



Working Papers Series  
in  
EU Border Conflicts Studies

**THE STRUCTURE OF THE EU-RUSSIAN CONFLICT DISCOURSE:  
ISSUE AND IDENTITY CONFLICTS IN THE NARRATIVES OF EXCLUSION  
AND SELF-EXCLUSION**

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**No. 13  
April 2005**

## SUMMARY

This paper seeks to reconstitute the *structure of the conflict discourse*, articulated in the field of EU-Russian relations. In our previous research we have argued that the discourse of border conflicts between Russia and the EU revolves around two at first glance opposite problematics: the Russian problematisation of its exclusion from Europe in the EU's administrative practices and the reassertion by Russia of its sovereign subjectivity through a policy of 'self-exclusion' from the European political and normative space.<sup>1</sup> In this paper we continue this line of reasoning in a systematic analysis of the *narratives of exclusion and self-exclusion* in the Russian *political debates* concerning EU-Russian relations in terms of their functioning as *conflict discourses*. Proceeding from the understanding of conflicts in terms of the 'incompatibility of subject positions' we attempt to highlight the ways in which this incompatibility is articulated both on the level of concrete *issues* and on the more general level of the '*identity conflict*'. Secondly, the paper will demonstrate that the impact of EU policies will regard to Russia has largely been *negative*, i.e. these policies and their reception have been generative rather than ameliorative of new conflictual dispositions.

The first chapter analyses the problematisation by Russia of its *exclusion from Europe*. Originally related to the specific issue of the expansion of the strict visa regime for Russians in the course of EU enlargement, this problematic is presently developing in the Russian political and academic discourse into an *identity conflict* on Russia's thoroughgoing exclusion from Europe in the political, if not cultural, sense. We thereby observe the *spillover* of a conflict issue, confined and contained within a narrow discursive arena, into a wider space of the *discourses of identity and difference*, that ultimately connects with the century-old debates on Russia's relation to 'European civilisation'. The problematisation of exclusion from Europe characterises the entire spectrum of political discourse in Russia, from the liberal minority, which posits as axiomatic Russia's belonging to 'European civilisation' to the conservative, 'left-patriotic' forces, who find in European practices the vindication of their principled opposition to Russia's integrationist orientation. Ironically, the exclusionary practices of the EU that have given rise to this conflictual disposition clearly contradict its own manifest policy stance on Russia which emphasises regional integration, cross-border cooperation and the stimulation of contacts between all types of social agents. In this sense, the EU impact may be characterised, in the reversal of the categories employed in the theoretical framework of the Euborderconf project, as *disabling*, precluding the formation of the inclusive integrated space, within which the communication of disaccord would be restricted to occasional episodes, resolved without recourse to identity-related political strategies.

The second chapter addresses the second, at first glance diametrically opposed, conflictual disposition between Russia and the EU. The perception of Russia's low degree of influence or *passive status* in cooperative arrangements with the EU has resulted in the demands to reconstitute the EU-Russian 'strategic partnership' on the basis of the principles of *intersubjectivity* and *reciprocity*. In the extreme case, the lack of recognition of Russia as a legitimate political subject with its own interests that need not necessarily coincide with those of the EU brings forth a discourse of *self-exclusion* from European integration, grounded in the renewed *reaffirmation of sovereignty*.

Similarly to the problematic of exclusion, concrete conflict issues in circumscribed domains such as the design of technical assistance programmes or Russia's role in the EU's

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<sup>1</sup> See Prozorov 2004a.

Northern Dimension initiative tend to spill over into the wider space of *identity politics*, in which ethical questions of recognition of political difference override the more technical or administrative issues of managing EU-Russian cooperation. The failure of the EU to embark on an equal '*subject-subject*' avenue of cooperation instead of the presently perceived '*subject-object*' relation, in which Russia is cast in the passive role of policy *recipient*, arguably jeopardises the EU's own efforts at integrating Russia within its normative space. In the case of the narrative of self-exclusion the EU impact may be characterised as primarily *disconnective*, particularly with regard to the liberal political forces, whose embrace of the value of sovereignty dissociates them from the discourse of European integration. The paper concludes with the interpretation of relation between the apparently opposed narratives of the *problematism of exclusion* and the *valorisation of self-exclusion* in the Russian political discourse.

## EU-RUSSIAN CONFLICT AND THE 'EUROPEAN IDENTITY': EU ENLARGEMENT AND THE PROBLEMATIC OF EXCLUSION

### From Issue to Identity Conflict: The 'Schengen Curtain' and the Oscillations of the Problematic of Exclusion

While there appears to be an agreement in the literature on EU-Russian relations about the generally beneficial nature of the 'pro-European' course of Russian foreign policy, there has, since the late 1990s, also been an upsurge in the Russian discourse on the negative effects of EU policies (and specifically, the enlargement process) that may give rise to the emergence of new conflicts.<sup>2</sup> These conflicts may be divided into two categories: specific *episodes* and *issues* and more general problematics that may be referred to as '*identity conflicts*'.<sup>3</sup> Identity conflicts are not merely marked by greater *intensity* than circumscribed issue conflicts; more importantly, these conflict discourses articulate a plethora of minor or isolated conflict issues into an overarching *narrative*, that not merely communicates particular disaccord, but also offers an *interpretation* of its occurrence on the cultural level of identity/difference. The relevant difference between the two types of conflict is thus qualitative rather than quantitative: while issue conflicts are in themselves decontextualised, arising as *particular* events that function as a *rupture* in the existing practices, and hence require interpretation, identity conflicts derive their intensity precisely from the *generalised* interpretation of the occurrence of the particular conflict episode. The *discourse* of identity conflict thus serves to contextualise and interpret the *events* of conflict episodes or issues. This is not to say that issue and identity conflicts are entirely distinct categories, the latter located at a necessarily higher conflict stage than the former. Let us rather suggest that these categories are in fact interdependent, specific issues potentially triggering wider conflicts on the level of identity, and the identity conflicts in turn contextualising and hence delimiting the possibilities of addressing specific conflict issues. Two of such '*conflict dyads*' may be isolated in the political and academic discourse on EU-Russian relations. This chapter will discuss the conflict narrative that centres on the problematic of *exclusion* of Russia from the

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<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Trenin 2000a, 2000b, Bordachev 2001, 2003a, 2003b, Leshukov 2000, Moshes 2003, Tkachenko 2000, Khudolei 2003, Baunov 2003, Potemkina 2003.

<sup>3</sup> This distinction between issue and identity conflicts is owing to Stetter, Diez and Albert 2003. At the same time, against the authors' interpretation of this distinction in terms of 'conflict stages', we propose to focus on the permanent relays between the two categories.

European political, normative, economic or cultural space. The following chapter will address the at first glance opposite narrative, which asserts the need for Russia's '*self-exclusion*' from Europe due to the lack of European recognition of Russia as a sovereign political subject. In both chapters our way of proceeding will consist in the analysis of the *relay* between concrete EU-Russian conflict issues and the emergence of identity conflict discourses, which weave together interpretive schemata for the contextualisation of issue-specific episodes.

The Russian concerns with regard to the EU enlargement, voiced as early as 1999 but increasingly highlighted in the second half of Putin's first presidential term<sup>4</sup>, primarily relate to the stringency of the Schengen border-and-visa regime, which complicates the travel of Russian citizens to EU countries and hampers the *existing* forms of cross-border cooperation with the new member-states. Indeed, the extension of the Schengen regime in the enlarged EU entails the imposition of a visa regime that far exceeds in its strictness the bilateral visa practices that existed between Russia and the new EU members, e.g. Finland, Poland, the Baltic States, etc.<sup>5</sup> As a number of studies have indicated, the problem is particularly critical with regard to Kaliningrad Oblast' that emerges as an enclave within the enlarged EU, which not merely complicates its socioeconomic relations with the rest of Russia, but, more importantly in the context of EU-Russian relations, serves to jeopardise the cross-border cooperation arrangements between the oblast' and its neighbours in Poland and Lithuania.<sup>6</sup> *Pace* the EU policy discourse with its valorisation of inclusion, integration and regional cooperation, the unequivocal extension of the Schengen regime both draws a clear line of exclusion of Russia from the 'area of freedom, security and justice' and, what is less often articulated, actually destroys the *ad hoc* cooperative arrangements, from shuttle-trading to cultural exchanges, that already *exist* and were made possible by the relaxed border control regimes agreed on bilaterally by Russia with the future member states during the 1990s. It appears that the almost exclusive academic and political focus on the *development* (through administrative practices) of cooperative regional arrangements reflects a certain *programmatische a priori*<sup>7</sup> that prejudices governmentally constructed, and hence *sanctioned*, practices to the detriment of spontaneous and ad hoc arrangements not subject to governmental disposition. In other words, the speculative discourses on the possibilities of developing *new* forms of cooperation silence the question of whether present or potential future governmental efforts in this direction might not in fact be squarely antagonistic and detrimental to *antecedent* cooperative practices, as the insistence on the uniform application of the Schengen regime clearly seems to be.

The same exclusionary logic is at work in other regional programmes of EU-Russian cooperation, e.g. the project Euregio Karelia, generally perceived as a success story and an exemplary model of EU-Russian regional cooperation. Officially inaugurated in 2000, Euregio Karelia comprises the Republic of Karelia and the Finnish provinces of North Ostrobothnia, Kainuu and North Karelia. "The goal of the project is the stimulation of transboundary subregional cooperation in various spheres, the priority areas being the economy, the environment, tourism and culture."<sup>8</sup> The basic principle of the project is the formation of what the Karelian Programme of Cross-Border Cooperation refers to as "the

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<sup>4</sup> See Potemkina 2003 for the detailed analysis that counters the prevailing understanding that Russia has, as it were, 'slept through' the process of enlargement and began voicing its concerns far too late for them to be addressed properly.

<sup>5</sup> See Khudolei 2003.

<sup>6</sup> See Fairlie 2001 for the discussion of the border and visa regime around Kaliningrad and Potemkina 2003 for the analysis of the policy process leading to the temporary EU-Russian compromise regarding the transit to Kaliningrad through the territory of Lithuania.

<sup>7</sup> See Rose 1996a.

<sup>8</sup> Programme of Cross Border Cooperation of the Republic of Karelia, 1.4. Translation by author.

*culture of transparent borders*”, making cross-border contacts in trade, science, culture and tourism a ‘natural activity in the everyday life’ of the border communities.<sup>9</sup> Tarja Cronberg, who played a key role in the establishment of Euregio Karelia as the Executive Director of the Regional Council of North Karelia, has argued that the Euregio exemplifies a new space for action that poses a “postmodern challenge to the nation-state”,<sup>10</sup> as divisive borders turn into *integrated borderlands*. The success of the project is deemed by Cronberg to be all the more profound, since the border, around which integration is unfolding, is one of the lines, along which a Huntingtonian ‘clash of civilisations’ has been envisioned. In her account it is Finland’s membership of the EU that has enabled the project such as the Euregio, whose origins lie in intra-EU practices of regional integration, to be established between Finland and Russia. On the other hand, Cronberg also describes the way the *institutional structure* of the European Commission itself poses problems for the model such as the Euregio: since regional development and external relations are handled by different directorates-general of the Commission, the coordination of these activities (which is the very substance of the Euregio) is frequently made problematic by bureaucratic hurdles. The EU’s failure to integrate the operation of the two programmes, relevant for the Euregio, Tacis and Interreg, is the major structural obstacle to the achievement of the integrative effects that consist in the emergence of the Euregio as a new institutional structure of cross-border governance that possesses both administrative and budgetary capacity to undertake ambitious cooperative projects. Insofar as Interreg remains a programme designed and managed by the EU, without any Russian participation, the line of exclusion is thus drawn even within such cooperative projects as the Euregio.

The second mode of the *negative impact* of the EU, reported by Cronberg, concerns the stringency of the visa regime between Russia and Finland as a member of the Schengen agreement. The strict visa regime is the primary obstacle to the further development of cross-border cooperation within the framework of the Euregio. The insistence of the EU on the uniformity of the application of the Schengen rules contradicts its own logic of fostering cooperative transboundary regimes across the formerly contested borderlands, which logically presupposes that the residents of the border region in question should be granted a visa applicant status, different from the rest of the country. Cronberg’s study explicitly demonstrates the paradox, whereby the EU is simultaneously the ‘condition of possibility’ of the transformation of the Finnish-Russian border into an integrated borderland of the Euregio and the main structural constraint to this very transformation.<sup>11</sup> It is worth reiterating that in this case, similarly to Kaliningrad, the ‘positive’, enabling impact of EU programmes relates to ‘artefactual’, governmentally sanctioned arrangements, while the negative effect, rarely brought up in the official discourse, consists in the disabling or outright elimination of the existing forms of cross-border activities, which in the case of Karelia date back to the late-Soviet period.

The main Russian response to the problem of exclusion is the proposal on the relaxation or even the abolition of the visa and passport control regime, which in the Putin presidency has become the primary object of advocacy in the Russian discourse on the relations with Europe. While such solutions require addressing a number of complex technical issues and resolving legal problems (most importantly, the signing of the readmission treaty between Russia and the EU), they also depend on more political decisions with regard to Russia’s

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<sup>9</sup> Programme of Cross Border Cooperation of the Republic of Karelia, 3.2.

<sup>10</sup> Cronberg 2000, 2003. Such a conceptualisation is also articulated in Joenniemi 1998, Christiansen and Joenniemi 1999, Paasi 1999.

<sup>11</sup> Cronberg 2003.

exclusion from or inclusion into the European space.<sup>12</sup> With regard to the issue of the visa regime, it is clearly the EU's approach that is marked by the logic of exclusion that is at first glance irreconcilable with the idea of the 'European project' as centred on the principles of inclusion, integration and cosmopolitanism. On the contrary, the Russian stance, which, since the mid-1990s, has tended to be equated in the Western literature with the anachronistic reaffirmation of the principle of sovereign statehood, is marked by a more inclusive approach.<sup>13</sup> The Russian proposal on the abolition of the visa regime may be viewed as not merely the attempt at a blanket resolution of the problem of the Kaliningrad enclave but also as an indicator of the realisation that Kaliningrad is merely an extreme case, a hyperbolic metaphor for the problem of Russia's increasing exclusion from Europe, whereby it becomes the only *European* country that is *left out of Europe*, the latter being increasingly synonymous with the EU.<sup>14</sup> The Russian response to the *issues* raised by the EU enlargement therefore did not remain confined to the concrete domains of disaccord, but sought to articulate a problematisation on a different level, establishing the possibility of the emergence of the discourse of identity conflict.

Thus, while the 'Schengen problem' in itself has served, particularly with regard to Kaliningrad, to generate a circumscribed issue conflict with regard to transit through the EU territory<sup>15</sup>, it also points to the possibility of a wider conflictual discourse, centred on the problematic of exclusion, the reception of Russia and the Russians as European 'Others' whose access to the 'zone of freedom, security and justice' must be contained and controlled, and hence ultimately raises the question of identity/difference. In contrast to specific issues such as the Kaliningrad transit, which has largely been contained within a narrow discursive arena, the problematic of exclusion is in principle able to unfold within a wider discursive space, since it ultimately touches upon the very question of Russian identity in relation to Europe. "The discussion about Russia's inclusion in Europe is as much a question of identification, of value choice as it is a matter of deciding on the vector of economic development and political strategy."<sup>16</sup> The issue of exclusion, originally arising in the specific context of the extension of the Schengen visa regime, is in this manner articulated with the more interpretive discourse on Russia's relation to Europe and the 'European identity'.

The general discourse on Russia and Europe, whose historical unfolding is analysed by Iver Neumann<sup>17</sup>, has resurfaced during the 1990s and acquires particular importance with the enlargement process, as Russia looks set to remain one of the few countries, whose 'Europeanness' (whether cultural or geographic) does not find an institutional embodiment in the EU membership. "In the process of the enlargement of the EU there is formed a new pan-European community, of which Russia is not a part. The Russian Federation risks remaining the only state that is European in the geographical sense but de facto outside Europe."<sup>18</sup> Within the Russian academic community, the work of Dmitry Trenin is particularly sensitive to the possibility of marginalisation and peripheralisation of Russia as a result of EU enlargement and highly critical of the Russian political establishment for not properly responding to the 'challenge of Europe'.<sup>19</sup> Other authors (e.g. Igor Leshukov,

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<sup>12</sup> See Bordachev 2003a, Potemkina 2003, Trenin 2000a.

<sup>13</sup> See Haukkala 2001, 2003, Pursiainen 2001. Cf. Joenniemi 2003.

<sup>14</sup> See Trenin 2000a, Khudolei 2003, Bordachev 2003a.

<sup>15</sup> See Joenniemi and Makarychev 2004 for the detailed discussion of the policy debates specific to the question of Kaliningrad.

<sup>16</sup> Leshukov 2000, p. 26. Translation by author.

<sup>17</sup> See Neumann 1996.

<sup>18</sup> Leshukov 2000, p. 44. Translation by author.

<sup>19</sup> Trenin 2000b, particularly pp. 17-18. See more generally the volume edited by Trenin (2000).

Stanislav Tkachenko, Timofei Bordachev, Konstantin Khudolei) point to the paradox whereby Russian authorities have focused excessive criticism on the enlargement of NATO, which may pose direct threats to Russia only in barely conceivable scenarios, while being blissfully oblivious or strangely benign to the EU enlargement, which carries forth a number of immediate drawbacks and challenges.<sup>20</sup> In this kind of discourse, the expansion of the Schengen regime is displaced from its specific sector and becomes an *index of the problem* on the more general level. In a pessimistic assessment of the present state of EU-Russian relations, Trenin remarks: “The paradox consists in the fact that despite the mutual openness and the veritable explosion of contacts, the degree of the understanding of partner since the Cold War has scarcely increased. This is equally true for both Russia in relation to the rest of Europe and for Europe in relation to Russia.”<sup>21</sup>

The discursive expansion of the problematic of exclusion from a circumscribed issue to an identity conflict is also enabled by the privileged status of this problematic in the wider social space. The problem of the ‘Schengen curtain’, which is widely discussed in the Russian media, concerns large numbers of the population and may well be considered a priority issue in EU-Russian relations not merely from the perspective of the government, but also from the ‘societal’ perspective. While such important aspects of EU-Russian relations as the ‘Energy Dialogue’ or the creation of the Common Economic Space remain too abstract and complex to attract much popular or media interest, the increasingly stringent visa regime has created considerable media controversies that also succeeded in raising the profile of this issue in the more scholarly Russian discourse on the relations with the EU: “This aspect of relations between Russia and the EU can by no means be ignored. Many citizens of Russia, particularly young people, wish to visit Europe and the clash with the visa regime, complicated by bureaucratic procedures, leaves them with a negative impression of it.”<sup>22</sup> The loss of support for the pro-European course of Russian foreign policy does not merely create a general unfavourable political climate for EU-Russian relations, but also jeopardises concrete programmes of cooperation.<sup>23</sup> In terms of the *compulsory* pathway of EU impact we may suggest that the EU’s failure to offer a ‘carrot’ of visa-free or even more relaxed visa arrangements to Russia also deprives it of a possibility of applying the ‘stick’ of conditions that Russia must meet in order to be eligible for a stronger degree of integration: the uncompromising position on the unitary application of the Schengen regime limits the scope of negotiable solutions and therefore also restricts any further EU impact on Russia’s policies.

Finally, it is important to note that the problematisation of exclusion is at work across the entire Russian political spectrum, although the interpretive schemata, deployed in the constitution of the identity conflict discourse, tend to differ. While the liberal political forces and commentators view the exclusionary stance of the EU as weakening their domestic political position, the more conservative discourses find in this stance the vindication of their principled criticism of the pro-European course of the government since the beginning of the 1990s. On the more abstract level of identity discourses, the liberal discourse problematises European exclusion because it contradicts the assumption of Russia’s already-present ‘European *identity*’, which is axiomatic for Russian liberalism. The conservative, ‘left-patriotic’ discourse, in contrast, finds in the exclusionary practices of the EU the proof of Russia’s essential *difference* from Europe, the denial of which by Russian

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<sup>20</sup> See Tkachenko 2000, Bordachev 2001, Leshukov 2000, Khudolei 2003.

<sup>21</sup> Trenin 2000b, p. 19. Translation by author.

<sup>22</sup> Khudolei 2003, p. 24. Translation by author.

<sup>23</sup> See also Tkachenko 2000 for the discussion of the detrimental effects of the enlargement on the existing cross-border cooperation.

foreign policy makers leads to the presently perceived asymmetries in EU-Russian relations. Below, we shall briefly illustrate the operations of these two distinct strands of narrative of exclusion, focusing on, respectively, the ‘Russia in the United Europe’ committee, uniting the politicians and activists of liberal persuasion and the discursive orientation of ‘left conservatism’<sup>24</sup>, associated with the political party Homeland (*Rodina*), which emerged as a surprise winner in the 2003 parliamentary elections and presently remains the most vocal ‘patriotic’ opposition to the foreign policies of the Putin presidency. The following two sections will address the precise modalities of the EU impact on the Russian debates on EU-Russian relations for, respectively, the liberal and the conservative orientations of the Russian discourse.

### **Out of the United Europe: The Liberal Criticism of Russia’s Exclusion**

The ‘Russia in the United Europe’ Committee (RUE) is headed by Vladimir Ryzhkov, an independent member of the Russian Duma, a politician of a strongly pro-European liberal persuasion and unites other liberal politicians, businessmen and analysts (from the President’s personal nemesis Mikhail Khodorkovsky to Presidential Advisor Andrei Illarionov). Starting from 2001, the Committee has cast itself as the vanguard of the “European movement” in Russia, “striving towards the deeper integration between Russia and the EU”.<sup>25</sup> Avowedly pro-European and delimiting itself from the mainstream of Russian politics, RUE’s publications nonetheless critically address the key issues in EU-Russian relations that have been the object of issue conflict discourses: WTO negotiations, Kaliningrad, the Northern Dimension, etc. A number of RUE publications are devoted to the issue of the ‘Schengen curtain’ and the possibility of the turn towards visa-free travel between Russia and the EU.<sup>26</sup> In the 2002 conference report *Schengen: The New Barrier Between Europe and Russia* Ryzhkov poses the problem of the Schengen visa regime in the light of EU enlargement and questions the readiness of the EU to pursue a more ‘liberal’ policy course with regard to both the specific question of the Kaliningrad transit and the more general issue of the visa regime.<sup>27</sup> The report demonstrates clearly the incompatibility of the positions of the EU participants in the discussion (e.g. Swedish Ambassador to Moscow and the Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Russia) and even the most ‘pro-European’ representatives of the Russian political elite. Similarly to Ryzhkov, the Scientific Director of RUE, Nadezhda Arbatova claims that “neither economic nor political cooperation is capable of effecting such revolutionary change in popular consciousness that a visa free regime could”.<sup>28</sup>

On the contrary, Swedish Ambassador Hirdmann’s presentation seeks to allay the fears of the Russian counterparts concerning the exclusion of Russia through visa practices, which he views as neither political nor even technical but “psychological”: “Some people are nostalgic about the past, while others perhaps perceive that they are being unjustly suspected of something or being viewed as ‘second-rate’ people, which is of course not the case. Most people get their visas with few problems, quickly and at a reasonable expense.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> For the more detailed analysis of Russian ‘left conservatism’ see Prozorov 2004d.

<sup>25</sup> Ryzhkov cited at <http://www.rue.ru>.

<sup>26</sup> See particularly *Schengen: Novy Barrier Mezhdru Evropoj i Rossiej* (hereafter abbreviated as ‘Schengen’), *Bezvizovy Rezhim Mezhdru Rossiej i ES: Mechta ili Realnost’* (hereafter abbreviated as ‘Bezvizovy Rezhim’), *Kaliningrad: Evromost ili Evrotupik* (hereafter abbreviated as ‘Kaliningrad’).

<sup>27</sup> See Ryzhkov cited in Schengen, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Arbatova cited in *Bezvizovy Rezhim*, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> Hirdman cited in Schengen, p. 12.

This is not the view of Vladimir Kotenev, the Head of the Department of Consular Service in the Russian Foreign Ministry: “The visa curtain has arrived to our borders, which in practice has entailed the more stringent visa policy of participating states towards Russian citizens in all aspects: longer periods of processing the applications, stricter criteria for applicants, the increase in the number of refusals, the rise of visa processing costs. At the same time, there is a process of ‘raising’ the countries with formerly more liberal policies on Russia towards the new, unitary and stricter standard.”<sup>30</sup>

Insofar as any relaxation of the visa regime is deemed possible by the EU representatives, it is made conditional upon a number of technical solutions that Moscow must implement prior to beginning any negotiations on the matter: the conclusion of the readmission treaty with the EU, the thoroughgoing reform of the passport system, the wide-ranging changes in the management of Russia’s Southern borders.<sup>31</sup> On the contrary, Vladimir Yegorov, the Governor of Kaliningrad Oblast’ argues, similarly to the majority of Russian political analysts, that the question of the visa regime is purely political rather than technical and will therefore have serious political consequences: “We frequently hear from the politicians in Brussels that visas are a purely technical issue and that the freedom of movement of the people will depend solely on the efficient operation of consular and visa services. This is far from the case. [...] Instead of good neighbourly atmosphere there now arise the perceptions of suspicion and alienation.”<sup>32</sup> Yegorov’s statement, articulated in the context of the Kaliningrad question, combines the valorisation of two, apparently opposed principles. On the one hand, he is strongly supportive of the integrationist policy course, concretely exemplified by the President’s proposal for visa-free travel. On the other hand, the extension of the Schengen regime to Kaliningrad raises the issue of a violation of Russia’s sovereignty, whereby the decision on the travel of a person from one part of Russia to another is decided by the authorities of a different state. In both arguments, the central question is that of exclusion of Russia, either from the integrative processes within Europe or from decision-making within its own territory. The same problem is addressed by Vladimir Lukin, a prominent member of the left-liberal Yabloko party and presently the Russian Ombudsman for Human Rights, who argues that while in the Soviet period travel to Europe was restricted by the Soviet authorities, this function is presently transferred to the EU officials. In the following statement Lukin is scathing about both the European insensitivity to Russian integrationist approaches and concerns over its sovereignty and the failure of Russian decision-makers to move beyond fancy talk on ‘strategic partnership’ towards the resolution of concrete problems:

I am baffled by the fact that for year we have had an escalation of fancy words and projects on full integration, strengthening unity and creating the common economic space. *Yet, when it is a question of solving a concrete problem, it is impossible to reach a compromise with the European bureaucracy on any question whatsoever.* It is a matter of principle. The problem is that now *we are offered to abolish the free movement of our citizens within our own country, from Russia to Russia.* This is incredible! I have frequently said that Russia is the most pacific country in the world because it does not interfere even in its own affairs. But not this time and not with your ‘help’! [...] In conclusion, I would like to say that *democratic parties in Russia, one of which I am representing here, will take the toughest position on this question.*<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Kotenev cited in *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>31</sup> Hirdman cited in *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>32</sup> Yegorov cited in *ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>33</sup> Lukin cited in *ibid.*, p. 36.

This tough position is reiterated in the concluding statement of Vladimir Ryzhkov, which succinctly sums up the central status of the Schengen issue for EU-Russian relations as perceived by the most liberal and pro-European political forces in Russia: “I am convinced that this harshness is justified: we can go on making plans and talk of cooperation but there are visa problems that hit hard the millions of Russians and EU citizens. *Nothing jeopardises our relations as much as the visa problem.* Therefore we shall be *most decisive* in exerting serious political influence on bureaucrats both in Brussels and Moscow.”<sup>34</sup>

For their part, the Moscow foreign policy bureaucracy has repeatedly articulated a position that is fully in accordance with the above-discussed conflict narrative. In the 2003 RUE publication, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Chizhov has articulated the specific visa issue with the more general identity problematic at work in EU-Russian discussions on the freedom of movement. Chizhov points out the correlation between the historical Russian discourse on its belonging to the European civilisation with the European discursive constructions of Russia as either “instinctively aggressive” or possessing a “mysterious soul”, yet always perceived as the ‘Other’, whether in the metaphysical or in the concrete, strategic and geopolitical sense. “I would say, with sincere regret, that the absolute majority of Russians have got rid of such outdated stereotypes far quicker than their European counterparts.”<sup>35</sup> For Chizhov, the frequently reported problems in acquiring Schengen visas are by no means mere indicators of low efficiency but have a clear political grounding in the ongoing ‘othering’ of Russia in administrative practices:

Every day the personnel of the [European] embassies may observe crowds of people, who line up, for a second or a third time, to consular offices in order to get a positive decision on their application. One also knows all too well about the humiliating ‘interviews’ at the consular offices of Schengen states, not to speak of the piles of documents that Russians must present to prove their law-abiding status to be granted permission to make a visit to one of the Schengen states on a prepaid holiday package. Can someone give me an intelligent reason why someone with a prepaid package, i.e. a return ticket, paid accommodation, medical insurance, etc, must present proof of regular income? What is the motivation for income thresholds for the cases, e.g. 10.000 roubles a month demanded by Belgium?<sup>36</sup>

Chizhov also claims that, when it comes to the above-discussed technical and administrative changes demanded by the EU as a condition for raising the issue of visa-free travel, Russia is perfectly willing to undertake them, but only insofar as there is sufficient political will on behalf of the EU to formalise the vaguely positive reception of President Putin’s proposal into a concrete ‘road map’: “No one would dispute the fact that the goal of visa free travel between Russia and the EU is a complex task that requires considerable expenditure and the resolution of many legal and administrative problems. [...] Yet, before we pay this price, we need to know exactly what awaits us at the end of the road and what is the realistic time-frame for achieving that goal.”<sup>37</sup> The Foreign Ministry therefore makes technical changes conditional upon the demonstration by the EU of the political will to move towards visa-free arrangements.

This brief discussion of the RUE debates on the problematic of exclusion demonstrate the clear incompatibility of EU and Russian subject positions, which is of particular significance insofar as it is the RUE Committee with its key figures, particularly Ryzhkov and Lukin, that may be viewed (and self-consciously posits itself) as the *vanguard* of the

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<sup>34</sup> Ryzhkov cited in *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>35</sup> Chizhov cited in Bezvizovoy Rezhim, p. 18.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

‘European movement’ in Russia. Structurally, this incompatibility concerns the very distinction between issue and identity conflicts that organises our analysis in this chapter. While the liberal discourse of RUE articulates the technical issues of visa arrangements into an interpretive discourse on identity politics and exclusion, which conceives of the present visa threshold between Russia and the EU in terms of unwarranted *humiliation*, the response of EU officials is confined to the narrow issue domain and is restricted to the discussion of plans to make the practices sustaining this threshold more efficient. In the narrative of exclusion, espoused by the Russian party, this of course amounts to a monstrous notion of *more efficient humiliation*, adding insult to injury. It is this structural incompatibility that accounts for the increasingly critical stance of such figures as Lukin, who, being pessimistic about the very possibility of a common discursive platform between Russia and the EU on the question of visas, issues a stinging accusation about the similarities between ‘the two Unions’ that Russia has had to deal with, the European and the Soviet one.<sup>38</sup> We may therefore suggest that in this conflict narrative the EU impact may be characterised as both *disabling* and *disconnective*. The disabling impact consists in the rupture of the common discursive space for further integration by the exclusionary practices, related to visa and passport control. These forms of exclusion, prioritised by Russian liberals in their approach to the EU, penetrate and thus undermine the common platform of ‘strategic partnership’, disabling the emergence of the integrative framework of interaction. The consequence of this is the *disconnection* of Russian liberals from the ‘European project’, which we will discuss in greater detail in the next chapter. At this stage, let us merely suggest that the exclusionary practices of the EU have, as we have demonstrated above, antagonised the most ‘pro-European’ forces within the Russian political debate, severely weakening any future EU impact on Russian politics.

The problematisation of EU’s exclusionary practices by Russian liberals is by no means restricted to the issue of visas. One may recall the well-known 1999 electoral manifesto of the liberal coalition Union of Right Forces (URF), written by Alexei Ulykaev, which, while adamant about Russia’s axiomatic belonging to “the European Christian civilisation”, is scathing about “socialist and semi-socialist experiments, [...] ulterior motives and moral irresponsibility” that characterise contemporary European politics.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the influential discursive grouping of ‘liberal conservatism’, represented by such figures as Maxim Sokolov, Mikhail Leontiev, Alexei Chadaev and presently being institutionalised in the ‘New Right’ movement, has the critique of the unwarranted exclusion of Russia by the EU as its constitutive principle that demarcates it from the more cosmopolitan liberalism of the 1990s.<sup>40</sup> More specifically, the divorce of mainstream Russian liberalism from the a priori ‘pro-European movement’ has its origins in the sharply divergent attitudes of the two parties to the Kosovo war of 1999 and, even more importantly, Russia’s counter-terrorist operations in the Chechen Republic. However, the visa issue, exacerbated by the problem of Kaliningrad, assumes central importance in this general context, functioning as the nodal point, around which disparate grievances with regard to the EU converge. Moreover, within the wider context of the identity conflict discourse the statements of disaccord, related to this issue, are able to find multiple points of interface with a politically opposed orientation, which also problematises European exclusion, albeit initially from a different angle. It is to this conservative narrative of exclusion that we now turn.

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<sup>38</sup> Lukin cited in Schengen, p. 35.

<sup>39</sup> Ulykaev 1999.

<sup>40</sup> See Prozorov 2004d for the detailed account of contemporary Russian liberal conservatism.

## Liberation from the 'European Myth': Left Conservatism and the Problem of 'False Europe'

Since the early 1990s the oppositional discourses of Russian politics, both communist and national-patriotic, have been conventionally viewed as 'anti-European' both in the sense of endowing contemporary Europe with the attributes of the 'hostile other' and in the sense of opposing the pro-European policy course of the Russian government. At the same time, Europe has remained a key object of discourse, albeit endowed with negative connotations and serving as the means of Russia's *negative self-identification*.<sup>41</sup> While we shall discuss these patterns of negative self-identification in the following chapter that deals with the narrative of self-exclusion, let us demonstrate that the identity conflict discourse on the European exclusion of Russia, practiced by the liberal politicians and analysts, also characterises the contemporary oppositional field. In our illustration of the operation of the narrative of exclusion in the oppositional discourse we shall focus on the discursive grouping of 'left conservatism', which may be presently considered the most ideologically coherent opposition to the Putin presidency.

The origins of left conservatism lie in the disillusionment of many critics of the Yeltsin and subsequently the Putin presidency with the dominant style of oppositional politics, which since the mid-1990s has been exemplified by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), which was reconstituted in 1993 on the syncretic platform that combined nostalgic Soviet communism with nationalist and imperial sentiments. Throughout the 1990s, conservatism has thus been either the province of obscure quasi-parties or the means of differentiating one's idiosyncratic position from the dominant polarised forces along the political spectrum, liberal cosmopolitans and national-patriotic Communists.<sup>42</sup> It is against the background of the weakening of this polarised left/right spectrum and the correlate rise of the depoliticised 'anti-ideological' stance of the Putin presidency that the conservative discourse was first articulated in the election campaign of 1999-2000. In the 2003-2004 electoral cycle a more coherent conservative platform, specified by its advocates in terms of the 'left-conservative opposition' was constituted around the movement *Homeland* (Rodina), initially led by Sergei Glaziev and Dmitry Rogozin.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, the left-conservative position has been increasingly attracting Russian intellectuals, many of whom were formerly of liberal persuasion (Mikhail Remizov, Konstantin Krylov, Dmitry Olshansky, Pavel Svyatenkov, etc.)<sup>44</sup> The primary features of left conservatism, clearly contrasting with the dominant line of the Putin presidency, are the irreconcilable attitude to the course of events in Russia since 1991, the demand for the reform of the constitutional order and the revision of the results of the policy of privatisation, the criticism of the theory and practice of globalisation, and the strong reaffirmation of Russia's sovereign subjectivity. What is distinct about 'left conservatism' in contrast to the oppositional discourse of CPRF and associated minor 'left-patriotic' parties is a considerably less dogmatic orientation and the wider range of intellectual influences, from Heideggerian phenomenology to contemporary post-structuralism.

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<sup>41</sup> This position is best exemplified by the works of the leader of the CPRF, Gennady Zyuganov. See e.g. Zyuganov 2004.

<sup>42</sup> For a more detailed analysis of left conservatism see Prozorov 2004d.

<sup>43</sup> After the elections, the internal conflict between Glaziev and Rogozin led to the expulsion of the former from the leadership positions in the party and its parliamentary faction, and victory of the 'Rogozin line' in Homeland, which is considerably less left-wing or 'socialist' than that of Glaziev.

<sup>44</sup> See Prozorov 2004d. According to 2003 post-election polls, the Homeland movement gained most of its votes from the former supporters of the liberal parties Union of Right Forces (URF) and Yabloko, whose own performance in the elections was dismal, displacing them from the mainstream of Russian politics.

In more concrete political terms, the Homeland movement is irreducible to the conventional labels applied to contemporary Russian politics, being neither ‘liberal’ nor ‘communist’, neither ‘nationalist’ nor ‘cosmopolitan’. Indeed, the leading figures in Homeland have repeatedly proclaimed the movement as a long-awaited alternative to the discredited binary opposition of liberals vs. communists.<sup>45</sup> As a consequence, the left-conservative oppositional discourse can no longer be contained within an a priori ‘anti-European’ (or anti-Western) label and requires a more balanced and nuanced investigation. Moreover, the key political figures in the Homeland movement have been highly influential in the sphere of EU-Russian relations. The leader of the parliamentary faction of Homeland, Dmitry Rogozin, acted as the Special Representative of the President in the 2002-2003 negotiations with the EU on the resolution of the Kaliningrad problem. The Homeland MP Natalia Narochitskaya is a prominent academic figure, who has published widely on Russia’s relations with Europe from a historical identity-based perspective. The discussion below will follow our logic in this chapter of reconstructing the relay between issue and identity conflict discourses on Russia’s exclusion.

In his 2004 book *Reclaiming Russia* Dmitry Rogozin adopts an initially integrationist stance vis-à-vis Europe, despite also viewing Europe as a source of challenges and dangers for Russia: “For all his decisive anti-Westernism Dostoyevsky has accepted that ‘We can never get away from Europe. Europe is our second Fatherland.’ Besides the CIS, the European dimension is our second priority in foreign policy, determined by deep historical traditions. At the same time, in Europe we face a multitude of problems, from the attempts to undermine our territorial integrity in Chechnya and Kaliningrad to the discrimination of Russian exports and the smear campaigns in the media”<sup>46</sup> Having been appointed the Presidential Representative in the EU-Russian negotiations on the question of Kaliningrad, Rogozin has argued that EU-Russian cooperation may be mutually beneficial and that previous less than satisfactory outcomes of this cooperation may in part be due to the inert and insufficiently assertive nature of Russian policy-making:

We do have [allies] in Europe. However much we speak of Russia’s national interests, the *interdependent world makes cooperation necessary*. We have a long and stable tradition of relations with the so-called ‘old’ Europe, France, Italy, Germany. There is also a ‘young’ Europe – Poland, the Czech Republic, [...] which offers great potential for Russia and we will develop strong relations with it.<sup>47</sup>

*We must not expect new initiatives from Eurobureaucrats, but must seize the initiative ourselves, insist on being listened to and respected, put our own Southern borders in order, strengthen the fight against document forgery, stop illegal migration, etc.*<sup>48</sup>

More specifically, Rogozin’s conception of EU-Russian relations is characterised by the prioritisation of statecraft and diplomacy over ideology and values. In contrast to Soviet-era diplomacy, of which Rogozin is highly critical,<sup>49</sup> postcommunist foreign policy is viewed in classical realist terms as the domain of intricate statecraft, divorced from ideological considerations and seeking to attain an advantageous balance of power. This is not to say that this conception of EU-Russian relations is narrowly elitist: it was Rogozin’s personal

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<sup>45</sup> See particularly Rogozin 2004e, Narochitskaya 2004a, 2004c. These simultaneous attacks on liberals and communists may be said to anticipate the current trend of the gradual convergence of left-liberals and communists in opposition to the Putin presidency.

<sup>46</sup> Rogozin 2004e.

<sup>47</sup> Rogozin 2004g.

<sup>48</sup> Rogozin 2004c.

<sup>49</sup> See particularly Rogozin 2004a.

initiative in early 2004 to establish a nationwide ‘European committee’ with the participation of the Russian MPs, civic organisations and human rights activists.<sup>50</sup> The classical realist background rather consists in Rogozin’s invocation of the principle of sovereign equality as a condition for negotiating with the EU on the mutually advantageous resolution of the question of Kaliningrad. Indeed, with regard to the issue of Kaliningrad, Rogozin’s position (despite being frequently misinterpreted as ‘hardline’) is in fact quite conciliatory, as is evidenced by his proposal for Russia to unilaterally abolish the visa regime for Europeans travelling to Kaliningrad.<sup>51</sup>

Yet, all the conciliatory and cooperative proposals of Rogozin are enunciated against the background of a position he himself labels ‘national egoism’: “In high politics everyone thinks of his own good.”<sup>52</sup> On the basis of this principle, Rogozin’s position on Kaliningrad is able to combine both a strong degree of flexibility and the assertion of Russia’s sovereign integrity as an absolute principle: “The question must be resolved within the legal field of both Russia and the EU politically, i.e. by means of compromise. *What we must never do is humiliate each other.* [...] We will work constructively [with the EU] but there are *limits to compromise*, which we shall not overstep. [...] There is room for flexibility, but *flexibility is not the same as demonstrating spinelessness.*”<sup>53</sup> In the specific case of Kaliningrad, the principle of sovereignty takes concrete shape in the demand for visa-free transit for Russian citizens between Kaliningrad and the rest of Russia through Lithuania - a condition eventually accommodated by the EU through the introduction of the ‘facilitated transit document’ (FTD), which sceptical observers inside Russia consider to be little more than a euphemism for a visa. The importance of this condition is well illustrated by Rogozin’s claim that the President referred to his appointment as a “*mission*, which is eventually to define the vector of Russia’s policies”.<sup>54</sup> The notion of a ‘mission’, which in the Russian language carries more elevated connotations, connects the specific issue of the Kaliningrad transit with the more identity-related concerns.

Within the ‘left-conservative’ discourse the identity conflict discourse on exclusion centres on the problematisation of the increasingly common equation of the cultural or civilisational concept of Europe with the normative and administrative apparatus of the EU, an equation which excludes Russia by definition as the only ‘non-European European country’. The discourse of the left-conservative opposition is therefore directed towards the ‘liberations from myths’<sup>55</sup>, unravelling the hypocrisies at work in the EU’s posture as a normative hegemon in today’s Europe, having the ‘last word’ on the concept and practices of democracy, pluralism, human rights, etc. This criticism focuses particularly on the EU’s nonchalant position towards the issue of Russian minorities in the Baltic States, whose discrimination of ethnic Russians did not pose an obstacle to their EU membership:

In Latvia Russians are deprived of the right to study their own culture and language and the President of Latvia says that Russians must become ‘Latvians of Russian origin’. Can you imagine a Russian president saying that, say, Tatars must become ‘Russians of Tatar origin’? Is this democracy? *This is a disgrace to Europe and the EU!*<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> See Rogozin 2004g.

<sup>51</sup> Rogozin 2004c.

<sup>52</sup> Rogozin 2004b.

<sup>53</sup> Rogozin 2004f.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> This is the title of Narochnitskaya 2004c.

<sup>56</sup> Narochnitskaya 2004a. The goal of protecting Russian minorities abroad has long been advocated by Dmitry Rogozin who in 1992 founded the Congress of Russian Communities, an NGO that seeks to defend the right of ethnic Russians in the New Independent States.

The EU is problematised as both contributing to the literal exclusion of Russians from democratic politics within an EU member state and excluding Russia from the very discourse on democracy by presenting itself as having the last word on the subject. “We are not anti-Westernists. It is the West that denies Russia, and this denial is followed by our libertarians so that they can gain recognition in the West. The great Westernism [the 19<sup>th</sup> century philosophical trend] of the past was never an *antithesis to Russian consciousness but one of its components*. The dilemma of ‘Russia and Europe’ does not haunt Russia and the Russians; on the contrary, it *haunts Europe*, which, having built its ‘paradise on Earth’, remains apprehensive of our magnitude and our capacity to withstand all challenges.”<sup>57</sup> Despite its extreme pathos, this citation provides us with a crucial insight into the operation of the figure of Europe in the left-conservative discourse. As opposed to the conventional and overused notion of Russia plagued by the question of ‘European identity’ (which, as we shall see in the next chapter, is presently being challenged precisely by left-conservatives), Narochnitskaya advances the opposite argument: it is rather Europe that is challenged with the ‘Russian question’, aware of Russia’s cultural or ‘civilisational’ *commonality* but unable to accommodate Russia’s political *difference*. Russia is in many ways identical to Europe, but *not quite* identical, and it is this minor, yet noticeable *gap* that makes full Russian-European convergence impossible and is therefore far more irritating and dangerous to Europe than Russia’s complete and categorical *difference*.

Narochnitskaya’s strategy is to re-assert the *cultural identity* between Russia and Europe and at the same time play down the existing *political divergence* as something that Europe’s own liberalism should teach it to respect or at least tolerate: “What unites us with Europe is not the American constitution, which in fact has been reaffirmed in Africa or Asia as well, but the Sermon on the Mount.”<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Dmitry Rogozin asserts that “for us, the West is the historical Europe with its intellectual, cultural and spiritual heritage.”<sup>59</sup> This historico-cultural ‘European identity’ should in turn provide sufficient ground for the inclusion of Russia within European integrative processes without any discrimination of its government or citizens in punishment for the country’s final abandonment of the “infantile thinking of Gorbachev and Sakharov”<sup>60</sup>. The criteria, allegedly postulated by the EU for Russia’s further inclusion, are deemed politically unacceptable as they confuse cultural identity and political difference in a set of demands that can only be achieved at the cost of the destruction of Russia’s political subjectivity: “The West does not need a country that is strong, equal to it and, furthermore, grounded in its own values; such a country is an *objective obstacle to the global administration of the world*. The West demands of us to refuse our own selves and only then promises to reward us with a passing grade on the ‘civilisation test’”.<sup>61</sup>

In conclusion, it is evident that in the case of the ‘left-conservative’ discourse the negative impact of the EU is less distinct than in the case of liberalism, since the critical attitude to the contemporary EU is a point of departure for left conservatism rather than a response to concrete EU policies. Rather than having a negative impact, the EU may be claimed to have *foregone the possibility of positive impact*, most notably through *compulsory* and *connective* pathways. In terms of the compulsory pathway, the left-conservative narrative fully accepts the EU as a sovereign political subject with its own

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<sup>57</sup> Narochnitskaya 2004c.

<sup>58</sup> Narochnitskaya 2004a.

<sup>59</sup> Rogozin 2004e.

<sup>60</sup> Narochnitskaya 2004a.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

interests, which must be accommodated by Russia to find a mutually advantageous compromise, but resents the alleged EU deprivation of Russia of the very same status through excessive conditionality clauses. A more balanced, *inter-subjective* dialogue between the two parties, deprived of normative hierarchies and the prioritisation of abstract values over concrete interests would, in this narrative, enable the ‘normalisation’ of EU-Russian relations along the lines of the classical realist vision of interstate relations. In terms of the connective pathway, the exclusionary policies of the EU, which cast ‘Europeanness’ in primarily normative-institutional terms, disconnect the left-conservative stance from the European project as such, since the latter’s vision of Europe is first and foremost historico-cultural, which renders Russia’s ‘European identity’ axiomatic and independent of the contemporary political conjuncture.

### **Conclusion: From Exclusion to Hierarchical Inclusion**

Our brief discussion of the left-conservative conflict discourse demonstrates that this approach does not merely problematise exclusion per se, but rather focuses on the illegitimacy of the *threshold* that Russia is required to pass to be included, i.e. on what Russia is to *become* if it is to be included. It therefore goes one step beyond the liberal problematisation of unwarranted exclusion to warn against the uncritically positive reception of any inclusive gesture whatsoever, emphasising that what is at stake is not *inclusion at any cost* but precisely the *cost of inclusion*. In the terms of Hardt and Negri, the left-conservative discourse is critical of the form of ‘hierarchical inclusion’<sup>62</sup> that ‘includes’ Russia in the subordinated and disadvantageous modality.

The concept of hierarchical inclusion should attune us to the problematic nature of the presently widespread uncritical approach to inclusion and integration as a priori better alternatives to ‘exclusion’ and ‘isolation’. The facile valorisation of inclusion has been addressed in a number of critical approaches in political philosophy, from Giorgio Agamben’s disturbing account of the homo sacer as the figure, who is ‘included-as-excluded’ in the sovereign political space to Foucauldian studies of governmentality, which emphasise the way integration and inclusion, participation and empowerment function as mechanisms for the *extension of power relations* into formerly autonomous domains, whereby the ‘included’ subjects are indoctrinated into particular governmental practices and subsequently reconstituted as their ‘autonomous’ practitioners.<sup>63</sup> In an earlier work we have attempted to systematically analyse the ways in which participation and inclusion function in the modality of governmental practices in the EU technical assistance programmes in Russia, which seek to restructure administrative and professional practices in various fields. Drawing on Foucauldian analyses of the order of discourse, we have claimed that despite the promise of inclusion and the injunction to participation the discourse of the Russian recipients of technical assistance is systematically ordered through *exclusion* from discourse of various themes and objects, the *rarefaction* of discourse through the specification of its substantive content, and the *restriction* of access to discourse through the designation of privileged subject-positions, whose discourse is endowed with truth-value.<sup>64</sup> From this perspective, exclusionary policies, based on the principle of sovereignty with its valorisation of strict delimitation of boundaries of community and subjectivity, leave the excluded subjects on the *outside* – having no identity and role in the system in question, but also *not*

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<sup>62</sup> Hardt and Negri 2004, pp. 164-167.

<sup>63</sup> See Agamben 1998, Foucault 1990, 1991, Dean 1999, Rose 1996a, 1996b, 1998.

<sup>64</sup> See Prozorov 2004b, chapter 2. See also Prozorov 2004f for the more general critique of the liberal politics of inclusion.

*liable to the governing mechanisms of the system.* The inclusive, integrationist approach to government, in contrast, consists precisely in enveloping the exterior domain by systemic mechanisms, which is equivalent to the elimination of the outside as such. In the extreme version, the cosmopolitan approaches of various political orientations, from liberalism to Marxism, assert world unity and the disappearance of the exterior.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, the resultant unity itself must *ipso facto* be particularistic in its origin, which entails that other particularities are inscribed within its framework in a manner that transforms their anterior identities in accordance with the imperatives of the ‘inclusive’ system. In this manner, it is precisely the integrationist or inclusive stance that leads to the constitution of strict discursive hierarchies and ritualistic discursive practices, which in turn, as is the case with left conservatism, tempts one to rethink the unconditional value of inclusion.

It is precisely the problematisation of hierarchical inclusion that differentiates the left-conservative conflict discourse from the more liberal strands discussed above. Although the unfair or unjust nature of the required ‘thresholds’ is frequently noted in the discourse of the liberal ‘European movement’, these occasions do not exceed the status of isolated episodes and have no consequence for the overall narrative, which consists in the demand for greater, fairer or more efficient integrationist policy. In contrast, within the left-conservative discourse the notion of hierarchical inclusion plays a crucial role in rupturing the integrationist narrative, which leads to the reassertion of sovereignty that we shall discuss in the next chapter in terms of Russia’s ‘self-exclusion’ from Europe. This rupture takes concrete shape in the replay of the dualism that is foundational for the very debate on Russia’s ‘European identity’ - the *distinction between ‘true’ and ‘false’ Europe*, that, according to Iver Neumann, has been a permanent fixture of Russia’s historical discourse on its relation to Europe<sup>66</sup>, whereby the question of being inside or outside of Europe (defining the positions of respectively ‘Westernisers’ and ‘Slavophiles’) is complicated by the fragmentation of the figure of Europe itself into a ‘true’ Europe (variably conceived as conservative, liberal or socialist) and the ‘false’ Europe, the object of negative identification of various Russian discourses. The following statement by Rogozin illustrates most starkly the operation of this logic: “Russia is indeed the *true Europe*, without the predominance of gays, without marriages between pederasts, without punk pseudo-culture, without lackeying for America. We are the true Europeans, as we have preserved ourselves, *proving our Europeanness* in wars with both the crusaders and the Mongols.”<sup>67</sup>

This statement is an extreme demonstration of the logic at work in the move from the problematisation of exclusion to the valorisation of self-exclusion: departing from an axiomatic assumption of Russia’s Europeanness (an integrationist narrative), one perceives concrete European exclusionary practices as *unjustified humiliation*, which in turn leads one into a *cognitive dissonance* (whereby the ‘We’ of Europe is necessarily fractured into the excluded *us* and excluding *them*), which is in turn resolved by the *fracture* of the image of Europe itself into the false and true components, the line of the fracture becoming a precise marker of difference and a border of *self-exclusion*. In relation to the EU, this stance acquires concrete shape in the renunciation of the goal of EU membership even in the long-term perspective and the emphasis on the maintenance of that very *difference* which makes Russia ‘true-European’. In Narochnitskaya’s terms, this means to “calmly and confidently

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<sup>65</sup> This criticism of cosmopolitanism is particularly characteristic of the work of Carl Schmitt. See Schmitt 1976, 1985, 2003.

<sup>66</sup> See Neumann 1996. For an application of this distinction to contemporary Russian politics see Morozov 2003.

<sup>67</sup> Rogozin 2004d.

go on being Russian”.<sup>68</sup> In Rogozin’s view, “Russia must perceive its scale and not turn into a subordinated fragment of any wider spaces. Russia is a self-sufficient civilization. We do not need to apply to join NATO like some other countries of ill-repute. We do not need to rush to the EU, *as if only membership in this organisation delimits Europeans from non-Europeans*. We are Europeans with no need for any European Unions and Euromembers [sic!], with their unclear prospects and their *sold sovereignties*.”<sup>69</sup> The turn towards self-exclusion is of course by definition a move that weakens EU impact on Russian politics along all four pathways, *disconnecting* both political elites and the wider civil society from the ‘European project’ as such and *disabling* the formation of a common normative and institutional platform, within which conflict discourse may be minimised and reduced to occasional episodes. As this chapter has demonstrated, the latter ‘common platform’ is at present perceived as hierarchical and asymmetric, which logically leads to Russia’s dissociation from it. In the next chapter we shall address the ways in which this assertive self-exclusion from Europe, defined in EU terms, is articulated in concrete issue conflicts, linked with interpretive schemata into an identity conflict discourse and operates across the entire Russian political spectrum.

## **FROM OBJECT TO SUBJECT: INTERSUBJECTIVITY AND THE PROBLEMATIC OF SELF-EXCLUSION**

### **The Lack of Strategic Intersubjectivity: Issue and Identity Conflict in the Narrative of Self-Exclusion**

The conflict narrative that we have termed ‘self-exclusion’ arises in the relay between concrete policy *issues*, in which the hierarchical inclusion of Russia into EU programmes has been problematised, and the wider *identity* conflict discourse that centres on the reaffirmation of state sovereignty *in resistance* to hierarchical inclusion. Specific problems with regard to the existing forms of cooperation range from the inflexibility of the EU’s operating procedures with regard to the coordination of Tacis and Interreg programmes, which complicates the functioning of technical assistance and regional development programmes, to the more general question of the alleged insensitivity of EU programmes such as the Northern Dimension to Russia’s interests.<sup>70</sup>

With regard to the former issue, the object of problematisation is the failure of the EU to involve the Russian party in the design of cross-border cooperation programmes, which remain guided by primarily EU’s own interests. This problem is particularly relevant for such arrangements as the Euregio, which is based on the logic of combining regional development (Interreg) and external relations (Tacis) into a coherent policy. While the problem of Tacis-Interreg coordination has now been officially accepted by the EU and preliminary studies have been carried out on the possibility of improving the situation<sup>71</sup>, no practical solutions have yet been implemented, one of the interpretations ventured in the literature being the EU unwillingness to give the Russian party any control over EU funds, which would be the case if cross-border cooperation programmes of Interreg functioned

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<sup>68</sup> Narochnitskaya 2004a.

<sup>69</sup> Rogozin 2004e.

<sup>70</sup> For the discussion of these problems see Cronberg 2003, Aleksandrov 2001, Tkachenko 2000, Fairlie 2001, Khudolei 2003. See also Joenniemi and Sergounin 2003.

<sup>71</sup> See Bringing Interreg and Tacis Funding Together.

according to the same logic as Tacis.<sup>72</sup> This concrete issue is naturally prioritised at the regional and local levels at which cross-border programmes are implemented. In the Republic of Karelia, which has been cast by both Russia and the EU as a model of successful EU-Russian regional integration, this problem has been raised repeatedly by both Head of the Republic Katanandov and Minister of Foreign Relations Shlyamin in their articles and speeches regarding the implementation of the Euregio Karelia project.<sup>73</sup>

We have insistently raised the question of *harmonising EU programmes with Russian interests*, our own plans, *since we have ourselves designed a long-term programme of the socioeconomic development* of the region until 2010, in which we clearly state our objectives in the spheres of the economy, environment, education, health care, international tourism and culture.<sup>74</sup>

A number of Russian analysts have also raised the question of the possibility of restructuring the operation of EU Tacis along the lines of the Phare programme, whereby the current focus of the programme on the minimisation of soft security threats in areas such as health care, social protection, environment, etc. is supplemented by the regional-level support to structural reforms undertaken by the federal government. Decentralisation of the management of the programme and the transfer of decision-making in concrete projects to the regional and local levels has also been advocated.<sup>75</sup> In all of these cases, the conflict issue concerns the lack of proper *intersubjectivity* in EU-Russian cooperation, whereby EU programmes appear to be designed with solely EU's interests in mind and the management of these programmes is insensitive to the concerns of the Russian parties.

This is not to say that this situation characterises EU programmes in Russia across the board. One of the signs of the change of the EU's stance vis-à-vis federal-level Russian reforms is the articulation of the priorities of EU Tacis with the reform programme of the Putin presidency in 2001-2002, when the main coordinating function of the operation of the programme was bestowed on the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, which is also responsible for strategic reform design, Minister Gref simultaneously occupying the Chair of the Board of the federal Strategic Designs Centre, a policy think tank, responsible for the development of the nationwide reform strategy. The 2003 and 2004 Tacis Indicative Programmes also explicitly link the change in priorities with the need to articulate the operation of the programme with the reforms undertaken by the Russian government and thus exemplify the 'intersubjective connection' of reform designs, proposed by SDC-NW.<sup>76</sup> At the same time, such positive examples remain rare and the overall reception of EU programmes in Russian regions remains critical. This is not to say that the critique is advanced squarely *against* the EU, since it also targets Russia's own passivity in the face of the hierarchical stance of EU experts in technical assistance projects in Russia. A good illustration is provided by the statement by Yuri Perelygin, a scientific director of the Strategic Designs Centre 'NorthWest', an institution, which, as we shall argue below, arose partly in response to the problematisation of the passive status of Russian regional planning expertise in relation to the EU. "We need to understand what kind of work we need to undertake - *not them* [EU], *but us* – to become compatible with them in terms of expert centres, the studies of the problems, etc. Maybe then it will turn out that we can think of

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<sup>72</sup> See particularly Cronberg 2003.

<sup>73</sup> See Shlyamin 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, Katanandov 2000, 2003a, 2003b. See also Ukkone 2001a.

<sup>74</sup> Shlyamin 2000a.

<sup>75</sup> See Khudolei 2003, Bordachev 2003a.

<sup>76</sup> See National Indicative Programme 2004-2006 and Tacis Indicative Programme. Russian Federation. 2000-2003.

something jointly. *In the meantime, we hand over the ‘thinking part’ to them and get built-in in their projects.*<sup>77</sup> It is precisely the status of being ‘built-in’ in external projects in accordance with the principle of hierarchical inclusion that generates the assertive discourse of self-exclusion that we shall analyse in detail in this chapter.

On the more general level, the EU’s wariness of surrendering any measure of control to the external party is also evident in the politics of the Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI) which, according to a number of Russian critics<sup>78</sup>, to date manifestly remains an EU *policy* on Russia rather than a *framework* of EU-Russian relations. The conceptual difference is evident: in the present case Russia figures as an external *object* of the initiative rather than an equal *subject* within a joint framework. While neither institutionalised nor endowed with an independent budgetary basis, the Northern Dimension is nonetheless highly important as a delimitation of the EU’s interest in Russia, singling out the Russian Northwest as a priority area. This delimitation was initially anticipated in Europe as liable to misconstrual on the part of the Russian authorities as possibly contributing to further fragmentation and disintegration of the federation.<sup>79</sup> None of such worries materialised, perhaps since the fear of increasing regional disparities must presuppose massive financial inputs of the EU in the grand project of ‘raising’ the Russian Northwest, that are manifestly absent at present and may hardly be anticipated in the future. Instead, Russia’s restrained response was rather motivated by the absence of any substantive content in the Initiative aside from the focus on natural resources. Indeed, the Russian Midterm Strategy on the EU emphasises “*substantialising by joint efforts* the initiative of the Northern Dimension in the European cooperation [...] to ensure that the implementation of this initiative is directed not only at the promotion of exploration and exportation of raw materials but also at the *integrated development of the Northern and the Northwestern Russia*”<sup>80</sup>. Similarly, there have been repeated calls on the regional level to form *joint* working groups on the NDI to substantialise the initiative, which was perceived by regional policy makers such as Karelia’s Foreign Relations Minister Shlyamin to be devoid of concrete content and not harmonised with the interests of the Russian state and Russian regions.<sup>81</sup> “To date, the Northern Dimension Action Plan [...] is not articulated with Russian projects in the north of Europe.”<sup>82</sup>

The Russian discourse on the NDI has undergone a considerable transformation after the establishment in May 2000 of seven Federal Districts, headed by presidential plenipotentiary representatives and, more specifically, after the formation in the Northwestern Federal District of two policy think tanks: the independent Strategic Designs Centre (SDC) ‘North-West’ (an offshoot of the Moscow SDC, which produced the Russian government’s long-term reform programme) and the Expert Council on Economic Development and Investment (ECEDI), associated with the administration of the Presidential Representative.<sup>83</sup> Two strategic policy documents were produced during 2001-2002: the SDC Doctrine of the Development of the Northwest of Russia and the ECEDI Strategy of Socioeconomic Development of the Northwestern Federal District. Significant

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<sup>77</sup> Perelygin et al 2002. Emphasis added.

<sup>78</sup> See Bordachev 2003a, Khudolei 2003. See also Haukkala 2001 for the Finnish perspective on this question. For the detailed discussion of the Russian reception of the Northern Dimension see Joenniemi and Sergounin 2003, chapters 3, 4.

<sup>79</sup> See Haukkala 2001, Tkachenko 2000.

<sup>80</sup> Russia’s Midterm Strategy towards the EU. Emphasis added.

<sup>81</sup> Shlyamin 2000a, 2002b, 2002c.

<sup>82</sup> Shlyamin 2001b. Translation by author. See also Khudolei 2003.

<sup>83</sup> See respectively <http://www.csr-nw.ru>, <http://www.expnw.ru>.

differences notwithstanding<sup>84</sup>, both documents take their points of departure from problematising the absence of an *autonomous* strategic vision for the Russian Northwest as a whole, the weakness and the incommensurability of separate development strategies of the subjects of the federation and the consequent *passivity* of the Northwest vis-à-vis the EU policies. “The authorities of the subjects of the federation *failed to become the centres of designing regional development*. Manifold programmes of socioeconomic development are not implemented in practice. The old priorities of industrial development are outdated, while *new images of the future, from which new priorities could be derived, have not appeared yet.*”<sup>85</sup> The SDC doctrine is particularly explicit about the need to restore *political subjectivity* to the Northwest as a macro-regional entity that could be a *partner* of the EU in the Northern Dimension.<sup>86</sup> The Doctrine advocates *macro-regionalism*, developed on the basis of the institution of the federal district, as a *creative response* to globalisation and international regionalisation, an alternative to ‘regionalisation-by-default’ that results in fragmentation and the stagnation of Northwestern Russian regions as weak and inefficient administrative-territorial subjects that are at best capable of being passive *objects* of EU macro-regional projects such as the Northern Dimension.

The Northwest Federal District is viewed as a new institutional structure that could carry a ‘megaproject’ of the assembly of the Northwest, “a common entity, authorised to strategically manage regional development”<sup>87</sup>. An important function of the federal district is therefore the development of macro-regional integration *within* Russia, which of course need not be viewed as exclusive of international macro-regional cooperation with the EU in the framework of the NDI. In fact, one of the three success criteria elaborated in the Doctrine for the Federal District consists precisely in *connecting* the macro-regional development programme to the ‘European scale’: “In case the formation of the Northwest macroregion is a success, it will fulfil the threefold task: it will set the *new benchmark of the country’s development* in general; it will *make Russia’s strategic projects consistent with the European scale*; and, finally, it will trigger the *development of the new management system*, which is so crucial for further strategic growth of Russia.”<sup>88</sup>

Thus, contrary to what the critical rhetoric towards Russia’s present state of integration into the new European environment may suggest, the Doctrine is by no means a conservative or ‘anti-European’ manifesto. What marks the Doctrine as a novelty within Russian political discourse is rather its emphasis on the need to transcend the structurally ‘built-in’ status of Russian politics and expertise in European macro-regional programmes and the problematisation of the facile and hurried adoption of the ‘positive sum logic’, whereby ‘what is good for the EU’ is automatically also ‘good for Russia’, irrespectively of whether Russia played any part in the generation of these rules, norms or values. “*In case we remain passive on this issue, the Northwest borders may be outlined by the European communities instead.*”<sup>89</sup> In the argument of the Doctrine, the question of *who decides* on the boundaries and the internal furnishing of the Northwest district is far from outdated and

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<sup>84</sup> These differences may be summarised as follows. The SDC Doctrine is a fairly radical policy vision that seeks to offer a new ‘mega-project’ for the construction (‘assembly’) of the macro-region of the Northwest, while the Strategy is a more conceptually modest programme of socioeconomic development, focusing less on the radical transformation of the political subjectivity of the Northwest than on sector-specific problem-solving measures. The Doctrine remains a more interesting document for our present purposes insofar as it is more explicit and detailed in its treatment of the international environment of the Federal District and its proposal to integrate the ‘assembly of the Northwest’ with the dominant international trends.

<sup>85</sup> Doctrine of the Development of the Northwest of Russia. Emphasis added.

<sup>86</sup> See Prozorov 2004e for the detailed analysis of the strategic policy discourse of SDC-NW.

<sup>87</sup> Doctrine of the Development of the Northwest of Russia. Emphasis added.

<sup>88</sup> Doctrine of the Development of the Northwest of Russia. Emphasis added.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. Emphasis added.

irrelevant. The emergent Northwest macro-region is cast as a space of *infinite political possibility*, a ‘clean slate’ on which the new positivity of order may be inscribed. From this perspective it appears possible to fully appreciate the persistent recourse of the Doctrine to the demand for active political construction: foregoing this possibility merely entails the subjection to the externally designed project of moulding the Russian Northwestern space in accordance with specific interests. The narrative of self-exclusion arises precisely out of this emphasis on the active force of political decision, whereby Russia is expected to benefit more from autonomous decision-making as a sovereign actor than as a de-subjectivised ‘member’ in the system of hierarchical inclusion. The very nature of the offered modalities of exclusion therefore has a *disabling impact*, resulting in the formation of the project of autonomous regional development.

The same logic applies to the resolution of the Kaliningrad problem, whose status in the narrative of exclusion we have addressed in the previous chapter. Kaliningrad is cast as one of the ‘mega-projects’, envisioned in the Doctrine, which both points to the urgency of the Kaliningrad issue at the time of the preparation of the document<sup>90</sup> (2001-2002) and locates this question in a wider macro-regional framework, beyond the boundaries of the specific subject of the Russian Federation.

The megaproject Kaliningrad is of paramount importance for Russia to establish its *independent stance within the framework of international integration*. The Kaliningrad region proves to be the litmus test for relationship building between Russia and Europe. The principle of complementary efficiency is a key one in this project’s development. This principle assumes that actions, taken by the regions, the federal centre, public and private companies, should conform to common logics. This conformity is a critical condition to *make Russia’s strategic project equal to those, offered by the European Union*.<sup>91</sup>

This statement provides us with two insights for the understanding of the position of the Doctrine on the Kaliningrad question. Firstly, the text prioritises Russia’s *independent stance within* international integration and casts Kaliningrad as a platform for developing new modalities of relations with the enlarged EU. This claim should not be equated with the more defensive nationalist stance that conceives of Kaliningrad as the ‘bastion’ of Russian statehood in an unfriendly environment and seeks merely to retain the close link between the oblast and mainland Russia to prevent the emergence of separatist tendencies in the area. What is at stake is rather maintaining Russian political subjectivity as such in the situation when the region risks becoming the passive object of EU policies.

Secondly and relatedly, the text criticises the present efforts at strategic policy planning in the Oblast’ that are not complementary with the federal reform designs and is limited in scope, focusing merely on the local level. What is problematised is the lack of the *macro-regional contextualisation* of Kaliningrad, which isolates it as a special case and makes meaningless the concept of developing Kaliningrad as a pilot project of EU-Russian relations:

The non-productive clash of geographical, administrative, and corporate interests results in *failures of several projects of regional development*. Meanwhile, the strategy of relationship building with Kaliningrad region, which is now underway in the European Commission, is a consolidated plan, which takes into account interests and multi-level connections of both the

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<sup>90</sup> At a press conference associated with the publication of the Doctrine, Shedrovitsky argued that the SDC was one of the first policy think tanks to seriously address the issue of Kaliningrad two years prior to its emergence as a divisive issue in EU-Russian relations. See Shedrovitsky et al 2001. See also Shedrovitsky 2001.

<sup>91</sup> Doctrine of the Development of the Northwest of Russia. Emphasis added.

EU members and the Russian Federation. Russia, in its turn, can only offer a locally bounded project (either competing with the one by the EU or supplementary), restricted to interests of Kaliningrad region. *Therefore, short-, medium-, and long-term goals of both Russia and Kaliningrad region seriously lack internal conformity, especially against the backdrop of the new international environment.*<sup>92</sup>

Interestingly, the Russian situation is problematised through the contrast with the EU strategies, which are held as exemplary in integrating multiple levels and connections in its relations with the Oblast'. The approach of the Doctrine is thus marked not by a zero-sum game antagonistic relation to the EU policies concerning Kaliningrad but with the demand for what we may refer to as 'strategic intersubjectivity'<sup>93</sup>, the '*subject-subject*' relationship of equality between Russia and the EU as agents of strategic policy-making rather than a '*subject-object*' relationship implicitly at work in EU's programmes in relation to Russia, particularly those of technical assistance. "We need to *design in cooperation with the Europeans common standards of activities in the development of territories*, ecological and humanitarian spheres that would allow to integrate our infrastructure with the European one."<sup>94</sup>

The assertive tone of the Doctrine and its opposition to the passive role of the Russian Northwest as the object of external development strategies and the recipient of European technological and policy innovations should not obscure the fact that the Doctrine exemplifies one of the first consistent and internally coherent programmes of Russian integration into the European space.<sup>95</sup> In the case of the interface of this Doctrine with EU policies in the Northern Dimension, the Northwestern Federal District may become the proper 'pilot project' (i.e. an experiment with potentially generalisable results) for EU-Russian relations, instead of Kaliningrad, which as an exceptional case is not fit for the pilot status by definition.<sup>96</sup> Such a project, grounded in the interface of strategic visions, could endow with concrete content the principles of "complementarity, subsidiarity and synergy", proclaimed in the Second Northern Dimension Action Plan,<sup>97</sup> and substantialise the long-term project of cooperation, stipulated in the EU initiative of the 'Wider Europe'.<sup>98</sup> It is evident that the 'self-exclusive' character of the SDC-NW discourse does *not* prevent EU impact on Russian politics, which, in the case of positive interface of the programmes of the two parties, could both be *enabling*, in the sense of the formation of a transnational macro-regional structure of cooperation and *connective*, in the sense of linking EU initiatives with the wider range of civil society actors, from professional organisations to expert think tanks, which have so far played little role in EU-Russian policy design and implementation.

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<sup>92</sup> Doctrine of the Development of the Northwest of Russia. Emphasis added.

<sup>93</sup> Prozorov 2004a. Arguably, it is the very demand for intersubjectivity that accounts for the increased scepticism about the possibility and desirability of Russia's *accession* to the EU and the contrasting interest in the possibility of an ambitious *association* agreement which would retain Russia's sovereign autonomy in relation to the EU legal and normative principles. See e.g. Gutnik 2003, Afontsev 2003, Romanova 2003 for the recent discussion of such possibilities. The need for a new Association Agreement is also the key point of departure of the 2003 Report by "Russia in the United Europe" committee. See "Russia and the European Union: Options for Deepening Strategic Partnership".

<sup>94</sup> Shedrovitsky 2003b. Emphasis added.

<sup>95</sup> The following 'mega-projects', stipulated in the Doctrine, substantively connect with the priorities of the Northern Dimension initiative and may thus serve as possible points of the EU-Russian interface: the introduction of innovations in energy production and consumption, development of innovative technologies in forestry and timber industry, development of human capital through lifelong education, construction of 'multicultural communication networks' through transboundary regional cooperation, the development of Kaliningrad as a pilot project of "addressing the problem of the independent development of the country within international integration" and development of the Russian (Far) North.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Khudolei 2003, p. 27.

<sup>97</sup> The Second Northern Dimension Action Plan, p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> See Wider Europe: Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours.

Yet, what is conspicuous by its absence in the SDC Doctrine is any reference to the ‘promotion of democracy’ that the EU has increasingly prioritised in relation to Russia<sup>99</sup> and any indication of Russia’s deficiency in this regard, which could even conceivably require EU interventions in the matter. Integration into Europe is similarly not advanced in terms of Russia’s *unilateral* adoption of EU practices in the political, socioeconomic or cultural spheres. The SDC discourse indeed lacks any notion of a ‘threshold of political subjectivity’ that Russia is required to cross in order to qualify as the EU’s equal partner in macro-regional cooperation. In other words, in this discourse cooperation with the EU in the Northwestern macro-region does not require the accompanying EU efforts at ‘promotion of democracy and the development of civil society’ in Russia, which in fact constitutes the primary objective of EU policies such as Tacis and broader initiatives such as Wider Europe.<sup>100</sup>

Thus, self-exclusion from ‘hierarchically inclusive’ integration in the normative aspect is perfectly compatible with the substantive pro-integration stance. Indeed, we can observe very few *substantive conflict issues* in the interface of the SDC Doctrine and the precepts of the EU’s NDI. At the same time, the demand for strategic intersubjectivity and the problematisation of the objectification of the Northwestern region as a domain of EU policies does exemplify a *conflictual disposition*, which unfolds on the level of *identity* rather than policy. While the slogan of ‘strategic partnership’ on the policy level remains on the agenda, it is precisely the form and the degree of *partnership* that is presently being problematised and found wanting in the Russian discourse with regard to both the EU in general and Northern European regional arrangements in particular.<sup>101</sup> While there is a general consensus about the benefits of cooperation with the EU, the specific *model* of EU-Russian relations is a more contentious matter, which is reflected in the official declarations on the need to review the existing Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.<sup>102</sup> As the socioeconomic situation in the country is stabilising and the political regime consolidating, one may anticipate a more assertive orientation in Russian foreign policy, making sovereign self-exclusion a more plausible and attractive option.

What is at stake in this narrative is the question of recognition of Russia as a ‘sovereign equal’ to the EU in the macro-regional context, the ‘transition’ from a situation of apprenticeship of Russia as dependent on technical assistance to the emergence of a sovereign subject of strategic development in the Russian Northwest that is capable of acting as the counterpart of the EU in the transboundary macro-regional projects such as the Northern Dimension. The conflictual disposition that problematises *asymmetry* in intersubjective interactions is thus in the last instance an *ethical* issue of recognition rather than a matter of policy divergence, which in the particular case at hand may well be negligible. Thus, in the narrative of self-exclusion formal and technical issues, in which the Russian party perceived its ‘inclusion’ to be unjustly hierarchical, tend to spill over into the domain of identity politics, in which the asymmetry in question is no longer formal but generative of ethical resentment. “The most significant among these fundamental [EU-Russian] disagreements, which entail frustration in many practical aspects of cooperation, is

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<sup>99</sup> See Tacis Indicative Programme. Russian Federation. 2000-2003, Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006. Indicative Action Programme 2002-2003. Russian Federation, National Indicative Programme 2004-2006. Russian Federation. The working paper on the reform of EU Tacis not the new Neighbourhood policy instrument also emphasises the aspect of democracy promotion and the development of civil society in contrast to the Central Asian countries, in relation to which poverty relief remains a top priority. See Towards a New Concept and Regulation for the Tacis programme.

<sup>100</sup> See particularly Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours.

<sup>101</sup> See e.g. Shlyamin 2001b, Ukkone 2001c. See also Tkachenko 2000, Khudolei 2003.

<sup>102</sup> See Bordachev 2003b.

the difference between Russia's self-evaluation and the image of Russia widespread among the EU officials. *The European Union regards Russia primarily as an object of policy, not as a subject.*"<sup>103</sup> The resentment against hierarchical inclusion is also fuelled by the fact that this disadvantaged situation is thoroughly deprived of any telos of eventual EU accession, which makes subordination both meaningless and less tolerable, further minimising any possible impact that EU may have on developments in Russia and, crucially, directing a wide array of political forces towards the task of resisting EU impact as such. As a state that is not even potentially viewed in terms of prospective EU membership, Russia is only to be expected to 'take exception' from externally designed rules and principles and demand the recognition of its autonomous voice and legitimate interests in the region. In the argument of an otherwise strongly pro-European liberal analyst, "the fact that Russia tries to have its norms coincide with EU norms does not mean that it will automatically abide by the *norms that have been designed without its participation.*"<sup>104</sup> Moreover, the wariness of subjection to external norms is by no means restricted to 'reactionary' or 'nationalist' discourses and is therefore far from being an expression of a residual xenophobia or habitual inwardness. In the following two sections we shall repeat our procedure, practiced in the previous chapter, of demonstrating the operation of the narrative of self-exclusion on both liberal and conservative sides of the political spectrum.

### **'Liberal Empire': Self-Exclusion and the Strategy of Redoubling of Europe**

At first glance, the adoption by liberal political forces of the narrative of self-exclusion from Europe may appear paradoxical and self-defeating, insofar as the assumption of Russia's 'European identity' has been axiomatic for Russian liberalism and the disappearance of this fetishised figure from the discourse creates an uncomfortable lacuna in place of the object of identification. At the same time, a number of analysts of liberal persuasion, as well as the politicians on the centre-right, have since the late 1990s voiced strong scepticism about the ultimate goals of Russia's cooperation with the EU and urged to put the question of potential EU membership aside once and for all.<sup>105</sup> In contrast to the more conventional opposition to Russia's EU membership from geopolitical and other 'multipolarity-oriented' discourses, the liberal opposition to the EU membership proceeds from the unwillingness to abide by the detailed prescriptions of the *acquis communautaire*, particularly insofar as the resurgence of (neo)liberal economic reforms in the Putin presidency has increased the right-wing liberal forces' sense of self-certitude and thus makes integration into European structures less important politically and symbolically than in the beginning of the 1990s. The narrative of self-exclusion is nonetheless a new trend in the Russian liberal discourse, since the more conventional avenue of criticism has been the problematisation of Russia's exclusion by Europe, which we have discussed in the previous chapter, and the pressure on the EU to grant recognition. It is this 'inclusive' orientation that is increasingly found wanting by liberal commentators and politicians.

According to Alexander Baunov, the strategy of seeking EU accession is ultimately self-defeating for Russia, as it would subject Russian policy-making to the excessive bureaucratic regulations and the contestable norms of 'good governance', which would be counterproductive for the goal of radical socioeconomic reforms. What is particularly interesting is the comparison that a liberal critic like Baunov draws between the EU and the

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<sup>103</sup> Kaveshnikov and Potemkina 2003, p. 336. A similar argument is advanced in Cronberg 2003a, pp. 286-287.

<sup>104</sup> Khudolei 2003, p. 31. Emphasis added.

<sup>105</sup> See e.g. Baunov 2003a, 2003b, Remizov 2001b, Privalov 1999, 2003, Leontiev et al 2003.

Soviet Union: “It would be a question of entering a closed corporation of the privileged, somewhat reminiscent of the Central Committee in the Soviet period. According to the rules of this genre, prior to any hypothetical accession Russia will have to face a long, difficult and indefinite period of apprenticeship. [...] What is undoubtable is that during this period the Europeans would try to get all possible concessions, while our temporary weakness and the unequal status of the candidate permit it.”<sup>106</sup> Moreover, Baunov notes that as a potentially ‘last candidate state’ to enter the EU, Russia would need to adopt the entire volume of *acquis communautaire*, devised entirely without its participation. In short, Baunov draws a direct linkage between the narratives of European exclusion and Russia’s self-exclusion and concludes that “the unwillingness of the European bureaucrats to make even a minimal step towards our possible accession must be viewed as a blessing that liberates us from a poignant and fruitless temptation.”<sup>107</sup>

Instead, Baunov suggests an ambitious upgrading of the present Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with a view to the establishment of a relationship of association, which would create the sought ‘common spaces’ between Russia and the EU without compromising Russia’s sovereignty. Indeed, the strategy of ‘four common spaces’ in the spheres of the economy, justice and home affairs, external security, research and education, agreed on by President Putin and Romano Prodi during the 2003 EU-Russia summit, is recognised by Baunov on the condition that additional measures should be taken to enhance *symmetry* between the two parties. At the same time, the author recognises that symmetry is problematic between such incomparable entities as the EU and the Russian Federation and argues, in a manner formerly tabooed in the liberal discourse, that the only possibility for Russia to establish an equal intersubjective relationship with Europe is by becoming the leading actor and the guarantor of order in the post-Soviet space, which remains outside the EU and is not liable to EU control through such mechanisms as the Neighbourhood policy. In Carl Schmitt’s terms, this thesis entails the intersubjective relation of two autonomous *Grossraume*,<sup>108</sup> which nonetheless are founded on similar values.

In the great Eurasian space, Russia is the only state that can *realistically guarantee the development of liberal-democratic order* in the Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, the states of Central Asia and the Caucasus that are unreachable for the great European powers or the EU as a whole. [...] Paradoxically, the real, rather than formal integration of Russia into Europe will only be assisted, and not hampered, by strong statehood, a strong army, a rising population, a vast yet well-governed territory. *All of this is true on the condition that we speak with our European and non-European neighbours (as well as with each other) in the language of Western liberalism.* This is the easiest and the most painless way to eliminate obstacles and prejudices on our way to Europe and arrive at the common market, common security and the freedom of movement – all that is presently desired in Russia.<sup>109</sup>

This fragment illustrates a highly significant shift of the liberal discourse from the valorisation of European integration at any price towards the increasing realisation that the price may well be too high and could exceed the benefits of integration. The problematisation of hierarchical inclusion entails the abandonment of the axiomatic status of integration and the search for an arrangement that would secure symmetric intersubjectivity in EU-Russian relations. Notably, in Baunov’s analysis self-exclusion is advocated as a response to the purely formal problem of interactional asymmetry, rather than a substantive

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<sup>106</sup> Baunov 2003a.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> See e.g. Schmitt 2003 for the discussion of the concept of *Grossraum*.

<sup>109</sup> Baunov 2003b.

issue of normative or policy divergence: ‘the language of Western liberalism’ remains the common ground for cooperation, but speaking this language no longer seems to require a subordinate subject-position. Moreover, within the Russian ‘double of Europe’ the impact of the EU on Russian policies would be limited to the more fundamental identity level, while concrete pathways of influence will be foreclosed.

Baunov’s strategy of entering Europe as a hegemonic power in the post-Soviet space has been influential, if ultimately unsuccessful, in the election campaign of the liberal coalition Union of Right Forces (URF) in the 2003 parliamentary elections. This theme is particularly associated with Anatoly Chubais, a veteran liberal politician who returned to the forefront of liberal politics during the URF’s election campaign. Against the avowedly pro-European disposition of other URF leaders (Boris Nemtsov and Irina Khakamada), reflected in the campaign slogan “Do you want to live like they do in Europe?”, Chubais advances a vision for Russian liberalism that is more ambitious and self-assured than a second-hand reiteration of European doctrines. Chubais’s programmatic article “Russia’s Mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” proceeds from the assumption that Russia has already accepted and adapted to the ‘right-wing liberal’ programme, which throughout the 1990s was instrumental in laying the foundations of the new statehood and the new economy. Moreover, as a veteran of political struggles of the 1990s, Chubais points out gleefully that as opposed to that period, in which even basic liberal prescriptions were highly controversial, “we now do not have a single party, whose programme rejects the fundamental socioeconomic and political liberal values. Nobody demands the abolition of parliamentary democracy, the separation of powers and the popular elections of the executive leadership; nobody demands the restoration of state ownership of the means of production, the ban on private entrepreneurship and the reinstallation of price controls. That is what I call irreversibility!”<sup>110</sup> Even though the irreversibility in question clearly did not cover Chubais’s party’s electoral fortunes as the URF performed dismally in 2003, failing to make it past the 5% electoral threshold, Chubais’s argument has a more general significance. Along with other veteran liberal reformers (e.g. Yegor Gaidar, Alexei Ulykaev, Yevgeni Yasin, etc.), Chubais argues that the highly fragile and contentious liberal reform platform of the early 1990s has in fact been *implemented* and liberal economic principles became *hegemonic* commonplaces, to which there now is (as Russian liberals never fail to emphasise) ‘no alternative’. Within this new constellation, the liberal economic doctrines are perceived by Chubais to be sufficiently internalised in the Russian political discourse, the debate on e.g. taxation, pension policies and land ownership unfolding strictly within the liberal system of coordinates. This accounts for the self-assured tone of Russian right-wing liberals, who no longer require accession to the EU to prove themselves as an established political subject.

The new task of the liberal forces must, according to Chubais, consist in the abandonment of the economy-centric and technocratic tone, usually associated with Russian liberalism, and greater participation in the debates on the Russian ‘national idea’ or ‘mission’, from which the liberals used to recoil in distaste. Chubais is critical of the latter tendency, since it resigns the liberals to being a permanent minority, participating in politics solely as ‘professionals’, entrusted with carrying out economic reforms, but never as a fully autonomous political force. “Our country has always been disposed towards the tasks of cosmic - both literally and figuratively - significance. Russia is a country with its own destiny and undoubtedly with its own historical mission.”<sup>111</sup> In contrast to the standard tropes of Russian liberalism, this mission clearly does not consist in the integration ‘with the

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<sup>110</sup> Chubais 2003.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

West' or 'into Europe', particularly through joining the EU, which was presented as the telos of liberal reforms in the 1999 campaign of the URF: "The long-suffering question of Russia's entry into the leading political and military structures of Europe - the EU and NATO - is resolved unambiguously: *we must not enter either the EU or NATO*. We simply won't 'fit' there, either politically or geographically."<sup>112</sup>

The alternative, proposed by Chubais, is the controversial concept of a 'liberal empire', which proceeds from the explicit assumption of Russia's 'natural leadership' in the post-Soviet space: "It is time to clearly tell it like it is. Russia is the only and unique leader in the space of the CIS, both in the volume of its economy and the quality of life of its citizens. From this fact follows our task: *Russia can and must enhance and strengthen its leading positions in this part of the world*. [...] The ideology of Russia for the long term perspective must be *liberal imperialism*. [...] This is the task of the scale that would permit our people to finally *overcome the spiritual crisis*, will truly *unite and mobilise* them."<sup>113</sup> Since the 'empire' in question is, in line with Baunov's theses, to be built on squarely liberal principles, we may refer to this strategy of self-exclusion in terms of *redoubling* of European practices. It appears that Russian liberals, eager to pursue further integration with the EU but disappointed in the modalities of hierarchical inclusion, offered to Russia, conjure up a figure of their own, also partially European, Union, in which Russia plays the leading role rather than acts as an apprentice. As a leader of the post-Soviet 'liberal empire' it is able to act as an equal partner of the EU and at the same time no longer has any need to ask for its inclusion in the European institutional and normative space. A strategy of redoubling permits Russian liberals to dissociate their continuing valorisation of the principles of liberal political philosophy from the fetishisation of the place of their origin. In terms of the problematic, introduced in the previous chapter, it permits Russia to legitimately present itself as a *European country outside of the EU*. While the left-conservative narrative of exclusion demanded Russia's *inclusion* into European structures, irrespectively of continuing and intensifying political *differences*, the liberal narrative of self-exclusion performs the reverse gesture of advocating institutional *difference*, notwithstanding the underlying political *identity*. While in the former case the common 'European identity' was paradoxically advocated on the basis of political difference, in the latter case we observe a no less paradoxical gesture of asserting structural and institutional difference on the basis of an underlying identity of 'liberal values'.

Chubais's vision, which seeks to articulate the relative success of liberal reforms with the elusive search for a 'national idea', echoes the more theoretical discourses of liberal-conservatism, including the 1999 manifesto of Alexei Ulykaev, which spoke of a 'new imperialism' and was strongly critical of the contemporary EU, and the group of journalists and analysts, called the Seraphim Club (including e.g. Mikhail Leontiev, Maxim Sokolov and Alexander Privalov), which seeks to articulate a synthesis of the universal 'idea of freedom' and the patriotic 'idea of Russia'.<sup>114</sup> However, as the critics of Chubais's blueprint from within the conservative circle did not fail to observe, the latter component remains unarticulated in Chubais's proposal and may come down to the recycling of liberal universalism under the guise of the 'new patriotism'. Moreover, the observers, critical of the socioeconomic and foreign policies associated with the figure of Chubais, have noted that the proposal may result in the extension, via the vaguely defined imperialist means, of the neoliberal policy designs into the post-Soviet space, which obscures their ill-reputed status

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. Emphasis added.

<sup>114</sup> See Ulykaev 1999, Leontiev et al 2003, Privalov 2003.

within Russia. At worst, liberal imperialism is expected to lead to Russia taking on the status of a ‘regional policeman’, imposing the liberal-democratic standards in the countries, geopolitically in its sphere of influence, all the while being deprived of its *own* subjectivity due to its inscription into a global liberal-democratic project.<sup>115</sup> It is therefore notable that Chubais’s project was criticised not for abandoning conventional pro-Western liberalism, but as not thorough *enough* in this abandonment. Despite the electoral failure of the URF in 2003,<sup>116</sup> the liberal-imperialist blueprint is highly significant as an indicator of the transformation of the liberal discourse in Russia, its embrace of ‘grand projects’ over technocratic rhetoric, its rehabilitation of the tabooed ‘imperial’ lexicon that articulates contemporary liberalism with the pre-revolutionary Russia, and, most notably, in its explicit renunciation of the ‘integrationist’ paradigm of foreign policy, concretely exemplified by the goal of eventual EU membership. Chubais’s design follows to the letter the precept of the more radical conservative, Mikhail Remizov, whose work we will discuss in the following chapter: “We have nowhere to *be integrated* into – it is about time *for us to integrate*.”<sup>117</sup> In this manner, the *disconnective impact* of the EU, addressed in the previous chapter, logically leads to the *disconnection* of Russian liberals from the integrative project, although this disconnection does not imply the abandonment of the substantive ‘European ideal’ as such.

### **Getting Over Europe: Left Conservatism and the Demise of the Question of ‘European Identity’**

Within the conservative discourse, the problematic of self-exclusion is not as innovative as in liberalism, being part of the political platform of the national-patriotic opposition since the 1990s. During the 1990s the oppositional discourse on relations with Europe was marked by a combination of nostalgic Soviet revanchism, the Russian interpretation of the continental tradition of geopolitical thought and the revival of the Russian conservative thought of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which had particularly ‘anti-European’ representatives in such thinkers as Konstantin Leontiev and Nikolai Danilevsky.<sup>118</sup> At the same time, the left-conservative discourse in the Putin presidency, associated first and foremost with the Homeland movement, marks a number of serious departures from the oppositional discourse of early postcommunism, particularly that of the CPRF, which at least superficially remains tied to the tropes of Soviet communism. Natalia Narochnitskaya, a leading academic figure within the movement, focuses her criticism on *both* liberalism and Marxism as equally destructive for Russia. She ridicules the dogmatism of contemporary Russian liberals, whose slogan of ‘worldwide transition to democracy’ she finds as vacuous and asinine as the precepts of Soviet ‘scientific communism’, which of course also operated with the teleological category of transition.<sup>119</sup> In line with conventional European conservatism, from Heidegger to Schmitt, she argues that both of these political philosophies, having at the centre of their political ontology respectively the figures of the individual and social class,

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<sup>115</sup> See Holmogorov 2003.

<sup>116</sup> It must be noted that it was precisely the Chubais ‘wing’ of the party that triumphed in the intra-party conflict following the parliamentary elections of 2003, with the other leaders (Irina Khakamada, Boris Nemtsov) splitting from the party either to launch new political projects or to pursue a business career. One may therefore expect the liberal-imperialist theme to resurface in the URF discourse, as the party seeks to reassert itself prior to the 2007 parliamentary elections.

<sup>117</sup> Remizov 2003a.

<sup>118</sup> For the best examples of such tendencies see the work of Alexander Dugin, the leading Eurasionist thinker of the 1990s. See e.g. Dugin 2000.

<sup>119</sup> Remizov 2003a.

are united in the *cosmopolitan* valorisation of atheistic and anti-national community.<sup>120</sup> Only when stripped of religious and national particularism, may this community be thought as universal.

Narochnitskaya's thesis connects with a more philosophical critique of universalism, practiced by a key Russian political philosopher of conservative persuasion – Mikhail Remizov. Remizov reconstructs the concept of conservatism epistemically in terms of 'emphatic particularism', an intellectual disposition that is diametrically opposed to the 'left-wing' critique of ideology.<sup>121</sup> While the latter approach condemns the universalist claims of ideology as being *in fact* conditioned by particular constellations of interests, conservatism aesthetises *this very particularity*, manifests and valorises it in its own self-presentation and criticises universalist claims solely as 'bad taste', a hypocritical or cowardly refusal to practice philosophical or political discourse *in first person*. In other words, the historically and culturally conditioned and politically particularistic status of an idea is for a conservative its *truth-criterion*: a statement that is not spatio-temporally or contextually grounded is ipso facto *groundless*. As opposed to the critique of ideology which practices such contextualisation as a means of 'unravelling' and delegitimising a certain idea, the same operation undertaken by a conservative rehabilitates it: even if purely universal and unconditioned knowledge were *possible*, it would be literally *out of place* and quite simply *would not count*. Conservatism is thus defined epistemically as the *apology of prejudice*,<sup>122</sup> which accepts the irreducible pluralism of all cultures and modes of knowledge *except* those which pretend to be universal, decontextualised or multicultural. The apology of prejudice is thus irreducible to the solipsistic assertion of the subjective truth of one's position but is rather a disposition that accepts and valorises the multiplicity of irreconcilable positions without presuming the possibility of their reconciliation through universal communication or even peaceful coexistence in the liberal project of multicultural tolerance: for Remizov, multi-culturalism is *not itself a culture* and hence is not to be taken into account.<sup>123</sup>

Similarly, Narochnitskaya argues that the abandonment of the categories of religion and the nation in the aggressive promotion of liberal universalism deprives liberalism itself of its particular national and religious origins, without which, as an *actually universal* disposition, it turns into a monster of a nihilistic, hedonistic and narcissistic ideology. "The central ideologem here is the abstract individual with his rights. The valorisation of physical existence as the supreme value undermines not only the two millennia of Christian culture but also the elementary norms of collective life. [...] This is the de-humanisation and bestialisation of man, since human being exists only where the spirit overrides the flesh. [...] The nation stops being a continuous organism, held together by spiritual and historical experiences and becomes mere population or *okhlos*."<sup>124</sup> This is what allegedly took place in postcommunist Russia, where liberalism entailed little more than the triumph of base consumerist values and the decline of patriotism, morality and faith. This partial and hurried adoption of select 'Western values' is for Narochnitskaya nothing less than a "capitulation

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<sup>120</sup> Narochnitskaya 2004a.

<sup>121</sup> Remizov 2002b.

<sup>122</sup> Remizov 2003b. The opposition to universalist ideas justifies Remizov's definition of conservatism as *anti-utopian* thought, insofar as utopianism is understood as the abstraction from the spatiotemporal. In contrast, the attachment of the conservative to the immediate spatiotemporal coordinates of discourse renders it, in Remizov's provocative description, literally *fundamentalist*.

<sup>123</sup> Remizov 2002b. This thesis accords with the seminal critique of multiculturalism in the work of Slavoj Žižek. See Žižek 2004, pp. 110-138.

<sup>124</sup> Narochnitskaya 2004d.

before Europe”, which in her view is the only vision of Russia’s future that liberals can offer.

The Moscow liberals, in love with the West, have destroyed the ‘monster’ of the USSR so that poor little Europe could, without fear, deliver progress with bombs to everyone. The pro-Western intelligentsia will apparently continue to gladly accept the mentor tone of the USA when it comes to democracy, rights and freedoms. [...] The ideologists of professor’s offices and dissident kitchens, thoroughly incapable of constructive work, call for us to submit to the West, which would allegedly help integrate Russia into the world economic system.<sup>125</sup>

Nonetheless, the conservative response must consist not in isolation but in purposeful self-exclusion of Russia from European and other Western structures so that it may reassert itself as a sovereign subject with its own distinct (necessarily particularist) identity that has a greater potential to “restore the spiritual edifice, abandoned by Europe”.<sup>126</sup>

Anyone who insists on Russia having economic or cultural interests that do not correspond with the interests of the West is immediately accused of isolationism. Similarly, the West threatens isolation if Russia returns to the status of a Great Power. Yet, the historical experience tells us that the West will neither wish, nor be able to, isolate a strong and independent Russia, since it would be a system-making entity. The stronger and more independent Russia is, the more important it will be for the West, even if at first this will be accompanied by hostility. *The present humiliation of Russia is precisely the consequence of its loss of any independent historical significance.*<sup>127</sup>

At the same time, Narochnitskaya’s discourse on Europe does not mark her vision of the optimal course of Russian foreign policy as very heterogeneous to European policies: “I suggest that just like them we should pursue national interests and defend domestic business. Self-isolation is fatal for the country, as history has shown us. However, equally fatal is the *artificial self-depersonalisation*. The recent years have shown that Russia can not develop without goals and values that go beyond mere earthly existence. It is a difficult task: we need modernisation, but without that version of Westernisation that destroys the meaningful core of our historical life.”<sup>128</sup> The relation between Russia and Europe is thus ultimately ambivalent: on the one hand, cosmopolitan Westernisation destroys Russia’s traditional identity, while on the other hand the preferable policy course suggested for Russia consists in acting just like the contemporary Europe *does itself but does not allow others to*. The ‘thick’ version of conservative criticism that views the Russian ‘tradition’ as inherently and substantively opposed to Europe is combined with a ‘thinner’, much more conventional criticism of European (or more generally Western) cynicism and double standards, whereby ‘hierarchically included’ states are deprived of exactly those policy options that EU states easily allow themselves. The ambivalent combination of these two tendencies is particularly intense in Narochnitskaya’s controversial article, written in the aftermath of the Beslan school massacre.

The article, called “A Punishment for Indifference”, is a stinging accusation targeting whatever remains of the naïve cosmopolitan disposition in the Russian political discourse. The horrific massacre of children must, according to the author, be a wake-up call for the Russian intelligentsia that must result in “the *complete emancipation from illusions with regard to the so-called ‘civilised community’*”. Right before the eyes of this false mentor the

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Narochnitskaya 2004a.

<sup>127</sup> Narochnitskaya 2004d.

<sup>128</sup> Narochnitskaya 2004c.

monsters, lacking anything resembling human ethics, tortured and murdered hundreds of children. And yet the civilised community refers to them as ‘rebels’. [...] The foreign media have stripped the mask of decency and *we have seen the true face of ‘civilised Europe’ and its relation to Russia.*”<sup>129</sup> Narochnitskaya proceeds with the discussion of historical analogies from the 19<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. the Crimean War) to illustrate her claim that, its own assertions notwithstanding, Europe has been historically hostile to Russia and has been eager to condone *any* political force that may weaken Russia or prevent its consolidation, including terrorism. The newly unveiled ‘true face’ of Europe is all the more dramatic, since in contrast to the early 1990s, when the cosmopolitan orientations formed the mainstream of Russian politics and were able to act in concert with Europe with regard to the opposition to the first Chechen war, the present Russian political mainstream is increasingly oriented towards the reassertion of sovereignty and the hardline measures against separatism and is thus strongly dissonant with the European criticism of the tendencies in Russian politics:

Against this background, the scattered voices that still demand to “to stop the criminal war against the ‘heroic mountain people’, who are fighting against the empire” appear grotesque and are no longer dangerous to national self-consciousness, which has grown immune to them. But it is precisely these voices that in the early 1990s had direct influence over public opinion, undertaking an unprecedented campaign of smearing the state and the army. *Paradoxical as it may be, it is the ‘peacemakers’ that are indirectly responsible for what took place.* [...] It is time to openly recognise how damaging for Russia was the ten-year-long sermon of the *false conception of civil society*, where the measure of civility was the thesis ‘my Fatherland is where I feel good’ and the exemplar of a ‘democrat’ was the ‘citizen of the world’ who, with the help of the Council of Europe, participates in the defeat of his own government in a war.<sup>130</sup>

This statement demonstrates most starkly the conservative self-exclusion of Russia from present-day Europe, as well as the exclusion from legitimate Russian politics of those *within* Russia, whose loyalty to European cosmopolitanism overrides the duties of citizenship. At the same time, this extreme dissociation is combined, on the level of the positive programme, with an almost disappointingly trivial vision of the positivity of the ‘self-excluded’ sovereign Russia: the reaffirmation of national interest, the insistence on the principles of sovereign equality and territorial integrity, the revival of the armed forces - in short, nothing that exceeds the minimal set of attributes for the *reconstitution of a modern nation-state*, a European phenomenon if there ever was one.

We may observe a similar ambivalence in Rogozin’s volume *Reclaiming Russia* in which passionate diatribes against the EU coexist with a positive programme that, with very few reservations, belongs squarely to the tradition of European political realism. The already-cited invectives about ‘Euromembers’ with ‘sold sovereignties’ are combined with the presentation of the desirable foreign policy in terms of “the pragmatic policy of national success, [...] civic dignity and historical pride, in the absence of any humiliation of others, belligerence, self-importance or arrogance”.<sup>131</sup> This policy course that Rogozin terms ‘national egoism’ appears to be little more than a classical realist blueprint of a policy of national interest that is, moreover, grounded in the minimalist commonality of values, akin to the ‘thin’ conception of ‘international society’.

The former Soviet sense of superiority, the fantasies over possible geopolitical ‘triangles’ [between Russia, China and India, suggested by the left opposition during the 1990s] and the

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<sup>129</sup> Narochnitskaya 2004b.

<sup>130</sup> Narochnitskaya 2004b.

<sup>131</sup> Rogozin 2004e.

eventual limitless submissiveness in relations with foreign partners must be replaced by a *different style of policy – dignified and unhurried, friendly without being slavish*. Russian diplomacy must be preventive rather than reactive. It must work ahead, creating favourable situations and outcomes in the world, rather than respond to events that already occurred. [...] The only alternative to the partnership with the West may only be open confrontation and even a poor peace is better than war. We must learn to act cleverly and prudently and not participate in anyone's adventures. [...] *We must never sacrifice our priority interests, of which the central one is the existence of Russia as an independent sovereign state.*<sup>132</sup>

This fragment clearly demonstrates that the policy course, dictated by the left-conservative narrative of self-exclusion is furthest away from the Soviet conflation of statecraft and ideology in the international communist project as well as the utopian geopolitical scenarios of the national-patriotic opposition of the 1990s. Instead, what is at stake is a simple, but nonetheless a fundamental gesture of *self-delimitation*, whereby Russia clears free a minimal space, from which it can act in the modality of a sovereign state.

How Russia is thought of in the world is obviously important. But even more important is how we think of ourselves. [...] *Russia is not a dollar bill to be liked by everyone*. The main thing is to act in accordance with our national interests, *understanding that other states have their interests too*. What they ought to know is that their interests end at the tip of our nose. *The world is imperfect. It still respects force*. We did not create this rule but we have to live with it. And the power that we seek to enhance must be directed towards strengthening our security and economic might.<sup>133</sup>

The stinging critique of Europe and the West more generally can not therefore be viewed as inherent to the political philosophy of left conservatism but is rather a response to the particular obstacle to Russia's emergence as a sovereign subject. For 'left-conservatives' the figure of Europe has functioned as the *discursive limitation on Russia's enunciative modality*, deployed either from the outside (in the imposition of strict conditionality for Russia in order to gain acceptance as a legitimate subject) or from the inside (by the cosmopolitan liberals, whose 'hijacking' of the linkage to the valorised object of Europe previously served to endow them with discursive privileges, if not an actual monopoly on legitimate discursive practice within the country). As a resolution of this problem, Rogozin suggests an attitude of neither hostility or fetishism, but rather that of *indifference* towards the West:

It is strange that a country with a millennium-old culture, the most reading country in the world, suddenly became so stupid, opened its mouth and started waiting what the West may have to say about us and what it shall recommend. *It is time to look at the West with greater indifference: it is not a teacher and we are not pupils.*<sup>134</sup>

Although at first glance this strategy may be dismissed as facile, it connects with more serious philosophical discussion in conservative circles on the very function of the figure of Europe in the Russian political discourse. In a programmatic article, Mikhail Remizov observes the tendency of Russian liberals to speak of Europe in exclamatory and axiomatic terms and suggests instead that any enunciation of 'Europe' must be accompanied by the

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Rogozin 2004e.

reflection on the meaning of the concept.<sup>135</sup> The proverbial ‘European identity’ is obviously a problematic term, if one expects identity to be constituted on the basis of geographical, cultural or geopolitical criteria. However, this is precisely the path avoided by the discourse of European integrationism, which instead deploys universalist claims that can not be *localised* and are therefore, in the conservative worldview, *out of place*. Similarly, Dmitry Zamyatin points to the increasing irrelevance of cultural-historical and geopolitical factors to the European identity and suggests that rather than designate a spatially particular locus, ‘Europe’ refers to a particular global *strategy*, entirely independent of spatial coordinates and hence exemplary of the *utopian* political disposition.<sup>136</sup> The only positive figure of Europe, accepted by the conservative political ontology, would be a neo-imperial Europe, asserting its geopolitical and cultural particularism along the lines of the contemporary European ‘far right’. Recognising that such a Europe would still be geopolitically antagonistic to Russia<sup>137</sup>, Yegor Holmogorov nonetheless proclaims it to be a “worthy and stronger adversary than the blurry geopolitical interjection of today’s liberal EU”.<sup>138</sup> Since at present such a neo-imperial project is not anticipated, Remizov ventures that “the very term ‘European identity’ may well be a contradiction in terms. Thus, the rhetorical utilisation of the word ‘Europe’ is simulative in the classical sense, i.e. it refers only to itself [...] and possibly to the very act of renunciation of meaning. *Euro-optimism celebrates its own non-identity*.”<sup>139</sup> Therefore, the task of ‘integration into Europe’, perpetually reaffirmed by President Putin, is impossible even if it were desirable, since ‘Europe’ merely designates a locus where it ought to be, a locus presently *vacant*.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, Remizov conceives of Europe as a historical archetype, a *memorial* that deserves an epitaph rather than the reverence of a candidate for ‘integration’.

Therefore, left conservatism makes a move that is far more radical than the century-old oscillation between fetishisation and denunciation of Europe. Instead, it attacks the very *discourse* of “Russia and Europe”, which has arguably been constitutive of Russia’s identity, as markedly *irrelevant* in all its modalities: the Gorbachevian optimism of the ‘Common European Home’, the desire of right-wing liberals to ‘abduct Europe’ by its reduplication in the post-Soviet ‘liberal empire’, or even the already discussed move of pronouncing Russia to be the ‘true’ Europe as opposed to the degenerate Europe of ‘pederasts and punks’ decried by Rogozin.<sup>141</sup> This wild oscillation of positions that nonetheless all *refer* to Europe as a relevant Other is for Remizov a symptom of *hysteria* that must be ceased by a simple *dissociation* of Russia from Europe *as such*:

Up to this moment European politics was an *existential zone* for us, an area of fateful deeds, in which *we fought not so much for our interests, but for the formation of our identity*. Europe has never been our friend but has always been our Other, the glance of which we were trying to steal, deserve or provoke so that it could mediate our subjectivity. The ‘abduction of Europe’ resembles an *erotic game with a succession of sadistic and masochistic phases*. First

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<sup>135</sup> Remizov 2001a. See also Remizov 2002c. Cf. Elbe 2002 for a ‘European’ attempt at a similar rupture of the self-evidence of ‘Europe’.

<sup>136</sup> Zamyatin 2002.

<sup>137</sup> For the more conventionally geopolitical argument on the inherent antagonism between Russia and Europe see Tsimbursky 2002. Geopolitical readings of Europe differ from the left-conservative ones, in that the latter discourse perceives European *normative* expansion as a threat to Russia, while for geopoliticians the thrust of European policies is simply to push Russia *aside* from European affairs, to deny it any presence in continental politics. The ‘colonising’ drive of Europe is, according to Tsimbursky, directed towards the Mediterranean rather than Eurasia.

<sup>138</sup> Holmogorov 2002.

<sup>139</sup> Remizov 2001b.

<sup>140</sup> Remizov 2001b.

<sup>141</sup> See e.g. Rogozin 2004d, an article tellingly titled “We are the True Europe”.

we impose ourselves on it in order to define ourselves through its frightened stare and then reject our selves to be defined by it through a condescending glance. [Thus,] the very abduction of Europe is twisted inside out and is presented as a *return* to it.<sup>142</sup>

Since the present EU is viewed as lacking proper political subjectivity and an unlikely ‘conservative’ Europe would still be Russia’s geopolitical antagonist, the ‘question of Europe’ is of no consequence for Russia’s self-identification and should be discarded without regret. Russia must neither join nor confront Europe, instead, in Remizov’s fortunate formulation, it must ‘*get over*’ it.<sup>143</sup>

The discourse on Europe, practiced by such younger ‘left-conservatives’ as Remizov and Holmogorov, is thus distinct from the geopolitical constructions of e.g. Alexander Dugin or Alexei Panarin, prevalent in the ‘national-patriotic’ discourse of the 1990s. Indeed, one may doubt whether ‘left conservatism’ is *at all* affected by the ‘geopolitical imagination’ with its constitutive cleavage of Atlanticism vs. Eurasianism, which fractures the image of Europe into the pro-American Atlanticist group and the presumably Russia-friendly Eurasian Heartland. Instead, left conservatism is considerably more attuned to the realities of contemporary European thought and practice with the consequence of abandoning all attempts at finding a ‘true’ Europe with which Russia ought to identify and cooperate. Instead, the ‘question of Europe’ is simply *removed* from the Russian political agenda in the strictly sovereignty-based vision of foreign policy. The difference between the liberal and left-conservative discourses is now clear. For the liberal narratives of exclusion and self-exclusion, Russia’s entry into the ‘European community’ remains a valuable objective, though its achievement ought not to be tied with the subjection to external normative pressure. This stance leads to the complex choreography of frequently irreconcilable positions: from the repeated oaths of Russia’s unequivocally ‘European choice’ to the ceremonies of taking offence and feigning retreat. On the other hand, for ‘left-conservatives’, the very *paradigm of integration* appears discredited by the processes of hierarchical inclusion, and the maximal content of cooperation is exhausted by what we in the next chapter shall term ‘mutual delimitation’ of Russia and Europe, whereby the interface between the two parties is grounded in the recognition of each other’s *legitimate difference*. The conflictual disposition towards Europe in left conservatism is thus ultimately less a question of Russian-European relations than a strictly domestic question of Russia ‘getting over’ Europe in its identity formation. In terms of EU impact, this narrative features the most striking combination of the *disabling* and *disconnective* pathways: both the notion of a common institutional and normative space between Russia and the EU and the ideal of integration through transnational societal connections are entirely dispensed with in this discourse. Within the contemporary Russian political discourse, the centrality of sovereignty limits the scope of discursive diffraction to the oscillation between the problematisation of the lack of due recognition of Russia as a member of the ‘Western’ or ‘European’ community and, as it were, the *de-problematisation* of the question of recognition as such, whereby Russia’s identity no longer requires the confirmatory nod of the Other. While the liberal narrative of self-exclusion asserted institutional difference on the basis of the underlying political identity, the left-conservative narrative dismantles this deep structure altogether in a purely *autopoietic* constitution of Russia’s identity in terms of its *pure difference from its exterior*. It would therefore be fair to claim that in the narrative of self-exclusion *all possible forms of EU impact are minimised*, and in the left-conservative strand

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<sup>142</sup> Remizov 2001a.

<sup>143</sup> Remizov 2002d.

of this narrative the very conception of Russia's subjectivity is constituted in the manner that precludes any EU impact *whatsoever*.

### **Conclusion: Beyond the Exclusion/Inclusion Opposition in EU-Russian relations**

We have now completed the analysis of the dyadic conflict narrative of self-exclusion, which goes beyond the problematisation of the EU *exclusion* of Russia to the advocacy of Russia's greater *self-delimitation* from the EU normative space as a state with a newly found appreciation of sovereignty, keen to retain the freedom of manoeuvre in domestic reforms and foreign policies. The concept of hierarchical inclusion serves to challenge the axiomatic status of the virtues of integration and opens the conflict narrative to the bifurcation into two alternatives: the liberal strategy of *redoubling* the image of Europe in the project of 'liberal empire' and the left-conservative discursive abolition of the 'question of Europe' as such, whereby both positive and negative modes of identification give way to the demonstrative *indifference* towards the formerly fetishised object. Our discussion of the EU-Russian conflict discourse, articulated in the Russian political debates, therefore leads us from the focus on the *negative* impact of EU in the narrative of exclusion through the discussion of possible *responses* to such negative impact towards, finally, the articulation of a discursive practice that is wholly *dissociated* from the 'question of Europe' and seeks to *reduce EU impact* on Russian politics in all its varieties.

Yet, what is the relation between the two conflict narratives, reconstituted in the analysis in this and the previous chapter? Is the combination between the problematisation of exclusion and the valorisation of self-exclusion a mere contradiction, an indicator of the fragmented nature of the Russian political discourse which fails to achieve a consolidated position on the 'question of Europe' and is doomed to forever oscillate between incompatible positions and mutually exclusive claims? Timofei Bordachev considers the tension between the reassertion of state sovereignty in the Russian discourse and the interest in cooperation and integration with the EU to be the key contradiction in EU-Russian relations that is liable to create conflictual situations and crises.<sup>144</sup> However, this argument both proceeds from the claim that sovereignty and integration are a priori incompatible principles and conceives of the apparent contradiction in the Russian stance as purely immanent to the domestic political discourse. With regard to this claim, we may argue that the conflict narratives which we have reconstituted function as dynamic *responses* to the concrete policy encounters with the EU (over Kaliningrad, the visa issue, Chechen separatism, etc.) The dynamic understanding of these narratives is crucial for grasping the important tendency within the liberal discourse to gradually move away from the enunciative modality of the *complainant* in the narrative of exclusion toward the more active modality of the *double* of Europe, the subject of the sovereign reconstitution of Russia and the wider post-Soviet space along the lines of European liberalism. The development of the conservative discourse is similarly dynamic, yet in this case the shift is from the more *militant* position in the struggle over 'true' and 'false' notions of Europe that demands due recognition of Russia as a 'true European' country towards the more resigned (if still active) stance of 'getting over Europe'. Both liberal and conservative strands of discourse therefore move, in a fully logical manner, from the *initial endorsement of integration* through the *problematisation* of EU's exclusionary policies or the hierarchical nature of the offered inclusion to the disillusioned *abandonment of the integrationist ideal* in the reaffirmation of sovereignty.

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<sup>144</sup> Bordachev 2003a, pp. 102-108.

Neither is this development a merely hypocritical strategy of saving one's face, pretending that inclusion was never a serious request, once it has been denied. Instead, the concept of hierarchical inclusion which have introduced in this paper permits us to go beyond the facile opposition between exclusion and inclusion and thus eliminate the apparent contradiction between the two conflict narratives. Indeed, both the narratives of exclusion and self-exclusion have the same object of problematisation – the manifest *interactional asymmetries* in EU-Russian relations. Whether one advocates a greater inclusion of Russia in the European space or seeks to delimit Russia from it, the fundamental grievance that incites the conflict discourse is the perception of the absence of genuine intersubjectivity in EU-Russian encounters. We may therefore consider hierarchical inclusion to be the key '*point of diffraction*' of the entire political discourse on Russia's relations with Europe, while the narratives of exclusion and self-exclusion may be viewed in the Foucauldian sense as the effects of the dispersion of discursive practices, according to the rules of formation of the 'strategies' of discourse.<sup>145</sup>

The two strategies of 'exclusion' and 'self-exclusion' arise on the basis of the same discursive structure, marked by the problematisation of interactional asymmetry, the split of the object of Europe into 'true' and 'false' components and the set of enunciative modalities ranging from that of a passive complainant to that of an anti-EU militant. They only diverge from each other in the relation they establish to the key nodal point of hierarchical inclusion and this 'diffraction' accounts for the dynamic and dispersed character of the discourse. At the same time, the two strategies follow a systematic logic of formation, which specifies the content of possible discursive practices on the basis of an initial choice of whether one seeks to deal with hierarchical inclusion through pressing for *more equitable inclusion* and the dismantlement of existing hierarchies or attempts to *evade hierarchical subjection* through exiting the space of 'inclusion' as such. Interestingly, these strategies of discourse do not coincide with the division of discursive practices along the liberal-conservative cleavage in the Russian political spectrum. We have demonstrated that *both* liberals and conservatives participate in *both* conflict narratives, even though the content of discursive practices varies according to the 'ideological' orientations of the respective parties, the limits of variance nonetheless restricted to the two strategies. It is therefore as if the two discursive distinctions, between 'exclusion' and 'self-exclusion' and between liberalism and 'left-conservatism', became superimposed on one another, the former ordering the formal structure of discourse and the latter providing substantive content to its practice.

The developments that we have analysed demonstrate that the 'inclusive' strand of discourse on the relations with Europe has been ultimately less than successful, leading many of its practitioners to opt for a more 'self-exclusive' orientation. In other words, we observe a move from the problematisation of the negative impact of the EU on Russia's domestic and foreign policies towards the drive to minimise this impact as such, particularly on the fundamental level of identity construction. One interpretation of this move may be the location of the EU-Russian conflict discourse in the wider context of Russian postcommunist transformation and the project of 'reconstitution of the state' in the Putin presidency, which is marked by the general trend of the reaffirmation of sovereignty. While clearly not incompatible with integration per se, sovereignty is certainly incompatible with *hierarchical* inclusion, which by definition deprives the state of autonomous subjectivity. Thus, when inclusion is equated with a submission to hierarchy, the narrative of EU exclusion of Russia becomes unsustainable unless it simultaneously disavows the value of

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<sup>145</sup> Foucault 1989, chapter 1.

sovereignty. The incompatibility of sovereign subjectivity and hierarchical inclusion therefore leads to the increasing prevalence of the narrative of self-exclusion, which may be expected to be a self-fulfilling prophecy with regard to EU-Russian relations, since the problematic of sovereignty is comparatively less articulated in the EU discourse on relations with Russia.

The divergence of the two parties in relation to sovereignty has been offered as a key explanation for the occurrence of conflictual dispositions in EU-Russian relations. Hiski Haukkala has posited a binary opposition between Russian and European foreign policy discourses, which may be summed in terms of three distinctions. Firstly, the EU discourse is taken to be 'value-based', centred on the affirmation of human rights and humanitarian principles, while Russia "approaches international relations, and thus its relations with the EU, through the prism of realist thinking where concepts such as balance of power and geopolitics are more important than references to common values".<sup>146</sup> Secondly, "whereas the EU can be seen as moving towards a post-modern and post-sovereign political system, the Russian project is still very modern in its essence."<sup>147</sup> Thirdly, while the EU is taken to embrace a positive stance towards the dual process of globalisation and regionalisation, Russia is perceived as wary of globalisation as a form of hegemony and regionalisation as a negative force of fragmentation, which threatens Russia's very territorial integrity. In this argument, the broad and somewhat facile labels of 'realist' or 'geopolitical' approaches, a 'modern, sovereign project', and the state-centric opposition to globalisation that allegedly characterise the 'Russian project' are presented as thoroughly *exterior* to the political discourse of the EU.

A similar interpretation has been ventured on a more general level by Ole Wæver, according to whom the contemporary other of Europe is nothing other than its own past, i.e. the Europe of 'modern' sovereign nation-states.<sup>148</sup> Similarly, Thomas Diez has argued that a *temporal*, rather than *territorial* 'othering', has been the prime modality of identification of the post-war Europe.<sup>149</sup> However, as our analysis has shown, this 'temporal othering' is presently acquiring a clearly identifiable 'territorial other', namely, Russia, insofar as it constitutes its present identity on the basis of precisely the same markers that Europe is allegedly leaving behind. *Russia is thus the perfect image of 'Europe's past' surviving in the present.* This argument permits to understand and appreciate the persistent recourse of the conservative discourses of e.g. Narochnitskaya or Rogozin about Russia being 'truly European'. This statement is entirely true, insofar as modern sovereign statehood is an inherent feature of the European tradition; yet, it is precisely this tradition that is apparently discredited today, which lends some credence, though perhaps not veracity, to the claim that contemporary European practices have betrayed this tradition and are therefore 'false-European'. In this reading, Russia's reconstituted sovereign subjectivity by definition posits it as the 'Other of Europe', since it merely *territorialises* the dominant mode of temporal othering. The narrative of self-exclusion is then self-explanatory, insofar as any discursive affirmation of sovereignty excludes Russia from the EU discourse, whether it wants it or not. From this perspective, the Russian reaffirmation of sovereignty logically limits the possible pathways of EU impact to the *compulsory* pathway of top-level interstate dialogue, i.e. the EU impact is minimised and restricted to the most modest modality of influence, which consists in the mutual delimitation of the two parties as sovereign entities with

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<sup>146</sup> Haukkala, 2001, p. 8.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>148</sup> See Wæver 1998.

<sup>149</sup> Diez 2004.

legitimate interests, which need not coincide. Ironically, in this scenario of EU-Russian relations not merely Russia but also Europe is returning to its allegedly overcome 'past'.

Yet, how past *is* 'Europe's past'? To what extent has the EU actually abandoned the constitutive principle of modern sovereign statehood so that it is able to function as a 'temporal other'? Diez's own argument on temporal othering is characterised by the admission that this modality of othering is presently "losing in importance"<sup>150</sup> due to the resurgence of territorial or geopolitical othering of e.g. Islam, the United States, Turkey, Russia, etc. Although guarding against an excessive enthusiasm about the relegation of 'Europe's past' properly into the past, Diez's argument still presupposes that such a project is possible in principle. A somewhat different argument is ventured by Chris Browning in his discussion of the 'external/internal security paradox' that characterises European foreign policy.<sup>151</sup> According to Browning, there is a tension between the EU's goal of 'internal security', essentially a 'modernist' (supra-) statist project that rests on the strict and exclusive delimitation of borders, and the more open and outward-oriented project of external security, in which inclusive and cooperative relations with Russia appear to be crucial. In the context of EU-Russian relations the goal of internal security refers to containing the 'soft security threats' emanating from the bordering regions of Russia<sup>152</sup>, including crime and illegal immigration, and thus *guarding* the freedoms that obtain *within* the delimited EU space – a stance that is *ipso facto* exclusionary in relation to Russia. The Schengen regime clearly serves to respond to these threats, yet simultaneously problematises the project of external security, which presupposes Russia's further inclusion into the EU space. According to Lyndelle Fairlie, who analyses this dilemma in relation to Kaliningrad<sup>153</sup>, the EU faces a problem of simultaneously preventing the emergence of 'new dividing lines' in a project of enhancing cooperative arrangements in the Wider Europe and actively drawing those very same lines in the project of optimising internal security. While Kaliningrad obviously illustrates this dilemma most starkly, being the 'internal outside' of the EU that is impossible to deal with within the inside/outside logic, the dilemma in question appears to be of a more general significance for EU-Russian relations. Simply put, *the inclusive orientation of the project of external security is hampered by the exclusionary practices, necessitated by the concern for internal security*. In this line of argumentation, the dilemma is unlikely to be resolved by the adoption of the unequivocal course in either direction, if only because both internal and external security are likely to remain crucial goals for the EU.

The contribution of our study consists in demonstrating how a similar tension between the demand for greater inclusion (an 'integrationist' or 'external-security' narrative) and the valorisation of self-exclusion (a 'sovereign' or 'internal-security' narrative) operates within the Russian conflict discourse. The more specific contribution of this analysis is the concept of hierarchical inclusion that makes evident that conflictual dispositions in EU-Russian relations are *not* likely to disappear, were the EU more consistent in its adoption of the inclusive, integrationist line. It is not as if there was a *choice* between two simplistically conceived alternatives: thoroughgoing integration with the EU vs. a 'semi-isolationist', sovereignty-oriented policy line. As we have argued, the latter policy orientation is directly

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<sup>150</sup> Diez 2004, p. 328.

<sup>151</sup> Browning 2002.

<sup>152</sup> See Pursiainen 2001 for the detailed discussion of 'soft security threats' allegedly emanating from Northwest Russian regions, bordering on the EU.

<sup>153</sup> Fairlie 2001, pp. 14-19. The tension between external and internal security, i.e. between an "open and secure Union" is also the point of departure of Potemkina's (2003) analysis of Russian concerns with regard to the enlargement. See particularly pp. 229-234.

linked to the disappointment of a significant section of *both* liberal and conservative policy practitioners in the hierarchical nature of the presently operative modes of inclusion. Moreover, the concept of hierarchical inclusion is directly linked to the principle of sovereignty: while the subject enfolded in the hierarchical structure is by definition deprived of its sovereignty, the subject who constitutes the hierarchy in question is endowed with sovereignty in the very act of this constitution. However much dispersed among a series of structures or institutions, the practices of hierarchical inclusion point to the EU's *practice of its sovereignty* in its relations with Russia, not only in the obvious case of unambiguously exclusionary practices but also in the more intricate case of governing the process of Russia's inclusion in its normative space. Instead of a facile representation of two subjects, whose policies are guided by incompatible logics, we observe the existence of a complex amalgam of both sovereign and integrationist logics in the policies of both Russia and the EU. The negative impact of the EU, which we have elucidated in this paper, is therefore not merely a policy failure or a result of an a priori divergence of the EU and Russian policy logics, but the effect of a more fundamental contradiction at the heart of the 'European project', which draws the lines of exclusion at the heart of its own integrationist programmes and practices sovereignty in the very acts of its disavowal. Conflictual dispositions in EU-Russian relations are not likely to go away unless this contradiction is resolved, yet the question remains of whether it *can* be resolved at all without fundamentally reshaping the European project as we know it.

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ISSN 17431840

EUBorderConf working papers are published within the context of the research project “The European Union and Border Conflicts: The Impact of Integration and Association” (EUBorderConf), funded by the European Union’s Fifth Framework Programme, with additional funds from the British Academy, and co-ordinated at the Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLISIS), The University of Birmingham. The series may be of interest to anyone engaged with contemporary debates on the EU and border conflicts, including academics, PhD students and people working in the field. For more information please contact Jevgenia Viktorova at [j.viktorova@bham.ac.uk](mailto:j.viktorova@bham.ac.uk), or visit [www.euborderconf.bham.ac.uk](http://www.euborderconf.bham.ac.uk).