ROOTS OF RUSSIAN SOFT POWER: RETHINKING RUSSIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

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Abstract: The end of the Cold War heralded a new era as Western soft power was at its zenith in Eastern Europe and regional states accepted and institutionalized a new Euro-American ethos. In contrast, Russian soft power was at its lowest point as the Soviet Union imploded, leaving fifteen newly independent states. While Russia was still the most powerful nation in the region, it lacked competence to deploy soft power and was unable to culturally influence its neighbors. Russia had to regain its footing and sought to redefine its own national identity prior to being able to build and project its soft power. Thus, Russia turned inward to nineteenth century works in philosophy and literature while Western soft power and expansionism continued to draw closer to Russia's borders. As Moscow regrouped, it created institutions to spread its message both regionally and globally and expanded its communication prowess. Russia realized that while its national identity might be grounded within its Slavic roots and Russian exceptionalism, the only way it could effectively counter Western soft power was to point out the hypocrisy of American and European governmental policies. Rather than generating a positive projection of cultural and political attractiveness, Russia fought the spread Euro-American soft power by directly challenging it and showed that the Western political ethos ultimately was self-contradictory and also worked to destroy traditional values.

On December 26, 1991, the Soviet Union was officially dissolved. A day earlier, former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev had officially resigned, claiming that his office no longer existed, and passed on the mantle of power to Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

While the suddenness of the dissolution of the Soviet Union took many Western policy makers by surprise, they were quick to tout the triumph of Western ideology over communism. The Western political ethos had overtaken the Soviet dogma, and was moving eastward. Western influence was reaching its zenith as more and more of the Eastern European countries that had been Soviet satellite states turned their backs on the Soviet Union and turned towards liberal democracy.

Like the transitions in Eastern Europe that had occurred just a couple of years earlier, Russian President Yeltsin embraced Western values and demanded a quick transition to a market economy. While he was quick to

accept Western economic institutions, he was less enthusiastic about adopting Western democratic norms. However, it is nevertheless clear that the dissolution of the Soviet Union further proved that Western soft power was at its zenith, while Russian soft power was at a nadir. The Soviet system had collapsed, and the ideology of the Soviet period had been shown to be less attractive than Western ideology. While Russians began to embrace capitalism and Western ideologies, Russian soft power remained very weak. Despite the fact that the roots of Russian soft power were strong, Moscow's perceived weakness and financial problems could not present an attractive face internationally.

In fact, the early period of Yeltsin's presidency was focused on embracing American soft power and seeking aid from the West. Yeltsin tried to integrate Russia into Western institutions and tried to institute economic reforms to bring Russia more in line with Western ideology. The economic reforms actually led to increased corruption and economic inequality by allowing oligarchs to gain control of former state-owned enterprises.[1] This in turn soured the Russian public on Western ideology, and clearly showed that Russia needed to forge its own path to democratization and economic reform.

Following several years of economic recession, Russia's economy began to improve. Russia's improved economy meant that it had one of the best economies in the post-Soviet region. Many people from poorer regional states began immigrating to Russia to better their lives. This new immigration and the booming state of the Russian economy began to increase Russian soft power in the region.[2] However, the increase in Russian soft power was only partially due to the economy and energy. Another major factor was Russian President Putin's foreign policy reorientation that prioritized relations with the

former Soviet states. He focused on building relationships with these countries, and while Russia was the regional hegemon, it did not have the power to force other regional states to comply with its wishes. Instead, Moscow had to build relationships and work to develop regional trust.[3]

The lack of a coercive foreign policy during the early 2000's helped to further aide in the spread of Russia's soft power.[4] This is not to say that Russia was unwilling to use coercive force to influence foreign policy and domestic policy outcomes, merely that during this period Russia was forced to first build enough trust to achieve its foreign policy goals, and thus used less coercive force. In fact during this period, some scholars heralded the arrival of Russian soft power and the ability of the Russian government to spread that soft power within the post-Soviet region.[5] Russian soft power was still not strong during this period, but scholars noted that it had increased significantly since its nadir at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The purpose of this article is to examine Russian soft power and its presence in the former Soviet states and Eastern Europe. We first examine the roots of Russian soft power, then we examine the positive aspects of Russian soft power, then we turn to the competition over the spread of soft power, and finally we examine Russia's policy towards soft power and its efforts to strengthen its soft power.

Roots of Russian Soft Power

[1] Aslund, Anders. Russia's Economic Transforma–tion / In The Oxford Handbook of the Russian Economy, eds. Michael Alexeev and Shlomo Weber. Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. 86-101.

[2] Feklyunina, Valentina. Battle for Perceptions: Projecting Russia in the West." Europe-Asia Studies, 2008, No. 60(4), pp. 605-629; Hill, Fiona. Moscow Discovers Soft Power // *Current History*, 2006, No. 105(693), p. 341.

[3] Slobodchikoff, Michael O.Strategic Cooperation: Overcoming the Barriers of Global Anarchy. Lexington Books, 2013; Slobodchikoff, Michael O. Building Hegemonic Order Russia's Way: Order, Stability, and Predictability in the Post-Soviet Space. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014; Willerton, J. P.; Slobodchikoff, Michael O.; Goertz, Gary. Forthcoming. Treaty Networks, Nesting, and Interstate Cooperation: Russia, the FSU, and the CIS / International Area Studies Review; Willerton, John P.; Goertz, Gary; Slobodchikoff, Michael O. Mistrust and Hegemony: Regional Institutional Design, the FSU-CIS, and Russia // *International Area Studies Review*, 2015, No. 18(1), pp. 26-52.

[4] Hill, Fiona. Moscow Discovers Soft Power // *Current History*, 2006, No. 105(693), p. 341.

[5] Ibid.

The question of identity is fundamental to Russian soft power. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia found itself in a unique situation of having to redefine its national identity.[6] The communist ideology had created a new cultural identity for Soviet citizens, but had failed, and the new Russian Federation had to create a new national identity.

At first, many Russians embraced Western values and sought to create a European identity. Despite embracing Western consumerism and increased travel, a Russian national identity failed to emerge from this encounter. While they embraced Western values, the Russian people did not settle into the European ethos.

Writers and philosophers began discussions of what it means to be Russian, often returning to questions posed in the 19th and early 20th Centuries as to whether or not Russians were European or Asian.[7] For example, Aleksandr Blok's famous poem on the Scythians challenges traditional conceptions of Russian national identity by claiming that Russians are Scythians, astride between Europe and Asia, protecting Europe from the East[8]. The importance of Blok's poem lies in the fact that he delineates a Russian identity as neither Eastern nor Western, but rather as a distinct identity forged in battle and protecting Western people from an external threat by suffering defeat yet preventing that threat from moving further west.[9]

Writers like Blok perpetuated the idea of Russian exceptionalism. They believed that the Russian identity truly was unique and unrepeatable and not like any other character in the East or the West. The Russian identity was based on straddling both Asia and Europe and was distinct in that it embraced the suffering that took place because of its geographical vulnerability. Blok sees the Russian identity as not only exceptional and bridging different cultures, but suffering of the people is part of the national identity. For example, he describes the people as suffering tremendously to protect Europe from the attack of the Mongols.

The Russian philosophy of suffering is not unique to Blok but originates in the Russian Orthodox faith which recognized Jesus Christ's agony which absolved the sins of man. Further, the Virgin Mary suffered tremendously in losing her only son so that man's iniquities could be forgiven. The suffering of both Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary make them closer to God and serve as role models for Orthodox Christians. The Russian Orthodox Church therefore teaches that suffering is an important aspect of faith, and that through suffering, true believers will be closer to God and will be rewarded for their suffering in the afterlife.[10]

Many writers expanded on the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church on the virtues of suffering. For example, Fyodor Dostoevsky not only utilized Russian Orthodox core beliefs in many of his books, but also infused those beliefs with Russian nationalism. He often wrote of a Slavic nationalism that formed the basis of a Russian nationality. Thus many of his characters not only followed Orthodox teachings, but also took on a uniquely Russian

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[6] Franklin, Simon; Widdis, Emma. National Identity in Russian Culture: An Introduction. Cambridge University Press, 2006; Tolz, Vera. Forging the Nation: National Identity and Nation Building in Post – communist Russia // *Europe-Asia Studies*, 1998, No. 50(6), pp. 993-1022; Tsygankov, Andrei P. Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013; Willerton, J. P.; McGovern, Patrick J. The State, Sovereignty, and Democracy Building 'Russian Style.' In Stockholm, Sweden, 2010.

[7] Becker, Seymour. Russia between East and West: The Intelligentsia, Russian National Identity and the Asian Borderlands // *Central Asian Survey*, 1991, No. 10(4), pp. 47-64; Franklin, Simon; Widdis, Emma. National Identity in Russian Culture: An Introduction. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

[8] Blok, Alexander. The Scythians // *Critical Quarterly*, 1969, 11(4), pp. 321-323.

[9] In this case, Blok is referring to the Mongol threat. The Mongols invaded Kievan Rus in the 13th Century, and is credited with destroying Kievan Rus.

[10] Rancour-Laferriere, Daniel. The Moral Masochism at the Heart of Christianity: Evidence from Russian Orthodox Iconography and Icon Veneration // *Journal for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society*, 2003, No. 8(1), pp. 12-22; Zenkovsky, Vasily V. The Spirit of Russian Orthodoxy // *Russian Review,* 1963, No. 22(1), pp. 38-55.

and Slavic persona.[11] The drama Dostoevsky[12] presented showed the danger to Russian culture through its encounter with modernity, or the West, as this lead to a fundamental disorientation and eventually nihilism. Thus, Dostoevsky is particularly important to the Russian identity because he witnessed the damaging consequences that emerged through the encounter with Western enlightenment thought. Through the writings of Dostoevsky and Nikolay Gogol,[13] a new concept of the Russian Soul was born.[14] The Russian Soul was changed but not lost through the original encounter with modernity, so the contemporary Western intellectual climate is just as potentially damaging to the Russian ethos. To illustrate how deeply this idea is embedded in the Russian ethos, the Soviet Union was officially atheistic but within its ideology it maintained the idea that the Russian people were suffering for all of humanity.[15] Christian suffering is so ingrained on the Russian soul that it was present even during the communist period.

The Russian Soul combines elements of Russian philosophy with religious suffering and nationalism to create the basis of a national identity. Further, the concept of the Russian Soul is one of the roots of Russian soft power. However, while the Russian Soul is an important foundation for Russian soft power, it is not its only basis. Russian soft power builds upon and borrows from the Russian Soul.

The Russian national identity is made up not only of their cultural ethos, but also of their geopolitical heritage. An important factor is Russia's status in the global hierarchy as a great power. The collapse of the Soviet Union dealt a huge blow to the Russian sense of self-respect. Russia believed that even though it was no longer a superpower, it still deserved to be consulted about major policies that affected the world at large. It believed that because of its history and nuclear capabilities, that it maintained its international prestige and deserved the respect that is due to great powers. However, it became increasingly clear that the West did not believe that Russia was a great power following the Cold War, and while it was willing to cooperate with Russia, it was not willing to extend the respect that Russia believed that it was owed. Russia made concessions that were not in its interest with the expectation that the West would give in return and make sacrifices to help it, but the West never reciprocated.16 This was especially evident to the Russians as NATO and the EU expanded into Eastern Europe over Russia's objections.[17] Under Yeltsin, Russia had first requested that NATO be disbanded and that a new agreement on cooperation and security in Europe be enacted. The West refused to discuss that possibility and Yeltsin requested that Russia would be allowed to join NATO and cooperate to bring security to Europe. Moscow was again rebuffed, and instead NATO and the EU expanded into Eastern Europe.

As Russia saw the expansion of NATO and the EU into its former satellite states, Russia began to increasingly feel insulted and belittled. Policy makers rediscovered the philosophy of Ivan Ilyin, a Russian monarchist who studied the reasons the Russian Revolution occurred. He believed that the Revolution occurred in large part due to the loss of self-respect among Russians following World War I. Interestingly, he argued that this loss of dignity led to a chasm between the subjects and the state, and that this gulf grew into revolution. Ultimately, Ilyin believed in the necessity of a strong state led by a benevolent monarch who would care for the people of Russia. He maintained that neither democracy nor totalitarianism was right for Russia, but rather that Russia required a strong state with a very powerful leader in order to stave off revolution.

[11] For examples of such characters, see: Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. Crime and Punishment. Trajectory Classics, 2014.

[12] The Brothers Karamotsov, Crime and Punishment, Notes from the Underground

[13] Especially in Gogol's *Dead Souls:* Gogol, Nikolai. Dead Souls. Yale University Press, 1996.

[14] For more information on the Russian Soul see (Boym 1995; Williams 1970)

[15] Del Noce, Augusto. The Crisis of Modernity. Translated by C. Lancellotti. Edited by P. J. Cercone. Vol. 64. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014.

[16] Lukin, Alexander. From a Post-Soviet to a Russian Foreign Policy: Lessons From the Conflict with Georgia // *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2008, No. 6 (4), pp. 52-65.

[17] Lukin, Alexander. What the Kremlin Is Thinking // *Foreign Affairs*, 2014, No. 93(4)

Ilyin's philosophy was quickly adopted by Russian policy makers, especially under Putin, who argued that Western democracy would not work for Moscow because Russia was unique and needed a strong leader to guide its reemergence as a strong state. In fact, Ilyin's philosophical works were widely distributed to Russian regional governors to emphasize that Putin was a strong leader who was reigning in the power of the regions and recreating a strong Russian state.[18]

Ilyin's philosophy is important as a counter to Western philosophy because he stresses the strength of the state as being the most important factor of survival and that democracy is problematic as it can weaken the state. Furthermore, a strong leader must be able to strengthen the state and take care of its citizen's interests. Finally, it is important to note that self-respect is theoretically important because its weakening is linked to a higher likelihood of a revolution. As Moscow's place as a great power fell following the collapse of the Soviet Union, many policy makers pointed to its loss of face and respect, which in turn led to more turmoil in Russia. As the state strengthened during the early 2000's due to rising oil prices and Putin's policies, policy makers began to solidify their understanding of Russian national identity and its place in the international system. Using the concept of national identity as a building block, Russian soft power combines different cultural aspects to fully create an indigenous, home-produced soft power. We now turn to the various cultural aspects that are also included in contemporary Russian soft power.

Russian Language

As of 2010, the Russian language was spoken by approximately 137.5 million native speakers in Russia, 93.7 million native speakers in the former Soviet Union (FSU), and 12.9 million native speakers in Eastern Europe and the Balkans.[19] The fact that so many people share Russian as their native language across Eastern Europe and the FSU facilitates the spread of Russian soft power. The shared language allows for the dissemination of information through various types of media and social media, allowing the Russian government to spread its soft power.

In the early 1990's, debates within the Russian government raged as to how closely to associate with those native Russian speakers who following the collapse of the Soviet Union found themselves living in newly independent countries.[20] Many policy makers wanted to forge closer ties and protect ethnic Russian speaking minorities in countries like the Baltic States. They tried to get many governments, especially in the Baltics, to adopt Russian as a national language or minimally to adopt policies protecting native Russian speakers.[21]

Despite the fact that the policy makers were often unsuccessful at helping to protect ethnic Russian minority linguistic rights, nevertheless native Russian language speakers were spread in large numbers across the FSU and Eastern Europe allowing a receptive audience for the spread of Russian soft power. While we will discuss the Russian government's use of media to spread its soft power later in this article, it is important to note that the number of native Russian speakers allows the government to spread its message very easily. We now turn to a discussion of historical nostalgia.

Historical Nostalgia

While Moscow's communist government collapsed for a myriad of reasons, its breakdown had a profound effect on people living within the Soviet Union. For many individuals with little access to wealth and ties to the government, the

[18] Gardels, Nathan. Putin's Three Gurus vs. the G-8 // *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 2014, No. 31(2), pp. 2-7; Lucas, Edward. The New Cold War: Putin's Russia and the Threat to the West. Macmillan, 2014; Stent, Angela E. Restoration and Revolution in Putin's Foreign Policy // *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2008, No. 60(6), pp. 1089-1106.

[19] These statistics are for people who consider the Russian language to be their native language. Арефьев, Александр. Сжимающееся русскоязычие / *Demoskop Weekly*, 2013, No. 571.

[20] Jackson, Nicole J. Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions. Psychology Press, 2003.

[21] Slobodchikoff, Michael O. The New European Union: Integration as a Means of Norm Diffusion // *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, 2010, No. 9(1), pp. 1-25.

social net that they could rely on during Soviet times was no longer available. They had worked all of their lives taking for granted that the guarantees provided by the Soviet government would always be available. However, with the collapse, those guarantees were no longer present. People found their savings depleted through hyperinflation and no longer having guaranteed employment, they were left with no understanding as to how to function within a new society based on capitalist rules. In fact, Russian President Vladimir Putin famously stated: "Above all, we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century. As for the Russian nation, it became a genuine drama. Tens of millions of our co-citizens and compatriots found themselves outside Russian territory. Moreover, the epidemic of disintegration infected Russia itself ".[22]

The social sphere was one of the most important aspects of life in the former Soviet Union to suffer. Not only was the social safety net gone, but people also had to change their orientation from a communal social structure to a new one which was based upon rewarding individualism. In this respect, the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster for the Russian people.

While the Soviet Union had many problems, nevertheless, many who found it difficult to drastically change their weltanschauung[23] began to feel a certain nostalgia for the Soviet way of life. This was not only true for those living in the former Soviet Union, but was also true for those who were living in Eastern Europe and the former Warsaw Pact countries. Many of those people enjoyed watching Soviet movies, cartoons, and listening to Soviet and socialist music.

This nostalgia further laid the foundation for Russian soft power to spread not only throughout the former Soviet Union, but also into Eastern Europe. While people would often discuss the problems and difficulties of the Soviet period, over time, people began looking fondly back not to its political aspects, but rather to its culture. However, the longing for old Soviet movies and music was not the only cultural export that helped bolster Russian soft power. We now turn to other cultural exports which help to build Russian soft power.

Russian Exports of High Culture

The fine arts have always been considered a good way to spread cultural goodwill and soft power. In the United States, efforts had often been made for groups to travel to showcase their talents and spread American soft power as cultural ambassadors. American dance companies were often sponsored by the United States Department of State to travel to showcase American culture and values.[24] This was a relatively inexpensive way of garnering good publicity and spreading soft power.

Groups like Russia's Mariinsky Ballet Company not only have profited from signing cooperation agreements with Western Theaters but have also helped to spread Russian soft power. People who only know of the reputation of Russian ballet and opera are able to gain exposure to the high quality of Russian dance and opera.

Companies aren't the only groups that have acted as cultural diplomats of Russian culture. Certain individual artists have also gained worldwide notoriety and spread Russian soft power. For example, singers Dmitry Khvorostovsky and Anna Netrebko are famous around the world, and they are in high demand by global Opera companies.

In addition to fine arts, Russia is internationally known for its literature and classical music. Authors such as Dostoevsky, Pushkin, Tolstoy and others are often read in translation around the world, while orchestras around the world often play Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Glinka, among other famous Russian composers. In short, Russia's soft power derives its strength from a long history of renowned high culture. Its soft power capabilities are extremely high provided that

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[22] From the Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, April 25, 2005.

[23] Literally meaning world view, this is a term that is fundamental to German philosophy. It means how a person views the world in terms of theoretical and philosophical orientation.

[24] Croft, Clare. Dancers as Diplomats: American Choreography in Cultural Exchange. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Russia is able to harness and utilize its cultural manifestations. We now turn to the use of soft power and how governments can spread soft power.

Spreading Soft Power

One of the difficulties of soft power is harnessing it for use. One of the main ways that the United States spreads soft power is by providing information. During the Cold War, the United States used media programming like Voice of America and other programs that would spread the official United States message and hope that it would resonate and, thereby, gain greater influence. This programming was broadcast over short wave radio to avoid government censors. Many people in countries that strictly controlled information would often try to listen to broadcasts from the United States, equating Voice of America with the freedom that many people sought. In fact, the United States' soft power spread so effectively precisely because it stood for freedom and in stark contrast to authoritarian regimes during the Soviet era.

While soft power can be spread through government initiatives, the most effective method of spreading soft power is through non-government entities such as cultural exports. However, soft power is not only spread through the export of information and culture. A country's ideology and philosophical orientation is extremely vital to spreading soft power. We now turn to examining how Russia spreads its soft power.

Spreading Russian Soft Power

In the early 2000's, Moscow saw its soft power increase along with its national identity and Russia became one of the most stable countries in the post-Soviet space, and many workers began to immigrate. Russia began a more conciliatory foreign policy towards regional states within the post-Soviet region, and cooperated with the United States on many issues such as counter-terrorism operations and intelligence.

While the early 2000's were marked with more conciliatory foreign policy towards many states within the post-Soviet region, Russia was not able to build trust with all of its regional neighbors. States like Armenia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan developed cooperative relations with Russia, while states like Moldova and Georgia worked to distance themselves.[25] During this period Russia was trying to develop a new regional identity to cement its place as the regional hegemon by forming new multilateral organizations such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Eurasian Customs Union, and the Common Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).[26] Further, the development of these organizations was a way in trying to regain the seat at the table of global leadership that Russia had lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union. It should be noted that during the early 2000's, Moscow was content to be a regional power. It did not try to spread its soft power globally, as it recognized that it did not have the ability to do so. However, not all of the states within the region were happy with Russian plans for regional order.

Georgia and Moldova opposed the Russian regional order and sought to counter Russian regional hegemonic power. Thus, they began to pursue a more open relationship with the European Union. In turn, the EU was interested in gaining influence in the former Soviet states, and wanted to try and use the European Neighborhood Program (ENP) which gave preferential access to European markets while also creating a new category of states.[27] These states would be able to cooperate with the EU, but would be unlikely to become

[25] Slobodchikoff, Michael O. Strategic Cooperation: Overcoming the Barriers of Global Anarchy. Lexington Books, 2013.

[26] For a more complete list of multilateral organizations in the post-Soviet space, see (Slobodchikoff 2014).

[27] Barbé, Esther; Johansson-Nogués, Elisabeth. The EU as a Modest 'force for Good': The European Neighborhood Policy // International Affairs, 2008, No. 84(1), pp. 81-96; Gänzle, Stefan. EU Governance and the European Neighbourhood Policy: A Framework for Analysis // Europe-Asia Studies, 2009, No. 61(10), pp. 1715-1734; Lavenex, Sandra. A Governance Perspective on the European Neighbourhood Policy: Integration beyond Conditionality? // Journal of European Public Policy, 2008, No. 15(6), pp. 938-955.

EU member-states.[28] The idea of the ENP was to continue with the spread and diffusion of European norms and soft power while limiting the promises of membership to the EU.[29]

Initially the EU assumed that its norm diffusion would affect Russia and create a strong democratic Russia in addition to spreading democracy and human rights to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (FSU). However, it soon became clear that Russia was not transitioning as quickly to democracy as the states in Eastern Europe, and the EU believed that it had to continue to try to diffuse its norms in the post-Soviet space.[30]

On November 21, 2004, Ukraine held a presidential election between Viktor Yushchenko, who favored closer ties with Western Europe, and Viktor Yanukovych, who favored closer ties with Russia. Ukraine was at a crossroads, and was on the verge of deciding its future allegiance. The run-off election was marred by fraud, and many domestic and foreign election monitors reported that the election had been rigged by the Ukrainian authorities in favor of Yanukovych. These election monitors reported that there was massive corruption, voter intimidation, and electoral fraud.[31] Further, there was widespread public perception of electoral fraud, and the public demanded change, eventually getting the results of the election overturned and President Yushchenko took over. Yushchenko renewed his resolve to move Ukraine more into the orbit of the European Union (EU) and away from under Russian influence.

The protests and eventual triumph of Yushchenko became known as the Ukrainian Orange Revolution which was heralded by many in the Europe and the U.S. as evidence that Western ideas and ideals were spreading eastward. Democratization was finally taking hold, and the West could further spread liberal democracy and its institutions into the post-Soviet space.[32] Further, many in the West viewed the Orange Revolution as evidence of the effectiveness of NGOs and the Western efforts to build up Ukrainian civil society to bring about democratic change.[33]

In response to Yushchenko's pivot away from Russia, the EU chose to increase its relations with Ukraine through the European Neighborhood Program (ENP) which could further institutionalize democratic reforms and ideals in Ukraine.[34] Further, the EU could then ensure that Russia would no longer possess as much influence over Ukraine as it had prior to the Orange Revolution.

The Orange Revolution took Russia by surprise.[35] Russia had developed a relationship

[28] Smith, Karen E. The Outsiders: The European Neighborhood Policy // *International Affairs*, 2005, No. 81(4), pp. 757-773.

[29] Schimmelfennig, Frank; Scholtz, Hanno. EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighbourhood Political Conditionality, Economic Development and Transnational Exchange // *European Union Politics*, 2008, No. 9(2), pp. 187-215; Smith, Karen E. The Outsiders: The European Neighborhood Policy // *International Affairs,* 2005, No. 81(4), pp. 757-773.

[30] Averre, Derek. Competing Rationalities: Russia, the EU and the "Shared Neighbourhood" // *Europe-Asia Studies,* 2009, No. 61(10), pp. 1689-1713; Haukkala, Hiski. Lost in Translation? Why the EU Has Failed to Influence Russia's Development // *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2009, No. 61(10), pp. 1757-1575.

[31] Lane, David. The Orange Revolution: 'People's Revolution' or Revolutionary Coup? // The British Journal of Politics & International Relations, 2008, No. 10(4), pp. 525-549; Pifer, Steven. European Mediators and Ukraine's Orange Revolution // *Problems of Post-Communism*, 2007, No. 54(6), pp. 28-42.

[32] McFaul, Michael. Ukraine Imports Democracy: External Influences on the Orange Revolution // International Security, 2007, No. 32(2), pp. 45-83; Wilson, Andrew. Ukraine's Orange Revolution, NGOs and the Role of the West // *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 2006, No. 19(1), pp. 21-32.

[33] Wilson, Andrew. Ukraine's Orange Revolution, NGOs and the Role of the West // *Cambridge Review of International Affairs,* 2006, No. 19(1), pp. 21-32.

[34] Kubicek, Paul. Ukraine and the European Neighborhood Policy: Can the EU Help the Orange Revolution Bear Fruit? // *East European Quarterly*, 2007, No. 41(1), p. 1.

[35] When Putin watched the Orange Revolution he is said to have stated, "They [the U.S.] lied to me [Putin was talking about the US]. … I'll never trust them again." The revolution's timing was curious for the United States which traded Russian cooperation in the war on terror for Ukraine, which lacked any strategic thinking and weakened the U.S. global position. Saari, Sinikukka. Russia's Post-Orange Revolution Strategies to Increase Its Influence in Former

with Ukraine that while Kiev did not necessarily fully trust Russia, nevertheless, it was reliant upon Moscow for natural resources.[36] Russia had been working towards economic integration with Ukraine and had provided special pricing for natural gas in exchange for continued influence. Yet, despite the fact that it was in Ukraine's economic interest to maintain good relations with Russia, the Orange Revolution proved that Ukraine was striving to distance itself from Russian influence and move toward the West and potential EU membership.

Russia understood the results of the Orange Revolution as being evidence of the power of ideas.[37] The EU had long prided itself on being an ideational power capable of fundamentally changing the behavior and domestic institutions of the state,[38] and Russia believed that the Orange Revolution showed that the EU was now trying to vie for influence in the former Soviet states, an area that Russia had traditionally viewed as being within its own sphere of influence.

Soviet Republics: Public Diplomacy Po Russkii // *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2014, No. 66(1), pp. 50-66.

[36] Balmaceda, Margarita Mercedes. Gas, Oil and the Linkages between Domestic and Foreign Policies: The Case of Ukraine // *Europe-Asia Studies*, 1998, No. 50(2), pp. 257-286; Feklyunina, Valentina. Russia's International Images and Its Energy Policy. An Unreliable Supplier? // Europe-Asia Studies, 2012, No. 64(3), pp. 449-469; Goldman, Marshall I. Petrostate: Putin, Power, and the New Russia. Oxford University Press US, 2010; Mroz, John Edwin; Pavliuk, Oleksandr. Ukraine: Europe's Linchpin // *Foreign Affairs*, 1996, No. 75(3), pp. 52-62.

[37] Popescu, Nicu. Russia's Soft Power Ambitions / CEPS Policy briefs, 2006, No. 1-12, pp. 1-3.

[38] Manners, Ian. Normative Power Europe Reconsidered: Beyond the Crossroads // *Journal of European Public Policy*, 2006, No. 13(2), pp. 182-199; Noutcheva, G. Fake, Partial and Imposed Compliance: The Limits of the EU's Normative Power in the Western Balkans. CEPS Working Documents No. 274. CEPS Working Documents No. 274; Slobodchikoff, Michael O. The New European Union: Integration as a Means of Norm Diffusion // *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, 2010, No. 9(1), pp. 1-25; Tocci, Nathalie; Hamilton, Daniel Sheldon. Who Is a Normative Foreign Policy Actor? / The European Union and Its Global Partners. CEPS, 2008.

Russia believed that if it was going to maintain its regional influence, it needed to compete with the European Union in its power of ideas. It realized that it needed to develop its own powerful ideas that would be able to successfully counter those offered by the EU. In short, it needed to bolster its soft power and then utilize it to maintain and even gain influence against the EU. However, more fundamentally Russia also understood that it could not directly counter the ideas of the West. The Russian national identity was a powerful symbol domestically, but was not powerful outside of Russia. Therefore, it had to develop a new strategy to counter Western influence. Russia had to turn to a negative campaign against Western values while it did not need to provide an alternative value system. All Russia had to do was to try to discredit and raise questions about Western values, and they could be successful in slowing the spread of Western soft power. This made its task easier as Moscow did not need to provide an alternative, but sought to show the hypocrisy or moral incongruity in the Western proposals.

However, before they could successfully discredit Western values, they had to target the damage caused by Western values present in the post-Soviet space. They believed that despite the fact that the EU and NATO were looking to spread into Eastern Europe and the Baltics, that neither NATO nor the EU member states would risk direct war with Russia. Thus, they cultivated frozen conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia and Transnistria in Moldova. Russia recognized that according to ascension rules for both organizations, territorial conflicts and simmering civil war would prevent those states from becoming members. Both the EU and NATO tried to maintain close ties with the elites of those states with frozen conflicts, often by stating that eventually those states might be able to gain membership.

In the case of Georgia, it was led to believe that it could eventually join the EU and NATO, and strongly believed that this would be a good way to counter Russia's regional hegemonic power. However, in 2008, Georgia attacked the breakaway republic of South Ossetia, which ignited a small war between Russia and Georgia. Russia invaded Georgian territory and defeated the Georgian army.

The 2008 Georgian War was the last bit of evidence to show a break between Russia and the West. Russia was willing to prevent Western influence from expanding into the former Soviet states by using force if necessary. Further, Russian actions showed that they believed that the world system was no longer unipolar, but rather was starting to become more multipolar, and in turn led Russian policy makers to see Russia as a post-Western power.[39] In other words, Russia believed that the time of US hegemony was quickly coming to an end, and that it could provide an alternative regional order than that provided by the West.

It is important to note that after the Ukrainian Orange Revolution, Russian soft power evolved differently from traditional soft power proposed by Nye in that it really lacks a specific ideology. Instead, Russian soft power focuses on being a counter ideology, specifically setting itself up as being a power that is counter to that of the West.[40] It views the expansion of Western power as a threat, and views its soft power as being a vital element of countering that threat.

While Russian hard power was on display in the Georgian War, Russian soft power was extremely important in increasing Russia's power in the region. For example, Russian soft power was largely responsible for rolling back many of the gains of the color revolutions in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan.[41] While many in the West had looked upon the color revolutions as a stark democratic transition in both Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, corruption and many other problems hampered the new governments that had been established, and soon elites again turned toward accepting Russian influence in the region.

It is important to note that Russian soft power, and specifically the use of Russian soft power by the government was not only used as a tool to expand Russian influence. While some scholars argue that Russian soft power is merely a means of creating a new Russian empire,[42] it was really not a tool to try to recreate a new Russian empire. In fact, the most important use of Russian soft power was mainly to try to create regional stability and to keep outside influence from entering into the post-Soviet space.[43] That is not to say that Russia was not looking to increase its influence, merely that was not its overarching goal. However, as both the EU and NATO expanded and Russia grew even more powerful, Russia began to formulate its soft power to move beyond the regional level to try to spread its version of soft power globally.[44] Specifically, it looked to counter Western values and ideology on a global scale. We now turn to examining how the Russian government has tried to spread its soft power globally.

Global Spread of Russian Soft Power

[39] Tsygankov, Andrei P. Russia in the Post-Western World: The End of the Normalization Paradigm? // *Post-Soviet Affairs,* 2009, No. 25(4), pp. 347-369.

[40] Simons, Greg. Russian Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century: Structure, Means and Message // *Public Relations Review*, 2014, No. 40(3), pp. 440-449.

[41] Tsygankov, Andrei P. Preserving Influence in a Changing World // *Problems of Post-Communism*, 2011, No. 58(2), pp. 28-44.

[42] Bugajski, Janusz. Expanding Eurasia: Russia's European Ambitions. Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2008; Suny, Ronald Grigor. The Pawn of Great Powers: The East–West Competition for Caucasia // *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 2010, No. 1(1), pp. 10-25.

[43] Slobodchikoff, Michael O. Russia's Monroe Doctrine Just Worked in Ukraine // Russia Direct, 2013. Mode of access: http://russia-direct.org/content/russia%E2%80%99s-monroe-doctrine-just-worked-ukraine; Tsygankov, Andrei P. If Not by Tanks, Then by Banks? The Role of Soft Power in Putin's Foreign Policy // *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2006, No. 58(7), pp. 1079-1099.

[44] Dolinskiy, Alexey. Russian Soft Power 2.0 // Russia Direct, 2013. http://www.russia-direct.org/russian-media/september-quarterly-russian-soft-power-20; Haukkala, Hiski. The Russian Challenge to EU Normative Power: The Case of European Neighbourhood Policy // *The International Spectator*, 2008, No. 43(2), pp. 35-47; Haukkala, Hiski. Lost in Translation? Why the EU Has Failed to Influence Russia's Development // *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2009, No. 61(10), pp. 1757-1575; Popescu, Nicu; Wilson, Andrew. The Limits of Enlargement-Lite: European and Russian Power in the Troubled Neighbourhood. European Council of Foreign Relations, 2009. Mode of access: http://www.jean-jaures.org/content/download/12118/115522/file/popescu.pdf

Russia realized that it could not directly challenge the power of the United States and the West. It was a resurgent regional power, but certainly did not possess enough power to directly contest Washington. One of the best ways to oppose the United States was to indirectly do so, by disputing some normative aspects of Western ideology. For example, Russia developed a new form of democracy that it refers to as "Sovereign Democracy," which provides a direct contrast to the norm of liberal democracy that is spread by the West.[45] By using such normative forms of challenging Western norms, Russia worked with China to balance Western soft power in Eastern Europe.[46]

Russian leaders wanted to create the governmental structures that would allow it to present its message to foreign audiences and expand its soft power. Several initiatives emerged in the past decade and they have given Moscow the ability to communicate globally. One institutional effort to defend Russia's image in the West was the Institute for Democracy and Cooperation that was opened in Moscow in 2007 and has since expanded to Paris and New York.[47] This enterprise defends the Russian democratic ethos and highlights the instances when the West violates democratic principles or human rights.[48] The government has also hired American public relations companies to allow it better communicate Russian ideas to Western audiences.[49] The Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Foundation emerged in 2010 and it works to defend Russian governmental institutions and cultural values and it works to coordinate other NGOs operating internationally.[50] The Russian Council on International Affairs also opened in 2010 and it is focused on spreading public diplomacy to the West. An initial appraisal suggests that Russian public diplomacy is not credible because it presents an image that is too positive so that it appears more like propaganda rather than a realistic policy defense.[51] However, public relations institutions learn over time and are likely to find the political and cultural elements that resonate with Westerners and more effectively present them in the future. Moscow has developed the institutional framework to have a public diplomacy that can consistently reach foreigners and thereby has the capacity to expand Russian soft power.

Russia realized that its soft power was not as strong as that of the United States and Europe, and recognized that it would have to seriously invest in its soft power to try to counter the Western competition. One of the ways that it tried to expand its soft power was to create new study abroad programs for students to study in Russia. The idea is similar to student programs in the United States, where students would come to experience life and culture in Russia

[45] Kokoshin, Andrei. Real Sovereignty and Sovereign Democracy // *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2006, No. 4(4), p. 105; Krastev, Ivan. 'Sovereign Democracy', Russian-Style. // *Open Democracy*, 2006, No. 16; Lipman, Masha. Putin's 'Sovereign Democracy' // *Washington Post:* A21, 2006; Makarychev, Andrey S. Russia's Search for International Identity Through the Sovereign Democracy Concept // *The International Spectator*, 2008, No. 43(2), pp. 49-62; Okara, Andrei. Sovereign Democracy: A New Russian Idea or a PR Project? // *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2007, No. 5(3), pp. 8-20; Petrov, Nikolai. From Managed Democracy to Sovereign Democracy: Putin's Regime Evolution in 2005. PONARS Policy Memo 396, 2005.

[46] Ferguson, Chaka. The Strategic Use of Soft Balancing: The Normative Dimensions of the Chinese–Russian 'Strategic Partnership' // *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2012, No. 35(2), pp. 197-222.

[47] Saari, Sinikukka. Russia's Post-Orange Revolution Strategies to Increase Its Influence in Former Soviet Republics: Public Diplomacy Po Russkii // Europe-Asia Studies, 2014, No. 66(1), pp. 50-66; Simons, Greg. Perception of Russia's Soft Power and Influence in the Baltic States // *Public Relations Review*, 2015, No. 41(1), pp. 1-13.

[48] Saari, Sinikukka. Russia's Post-Orange Revolution Strategies to Increase Its Influence in Former Soviet Republics: Public Diplomacy Po Russkii // *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2014, No. 66(1), pp. 50-66.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Saari, Sinikukka. Russia's Post-Orange Revolution Strategies to Increase Its Influence in Former Soviet Republics: Public Diplomacy Po Russkii // *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2014, No. 66(1), pp. 50-66; Simons, Greg. Perception of Russia's Soft Power and Influence in the Baltic States // *Public Relations Review*, 2015, No. 41(1), pp. 1-13.

[51] Avgerinos, K. Russia's Public Diplomacy Effort: What the Kremlin Is Doing and Why it's Not Working? // *Journal of Public and International Affairs*, 2009, No. 20(1).

and then bring Moscow's soft power back to their home countries.[52]

Russia began to provide more foreign aid, especially in the form of disaster relief. For example, in 2014, Russia was one of the first countries to send in aid to Serbia following severe flooding that left many people homeless and many lives in peril.[53] This type of foreign aid is extremely important in spreading good will and thus spreading Russia's soft power.

The previous examples of spreading soft power are positive examples in that they spread Russian ideas, but do not try directly to compete and destroy other values and ideology. Instead, it tries to build good will and positive feelings toward Russia. Foreign aid or accepting foreign students does not demand that students abandon their own culture and values. Good will is thus achieved through the positive transfer of soft power. However, the competitive nature of Russian soft power with the West also created negative types of soft power by trying to change individual cultures and values of other states. Again the West was much more advanced in changing values and ideals than Russia, so Russia had to find ways to attack and denigrate Western values and ideology.

One area in which Russia felt it was extremely deficient in soft power compared to the West was its ability to spread information.

Russia believed that the West was able to disseminate information quickly and throughout the world easily, often spreading information that was not favorable to Russia.[54] Russia knew that it had to find an avenue to disseminate information. In that regard, Russia began to focus on social media, as that is a quick way to spread information. It could challenge traditional Western accounts of events in comments sections of Western media and also begin to cast Western values as an attack on traditional values. Russia began to cast the spread of Western values as a direct attack on Russia's and Eastern Europe's traditional values such as arguing that the acceptance of homosexuality and more liberal social norms were eroding and destroying the way of life of those in Eastern Europe and Russia.

Another tactic to spread Russian soft power was to create new virtual spaces of a Russian world on the internet.[55] Specifically, the Russian government created a virtual environment called Fond Russkii Mir (Russian World Foundation). The Russian World Foundation was a specific initiative established by Russian president Vladimir Putin to both promote the Russian language, while also cooperating with the Russian Orthodox Church in promoting Russian and Eastern values. The idea was not only to reach Russian diasporas around the world, but also to promote an ideological conceptualization of Russian culture and soft power around the world. In other words, the Russian World Foundation would help spread Russian soft power. Further, the Russia World Foundation would stress the comparison of Western and Eastern values and show that Russia was the protector of traditional culture and values against Western aggression through social liberal values and ideology.

52 Dolgov, Anna. Russia Wants to Take More Foreign Students to Build 'Pro-Moscow Elites' News // *The Moscow Times*, 2015. Mode of access: http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-wants-to-increase-number-of-foreign-students-in-attempt-to-produce-sympathizers-abroad/519679.html; Лебедева, М.М., Ж. Фор. Высшее образование как потенциал «мягкой силы» России // Вестник МГИМО Университета, 2009, No. 6. Mode of access: http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/vysshee-obrazovanie-kak-potentsial-myagkoy-sily-rossii [Lebedeva, M.M., Zh. For. Vysshee obrazovanie kak potencial «mjagkoj sily» Rossii (Higher Education as an Element of Potential Russian Soft Power) // *Vestnik MGIMO Universiteta*, 2009, No. 6. Mode of access: http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/vysshee-obrazovaniekak-potentsial-myagkoy-sily-rossii]

53 Robinson, Matt. In Fight for Influence, Russia Can Play Good Cop Too // *Reuters*, 2014. http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/30/us-europe-russia-influence-insight-idUSKCN0JE07I20141130

54 Chernenko, Yelena. Russia's Reputation on the World Stage May Be at an Unfair Disadvantage // *Kommersant*, 2012. Mode of access: http://rbth.ru/articles/2012/09/05/russias_reputation_on_the_world_stage_may_be_at_an_unfair_disadvanta_17967.html; Kosachev, Konstantin. The Specifics of Russian Soft Power // *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2012, No. 3.

55 Gorham, Michael. Virtual Rusophonia: Language Policy as 'Soft Power' in the New Media Age. Digital Icons: Studies in Russian, Eurasian and Central European New Media, 2011, No. 5, pp. 23-48.

However, the problem with both social media and the Russian World Foundation concept is that people must go to these locations for it to be effective. In other words, most of the people who seek these services and methods of spreading Russian soft power are those who are not Moscow's target audience as they are already consumers of Russian soft power. Generally, they already speak Russian and are sympathetic to Russian values and ideology. It is not difficult to preach to the converted. Yet Russia needed to find a way to sow the seeds of doubt about the moral justness of Western values and ideology if it was to be successful in spreading its soft power.

The Russian government realized how important media outlets were in spreading soft power and delivering messages. They saw that companies like CNN and other news outlets were very effective in broadcasting Western messages and spreading soft power. Therefore they developed a plan to invest in media programs that would help to spread the Kremlin's message. Specifically, they said that they wanted to develop media that would present news in such a way as not being totally biased toward the Western point of view.

One of the media outlets that the Russian government developed was the Voice of Russia. It was the Russian government's international radio broadcasting service. It was broadcast in over 38 different languages. In 2013, Vladimir Putin decreed that the Voice of Russia was to be merged with the Sputnik News Agency, and would further be incorporated with RIA Novosty (the main Russian news service) into a new news organization called *Rossiya Segodnya* (Russia Today).[56] Russia Today's main aim was to provide information on Russian policy and life and society for international audiences.[57]

Another of the media outlets that the Russian government established was RT which was developed as a satellite news channel like CNN. It presents 24 hour coverage of news programs, analysis, documentaries, and debates. Many in the West have argued that RT is very biased toward the official Russian government point of view, while RT has argued that it is providing other views besides those of the standard Western media. One of the ways in which RT presents the news is to try to point out hypocrisy in Western values and the way in which Western mass media present the news. For example, commentators will often try to deflect criticisms against Russia by using examples from the West.

One of the most effective ways to deflect Western criticism of Russia is a method termed "*whataboutism*." Whataboutism was a term that was coined during the Soviet period to describe Soviet comments in pointing out hypocrisy in Western values and actions.[58] For example, whenever the West would criticize the Soviet Union over issues such as human rights, the Soviets would respond with a statement that questioned racial relations in the United States. The comment would never directly address the legitimacy of the criticism, merely deflect the criticism by pointing out the hypocrisy of the criticism in the first place. The Russian government expanded the Soviet technique and began to expand its usage in media programs on RT and other Russian media sources. For example, when the West criticized Russia for its invasion and subsequent referendum in Crimea, Russia immediately pointed to the West's actions in Kosovo and pointed out the hypocrisy of the West's criticism. It is important to note, however, that such a response does not justify or seek to defend Russia's actions, it merely deflects the argument by stating that those leveling the criticism are no better and do not possess the moral authority with which to criticize.[59] This is a much easier argument

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[56] This is not to be confused with the former Television News Channel "Russia Today," which became known as RT.

[57] Putin Orders Overhaul of Top State News Agency / *RT*, 2013. Mode of access: http://rt.com/news/ria-novosti-overhaul-putin-960/

[58] Gessen, Keith. What's the Matter with Russia: Putin and the Soviet Legacy // *Foreign Affairs*, 2014, No. 93, p. 182; Headley, James. Challenging the EU's Claim to Moral Authority: Russian Talk of 'double Standards' // *Asia Europe Journal*, 2015, pp. 1-11; Maliukevičius, Nerijus. (Re) Constructing Russian Soft Power in Post-Soviet Region // *AGORA. Political communication studies*, 2015, No. 0(2), pp. 61-86.

[59] Headley, James. Challenging the EU's Claim to Moral Authority: Russian Talk of 'double Standards' // *Asia Europe Journal*, 2015, pp. 1-11.

to make than a moral justification, and seeds enough doubt in the moral justification of the West to stop the spread of Western soft power.

One of the most noted examples of "Whataboutism" involved Edward Snowden, a United States government contractor who worked for the National Security Agency. Snowden became very upset with secret government surveillance programs designed to protect the United States from terrorism. He believed that the data gathering techniques were unconstitutional and violated citizens' rights to privacy. Snowden leaked information about these surveillance programs to the media, and incurred the ire of the United States. In 2013, Snowden left the United States and sought asylum overseas. He tried to flee to Ecuador but the U.S. cancelled his passport while in route during a layover in the Moscow airport and, as a result, Russia granted him temporary asylum. While the West has accused Moscow of violating international due process, Moscow has used the publicity of Snowden to show that the West is hypocritical as its policies do not match its rhetoric when it comes to protecting individual liberty and freedom. Again, Moscow is able to use the United States' own moral shortcomings as a message that works to stop the spread of Western soft power.

The Russian government's efforts to increase spending on the media as a way of spreading its message globally is an extremely important part of the Russian soft power strategy. However, it should be noted that the budget for these media outlets are still much less than Western media outlets, so it remains to be seen how effective this strategy will be to spread Russian soft power.

However, Russia has not only tried to spread its own message through media outlets, but it has also tried to discredit Western soft power and more specifically the message being presented by Western media outlets. In late 2014 and early 2015, news surfaced that the Russian had employed internet trolls to discredit Western media messages and to try to provide Russian perspectives on certain issues.[60] The

job of these bloggers was basically to provide a positive view of Russian foreign policy and to discredit Western policy. They used social media as well as the comment section of many different internet news sites. They were so successful that many internet newspapers such as *The Moscow Times* stopped allowing comments from individual people, as there were just so many different comments that were pointedly anti-Western and pro-Russian.

The new Russian media strategy to help spread Russia's soft power has been effective in many ways. It has certainly gotten the message to many and presented Russian arguments against Western hegemonic actions. In fact, many critics point to Russia's increased active efforts to spread Russian soft power as being nothing more than propaganda. However, the efforts have been effective enough that the United States House of Representatives has even conducted hearings into the danger to national security that this new form of Russian propaganda poses.[61] The House Committee on Foreign Affairs argued that Russian state marketing was really dangerous to the national security of the United States, and that the United States needed to directly confront Russian propaganda in such a way as to effectively counter and remove the threat.

Despite the gains in the strength of Russian soft power, Russia is still not fully trusted within the post-Soviet space. Many of Russia's past imperial actions during the Soviet era are remembered by the former Soviet republics. Elites in states like Moldova are very wary of trusting Russia due to past behavior. Yet the Moldovan people have been increasingly more

[60] Bertrand, Natasha. Russian Internet Trolls Are Trained to Spread Propaganda in Three-Person Teams // Business Insider, 2015. Mode of access: http://www.businessinsider.com/russian-internet-trolls-are-trained-to-spread-propaganda-in-three-person-teams-2015-3; Gregory, Paul Roderick. Putin's New Weapon In The Ukraine Propaganda War: Internet Trolls // *Forbes*, 2014. Mode of access: http://www.forbes.com/sites/paulroderickgregory/2014/12/09/putins-new-weapon-in-the-ukraine-propaganda-war-internet-trolls/; Putin's 'Troll Army': Bloggers Forced to 'Flood Websites with pro-Russian Propaganda' / Express, 2015. Mode of access: http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/568443/Vladimir-Putin-bloggers-flood-websites-pro-Russian-propaganda

[61] Royce, Rep. Edward R. Confronting Russia's Weaponization of Information. Washington D.C., 2015.

in favor of pursuing good relations with Russia and spurning the EU.[62] This is evidence of not only the effectiveness of Russian soft power, but also of a growing rift between political elites who are extremely wary of Russia and its intentions and more common people.

Ultimately, Russia realizes that it is almost impossible to directly counter Western soft power. While Russia is not the Soviet Union, there is still a deep mistrust of Russian intentions toward Eastern Europe. Russian efforts at spreading positive soft power through disaster relief and aid can be somewhat successful in states like Serbia, yet can't be expected to be effective in states like Poland. While Russia believes that it is protecting traditional values by opposing the West, it is no less imperialistic in its soft power aims than the West. It also wants to regain its influence in Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet region. Russia recognizes that it is no longer the Soviet Union and does not want to recreate the Soviet Union, but Russia also believes that its values and identity are superior to those of other states, and wants to see the triumph of Russian traditional values over those of the West. Russian soft power as an opposing force to the spread of Western soft power is still in its infancy, yet is growing in power. It is trying to defeat a more powerful foe in much the same way as guerilla insurrections target stronger forces. It attacks its opponent at weak points, but doesn't stay exposed. Instead, Russian soft power focuses on pointing out hypocrisy of Western values and trying to cast doubt on the belief that Western values will inevitably triumph. The irony of the situation is that Eastern Europe is again in the crosshairs of this soft power competition. Neither Russia nor the West is concerned with traditional Eastern European values and traditions, and inevitably those values will be destroyed by the ideological imperial struggle between the two opposing powers.

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[62] Higgins, Andrew. Moldova Eyes Russia's Embrace as Flirtation With Europe Fades // *The New York Times*, 2015. Mode of access: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/22/world/europe/moldova-eyes-russias-embrace-as-flirtation-with-europe-fades.html; Poll: Moldovans Prefer Customs Union to EU. Kyiv Post, 2012.

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ИСТОКИ «МЯГКОЙ СИЛЫ РОССИИ»: ПЕРЕОСМЫСЛЯЯ РУССКУЮ НАЦИОНАЛЬНУЮ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЬ

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Аннотация: В статье рассматриваются философские основы возникновения «мягкой силы» современной России и стратегии противостояния "мягкой силе" Запада. Авторы делают вывод о том, что «мягкая сила» современной России основана на русской философии и литературе девятнадцатого века. Без дополнительных механизмов, «мягкая сила» России не смогла противостоять распространению «мягкой силы» Запада. Таким образом, вместо создания собственного позитивного культурно-политического имиджа, Россия создала специальные информационные организации для того, чтобы показать противоречивость «мягкой силы» Запада.