

## CASE STUDY: THE EXPRESSION OF NATIONALISM IN VLADIMIR PUTIN'S RHETORIC

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**ABSTRACT:** *BASED ON A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS ALGORITHM, THE MAIN POSITIONS OF RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN ON RUSSIAN OFFICIAL NATIONALITY IN ANTITHESIS ARE ANALYZED WITH WESTERN EUROPEAN MULTICULTURALISM AND DECADENCE. PUTIN'S SPEECHES AVOID THE DEADLY TRAPS OF NATIONALISM AND RELY ON THE FOUNDATIONS OF A PATRIOTISM WITH ROOTS REDISCOVERED IN RUSSIAN ORTHODOXY, BUT ALSO WITH NOSTALGIC REFERENCES TO THE SOVIET ETHICAL CODE AND DEMONIZING THE WESTERN DECADENCE. WHEN EUROPEAN MULTICULTURALISM IS DECLARED A MISTAKE AND BURIED BY ITS OWN PROMOTERS AND PROTECTORS THE APPEAL TO THE RHETORICAL DIMENSION OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE BECOMES SINE QUA NON. THE WINNER CAN ONLY BE CLASSICAL POLITICAL DISCOURSE BUILT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF RHETORICAL ART, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE SPIRAL OF HISTORY THE RHETORICAL ART OF THE GREAT PERSONALITIES.*

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**KEYWORDS:** VLADIMIR PUTIN, NATIONALISM, PATRIOTISM, MULTICULTURALISM, WESTERN DECADENCE

### 1. PRELIMINARIES ON THE METHODOLOGY OF RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

The classical foundations of education – grammar, logic and rhetoric – build a "trium" and they have been, are and will always be essential for a well-constructed political discourse. Paradoxically, some heads of states accidentally offer in their narrative grammatical errors (George Bush), others seem to be unable to overcome the "childhood" propaganda of "Bolshevism", using abundantly circumstantial comparisons of the situation in "civilized states" or "recovering the gap" even in the case of moral decadence, while heads of civilized states demonstrate a chronic atrophy of historical sense ("history is bunk").

Rhetoric has a huge persuasive power, it has the possibility to make masses of people do something - good or bad - or do nothing. It can be "noble" (Plato), it may reveal transcendence, it seems to make a good house with poetry, it is able to exploit the potential of connotations and denotations, to carry the meanings of the metaphor to the sublime, to highlight the abstract ideas of immortal spirituality. The well-argued rhetoric of high ethical status that analyzes and generates

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essences rather than similarities, principles and deeds leads to a profound authority much faster and makes the appeal to the authority itself redundant<sup>2</sup>. A persuasive political rhetoric must avoid truisms, histrionics, demagogy or ridicule; it should recommend itself through substance and treatment continuity when it presents the positives and negatives as two possible extremes on a spectrum. Rhetoric takes into account the fundamental dimensions of the human nature - reason, emotion, ethics and religion. The barren, artificial rhetoric showing lack of knowledge and inability to adapt to the audience's specificity becomes sterile and possibly counterproductive. The rhetorical narrative conquers its status by the method of argumentation adapted to the target audience table according to:

- Cause-effect,
- Definition,
- Consequences,
- Circumstances;
- With stylistic alchemy of the relationship between "good" and "evil / bad".

## 2. BETWEEN EUROPE AND EURASIA

The end of the Cold War did not bring the much-promised and expected *End of History* (Fukuyama) but at least it ceased the blunt and irreducible propaganda between the two great political-ideological and military blocs.

In the Soviet vocabulary, its ideology was described as being similar to the Marxist-Leninist doctrine<sup>3</sup> (as a vision but also an interpretation of the normative of a society) even if usually the doctrine is a collection of teachings or attitudes integrated in a unitary logical perspective for the citizens of a state<sup>4</sup>.

The tectonic changes in the international political system, which was not supported by the huge propaganda apparatus, have revived the rhetoric and political stylistics of the contemporary political figures. In the first decade of this century, the introduction of the American model of democracy, including by force, especially in the Middle East region, has generated high migratory flows of refugees towards Europe, which in Europe has lit up a strong nationalist trend (called by a part of the international press "ordinary populism") in front of which multiculturalism tried to show resistance, but ultimately in some regions succumbed to the arms of its parents<sup>5</sup>. The EU system crisis attempts to resolve the government-supranational relationship through solutions to the expression of its own denial: restructuring of "concentric circles" and re-organization at

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<sup>2</sup> "A society's health or declension was mirrored in how it used language." Richard Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric*, in *Rhetoric Review* 15 (Fall 1996): 128-41.

<sup>3</sup> See Mărcău Flavius Cristian, „Undemocratic regimes”, in *Annals of „Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu Jiu, Letter and Social Science Series*, Issue 2/2014, pp. 105-110

<sup>4</sup> Mărcău Flavius Cristian, „Democratization in the Former Communist States: Imposition or Necessity” in *Research and Science Today*, No. 1(7)/2014, pp. 81-85. See also Mărcău Flavius Cristian, „Short analysis of the fall of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe 1989 and the domino effect” in *Astra Salvensis*, Anul III, Nr. 5, octomber 2015, pp. 159-164

<sup>5</sup> Defined as a set of policies or processes designed to preserve the cultural identity of a distinct group within society, the term has come into use and has generated a new sociological theory (examples - Switzerland, the United States, Canada and Australia). In 1975, Sweden formally adopted multiculturalism as a state policy.

different speeds are far too far from Charles de Gaulle's dream<sup>6</sup>. A comparison between the two federalist systems - the European Union and the Russian Federation - can only begin with political leadership (the role of personality in history / leadership-mass / ethos-tradition / modernity)<sup>7</sup>. There are two categories of nationalism: the nationalism of Russian ethnic purity (without non-Russian elements but including the Russians out of the state) and Russian nationalism (multiethnic including all ethnic groups with historical ties in the Russian space). This perspective implies the interrelation of the ethnic diversity within Russia, but also the justification for the re-integration of the Russian spaces that are outside Russia (*russkii* and *rossiiskii*, but without a clear demarcation between these syntagms).

On the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014, Putin's rhetoric explains the status of the Crimean Peninsula through the Black Sea geopolitical command, sanctioning the double standard of the West in international relations, underlining that the Russian people (the ethnic entity, former *rossiiskii narod* - used by Elsin and the tsarist era) became one of the largest divided nations in the world if not the largest after the dissolution of the Soviet Union<sup>8</sup>. The West after the Crimea (formerly - Iran, Syria, Georgia) becomes unequivocally from partner to enemy<sup>9</sup>. It should be noted that earlier this syntagm only concerned the ethnic meaning and did not have political significance; Putin uses *rossiiskii* (Russians) to describe Russian-Germans, Russian-Tatars, Russian-Armenians and other ethnicities inside Russia, which determines an author to think that rhetoric will jump to "ethnonational positions"<sup>10</sup>.

After the rise and demise of "national democratic nationalism" (2000-2014), Russian nationalism includes both the current "imperialist nationalism"<sup>11</sup> and ethno nationalism. However, it uses the same arguments enforced by the Russian ethnic group<sup>12</sup> in support of the expression "Geography as a destiny"<sup>13</sup> normal for a large country playing a geopolitical role, especially in the

<sup>6</sup> General Charles de Gaulle launched the famous phrase, "We must have a Europe going from the Atlantic to the Urals" (the ideology of the current federalist - the "intergovernmental dialogue stage") by strengthening the United States towards a Europe of Nations. See also Altiero Spinelli "Manifesto for a free and united Europe."

<sup>7</sup> Even if there are a number of integration theories (functionalism and neo-functionalism, realism and neorealism, neo-Europeanism and European federalism), the leader's personality is capital.

<sup>8</sup> See Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, *The New Russian Nationalism. Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000–2015*, Edinburgh University Press, (2016), p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Masha Lipman, Putin's Nationalist Strategy, March 2, 2014, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/putins-nationalist-strategy>.

<sup>10</sup> *Rossiiskii* refers to Russian citizens and the Russian state. Anyone who is ethnic Chechen, Tatar or Ukrainian may be "Rossiiskii" if he has a Russian passport and lives on Russian territory. See Vladimir Putin: *Ethnic Russian Nation*, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/03/19/vladimir-putin-ethnic-russian-nationalist/?utm\\_term=.589f78d6c5b1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/03/19/vladimir-putin-ethnic-russian-nationalist/?utm_term=.589f78d6c5b1).

<sup>11</sup> This term that emerged after the annexation of Crimea to the Russian Federation. See Emil Pain, "The imperial syndrome and its influence on Russian nationalism". See Emil Pain, "The imperial syndrome and its influence on Russian nationalism", in Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, *The New Russian Nationalism. Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000–2015*, Edinburgh University Press, (2016), p. 48. "We never use the word "strength" to imply superpower ambitions. We can never impose anything on anybody. Russia's strength is within us, within our people, our traditions and culture, our economy, our huge territory and natural resources. It is in our defence power, of course. However, most importantly, our strength is in the unity of our people." See Vladimir Putin addressed State Duma. October 5, 2016. <http://en.kremlin.ru/catalog/keywords/78/events/53027>.

<sup>12</sup> The author's judgments are forced. See Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, *The New Russian Nationalism. Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000–2015*, Edinburgh University Press, (2016), 22.

<sup>13</sup> Dughin, 1997

existence of the Ukrainian civil war<sup>14</sup>. We cannot speak of “religious nationalism” but rather of “pagan nationalism” and especially of “secular nationalism”, however without important political roles. Particular attention is paid to the position of the Russian Orthodox Church over the concept of patriotism (the sense of love and devotion to the homeland and the people, established in history), which Putin's rhetoric promotes, though between the Russian President and the cautious attitude of the Russian Orthodox Church there have been seen differences in both Chechen and Armenian issues. Still, Putin's political discourse is clearly supported by the patriotic perspective as defined by the Orthodox perspective<sup>15</sup>. Eurasianism as the new expression of Russian nationalism avoids ethno nationalism because “the historic mission of the state will end”, “the preservation of every nation and its ethos will be treated as the greatest historical value” with a significant role in “close proximity”<sup>16</sup>. Thus, the Eastern EU mini-project (Eurasia Union) made up of as many Soviet states as possible is more than favorable to the interests of the Kremlin. Putin supports the idea that Russia is a multinational state but with a single nation, with a polyethnic civilization, the foundation of the Russian culture, refusing to support a *Rosiiski* nation, but only the dominance of the Russian ethnicity. The term “*ruskii*” defines culture (which is not “*rossiiskaia*”) more important than nationalism. The Russian president's rhetoric supports the “official nationality” correlated with the need to protect the Russian world (*ruskii mir*) from the territories belonging to the Russian Empire, defending the only true defender of the people<sup>17</sup>.

In conclusion, non-Russian literature on the Russian nationalist phenomenon has a variety of nuances, currents and trends that make it different from the Western landscape. Any reduction to one of its forms of expression - ethnic, religious, anti-Semitic, imperialist, religious, secular, tsarist, as a reflex of national liberation under the yoke of an empire etc. (the variants are conceptually and factually conflictual) is erroneous and justified only by polemic finality, not without pejorative words and controversial categorization. Putin's nationalist rhetoric is moderate compared to the political rivals' discourse, avoiding radical positions or introducing a cleverly refined ambiguity when he cannot avoid the book of nationalism in order not to risk the strategic division of its supporters in the medium and long term. Putin's moderate solution in nationalist rhetoric - the prospect of wider acceptance of nationalism - even if he is strongly criticized in Western space is the option that has generated social coherence and stability (according to Western opinion polls)<sup>18</sup>.

### 3. THE SUBTLETIES OF THE RUSSIAN NATIONALISM AND PATRIOTISM

In the Western world, Russia is suspected or even accused of wanting to regain its lost status, the territories of the former Tsarist Empire under a “presidential patronage” (through

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<sup>14</sup> Alexander Verkhovsky, Radical nationalists from the start of Medvedev's presidency to the war in Donbas: True till death? in Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, *The New Russian Nationalism. Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000–2015*, Edinburgh University Press, (2016), 75.

<sup>15</sup> Anastasia Mitrofanova, “Russian ethnic nationalism and religion today”, in Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, *The New Russian Nationalism. Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000–2015*, Edinburgh University Press, (2016), 104.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel Schearf, *Putin's Popularity Rooted in Nationalism*, November 01, 2014, <http://www.voanews.com/a/analysts-say-putins-popularity-is-rooted-in-nationalism/2504876.html>

<sup>17</sup> “The words of our president (Vladimir Putin) are very close to the heart of any of us: Russia can be either great or not at all.” Aleksandr Dugin, Council of the Russian People Worldwide, Moscow, 13-14 December 2001.

<sup>18</sup> In May 2013, the Romir poll releases NEO-RUSS survey.

coercion, manipulation, and election fraud) backed by a socially balance dominated by a person and not by principles (the weakness of the rule of law, corruption and a low social capital)<sup>19</sup>. However, Putin condemns the past imperialist episodes of the USSR, referring to the invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, considering them as "major mistakes whose fruit is the rusophobia of Eastern European citizens."

Stabilizing the Russian political system after the chaos of the 90s<sup>20</sup> from a center-right perspective led to economic development in the market economy, cooperation with the West but only in terms of its own national interests with popular support of 60-80%. In the first decade of this century, Putin adopts a defensive royalist rhetoric based on internal issues, pursuing the elimination of Western criticism regarding the electoral system, limiting the place and the play of nationalist issues to the voters' preferences<sup>21</sup>. In 1999, Putin carried out the military operation against the rebels in Chechnya ignoring the appeal to the nationalist wave, preferring to define the operation as "anti-terrorist" directed against "bandits", avoiding criticizing the Chechens as a nation, his rhetoric not excluding them from the Russian nation. The energetic, decisive and motivated leadership skills and not nationalism highlight his character traits: experience, physical presence, leadership style, principled nature and honesty, projecting him first on the Russian voters, overcoming the other political rivals counting on the book nationalist group - Evgenii Primakov, Iurii Luzhkov or Gennadii Ziuganov<sup>22</sup>. The 2008-2009 crisis, despite the predictions of a collapse – there was an economic downturn –, is affecting Putin's popularity in 2011, but it does not block Putin's return to power in March 2012 after the presidential election as a "father of the nation." The list of Russian officials sanctioned by the US for the death of Prisoner of Sergei Magnitskii's lawyer and the annulment of the incarcerations by the Americans (the death of a Russian child adopted in Texas) bring substantial popular support in favor of Putin, especially during 2012-2013. Russia is a patronized society and is not defined by nationalism, according to the specialized literature. Social mobilization takes place through a person's network (oligarchs, regional political machinery, Vladimir Putin's personal network in all spheres of society) and not according to nationalist ideals. The alchemy of "presidential patronage" is a combination of formal and informal power generating numerous and prosperous "hybrid regimes" (combinations of democratic elements with autocratic elements) on the background of the stability of long-standing leadership. Such a perspective devotes a great deal of attention to public opinion by regularly pouring it in order to know the popular support of political decisions. Putin's rhetoric may be more likely to be based on patriotic feelings and not on Western-style nationalism as an expression of cultural unity and migratory waves in the Middle East and Africa<sup>23</sup>. Because of the Ukrainian civil

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<sup>19</sup> Henry E. Hale, How nationalism and machine politics mix in Russia, in Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, *The New Russian Nationalism. Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000–2015*, Edinburgh University Press, (2016), 221.

<sup>20</sup> See Mărcău Flavius Cristian, „Short analysis of the fall of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe 1989 and the domino effect” in *Astra Salvensis*, Anul III, Nr. 5, octomber 2015, 159-164

<sup>21</sup> "Our goal is to create higher living standards beyond the Urals in a ten-year period to make Siberia a very attractive place for people." Siberian Development Strategy. <http://en.kremlin.ru/>.

<sup>22</sup> [http://rosvoenentr-f.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=51:2008-12-22-12-36-56&Itemid=72&layout=default](http://rosvoenentr-f.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=51:2008-12-22-12-36-56&Itemid=72&layout=default)

<sup>23</sup> "Like anyone who considers themselves a Russian and a patriot, must take an objective look at what is happening out there and choose the appropriate response, or at the very least formulate their own position on the situation."



war, four-fifths of the Russian population supports Putin's decisions, and his popularity climbs up the stunning peaks, due to the popular tendency of self-identification with the winner. Putin dominates the political system without any shadow of doubt by the decision to protect the Russian ethnic group of Crimea (*iskonno russkaia zemlia*) against Ukraine "fascist," the citizens being "very proud that they are Russians." However, Putin uses a moderate, even warm rhetoric on the part of the Ukrainians calling him the "brother nation", evoking the common origin (Kievan Russia and the USSR) and deserving a common political future, even if the intolerance to the Ukrainians had become very high. Massive popular support for Russian-led Crimean decisions is explained by nationalist sentiment, although Putin considers it politically dangerous, paying special attention to avoiding the politicization or exacerbation of this sensitive issue<sup>24</sup>. The "renunciation" of ideology<sup>25</sup> along with multilateral deregulation and legislative destruction and aggressive socialization brought about by social networks led to revolutionary transformations but also manipulation, intoxication as a reflux of the monolith spraying of antagonistic ideologies. Neoliberalism has also promoted the rights of minorities of any kind, in a dizzying spiral with generous humanist horizons, like multiculturalism, but with short and ephemeral existences buried by their parents. The failure of the *Leitkultur* concept (1998, German-Arab sociologist Bassam Tibi), the warning of Thilo Sarrazin (*Deutschland schafft sich ab* - Germany is self-defining) and the failure to build a multicultural society in Germany (2004, 2010 Angela Merkel) have been adopted by Putin in a creative way through the primacy of Russian culture. The "failure of multiculturalism" is officially declared by a number of political leaders - British<sup>26</sup>, Spanish<sup>27</sup>, Italian<sup>28</sup>, but also EU leaders. There is an aggressive nationalist discourse, a new type of anti-Semitism, new meanings of extreme political righteousness, and the need for European institutional reconceptualization and reconfiguration. In his first two mandates, President Putin is a clear and unequivocal promoter of pride / dignity generated by the new foundations of civic patriotism in the vast process of realigning the identity of the Russian people (*rossiiskii narod*)<sup>29</sup>. The civic nation, not just over the ethnic element, provides non-Russian cultural and political rights and shares a variety of common values and traditions<sup>30</sup>. In 2012, Putin underlined "The great mission for the [ethnic] Russian is to unite and cement the polyethnic society around a center of

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Meeting with members of the Council for Civil Society and Human Rights and federal and regional human rights commissioners. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47179>

<sup>24</sup> Gallup estimates the support of the population for a US president in foreign policy decisions and military actions lasts for about ten weeks. See Mikhail A. Alexseev and Henry E. Hale, "Rallying the Leader More Than the Flag: Changes in Russiannationalist Public Opinion 2013-14," in Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, *The New Russian Nationalism. Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000-2015*, Edinburgh University Press, (2016), 199.

<sup>25</sup> "In the twentieth century various eras were recorded in Russia - monarchy, totalitarianism, perestroika and democracy. Each era had its own ideology. We do not have. "Boris Eltsin in *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* 1996.

<sup>26</sup> Prime Minister David Cameron, "the doctrine of state multiculturalism in the UK has encouraged different cultures to bring separate lives away from each other and society as a whole" (Munich Security Conference, February 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, "multiculturalism is a big failure, divides and weakens societies, produces neither tolerance nor integration." Madrid, 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said (2006) "does not want Italy to become a multiethnic and multicultural state, and Italians are proud of their traditions."

<sup>29</sup> Helge Blakkisrud, "Blurring the boundary between civic and ethnic: The Kremlin's new approach to national identity under Putin's third term," in Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, *The New Russian Nationalism. Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000-2015*, Edinburgh University Press, (2016), 249.

<sup>30</sup> Sakwa 2008 Putin's Millennium Manifesto.

Russian cultural gravity” through a federal approach to the national question, “no person living in our country should lose faith and ethnicity. However, he must first be a citizen of Russia”<sup>31</sup>, arguing against any manifestations of separatism or nationalism. In 2013, Putin supports the communication entitled "Russia's Diversity in the Modern World", dedicated to the unity and identity of the nation around common goals and responsibilities, underlining the important role of the Russian Orthodox Church, of family values while considering that the excesses of political correctness and multiculturalism are opposed to moral principles and all traditional identities: national, cultural, religious and even sexual. Putin opposes traditional values in a conservative vision of protecting national identity against Western decadence.

In 2014, patriotism becomes the centerpiece of Putin's strategies after the loss of power in Ukraine by Viktor Yanukovich, reversing on the wall of political talks the fate of Crimea, which has long been shaken by the nationalist trend<sup>32</sup>.

Inclusion of Crimea within the Russian Federation does not trigger the waves of nationalism but increases support for Putin's decisions (September 2014, 87%)<sup>33</sup>, as an invincible defender of the Russian nation in front of the "fascist junta" of Ukraine, while strengthening the presidential ownership regime. If Gorbachev supported Russia's accession to the "European Common House" (current culminating with Andrei Kozyrev but ceased in 1996), Putin is a strong supporter of the Eurasian Union (founded by Lev Gumilev between 1960s and 90s and developed by "chameleon" Aleksandr Dugin) promoting peace but also mixing with other religions, ensuring freedom of movement for citizens of the Member States. If in 2000 Putin declared that "Russia is part of Europe's culture and cannot see it isolated from Europe ..." (BBC 2000), as a continuation of Gorbachev's position, the Eurasian option is undoubtedly a more significant geopolitical change. In the same year Putin made a parallel between the need for moral values and the moral code of 1961 (*Moral'nyi kodeks stroitelia kommunizma*), concluding the need to strengthen the morality of citizens. Between 1994 and 2004, "patriotic centralism" was promoted as a form of balance between "liberalism" and "communism"<sup>34</sup>. In 2003 Putin spoke about the creation of a Council for National Ideology (*Sovet po natsional'noi ideologii*) unmaterialized initiative; previously. In 2001 Putin launched a patriotic education program for citizens. In the time period of 2004-2012, Vladislav Surkov (Putin's gray eminence) is conceptually launching sovereignty of democracy defining the status of international relations ("the second Europe") and the nature of the political regime in Russia. In December 2007, Putin declared that Russia had no official ideology or principles, and in the following year, he tried to create a political framework within the presidential party for the "great ideology," simultaneously with the centrist concept of "social conservatism" promoted by Boris Gryzlov. In 2012, the Institute for Social Economic and Political Studies (*Institut sotsial'no- ekonomicheskikh i polit-icheskikh issledovaniy* – ISEPI) publishes the

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<sup>31</sup> Nezavisimaia gazeta.

<sup>32</sup> September 2000 interview with the Indian newspaper, *India Today*: "[Russian] basic values are none other than patriotism, love of one's motherland, love of one's home, one's people, one's cultural values....Everything that makes us a nation, that is the source of our uniqueness, everything that we can be proud of--all this will be the foundation of [the national] idea."

<sup>33</sup> According to the opinion poll Levada Center.

<sup>34</sup> See Mărcău Flavius Cristian, „Short analysis of the fall of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe 1989 and the domino effect” in *Astra Salvensis*, Anul III, Nr. 5, octomber 2015, 159-164

Commentary on Conservatism (*Tetradī po konservatizmu*)<sup>35</sup> aiming at promoting the "tsennosti" values of "traditional" values - the heterosexual family, demographic health, healthy lifestyle, respect for the elderly etc. – many regulated by law. Correlatively, Putin's speeches often include terms such as "morality" (*nравstvennost'*), the adjective form of spirituality (*dukhovnyi*). In the same year, Patriarch Kirill speaks of Putin as "a miracle of the Lord." "Slavic Solidarity", a concept with historical roots, is not agreed by Putin opting for the Byzantine heritage as a functional empire and force against the West, derived from the theological term 'katechon'. In 2013, Putin adopts the rhetoric of morality by promoting "Alternative Europe" dedicated to safeguarding Christian values, stressing "[...] it is impossible to go forward without nationality, culture and national self-determination. [...] We see how many Euro-Atlantic states refuse to assume their roots, including Christian values, the basis of Western civilization<sup>36</sup>. Beginning with warning Europe that it is losing its identity, the president continues, stating that Russia will no longer accept lessons, adopts the position of a European anti-liberal force attracting sympathizers from the populist right-wing parties and religious movements.

Following the chaotic reforms of the 1990s, Putin imposed an economic gain model (corporate state in international integration) followed by an uncertain evolution after the financial crisis of 2008 (the constitution of a regional bloc of trade - the Eurasian Economic Union) and the Western economic sanctions regime starting in 2014 (return to autarchy and dependence from China)<sup>37</sup>. Putin conceptually supports BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) as a response to US hegemony and as a potential structure generating new international rules.

Maintaining the market economy option and the integration trend in the international economy, Putin takes some autocratic nationalist measures - the arrest of Mikhail Khodorkovskii and the takeover of Yokos by the state (in 2003 following his intention to sell Exxon), the purchase of Sibneft (Roman Abramovich) by Gazprom, the purchase of TNK-BP by Rosneft - the limitation of 25% of the shares held by foreigners in the strategic fields. In 2012, based on elected members of the security forces (*siloviki*), a series of strategic economic objectives strongly obstructed by the wave of Western sanctions generated by the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 are launched. As a reaction to these sanctions, an alternative economic agenda and the initiation of an international payment system correlated with BRICS, Putin pursuing "reducing the dependence of our economy and the financial system on negative external factors"<sup>38</sup> adopts the line of anti-Western protectionist policies.

#### 4. ELEMENTS OF RHETORIC AND STYLISTICS IN PUTIN'S SPEECH

Types of rhetorical arguments are related to political and ideological types, definition and analogy (ethical arguments) are compatible with idealism and conservatism (as philosophical perspectives) suited to ideas or examples of past present situations and the development of general principles.

<sup>35</sup> Built on the ideas of Nikolai Berdiaev (1874-1948) the promoter "Russian Ideas," Ivan Ilin (1883-1954) theoretician of monarchy and Konstantin Leontev (1831-1891) bizanthologist.

<sup>36</sup> Vladimir Putin, *Russia's Diversity for the Modern World*, The Valdai International Discussion Club. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19243>.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Rutland, "The place of economics in Russian national identity debates," in Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, *The New Russian Nationalism. Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000–2015*, Edinburgh University Press, (2016), 336.

<sup>38</sup> *Kremlin.ru* 2014.



Although there is a tendency to break the rhetoric of ideology and politics, such a thing is not possible, because it itself denies the Platonic Aristocratic foundations, the rhetoric itself being ideological "rhetoric is in ideology rather than ideology in rhetoric." The rhetoric is an indicator of ideology, though the argumentative styles may be specific to a political stream but abundantly used by a political stream at least differently if not rival. Perhaps this blending most eloquently supports that rhetoric works very well with pedagogy, the professor claiming "a certain reality" even if he does not. In Putin's rhetoric, traditionalist arguments are laid down in an ethical hierarchy (family-society), an avoidance of relatives in an argumentative flow (avoiding the easy political course) based on conservatism in which circumstantialization is occupied by the anti-status quo ruse-controversial neoliberal examples. The similarity and analogy with certain aspects of the Tsarist or Soviet period are punctual, the loan of the religious foundations of patriotism being the most successful with consistent stylistics without contradictions between the terms used. The consequences (as a rhetorical argument) are illustrative when they highlight the emergence and disappearance of the concept of European multiculturalism that was ambiguously antithetical with the role of the Russian factor in the Russian multicultural civilization. Interestingly, the suggestion from the unfinished comparison (the rhetorical argument - consequences) between the "Soviet" reality and the "European federal integration" (rhetorical argument - circumstances) is remarked by the remark that the West uses two standards for the same type of problem - Crimea.

Arguments of consequences and circumstances are fully exploited in the case of the Ukrainian civil war in the face of the negative media offensive towards Vladimir Putin's person with or without arguments, but on an aggressive background of apocalyptic assumptions and scenarios in which Russia is "the guilty party".

Putin promotes social and epistemological rhetorical centrist and center-left sometimes, explicitly criticizing reality tightening economic, political and social arrangements when dealing with internal issues in a conservative fund (suggestive references to Soviet positive aspects) and with "limited liberal explosion". Putin's position on the Ukrainian civil war reveals aspects of balanced, diplomatic, hermetic primordial rhetoric, and taking positions well weighed in advance. We cannot speak of a proactive but rather reactive attitude (limited to the ethnic Russians) with arguments against civil war with pleadings for federal settlement of the situation.

The impact of Western sanctions, military support and external humanitarian aid on regional stability as well as on Russian interests are treated as an "international business" by OSCE involvement of regional powers (Germany and France) but without the direct involvement of superpower number one Minks Agreement (not completed in English).

In 2008, a populist trend develops in Europe and is exploited by Putin against its geostrategic rivals, so in 2013 after attacks against feminism and homosexual movements in a paper he criticizes decadence, lack of spirituality, fetishism of tolerance and diversity in Euro-Atlantic space, as "*Gayropa*." The rhetoric is about relative morality predicting the entrance into a "dark chaos" and falling into a "primitivism," counterbalanced by Western warning "lifting dictators gives rise to anxiety, admiring a strong man from a distance is like an opportunity in which you end up buying authoritarianism"<sup>39</sup>.

In the opinion of the advocates of neo-liberalism, Putin's rhetorical logic of rhetoric included among the ideologists of global populism, the pivotal argument being the admiration of

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/03/its-putins-world/513848/>

some controversial political leaders - Rodrigo Duterte (Philippines), Nigel Farage and (Britain), Pat Buchanan and Donald Trump (USA), Sarkozy and Marine Le Pen (France) - as an exponent of traditional resistance. Steve Bannon Trump's ideologist, though suspecting Putin of kleptocratic tendencies and imperial ambitions, cannot draw attention to the rhetoric of his projects<sup>40</sup>. Putin is considered the "leader of the free world" and "protector of Eastern values", but also a kind of "white knight" against Islam and cosmopolitan elites, and Russia as a "civilization model"<sup>41</sup>.

The nostalgic nationalism promoted by several current political leaders - Donald Trump, Xi Jinping (the great Chinese people's rebirth, 2012), Recep Tayyip Erdogan (Glory of the Ottoman Empire), Shinzo Abe (Meiji Restoration of the 19th Century), Narendra Modi (Renaissance Hindu Movement), Theresa May (Brexit - "Global Britain")<sup>42</sup>, Viktor Orban (Great Hungary) - could not ignore Putin suspected of nationalist projects<sup>43</sup>. Putin does not recognize separatist entities in eastern Ukraine, an option that did not give water to the supporters of Putin's nationalism, preserving his flexibility and balance with anti-Western nationalists and pro-Western liberals<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> "We, the Judeo-Christian West, really have to look at what [Putin's] talking about as far as traditionalism goes," Bannon said. He shared Putin's vision of a world disastrously skidding off the tracks—"a crisis both of our Church, a crisis of our faith, a crisis of the West, a crisis of capitalism."

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/03/its-putins-world/513848/>

<sup>41</sup> *Extremists Turn to a Leader to Protect Western Values: Vladimir Putin*

[https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/03/world/americas/alt-right-vladimir-putin.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/03/world/americas/alt-right-vladimir-putin.html?_r=0)

<sup>42</sup> Tim Farron accuses Theresa May of having the same 'aggressive nationalistic' agenda as Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin. 'The politics of Trump. Of Putin. Of Le Pen. Now the politics of Her Majesty's Government. Welcome to the new world order.'

<sup>43</sup> Gideon Rachman, Trump, Putin, Xi and the rise of nostalgic nationalism, <https://www.ft.com/content/198efe76-ce8b-11e6-b8ce-b9c03770f8b1>.

<sup>44</sup> Andrei Tsygankov, *Putin is Not a Nationalist*, June 24, 2014, <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/putin-is-not-a-nationalist-36704>

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