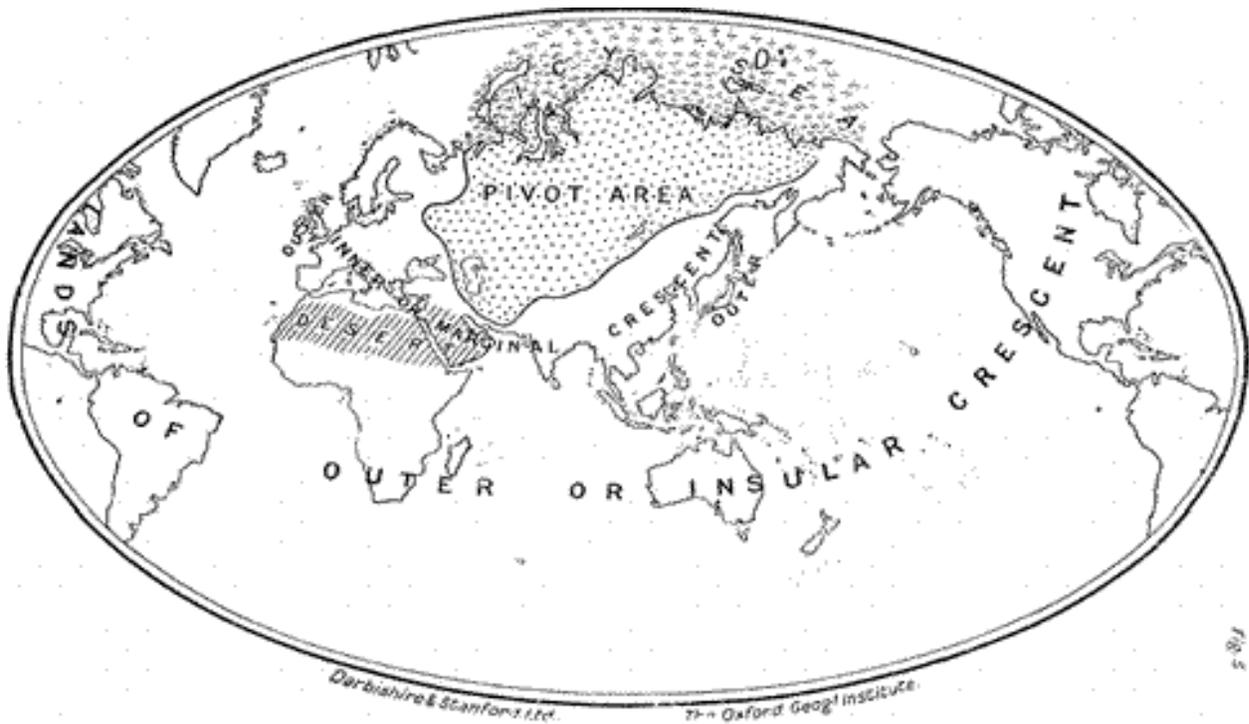
These considerations can be translated into the general notion that Russian academia and policy-makers view power mainly as resources (Cfr. Section 5.d).

Moreover, the Great Power Balancers and Nationalists' schools can be conceptually linked to Mackinder's geopolitical theory on the heartland, which is adopted by Dugin. This theory assigns in world politics a primary role to the heartland, which roughly corresponds to Russia and the former Soviet Union and can be summarized with the maxims: "Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rule the World-Island commands the World-Island; who rules the World Island controls the world" (Kubyshkin & Sergunin, 2012). The link between this geopolitical theory (and its variations) and the Russian foreign policy can give some insight for the critical Russia-Ukraine relations and for the special path between Russia and its near abroad, as will be seen in the following sections.

Needless to say Russia's foreign policy (as that of any other country) cannot be completely described in toto by a single clear-cut theory, and often when analyzing an instance of foreign policy, elements of different theories are used.

From the theories examined above, it is obvious that “the Russian science of International Relations in many aspects continues to live in dependence of the Western theories, without questioning the character and consequences of this fact” (Tsygankov, 2013). Tsygankov argues that regardless of the benefits of using Western theories, Russia’s influence, although strong in the near abroad for cultural, historic, linguistic, etc. reasons, could be stronger if there was a national theory of IR. Any social theory does not simply provide an analysis of the facts, but also promotes the creation of a society with a characteristic system of ideas and purpose. This can be seen in the promotion by the Western powers of the liberal-democratic model. Apart from the near abroad, the Russian model of society can hardly compete with the Western one; therefore, there is need for the Russian academia to develop a Russian model of values and identity that can be integrated along the Western ones. With the development of a national theory, it will be possible to achieve a concrete view of the world, which accounts for Russia’s interests and characteristics (Tsygankov, 2013).

Figure 5: Mackinder's Map<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> (Mackinder, 1904)

### **5.b. Russia's Power in the Near Abroad**

If Russian power were to be assessed only in purely Realist terms, then it may be said that Russia is the second world-power as far as military capabilities and natural resources, after the US. (Global Fire Power, 2013). Obviously, compared to the countries in the near abroad Russia has the strongest military and economy and energetic system. Moreover, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union all countries (apart from the three Baltic states), have entered the Commonwealth of Independent States, which was supposed as a means of exercising Russia's institutional power. Along this organization, there is a set of other associated organizations such as the Free Trade Area, Organization of Central Asia Cooperation and Collective Security Treaty Organization.

There are also plans to create the Eurasian Economic Union (with the aim of creating a single economic market) which will initially have as members Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus. Ukraine has been courted by Russia to join under President Yanuchovych, but in the aftermath of the Euro-maidan, this will hardly happen.

### **5.c. Russian Power in Ukraine**

This section will provide a brief historical overview of the Ukraine-Russia relations and an assessment of the types of power Russia exerted or can exert in Ukraine.

Ukraine and Russia share a centuries long common history. The Ukrainian capital Kiev is the cradle of the Ukrainian and Russian civilizations and most parts of Ukraine gradually became part of the Russian empire at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Additionally, Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991. The relations between the independent Ukraine and Russia have witnessed moments of tensions since their inception. Disputes regarding gas, the status of Russian language, the status of Crimea and the Black Sea Naval Fleet. Additionally, the Orange Revolution (according to Dugin Putin is an anti-revolutionary by nature, and the color revolutions are seen as a Western sponsored fifth column trying to destabilize Russia's influence in the near abroad) and the potential Ukraine's NATO membership.

Russia has a great array of power channels towards Ukraine, which have been used and could potentially be used again:

-compulsory: the Ukrainian economy is highly dependent on Russia, and during the Gas crises Russia has used economic force to change Ukraine's behavior. Additionally, the occupation of

Crimea has been an instance of compulsory/hard power, and the South-East of Ukraine is susceptible to Russian military intervention, depending on the development of the ongoing crisis. Moreover, Yanukovich's decision to refuse the signing of the EU Agreement has been seen as the result of the economic pressure exercised by Russia.

-institutional power: the Commonwealth of Independent States, The Customs Union with Belarus and Kazakhstan (potentially)

-structural: the common history (especially the Soviet one), an intertwined economy (around one third of the Ukrainian economy depends on Russia (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014)) and a large Russian diaspora defines the structural relations of the two countries, with Russia being potentially the stronger actor

-productive: according to Ukrainian sociological surveys Russian language is not limited to the South-East of Ukraine, and many Ukrainians speak Russian at home. An indicative element of how Russian is pervasive in Ukraine is the fact that the speeches in Ukrainian of one of the leaders of the pro-EU bloc reveal that her Ukrainian is not her first language (dw.de, 2014). Moreover, Russian and Russian speaking media are highly diffused in Ukraine.

Since the productive power concerns the self-understanding of actors, political speeches may reflect the projections of the selves. For instance, Putin stated that: Russia and Ukraine are "Big Russia and Little Russia and nobody should be permitted to interfere in relations between us, they have been the business of Russia itself" (nbcnews.com, 2009). Allegedly Putin also stated at a NATO summit that "Ukraine is not even a state. What is Ukraine? Part of its territories is Eastern Europe, but the greater part is a gift from us" (Cohen, 2014)

In general opinion polls on Ukrainians' attitude towards Russia have showed throughout the years a tendency to have positive stance. Nonetheless, in the aftermath of Euromaidan support is starting to decline (Kiev International Institute of Sociology, 2014).

#### **5.d.Russia's Soft Power**

The concept of soft power has entered the Russian discourse recently, and Putin called for a more efficient use of soft power by the Russian public diplomacy and for the need of attractiveness in the material, spiritual and intellectual Russian spheres. Nonetheless, he laments the fact that Russia's image abroad is depicted not by Russia itself, but by others in a negative way. Additionally, he recognizes the need for strengthening the status of Russian language in the near

abroad and the ties with the compatriots living abroad offering them protection and assistance (kremlin.ru, 2012).

Notwithstanding Putin's call for the development of the Russian soft power and notwithstanding scholarly debates on soft power, Russian attempts at producing soft power have been rather feeble.

As Nye claims, soft power draws on three sources: culture, political values and foreign policy. Additionally, there must be a synergetic relationship between government and civil society in projecting soft power.

As far as culture is concerned the Russian high culture (arts, literature) has been and continues to be attractive, although popular culture does not have a large following abroad.

As far as Russia's foreign policies are concerned, they are generally seen as illegitimate by Western media and governments. Some examples are the Russo-Georgian war, the Russia-Ukraine gas dispute and most recently the occupation of Crimea.

The political values, instead, can be assessed by means of the following indexes on democracy, press and corruption.

The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index takes into account a set of categories in order to assign a coefficient to 167 countries; the categories are electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, political culture and civil liberties. Additionally, countries are subdivided into four political systems: full democracies, flawed democracies, hybrid regimes and authoritarian regimes.

In the 2012 Democracy Index Russia ranked 122<sup>nd</sup> and as an authoritarian regime; Ukraine 80<sup>th</sup> and as a hybrid regime; the EU does not have a median coefficient and EU countries fare heterogeneously between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> positions, and are full or flawed democracies (The Economist - Intelligence Unit, 2013).

The World Press Freedom Index assigns coefficients to 179 countries taking into consideration a set of parameters: pluralism, media independence, environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency and infrastructure. In the 2013 Index Russia ranked 148<sup>th</sup>, Ukraine 126<sup>th</sup> and EU countries between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 87<sup>th</sup> positions (Reporters without Borders, 2013).

Transparency International's 2013 Corruption Perceptions Index assigns coefficients of corruption to 177 countries. Russia ranked 127<sup>th</sup>, Ukraine 144<sup>th</sup>, and EU countries between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 77<sup>th</sup> positions (Transparency International, 2013).

Furthermore, according to other socio-economic indicators, such as the Gini Index, Economic Freedom Index, what emerges is an unequal society with an unbalanced distribution of income and with a mixed type of economy (partly free-market based and partly state-controlled).

As a final remark, all the above-mentioned indicators show a negative trend for Russia in the last five years, apart from the corruption index which shows a slight betterment.

It can thus be concluded that in Nye's terms Russia is inherently unable to exercise soft power. Nonetheless, this is a general assessment. An important question to be made is *where* is soft power projected? It may well be that Russia's soft power does not have a global breadth as some of the Western democracies do. However, in certain regions Russia may have the possibility of projecting more soft power.

To this point, Cwiek-Karpowicz reconnecting to Nye's conceptualization of soft power, identifies a set of channels for the wielding of Russia's soft power in a specific region: the near abroad. The potential and (actual) channels are as follows: color revolutions

- a huge labor market: Since Russia has the highest GDP per capita in the region and has visa-free regimes with most of the ex-Soviet countries, it is a pole of attraction for labor migration from the near abroad. Indeed, it has officially 3 million workers from CIS countries (and more than 10 million illegally). The EU Eastern Partnership countries have the majority of foreign workers in Russia: Armenia 2.5 mil, Ukraine and Azerbaijan 2 mil, Georgia 1 mil, Belarus 700,000 and Moldova 300,000.

- Russian language: the Russian language continues to be relevant in business, social, cultural and scientific relations in the near abroad, in particular in Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. At the same time language proximity is one reason for facilitating immigration.

- common culture: the development of a narrative depicting the common resistance against Nazism

- the Russian Orthodox Church, which extends its jurisdiction to many believers in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, is a reinforcing partner for the Russian policies towards compatriots abroad and a supporter of the Russian World ideology. Indeed, Patriarch Kirill I stated that "the

core of the Russian World today is Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus [...] regardless of state divisions...we are spiritually one people". He also encouraged the establishment of Orthodox associations in other post-soviet countries. Additionally, after the Russo-Georgian War, the patriarch recognized the jurisdiction of the Georgian Church over the separatist regions and provided financial support in an attempt at improving Russia's image in Georgia.

- NGOs. The Russkiy Mir Foundation (created by President Putin in 2007) is an organization that promotes Russian language and culture. However, its role is perceived negatively by the ex-Soviet countries because of its nationalistic approach to Russian diasporas. Another organization is the Rossotrudnichestvo (reformed by Medvedev in 2008) which works in parallel with the Compatriot Legal Support and Protection Fund. Along these, there have been also created nationalist youth organizations.

- mass media: the channel Russia Today and sites such as ino.SMI

- energy resources. This power type is regarded by some as attraction (therefore soft power) towards Russia in the near abroad countries. However, in Nye and Barnett and Duvall's conceptual framework it would be more comparable to hard power and compulsory/structural power. From the relational power standpoint, energy *resources* ought to be assessed in relation to how they are used: they can be both hard power or soft power. It seems though that Russia is more oriented to using them as hard power (Cfr. Russian power in Ukraine).

A curious coincidence is that Russia started devoting more resources to the development of soft power in the near abroad in concomitance with the color revolutions (Georgia, Ukraine) and the EU expansion eastwards. (Ćwiek-Karpowicz, 2012) This fact can be read through the prism of the dominant IR theory in Russia, Great Power Balancing: in order not to lose influence in the region in favor of the EU (and potentially NATO and the US), Russia has counteracted with soft power (Cfr. Russian schools of thought).

The concept of soft power has penetrated not only the political sphere, but the Russian academia as well. There is however no unanimous agreement over what to prioritize in the development of the Russia's soft power in the near abroad and abroad: some scholars emphasize the importance of developing more NGOs, others a more proactive diplomacy, others the development of an attractive ideology (as there is none since the collapse of the Soviet Union) and finally, others dismiss soft power as having any bearing for the power of a state in general

and consider military power as the ultimate factor in power politics (Tret'yakov, 2013). All in all, Russian academia has more of a tendency to see soft power in terms of resources rather than relational power (although referring often to Nye).

In the article “What China and Russia Don’t Get About Soft Power”, Nye maintains that Russia is not able to exert soft power, regardless of its attempts to do so. As mentioned before the three main ingredients of the soft power of a country are its culture - in places where it is attractive to others, its political values - when it lives up to them at home and abroad, and foreign policies - when they are seen as legitimate and moral.

An additional criticism is that Russia tries to exert soft power by governmental means, whereas it should be created by the synergy of government and civil society.

One must assume that Nye is implying that Russia does not have soft power in the Western democracies, where its political and foreign policies are often considered negatively. However, Russia may have soft power to some extent on the Russian diasporas in the near abroad. For instance, as presented above, Russian democratic indexes are negative to a Western observer, but not necessarily or completely to a Russian observer in the near abroad. As can be seen in Table 1, the Western democracy model does not represent the ideal political system in the South-East of Ukraine, where a large Russian diaspora lives. Indeed, around 20% and 10% prefer centralized and authoritarian types of political system. To these observers (unlike the Western ones), the fact that the Russian civil society is excluded by the government in the wielding of soft power must not appear as a complete deficiency.

**Table 1: Ukrainians' Ideal Government<sup>5</sup>**

<i>In your opinion, which political system is the most suitable for Ukraine?</i>	<b>Ukraine</b>	West	Central	East
The former Soviet System	<b>19%</b>	6%	22%	23%
A system that has a lot of similarity to the Soviet one, but is more democratic and market-based	<b>29%</b>	17%	29%	34%
A strong authoritarian system that places order above freedom	<b>8%</b>	5%	7%	11%
A monarchy or autocracy handed down from generation to generation	<b>2%</b>	1%	2%	2%
A Western-style democratic republic	<b>28%</b>	57%	30%	15%
Other, Don't know, Refused	<b>14%</b>	14%	10%	15%

<sup>5</sup> Table based on surveys by (Gallup, 2014), conducted in June-July 2013

An example that shows how foreign policy is perceived differently in different places is that of the Russo-Georgian Conflict. Whereas in the Western world Russia was largely seen as the aggressor, opinion polls show that in the South East of Ukraine, the majority does not see Russia as the aggressor but Georgia (Razumkov Centre, 2008).

Moreover, as seen above, Russian culture is even more attractive and persuasive in the near abroad by means of the language, media, religion and popular culture.

With regards to the relationship between government and civil society, in the Russian case soft power is almost entirely wielded by the governmental organizations. This point does represent a weakness. These organizations are considered to be ineffective (and corrupt in some cases) and they do not have as strong an impact organizations of the civil society might have.

From this different perspective, it can be said that Russia does hold some soft power in some places in the near abroad, while holding little or none in other contexts. Power and soft power are context specific: over whom and in which issue area.

Nye molds the concept of soft power looking at the United States (indeed there is a prescriptive chapter on American soft power in his books), but penetrating more in the Russian world one can see that Nye's conceptualization of soft power can be re-adapted and still function to a certain extent.

Using the oft-mentioned metaphor of the card hand being the winning hand in one game but the losing one in another, it can be concluded that the Russian soft power cards (culture, political values, foreign policy; and strong government) lose the game among Western democracies, while it may be winning among Russian diasporas in the near abroad.

Notwithstanding Nye insists on the specificity and circumstantiality of power, he generalizes the assessment of Russia's soft power and concludes that Russia cannot project it. Russia's soft power may not attract an American, but it may attract a Russian living in the near abroad.

Applying directly Nye's conceptualization of soft power to the Russian context, it is quite evident that Russia does not possess a fully-fledged soft power.

## 6. Diasporas and the Concept of Power

The two theories assessed in Chapter 4 do not explicitly include diasporas in the conceptualization of power and their discussion hinges on the idea that states are unitary and defined actors. Consequently, in order to supplement for the lack of theoretical elaboration on the implications of diasporas for the concept power, Yossi Shain and Aharon Barth's *Diasporas and International Relations Theory* will be critically assessed.

Assuming that power is “the authority to determine the shared meanings that constitute the identities, interests and practices of the states” (Adler, 1997), diasporas can play an important role in the power relations between two states. Consequently, the boundaries between two states are not clear-cut since “often social environments that affect state identity link international and domestic environments in a way that defies the reification of distinct domestic and international spheres of politics” (Katzenstein, 1996) in (Shain & Barth, 2003)).

With diaspora being defined as a people with a common origin residing outside the borders of its ethnic, religious or political homeland, diaspora members are to be considered inside and outside their homeland since they participate or are indirectly drawn into their homeland's affairs. Diasporas thus expand the meaning of domestic politics to include not only the politics inside the state but also inside the people.

Diasporas can be categorized into three groups: core members, passive members and silent members. The first are the organizing elites which have an intensive activity in the diasporic affairs and can mobilize the whole diaspora. The second are the members that can mobilize upon request from the elites; The third are non-participants in diasporic affairs, which can however get involved in times of crisis.

Diasporas can have either passive or active roles. Diasporas have a passive role when they end up in international relations involuntarily. This can happen under three sets of circumstances. In the first scenario, the diaspora needs help from its homeland because of tensions with the hostland. In the second, the homeland by means of ethno-national representations swallows the diaspora regardless of the inclination of the latter. And finally in the third one, diasporas cannot control their status of members of a homeland, and become this involved in the international affairs of the homeland. As mentioned, in all these scenarios diasporas play a passive role, while the homelands or other states are the active actors.

Diasporas with an active role, instead, influence the foreign policies of their hostland or homeland. As an illustrative example the American Jewish diaspora can be mentioned.

Diasporas are motivated by two types of interests. First, they might consider the foreign policy of the homeland as having influence on the interests of the people (inside and outside the state). Second, they may want to participate in the developing of the homeland's foreign policy (inside the state).

Moreover, there are four other factors that determine the relations between diaspora and hostland and homeland:

-Degree of motivation: diasporas can have internal differentiation between groups depending on their stance on the issue of identity. Diasporic members may be motivated over there (interests of the people or homeland) or over here (interests of the community/organization). Other factors may influence the diasporic motivation such as dual loyalty (towards hostland and homeland), cultural impediments (for instance, Chinese diasporas are culturally stymied from interfering in domestic affairs), anger and fatigue (towards the inability or political unwillingness of the homeland to interact with the diaspora).

-Nature of hostland: this has repercussions for a diaspora on two levels. First, generally democratic states allow a high degree of freedom to diasporic civil society organizations. Second, only a "weak", democratic and permeable hostland can have its foreign policy towards the homeland influenced by the diaspora.

-Nature of homeland: the diaspora can affect the policymaking of the homeland if the latter is weak, i.e. democratically permeable or "poor in ideological, material, and institutional resources". A strong state may see its diaspora as a legitimate part of the people and still object to diasporic interventions on sensitive issues (such as conflicts).

-Strength relations between diasporas and homeland: "to exert effective influence of on homeland foreign policy, a diaspora must be united in its position on the issue", otherwise, diasporic subgroup divisions may weaken the influence over the homeland. Beyond the unitary orientation of the diaspora, the relations can be strengthened depending on the above-mentioned factors (Shain & Barth, 2003).

### 6.a. Linking the concept of Diaspora to the Theories of Power

As mentioned before, theories on power consider states unitary actors (as A in relation to B). By introducing an actor *c* that is in between states the power relations between states change significantly. It can be said that actor *c* is in a dual power relationship with A and B: *c* can both influence and be influenced by the two actors.

Integrating diasporas into Duval and Barnett's theory, it can be hypothesized on how and over whom *c* can exert power and influence through the four channels of power:

-Compulsory: this is the only channel by means of which diasporas cannot exercise power. Generally, compulsory power is associated with military or economic resources and behavior (inherent to states or terroristic groups). It is improbable for a diaspora to force a state do something. Conversely, the hostland can adopt policies or use military force against a diaspora, while the homeland may exert compulsory power by military occupation of regions of the hostland where diasporas are located.

-Institutional: diasporas may exert power on both the homeland and hostland via political lobbying, by creating a political party or through NGOs.

-Structural: being part of both states, diasporas inherently and mutually constitute and are constituted by the two states. For instance, diasporas may vote for a political party in the hostland that has a positive orientation towards their homeland.

-Productive: this is the most significant channel by means of which diasporas influence and are influenced. Diasporas can be the target of various policies (and media) both by the homeland and hostland, thus being influenced by both states. At the same time, being part of both, they may try to influence the culture and identity of both states.

From another perspective, integrating *c* into Nye's theory on power, it can be said that diasporas may generally exert only soft power. However, in times of crisis a diaspora or some of its members may try to exert hard power on the hostland (by means of violent behavior in an attempt to change the behavior of the hostland). At the same time, diasporas can be the target on which both the homeland and the hostland are able to exert soft power and hard power.

Following the conceptualization of active-passive diasporas and identifying the Russian diaspora as a passive one, to hypothesize the Russian diaspora as an active one. Even if the Russian diaspora were an active one (requiring organizational and institutional structures in the

hostland), it would not be able to exercise influence on the homeland. In order to do so, Russia must have a weak and permeable government, which is not the case.

### **6.b. Russian compatriot policies: an instance of soft power?**

In this section a more detailed assessment will look into Russia's foreign policy towards its diasporas and whether this can be categorized as soft power.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia had to find a way of dealing with the Russian diasporas in the former Soviet countries. In 1993 one of the solutions appeared to be the granting of dual citizenship to diaspora members. This strategy has however been rather unsuccessful. Apart from marginal agreements with Kyrgyzstan, Armenia and Turkmenistan, the Russian proposal of dual citizenship has not been accepted by the countries in the near abroad with significant Russian diasporas. In Ukraine, Yanuchovich promised to introduce the policy, but the Orange Revolution made the plan impossible to implement. Notwithstanding the reluctance of the governments to accept the dual citizenship policy, many diasporic members have been *de facto* granted Russian citizenship (around 2 million) (Zevelev, 2008).

When the Russian government realized that its attempt of introducing *de jure* citizenship had basically failed, a weaker policy instrument was adopted in 1999, i.e. Basic Directions of the Russian Federation's State Policy Toward Compatriots Living Abroad. The term compatriot refers to four categories:

- citizens of the Russian Federation living abroad
- individuals that had Soviet citizenship
- individuals that emigrated from the Soviet Union or Russia
- descendants of compatriots

Although the term compatriots refers primarily to ethnic Russians overlooking the other categories, this fact is never mentioned by Russian authorities (Cfr. Section on political construction of diaspora).

In 2006 more policy instruments aiming at strengthening ties with compatriots were adopted: Program of Work with Compatriots Abroad, The Russian Language Federal Target Program, The State Program for Assistance to the Voluntary Resettlement of Compatriots Living Abroad to the Russian Federation. These initiatives however have yielded modest or below the target (in relation to resettlements) results, because of inefficiency and poor funding (Zevelev,

2008). Similar programs have been adopted also in the following years. Nonetheless, only one million out of the 13 million Russian speakers are involved to some extent in the activities of the compatriots' organizations (Pelnens, 2010).

It can be concluded that the policies towards compatriots are an instance of soft power, since among the Russo-phones in the near abroad there is attraction towards Russia. Nonetheless, Russia's soft power would have a greater impact if there was more funding and if the approach of the organizations involved had more popularity and efficiency among the diasporic members.

### **6.c. Dissecting the Concept of Russian Diaspora**

In the previous sections the concept of diaspora in IR has been introduced and assessed in relation to the concept of power. It has been concluded that diasporas can have a relevant role in the power interplay between states. Nonetheless, a further conceptual analysis is required to better suit the understanding of Russian diasporas.

Some authors such as N. Kosmarskaya and P. Kolstø problematize the possibility of ascribing the term diaspora to the Russians (and Russian-speakers) living in the post-Soviet states.

#### **5.c.1 Brief Historical Overview**

In order to tackle the concept of Russian diaspora a historical perspective is required. The imperial and Soviet periods (especially during Stalinism) witnessed waves of forced, semi-voluntary and voluntary migration in all the corners of the Russian world. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of the newly independent states several millions of people with different ethnicity and religion found themselves in new ethno-socio-political circumstances and not being able to adapt, chose to immigrate back to Russia, other ex-Soviet states or to Western countries. More than 60% of these forced migrants are represented by Russian-speaker who moved to Russia (in particular from Central Asia where the socio-cultural differences were perceived as being extremely wide). These migratory movements started to decline at a lower pace in 1995 because of practical migratory difficulties and of economic improvements in the new states (Kosmarskaya, 2005).

The following table illustrates the variations of Ethnic Russians in the Near Abroad from 1989 to early 2010s.

Table 2: Number of Ethnic Russians in the Near Abroad

Country	Ethnic Russians in 1989 <sup>6</sup>	Ethnic Russians in early 2000s <sup>7</sup>	Ethnic Russians in early 2010s <sup>8</sup>	Current Percentage of Russians out of Total Population <sup>9</sup>	Estimated
Armenia	51.555	14.660	11.862	0.4%	
Azerbaijan	392.000	142.000	119.300	1.35%	
Belarus	1.342.000	1.105.000	785.084	8.3%	
Estonia	474.000	352.000	326.235	25.2%	
Georgia	341.172	67.671	67.671	1.5%	
Kazakhstan	6.227.000	4.480.000	3.793.764	23.7%	
Kyrgyzstan	916.000	603.000	369.939	6.4%	
Latvia	905.000	703.000	590.029	27.8%	
Lithuania	344.000	220.000	176.913	5.8%	
Moldova	562,069	369.896	N/A	9.4%	
Tajikistan	388.000	68.000	34.838	0.5%	
Turkmenistan	333.892	297.319	N/A	6.7%	
<i>Ukraine</i>	<b>11.335.000</b>	<b>8.334.000</b>	<i>N/A</i>	<b>17.2%(up to 20%)</b>	
Uzbekistan	1.653.478	N/A	est. 900.000	5.4%	

### 5.c.2. View from above of the Russian diaspora: Political Perspective

The term diaspora has been widely and ambiguously used mainly by segments of the Russian political opposition, with nationalistic and patriotic features and by media that popularized these ideas. Manipulating the term diaspora mythical representations of the Russo-phone communities were made and implanted in the public. Consequently, these diasporas constructed from above (i.e. political construction) have been attributed characteristics inherent of true diasporas:

- ethnic homogeneity
- intensified feeling of belonging to the core Russian ethnos
- strife for return to the homeland
- historic homeland as the main source of identity.

<sup>6</sup> Data retrieved from (demoskop.ru, 1989)

<sup>7</sup> Data retrieved from the national censuses of the post-Soviet states

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Data retrieved from (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014)

Beyond diaspora, other synonymic terms have been employed: communes (*obshchiny*), fellow tribesmen (*soplemenniki*) with an instant reference with a mythological nuance to the pre-revolutionary peasant Russia.

This political construction from above is additionally accompanied by an exclusionary focus of the media and the Russian academia on ethnic Russians. Russian authorities, instead, have chosen to use the term compatriots to refer to the Russian-speakers in the near abroad, as it is a more politically correct term (Kosmarskaya, 2005).

After the critique of the political construction of the Russian diasporas, it can be concluded that the Russian speakers of the near abroad do not feel nor behave like a diaspora. This point will be further developed and corroborated by sociological research in the next section, which adopts an orientation opposite to the political one.

### **5.c.3. View from below of the Russian Diaspora: Sociological Perspective**

As far as the perspective *from below* on the Russian diaspora is concerned, three conceptual ramifications must be taken into account.

#### ***1. Ethnic Identity: Two Faces***

First, the ethno-cultural identity is subject to varying existential features and consciousness. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, sociological surveys in Russia, in the post-Soviet states and among Russian diasporas have observed an increasing erosion of the Soviet identity and a growing self-identification with the state and the ethnic group (civic and ethnic identities). However, Russian academia and political discourse singled out only the latter.

Sociological studies in post-Soviet states (such as Kyrgyzstan and Estonia) have shown that many Russians feel a strong attachment to Russian language and culture, and that, if they are free to enjoy cultural and linguistic freedom, they would not leave their country of residence.

Additionally, and in opposition to the above-mentioned group, many developed a local identity that stymies them from leaving. Although not rejecting their cultural and linguistic baggage, their emotional attachment to the homeland is often secondary to pragmatic reasons such as family reunion and economic conditions. In particular, in Ukraine only 10% of local Russians identified Russia as their homeland, and only 5% did not consider themselves Ukrainian citizens. Multiple other sociological surveys in the near abroad have found that the majority (to

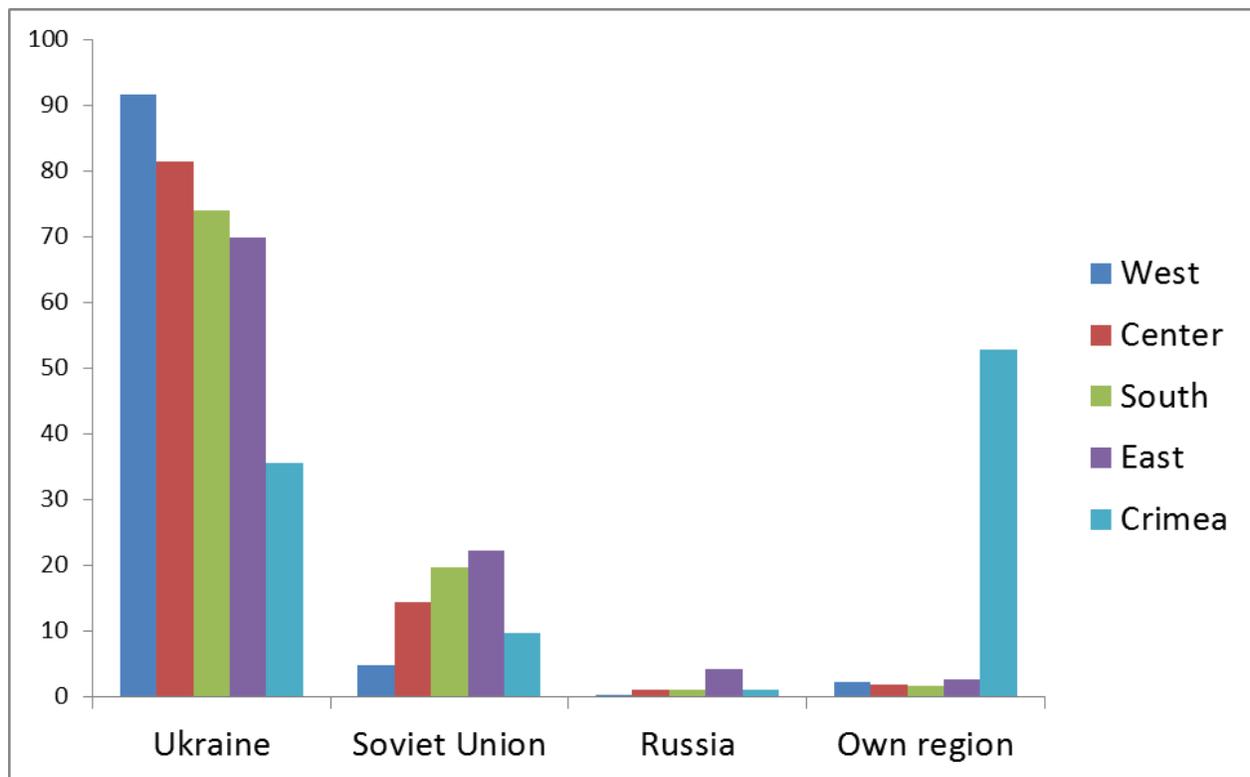
varying extents) of Russians consider their country of residence as their homeland (Kosmarskaya, 2005).

## 2. Civil Loyalty

Similar surveys, concerning civil loyalties, have shown to different extents that significant portions of the Russians in the near abroad are convinced citizens of their country of residence (in Ukraine this regards an overwhelming majority of Russo-phones). A dual allegiance is thus manifested in the empire offspring, i.e. the Russians in the near abroad: one is linguistic and cultural and is oriented towards Russia, the other is civic and is oriented towards the country of residence (Kosmarskaya, 2005).

These conclusions can be corroborated by more recent surveys in Ukraine conducted by the Razumkov Centre before the ousting of President Yanuchovich.

Figure 2: Graph based on the answers to the question: “What is your homeland?”<sup>10</sup>



It can be seen that the a large majority of citizens (regardless of ethnicity) identify themselves with Ukraine. Also telling is the percentage of citizens that identify with the Soviet Union (from

<sup>10</sup> Graph retrieved from (Taylor, 2014) and based on data of surveys conducted at the end of December 2013 from (Razumkov Centre, 2014)

5% to 20% depending on the region). Crimea, instead, represent a peculiar case: more than 50% consider Crimea their own region, and only some 30% consider it part of Ukraine.

**Table 3: Attitudes in Ukraine towards Ukraine-Russia relations<sup>11</sup>**

	Ukrainians	Russians	Ukraine in general
Relations should be the same as with other states – with closed borders, visas and customs houses.	17.4	4.6	14.7
Ukraine and Russia must be independent, but friendly states – with open borders, without visas and customs houses.	68.4	62.9	68.0
Ukraine and Russia must unite into a single state	8.7	31.8	12.5
Difficult to say/No answer	5.5	0.7	4.7

The results in this opinion poll confirm Kosmorskaya’s thesis regarding the shifting of civil loyalties. Only 31,8% of Russians in Ukraine want the two states to unite, whereas a large majority supports the independence of Ukraine. There are even 4,6% Russians that are not in favor of travelling privileges between the two states. Deserving mention is the fact that there are also almost 9% of Ukrainians that would like Ukraine and Russia to unite into a single state.

### ***3. Collective Actions of Ethnic Russians***

In the post-Soviet era Russo-phones found themselves poorly prepared for the use of ethnicity as a political instrument for mobilization. This is so, due to a series of factors: e.g. negative perception of the patriotic organizations (because of ineffectiveness and corruption of their structures), a preference for grass-roots organizations and networks (although not at the same level of a true diaspora) and political mobilization mainly along the power-opposition divisions at the national level, rather than ethnic ones (Kosmarskaya, 2005).

It is thus concluded that the Russian-speakers in the near abroad do not constitute fully-fledged diasporas. This point is also argued by Chepurin, a leading figure in the relations with compatriots abroad, who states that Russian diasporas are quite recent and that for a full development of diasporic structures and stronger relations with the homeland decades and investments are needed (Chepurin, 2009).

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<sup>11</sup> Table retrieved from (Kiev International Institute of Sociology, 2014); surveys conducted in the period 8-18 February, 2014

P. Kolstø argues that “between the positions of autochthonous and diaspora there is not an empty space but a continuum, and the Russians may gradually move from the diaspora end of the spectrum towards the centrum. There we find the rather amorphous category of national minority”(source?). This mono-directional perspective from diaspora to national minority is further elaborated by Kosmorskaya. She considers the development of the attitudes of the Russophones as having two opposite directions: towards national minority and towards diaspora. The spectrum between these two ends describes the multitude of the attitudes of the Russian-speakers (see Diagram below). The orientation towards one end or the other may oscillate depending on a series of factors. In the following, the main factors will be identified.

Figure 6: Potential orientations of the Russian-speakers



What may change the orientation of the Russian-speakers in the near abroad? Analyzing opinion polls in the aftermath of the occupation of Crimea and during the on-going Ukrainian crisis, it can be observed that there the Russian-speakers are tending more towards the category of diaspora, meaning that they are switching loyalties and see more security in Russia. Some of the factors that can be considered responsible for this process are:

- status of the Russian language
- internal political stability
- economic expectations
- media influence
- violent extremism and lack of security
- Russia's influence

One final observation is that the Russians in the near abroad do not constitute one single diaspora, but fourteen. Each diaspora has its own peculiarities depending on the cultural distance from the titular ethnic group, ethnic cohesion, social composition, etc. (Kolstø, 1999).

Figure 7: Map of Ukraine<sup>12</sup>



As can be seen from the map, there are high percentages of Russians and Russian-speakers in the East-South of Ukraine. The debate around Ukraine’s socio-political orientations is often oversimplified with the conclusion that there are two distinct vectors: one being Ukrainian and against Russia (and pro-EU), the other being Russian and tending towards Russia (and against the EU). However, the Russian vector is multidimensional. The loyalties and orientations of Russians vary along the diaspora-ethnic minority spectrum.

<sup>12</sup> Map retrieved, adapted and translated from (Canali, 2014)

#### **6.d.Occupation of Crimea: an Instance of Hard Power or Smart Power?**

Before answering the question, it is propaedeutic to the analysis to present some historical aspects of Crimea. The Crimean peninsula has a centuries long history of being conquered and dominated by different empires: from the Romans to the Tartars in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Ottomans and Russians at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the Independent Crimean Tartar state was established and later annexed to the Russian empire. During the Russian Civil War crimea was home of the White Army, and following the defeat of the latter, it was annexed to the Soviet Union. In 1954 the Crimea was transferred by Nikita Krushev from the Russian Soviet Federative Republic to the Ukrainian SSR. The move was intended as a symbolic gesture in commemoration of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ukraine becoming part of the Russian empire. Others believe it was a move to strengthen the economic and cultural ties of the two republics. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the independence of Ukraine, Crimea became part of Ukraine as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. 1992 own president In 1994 a nationalist movement tried to transfer Crimea back to Russia, but it did not succeed also because of the lack of support from Russia (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2014); (Goloss Rossii [Voice of Russia], 2014).

Following the Euromaidan protests and the flee of President Yanukovich (on February 21<sup>st</sup>), the Ukrainian parliament deposed the President and appointed an interim government. On February 23<sup>rd</sup> the Parliament voted and repealed the 2012 Law "On the principles of the state language policy", thus making Ukrainian the sole official language (Russian had regional status).

This bill enraged the Russian-speakers in the South-East and Crimea, who started to protest against the government, perceived as pursuing a nationalistic agenda. (On March 1<sup>st</sup> the bill was repealed by the President). This potentially critical issue has been previously underscored: "The protection of the Russian language would presumably be a smart cause to promote in Ukrainian politics" (Kolstø, 1999).

This critical situation provoked manifestations and clashes between pro- and anti-Russians. Subsequently, on February 26<sup>th</sup> military men without insignia (believed to be Russian military) seized the Crimean parliament in the capital Simferopol and the Council of Ministers, ousting the Crimean prime minister and replacing him with a pro-Russian politician (not recognized by Kiev). Meanwhile in Sevastopol, home to the Russian Black Sea fleet, demonstrators appointed a pro-Russian activist as mayor. Two days later Russian troops began

moving to Crimea. Moreover, the Supreme Council voted to hold a referendum on the status of Crimea on May 25<sup>th</sup>. Irregularities were reported regarding the voting, with some members stating that they were forced to vote by the military who were occupying the building.

The initial referendum was about the status of Crimea within Ukraine, but after the lack of recognition from Kiev of the new authorities and the validity of the referendum, the Crimean leadership accelerated the process and with joint Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Crimea, the Supreme Council of Crimea and the Sevastopol City Council manifested the will of joining Russia while in the process of a referendum on the issue. The referendum was held on March 6<sup>th</sup>. Two choices were offered to voters: either to restore the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Crimea and be part of Ukraine or to reunify with Russia as a federal subject. The first choice won by a large margin with votes and turnout being around 90%. Nonetheless, controversy has surrounded the voting and the percentages; many irregularities were reported by different stakeholders regarding the voting procedures and the turnout and votes, which allegedly do not represent the majority of Crimeans.

Regardless of the controversy, a Pew Research Center opinion poll conducted in April shows that a vast majority of Crimeans support the result of the referendum (Pew Research Center, 2014).

Looking at these events through the prism of the theories of power a number of observations can be made.

As polls show the Russian diaspora in Crimea did not consider itself as part of Ukraine and has always had positive orientations towards the possibility of uniting with Russia. Russia thus has had structural (by means of the presence of the Naval Fleet, stronger economy and military) and productive power (linguistic, historic, cultural, emotional ties) over Crimea. With the Ukrainian crisis, Ukraine, which already had institutional power to some degree (since Crimea was autonomous) and little structural and productive power, has seen its power decrease further. The causes are to be seen in the lack of legitimacy of the new government and its perceived nationalistic attitudes, such as the attempt to downgrade the status of Russian language. Moreover, the Ukrainian economy has been in dire conditions. All these factors constitute the platform for the Russia to exercise its compulsory power.

In Nye's terminology the occupation of Crimea has been smart use of power by Russia with some reservations. Smart power is defined as the skilful combination of soft power and hard power to achieve one's goals.

Russia's use of hard power has been possible in Crimea because it had soft power over the Russian diaspora. As seen with Korsmarskaya, Russo-phones belong to a spectrum between diaspora and national minority, however, sociological surveys show that in Crimea there has been a strong polarization towards the diaspora end, because of historical, economic, cultural reasons. Russia's soft power can be summarized in the words of a Crimean: "the economy will be better under Russia. Russia has a better army. Everything's going to be better with Russia" (Morello & Faiola, 2014). Moreover, there have been calls by the leadership of Russian compatriots in Crimea for Russia's help already during the Euromaidan (Peterburgskiy Dnevnik, 2014). Russia's intervention has thus been seen legitimate by the Russian in Crimea.

There are however some elements that diminish Russia's soft power in this context. First, there has been no soft power towards Ukraine with the use of hard power. Although, some analysts suggest that Russia did not plan using hard power in Crimea and that it initially tried to solve the Crimean through the use of soft power, when trying to find a compromise with the US and Ukraine. Only when this attempt failed, did Russia resort to hard power. Second, Russia did and does not have soft power over the Crimean Tartars (who represent around 20% of the Crimean population). Tartars are not attracted to Russia because of historical reasons (the deportation of Tartars during Soviet times) and because they see a better future being part of Ukraine. Consequentially, they saw the Russian intervention only as hard power. Through the same perspective was also seen the referendum on the status of Crimea, as being imposed and predetermined and therefore lacking legitimacy. Indeed, most Tartars boycotted it. Third, it is difficult to precisely assess the orientation of Ukrainians (who constitute around 20% of Crimeans), although the vast majority is close to the position of the Tartars. Fourth, Russia's image has suffered at the international level (mainly in the Western world), with media depicting it as a military aggressor.

Despite the above-mentioned deficiencies in Russia's soft power in Crimea, there are two additional considerations that illustrate the skilful use of power by Russia. One concerns the economic situation of Crimea, with the latter being a subsidized region. Russia was well aware of

the fact and knew that Crimea could not detach independently from Ukraine and that the only alternative was the annexation to Russia (Golunov, 2014). The other concerns the fact that Russia knew it had soft power over most of the Russian diaspora and not only over the pro-Russian elite. Putin, indeed, maintained that the decision on annexing Crimea was taken only after secret opinion polling in Crimea that showed a majority in favor of Russia (Lenta.ru, 2014).

It can thus be concluded that Russia successfully achieved its goals using hard power and soft power. The Russian goal in Crimea can be epitomized in Putin's words:

we are against having a military alliance making itself at home right in our backyard or in our historic territory. I simply cannot imagine that we would travel to Sevastopol to visit NATO sailors. [...] it would be better to have them come and visit us, be our guests, rather than the other way round (RT.com, 2014).

The occupation and annexation of Crimea can be read in a broader geostrategic key. Alexander Dugin interprets the situation in Ukraine through the theory of the Heartland and blames the sea powers US and NATO to have attempted to subtract Ukraine from the influence of the Heartland Russia. As such, Russia was forced to intervene to protect its interests and its geopolitical blitzkrieg has been successful in Crimea. Dugin also argues that there has been a transition in Putin's foreign policy. The initial liberal approach taken by Putin has translated to a realist one, because the superpowers US and NATO ignored Russia in international affairs perpetuating a mono-polar world system to which Russia was forced to answer in a realist way in order to assert its power and its strife for a multi-polar world (Dugin, 2014).

### **6.e. The role of Russian diasporas**

Having analyzed the occupation of Crimea and concluded that the Russian diaspora has played a major role in providing soft power for Russia's intervention, the attention will switch to diasporas in the South-East of Ukraine and in the near abroad.

Referring to the Russian diaspora in Ukraine Putin stated "I would like to remind you that what was called Novorossiya [South-East of Ukraine] back in the tsarist days were not part of Ukraine back then [...] Russia lost these territories for various reasons, but the people remained" (inoSMI.ru, 2014). The Russians remained indeed but under Ukraine, not Russia. The fact that Russians in Ukraine have a common ethnicity with Russia, does not necessarily translate into the

total acceptance of Russia’s foreign policy towards Ukraine. The population of Russians in South-East Ukraine is between 30% and 40%, but as can be seen from Table 4, not all Russians clearly support the secession of their region. As seen with Kosmarskaya, along the spectrum diaspora-national minority many Russians have switched civil loyalty towards Ukraine. Fragmented is also the attitude towards extremist actions in their regions as is the attitude towards Russia’s military intervention.

**Table 4: Attitudes in Ukraine ‘s South-East** <sup>13</sup>

	Do you support the idea, that your region should secede from Ukraine and join Russia?	Do you support actions of those, who with arms capture administrative buildings in your region?	Do you support introduction of Russian troops into Ukraine?
Certainly, yes, I do	7,1	5,7	5,6
Rather, yes	8,3	6	6,1
Partly yes, partly no	12,5	10,4	11,8
Rather, no	16	16,7	15,9
Certainly, no, I don’t	53,7	60,1	58,4
No answer	2,4	1,2	2,2

The last point concerning military intervention is better illustrated in Figure 8 by a survey conducted along ethnic categories. It can be observed that Russians’ attitudes are far being homogeneous. It is also noteworthy the fact that there are 7% of ethnic Ukrainians in favor of military intervention. There is no clear indication from the survey regarding the nature of these interviewees. However it can be hypothesized that they belong to the old generation that might have nostalgia towards the Soviet Union and are closer to pro-Russian positions.

<sup>13</sup> Tables retrieved from (The Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 2014) and based on surveys conducted during April 8-16, 2014

Figure 8: Support for Russia's Military Intervention in Ukraine<sup>14</sup>

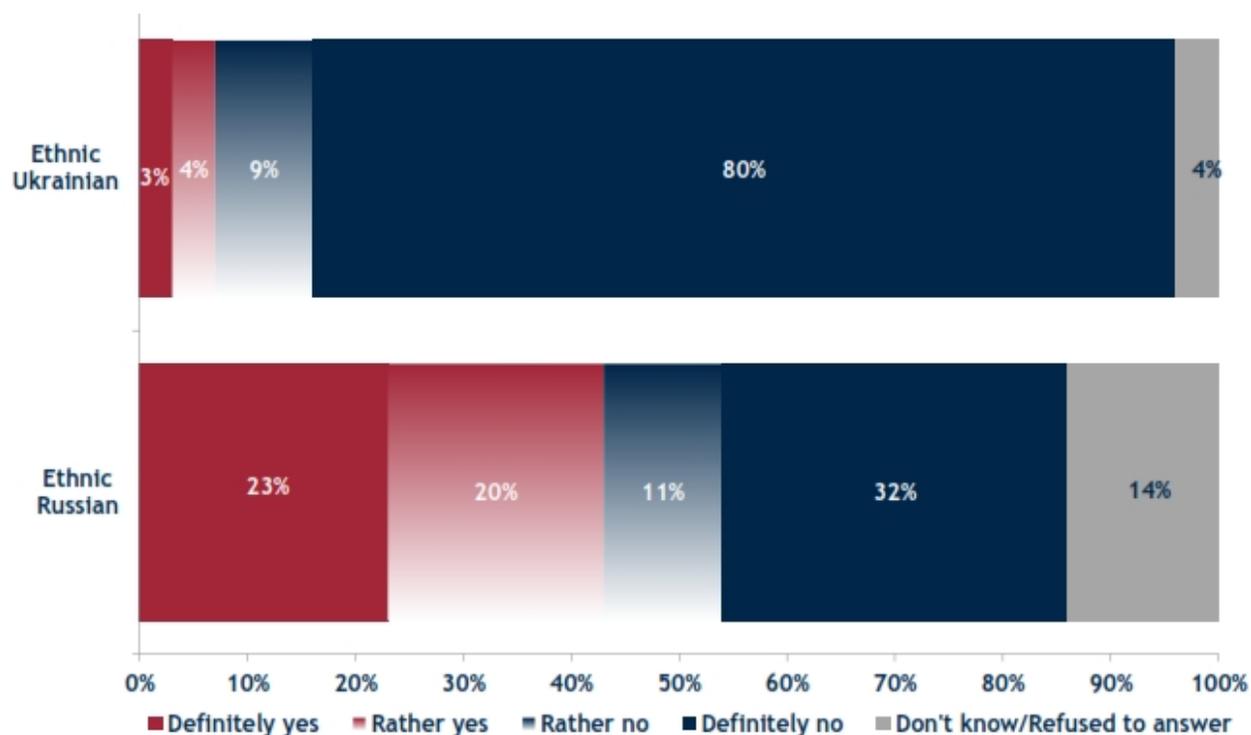


Table 5: Russia's attractiveness in South-East Ukraine<sup>15</sup>

	Total South-East	Dnipro-petrovsk	Donetsk	Zapo-rizhia	Luhansk	Mykolaiv	Odessa	Kharkiv	Kherson
Culture	13.4	9.4	14.6	10.4	7.7	10.4	18.5	18.3	17.8
Stability of the economy	25.7	11.1	41.8	13.8	34.7	19.6	22.2	28.2	16.3
High wages and pensions	25.3	9.9	39.6	17.0	30.3	26.6	17.5	32.9	17.6
Political stability	21.2	10.1	37.9	12.6	24.8	23.6	19.0	17.1	9.9
Other	3.8	4.2	3.0	4.0	3.7	2.5	3.0	4.5	6.9
Difficult to say	7.9	10.4	4.7	10.6	9.9	7.2	7.4	6.4	8.9
Nothing	35.2	55.0	20.0	46.7	21.6	45.2	36.8	30.4	40.1
DK	1.9	2.5	1.0	1.7	3.2	2.0	2.7	1.2	0.7

<sup>14</sup> Diagram retrieved from (International Republican Institute, 2014) and based on surveys conducted between March 14<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Table retrieved from (Kiev International Institute of Sociology, 2014)

In the previous sections the link between Russia's soft power and diasporas has been explored and in Table 5 it can be seen in more detail what is attractive in Russia to the South-East of Ukraine (where most Russians live). Russia's attractiveness does not primarily consist of Nye's three main factors of soft power: culture, political values and foreign policy. Economic aspects (stability and wages) are the most attractive element in Russia (some 50%), whereas culture and political stability follow at 13% and 21%. In a period of economic crisis which has been evident before the Euro-maidan, and even more so in the aftermath, and in a period of political and social instability Russia represents for many Russians in in South-East Ukraine a stable economic model.

As seen in the previous chapters with link between power and diasporas, the role of the latter can be a determinative factor in the relations between Russia and the post-Soviet states. Indeed, these countries have already expressed their preoccupation for the role Russian diasporas can play in intra-national affairs. Since their independence the post-Soviet states coped with the Russian diasporas and occasionally there have been tensions with Russia because of them, but the occupation of Crimea potential tensions become more likely.

The attitude of these states can be seen in some of their public declarations in relation to Crimea. For instance Belarus' President Lukashenko who usually has close positions to Russia declared that "Crimea is not dangerous because it has become part of Russia, but [...] a bad precedent has been created" or the Uzbekistani foreign affairs ministry "[the fact that the events in Ukraine] pose a real threat to the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, must elicit deep concern in Uzbekistan". Along this lines is the position of the other states in the near abroad (with Armenia being the only state in the near abroad to officially support the status of Crimea) (Koren, 2014).

## **7. Power Abroad as Power at Home**

An incidental observation deserves mention in relation to Russian power. The two theories of power do not envisage the scenario in which a state A by exercising power over a state B can increase the power over itself A.

This phenomenon may concern democracies and authoritarian regimes. For instance, N. Chomsky argues that even a democracy when exercising power abroad (by waging war), may increase its power at home (along the line government-society).

This topic will not be theoretically further elaborated due to its non-contingency to the framework of this work. Nonetheless, a parallel concept will be briefly analyzed in the Russian case and the link between exercise of power abroad and popularity of the government.

In concomitance with the occupation of Crimea (27 February - ongoing) Russian opinion polls show an increase of 20% in Putin's popularity. To the question If there were a presidential election, who would you vote for? It can be observed that from August 2013 to February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2014 the support for Putin has been hovering around 45% with no significant variations. The following weeks till March 30<sup>th</sup> have shown a constant increase up to 66% of support (FOM, 2014).

While a direct causation between the Russian occupation of Crimea and increase in Putin's popularity cannot be demonstrated, a strong correlation can be inferred: looking at policy documents on the presidential site and policy news in Russian media for the period considered, there is no mention of major domestic policies in Russia that can justify the significant increase in Putin's popularity.

A fortiori, for the same period another opinion poll shows that to the question Do you think President Putin is doing a good or bad job in his role? there has been an increase from 56% in February to 78% in March-April for the answer Good (FOM, 2014).

## **8. Conclusion**

In this work there an attempt has been made at following Baldwin's advice: "Rather than striving to produce yet another global ranking of the so-called overall power of every country in the world, [there is] need to focus on power distributions within specified issue areas and [...] specified regions" (Baldwin, 2013). Indeed, after examining theories on the concept of power and linking them to IR theories, Russia's power has been assessed in the near abroad (particularly in Ukraine) with particular attention dedicated to Russia's soft power in relation to Russian diasporas.

It has been concluded that diasporas can be crucial players in intra-national affairs and that they are linked to power consideration both in relation to the hostland and the homeland. In particular, the construction of Russian diasporas has been explored and their multidimensionality assessed.

Russian diasporas in Ukraine have provided a dual example. On one hand, it has been seen that the Crimean occupation by Russia has been possible because of particular attitudes (determined by historical, strategic, economic factors) towards Russia. Russia had a platform of soft power in the majority of the Russians in Crimea and has thus been able to apply hard power for its own interests. On the other hand, it has been seen with different sociological polls that diasporas in South-East Ukraine do not have a mono-directional attitude towards Russia. If Russia occupies the Ukrainian regions in question it will definitely not have the same amount of soft power as in Crimea.

This work does not set its sights on predicting what will happen in the South-Eastern Ukraine and in the near abroad, nonetheless, different factors concerning diasporas have been assessed and determined as playing a crucial role in the development in Russia's foreign policy. Moreover, diasporas are not fixed entities, the orientations thereof vary according to a diaspora-national minority spectrum and there are many external and internal factors that might change its stance with regards to Russia. Some of the factors may be:

It is difficult to predict what will happen between Russian and Ukraine. The critical situation is dependent on a myriad of factors:

- the US and EU's stance
- Ukrainian internal political situation (the attitude of the government towards diasporas; nationalistic and/or ethnic extremism on both sides)
- the economic situation
- Russia's perceived interests

The Director of the Foreign Ministry's Department working with compatriots abroad indicated without using circumlocutions what the role of Russian diasporas in the near abroad potentially represent:

the Russian *diaspora* abroad constitutes *the socio-humanitarian foundation for the interests of the Russian Federation in the post-Soviet states*<sup>16</sup>. Being bearers of the Russian language and culture, compatriots are, in fact , an outpost of their spiritual and historical homeland abroad. That is why the support for the diaspora and the development of relations with Russia, the conservation of the centers of Russian culture abroad corresponds to the

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<sup>16</sup> Italic added for emphasis

objective of promoting the cultural influence of the Russian Federation on the neighboring countries and the cooperation with these countries (Chepurin, 2009).

Whether Russian diasporas in the near abroad effectively require or not Russia's intervention, it is sure that Russia has an unconditional possibility for getting involved whenever there is a socio-humanitarian factor that collimates with Russia's interests. Potentially, Russian diasporas give the opportunity to Russian foreign policy to have a nuance of soft power towards its diasporas even if there is little or none. This has to be considered along the array of other types of power (ideological, economic, energetic, military) Russia can have towards its near abroad.

A final emphatic comment on the importance of Russian diasporas in potentially defining Russia's policy in its near abroad is the statement by a Russian diplomat at the UN Human Rights Council, affirming that Russia's intervention in Crimea was dictated by the same language policy in force in Estonia (Russian has no official recognition) (Evans, 2014).

## **9. Further Research**

There are other analytical possibilities for understanding how power works. For instance there has been talk about a media war in Ukraine.

Media shape public opinion and thus create soft power for different stakeholders. It would be useful to know how different media construct different narratives about the same event and how audiences are influenced. This could be studies in connection to the Ukrainian situation and to the Russian diaspora.

The Russian diaspora being part of two states is at the same time a potentially double audience for media representing the interests of these two states. An additional tool for understanding how the Russian diaspora sees the events in Ukraine could be the identification of pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian media and the quantification of their audience. In order to do so, there is need for sociological surveys assessing what kind of media the Russian diaspora follows and whether there is trust in those media.

This kind of research requires field work since there are no opinion polls showing this kind of data. There are opinion polls concerning media in Ukraine that have been conducted by the Razumkov Centre, which assesses the public trust in Ukraine towards Russian and Ukrainian

media. Although they can offer an idea of the soft power of Russia and Ukraine in general, these data are not indicative of the Russian diaspora. Instead, sociological surveys using ethnic categories would offer more insight in the correlative links between soft power (and productive power) and diaspora.

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