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# PORTRAYAL OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS GEORGIA IN 2008 AND UKRAINE IN 2014 IN THE WESTERN AND RUSSIAN ACADEMIA

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**Abstract.** This study examines how the Russo-Georgian War in 2008 and the Ukraine Crisis in 2014 were discussed in Western and Russian academic circles. The findings show that historical accounts as well as various theoretical frameworks were used to explain the Russian foreign policy (RFP) regarding these conflicts. In comparison, although mono-theoretical models were utilized in both cases, they are more dominant in the works of Western scholars. On the other hand, inductive historical explanations were used more in the works of Russian scholars. Another important point is that in the latter studies, alternative accounts to the Western unilateralism are more popular. These accounts reveal themselves with concepts such as "multipolar world" or "Eurasianism". As for the mono theoretical accounts, realist approaches seem to be the dominant framework in both cases. Realist frameworks emphasize the improved material capabilities of Russia and external pressures in its sphere of influence. The later component of the realist approach is stressed more by scholars from both academic circles. Moreover, even the studies that utilize different approaches, such as ideational explanations, domestic political factors, decision-maker related approaches, or the ones that highlight the regional competition, emphasize the role of the strategic or geopolitical imperatives as a factor that cannot be ignored regarding how RFP is formed and implemented.

**Key words:** Russian foreign policy, Ukraine crisis, Georgian crisis 2008, academic discussion

## *Introduction*

In the 2000s, Russia under the leadership of Vladimir Putin followed an assertive foreign policy, particularly in the post-Soviet space. Moscow viewed countries in this region joining NATO, allowing foreign military bases on their territories, and use of force by these countries without Moscow's consent as a threat; and promoted regional integration projects such as the CSTO and the Eurasian Economic Union [Trenin, 2012]. On the other hand, some scholars argued that Russia's primary goal in the post-Soviet space is the *de facto* recreation of the Soviet Union [Kanet, 2022] or the domination of Eurasia and to be treated as if it were the Soviet Union [Stent, 2019]. The movement of some of the former Soviet republics towards the West, away from Russian influence, has resulted in a conflict between Russia and the West in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. This culminated in the war in Georgia in 2008 and the Ukraine crisis in 2014, which resulted in Crimea joining Russia and the Civil War in the Donbas region. In February 2022, the conflict reached the point of no return when Moscow declared the start of the "Special Military Operation".

This historiographical study aims to reveal the patterns of Western and Russian academic circles regarding the RFP in the post-Soviet space, specifically the conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine. It examines the debates on Moscow's rationale for military and political interventions, and similarities and differences between the two sides. It will not claim that these patterns indicate a distinct camp of scholars, nor that the scholars reflect established narratives. Rather, it seeks to show the variety of arguments that can improve our understanding of these conflicts and Moscow's policies in its neighborhood.

This research takes a qualitative approach to examine the studies that discuss the underlying factors behind Moscow's policy regarding the Russo-Georgian War in 2008 and the Ukraine Crisis in 2014[1]. To develop a comprehensive database of studies, relevant keywords were used to search through e-journal databases, Google Scholar, and think-tank websites for scholarly articles and books written by Western and Russian scholars between 2008 and 2022. Initially, articles from journals indexed in databases such as SSCI or Scopus were reviewed, and then additional studies were identified through citation tracking. Websites of think tanks like the Russian International Affairs Council and the Carnegie Moscow Center[2], where mainly Russian scholars and analysts publish, were also consulted to make the database more representative. After an initial review, main arguments used to explain the cases were determined and categorized. Any source not fitting the criteria was excluded.

The research utilizes descriptive research to identify independent variables (and intervening variables, if any) and existing patterns among these studies, categorize, and later compare the arguments used to explain RFP regarding these two cases. Categories

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[1] In this article, "the Ukraine Crisis" refers to the chain of international events that erupted in early 2014. In that sense, it differs from "the Ukrainian Crisis", which refers to the internal political turmoil in Ukraine that started with the Maidan protests.

[2] The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Moscow Center was shut down in April 2022.

in this article were determined based on the literature on qualitative content analysis. Accordingly, there are two main approaches to categorization in content analysis: deductive and inductive. In the deductive approach, the researcher begins with established categories based on pre-existing knowledge and expectations. On the other hand, the inductive approach entails the researcher creating categories after an initial analysis of the data [Lamont, 2015]. In this study, an inductive approach was pursued to develop data-driven categories and prioritize the perspectives of those scholars whose studies were analyzed in this article [Drisko, Maschi, 2016: 103]. This approach is quite helpful in covering the rich literature on Moscow's decisions regarding these two conflicts, capturing different approaches, and establishing categories. The preliminary research also enabled the identification of the sources and scholars that could be used to represent each category.

Indeed, the latest developments in Ukraine and the ongoing military conflict constitute an important turning point in the history of Russia, the post-Soviet space and Europe and it will have lasting effects on a global scale. However, the conflict is still ongoing and its early to comment on the results of it. On the other hand, it is important to understand the reasons behind events Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014 for it contributes to our understanding on the ongoing military conflict.

The studies of RFP are divided into two parts. The first part looks at the Western academia's views, and they are broken down into five categories: 1) personality-based explanations, 2) domestic political factors, 3) ideational approaches, 4) realist approaches, and 5) eclectic accounts that combine aforementioned approaches. The second part looks at the Russian academia's views, which are divided into three categories: 1) domestic political factors, 2) regional aspects, such as competition with neighboring countries, and 3) global aspects, including both realist and constructivist approaches. In the end, the similarities and differences of these arguments are compared.

### *The Portrayal of the Conflicts in the Western Academia*

The western literature on RFP with a focus on its assertive policies and interventions in the post-Soviet space can be divided into five categories.

The first category examines the character of President Putin, analyzing how his personal characteristics, ideological beliefs, and professional experience shape and inform the Russian political system and foreign policy. Hill and Gaddy assert that the political system built in Russia by Vladimir Putin is highly personalized [Hill, Gaddy, 2013: 5] and thus the current Russian political system can be explained by his six identities [Hill, Gaddy, 2013: 15]. The first category consists of more generic ones that can be attributed to other figures from the ruling elite: the Statist, the History Man, and the Survivalist. These identities inform us about "Mr. Putin's views on the Russian State, his political philosophy and his conception of his first presidential term in the 2000s" [Hill, Gaddy, 2013: 9]. On the other hand, the second set of identities consists of the Outsider, the Free Marketeer, and the Case Officer. The authors argue that these identities are much more specific to Vladimir Putin [Hill, Gaddy, 2013: 10]. Similarly, Marten argues that the Russian president is an expert on immediate tactics but he is not a long-term

strategist. In both crises, Moscow's decisions to use force or to recognize the independence of the two breakaway republics in the Caucasus and the referendum results in Crimea were unexpected. Along with his KGB past, this explains the unpredictable and surprising decisions [Marten, 2015: 192]. Lastly, Michael McFaul argues that the agency of Vladimir Putin played an essential role in several RFP decisions, including the intervention in Ukraine. Rather than being a predetermined result of the international system's balance of power or of historical and cultural determinants, the return of Russia to a confrontational relationship with the US and the West was a choice made by President Putin [McFaul, 2020: 97].

The second category emphasizes the importance of domestic political factors. Götz further divides this category into two: *diversionary war theory* and *regime-security theory* [Götz, 2017: 233]. Adherents of the first approach argue that the reason behind the assertive policies of Moscow diverts the attention of the Russian public from economic problems and political protests. The second approach emphasizes the security of the regime and the possible democratic spillover arising from the Color Revolutions. Accordingly, Moscow sees the political revolutions and consequent regime changes in its neighborhood as a threat that may result in a similar outcome in Russia [Götz, 2017: 233]. Roy Allison, on the other hand, conceptualizes these two approaches as "*domestic political consolidation*" and argues that it "emerges as an important influence on Russian action in Ukraine", meaning the "intervention" in Ukraine both increased Putin's popularity and prevented aggravation of ongoing protests [Allison, 2014: 1296].

The third category consists of *ideational explanations*. This approach focuses mostly on the perceived identity and status of Russia. Feklyunina provides four main ideational factors: Russia's identity, recognition of Russia's identity by the others, Russia's engagement with international norms, and the role of practices and habits in its foreign policy [Feklyunina, 2018: 6].

Among these categories, the most common one is Russia's identity in the world and recognition of its status. The examination of Russia's status helps one to comprehend international politics and its evolution on a wider scale [Forsberg et al., 2014: 261]. They further state that Russia's endeavor to strengthen and restore its status as a great power in global politics has dominated current studies of post-Cold War RFP. The Ukraine crisis is an ideal example to apply this approach. Thus, they claim that the Russian behavior in this crisis was motivated by its worry of losing its great power status.

In his article about Russian neo-revisionism, Sakwa argues that Russian leaders believe their status as a great power is an inherent part of their character and destiny, and cannot be taken away by external actors. He suggests that when this status is not recognized it leads to *ressentiment* [Sakwa, 2009: 5]. His conclusion is that Russia's neo-revisionism does not mean they are trying to change the international system of the post-Cold War era, but rather they are dissatisfied with the application of these rules. Consequently, they refuse to simply accept EU norms and instead strive to be co-creators of Europe's destiny [Sakwa, 2009: 1]. On the other hand, Laruelle argues that Russia still sees itself as belonging to a European civilization, yet it is against the West-

ern/liberal way of development, creating its own identity based on a conservative comprehension of European values. This has enabled Russia to construct an "ideological language" that can be used to explain its foreign and domestic policy, portraying itself as the anti-liberal force of Europe [Laruelle, 2016: 294].

Moreover, some authors introduce geopolitical vision as a factor that affects foreign policy. Toal's *critical geopolitical analysis* examines and evaluates the discourses and practices of geopolitics by analyzing the geopolitical field (including the *sociospatial* context of statecraft and the social players), the geopolitical culture (the way states view themselves and the world) and the geopolitical condition (the foreign, political, military and cultural policies) [Toal, 2017: 3]. Taking into account the complex geography of the post-Soviet space and the historical ties between the former Soviet states, these three conceptual foundations contribute to the understanding of Moscow's actions in Georgia and Ukraine.

Chrzanowski conceptualizes *ontological security* to explain Russia's "intervention" into the Donbas region in Ukraine and this conflict's protracted nature. According to him, it is the practice of states reinforcing their self-identity through habitualization in relation to other states. This could explain why Russia became so entrenched in the Donbas, despite the fact that it could be detrimental to its long-term goals [Chrzanowski, 2021].

Realist literature typically emphasizes external factors, as well as the country's material capabilities. These theories are often divided into offensive and defensive strategies. Offensive realist approaches argue that the interventions in the post-Soviet space are the result of Russia's desire to expand its territory and increase its influence vis-à-vis its neighbors and the Western states. Karagiannis uses this framework to explain why Russia fought Georgia in 2008. He argues that the US first supported Turkey against Russia in the Caucasus as a balancing power, but after the growing ties and improving relations between the two, the US stepped in to act as an offshore balancer by promising NATO membership to Georgia. This initiative pushed Moscow to react [Karagiannis, 2013]. Following the offensive realist framework, Coyle argues that Moscow has managed to increase its influence beyond its geopolitical boundaries. He suggests this is achieved by exploiting the political confusion of its rivals, using its energy policy, and manipulating ethnic conflicts in the post-Soviet space [Coyle, 2018].

On the other hand, adherents of the defensive realism argue that Russia protects its interests and reacts to external threats. Although one of the leading figures of offensive realism, Mearsheimer perceives Russia as a defensive actor in the face of an expansion of the Western actors via international institutions [Mearsheimer, 2014]. Similarly, Treisman suggests that the "annexation" of Crimea was not a planned move and rather it was improvised after the fall of Yanukovich with the risk of losing the Sevastopol base [Treisman, 2016].

The final category of studies involves combining different theoretical frameworks in an eclectic approach. After evaluating different approaches to RFP in its "near abroad", Götz argues that to overcome the shortcomings of different approaches, it is better to use eclectic research where the researcher "develops explanations that specify

the relative weight, role, and relationship of different factors at play" [Götz, 2017: 242]. Mankoff explains Russia's policy in the 2008 Russo-Georgian War using a similar framework. He suggests that while Russia's desire to increase its power vis-à-vis the West was the main motivation, the aspiration for status and prestige as an intervening variable helps to explain the Russian policy better [Mankoff, 2009]. Splidsboel-Hansen develops this idea further in the Ukraine crisis, using neoclassical realism to explain how collective identity caused Moscow to interpret systemic inputs negatively. The author asserts "Putin framed himself into a corner from which there was only one way out – and that was through the door leading to Crimea" [Splidsboel-Hansen, 2015: 153]. D'Anieri supports this notion by looking at the Ukraine crisis from a neoclassical realist perspective, arguing that both systemic and domestic factors, namely security needs of various actors, the spread of democracy in Russia's sphere of interest, and domestic costs of a conciliatory policy and state capacity, were in play regarding the sources of conflict [D'Anieri, 2019: 26].

### The Portrayal of the Conflicts in the Russian Academia

Although it is possible to trace the theories of International Relations in the studies examined in this section, these theories are not explicitly stated in the majority of them. That is why in this section RFP regarding these conflicts will be examined within domestic, regional, and global aspects. One of the challenges of reviewing the studies of the Russian scholars is that these aspects were quite intertwined in their works. As a result, some of the articles will be mentioned in multiple sections.

To understand the domestic aspects of the conflicts, it is essential to analyze the underlying causes. The conflict in Georgia has been an ongoing issue since the days of the Soviet Union, and it intensified following its dissolution. Markedonov notes this aspect of the conflict between Georgia and Russia, and asserts that after the dissolution, not everyone recognized the borders between newly emerged states as legitimate [Markedonov, 2009: 73]. Similarly, Solov'ev refers to the historical legacies of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and the autonomous status that these two republics had under the Soviet Union. Naturally these republics did not want to give up their autonomous status and reacted when threatened [Solov'ev, 2009: 11]. After the independence of Ukraine, the status of Crimea constituted a problem too. The fact that most of the population of the peninsula is comprised of ethnic Russians; the historical significance of Crimea for the Russian history and the controversial transfer of the peninsula to the Ukrainian republic in 1954 were the main discussion points used by Russians who advocate the "reunification" of Crimea with Russia. Pro-Russian residents of the peninsula showed their will through a couple of actions right after the dissolution of the Soviet Union yet, Yeltsin's policies prevented a possible reunification [Trenin, 2011: 45]. However, following the Maidan protests, Ukraine *de facto* lost control of the peninsula and two other self-proclaimed republics were born in the Donbas.

The deeply rooted causes of both conflicts, however, do not explain Moscow's policies. Sushentsov and Neklyudov explore the relationship between Russia's domestic, regional, and global strategies in the Caucasus, noting that the RFP in the area reflects

the country's grand strategy. Firstly, they argue that Russia only interferes only if it thinks that the ethnic Russians living in a post-Soviet state were subjected to oppression [Sushentsov, Neklyudov, 2019: 130]. In relation to this, considering domestic security, any ethnic strife that may occur in the region poses a danger for Russia because of the multi-ethnic nature of the Caucasus. Markedonov emphasizes a similar point: "Ensuring stability in the former Soviet Republics of Transcaucasia is a prerequisite for Russia's peaceful domestic development and for the preservation of its territorial integrity" [Markedonov, 2012: 63].

Similar to the arguments from the "*regime security theory*", some authors argue that the Color Revolutions and their possible impacts on the security of the regime in Moscow played a role in RFP. These popular protests were seen as an expansion of the space of freedom and democracy in the former Communist countries by the Western world. However, Moscow feared these protests posed a danger to the stability of the government. Trenin suggested the Maidan could revive the anti-government protests of 2011–2012 in Russia [Trenin, 2014: 11–12].

The Russian political elite perceived the Maidan and subsequent events in Ukraine as a provocation from the West to humiliate Russia. The ousting of Yanukovich was interpreted by Moscow as a *de facto* declaration of war. A submissive retreat on the part of Russia would create a systemic risk, with potential opposition from both liberals and ultranationalists. In the end, the majority of the political elite ultimately agreed to the decision of the Kremlin, motivated by the need to restore historical justice, the removal of Yanukovich, and the prospect of a fascist government in Ukraine [Shatilov, 2015: 10].

In terms of regional matters, two primary arguments are closely connected to domestic and global aspects. Solov'ev's article, which was written before Russia's decision to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia's sovereignty, emphasizes the need for Russia to defend its interests in the Caucasus. As he puts it, Georgia's nationalist policies towards Abkhaz and Ossetian populations necessitate the recognition of Abkhazia's independence and the integration of South Ossetia into Russia [Solov'ev, 2009: 14].

The second argument considers the regional competition, especially in the Caucasus region. Regarding the ethnic composition of the region, historical enmities, and the interests of neighboring countries in the Caucasus, the existence and motives of external actors should be taken into consideration too. Markedonov suggests that when looking at the geopolitical situation of the Caucasus, the rivalry between the United States and Russia should not be the only factor taken into consideration. It is also important to look at the role of the region's closest neighbors, namely Turkey and Iran, as well as the role of the EU, which has begun its enlargement into the Black Sea area [Markedonov, 2012: 58].

The role of the EU in these conflicts is more visible regarding the Ukraine crisis. As is known, the Maidan Protests started the day Yanukovich abruptly changed his decision to sign the Association Agreement with the EU. The implications of this agreement revealed the clash of interests in the post-Soviet space. Lukyanov explains that Ukraine was at the heart of Russia's Eurasian Union and the integration process of the union was directed towards Europe, not Eurasia [Lukyanov, 2015: 104–107]. In addition, the

Eurasian Union concept became the foundation of the foreign policy in Vladimir Putin's presidential program in 2011 and Ukraine had a key position in this project [Trenin, 2017]. Moreover, Baev states that the real content of the conflict with Ukraine was its movement in the direction of the EU although the rhetoric among the Russian political elite mainly focused on the USA and the NATO as main adversaries [Baev, 2015: 95].

As mentioned above, these aspects are intertwined, and it is difficult to differentiate between them while assessing the motivations of Moscow. Alexandrova-Arbatova highlights how one factor can influence another in regards to Moscow's motivations. In an article about security in the Black Sea after the Ukrainian crisis, she compares the regional effects of the conflict to the boomerang effect and suggests that issues at the strategic level can have repercussions at the regional level, which then further influence the strategic level [Alexandrova-Arbatova, 2015: 129]. In an earlier article, where she discusses the impact of the Caucasus crisis on regional and European security, her arguments go parallel with this view. She states that the war in 2008 was essentially an outcome of a clash of security interests between Russia and the US/NATO, triggered by regional developments [Alexandrova-Arbatova, 2009: 287]. Although regional developments were a factor in the escalation of the conflict, she emphasizes that the conflict was a direct result of the end of the bipolar world and the enlargement of NATO in the post-Soviet space at the expense of Russia would be dangerous as it may provoke a conflict in Ukraine [Alexandrova-Arbatova, 2009: 299].

This argument can be attributed to realist approaches. Trenin argues that most analysts in Russia saw the Georgia conflict as a proxy war waged by the US to limit its influence, with Russia changing its policy from attempting to engage in a partnership with the West to protect its interests in its sphere of influence, and warning of the possible spillover of this competition into Ukraine [Trenin, 2009]. Buzgalin and Kolganov posits that the Saakashvili regime could not have acted without US approval and support, and Russia had to react to the aggressive policies of Saakashvili and Bush [Buzgalin, Kolganov, 2008]. Sushentsov and Neklyudov suggest that Russia's use of hard power and its balancing strategy in the region are a response to its perceived vulnerability, due to geopolitical rivalries and the increasing influence of the EU and the US. This strategy is seen as a formative experience for the Russian grand strategy, demonstrated through its involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its intervention in Syria [Sushentsov, Neklyudov, 2019].

In regards to the Ukraine crisis, Karaganov has argued that Moscow perceived the events following the Maidan as a Western policy of containment against Russia, forcing them to take action in order to protect their strategic position[1]. Moreover, he argues that the discord between Russia and the West originates from Moscow's refusal to abide by the rules enforced by the West over the past 25 years. He maintains that Russia must defend its own interests in areas that it views as having a major impact on its security

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[1] Karaganov, S., (2014) 'Russia needs to defend its interests with an iron fist', Financial Times, 5 March 2014. URL: https://www.ft.com/content/1b964326-a479-11e3-9cb0-00144feab7de (accessed: 26.01.2023).

[Karaganov, 2014]. Russia's main struggle is stopping the West from expanding into its sphere of influence which is vital to Russia's survival[1].

From a broader and theoretical perspective, Kazantsev et al. evaluate RFP regarding the frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet space between 1991 and 2018. They divide these conflicts as first and second-generation conflicts and argue that although these conflicts were considered a reaction to the Western expansion into the Russian sphere of interest, this is only valid for the second-generation conflicts that include Russia's policy towards Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014. In the 90s, these frozen conflicts were mostly treated as ethno-territorial and ethno-linguistic conflicts and Moscow's policy was simply freezing them. Later, decision-making mechanisms were centralized and the degree of opposition to the West, especially to NATO, increased. As a result, these ethno-territorial conflicts transformed into geopolitical conflicts [Kazantsev et al., 2014]. This trend became more salient after Vladimir Putin's famous speech at the Munich security conference in 2007. Building on this study's categorization, Markedonov argues that these conflicts are transforming from ethnopolitical ones to geopolitical ones between Russian and the West. In parallel with Kazantsev and his colleagues, he advocates that the first-generation *de facto* states are mainly the result of the developments during the late Soviet period and its collapse, and the growing fight for revisiting statuses of former union and autonomous entities. However, from 2008 on these *de facto* states became the subject of the competition between Russia and the West [Markedonov, 2021: 81].

Some studies use ideational approaches to explain the second-generation conflicts in the post-Soviet space, which Kazantsev and his colleagues classify as such, even though constructivist approaches are often thought to provide a better explanation for the first-generation conflicts. For example, according to Tsygankov, much of Russia's reaction considering Georgia and Ukraine can be explained by its perception of threat stemming from the expansion of the NATO because Georgia's and Ukraine's desire to join the NATO exacerbated Russia's sense of vulnerability and isolation by the West [Tsygankov, 2016: 201]; and frustrated Russia with the lack of recognition of its values and interests in Eurasia by the US and NATO, together with Ukraine's role in the Kremlin's foreign policy calculations [Tsygankov, 2015]. Similarly, but from a critical point of view, Pain theorizes that the root cause of the war between Russia and Georgia is due to a shared illusion of imperialism, with Russia believing itself to be a regional superpower in a multipolar world [Pain, 2009: 10].

On the other hand, Lukyanov argues that both the strategic importance of the Russian naval base in Sevastopol and national-cultural and historical factors played a role in the decision to intervene in Crimea [Lukyanov, 2014]. Deliagin, for instance, states that the Crimean people never considered themselves a part of Ukraine. Crimea has been a part of Russia since the 18th century and even the ethnic Ukrainians who inhabit the peninsula perceive themselves as a part of Russian culture [Deliagin, 2015:

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[1] Karaganov, S., (2014) 'Western delusions triggered this conflict and Russians will not yield', Financial Times, 14 September 2014. URL: https://www.ft.com/content/05770494-3a93-11e4-bd08-00144feabdc0 (accessed: 26.01.2023).

7]. In another article, Lukyanov distinguishes Russia's reaction towards Crimea and Donbas and asserts that while realist considerations were more effective in the decision to annex Crimea, the approach to Donbas was more romantic and rooted in nationalist thinking[1]. Similarly, Moiseev refers to the "compatriots" in Eastern Ukraine and urges Russia to protect Russian speakers in Ukraine under the auspices of relevant international norms [Moiseev, 2015: 56]. Trenin, on the other hand, while emphasizing the importance of Russia's stance against the expansion of NATO, considers Moscow's position within the perspective of its vision of "Greater Europe". In this respect, winning back Ukraine for the Eurasian integration project is critical because Ukraine constitutes one of the core elements of the reunification of the "Russian World" [Trenin, 2014: 6].

## *Conclusion*

This research examined how the Russo-Georgian War in 2008 and the Ukraine Crisis in 2014 were discussed in Western and Russian academic circles. It was found that historical accounts and various theoretical frameworks were used to explain the Russian foreign policy in both conflicts, with Western scholars more likely to use mono-theoretical models and Russian scholars more likely to use inductive historical explanations. Realist frameworks were the dominant framework used to explain RFP in both cases, and there is an increasing number of studies that utilize theoretically eclectic approaches to better understand the interplay between different potential factors in the formation and implementation of RFP.

Examining the various aspects of RFP separately is not enough to grasp the whole picture. To better understand the issue, it is necessary to look into the interplay between the different elements that shape RFP. Studies which utilize an eclectic approach to investigate the interaction between different factors can help us to comprehend RFP and the developments in Ukraine since February 2022.

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