

# GEOPOLITICAL FRUSTRATION AND HYBRID RESPONSE: EMPIRICAL CAPTURE OF RUSSIAN BEHAVIOR AFTER THE UKRAINE CRISIS (2013-2021)<sup>1</sup>

Rui Kai Xue

*Lecturer of the School of Country and Region Studies,  
Beijing International Studies University*

*Email: ruikai0814@outlook.com*

*ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1001-871X>*

**Abstract.** The Ukraine crisis of 2013 was a major geopolitical disaster since the end of the Cold War, shattering the calm of the European security structure after the collapse of the USSR and triggering a harsh confrontation between Russia and the West. Moscow occupied Crimea after the Ukraine crisis, and the military conflict in the Donbas region has led to a serious humanitarian tragedy. The Ukraine crisis has a profound historical, ethnic and geopolitical background and needs to be put into the narrative framework of the game between the West and Russia in the Black Sea region. This article first constructs a frustration-response analysis framework and introduces two mediating variables of target expectation and target distance. Then it embeds theoretical elements in the interaction between Russia and Ukraine, including the entangled history, civilization and ethnic ties of the two countries. Finally, the article uses the captured (GDEL) data to conduct empirical measurement of Russia's behavior after the 2013 Euromaidan crisis, thereby providing enlightenment for foreign policy analysis and prediction of state behavior.

**Keywords:** Russia; Ukraine; Frustration; Crimea; East Slavic

\* \* \*

**Introduction.** How did Russia response after the Ukrainian crisis? Can we empirically portray the Russia-Ukraine interactions after the 2013 crisis from micro-level event dataset, and capture the mixed reaction behavior used by Moscow? Russian history and geography led to a political identity of East Slavic ethnicity, a narrative model that relied on imperial and ethnic terms. Russia and the Soviet Union have never been stripped of their identities, which is also the spiritual root of Russia's restoration of its status as a major power after the Cold War (TRENIN 2017). Russia's self-contradictory policy is to continue its collective memory with Ukraine through nation building during the Yeltsin era and intensive integration of politics, economy, and security during Putin's era. Therefore, when the geopolitical tectonic plates shifted profoundly after the Cold War, and eventually lead to the dramatic "de-Russification" of Ukraine's regime in 2013, the historical narrative and national identity directly triggered the Kremlin's aggressive response to Kiev, which demanded serious reflection. The emotion of frustration evokes the Russian national sentiment and expectation of target, which constitutes the causal logic of Russia's response to the Ukrainian crisis (Larson & Shevchenko 2014, pp.269-279). The Ukraine crisis has intensified the political confrontation between Russia and the United States, alienated Moscow from the European Union, and triggered a continuing shake-up of the geopolitical order across Europe. The crisis is decisive for Russia's national and geographic consciousness. Russia no longer tolerates and passively responds to the "frustration" created by the West in the post-Soviet space. The annexation of Crimea and the Donbass Rebellion in eastern Ukraine proved that Russia's

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper represents the author's personal views and does not reflect the position of the affiliation.

reintegration of Kiev has come to an end. Moscow sees itself as an independent, self-sufficient and dignified country, and no longer dreams of becoming Euro-Atlantic Community, but regards Ukraine as a composition of the geopolitical space centered on the Kremlin, calmly and unsentimentally dealing with this neighbor with the same national identity.

Existing literature on the Ukraine crisis ignores the typological analysis of Russia's response, including energy, military, diplomatic, and media narrative dimensions. Russia's assault of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 has seriously violated Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and requires the international academic community to propose insights to maintain peace in Europe. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's strength did not allow it to overthrow the European security structure on which NATO is the cornerstone. Moscow's ambition was to maintain political unity in the post-Soviet space. The Kremlin has selectively intervened in crises around the boarder to maintain its own security and to perpetuate the shared memory with newly independent states through political and economic means (Bordachev 2021, pp.1-4). Therefore, a frustration-response analytical framework will be creative and timely to capture Russia's behavior and provide intellectual material for the international community. This article will be divided into the following five sections to discuss the Russian behavior after the 2013 Euromaidan crisis. The first section will draw theoretical elements from the field of social cognition and construct an analytical framework of frustration-response. The second section will sort out the representative academic literature concerning the Ukraine crisis from three dimensions. The third section fits the analysis framework to Russia-Ukraine relations, and traces the frustration experienced by Russia and its response behaviors in the 2013 Euromaidan crisis. The fourth section will empirically measure the interaction between Russia and Ukraine after 2013 through a series of human-computer interaction language, and try to capture the reaction behavior of Russia from the event big data. The fifth part and the conclusion will provide new insights for solving the Ukraine crisis, as well as contribute knowledge resources for predicting of state behavior.

#### 1. "Frustration" in International Relations

The inspiration of frustration comes from human behavior in the field of social cognition, and the transfer to the field of international relations is a breakthrough attempt to anthropomorphize the national behavior patterns, thereby building a causal link between frustration and reactive behavior. The frustration is rooted in the sudden suspension of the frequency of national behavior within a certain period of time, which hinders the realization of its goal. The recognition and evaluation of frustration have contributed to the country's response behavior, which reflects the functional value of the state to counter. The competitive encounter between achieving goals and interfering impediments promotes the state's choice of response behavior. The interference here can be considered as a setback to the nation's basic psychological needs and self-efficacy, which triggers the negative emotions of humiliation, grievance and loss (Klandermans 2013). The causal boundary of frustration and reaction behavior depends on the country's subjective judgment of the situation. Frustration does not necessarily lead to the occurrence of reaction behavior. The value judgment, target distance, and expectations of the country make the reaction behavior from weak to strong. Changes can be embodied in diplomatic warnings, economic sanctions and even military actions (Pastore 1950, pp. 271-279). The country's judgment on the type and direction of frustration, and the reason for the obstruction will influence the intensity of the response behavior. Therefore, the cost and benefit calculation will also be carried out during the reaction, and it may eventually be possible to reach an understanding with the frustration source country before the intensity of the reaction increases. Perceived frustration in advance reduces the probability of reactive behavior as such setbacks based on rational expectations counteract impulsive emotions. When frustration bearer finds that setbacks will cause huge losses in the target pursuit process and exceed the benefits of achieving the goal, the country will choose to avoid risks at this time and

adopt the strategy of wait-and-see or even temporarily abandoning the pursuit (Kregarman & Worchel 1961, pp. 183-187). The country's failure to achieve its target in the historical cycle indicates that policymakers will be prepared for repeated setbacks.

## 2. The state's response to frustration

The state's response to frustration can be seen as a catharsis of dissatisfaction, or even an act of revenge. As a series of events, frustration has also been described as a predictor of reaction probability and intensity. The state responds to the source of frustration in the context of safeguarding national interests. Frustration appears as a situational stressor, acts as an independent variable in the cognitive chain of reaction behavior and plays a catalytic role in the expectation and distance of country towards target as a reverse incentive. Identification of country's expectation and distance to the target can assess state hostility, thereby producing a mediating effect in inhibiting state response.

### a. The country's expectations of the target

As the psychological prospect of national foreign decision making, the expectation emphasizes that actors make policies around reference points, that is, the state accepts risks to target, but is loss-averse to frustration (Kahneman & Tversky 1979, pp. 263-291). The reference point is a function value of the status quo changing over time. Decision-makers have different behavioral options at each reference point, thus generating differentiated cognition and utility evaluation. As the external force that may change the status quo, behavioral options under frustration have the expectation uncertainty, which makes the target distance for the country longer, and even leads to the country deviating from the existing reference point. The original risk acceptance type changes to loss aversion type. Frustration may increase the attractiveness of the target to the country, which means that the country has stronger expectations to achieve the goal, thereby has a stronger motivation to react. When the country deviates from the reference point, the country pays more attention to the evaluation of frustration rather than comparable gains. The loss caused by frustration increases the risk of the target expectation, so the country will have disgust emotion, which leads to the increase of the intensity of the reaction behavior (Levy 1992, pp. 171-186).

### b. Identification of target distance

Frustration is defined as a negative event, accompanied by the country's low spirit. It allows adding the target distance as an intermediary variable based on the causal effect between the event and behavior, and deduces the reverse relationship between the country's pursuit of target and the sense of frustration. The target distance affects the intensity of the country's response behavior. When the country is far from the target, there is sufficient time and space for it to identify the type and level of frustration, and its response tendency will decrease accordingly (Breuer & Elson 2017, pp.1-12). As the country gets closer to the target, the interference and hindrance of frustration to the country will be magnified. Frustration raises national anxieties about target distance, especially when it comes from competing nations. Countries that bear frustration may sense the risk of victory being stolen. A country's pursuit of diplomatic goals is the process of shortening the distance with time, money and other inputs. Frustration is likely to interrupt this process, leading to the country to bear a huge marginal cost.

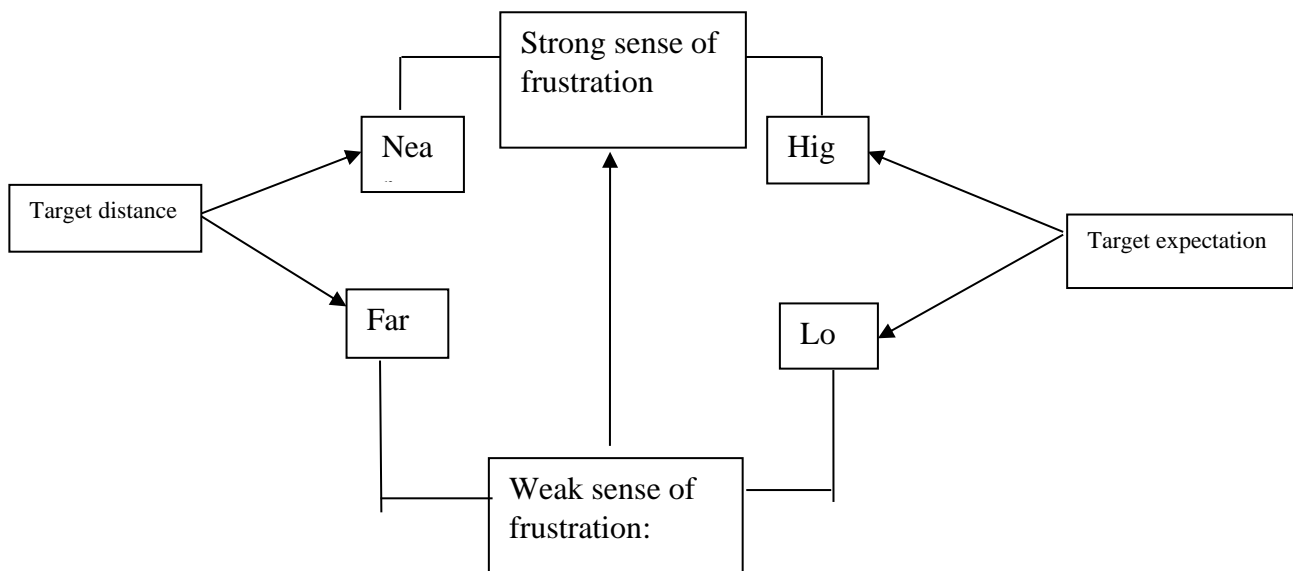


Figure 1: Model of the "frustration-response" analysis framework (made by the author)

### 3. Literature Review

Russia's annexation of Crimea and support for the insurgency in the Donbas requires a rational assessment by the academic and policy community, particularly in the backdrop of a broader shift in the interaction between Russia and Ukraine. The current academic research on Russia-Ukraine relations can be roughly divided into three categories: power game theory, Russian historical materials sorting, and the perspectives of new Cold War. The first kind of literature examines the Ukrainian crisis from the perspective of power game in post-Soviet space. The Crisis in Ukraine is a symptom of a broader conflict between two major powers (Russia and the United States) and the power groups behind them. At a deeper level, it reflects the plight of Europe's collective security structure. Sauer and Kissinger argue that after 1991, the West missed the opportunity to integrate Russia into the Euro-Atlantic security establishment, but continuously absorbed post-Soviet space countries, including Georgia and Ukraine. Instead of entering a constellation of great power collective security, Russia has become the new destabilizing factor. If Ukraine is to survive and prosper, it must not be an outpost for the West against Russia, but a bridge between the West and the East (Sauer 2017; Kissinger 2014). The Ukraine crisis and the military escalations in the Donbas region in 2021 have had a huge impact on the peripheral security environment of the EU and the eastern flank of NATO, requiring the West to re-examine its own security policy and replace the competitive thinking with a security governance framework (Minzarari 2021, pp.1-5; Averre 2016, pp.699-721). The second type of literature discusses the development of Russia-Ukraine relations from the perspective of Russian historical materials sorting. Fedorov and other scholars argue that the ongoing crisis in Ukraine can be seen as the second stage of the disintegration of the East Slavic peoples. Those living in eastern and southern Ukraine have a different view of national identity, becoming direct victims of the collapse of the Soviet Union but retaining a sense of a common motherland and a desire to return to Russia, defined by their Russian-speaking identity. Moscow's aggression is not directed against Ukraine itself, but to protect its Ethnic East Slavs. It must be acknowledged that after the recapture of Crimea, the unity between Russia and Ukraine has been broken, and this has clearly become the basis of events that increased tensions between the two countries (Shcherbak, Shishelina and Tsirenschikov, etc 2014, pp.10-34). The third category of literature analyzes the New Cold War between Russia and the West in the context of the 2013 crisis from the Ukrainian perspective.<sup>1</sup> Rabodezhev and Slaviv believed that the Ukrainian crisis was the result of the outbreak of accumulated geopolitical and ethnic

disputes after independence. By changing its political consciousness from the former Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine, Ukraine has always wanted to get rid of Russian influence and form a non-Russian Slavic state identity (Rabodezhev & Slaviv 2017, pp.3-25). However, Ukraine's regional division of labor status in the Soviet Union period and its close relationship with Russia in the transportation and machinery industries determined that Kiev's cutting off of economic and trade relations with Russia would certainly cause a huge shock to the social and economic structure, and the huge economic threshold of joining the EU also made Ukraine bear the high cost of economic transformation. In the post-crisis era, Russia's policy goal is to ensure Ukraine's non-bloc status and protect the rights and interests of Russian-speaking ethnic groups in Donetsk and Luhansk. If it cannot exert control over Kiev's foreign policy direction, Russia may consider establishing a belt of Pro-Russian provinces in Ukraine's east (Götz 2014, pp. 3-10).

#### 4.The 2013 Euromaidan crisis: A Geopolitical frustration for Russia

The 2013 Euromaidan crisis in Kiev has caused a huge oscillation in Relations between Russia and Ukraine, as well as between Russia and the West (Andrei 2018, pp.101-111). From the perspective of Russia, the European Union and NATO, as representatives of economic and military integration mechanisms, have become a tool for the West to promote the liberal worldviews in the post-Soviet space (Nitoiu 2016, pp.1-5). Such setbacks based on the "color revolution" have already occurred in Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania, etc., and may eventually be transmitted to Moscow and become a huge stimulus factor affecting the political stability of the Kremlin. The Kremlin sees the longstanding dual policy of the U.S. and Western camps as a logic of power, which exemplified in the Ukraine crisis (Sakawa 2020, pp.103-106). The reality is that Ukraine will have to choose between Brussels (Washington) and Moscow. If Kiev is finally promised to join NATO and the European Union, Western power will eventually extend to Russia's borders. This has obviously touched Russia's national security red line.

Russian language is the identity mark that keeps the post-Soviet space state within the former imperial metropolis, and is also the ideological pillar of the Russian world. In Russian historiography, Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians were born together in the medieval principality of Kievan Rus. Thus, Moscow sought the Russian language as a link of collective identity to maintain unity among the three East Slavic peoples (Feklyunina 2016, pp.774-776). Ukrainians and Russians belong to the East Slavic nation, and Ukraine's position in the history of Russian Federation cannot be changed. Ukraine is a close neighbor and a fraternal country linked by blood with Russia. The Kremlin believes that NATO's measures to strengthen security have undermined Russia's survival and the identity of every Slav, which is the security dilemma that lies between Russia and the West. Ukraine's former president Viktor Yanukovich agreed to abandon the Association agreement with the European Union and joined the Russia launched Customs Union, which was the precursor to the Eurasian Economic Union (Rutland 2015). However, it triggered a revolution in Euromaidan square and led to the ouster of the president. The Kremlin cannot envisage Ukraine, with the same national identity and Russian-speaking symbol, being excluded from the Russian world. The 2013 Euromaidan crisis is an important factor that aggravated the geopolitical imbalance in Europe. The expected frustration brought to Russia may include the impact of the failure of Kiev's governance, the negative demonstration effects of spontaneous popular movements and the occupation of government, the complete separation of ethnic identities between the Ukrainian and Russian in the East Slavic branch, and the Western "security enhancement" project penetrated the Russian border and so on.

#### 5. Russia's Response to frustration: Crimean Ambitions and East Slavic Ethnic Dignity

Russian and Ukrainian history has been intertwined for centuries, but that does not mean the Kremlin can play a privileged role in Ukraine. The heterogeneity of religion and ethnicity in western and eastern Ukraine can be seen as a microcosm of the interaction between the two governance models of the West and

Russia. When the two sides are cooperating, Ukraine can act as a breadbasket of Europe and a bridge between the East and the West, but if there is tension or even collision between the two sides, Ukraine may become a battlefield or even be torn apart. The process of Ukrainian nation-building after the Cold war embodies the rivalry between European liberal democratic norms and Russia's vertical centralized leadership, in which the substitution of either model for the other is greatly amplified by the differences between eastern and western Ukraine (Raik 2017, pp.51-70). The oscillation of Ukraine's democratic transition and the monistic ethnic construction in Kyiv undoubtedly provided the soil for the outbreak of domestic contradiction, while Russia's intervention turned the Ukrainian internal crisis into an international conflict. The build-up of Russian troops on the western border, the initiative to annexation Crimea, and the creation of a buffer zone in the Donbas can all be seen as the Kremlin's "reaction" to geopolitical frustration.

#### 5.1 Russia annexed Crimea: target expectations under geo-frustration

Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 was a violation of the principle of sovereignty under international law, prompting western economic sanctions. It should be noted that Russia's actions have a complex logic that connects geopolitics and historical identities and needs to be placed in the narrative context of its game with the West. (Biersack & Shannon 2014, pp.247-249). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia became a country with limited goals and ambitions, constrained by the decline of its relative power. Moscow does not want to overturn the international order established by Europe after the Cold War, but only to ensure that its territorial and sovereign interests are not eroded by the West (Götz 2016, pp.1-18). In the face of the independent Ukraine as a post-Soviet space country, Russia hopes to establish new guidelines for relations with Ukraine, including delimiting territories and maritime boundaries, cooperating to deal with the nuclear weapons left in Ukraine, determining the division of the Black Sea Fleet and the location of its bases, and developing uniform gas prices to create a common economic space in the Black Sea region, particularly through the use of Soviet-retained pipelines for cooperation in energy delivery to Europe (Pantin & Lapkin 2013, pp.133-144). However, the eastward expansion of NATO and the European Union has created enormous frustration in Moscow, as post-Soviet states have been absorbed into the anti-Russian bloc (Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia) and Ukraine has become the only remaining buffer zone in Russia's game with the West. As the legal successor to the Soviet Union, Russia's ambitions for Crimea can be traced back to the tsarist period in the 18th century. When Peter I began to look for the outlet to the sea from the south, and Crimea became a necessary fulcrum for the expansion of the Russian Empire to the Black Sea. However, Peter's main rivals were Poland in the west and Sweden in the north. During the Russo-Polish War, Tatars from the Crimean Khanate often attacked Russia's rear, so Russia built the Belgorod Line of defense in the south, proving that Crimea was not under Russia's actual control at that time. Catherine II's Tsarist Russia and the Ottoman Empire went to war in 1768 and won. Russia officially broke Istanbul's dominance of the Black Sea and subsequently annexed the Crimean Khanate, building naval bases in Kherson and Sevastopol. Russia expanded its empire territory to southern Ukraine and established the new province called Novorossiia, similar to what Russia did in Ukraine after 2014 (DOHI 2007, pp.140-146; Plokyh 2017, pp.189-205). Catherine II also expelled Ukrainian Cossacks from Zaporozhye, Donetsk and the Tatars from Crimea until the end of the 18th century. For many Russian politicians, Russia's history in Crimea is closely linked to that of the Black Sea Fleet, from which the cornerstone of Sevastopol's glory and sovereignty also comes, and the loss of the peninsula would mean Russia's return to the three centuries before Peter I (Plokyh 2014, pp.369-383).The conflict in Sevastopol played a decisive role in Russia's national identity, especially the Crimean War in the 1850s, when Tsarist Russia was defeated by the French-British Ottoman alliance. Crimea also played an important role in the Soviet Union's defeat of the Nazis in the Great Patriotic War (Gorenburg 2014). If Kiev is eventually integrated into NATO's security structure, Crimea could become a battleground between Russia and NATO

when Ukraine tries to retake the peninsula by force. After Ukraine's transformation to the detriment of Russia's geopolitical interests, the expectations of the target have convinced Moscow that Crimea was a Soviet gift to Ukraine and should be returned.

## 5.2 Moscow securitized Ukraine: a target distance to defend the Russian ethnicity

Russia has endured two decades of frustration, including geopolitical upheaval, energy and economic sanctions. The root of all Moscow's behavior lies in countering the erosion of Western world. The European Union, which represents economic power, and NATO, which is a military symbol, hopes to pull Ukraine from the post-Soviet space into the orbit of the West (Kuzio 2018, pp.1-11). As a new regional order established after the Cold War, the EU has always guarded against the integration process between Russia and Ukraine, which is reflected in the promotion of the European way of life and boycotting Ukraine and Russia's Slavic identity narratives, as this will produce adverse changes to the geopolitics of Europe (Ananicheva 2013, pp.68-77). The West believes that Ukraine's entry into the EU Free Trade Area is a necessary step to significantly reduce the level of cooperation between Russia and Ukraine, and it will also weaken Moscow's influence on the Russian ethnic group in Ukraine. Russia's policy behavior toward Ukraine reflects the characteristics of great power security, which comes from Moscow's perception of global and regional systems, especially the relationship between Kiev's ethnic identity and security policies. Ukraine is seen by Russia as an important "area of interest" outside its official territory, while the Slavic ethnic group carries Russia's values. Russia's political elite will view the upcoming events in Ukraine as securities of power, responding to short - and long-term frustration (NATO military expansion, pro-Western conversion of Ukraine, Kiev's accession to NATO, ethnic Russia was suppressed, etc.) with decisive and resolute means. The key to this reacting process is Moscow's judgment on ethnic feedback signal of Ukraine from the perspective of national interests. Ukraine's right bank (east) and south bank (Crimea) are typically Russian-speaking areas of "Little Rus", with a long history outside Russia but its dominant Orthodox Church that has been part of the Russian Empire for centuries (Harris 2020). <sup>2</sup>In the Kremlin's narrative of history, Ukraine's right and south banks are natural components of the Russian world. Residents of the Russian-speaking east believe that a close relationship with Russia is more conducive to gaining economic and political benefits and giving their ethnic groups a more formal legal identity (Celeste Beesley 2019, pp.35-44). <sup>3</sup>In fact, the Grand Duchy of Moscow, which originated from Kievan Rus, is the starting point of the "Russian spiritual homeland". Ethnic ties still serve as a counterbalance and buffer against frustration in their relations (Tolz, 2003). As the West expands the existing structure, including the European Union and NATO, Ukraine could become a key factor in the ethnic disintegration of east Slavs. The struggle between the West and Russia for Ukraine actually reflects the competition between the two identity models.

## 6. Research design and empirical analysis

The empirical measurement of relations between countries is challenging. There have been several attempts in academia. Yan Xuetong's team, for example, has coded the positive and negative values of some important events in the interaction between countries, and set up standards for measuring the influence of events to predict bilateral relations (Yan & Zhou 2004, pp.90-103). The use of bilateral significant events to measure inter-state relations has loopholes and ignores the continuity of changes in the relationship between the two countries, because important behavioral events may not always occur between countries, such as state visits, and coding assignments of significant events may also be full of subjective cognitive preferences. Therefore, this article will take the Russia-Ukraine relations after the 2013 crisis as a case, creatively use Google Cloud Platform and machine learning interactive language method to crawl data from GDELT database, and empirically captures Russia's reactive behavior from the interactive map of Russia-Ukraine

relations. The GDELT project is a global real-time database of human society for open research, recording events in global media every 15 minutes through sensors and satellite resources distributed around the world. The advantage of this article lies in the use of media data flow as the research sample, which can successively describe and update the Russia-Ukraine relationship. The average tone under machine language can outline the emotions of micro events to the maximum extent and form continuous interaction between countries, which avoids the influence of human preferences.

The author used structured language (SQL) and search algorithms to crawl a total of 16,000 data on the interaction between Ukraine and Russia from the Global Event Database of Google Cloud Platform from February 3, 2013 to May 17, 2021. The Global Events Database provides two key variables for measuring Russia-Ukraine relations, namely AvgTone, which manifests the positive and negative attributes of events occurring every 15 minutes; QuadClass, used to frame the interaction between the two countries (1= verbal cooperation, 2= material cooperation, 3= verbal conflict, 4= material conflict). The sources of Ukraine-Russian relations in global news events are complex and contain elements of cooperation and conflict. Many Russian responses are not necessarily clear military responses. Moscow's information tools (media propaganda narratives) may also be the Kremlin's means of reaction after the 2013 crisis. The aim of this study is to continuously depict the interactive map of Russia-Ukraine relations in terms of the average tone of media events, and then capture specific Russian reaction behavior from the negative tone. Therefore, the article must first test a research hypothesis.

*H1: When there are verbal and material conflicts in the relationship between Russia and Ukraine, the average tone of the global news events is negative.*

*H2: When there is verbal and material cooperation in the relations between Russia and Ukraine, the average tone of global news events is positive.*

The article conducts correlation analysis on AvgTone and QuadClass of dataset of Russia-Ukraine relations news events scraped in Google Cloud Platform (Table 3). It is found that there is an extremely significant correlation between variables ( $p < 0.01$ ), which verifies the hypothesis that when conflicts occur in Russia-Ukraine relations, the average tone of news events is negative, thus laying a research foundation for further capturing Russian reaction in the conflict. Since the Russia-Ukraine border crisis escalated from the end of 2021, the author also conducted continuous situation tracking, and connected Russia's behavior in historical series, so as to provide valuable information for the de-escalation of the situation and the peace building in Europe.

Table 3: Correlation analysis

| avgtone            | Coef.  | St.Err.   | t-value              | p-value | [95% Conf | Interval] | Sig |
|--------------------|--------|-----------|----------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----|
| quadclass          | -0.704 | 0.025     | -27.78               | 0.000   | -0.753    | -0.654    | *** |
| Constant           | 0.483  | 0.070     | 6.88                 | 0.000   | 0.345     | 0.620     | *** |
| Mean dependent var |        | -1.256    | SD dependent var     |         |           | 4.104     |     |
| R-squared          |        | 0.046     | Number of obs        |         |           | 16000.000 |     |
| F-test             |        | 771.648   | Prob > F             |         |           | 0.000     |     |
| Akaike crit. (AIC) |        | 89835.139 | Bayesian crit. (BIC) |         |           | 89850.499 |     |

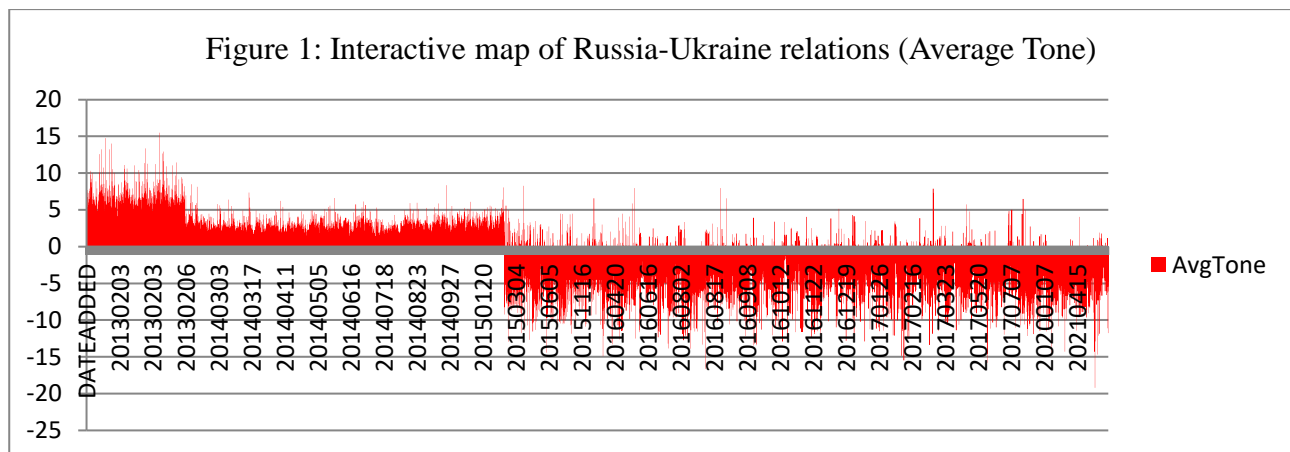
\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

The authors extracted the Russian media news from the captured global event data and conducts the tracking analysis of discourse changes, so as to show how the Kremlin uses media narratives to influence international public opinion after the crisis. The article firstly constructed an interactive map of the relationship between Russia and Ukraine based on the average tone of the event, and found that Russia framed the event after the Ukrainian crisis with narrative responses and discourse templates, and bound it with ideological terms such as Russian ethnic security and historical tradition. The description of the Ukrainian crisis in the Russian news media is oriented to follow the Kremlin's Ukrainian national policy and has become a tool for Russia to respond flexibly to the crisis. From the interaction events between the two countries, the following four levels of Russian reaction behavior can be captured:

*a. Russian diversionary tactics*

Russia-Ukraine relations have fluctuated positively during the period from February 2013 to February 2015. The protests in Kiev's Euromaidan Square and the subsequent Donbass war did not severely impact Russia-Ukraine relations (the average tone dropped but remained positive). Through the discourse analysis of the content of the event, it was found that after the Ukrainian crisis broke out, the Russian media adopted a strategy of diverting attention, focusing on the armed rebellion in the Donbass region and the humanitarian disaster that occurred there, in an effort to dilute the Kremlin's annexation of Crimea and interfere with international media attention. Russian Today (RT) and other state-run media, as well as a large number of Russian journalists, focused on the withdrawal of Ukrainian government forces from the eastern city of Debaltseve, surrounded by pro-Russian civilian armed forces (Tass News Agency, 2015). Russian journalists cited Reuters and political analysts to bolster the credibility of the narrative, framing Kiev's retreat as a "collective surrender" and Ukrainians' belief that "government forces had failed in the Donbas conflict" (RT News, 2015). Moscow's news discourse is based on the Ukrainian people, treating the resistance of the Donbas people as a righteous act and the repression of Kiev's military as an inhuman catastrophe. During this period, international media coverage of Russia's reabsorbing of Crimea was fuzzy, and Moscow reacted decisively to Ukraine's domestic protest, seizing the window of time. The speech of Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation in 2013 can be regarded as Russia's new "Flexible Response Concept", emphasizing the use of Internet, information and other tools to identify the people of the target country under the conditions of non-contact modern warfare, while using private military companies, special forces and other low-intensity means to carry out a new method of crisis response (Gerasimov, 2013). Numerous geographic and news data show that Mr. Putin ordered the military intervention of the Russian Defense Ministry, deploying secret commandos of military intelligence agents, special forces and marines to the Crimea region to protect Russian naval installations in Sevastopol. The Russian army also interacted with Russian-speaking groups in the Crimea region and annexed peninsula in the form of a referendum. In the case of Crimea, Putin retroactively invented polling data that purportedly showed Crimean residents' desire to be part of Russia, which constituted a source of legitimacy for Russia's absorption of it (Tymchuk 2014). Moscow also hopes to create a national identity-based narrative ahead of time, which comes from historical imagination and ethnic homogeneity for its intervention in the eastern Ukraine. After the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, the narrative position of Russian media changed rapidly. Before the annexation of Crimea, Russia used the humanitarian protection as an instrument, and focused on the survival of Russian-speaking population and the stability of Ukraine's domestic politics. When the war broke out in the Donbas region, the Russian-speaking media changed the narrative as Russian-backed separatists were at war with government forces, and the Kremlin focused on Ukraine's failure of governance, shifting the source of the conflict to the Ukrainian government and Western infiltration. From November 2021, when the

situation between Russia and Ukraine became tense again, Russian media adjusted their narrative position to the legitimacy of military deployment, safeguard national security and deal with the spillover effect of the crisis. Moscow expressed its concern over the security cooperation between NATO and Ukraine through media and accused Kiev of shelling and other military actions towards the Donbass in order to distract the international community from its own military build-up. (Tsukanov, 2022; RIA Novosti, 2022). At the same time, the Russian media also demonstrated Kremlin's diplomatic efforts such as the negotiations on security guarantees and the protection of the Russian ethnic group of Donbass region in order to deliver a righteous image to the international community (Sputnik News Agency, 2022; Tass News Agency, 2022).



*b. Russia protested the NATO military drills via the diplomatic channels*

NATO held the largest ground exercise in Eastern Europe since 1989 in June 2016, and the coverage area is located just west of the Russia-Ukraine border. The United States dispatched the 82nd Airborne Division deployed in North Carolina. Paratroopers from NATO member states such as Poland and the United Kingdom also participated in the exercise. NATO rotates large-scale equipment and personnel in Poland close to Ukraine and can enter Ukraine at any time (The Guardian, 2016). In the face of possible NATO military interaction with Ukraine, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has expressed concern that tensions in the Donbas region could erupt into a new war, and the Minsk Agreements cannot be replaced and must be implemented (Lavrov 2016). Russian repeatedly reiterated any military exercises on its borders do nothing to increase confidence and de-escalate the crisis, but instead pose a threat to the security of the Russian Federation. At the diplomatic diction level, NATO accused Russia of invading the eastern border of Ukraine, while Moscow responded that it has shown responsible attitude and did not want to see the ethnic conflict in Ukraine evolve into a civil war again. The Russian Federation moved its armed forces to the borders of the country in accordance with its own judgment in order to safeguard the national security. Russia's military mobilization is a conventional military deployment and has nothing to do with any country. There is no need for the outside world to worry about it (Embassy of the Russian Federation, 2016). Echoes with the Russian media, the Guard Corps stationed on the western border of Russia also conducted military exercises after the situation in eastern Ukraine escalated, sending response signals to Ukraine and the West (Gehrke 2021). While Russia continues to escalate its military amassment along the border with Ukraine from the end of 2021, it is also seeking compromises from the United States and NATO through diplomatic channels. In December 2021, the Kremlin presented to the United States a draft named "Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Security Guarantees" and to NATO a draft named "Agreement on Measures to Ensure the Security of the Russian Federation and Member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization". In January

2022, Russia held security dialogues with the United States, NATO and the OSCE respectively. The Russian security guarantee proposal mainly consists of NATO's commitment not to expand eastward or absorb Ukraine as a member, and NATO's withdrawal of any weapons or troops deployed in countries that joined NATO after May 1997 (Steven Pifer, 2021; TASS News Agency, 2021; Reeve, 2021). The United States then delivered a formal written response to the Russian security proposal on January 26 and rejected Moscow's security demand (Lewis, 2021). NATO's "open door policy" gives the post-Soviet countries in Eastern Europe the right to choose security position. The United States cannot accept Russia's domination of NATO's security principles to guarantee its own security and undermine the direction of Ukraine's security policy. At the same time, Germany and France, the core members of the European Union, also carried out shuttle mediation diplomacy between the United States, Russia and Ukraine from early February, 2022, hoping to play the role of information and position exchange among the three parties (CHARLTON, MOULSON DASHA LITVINOVA, 2022). The two drafts provide a basis for discussions between Russia and the United States to continue the European security dialogue. Although the process may be fraught with twists and turns, Moscow should not promote the dialogue by military coercion of Ukraine, and the two sides should negotiate in an atmosphere of equality and de-escalation of crisis.

*c. Russia deployed troops on a massive scale*

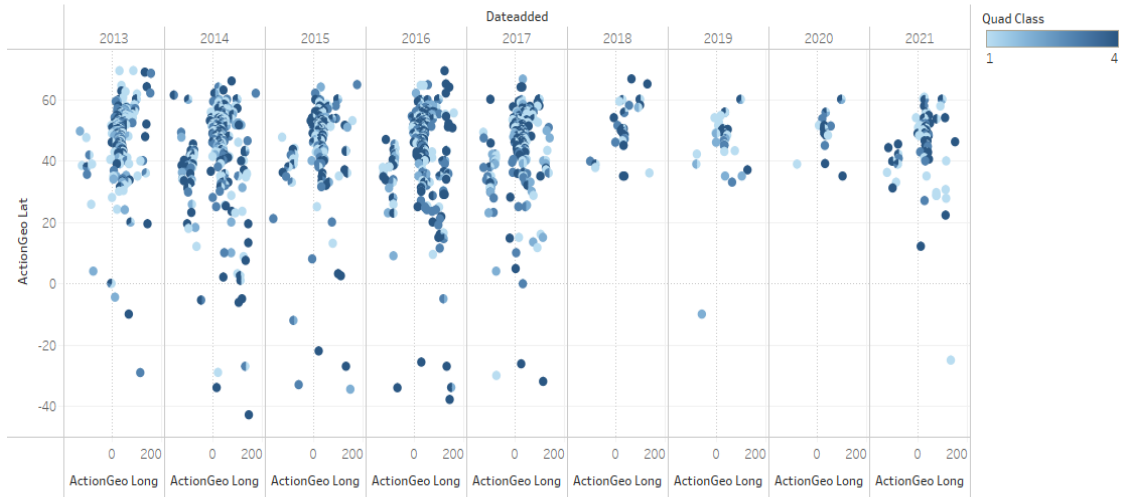
The article captured the changes in Russia's behavior in the dimensions of space and time after using geographic information technology (GIS) to project Russia's response to Ukraine in groups by year (Figure 2), and found that after the crisis broke out (from 2013 to 2017), Russia's response was the most intensive, mainly concentrated between 44° to 60° north latitude and 33° to 100° east longitude. The latitude is from the Crimea and the Russian-Ukrainian border to the vast Arctic region and the huge span of longitude is concentrated on the Russian territory. Russia's response to the Ukraine crisis is manifested in a cross-regional military deployment at the material level, expanding the field of reaction to the entire country and linkages with the Arctic region, using its own military superiority to counter the military drills of Kiev and NATO. The protest in Kiev's Euromaidan Square took place in November 2013, followed by Russia's absorption of Crimea and the Donbass rebellion (Fisher, 2014). Therefore, the article extracted data from January 9, 2014 to January 29, 2015, and plotted the Russian behavioral coordinates clustering into a geographic density heat map (Figure 3), and found that one year after the Ukrainian crisis outbreak, Russia's response is mainly concentrated in the eastern part of Ukraine and the Crimea region. At the same time, Russia is also carrying out some activities on the border with Ukraine. The war in eastern Ukraine has lasted for 8 years (2014 to present). Since 2021, there have been many violations of the ceasefire agreement in the Donetsk People's Republic. The military conflict in the Donbass region escalated again, and the US State Department also warned Moscow not to intervene. Russia's reaction frequency is also increasing (data kernel density in 2021). Russia continues to build-up large numbers of troops from the end of 2021, including artillery, tanks, armored vehicles, and as many as 100,000 troops, which are being moved from Russian central and eastern military districts towards the border with Ukraine, and the number of troops remained amassed by the end of January 2022 (Chance and Smith-Spark, 2022; Liptak, 2021). Russia also mobilized a large number of troops into Belarus on February 10, 2022, and the two sides held joint military drills (Ellyatt, 2022). Russia's military activities in its western boarder have raised tensions in the Ukraine crisis. The United States and Europe are worried that Russia may launch an att war against Ukraine from three directions: Belgorod in the east, Novye Yurkovich and Belarus in the north, and Crimea in the south (Wasielowski & Jones, 2022). It cannot even be ruled out that the Russian navy will conduct landing operations towards Mariupol and Odessa from the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. At the same time, the United States and NATO have continued to provide Ukraine

with weapons and military personnel training, and deployed troops in military bases such as Poland, Romania, and Lithuania to respond to possible Russian military aggression through political and military support to Ukraine (HENNIGAN, 2022). Russia launched the special military operation against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, which began with precision missile strikes on Ukrainian cities and military targets, including Kharkiv and the capital Kiev. Subsequently, Russia conducted large-scale ground operations from the north, south and east of Ukraine, using armored forces massed along the border. Kiev resolutely resisted Moscow's attack and the information warfare, but the military operation still caused huge civilian casualties and had a profound impact on the order and security arrangements in post-Cold War Europe (Zinets and Vasovic, 2022).

#### *d. Russia uses energy leverage*

The collapse of international oil prices and Western economic sanctions from the second half of 2014 to the beginning of 2015 has caused energy-dependent Russia's GDP to contract (approximately 3.7 percent less than the same period in 2015) (Burkhardt, 2017). In the face of the Western pressure on Russia in the economic field, Russia stabilized the domestic economic situation by adopting a flexible exchange rate policy, reducing fiscal expenditure and using a package of economic and financial measures such as reserves to prevent the further collapse of the Ruble exchange rate. At the same time, Russia actively discussed with Iran, Belarus and other countries to establish a settlement system to eliminate the U.S. dollar, and actively carried out diversified energy strategies to explore the Far East market. Russia and China signed a \$400 billion gas supply deal in 2014, including the construction of new pipeline to deliver gas to eastern China (Perlez 2014; EIA 2014). Russia also takes the natural gas supply as a geopolitical lever to actively counter the economic sanctions imposed by the U.S in its western position. The two Nord Stream natural gas pipelines mainly built by Russia will directly reduce the role of Ukraine in the energy supply of Europe and strengthen the energy interdependence between Russia and Europe. With the new Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline (via the Baltic Sea), which bypasses Ukraine, Germany can negotiate energy prices directly with the Kremlin and get steady gas. Russia has cut off gas supplies to Ukraine and raised prices after Kiev defaulted on its gas bills, which are bound up with the 2014 Crimea crisis (Zinets & Soldatkin, 2014). Moscow's deft use of energy as a weapon of diplomatic counterattack would hardly be noticed in the summer, but if supplies to Europe were to be cut off in the winter, it would cause huge geopolitical and economic shocks. While the Kremlin claims the Nord Stream 2 pipeline to Europe is a purely economic project, Belarus threatened to cut off Europe's gas supplies during the migrant crisis on the Belarus-Poland border in November 2021. In fact, Mr. Putin has also said president Lukashenka could theoretically do just that, albeit in breach of his contract with Russia (The Moscow Times, 2021; BBC, 2021). The energy game also appears in the border tensions between Russia and Ukraine at the end of 2021. US President Joe Biden vowed in February 2022 that the US would shut down the Nord Stream 2 pipeline if Russia invaded Ukraine. Although German Chancellor Scholz is still vague on sanctions against Nord Stream 2 (BBC, 2022), Germany has also suspended the legal certification of Nord Stream 2 (DW, 2022), with Russia has been deploying massive troops along the border in late 2021. Against the backdrop of border crisis between Russia and Ukraine, it cannot be ruled out that the Kremlin uses the natural gas pipeline as a political weapon to divide Europe and the United States. The Ukraine crisis, which escalates in 2021, continues to push Russian energy supplies eastward in response to instability in European markets. Russia and China signed gas supply deals worth about \$117.5 billion during the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, with Russia promising to supply China with 10 billion cubic meters of gas per year for the next 25 years (Tanas and Khrennikova, 2022; Soldatkin and Chen, 2022). The settlement method in the euro proves that energy leverage has been playing a role in diversifying risks and wooing Europe in the Russian geopolitical game with the West.

工作表 1



按 Dateadded 年细分的 ActionGeo Long 以及 ActionGeo Lat。颜色显示有关 Quad Class 的详细信息，为 Event Base Code 显示了详细信息。

Figure 2: Grouping changes of Russian reaction in Spatio-Temporal dimensions (2013-2021)



Figure 3: Geographic heat map of interaction between Russia and Ukraine (January 9, 2014 to January 29, 2015)

**Conclusion.** After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the European security structure was fragile, and its root cause was the security dilemma that emerged between Russia and the West. Ukraine, as a post-Soviet country, wants to get rid of Russia's influence and join NATO, but this approach also deepens Russia's sense of insecurity. Moscow's motivation to secure its own border is intertwined with historical ties to Ukraine and ethnic sentiment, leading to Russian military deployments along the border. The standoff between Russia and NATO over Ukraine has occurred several times since 2014, and the mutual finger-pointing between the two sides over their respective positions is unlikely to defuse tensions. Both sides need to put aside their ideological antagonisms and seek consensus guided by a common goal, which is the principle of Ukrainian sovereign independence, territorial integrity, and European security. Russia's security concerns cannot be ignored by NATO either. NATO has the right to accept new members, but the admission of Ukraine should not threaten Russia's border security. Therefore, it is possible to consider establishing a direct dialogue mechanism between Russia and Ukraine, so that Kiev can act as a security bridge between East and West. Facts have proved that it is unfair and unrealistic for NATO or Russia to make a unilateral compromise. Russia also needs to take good-faith measures by withdrawing its troops from the Ukrainian territory and stop threatening Ukraine's sovereignty, rather than unilaterally asking NATO for security guarantees or not admitting Ukraine. The Donbas of Ukraine does have ethnic ties with Russia, including Russian language identity, but after 30 years of migration and integration following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the ethnic composition of the Donbass has undergone tremendous changes and has formed the national consciousness of Ukraine. It is difficult to use a crude dichotomous logic to determine that the residents of the Donbas region are pro-Russian. The proportion of Russian ethnicity in Donetsk and Luhansk was already below 50% in 2001, 38.2% and 39% respectively (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, 2011). Therefore, the real situation is Putin has a desire for the territories that the Soviet Union gave to Ukraine from Russia during the time of Lenin and Khrushchev, including the Donbass and Crimea (Address by the President of the Russian Federation, 2022). Russia values the Donbas' rich coal reserves and steel production capacity, and uses the self-determination of a small group of Russian nationalists in the region as a tool of separatism, undermining Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, which requires the joint efforts of Ukraine and the international community to convey the authentic and holistic voice of the people from the Donbas region, thus providing popular support for the resolution of the crisis at the narrative level. However, it must be acknowledged that the Ukrainian crisis is complex, blending geopolitics, national security and even the governance model. The simple dichotomy between good and evil may make the war more tragic and protracted, and NATO should respond in empathy, including not only Ukraine, but also Russia. NATO needs to pursue comprehensive and sustainable security in Europe, that is, with peace and humanitarianism as the highest goals. Resolving the Ukraine crisis requires courage and wisdom. Only by putting aside differences and jointly defining European security can peace remain permanent in Europe.

**Notes:**

1. Kiev's positive response to NATO's eastward expansion and the leadership's adherence to liberal ideology after the 2013 crisis created a space for privileged interests that exclude other ethnic groups. According to the views of scholars such as Mearsheimer, NATO was the "source of trouble" for the turning point in Russia's relations with Ukraine (See Mcfacl, Mearsheimer , etc 2014).

2. Ukraine's desire to escape Russian influence since its independence has politicized the division between Ukrainians and Russian-speaking communities and triggered nationalism in Ukraine and Russia, with western involvement adding to the intensity of Russia's response (See Erika Harris 2020).

3. Cultural affinity is amplified through ethnic language and geographical proximity, and through trade affects the foreign policy preferences of specific groups of people. Due to the homogeneity of history and language, the Russian-speaking group living in the Donbas region supports the Ukrainian government to develop economic and diplomatic relations with Russia. Ukrainians in this region have similar positive preferences compared to the western region ( See Celeste Beesley, 2019).

4. The Minsk agreement was divided into two phases: the first (Minsk I :September 2014) was aimed at gradually reducing the level of violence in the Donbas region, and the second (Minsk II : February 2015) was aimed at restoring Ukrainian government control over the east by resolving potential political differences. The main side was Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine. (See Kristian Atland 2020).

### **Funding**

The author receives no direct funding for this research.

### **Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

### **Data availability statement**

The GDELLT dataset which are used in the article available for download at <https://cloud.google.com/>.

### **References:**

- Tsygankov, A. P. (2018). The sources of Russia's fear of NATO. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 51(2), 101-111.
- Breuer, J., & Elson, M. (2017). Frustration-Aggression Theory. In P. Sturmeijer (Ed.), *The Wiley Handbook of Violence and Aggression* (pp. 1-12). Chichester: Wiley Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119057574.whbva040>.
- Burkhardt, F. (2017). Presidential Power in Putin's Third Term: Was Crimea a Critical Juncture in Domestic Politics? In F. Burkhardt, A. Barbashin, O. Irisova, & E. Wyciszkievicz (Eds.), *A Successful Failure: Russia after Crime(a)* (pp. 119-141). Warschau: Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding.
- Beesley, C. (2020). Foreign policy preferences in Ukraine: Trade and ethnolinguistic identity. *International Studies Quarterly*, 64(1), 35-44.
- DMITRY V. TRENIN. (2017). TO UNDERSTAND UKRAINE, Retrieved from <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/to-understand-ukraine/>.
- Dmitry Tymchuk. 2014. "Government inaction inspires pro-Russian extremist violence", *Kyiv Post*, Retrieved from <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/opinion/op-ed/dmitry-tymchuks-military-blog-government-inaction-inspires-pro-russian-extremist-violence-343548.html>.
- Elias Götz. (2016). Russia, the west, and the Ukraine crisis: three contending perspectives, *Contemporary Politics*, pp.1-18.
- Erika Harris. (2020). What is the Role of Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Russia–Ukraine Crisis?, *Europe-Asia Studies*, pp.593-613.
- Joel Gehrke. (2021). "US and NATO meet to discuss 'Russia's recent large-scale military activities' near Ukraine", Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/us-nato-meet-discuss-russias-recent-large-scale-military-activities-near-ukraine>.
- Henry A. Kissinger. (March 5, 2014). How the Ukraine crisis ends, *The Washington Post*, Retrieved from

- [https://www.harrywalker.com/media/1905/kissinggerr\\_ukraine\\_washingtonpost\\_3-5-20141.pdf](https://www.harrywalker.com/media/1905/kissinggerr_ukraine_washingtonpost_3-5-20141.pdf).
- N. Rabodezhev and E. Slaviv. (2017). The Ukraine Crisis: Between Identity Policy and Geopolitics, *Russia and the new states of Eurasia*, PP. 3-25.
- Kregarman, J. J., & Worchel, P. (1961). Arbitrariness of frustration and aggression. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 63(1), 183–187.
- Kahneman, Daniel, & Tversky, A. (1979). Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk. *Econometrica*, 47, 263-291.
- Kristian Åtland. (2020). Destined for deadlock? Russia, Ukraine, and the unfulfilled Minsk agreements, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, pp.122-139.
- McFaul, Michael; Sestanovich, Stephen; Mearsheimer, John J. (2014). Faulty Powers: Who Started the Ukraine Crisis? *Foreign Affairs* ; New York Vol. 93, Iss. 6, (Nov/Dec 2014): 167-178.
- Minzarari, D. (2021). The Russian military escalation around Ukraine's Donbas: risks and scenarios for a revised EU policy. (SWP Comment, 27/2021). Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik -SWP- Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit, pp.1-9.
- Taras Kuzio. (2018). Russia–Ukraine Crisis: The Blame Game, *Geopolitics and National Identity, Europe-Asia Studies*, pp.1-11.
- Averre, Derek. (2016). The Ukraine Conflict: Russia’s Challenge to European Security Governance. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 68(4), pp.699–725.
- Levy, J. (1992). An Introduction to Prospect Theory. *Political Psychology*, 13(2), 171-186.
- Pastore, N. (1950). A neglected factor in the frustration-aggression hypothesis: A comment. *Journal of Psychology*, 29(2), 271–279.
- Sauer, T. (2017). The Origins of the Ukraine Crisis and the Need for Collective Security between Russia and the West. *Glob Policy*, 8: 82-91.
- Shcherbak I.N., Shishelina L.N., Tsirenschikov V.S., Fedorov S.M., Sindeev A.A., Maksimychev I.F., Krasikov A.A., Kargalova M.V., Kaveshnikov N. Yu., Danilov D.A., Bazhan A.I., Ananyeva E.V., Mironenko V.I., Nosov M.G., & Fedorov V.P. (2014). Ukrainian Crisis: Expert Evaluation. *Contemporary Europe*, 3(59), 10-34.
- Gerasimov V. V. (2013). The value of science in foresight: New challenges require rethinking the forms and methods of warfare,” *Military Industrial Courier*, 2013.2.26.
- Pantin V.I., Lapkin V.V. (2013). Trends in political development of modern Ukraine: main risks and alternatives. *Policy: Political studies*, 5:133-144.
- Ananicheva S.R. (2013). Eurasian Union: International Relations Issues • Issues 3-4 (4-5), 68-77.
- Dzhannathan Eivazov, *Securitization of Power and Regional Activities, Using the Example of Russia's Policy in the Ukraine Crisis, International Processes*, Vol. 15, No. 4, pp. 156-173.
- Yan Xuetong, Zhou Fangyin. (2004). The Quantitative Measurement of the Bilateral Relations Between Countries[J]. *Chinese Social Sciences*, (06):90-103+206.
- Natalia Zinets and Aleksandar Vasovic. 2022. “Missiles rain down around Ukraine”. *The Reuters*, February 25, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-orders-military-operations-ukraine-demands-kyiv-forces-surrender-2022-02-24/>.
- Russian Today (RT). 2015. “Kiev says troops withdrawn from Debaltsevo, rebels claim military ‘surrender en masse’”, February 18, 2015, <https://www.rt.com/news/233363-ukraine-debaltsevo-surrender-withdrawal/>.
- Tolz, V. (2002). Rethinking Russian–Ukrainian relations: a new trend in nation-building in post-communist Russia?. *Nations and Nationalism*, 8: 235-253.
- Larson, D. W., & Shevchenko, A. (2014). Russia says no: Power, status, and emotions in foreign policy. *Communist and post-communist studies*, 47(3-4), 269-279.
- Timofey Bordachev. (2021). The last empire and its neighbors: national security as Russia's only priority. *Russia in Global Politics*, 19 (2): 2-6.
- Klandermans, B. (2013). Frustration-Aggression. In *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* (eds D.A. Snow, D. Della Porta, B. Klandermans and D. McAdam).

- Nitoiu, Cristian. (2016). The Ukraine crisis and the conflict/cooperation dichotomy in EU-Russia relations. *Southeast European Studies and Black Sea Studies*. pp. 1-16.
- Elias Götz. (2015). It's geopolitics, stupid: explaining Russia's Ukraine policy, *Global Affairs*, 1(1), pp. 3-10.
- Sakawa, Richard. (2020). No exit: Logic and rationality in the Ukraine crisis. In: Schulze, Peter W. and Veit, Winfried, eds. *Ukraine in the crosshairs of geopolitical power play*. Campus, pp.101-128.
- Feklyunina, V. (2016). Soft power and identity: Russia, Ukraine and the 'Russian world(s)'. *European Journal of International Relations*, 22(4), 773–796.
- Peter Rutland, 2015, *An Unnecessary War: The Geopolitical Roots of the Ukraine Crisis*, *E-International Relations*, Retrieved from <https://www.e-ir.info/2015/04/09/an-unnecessary-war-the-geopolitical-roots-of-the-ukraine-crisis/>.
- Address by the President of the Russian Federation. February 21, 2022, The Kremlin, Moscow, Retrieved from <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828>.
- Gorenburg, Dmitry. 2014. "Russia's Black Sea Fleet." *Russian Military Reform*. March 12. Accessed August 11. <https://russiamil.wordpress.com/2014/03/12/russias-black-sea-fleet/>.
- Tass News Agency. 2015. "БОИ В РАЙОНЕ ДЕБАЛЬЦЕВА И ПЕРЕГОВОРЫ "НОРМАНДСКОЙ ЧЕТВЕРКИ", February 15, 2015. <https://tass.ru/godovschina-krizisa-na-ukraine/1743704>.
- Llya Tsukanov. 2022. "Biden Has Approved Deploying More Troops to Europe in 'Coming Days' Amid Ukraine Tensions, DoD Says", February 2, 2022. <https://sputniknews.com/20220202/biden-reportedly-approves-deployment-of-more-troops-in-europe-in-coming-days-amid-ukraine-tensions-1092689264.html>.
- Sputnik News Agency. 2022. "Stoltenberg: Moscow's Signals About Continuation of Diplomatic Efforts Are Encouraging", February 15, 2022. <https://sputniknews.com/20220215/stoltenberg-moscows-signals-about-continuation-of-diplomatic-efforts-are-encouraging-1093054131.html>.
- Tass News Agency. 2022. "Lavrov informs UN chief about Russia's talks with NATO on security guarantees", February 15, 2022. <https://tass.com/world/1403199>.
- The Guardian. 2016. "Nato countries begin largest war game in eastern Europe since cold war", June 6, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/06/nato-launches-largest-war-game-in-eastern-europe-since-cold-war-anaconda-2016>.
- Interview with Sergey Lavrov. 2016. "Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks and answers to media questions at a news conference on the results of Russian diplomacy in 2016", January 17, 2017. <https://russiaeu.ru/en/news/foreign-minister-sergey-lavrovs-remarks-and-answers-media-questions-news-conference-results>.
- Embassy of the Russian Federation. 2016. "Deputy Foreign Minister Alexey Meshkov's interview with the TASS News Agency", September 30, 2016. <https://m.rusemb.org.uk/article/deputy-foreign-minister-alexey-meshkovs-interview-with-the-tass-news-agency-september-30-2016>.
- ANGELA CHARLTON, GEIR MOULSON and DASHA LITVINOVA, "French, German leaders to visit Russia, Ukraine amid tension", February 5, 2022. <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-russia-france-united-states-europe-51f3a9ab56e8be2ba5290fbf3f780bb9>.
- RIA Novosti. 2022. "Investigative Committee opened two criminal cases after the death of civilians in Donbass", February 20, 2022. [https://ria.ru/20220220/donbass-1773925187.html?rcmd\\_alg=slotter](https://ria.ru/20220220/donbass-1773925187.html?rcmd_alg=slotter).
- Fisher. 2014. "Everything you need to know about the Ukraine crisis", September 3, 2014. <https://www.vox.com/2014/9/3/18088560/ukraine-everything-you-need-to-know>.
- Holly Ellyatt. 2022. "Russia begins massive military drills with Belarus; U.S. slams 'escalatory' action", February 10, 2022. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/10/russia-set-to-begin-massive-military-drills-with-belarus.html>.
- Philip G. Wasielewski & Seth G. Jones. 2022. "Russia's Possible Invasion of Ukraine", *Center for strategic and international studies*, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/russias-possible-invasion-ukraine>.
- W.J. Hennigan. 2022. "U.S. Puts 8,500 Troops on Alert for Possible Deployment to Europe Amid Ukraine Crisis", January 24, 2022. <https://time.com/6141675/us-troops-alert-ukraine/>.
- Perlez, Jane. 2014. "China and Russia Reach 30-Year Gas Deal." *The New York Times*. May 21.

Accessed August 11. [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/22/world/asia/china-russia-gas-deal.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/22/world/asia/china-russia-gas-deal.html?_r=0).

EIA (US Energy Information Administration). 2014. Country Analysis Briefs: China. Washington,DC: US Energy Information Administration. Accessed August 11. <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=CH>.

Natalia Zinets and Vladimir Soldatkin. 2014. "Russia cuts off gas to Ukraine as Kiev orders border secured", *The Reuters*, June 6, 2014. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-idUKKBN0ER16X20140616>.

Matthew Chance and Laura Smith-Spark. 2022. "Tensions are high on Ukraine's border with Russia. Here's what you need to know", January 28, 2022. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/20/europe/ukraine-russia-tensions-explainer-cmd-intl/index.html>.

Kevin Liptak. 2021. "US intelligence estimates Russian troop levels on Ukraine border could reach 175,000", *The CNN News*, December 4, 2021. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/12/04/politics/russia-ukraine-troops-border-us-intelligence-reports/index.html>.

Steven Pifer. 2021. "Russia's draft agreements with NATO and the United States: Intended for rejection?", *The Brookings Institute*, December 21, 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/12/21/russias-draft-agreements-with-nato-and-the-united-states-intended-for-rejection/>.

TASS News Agency. 2021. "Russia released draft documents on security guarantees to deter US schemes, says diplomat", December 22, 2021. <https://tass.com/politics/1379135>.

Patrick Reeve. 2021. "Russia makes sweeping demands for security guarantees from US amid Ukraine tensions", *The abc News*, December 18, 2021. <https://abcnews.go.com/International/russia-makes-sweeping-demands-security-guarantees-us-amid/story?id=81821816>

Patricia Lewis. 2021. "Russian treaty proposals hark back to post-Cold War era", *The Chatham House*. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/12/russian-treaty-proposals-hark-back-post-cold-war-era>

The Moscow Times. "Belarus Reduces Poland's Oil Supplies for Unscheduled Maintenance", November 17, 2021. <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/11/17/which-countries-have-resumed-travel-with-russia-a75561>

The BBC. 2021. "Belarus-Poland border: Putin warns Belarus over gas threat to EU", 13 November 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59274351>.

The BBC. 2022. "Nord Stream 2: How does the pipeline fit into the Ukraine-Russia crisis?" February 23, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60131520>

The DW. 2021. "German agency suspends certification for Nord Stream 2 pipeline", November 16, 2021. <https://www.dw.com/en/german-agency-suspends-certification-for-nord-stream-2-pipeline/a-59833502>.

"All-Ukrainian population census 2001 data". State Statistics Committee of Ukraine. 2004. Archived from the original on 17 December 2011.

Vladimir Soldatkin and Chen Aizhu. 2022. "Putin hails \$117.5 bln of China deals as Russia squares off with West", *The Reuters*, February 4, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/world/putin-tells-xi-new-deal-that-could-sell-more-russian-gas-china-2022-02-04/>.

Olga Tanas and Dina Khrennikova. 2022. "Russia Signs Oil and Gas Deals With China as Relations With the West Sour", *The Bloomberg*, February, 4, 2022. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-04/russia-s-gazprom-signs-new-gas-supply-contract-with-china>.

Ploky, S. (2000). The City of Glory: Sevastopol in Russian Historical Mythology. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35(3), pp.369–383.

DOHI Tsuneyuki. (World history of rise and fall) of the earth Russian Romanov dynasty. Japan: Kodansha. 2007, pp.1-318, (ISBN-13: 978-4062807142).

Serhii Ploky. 2017. *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 1-395, paperback (ISBN-13: 978-0465094868).

Kristi Raik. (2019). *The Ukraine Crisis as a Conflict over Europe's Political, Economic and Security Order*, *Geopolitics*, 24(1), pp. 51-70.