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Stanislav Myasnikov

**The Strategies of Justification of Russian Foreign Policy Since 2014**

SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION

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Olga Malinova

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## *Research problem statement*

State policy needs to be justified in order to get legitimized. *Legitimation* is a process of obtaining legitimacy (people's acceptance of policy, political regime, political order, leader, political actions and decisions)<sup>1</sup>, wherein *legitimation* can be obtained by different instruments, one of which is *policy justification*. It is a communicative instrument of legitimation<sup>2</sup> that involves rhetoric means, interpretation, argumentation of the legitimation's object as the best among alternatives<sup>3</sup>. The major part of literature deals with legitimacy of power, regime, order, leader. However, authorities seek to legitimize policy because the legitimate policy can affect the positive relation towards authorities and political order<sup>4</sup>. A specific set of rhetoric means<sup>5</sup> and communicative methods can be used in order to achieve the goals in a given context, this is what is called strategies of justification. In the current research the justification of the foreign policy is considered as a political process associated with the use of certain communication technologies.

Foreign policy legitimation is provided also for international audiences. Legitimation includes many actors, such as officials, media, experts, opinion leaders. Foreign policy media discourse is studied more often<sup>6</sup>, however the level of pluralism of media discourse can be dependent on the type of political regime and

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<sup>1</sup> Look. Del Sordi A. The Relation between External and Internal Authoritarian Legitimation: The Religious Foreign Policy of Morocco and Kazakhstan // *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*. 2018. Vol. 14. № 1. P. 95-116; Haldenwang C. von. The relevance of legitimation – a new framework for analysis // *Contemporary Politics*. 2017. Vol. 23. № 3. P. 269-286; Gelpi C. The power of legitimacy: Assessing the role of norms in crisis bargaining. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010. 244 p.; Dahl R. A Preface to Democratic Theory. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956. 176 p.

<sup>2</sup> Cm. Haldenwang C. von. The relevance of legitimation—a new framework for analysis // *Contemporary Politics*. – 2017. Vol. 23. № 3. P. 269-286; George A.L. Domestic constraints on regime change in US foreign policy: The need for policy legitimacy // *Change in the international system* / ed. K.J. Holsti. Boulder: Westview Press, 1980. P. 233-262.

<sup>3</sup> Look. Abulof U. Introduction: the politics of public justification // *Contemporary Politics*. 2017. Vol. 23. № 1. P. 1-18; Anderson P.A. Justifications and precedents as constraints in foreign policy decision-making // *American Journal of Political Science*. 1981. Vol. 25. № 4. P. 738-761.

<sup>4</sup> Look. Haldenwang C. von. The relevance of legitimation—a new framework for analysis // *Contemporary Politics*. 2017. Vol. 23. № 3. P. 269-286; George A.L. Domestic constraints on regime change in US foreign policy: The need for policy legitimacy // *Change in the international system* / ed. K.J. Holsti. Boulder: Westview Press, 1980; P. 233-262; Smoke R. On the importance of policy legitimacy // *Political Psychology*. 1994. Vol. 15. № 1. P. 97-110.

<sup>5</sup> Look. Cindori S. et al. The influence of the communicative strategy on the degree of protectability of texts in the Modern Political Discourse // *SHS Web of Conferences*. 2019. Vol. 69. P. 1-6.

<sup>6</sup> Cm. Strovsky D. The Russian Media as a Promoter of Manipulative Approaches: The Case of the Syrian Civil War // *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*. 2020. Vol. 11. № 1. P. 1-24; Brown J. 'Better one tiger than ten thousand rabid rats': Russian media coverage of the Syrian conflict // *International Politics*. 2014. Vol. 51. № 1. P. 45-66.

media system<sup>7</sup>. In authoritarian and hybrid media systems the authorities can impact media discourse using administrative resource. Thus, in cases of authoritarian and hybrid regimes it is more important to look at a discourse of officials.

The case of Russia can serve an example for the research. Political regime in Russia is treated hybrid<sup>8</sup>. The analysis of Russian media system also considers it hybrid (dualistic)<sup>9</sup>, the rules in such a system are formed both basing on market demands, and top down<sup>10</sup>.

Scholars, who study legitimation of (foreign) policy, analyze legitimation (the core term of political science); political rhetoric and communication (justification is a communicative instrument), and international relations.

Policy justification becomes especially crucial for a legitimation in cases of meaningful changes in foreign policy. When political actions and decisions come into collision with the principles debated before, it requires a certain argumentation. For this reason, a justification of the Russian foreign policy shift started with Crimea Annexation in 2014 is a proper case for analysis. Some authors claim that the annexation of Crimea had underlined the shift in Russian foreign policy<sup>11</sup>, supported lately by Russian intervention to Syria. There are different explanations of such a change. First, the relation of the West towards Russia like to the 'younger brother' might become inappropriate for Russian authorities<sup>12</sup>. Second, Russian

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<sup>7</sup>CM. Hallin D.C. *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* / D.C. Hallin, P. Mancini. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 349 p.; McCombs M. *Building Consensus: The News Media's Agenda-Setting Roles Perspectives on Journalism, Power and Citizenship* // *Political communication*. 1997. Vol. 14. № 4. P. 433-444.

<sup>8</sup> CM. Robertson G.B. *The politics of protest in hybrid regimes: managing dissent in post-communist Russia*. Cambridge University Press, 2010. P. 2; Treisman D. *Presidential Popularity in a Hybrid Regime: Russia under Yeltsin and Putin* // *American Journal of Political Science*. 2011. Vol. 55. № 3. P. 590-609; Petrov N. *Three dilemmas of hybrid regime governance: Russia from Putin to Putin* // *Post-Soviet Affairs*. 2014. Vol. 30. № 1. P. 1-26.

<sup>9</sup>CM. Vartanova E. *The Russian media model in the context of post-Soviet dynamics*. D. Hallin, & P. Mancini // *Comparing media systems beyond the Western world* / eds. D.C. Hallin, P. Mancini. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2011. P. 192-142; Kiriya I. *New and old institutions within the Russian media system* // *Russian Journal of Communication*. 2019. Vol. 11. № 1. P. 6-21. Lehtisaari K. *Introduction: the Russian media system at a crossroads* // *Russian Journal of Communication*. 2019. Vol. 11. № 1. P. 1-5.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Giles K. *The turning point for Russian foreign policy*. - Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2017; Nitoiu C. *Still entrenched in the conflict/cooperation dichotomy? EU–Russia relations and the Ukraine crisis*//*European Politics and Society*. - 2017. - Vol. 18, N.2; Baranovsky V. *From Kosovo to Crimea*//*The International Spectator*. - 2015. - Vol. 50, N.4.

<sup>12</sup> Karaganov S.A. et al. *Russian Foreign Policy: Risky Successes*//*Harvard International Review*. - 2016. - Vol. 37, N.3.

authorities had perceived the West as a destructive power<sup>13</sup>. Other scholars argue the key changes have happened before, e.g. after the Munich speech of V. Putin (2007), when he claimed<sup>14</sup> about unacceptance of the unilateral world<sup>15</sup>. But during the period of 2007-2014 Russia has been claiming a desire to develop relations with the West, and such a claim transformed after 2014. Change of Russian foreign policy reflected in the Conception of the Russian Foreign Policy 2016<sup>16</sup>, which was different to the Conceptions of 2008 and 2013<sup>17</sup>. The EU was not mentioned as meaningful partner anymore; Russia oriented itself to develop the relations within regional alliances. After 2014, the status of Russia in some international institutions changed, as Russia was expelled from the G8; the work of the Russian delegation in PACE was limited; the economic sanctions were implemented against Russia by the US and the EU. In this context, the official communication has changed. Previous studies of the Russian foreign policy discourse demonstrated that provocative rhetoric was used by Russian actors after 2014<sup>18</sup>. It is highly likely that active foreign policy positioning after 2014 echoed in a selection of some certain justification strategies.

Thus, it is possible to presume that the Crimean annexation<sup>19</sup> (2014) and Russia's military operation in Syria (2015 – nowadays)<sup>20</sup> became a demonstration of

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<sup>13</sup> Giles K. The turning point for Russian foreign policy. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2017. Nitoiu C. Still entrenched in the conflict/cooperation dichotomy? EU–Russia relations and the Ukraine crisis // European Politics and Society. 2017. Vol. 18. № 2. P. 148-165; Baranovsky V. From Kosovo to Crimea // The International Spectator. 2015. Vol. 50. № 4. P. 275-281.

<sup>14</sup> Putin V.V. Vystuplenie I diskussiya na munchenskoj konferencii po voprosam politiki bezopasnosti // Portal 'President Rossii' 2007. 10 fevralya. Rezhim dostupa: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034> (Data posesheniya: 08.03.2019)

<sup>15</sup> Stent A.E. The Munich Speech // The Limits of Partnership : U.S.-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century - Updated Edition. Princeton University Press, 2014. P. 135-158.

<sup>16</sup> Kontsepsiya vneshnei politiki RF, 2016 // Portal «MID RF». Rezhim dostupa: [http://www.mid.ru/foreign\\_policy/official\\_documents/-/asset\\_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/2542248](http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/2542248) (Data posesheniya: 03.03.2019)

<sup>17</sup> Kontsepsiya vneshnei politiki RF 2008 // Portal «President Rossii». Rezhim dostupa: <http://kremlin.ru/acts/news/785> (Data posesheniya: 01.03.2019); Kontsepsiya vneshney politiki RF 2013 // Portal «MID RF». Rezhim dostupa [http://www.mid.ru/foreign\\_policy/official\\_documents/-/asset\\_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/122186](http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/122186) (Data posesheniya: 10.03.2019)

<sup>18</sup> Kristensen K.S. Interpreting Russian Policy: Russian Policy in the Arctic after the Ukraine Crisis. Centre for Military Studies, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> In case of Crimea, Russia was not using a term 'annexation' (аннексия) thinking of its negative connotation, substituting it with 'Crimea joining Russia' (присоединение Крыма), though 'annexation' has no negative connotation in English.

the position which did not respond to the intentions debated earlier, regardless of whether Russian actions were based on calculation or miscalculation. At the same time, the situation in which Russia found itself after the annexation of Crimea could also be a factor that influenced the change in Russia's goals in international relations. Due to the shift in Russian foreign policy, a specific justification was required in order to legitimize the political actions and decisions, both domestically and abroad, so as not to lose the face. However, to reveal the changes in justification strategies used after the shift it is necessary to analyze the justification employed before the shift. Such a case was Russian military operation in Georgia in 2008. Studying how the justification of the annexation of Crimea, the military operation of the Russian Federation in Syria was carried out, comparing it with the justification for the military operation of the Russian Federation in Georgia, it is possible to identify what are the differences, and how communication technologies have changed in the context of the changed foreign policy, in the context of different foreign policy conditions.

A comparative analysis of the cases of justification (of the Crimea Annexation by Russia, Russian military operation in Syria, Russian military operation in Georgia), the selection of which will be justified below, is intended to reveal whether the justification was an indicator of changes in Russia's foreign policy orientations after 2014. First, the position of the state is expressed through official justification; second, the way in which the actors carry out the justification can be a demonstration of intentions, and will in making foreign policy decisions.

Thus, the analysis of the official discourse is appropriate, first, because in the context of the political regime, the official discourse is important; second, its role is especially significant in the context of foreign policy. Comparison of the

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<sup>20</sup> Stent A. Putin's play in Syria: how to respond to Russia's intervention // *Foreign Affairs*. – 2016. – Vol. 95. – № 1. P. 106-114; Biersack J. The geopolitics of Russia's annexation of Crimea: narratives, identity, silences, and energy // *Eurasian geography and economics*. Kansas. Vol. 55. № 3. P. 247-269; Abdulmalik Ali M. Discourse and Manipulation in the Representation of the Russian Military Intervention in the Syrian Civil War // *International Journal of Linguistics*. 2016. Vol. 8. № 3. P. 128-140; Geiss R. Russia's annexation of Crimea: The mills of international law grind slowly but they do grind // *International Law Studies*. 2015. Vol. 91. № 1. P. 426-447; Grant T.D. Annexation of Crimea // *American Journal of International Law*. 2015. Vol. 109. № 1. P. 68-95.

justification of the Russian military operation in Georgia (then RMOG), the annexation of Crimea (then AC), and the Russian military operation in Syria (then RMOS) allows to identify the justification strategies used to legitimize the foreign policy course; to analyze the dynamics of their usage in a changing context.

### *Literature review*

In spite of a long experience of legitimation studies there is still no universal conceptual approach. The major literature includes the analysis of legitimation of the regime<sup>21</sup>, order, leader and power; the legitimation of policy is less analyzed. Wherefore the studies of policy legitimation underline the complexity of such a legitimation process, showing that the means of policy legitimation can differ to the means of order's and power's legitimation<sup>22</sup>. The instruments for (foreign) policy legitimation are the communicative and rhetoric means, including justification<sup>23</sup> of policy. Analysis of the legitimation constitute a part in public policy studies<sup>24</sup>, so the study of *policy legitimation* can be a piece of policy analysis. For instance, P. Cairney<sup>25</sup> proposed to consider legitimation as a separate part of the political cycle, which stays in line with policy implementation, as an element of policy cycle.

The annexation of Crimea draw attention of social and political scholars. Authors analyzed the reasons for the crisis and its outcomes; major works were dedicated to legal aspects. Law scholars (more often Russian), underlined the justice

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<sup>21</sup> Del Sordi A. The Relation between External and Internal Authoritarian Legitimation: The Religious Foreign Policy of Morocco and Kazakhstan // *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*. 2018. Vol. 14. № 1. P. 95-116; George A.L. Domestic constraints on regime change in US foreign policy: The need for policy legitimacy // *Change in the international system* / ed. K.J. Holsti. Boulder: Westview Press, 1980. P. 233-262; Holmes L. Legitimation and legitimacy in Russia revisited // *Russian Politics from Lenin to Putin* / ed. S. Fortescue. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. P. 101-126; Dukalskis A. What autocracies say (and what citizens hear): proposing four mechanisms of autocratic legitimation // *Contemporary Politics*. 2017. Vol. 23. № 3. P. 251-268; Lintz J. Legitimacy of democracy and the socioeconomic system/Comparing pluralist democracies: Strains on legitimacy. Boulder: Westview Press, 1988. 412 p.

<sup>22</sup> Look. Haldenwang C. von. The relevance of legitimation—a new framework for analysis // *Contemporary Politics*. — 2017. Vol. 23. № 3. P. 269-286; George A.L. Domestic constraints on regime change in US foreign policy: The need for policy legitimacy // *Change in the international system* / ed. K.J. Holsti. Boulder: Westview Press, 1980; P. 233-262; Goddard S.E. Rhetoric, legitimation, and grand strategy // *Security Studies*. 2015. Vol. 24. № 1. P. 5-36.

<sup>23</sup> Cm. Abulof U. Introduction: the politics of public justification // *Contemporary Politics*. 2017. Vol. 23. № 1. P. 1-18.

<sup>24</sup> Cm. Jagers S.C. How policy legitimacy affects policy support throughout the policy cycle // *QOG Working Paper Series*. 2016. № 15. P. 2-30; Fischer F. *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis. Theory, Politics, and Methods* / F. Fischer, G.J. Miller. New York: Routledge, 2007. 668 p; Hanberger A. Public policy and legitimacy: A historical policy analysis of the interplay of public policy and legitimacy // *Policy Sciences*. 2003. Vol. 36. № 3-4. P. 257-278.

<sup>25</sup> Cairney P. *The Politics of Evidence Based Policy Making*. Stirling: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. 137 p.

and accordance of the Crimea joining Russia to the norms of ‘right to self-determination’<sup>26</sup>. Western scholars revealed that Russia had violated the international law<sup>27</sup>. Some part of the Crimean discussion in literature was dedicated to the comparison of Kosovo and Crimean cases in possibility to use the right of self-determination. A. Bebier concluded that Kosovars suffered repressions, which did not happen in Crimea, so the cases were incomparable in terms of applying towards right to self-determination<sup>28</sup>. An opposite opinion provided by O. Karpovich, underlined that Crimean people had a right to self-determination, and the referendum procedure was responding to the international norms<sup>29</sup>. The analysis of the diplomats’ narratives revealed that Crimean crisis was not resolved because of the colliding narratives, and due to some different interpretations of international norms<sup>30</sup>. A certain package of studies was dedicated to analysis of the media discourse. S. Hutchings and J. Szostek had showed that Russian media highlighted the self-identity of Russia via reporting about Crimean issue, which was based on the cultural and historical basis<sup>31</sup>. The literature regarding Crimean issue provided us with understanding of different positions towards legal aspects of such annexation; the media discourse analysis revealed the major media narratives and communicative means used by media. We will use this data to compare media discourse with an official discourse.

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<sup>26</sup> Tomsinov V.A. ‘Krymskoe pravo’, ili yuridicheskie osnovaniya dlya vossoedineniya Kryma s Rossiey: Pravo/Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta – M., - 2014.- N.5.; Vlasov A.A. Krym I politika legitimnosti v mezhdunarodnyh otnosheniyah // Vestnik MGIMO Universiteta - M., 2015. №.1. P. 26-41

<sup>27</sup> Geiss R. Russia’s annexation of Crimea: The mills of international law grind slowly but they do grind // International Law Studies. 2015. Vol. 91. № 1. P. 426-447; Grant T.D. Annexation of Crimea // American Journal of International Law. 2015. Vol. 109. № 1. P. 68-95; Marxsen C. The Crimea crisis – the international law perspective // Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht. 2014. Vol. 74. № 2. P. 367-391; Allison R. Russian ‘deniable’ intervention in Ukraine: how and why Russia broke the rules // International Affairs. 2014. Vol. 90. № 6. P. 1255-1297.

<sup>28</sup> Bebier A. Crimea and the Russian-Ukrainian conflict // Romanian Journal of European Affairs. 2015. Vol. 15. № 1. P. 35-54.

<sup>29</sup> Karpovich O.G. Analiz Kosovskogo I Krymskogo precedentov v kontekste realizatsii prava narodov na samoopredelenie // Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya - M., 2015. №.4. P. 377-384

<sup>30</sup> Faizullaev A. Narrative practice in international politics and diplomacy: the case of the Crimean crisis // Journal of the international relations and development. 2017. Vol. 20. № 3. P. 578-604.

<sup>31</sup> Hutchings S. Dominant narratives in Russian political and media discourse during the Ukraine crisis // Ukraine and Russia: people, politics, propaganda, perspectives / eds. S. McGlinchey, M. Karakoulaki, R. Oprisko. Bristol: E-International Relations, 2015. P. 183-196.

The studies considering the usage of Russian military in Syria has demonstrated a multiangle analysis. The reasons for Russian intervention were explained by major arguments. A. Stent revealed that Russia provided a self confidence that a new Syrian president wouldn't be set up by the West as it happened in Egypt; author considered Syrian conflict as a proxy war between the US and Russia<sup>32</sup>. R. Dannreuther studied the Russian response to Arab Spring and concluded that Russia suffered a political crisis because of the protests in 2011 and 2012, so the support and participation in the Syrian conflict could contribute to obtain the trust to authorities inside Russia<sup>33</sup>. Analysis of the discourse by D. Averre and L. Davis showed Russia was following 'great power' interests, justifying them by the liberal conception 'responsibility to protect', but Russia supported Assad and required a strong interpretation of the conception, underlying that the sovereignty principle strengthened the state, as it was provided by the stability of a legitimate government<sup>34</sup>. Media discourse analysis of the Russian intervention to Syria revealed, that Russian media used the narratives of necessity to prevent a possible intervention of extremists to Russia; and illegal intervention of the Western countries to Syria<sup>35</sup>. One of the little amounts of works dedicated to the legitimation of Russia's foreign policy was a study of A. Tarchokova<sup>36</sup>. In our opinion, the conclusion is doubtful, since the behavior of international actors in relation to Russia cannot be explained only by the success or failure of legitimation.

There is a certain literature dedicated to Russian-Georgian war in 2008. The reasons for the conflict were analyzed from plurality of angles. Analyzing the

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<sup>32</sup> Stent A. Putin's play in Syria: how to respond to Russia's intervention // *Foreign Affairs*. 2016. Vol. 95. № 1. P. 106-114.

<sup>33</sup> Dannreuther R. Russia and the Arab Spring: Supporting the Counter-Revolution // *Journal of European Integration*. 2015. Vol. 37. № 1. P. 77-94.

<sup>34</sup> Averre D. Russia, Humanitarian intervention and the Responsibility to Protect: the case of Syria // *International Affairs*. 2015. Vol. 91. № 4. P. 813-834.

<sup>35</sup> Strovsky D. The Russian Media as a Promoter of Manipulative Approaches: The Case of the Syrian Civil War // *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*. 2020. Vol. 11. № 1. P. 1-24; Abdulmalik Ali M. Discourse and Manipulation in the Representation of the Russian Military Intervention in the Syrian Civil War // *International Journal of Linguistics*. 2016. Vol. 8. № 3. P. 128-140.

<sup>36</sup> Tarchokova A.A. Mezhdunarodnaya legitimatsiya deistviy vo vneshnei politike Rossii v kontekste ukrainskogo I siriiskogo konfliktov: kontseptsiya 'otvetstvennost' po zashite': *Istoria. Regionovedenie. Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya* // *Vestnik Volgogradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta - Volgograad*, 2019. № 1. P. 813 - 834



process of the conflict, K. Welt explained Russian intervention by the response towards Georgian aggression against the Ossetia, the author revealed that the both sides were guilty – Georgia that believed it could defend its interests, and Russia which started the military operation<sup>37</sup>. The study of A. Kohen and R. Hamilton showed that Russia's operation in Georgia was explained by the geopolitical goals: not allowing Georgia to enter NATO<sup>38</sup>. Historical analysis of the circumstances of the Russian intervention revealed, that Russian intervention in 2008 had changed the status-quo, as Russia took a responsibility for South Ossetia and Abkhazia<sup>39</sup>. Analysis of the media discourse concerning Russian – Georgian conflict showed that Russian media were representing Georgia as an aggressor, but the conflict was personified on M. Saakashvili as a responsible person<sup>40</sup>. A negative image of Georgians and Georgia was also formed. Russian operation was interpreted as a response towards Georgian aggression<sup>41</sup>.

Thus, the literature review demonstrates that the official legitimizing discourse has not received enough attention from the scholars' side. There was also no comparative analysis of justification strategies. This allows us to fill the gap by identifying 1. what principles were used to justify foreign policy actions and decisions for the domestic and foreign audiences 2. whether there was a change in justification strategies in the context of a shift in the foreign policy of the Russian Federation 3. basing on some existing researches of media discourse, we can understand how the official discourse and media discourse were related.

#### *Scope and limitations of the research*

To compare the justification as a communication technology used before and after the change in the foreign policy, we compare the justification for the

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<sup>37</sup> Welt C. The Thawing of a Frozen Conflict: The Internal Security Dilemma and the 2004 Prelude to the Russo-Georgian War // Europe-Asia Studies. 2010. Vol. 62. № 1. P. 63-97.

<sup>38</sup> Cohen A., Hamilton R.E. The Russian Military and the Georgia War: Lessons and Implications. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2011.

<sup>39</sup> Markedonov S. The South Ossetia conflict // "Frozen conflicts" in Europe. Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2015. P. 111-118.

<sup>40</sup> Tønnessen H. Journalistic Identities and War Reporting: Coverage of the 2008 Russian-Georgian War in the Russian Press // Scando-Slavica. 2012. Vol. 58. № 1. P. 101-121.

<sup>41</sup> Akhvlediani M. The fatal flaw: the media and the Russian invasion of Georgia // Small Wars & Insurgencies. 2009. Vol. 20. № 2. P. 363-390.

annexation of Crimea and the military operation in Syria with the justification for the Russian military operation in Georgia in 2008.

Cases of justification of the Russian annexation of Crimea, military operation in Syrian, and military operation in Georgia were selected according to the following criteria: the use of the Russian Armed Forces on the territory of another sovereign state; Russia's recognition of responsibility for its actions and the implementation of an official justification in the domestic and foreign arena; justification under conditions a) to b) after changes in the foreign policy of the Russian Federation in 2014 a) to b) after changes in international conditions (exclusion from the G8, sanctions).

In cases of the Russian military operation in Georgia, the annexation of the Crimea by the Russian Federation, the Russian military operation in Syria, Russia used the Russian Armed Forces on the territory of another sovereign state without the consent of the UN Security Council and recognized itself responsible for its actions, providing justification. However, in 2008 (RMOG) Russia was in different (unlike 2014) foreign policy conditions - it was a member of the G8, no sanctions were imposed on the Russian Federation. The discourse was also different - the authorities actively announced a "reset" of relations with the United States and "modernization."

Russian foreign policy is conducted by multiple actors whose roles are defined by the Constitution and law. The most important actors are: the president, the ministry of foreign affairs, the ministry of defense, international committees of the federal assembly. Also, foreign policy actors are the state security services and intelligence services. The justification is carried out by the president and the ministry of foreign affairs' representatives, opinion leaders, media. Possibilities of comparative analysis are limited by the insufficient number of speeches of representatives of power and intelligence agencies, this also makes it difficult to compare the performances of actors in the external arena. This research is limited to the analysis of the official discourse of the president (due to the article 80.3 of the

Constitution defines the directions of the foreign policy, and due to the article 87.1 is a supreme commander), MFA representatives (a body is carrying out the foreign political activities, provides its coordination due to the presidential decree of the 8<sup>th</sup> of November, 2011<sup>42</sup>). The Ministry of Defense played a significant role in justifying Russia's actions in Syria. However, in cases of justification of Crimean annexation and military operation in Syria, its role was more modest, which limits the possibilities of comparative analysis.

In each of the cases selected for analysis, policy justification was a dynamic process. The chronological framework of the analysis is determined by this circumstance: for the justification of the Russian military operation in Georgia: 2008-2009; for the justification of the Crimean annexation: 2014 - 2019; for the justification of the Russian military operation in Syria: 2015-2019.

#### *Research question*

How have the justification strategies of Russian foreign policy changed in the discourse of the president and representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry in the context of the new course launched with the annexation of Crimea to Russia in 2014?

#### *Aim*

To compare the main justification strategies used by the President and representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry to justify the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, the Russian military operation in Syria, and the Russian military operation in Georgia.

#### *Objectives*

1. To clarify the theoretical understanding of the concepts of "policy justification" and "policy legitimation".
2. Develop a methodology for analyzing justification strategies.

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<sup>42</sup> Ukaz presidenta RF ot 8 noyabray 2011 g. N1478 'O koordiniruyushei roli Ministerstva inostrannyh del Rossiiskoi Federatsii v provedenii edinoi vneshnepoliticheskoi linii Rossiiskoi Federatsii // Portal 'Garant'. 2011. 8 noyabrya. Rezhim dostupa: <http://base.garant.ru/12191547/> (Data posesheniya: 22.10.2020)

3. To reveal and compare the justification strategies used by the President and representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry in justifying the annexation of Crimea, the Russian military operation in Syria, the Russian military operation against Georgia.
4. To determine why the justification of the foreign policy course of the Russian Federation after 2014 could have contributed to internal legitimation, what it was for an external audience.
5. To determine the relationship between the official and media discourses regarding foreign policy.

### *Methodology*

The theoretical framework of the study is determined by the need to study justification strategies as a complex communicative tool for legitimizing politics. Recall that by the rationale strategy we mean a set of rhetorical means and methods of rationale used to achieve goals in a certain political context. A variety of tools can be used to justify the policy, for example, toposes<sup>43</sup>, whether or not framed; speech acts, such as performatives<sup>44</sup>. Focusing on each of them requires a different methodology. This study focuses on the study of policy rationale, which implies the use of structured storytelling to convince the audience of the correctness of such a policy. In this regard, an important role in the discourse of politicians is played by narratives<sup>45</sup>, which are a more complex rhetorical tool - narration, a story that gives meaning to the past, present and future. Narrative is a more complex rhetorical tool - a story that gives meaning to the past, present and future. Through narrative events are united in a non-random way, attaching importance to the political world, keeping silent about one thing, giving greater importance to the other. Thus,

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<sup>43</sup> См. Zagar I.Z. Topoi in critical discourse analysis // *Lodz papers in pragmatics*. Lodz, 2010. N 6.1. P. 3-72; Захарова О.В. Идентификация и анализ топосов (аргументационных схем) в политическом дискурсе // *Политическая наука*. 2016. №3. С. 217-235

<sup>44</sup> Остин Дж.Л. Слово как действие // *Новое в зарубежной лингвистике*. Vol. 17. М., 1986. С. 22–130; Ильин Ильин М.В. Идеи и практика: мультимодальный анализ политических перформативов // *Политическая наука* - М., 2016. №4. С. 261 – 270

<sup>45</sup> De Fina A. Narrative Analysis // *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Politics* / eds. R. Wodak, B. Forchtner. London: Routledge. P. 233-246; Miskimmon A. Strategic narratives: Communication power and the new world order / A. Miskimmon, B. O’Loughlin, L. Roselle. London: Routledge, 2013. 240 p.; Bottici C. Narrative // *Encyclopedia of Political Theory* / ed. M. Bevir. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010.

narratives construct a political point of view. Narratives are used to achieve goals through the formation of a certain attitude of society towards themselves, their policies, actions, decisions. Narratives can be used to achieve different goals: agenda setting, legitimation, distraction, securing consensus, increasing popularity, mobilizing<sup>46</sup>. By identifying and analyzing narratives, it is possible to determine how the narratives of politicians have changed and transformed, which could allow us to understand how the justification strategies used to legitimize foreign policy have changed.

The authors of the theory of strategic narratives<sup>47</sup> drew attention to these properties of narratives. The theory proceeds from the premise of the importance of political discourse (correlated with the concept of soft power<sup>48</sup>), which can influence decision-making in international relations and helps to reveal how actors achieve the set communicative goal, based on what they form their position in international relations. According to A. Miskimmon, B. O'Loughlin and L. Roselle, narratives are discussed as a presentation of events that are formulated by actors in a certain discursive context in order to influence public opinion in their favor. Using the toolkit of the theory of strategic narratives, we can operationalize the levels of strategic narratives and create an integrated model for analyzing the justification of policy by state actors, conduct a comparative analysis of the application of models of using narratives, and identify communication strategies.

Strategic narrative theory has a number of limitations. Strategic narratives, in fact, are macronarratives according to the classification of J.F. Lyotard<sup>49</sup>, after events such as the Holocaust, they lost their legitimizing power. However, L. Roselle, B. O'Loughlin, A. Miskimmon justify the power of strategic narratives by the fact that they are used to achieve strategic communicative goals. A narrative is

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<sup>46</sup> Miskimmon A. Strategic narratives: Communication power and the new world order / A. Miskimmon, B. O'Loughlin, L. Roselle. London: Routledge, 2013. 240 p.

<sup>47</sup> Roselle L. Strategic narrative: A new means to understand soft power // Media, War & Conflict. Cali. 2014. Vol. 7. № 1. P. 70-84.

<sup>48</sup> М. Nye J.S. Soft power: the means to success the worlds politics. New York: Public Affairs, 2009. 208 p.

<sup>49</sup> Lyotard J-F. The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. 144 p.

strategic when it is used to achieve the goals of a strategy. Such goals can be: mobilization, legitimation, distraction, increasing popularity<sup>50</sup>. At the same time, strategic narratives are used in an interpenetrating communicative environment, which allows them to be used in the 21st century for a wider audience. Also, narratives are used strategically, when, telling about different events, one narrative is reproduced. The technology of manipulation is turned on, since people better perceive the narrative with which they are already familiar.

Another limitation of the theory is that it does not take into account the communicative disposition, the features of speech acts and performatives. However, the authors of the theory of strategic narratives have moved away from pragmatism and speech acts, reducing analysis to strategic narratives. This allowed them not to necessarily apply discourse analysis, not to analyze speech acts, performatives. This approach allows to reduce the excessive number of analytical units and solve research problems, focusing on the analysis of narratives. On the contrary, the congestion of the operating apparatus would make it difficult to analyze and achieve the goal of the study. Policy justification is a communicative tool and involves the use of narratives as a means of achieving a communicative goal. In this regard, the aforementioned methodological approach allows us to apply analytical units that are relevant for our research and form a theoretical framework for the study. For this particular study, the analysis of strategic narratives is exhaustive for answering the research question and solving the problems of the work, since it allows comparing the rhetoric of state actors without analyzing performatives and speech acts.

Strategic narratives are “means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of the past, present, and future of international politics to shape the behavior of domestic and international actors»<sup>51</sup>. There are three levels of strategic narratives - system narrative - serves to describe the state of affairs, how the world “works”, who are the actors in the international environment, what are their actions.

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<sup>50</sup> Roselle L. Strategic narrative: A new means to understand soft power // Media, War & Conflict. Cali. 2014. Vol. 7. № 1. P. 70-84.

<sup>51</sup> Miskimmon A. Strategic narratives: Communication power and the new world order London: Routledge, 2013. P.3.

National/identity narrative - contains a story about values, identity of an actor, nation, state. Issue narrative - informs about what the problem is, what is the policy and why it is needed, how it is implemented. According to the theory of strategic narratives, actors need to take into account other peoples' narratives, thereby making their own narrative more competitive in order to implement a successful strategy. At the same time, the formulation of narratives both for the internal audience and external audience can occur for the purpose of legitimizing foreign policy<sup>52</sup>. Competing narratives are semantic schemes formed by state actors and the media of other countries. The development of new media has led to the fact that the public has access to a wide range of information sources that the "new communicative environment"<sup>53</sup> offers. In this regard, people within the state become more critical of narratives, which gives a rise to their contestation. In order to make a narrative more attractive than the opponent's narrative, actors must take into account not only the cultural characteristics of the public, but also the existing discourses that people tend to perceive positively or negatively. Implying the instruments of the theory we can understand what was the official justification of the changed foreign policy.

#### *Empirical data*

The empirical data included the transcripts of speeches of the President and representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry from 2008 to 2009 (justification of the Russian operation against Georgia in 2008); from 2014 to 2019 (justification of the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the military operation of the Russian Federation in Syria in 2015). The pool of transcripts is made up of all available (by topic) transcripts on the official portals. It contained 56 transcripts of president's speeches; 59 transcripts of minister of foreign affairs speeches; 48 transcripts of MFA representatives' speeches; as well as 33 reports of the UN Security Council meetings containing transcripts of the counter-actors speeches. The transcripts were

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid

<sup>53</sup> Roselle L. Strategic narrative: A new means to understand soft power // Media, War & Conflict. Cali. 2014. Vol. 7, N.1. P. 77.

selected by a thematic search on the web portals "President of Russia", "Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia", "Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the UN", "UN".

### *Methods*

The research method is a qualitative content analysis<sup>54</sup> of speeches of the President and representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry, carried out on the basis of the QDA Miner computer soft. Following the logic of F. Meiring<sup>55</sup>, content analysis is applied as a mixed - method, which combines a qualitative analysis of the text with subsequent quantitative analysis. To analyze the text in our study, 6 deductively distinguished categories of codes were set (strategic system narrative, strategic national narrative, strategic issue narrative, method of justification, the president's speeches for different audiences, speeches by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for different audiences). Subcodes were highlighted inductively.

There were 3 stages of coding. At the first stage, the main strategic narratives were identified by type - systemic, national, issue. At the second stage, thematic coding was applied to the identified narratives. The main themes of the narratives repeated in different speeches of the president and representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry were inductively highlighted. Themes of system narratives: about the connection between the Cold War and the current situation, about a unipolar world, about the violation of international law by the West, about destabilizing actions of the West, about the use of double standards by the West, about the compliance of Russia's actions with international law, about ensuring human rights by Russia, about partners Russia in international relations. Themes of national narratives: We and Others, about the religious / sacred meaning of the

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<sup>54</sup> Cm. Mayring P. Qualitative content analysis. Theoretical foundation, basic procedures and software solution. Klagenfurt: Belts. 2014. 143 p.; Mayring P. Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Grundlagen und Techniken. Weinheim: Belts. 2008. 152 p.; Berg, B.L. Qualitative research methods for the social sciences. Boston: Pearson. 2011. 448 p.; Mayring P. Qualitative content analysis – research instrument or mode of interpretation // The role of the researcher in qualitative psychology / ed. M. Riegelmann. Tübingen: Verlag Ingeborg Huber, P. 139 – 148.; George A.L. Quantitative and qualitative approaches to content analysis // Trends in content analysis / ed. De Sola Pool I. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 1959. 7 – 32 pp.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid



discussed territories, about Our tolerance towards other religions and peoples, about Our past, about Our values, about heroes, about Our national qualities, about Our self-sufficiency. Themes of issue narratives: the need to ensure security, the threat to the "Russian world", the threat of restricting access to the Black Sea, the humanitarian role of Russia in Syria, the use of the veto by Russia in the UN Security Council, the demonstration of the arms and will of the Russian army, the decisive contribution of Russia to the defeat of terrorism, the return of a part of the military contingent to Russia, the repeated provocations of Georgia, the violation of obligations by Georgia, and the provision of stability in the Caucasus region. At the third stage, the narratives were coded according to the type of justification and speech of the president, representatives of the Foreign Ministry for an internal or external audience. At the final stage, the frequency of the use of narratives by year was revealed, which made it possible to demonstrate when new strategic narratives appeared, which of them were used more often than others in a given time interval.

#### *Scientific contribution to the subject field*

This study offers an analysis of the communicative process of foreign policy justification, carried out to legitimize the foreign policy in the context of its changes and in the conditions of a hybrid political regime. The paper offers an overview of a wide field of literature devoted to a) legitimation (the basic concept of political science) - a distinction is made between the concepts of "legitimation" and "justification" of policy; b) typology of media systems - the type of the Russian media system is determined; c) agenda setting - the features of the foreign policy agenda setting are considered d) the foreign policy of the Russian Federation (in terms of the Russian military operation in Georgia, the annexation of Crimea to the Russian Federation, the Russian military operation in Syria). The paper offers an understanding of how the process of the Russian foreign policy justification has changed since 2014. A method of analysis has been developed based on the use of analytical units of the theory of strategic narratives and additionally developed units

of analysis. This technique can be used in other studies, the task of which is to analyze the policy justification as a communication process.

*Statements to be defended*

1. The conceptualization of the concepts of "justification of politics" and "legitimation of politics" has been carried out. Legitimation is the process of gaining faith in the correctness of a political course, politics, regime, power, leader. At the same time, legitimation can be carried out in relation to different objects (regime, leader, power, actions, decisions, politics); special instruments of legitimation can be used to legitimize different objects. With regard to the legitimization of politics, the main tool is justification as a communication tool. The understanding of "policy justification" as one of the communicative tools that is used by actors in order to "legitimize politics" is proposed.

2. Analysis of justification strategies on the example of the annexation of Crimea and the military operation in Syria justifications revealed that the foreign policy of the Russian Federation after 2014 was justified strategically: in both cases, the justifications followed a general logic, using the same narrative framework, supplemented, at the same time, with facts, depending on the case and the communicative situation.

3. In the discourse of the president and representatives of the Foreign Ministry, the justification for foreign policy was based on an explanation of the need to ensure security, a description of historical memory, a description of common values, a description of confrontation with the West, and the formation of a negative image of the West (led by the United States). The President, in contrast to the representatives of the Foreign Ministry, strove to form his own image of a "strategist" and "triumphant". By addressing security issues, the image of a "global defender" was formed, which could have a positive effect on the president's rating within the country and support his image as a strong politician in the international arena.

4. In justification of the Russian military operation in Syria, the President and representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry argued about the illegitimate actions of Western countries, which made it possible to strengthen the arguments about the destabilizing role of the West in international relations, which were used to justify the annexation of Crimea to Russia.

5. Russian actors used critical justification strategies, which indicated decisiveness in pursuing their own political will in a critical communicative environment. This fact testifies in favor of the new international positioning of the Russian Federation, backed up by force.

6. The justification for the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the military operation in Syria in 2015 differed from the justification for the military operation against Georgia in 2008, which indicates a change in justification strategies after 2014. In the case of Russian military operation in Georgia, the president and foreign ministry officials blamed the Georgian president for the conflict. Russian actors used the discourse of cooperation with Western states and made accusations against Western states (mainly NATO) to a lesser extent than after 2014. In contrast to the justification of the VORG, justifying the RPC and the VORS, Russian officials used national narratives about the proximity of Russian and Muslim values. It can serve as an indicator of Russia's foreign policy orientations towards the East.

7. Comparison of the results of this study with the works devoted to the justification of the Crimea annexation by Russia, Russian military operation in Syria, Russian military operation in Georgia in discourse of state controlled media allows to conclude that the same narratives were often used in media discourse as in official discourse. In fact, the media were the government's propaganda tool. The narratives of the official discourse were communicated in the context of diplomatic protocol, which determined the scope of presentation. Thus, the presentation in the media and in official discourse was different.

#### *Research approbation*

The research results formed the basis for a number of publications:

1. Myasnikov S.A. Legitimation and Justification of Politics: Analysis of Conceptual Differences // Political Science. 2019. No. 3. P. 222-235.
2. Myasnikov S.A. Why “Crimea is ours”: analysis of the justification for the annexation of Crimea in the speeches of V.V. Putin and representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry from 2014 to 2018 // Political Science. 2020. No. 2. P. 234-255.
3. Myasnikov S.A. Strategies of justification of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation after 2014: analysis based on the examples of the annexation of Crimea and the military operation of the Russian Federation in Syria // Bulletin of Perm University. 2020. No. 4. P. 14-26.

The research results were presented at the following scientific conferences:

1. XII RAMI Convention. Moscow, MGIMO, October 21-22, 2019. Report: "Justification of the annexation of Crimea: strategic narratives of V. V. Putin and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation from 2014 to 2018".

2. Annual conference of the RAPN "Trajectories of Russia's political development". Moscow, Moscow State Pedagogical University, December 6-7, 2019. Report: "Strategic narratives of V. V. Putin in the justification of the "Crimean Spring".

3. Annual conference of the RAPN "Political Representation and Public Authority: Transformational Challenges and Prospects", Moscow, November 27-28, 2020. Report: "Communicative strategies of justification of the annexation of Crimea and the Russian military operation in Syria from 2014 to 2019".

#### *Analysis of data and findings*

This study focuses on the analysis of the official justification for the foreign policy of the Russian Federation after 2014, that is, after the change in foreign policy and changes in external conditions (exclusion from the G8, sanctions) in which Russia found itself. Since the Russian political regime can be classified as a hybrid one, the work offers an understanding of how the legitimation of foreign

policy is carried out through justification of policy on the example of a hybrid political regime. The proposed method of analysis, based on the theory of strategic narratives, as well as the additional units of analysis developed by us, can serve as an example for other works devoted to the analysis of the justification of policy as a communicative tool for legitimizing politics.

The first chapter analyzes the concepts *policy legitimation* and *policy justification*. It was revealed that the justification of policy is one of the communicative tools for legitimizing policy (a broader concept). There were also analyzed the approaches to the definition of the Russian media system. It is shown that the agenda is formed both "top-down" and on the basis of market requirements, which allows it to be classified as a hybrid type. The theoretical framework of the research and a methodological approach are based on the analysis of the components of the justification strategy. We operationalized justification strategies as including communicative positions, strategic narratives of three levels (based on the theory of strategic narratives<sup>56</sup>), methods of justification.

The second chapter analyzes the strategic narratives, communicative positions and methods of justification used by the President and representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry in justifying the Russian military operation in Georgia, the annexation of Crimea to the Russian Federation, and the Russian military operation in Syria.

First, it was shown that communicative positions did not determine the methods of justification, but influenced the choice of strategic narratives that were more aggressive towards opponents, in the case of the "plaintiff" communicative position. Thus, the change in the communicative position of Russia from the "defendant" (AC) to the "plaintiff" (RMOS) made it possible to use more aggressive communication strategies. In 2015, the communication strategy moved from the defense phase to the attack phase. Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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<sup>56</sup> Miskimmon A. Strategic narratives: Communication power and the new world order. London: Routledge, 2013. 240 p.

began to use concise narratives, declaring their unwillingness to discuss the topic of Crimea, which has de facto become part of the Russian Federation. The actions of Western countries in Syria served as a pretext for bringing charges against them, thereby strengthening the anti-Western discourse used by the Russian authorities in the case of justifying the AC. It is likely that such a discourse has worked positively in the domestic arena, stimulating the acquisition of domestic legitimacy in Russia's foreign policy.

Second, it was revealed that in justifying the RMOG, Russia avoided an acute communicative confrontation with the West and did not present direct accusations to it, which can be explained by a political orientation towards cooperation with the West and the United States, the accusations were more directed towards NATO, and not specific Western countries. On the contrary, the justification for the AC and RMOS formed a negative image of Western countries led by the United States. This may indicate a change in the approach to the substantiation of Russian foreign policy after 2014.

Third, in the case of justifying the RMOS, the president and representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry applied narratives in the same way as in the case of justifying the AC. This fact allows us to say that the justification of foreign policy after 2014 was carried out strategically.

Fourth, a comparison of the official discourse with the media discourse based on the available research has shown that in the context of a hybrid political regime and a hybrid media system in Russia, anti-Western discourse has become part of a large information campaign of the authorities with the involvement of the media. Such a campaign was based on opposing the negative image of the West with the “correct” image of Russia, its national values, and history. Probably, this was supposed to serve to consolidate the nation and internal legitimization of foreign policy actions and decisions of the Russian authorities.

Fifth, the international communication regarding the AC and the RMOS represented two opposite positions. From the first position, Russia was responsible

for the Crimea illegitimately taken away from Ukraine and the escalation of the Syrian conflict (Western discourse). From the second position, Western countries supported the coup in Ukraine and opposed the legitimate army of Assad in Syria with the aim of overthrowing him (Russian discourse). Both the first and the second discourse had their supporters. In fact, the communicative behavior of Russia after 2014 was supposed to demonstrate the independence of the Russian Federation in the international arena. To some extent, this strategy worked, because, as we said above, there were two opposing discourses, the main communicator of the first was the United States, the second - the Russian Federation.

Sixth, military victories were of particular importance in justification used by the President of the Russian Federation. V.V. Putin acted as a "triumphant" who declared that the RF ensured the safety of its citizens; or a "global triumphant" who claimed that Russia defeated the terrorists in Syria, thereby ensuring security for the world. Probably, such communicative behavior pursued the goal of associating the military victories of the Russian Federation with the personality of the president, which should have had a positive effect on both his personal legitimacy and the legitimacy of his decisions, and, ultimately, the legitimacy of order.

Seventh, the justification strategies used by Russian actors were based mainly on securitization; description of historical memory; interpretation of facts and international law from the standpoint of the correctness of Russia. Such justification strategies probably made it possible to transfer the "problem" to the level of the personal agenda of citizens, causing approval and agreement with the actions of the authorities in the domestic arena. At the same time, such justification strategies are similar to the strategies for justifying the war in Iraq, which were used by the US authorities - ensuring security, humanitarian action, ensuring law and order<sup>57</sup>. Thus, a model of justification similar to the American one was applied for a similar case - the use of the aircraft on the territory of another state.

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<sup>57</sup> Miller R.B. Justifications of the Iraq war examined // *Ethnic & international relations*. 2008. Vol. 22. N.1. 43 – 67 p.

We can say that the demonstration of military power and special justification are links in the same chain and are carried out strategically. Probably, the aggressive communicative environment and possible consequences did not become a reason for choosing other, softer communication strategies, which may also indirectly indicate a change in approaches to the positioning of the Russian Federation in the international arena.

Thus, the study showed that the justification was used strategically by the actors in both the justification of the AC and the justification of the RMOS; at the same time, the justification of the AC and RMOS was different from the justification of the RMOG. The justification actually reflected the changes that took place in the positioning of Russia in the international arena.