



SECURITIZATION OF THE ETHNIC RUSSIANS AND THE RUSSIAN NATIONALS LIVING ABROAD AS A FOREIGN POLICY INSTRUMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION: THE CASES OF GEORGIA AND UKRAINE

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რეზიუმე

წინამდებარე ნაშრომი იკვლევს რუსეთის საგარეო პოლიტიკის გარკვეულ ასპექტებს სეკურიტიზაციის თეორიის თვალთახედვით. კერძოდ, ნაშრომი ცდილობს დაადგინოს თუ რამდენად და როგორ ახდენს რუსეთი საზღვარგარეთ მცხოვრები ეთნიკური რუსებისა და რუსი მოქალაქეების სეკურიტიზაციას და იყენებს ამ პროცესს საქართველოსთან და უკრაინასთან მიმართებით საკუთარი საგარეო პოლიტიკური მიზნების მისაღწევად და გასაძლიერებლად.

დისკურსის ანალიზის მეთოდის გამოყენებით კვლევა ცდილობს შეამოწმოს რუსეთის კანონმდებლობა და ოფიციალური სახელმწიფო დოკუმენტები, ისევე როგორც რუსეთის ხელისუფლების წარმომადგენლების განცხადებები. საქართველოსა და უკრაინის შემთხვევების შესწავლა ხელს უწყობს გამოჩენას თუ რამდენად და როგორ ექვემდებარება კონკრეტული ჯგუფის სეკურიტიზაცია რუსეთის საგარეო პოლიტიკურ მიზნებს. კვლევის შედეგად გამოვლინდა, რომ რუსეთის კანონმდებლობის, ძირითადი პოლიტიკის დოკუმენტებისა და საჯარო განცხადებების მეშვეობით ხდება საზღვარგარეთ მცხოვრები ეთნიკური რუსებისა და რუსი მოქალაქეების სეკურიტიზაცია, რაც რუსეთს საშუალებას აძლევს, რომ საკითხი უსაფრთხოების რანგში აიყვანოს და შედეგად მოითხოვოს განსაკუთრებული ზომების მიღების უფლება.

საკვანძო სიტყვები : რუსეთი, სეკურიტიზაციის თეორია, თანამოქალაქეების დაცვა, საქართველო, უკრაინა

Abstract

Various aspects of the Russian foreign policy have been insufficiently researched from the perspective of the Securitization Theory. The research attempts to fill this gap and aims at diversifying the theoretical understanding of Russia's behavior. The following paper explores to what extent and how does Russia securitize the ethnic Russians and the Russian nationals living abroad and uses securitization as a means of justifying its specific foreign policy objectives vis à vis Georgia and Ukraine. The paper conducts the discourse analysis to examine the official state documents and the legislation of Russia as well as the

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speeches of the Russian government officials. The case study of Georgia and Ukraine helps to demonstrate the extent to which the securitization of certain groups by the Russian government is subordinated to specific foreign policy objectives. The research identifies that the securitization of ethnic Russians and the Russian nationals residing abroad is enshrined within the Russian legislation as well as within the major policy documents. This, then, enables Russia to locate the issue into the security field and, thus, to claim the use of extraordinary measures.

Key Words : Russia, Securitization Theory, Compatriots' Protection, Georgia, Ukraine

1. Introduction

The foreign policy of the Russian Federation has been a subject of extensive academic studies notwithstanding the downgrade of Russia's status from superpower to that of a great power. The Russian foreign policy is most often analyzed within the confines of the Western Russian rivalry which is still widely present in the international politics. The processes of NATO's expansion towards the East in particular and Russia's strive to re-establish itself on the international scene intensified the Western Russian rivalry to a greater extent.

A new wave of theories and concepts that emerged in the field of International Relations, Foreign Policy and Security Studies have largely remained unexploited in relation to the Russian foreign policy. The study of the Russian foreign policy has remained within the field of strategic studies and the traditional understanding of the international relations. Hence, there is a shortage of an academic literature which explores the Russian foreign policy, or certain aspects of the Russian foreign policy, from the perspective of the newly emerged theories and concepts.

To fill this gap, through the means of applying the Securitization Theory to the certain Russian foreign policy behavior, this paper attempts to widen the spectre of a theoretical understanding of the Russian foreign policy and to contribute to the scholarship of the Russian foreign policy studies. In particular, the research will identify how the ethnic Russians and the Russian nationals living abroad are securitized through the means of discourse and how the process of securitization of the collectivity is utilized for the purposes of accomplishing certain foreign policy objectives of the Russian Federation. More specifically, the paper attempts to address to the following research question: *To what extent and how does Russia securitize ethnic Russians and the Russian nationals living abroad and uses securitization as a means of justifying and accomplishing its specific foreign policy objectives vis a vis Georgia and Ukraine?*

The paper aims to discuss two case studies –the Russian Georgian war in 2008 and the Russian Ukrainian crisis over Crimea in 2014 which depict how Russia's use of securitization has been applied to the realities of the international politics. By analyzing the cases, the paper will attempt to explore how the discourse of securitization is actually translated into the practice and how the 'saying security' is closely intertwined with and followed by the 'doing security'.

2.Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The Securitization Theory has been a distinct addition to the security studies. The Theory can be placed within the wider approach of Critical Security Studies, whilst also remaining 'traditional' in the sense of privileging the state as the major recipient of security. Securitization Theory is 'critical' in the sense of its portrayal of security as a speech act, while hinging on the traditionalist camp via the recognition of the state as historically important object of security and military sphere as being of a primary importance. For Ole Waever, 'security is, in historical terms, the field where states threaten each other, challenge each others' sovereignty, trying to impose their will on each other, defend their independence and so on' (Waever in Lipschutz, 1995:50).

According to Waever, what makes security distinct is the need of urgency which gives the state power to claim the legitimate use of extraordinary means. Operating in the realm of security can be perceived as similar to embracing the politics of extraordinary and politics of Agambenian 'state of exception'. As Waever concludes, '*In naming a certain development a security problem, the "state" can claim a special right*, one that will, in the final instance, always be defined by the state and its elites' (Waever in Lipschutz, 1995 54, emphasis in original).

However, the revolutionary approach of Waever was to perceive security as a speech act. By saying "security", 'a state representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it' (ibid, 55). Another important aspect which is attributed to the securitization is the utilization of the process for 'self serving purposes' by those who are the power holders and, thus, 'by definition, something is a security problem when the elites declare it to be so' (Waever in Lipschutz, 1995 54).

Unlike Ole Waever, Barry Buzan goes beyond the state centrism and provides more precise description of the securitization process through identifying certain steps in projecting the issue as a security threat. According to him, 'security' is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue as a special kind or as above politics (Buzan *et al*, 1998:23). Securitization, therefore, can be regarded as a more extreme version of politicization. For Buzan *et al*, (ibid, 24) : 'security is thus a self referential practice, because it is in the practice that the issue becomes a security issue – not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat'.

A successful securitization, thus, has three components: existential threats, emergency action, and the effects on inter unit relations by breaking free of rules (Buzan *et al*, 1998:26). For securitization to be regarded as successfully endorsed, the securitization actor should induce the audience about the necessity of the extraordinary actions it has pursued. However, an important dimension of the securitization is its political nature and intersubjectivity. As Buzan *et al* (1998:29) highlight, it is always a political choice to securitize or to accept a securitization. When states or nations securitize an issue 'correctly' or not it is a political fact that has consequences, because this securitization will cause the actor to operate in a different mode than he or she would have otherwise.

Security action is usually taken on behalf of, and with reference to, a collectivity (Buzan,1998:36). Bearing this in mind, this paper will seek to identify, to what extent and how the process of securitization is exercised in the realm of the Russian foreign policy making. In particular, the Securitization Theory will be applied to the issue of protecting ethnic Russians and the Russian nationals living abroad. The cases of the Russian –Georgian war of 2008 and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 are studied to examine the extent to which securitization acts were performed.

For the purposes of this research, the key concepts within the Securitization Theory need to be defined:

Referent Object – ‘That to which one can point and say, “It has to survive, therefore it is necessary to...”’ (Buzan *et al*, 1998:36) – the ethnic Russians and the Russian nationals living abroad.

Securitizing Actor –the Russian government who claims the right to locate the issue into the security sphere and request the use of exceptional measures.

Securitizing move – Securitization move is defined as “an attempt to securitize an issue by labeling it as a security issue (Peoples and Williams, 2010: 76). The securitization move is performed when the government of Russia, on the discursive level, claims the need of protecting ethnic Russians and the Russian nationals living abroad.

Audience Convincing an audience ‘in the existence of an existential threat’ is crucial for the success of the securitization process. As Russia’s securitization of ethnic Russians and the Russian nationals living abroad goes beyond the boundaries of the Russian state, the members of the international society become the target audience to be convinced.

In terms of the research methodology, the paper will broadly rely on the qualitative research methods. The paper will undertake the documentary analysis of the primary and secondary sources concerning the issues of the Russian foreign and security policies. This would include the analysis of the official Russian foreign and security policy documents. The paper will also utilize the method of discourse analysis which places its attention on the role that ‘language, texts, conversations, the media and even academic research have in the process of creating institutions and shaping behavior’ (Burnham *et al*, 2008:250). This paper will largely consult with the public speeches given by the Russian state officials. The study will attempt to show how the discourses have been constructed by the Russian decision makers in order to legitimize their policy options or, in other words, ‘how the language can be used to deceive and to manipulate those to whom it is addressed (ibid, 251).

Within the research, the case study method is also utilized to further exhibit Russia’s behavior. The examination of the cases is necessary to ‘reveal what it tells us about a larger set of political phenomena’ (Lichbach and Zuckerman, 1997 quoted in Burnham *et al*, 2008:94). The case studies of Georgia and Ukraine, therefore, help to better assess the sources of Russia’s pursuance of the securitization in relation to the ethnic Russians and the Russian nationals living abroad.

3. Literature Review

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation has adopted four major foreign policy concepts, in the following years of 1993, 2000, 2008, 2013. The Foreign Policy Concept consists of a systematic description of the basic principles, priorities and goals of that policy (Gonzalez, 2013:1). According to the documents, the main goal of the Russian foreign policy is to 'protect citizen's and society's interests' (2000); 'protection of citizens', society's and State's interest' (2008) and 'to guarantee the protection of citizens', society's and States interests' (2013) (ibid:2).

The foreign policy concepts set clear objectives that are related to each region and even to individual states (Gonzalez, 2013:17). The post Soviet space is of a particular importance to Russia, not only because of their past connection to the Soviet Union, but some of the countries, such as Ukraine and Belarus, are part of the historic core of the Russian identity (ibid,18).

With regard to Russia's relations with the Western institutions, the language of the documents varies. From 2000s onwards, the subsequent documents reflect the changing patterns of the Russian – Western relations. What remains as a constant in all the major Russian policy documents is the strict opposition to the expansion of NATO.

Russia's relation with the Western nations has been of an unsteady nature, as Russia was trying to accommodate its interests to the changing international environment. Russia wanted to be part of the international status quo and 'fully integrated into Europe', but from the middle of 2003, Putin administration began to change the course (Lyne, 2015:2). According to Roderic Lyne, Russia's relations with the West have deteriorated from the stage of the integrationist model of convergence and partnership to the divergence and confrontation (Lyne, 2015). From the middle of 2003, it became increasingly evident that the mood in the Kremlin was changing. The reasons behind this were twofold: Russia was becoming richer and was willing to restore its historical role as an independent great power and to reverse the perceived humiliation of the years of weakness since 1991 (ibid).

The so called 'color revolutions' in Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004) were one of the key events that altered Russian policies in relation to both post Soviet countries and to the West. Many in Russia perceived the colour revolutions as an insidious plot by the West to encircle Russia with pro Western and thus anti Russian regimes and undermine Russia's political order (Ambrosio, 2007:237). The Russian foreign policy has changed, remarks Dmitri Trenin, proportionally to the criticism coming from the West. The Kremlin adopted a new approach to foreign policy which meant 'reasserting its status as a great power', thereby claiming its rightful place in the world alongside the United States and China rather than settling for the company with Brazil and India' (Trenin, 2006).

According to Buzan and Waever, the idea of 'near abroad' as Russia's main priority started to emerge already in 1992 and became an official policy from 1993 (Karaganov, 1992; Migranyan, 1994; Leplingwell, 1994 cited in Buzan and Waever, 2003:405). Former Soviet republics were defined as Russia's sphere of interest, partly justified by the need of protecting Russian minorities, partly in terms of joint

interests, including economic ones (Buzan and Waever, 2003:405). The increased attention to the 'near abroad' was mostly perceived as a neo imperial turn away from the liberal Western policy, albeit some noticed that this reorientation also has a strong element of 'strategy retreat' (ibid, 406). Russia has always negatively reacted against the NATO's eastward enlargement. Russia views the post Soviet space as its backyard in which 'Russia has privileged interests'.

The principle of protecting ethnic Russians and Russian citizens residing abroad has enjoyed a great deal of attention in the major policy documents of the Russian Federation. The Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Foreign Policy Concept, National security Strategy and the Military Doctrine, all emphasize on the responsibility of the state to protect its citizens living abroad. Article 61(2) of the constitution states that: "The Russian Federation shall guarantee to its citizens the protection and patronage abroad" (The Constitution of the Russian Federation). The foreign policy concept expands the objects of protection by adding the category of compatriots residing abroad: "ensuring comprehensive protection of rights and legitimate interests of Russian citizens and compatriots residing abroad..." (Russian Foreign Policy Concept, 2000; 2008; 2013).

Additionally, the Military Doctrine and the 'National Security Strategy until 2020' carries a special clause that guarantees the protection of the ethnic Russians and Russians citizens living abroad. The Military Doctrine (2010) states that Russia retains right to use its armed forces : "to ensure the protection of its citizens located beyond the borders of the Russian Federation in accordance with generally recognized principles and norms of international law and international treaties of the Russian Federation". Similar to the military doctrine, 'National Security Strategy until 2020' stresses that Russia is obliged to ensure "more effective defense of the rights and lawful interests of Russian citizens abroad." The wording of the official documents indicates that Russia has located the issue within the security sphere and stands ready, and even obliged, to effectively ensure the protection of its nationals and compatriots residing outside the Russian Federation.

That the ethnic Russians have been securitized in the official Russian discourse is also noticed within the scholarship of the Russian foreign policy studies. According to Buzan and Waever (2003:210), the Parliament of the Russian Federation upgraded securitization in relation to the ethnic Russians in the neighboring states. Chairman of the International Affairs Committee Dmitri Rogozin says:

'discrimination against and threats to the life, let alone taking the life, of Russian subjects amounts to a threat to the Russian state itself and its national security. We have 25 million compatriots in the near abroad. That problem is our number one problem, a national security problem' (Monitor 10 February 2000 cited in Buzan and Waever, 2003:411).

Barry Buzan and Ola Waever (2003), as already outlined above, remarked that Russia has securitized ethnic Russians residing in other countries and determined their protection as a matter of national security. However, despite some remarkable efforts, there is still huge lack of scholarly literature exploring various dimensions of the Russian foreign and security policies from the perspective of the Securitization Theory. This paper is an effort to expand the understanding of some dimensions of the Russian foreign policy through the lens of the Securitization Theory and to provide an account of the practical

cases in which Russia's securitization of the ethnic Russians and the Russian nationals residing abroad has been materialized.

4. Securitization of the Russian nationals living abroad The case of Georgia , 2008

The Russian Georgian war of 2008 depicts how Russia securitizes the Russian nationals living abroad. As it will be further discussed, one of the officially narrated *casus belli* for Russia to intervene in Georgia has been the protection of the Russian citizens living there. However, as a disclaimer it should be remarked that the narrative developed by the Russian Federation regarding the Russian Georgian war has been confusing and multifaceted. Creating confusion could itself be perceived as a sort of strategy or a tool in the hands of the Russian Federation to pursue its own policy objectives.

The foreign policy objectives of Russia during the Russian Georgian war

The reasons why Russia went to war with Georgia in 2008 have attracted a great deal of analysis among the scholars interested in the Russian foreign policy and the post Soviet space. Naturally, Russia's account of justifying the war has been different from that of Georgian and the Western understanding of the preconditions that led to the war.

Russian Georgian war of 2008 serves as a demonstration of resurgence of Russia's power and autonomy as an international actor (Mankoff, 2014:3). Among the Russian political elites, there is a broad consensus about the role Russia has to play in the world and that Russia has to increase its relative international power (ibid, 5). To ensure its standing as a great power with relevant influence on the international scene, Russia has to guarantee that it remains a dominant actor within the post Soviet space and does not allow other states, the West specifically, to meddle in the 'Russian affairs'. As Buzan and Weaver remark, 'If Russia is to remain a great power able to both defend itself and assert influence globally, it needs to retain its sphere of influence in CIS (Buzan and Weaver, 1993:410).

The Georgian aspirations towards the NATO and the NATO's willingness to enlarge eastward clashed with the declared interests of the Russian Federation. Since the dissolution of the USSR, Russia has consistently demonstrated its resistance towards NATO expansion which is expressed through all the major foreign policy and security concepts which Russia has adopted. Moreover, the public speeches of the Russian government officials demonstrate the level of their resistance towards the idea of NATO's enlargement. In his interview with BBC, then Russian president Dmitri Medvedev remarked that had Russia not intervened in Georgia in 2008, NATO would have expanded by now to admit new ex soviet republics: "If you...had faltered back in 2008, the geopolitical situation would be different now... and a number of countries which NATO tried to deliberately drag into the alliance, would have most likely already been part of it now" (Reuters, 2011).

The states that are most directly affected by Russia's assertive foreign policy are those immediate neighbors who were once the members of the Soviet Union (Mankoff, 2014:7). For the Kremlin, prevent

ing the former soviet republics from becoming jumping –off points for hostile forces has been the dominant theme. The war with Georgia as well as the Russian policy towards the post Soviet space some times ‘looked like a naked imperialism’. (ibid). Therefore, the Russian foreign policy with regard to the post Soviet countries is part of a larger dynamic of great power competition that has been characteristic for the Russian foreign policy of the last decades (Mankoff, 2014:7).

To ensure that Georgia remained within Russia’s horizon, the use of force and the demonstration of power were needed. However, the arguments advanced by Russia to justify its intervention demonstrate how the Russian interpretations of the customary international law as well as the norms related to the use of force have served as an instrument of state policy, rather than being rooted in any broader international consensus (Allison, 2009). Among Russian claims, Moscow’s commitment to support its ‘citizens’ abroad has been particularly controversial (Allison, 2009).

Russia devised different kinds of narratives to justify its intervention in Georgia. Russia officially did not cite Georgia’s ambition to integrate into the NATO as the determinant of the intervention. Rather, the Russian narrative emphasized on the need of protecting South Ossetian people from the Georgian aggression. According to the president of the Russian Federation (BBC, 2008):

“Russia does not reject the principle of territorial integrity but its foreign policy will take into account the will of the peoples of South Ossetia and Abkhazia who are unlikely to want to remain in the same state with Georgia. “

It is hard to identify the exact motivations of Russia that resulted into war with Georgia. However, stemming from the official foreign and security policy documents of Russia, it can be observed that Russia disapproves NATO’s attempts to expand towards the east and to get closer to the Russian borders. To some extent it can be argued that Russia securitizes the process of NATO expansion as well. Therefore, any desire of the Georgian side and the NATO to admit Georgia as a member of the alliance would constitute a threat to the Russian security and thus would go against the declared Russian foreign policy objectives.

Securitization of the Russian citizens living in Georgia

The securitization of the Russian nationals living in Georgia has been widespread narrative in the statements of the Russian state officials during the Russian Georgian war and afterwards. Since the protection of the Russian citizens living abroad is securitized within the legislation and the major policy documents of Russia, it came as no surprise that Russia would have claimed to take necessary measures to ensure the protection of its citizens living abroad. In his meeting with the participants of the International Club Valdai, then President of Russia stated that there are regions in which Russia has its interests and Russia would defend these interests,” but most important of all, we will protect our citizens“(Medvedev, 2008).

Protection of nationals residing abroad has been claimed to be the obligation of the Russian state.

According to the Chief Justice Zorkin, peace enforcement operation conducted by the Russian military in South Ossetia was in accordance with the article 14.5 of the Russian Federal Law on *the State Policy in regard to the Fellow Citizens Residing Abroad*. The law provides that if a foreign state violates recognized norms of international law and human rights in regard to the Russian expatriates, the Russian Federation shall undertake efforts authorized by international law to defend their interests (Zorkin cited in the Law Library of Congress, 'Russian Federation: Legal Aspects of War in Georgia'). The President of Russia even intensified the language by remarking that: "If anyone thinks they can kill our citizens and escape without punishment, we will never allow this" (Telegraph, 2008).

The discourse of the Russian government during the Russian Georgian war illustrates how Russia securitizes the Russian nationals living in Georgia. The securitization of the Russian nationals living abroad is then utilized by the government officials and subordinated to the specific foreign policy objectives of the Russian Federation.

Additional evidence in support of the claim that Russia uses the securitization of its nationals living abroad as a foreign policy tool is Russia's so called "passportization" policy that has been carried out in the disputed regions of Georgia. According to the EU –led report, prior to the emergence of the conflict, Russia organized a mass conferral of Russian citizenship and consequently passports to persons living in South Ossetia and Abkhazia and vast majority of the population are now carrying such passports. (IIFFMCG, 2009: 18). Turning Abkhazians and South Ossetians into Russian citizens seemed to offer a way of consolidating Russia's informal grip on the *de facto* states (Artman, 2013:689). Russia accelerated the distribution of the Russian passports into the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia so that, by so doing, Russia could "rationalize its actions in these two regions by the claim that it was merely defending its "citizens" ' (Ilarionov quoted in Artman, 2013:689).

Distribution of the Russian passports in the disputed territories represented a policy calculation made by the Russian government. The large number of the Russian citizens created in Abkhazia and South Ossetia meant that Russia could now claim some measure of jurisdiction over the significant proportion of the population of *de facto* states, and therefore, of Georgia (ibid,691). The conferral of the Russian citizenship would enable Russia to request the deployment of extraordinary measures – in accordance to the logic of the Securitization Theory to claim the protection of its citizens.

5. Securitization of the ethnic Russians living abroad The case of Crimea ,2014

The Russian Ukrainian crises in 2014 have largely intensified the Russian Western rivalry. The annexation of Crimea is yet another case in which one can discern the official policy discourse of the Russian government. The Russian political elite emphasized on the existing threats to the ethnic Russians living in Crimea and argued for the necessity of exceptional measures to protect them. The case of Crimea also illustrates the pattern of Russia's behavior to subordinate the securitization of ethnic Russians living abroad to the specific foreign policy objectives.

Russian foreign policy objectives towards Ukraine

The decision of Ukrainian President Yanukovych in November 2013 to postpone the signing of the as

sociation agreement with the European Union triggered massive demonstrations and an intense political crisis within Ukraine (The Atlantic Council report, 2015:2). The Ukrainian crisis became a major Russian Ukrainian confrontation in late 2014, when Yanukovych abandoned his position and Russian military forces seized Crimea (ibid).

For years, there have been entrenched beliefs within the Russian security and foreign policy elite that in a highly competitive world, western regional organizations are covertly pursuing strategic goals (Allison, 2013:1256). In response to those goals of the West, Russia felt it could register some success in integrating like minded CIS states into the Eurasian Union (ibid). The idea of the Eurasian Customs Union developed in the Russian political elite and was considered as a vehicle for reintegrating the post Soviet space, including the countries that are the members of the European Union's eastern neighborhood policy (Dragneva and Wolczuk, 2012:3).

Ukraine has been regarded as a driving force for Russia's calculations for the Eurasian Union, although "Ukraine had previously positioned itself on the sidelines of or outside Moscow's various Eurasian integration projects" (Allison, 2013:1256). Therefore, Russia's foreign policy objectives of deepening integrative projects with the post Soviet countries would have been unsuccessful if Ukraine was not an integral part of the project.

Besides the economic and trade interests, Ukraine has always been strategically important country for the Russian foreign and security policy. Russia's actions in Ukraine were perceived as the protection of its core strategic interests which have been disrupted by "NATO expansion and Washington's commitment to move Ukraine out of Moscow's orbit and integrate it into the West" (Mearsheimer, 2015).

However, some emphasized on Russia's revanchist policies and its desire to 'maintain influence across the domains of the former Soviet Union' (Mankoff, 2014). Accordingly, the Russian Military Doctrine of 2010 cites NATO expansion "to move the military infrastructure of NATO member countries closer to the border of the Russian Federation, including by expanding the bloc" (Military Doctrine of Russia, 2010) as the main military dangers to which Russia faces.

The decision makers in Russia believed that the signing of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the European Union would jeopardize Russia's declared goals of deepening the cooperation with the CIS countries. Besides, the Ukrainian rapprochement with the West in general would endanger the foreign and security policy goals of the Russian Federation. The connection with Ukraine was perceived as 'the last pillar of Russia's stability and power which could not be undermined if Russia were to survive and preserve its sovereignty, independence and authentic political culture' (Tsygankov, 2015:288).

Securitization of the ethnic Russians in Crimea

The main justification that allowed Russia to perform its actions vis a vis Ukraine was the protection of ethnic Russians living there. On March 18, 2014, in his address to the Parliament of Russia, the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, highlighted the historic importance of the referendum in Crimea and its

'full compliance with democratic procedures and international norms". According to his speech, by introducing a draft law to revise the language policy in Ukraine represented 'a direct infringement on the rights of ethnic minorities'. The revolution in Ukraine, according to Vladimir Putin left the country without legitimate executive authority and the situation in the country was controlled by the radicals who threatened those who opposed the revolutionary ideas. He remarked:

"Those who opposed the coup were immediately threatened with repression. Naturally, the first in line here was Crimea, the Russian speaking Crimea. In view of this, the residents of Crimea and Sevastopol turned to Russia for help in defending their rights and lives..." (Putin, 2014).

Therefore, the narrative developed by Putin underlined the need for actions that Russia had to take to defend the residents of Crimea: "millions of Russians and Russian speaking people live in Ukraine and will continue to do so. Russia will always defend their interests using political, diplomatic and legal means" (Putin, 2014).

The speeches from other government officials went in line with the statements of Vladimir Putin. The foreign minister of Russia, Sergey Lavrov, in his remarks at the United Nations Human Rights Session declared that Russia's actions were all about "the protection of our nationals and compatriots and defense of the most fundamental human right the right to live" (Lavrov, 2014).

The Russian President submitted proposal to the Federation Council on the use of the Russian armed forces on the territory of Ukraine on the ground of "extraordinary situation in Ukraine, the threat to the lives of citizens of the Russian Federation, our compatriots, and the personnel of the armed forces of the Russian Federation on Ukrainian territory (in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea)" (The Website of the President of Russia).

The statements from the Russian government officials exhibit the narrative of how the Russian nationals and the ethnic Russians living in Ukraine have been securitized. The discourse on the protection of the Russian nationals' and compatriots' 'right to live', 'extraordinary situation in Ukraine, the threat to the lives of citizens of the Russian Federation, our compatriots', 'we could not abandon Crimea and its citizens in distress', indicate how the Russian government presented the situation in Ukraine as being extraordinary, thus, requiring the extraordinary means .

The Russian governments' 'saying security' transformed into the 'doing security'. Securitization helped Russia to take the issue from the normal politics and to locate it into the security field and, by so doing, making all the possible unlawful actions justified as the survival of the collectivity the Russian citizens and the ethnic Russians was under the threat.

However, even though Russia claimed that the lives of ethnic Russians and the Russian nationals were threatened, it needs to be determined whether the threat to them was real or Russia constructed the threat so that it could have been able to pursue other objectives it had in relation to Crimea and Ukraine in general. Although, from the perspective of the Securitization Theory, what can be perceived as a security problem 'is always defined by the state and its elites'(Weaver in Lipschutz, 1995

54). Thus, the security problem in Ukraine as well as in Georgia existed as soon as Russia perceived to be so.

However, according to the United Nations Human Rights report of 2014, the situation of ethnic minorities in Ukraine has become highly politicized in the context of political and social unrest in Ukraine since February 2014. While the UN report does not cite any substantial threats to the lives of ethnic Russians and the Russian citizens in Ukraine, the reports by the OSCE and Amnesty International indicate a reverse tendency of Russia violating human rights since its occupation of Crimea (Amnesty International, 2015; The OSCE Report on Ukraine, 2014: 10).

The Russian reasoning that there was a need of protecting the lives of the Russian citizens and compatriots in Ukraine was hardly based on the objective realities existing on the ground, but rather relied on the subjective perception of the threats. To secure its strategic interests in Ukraine, Russia constructed the threat against the ethnic Russians living in Crimea, utilized the domestic legislation – which securitizes the Russian citizens and compatriots living abroad to its own benefit to enable itself perform the securitization move which would allow Russia to take the issue out of normal politics and to locate it into the security field. Securitization of the issue would, on the discursive level, justify Russia's use of extraordinary means in Crimea.

However, the audience's acceptance of the securitization act is necessary to examine the successfulness of the move. The audience – the states – did not justify Russia's use of extraordinary measures neither in Georgia nor in Ukraine. Russia's securitization of ethnic Russians and Russian nationals living abroad was hardly an intersubjective process in the collectivity of the states.

Conclusion

The paper attempted to identify to what extent and how does Russia securitize ethnic Russians and the Russian nationals living abroad and uses securitization as a means of justifying and accomplishing its specific foreign policy objectives vis-à-vis to Georgia and Ukraine. By conducting the discourse analysis of the official state documents, the statements and the public speeches of the government officials in Russia as well as by overviewing the academic literature in the field and examining the specific cases, the following conclusions have been drawn:

Russia securitized the ethnic Russians and the Russian nationals living abroad and emphasized on the need of protecting them from the possible threats. The principle has been enshrined in the Constitution of the Russian Federation, The Federal Laws as well as in the foreign policy document, national security strategy and the military doctrine. The documents obliged Russia to take measures to guarantee the protection of the Russian nationals and compatriots residing in another country.

The study of the cases of Georgia and Ukraine displayed the intensive utilization of the securitization language by the relevant government authorities in Russia. The Russian officials attempted to portray the situation in Georgia and Ukraine as dangerous to the Russian nationals and compatriots residing

there, hence, enabling Russia to perform the securitization move.

The disputed nature of the actual threats against the Russian citizens and the ethnic Russians in Ukraine; the mass policy of 'passportization' enforced in Georgia; Russia's declared interests vis à vis the post Soviet states; Russia's strong opposition to the expansion of NATO; Ukraine's aspiration to sign the free trade agreement with the EU and the challenges this would have caused to Russia's ambitions in the region indicate that the protection of the ethnic Russians and the Russian nationals residing in those countries could have been an *alibi* for Russia's intervention in Georgia and Ukraine. Securitization has been used as a foreign policy instrument which allowed Russia to use the extraordinary measures for executing its specific foreign policy calculations in relation to the countries concerned.

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