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# Politics, Culture & Socialization

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# Going negative by metaphors: The Donbass conflict in the Russian and the Ukrainian press

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## **Abstract:**

Previous research has established the importance of metaphors as conceptual devices (Semino, 2008; Zinken & Musolff, 2009). This article builds upon existing research and extends the insight into how media use metaphors in their coverage of military conflicts. The media coverage of the ongoing Eastern Ukrainian military conflict (Donbass conflict) presents a suitable case for this investigation. The strength of this study lies in the nature of the data that have been collected, namely articles that appeared in a Russian and a Ukrainian news outlet (September 2014 until January 2015) covering the same stories (same date, same event). Thereby, we investigate metaphor as a conceptual device and an element of framing that contributes to the distinct representation of the conflict in the selected outlets from the two countries. This research follows a qualitative research design, relying on Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black, 2004), and Metaphor Power Taxonomy (De Landtsheer, 2015; Beer & De Landtsheer, 2004). We conclude that the selected Russian and Ukrainian media used metaphors for enemy construction, in particular the hostile imagery with “Colony” (Russian outlet) and “Fear” (Ukrainian outlet) as major source domains.

**Keywords:** discourse analysis, metaphor, framing, news media, Russia, Ukraine, Donbass, conflict.

## Introduction

The prevailing trend in political communication studies is to explain the differences in media coverage of news stories in terms of framing theory (De Vreese, 2005; McQuail, 1994; Scheufele, 1999). In addition, previous studies provide a useful account of metaphors as means of conceptualization that highlight different sides of political issues and can facilitate alternative readings of events, (Burgers, Konijn, & Steen, 2016; De Landtsheer, 2015; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, Peeters, 2010; Schön & Rein, 1994). While

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the existing body of research has suggested the relevance of metaphors in media representation of events, the examination of this idea across contexts still constitutes interest for further studies. For instance, elsewhere metaphors were shown to contribute to the construction of reality in crisis context (De Landtsheer, 2009; De Landtsheer & De Vrij, 2004). This study aims to contribute to this growing area of research by exploring the application of metaphors to the construction of a military conflict in press.

This domain is of an increased practical interest as the indication of controversies and misunderstandings is essential on the way to conflict resolution (Fisher, Kelman, & Nan, 2013). The absence of a common metaphorical representation of the same events in media can reveal misconceptions that hinder negotiations, and even point at the roots of the conflict. In that regard, the empirical basis of this study presents an additional significance. This study focuses on the press coverage of the conflict in Donbass, from a Russian and a Ukrainian media outlet. We aim to explore and explain the differences in the representation of the Donbass conflict by interpreting the use of metaphors in news stories from different outlets covering the same events.

Furthermore, the case itself is of interest due its complexity and the ambiguity of the evidence of Russia's involvement. The aggravation of the controversies between Russia and Ukraine evolved against the background of Russia's annexation of Crimea and the Donbass conflict. The armed conflict in the eastern regions of Ukraine started in April 2014, and it remains unsettled (August 2018). The conflict involves the rebel forces of the self-declared republics and the Ukrainian government. Ukrainian leadership accuses Russian authorities of allowing well-trained volunteers together with heavy weaponry to cross the border with Ukraine to support the rebels (Verkhovna Rada, 2015), accusations dismissed by Russia. At the same time, both countries are engaged in international peace negotiations intended to resolve the conflict.

The aim of this research is to understand how the dispute between countries is constructed by the metaphorical language of the press during the international tensions (Herrmann, 2017; Kinder, 2003; Shimko, 2004). Therefore, this article attempts to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1.* What kinds of metaphors are present in the conflict coverage in the selected Ukrainian and Russian media outlets?
- RQ2.* How do metaphors contribute to the conflict coverage in the selected Ukrainian and Russian media outlets?

The first section of the article (I) covers the contextual background of the conflict. The second section of this article (II) contains the theoretical framework. Subsequently, we formulate the research objectives (III) drawn from the theoretical framework. In the method section (IV), we motivate the selection of tools that were used to collect relevant materials and to identify and interpret metaphors. Finally, we describe the results (V), after which we discuss the most important findings, as well as the limitations of this study and perspectives for further research (VI and VII).

## I. Contextual background of the Donbass conflict

This section outlines the course of the confrontation from its start (April 2014) until shortly after the period covered in our sample (September 2014 until January 2015). The background information originates from the reports of human rights organizations. In addition, we give a brief overview of the relations between Ukraine and Russia.

### Course of the conflict

In the aftermath of the “Euromaidan” movement (end of 2013 and beginning of 2014), the newly formed interim Ukrainian government faced opposition in eastern Ukraine. Its legitimacy was questioned by numerous demonstrations that took place in Donetsk and Luhansk regions (also known as Donbass). In the course of the protests, armed groups occupied administrative buildings in the region. They held a referendum and declared “self-rule” of the Donetsk and Luhansk “People's Republics” (abbreviated DNR and LNR\*). The Ukrainian government tried to regain control in the course of an armed security operation referred to as “anti-terrorist operation.” The local population was caught in crossfires, infrastructure was destroyed, and inhabitants started fleeing the territory. Groups of volunteers were reported to join both the side of the government and the armed forces of the protesters (Amnesty International, 2016; UN Report, 2016b).

At the early stages (2014), multiple attempts of peace-making (peace plan outlined in the Minsk Protocol) led to weak ceasefires and eventually restored military hostility. Meanwhile, the self-proclaimed republics held internal presidential and parliamentary elections, opposed by the Ukrainian government and the United Nations (UN Report, 2014e). In January 2015, the use of heavy weapons resumed, followed by the new negotiations which led to another pause in fighting and assurances of the withdrawal of heavy weapons and removal of foreign armed formations from the territory. Between February and October 2015, the ceasefire generally sustained, although isolated clashes were reported.

Consequently, DNR and LNR began to issue passports and develop parallel administrative structures. The Ukrainian government initiated the construction of a barrier on the contact line and several checkpoints with access to the territory controlled by the state. Together with this, armed groups tried to prevent residents from leaving the conflict zone. Those restrictions in the movement from both sides led to the isolation of the territory and the inhabitants (UN Report, 2015d). Meanwhile, the UN reported that vehicles with ammunition crossed the border with the Russian Federation without the inspection and permission of Ukrainian authorities (UN Report, 2015d).

Presently (August 2018), the situation in the East of Ukraine remains unstable. The negotiations of the sides are usually followed by a calm period with consequent reescalation. In total, there is a record of more than ten-thousand people killed and nearly 25 thousand injured in the conflict area in Donetsk and Luhansk regions in eastern Ukraine (UN Report, 2018).

# The Colonialist Roots of Democratic Decay: Collective Action, Experimental Psychology, and Spatial Discourse

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## **Abstract:**

Democracy and dictatorship both depend on collective action, which humans avoid because it takes more effort than it is worth. Experimental psychology reveals that positive spatial discourse, explicit or implicit, reduces the effort that humans project a task to require. If so, dictatorships arise because explicit positive spatial cues, capable of retaining coherence only if assigning only to relatively few members of any population, generate the collective repression by a minority that establishes any dictatorship. Conversely the implicit cue to group size in a color metaphor, capable of assigning throughout a population, generates the universal franchise establishing a democracy. By supplementing spatial cues dividing Europeans with a metaphor of whiteness unifying Europeans and their settlers, colonialism made democracy possible once European withdrawal ended white dictatorship over colonial territories. But by erasing the condition that once secured the universal franchise among Europeans and their settlers, loss of colonies invigorates whites' fears that hard-won political rights have reverted to insecurity. That insecurity is responsible for the democratic decay now evident across Europe and its settler territories.

**Keywords:** collective action, discourse, democracy, dictatorship, colonialism.

Study of political language either wastes time or discovers something about language or politics or both. Moreover, it would do well to address urgent questions confronting everyone now. Here I offer political discourse as a solution to a riddle about politics today of pressing concern worldwide. This riddle is democratic decay: why democracies new and old seem to be withdrawing the freedoms routinely (albeit mistakenly) considered inherent in democracy, to the point of corrupting the institution of elections itself. The presidency of Donald Trump and Brexit are only the most salient symptoms of a democratic decay that seemingly pervades the politics of Europeans and of their settler communities.

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Of course, the study of political communication has long purported to detect a cause for democratic deterioration. Modern rhetoricians are prone to allege that democracy fails when deliberative rhetoric, supposedly enabling democracies to choose policies by evaluating their merits, succumbs to epideictic rhetoric that inflames an unthinking mob. In the following pages I argue that a contrast between ancient rhetorical categories not only misses the target but does not even spot it to aim at. Instead I propose an explanation for democratic decay grounded in a theory that accounts for the record of politics from which democracy has very belatedly emerged.

Political discourse, rather than “rhetoric,” shapes institutions and events. Rhetoric concerns persuasion, discourse is a neural process active during either compilation or interpretation of text. Discourse maintains a given text’s coherence by selecting among lexical and syntactic options (as well as operating on any other linguistic phenomena, such as phonology and orthography). Discourse matters for politics because its selections affect whether anyone joins in collective action and who does. Both voting that establishes a democracy and repression that preserves the power of a dictator are instances of collective action. Humans are motivated to abstain from collective action because they decide what to do by weighing projected effort against discounted reward. It is well known that each voter confronts an extreme improbability that sharing in the reward of electoral victory even depends on whether the voter exerts the effort to cast a vote. That each repressor faces the same quandary may be less widely appreciated. Still any one repressor’s effort is hardly likely to determine whether the dictator remains in power to continue sharing the gifts or paying the emolument that rewards the repressor. This extreme improbability compels any voter or repressor to discount the reward when comparing it against either the tiny projected effort necessary to vote or the larger effort necessary to repress. Since the probability of making the difference in either voting or repression is so small, the discounted reward shrinks below the projected effort, and both potential voters and potential repressors free-ride instead.

Consequently, neither democracy nor dictatorship is logically consistent with the observation that human beings are foraging mammals who decide what to do by weighing projected effort against discounted reward. For either political institution to occur, as they certainly do, some unknown must diminish the projected effort that otherwise obstructs voting or repression. Recent advances in psychology and associated disciplines suggest what that unknown may be. As numerous experiments reveal, a description of the self as occupying more extent or position in space—“explicit positive spatial discourse”—reduces the effort that a human projects as necessary to accomplish any task. If so, spatial discourse might dispose people to join the collective action that establishes dictatorships, and changes in discourse might be responsible for the enfranchisement that replaces dictatorship with democracy. Because of the problem of collective action, the historical record of ubiquitous dictatorship—under whatever label—and the quite recent advent of electoral democracy are both even more puzzling than is often appreciated.

A concern with enfranchisement immediately directs attention to the great colonial tyrannies of northwest Europe where the franchise first began to spread. Inspection of political discourse there reveals how conquest of people outside Europe developed discursive conditions for enfranchisement of Europeans and their settlers that also provoked warfare among European states and their independent settler colony. Wasting

their economic and military power, warfare deprived these states of their colonial possessions. Loss of colonies turned European states and their settler communities inadvertently into democracies, but the same loss decays democracy by challenging the racist sense of supremacy that initially spread enfranchisement.

## The Recency of Democracy

Democracy is not only more puzzling but also much more recent than often alleged. Democracy is often said to be older than it is because various observers employ differing definitions. As I have argued elsewhere (Anderson 2010, pp. 406-7), only one definition of democracy is consistent with the elementary property of voter sovereignty that is common to all other definitions. A state qualifies as a democracy if all adult inhabitants can become eligible to cast an at least relatively equal vote in elections that choose everyone who exercises unsupervised political authority. By that definition all other states are varieties of dictatorship, the opposite of democracy, a state that permanently denies the franchise to some or all inhabitants. Dictatorships may bear a variety of names and may ascribe final authority either to some individual or to some kind of council, whose members may be few or numerous. Some dictatorships may ban voting entirely or confine it to very few persons, while others may qualify as what Ollie Johnson (1999) has called “authoritarian pluralism” but for which I use the term “dictatorships of voters.” In authoritarian pluralism or dictatorships of voters, some adults use their voting right to deny the same right to other adults or to distribute the right to vote so unequally that some small numerical minority always exercises decisive influence on elections. Because many commentators do not distinguish democracy from dictatorships of voters and many contemporary democracies have passed through a stage in which some adults have used their franchise to deny the rights of others, democracy is often said to be older than it is.

A brief review shows how recent democracy actually is. During the five thousand years for which written records of politics are available, by this definition almost every state has been a dictatorship. In each of these states, members of a tiny ruling minority organize to coerce labor by the overwhelming majority of some human population. Despite its numerical preponderance, this oppressed majority submits to coercion because, other than perhaps locally and sporadically, its members cannot organize to resist. In some locales, especially ancient Athens, the coercive minority composes a larger proportion of the inhabitants than elsewhere, but even ancient Athens is a slave-owning state that denies all political rights to most adult inhabitants, especially the half or more who are women. In a few other early states male minorities also exercise the elementary political right of voting, but either those minorities remain small or the elections are so organized, as in the ancient Roman Republic, that some small minority is always decisive.

In few states does the right to vote begin to extend to even a bare majority of males before the twentieth century. A few early exceptions can be found: France declares but never attains manhood suffrage in 1793, Switzerland introduces manhood suffrage by 1848 although some cantons then withdraw it from certain males, and Greeks celebrate independence by briefly attaining manhood suffrage in 1822, although they, like the



# The Image of Russia in Contemporary Russian Society: Political and Psychological Analysis

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## **Abstract:**

The article is based on the results of a study of Russian citizens' perception of their country. More than 500 in-depth interview and nearly the same number of projective tests from 15 Russian regions became the basis for political-psychological analysis. These data enabled to identify the core features of Russia's image in Russian mentality. This image includes reflections of authorities, leaders, the population, territory and the international role of the country in the country's perception. The results confirm the conclusion that territorial expansionism is not typical for Russians. Authorities' perception is an important component of the country's image. Citizens' mistrust to the state was revealed. This allows us to suggest that Russian society still has not overcome the negative processes that started in the 1980s and led to a serious complex of "national inferiority" in the post-Soviet period.

**Keywords:** political perception, country's image; image of authority, political context of perception, identity.

## Introduction

One can tackle the country's perception from different angles: first, an image of a particular country from the outside – as it is seen from another country; second, as a view from inside of the country outward; and third as people's image of themselves and their own country. The first and the second angles concern international aspects of the country's perception. They are most often discussed in the literature.

There is no doubt that an outside image of a country is important. But this image depends not only on the efforts of politicians and diplomats of some country or their enemies, but first of all it depends on the **image of this country in the eyes of its own citizens.**

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One can hardly imagine a positive external image of a country whose citizens see themselves negatively. But this is exactly how the Russian citizens evaluated their country starting from mid 1980-s - till 2010-s. During this period, rather a peculiar picture of the world has been formed in the people's minds: Russia was perceived by its' citizens as a second-grade country in which, in contrast to the "civilized" West, economy was weak, education and culture ruined, and democracy – underdeveloped<sup>2</sup>.

This picture was formed not by itself but was the result of indoctrination by the liberal (in that time they were called "democratic") leaders of public opinion who had a clearly pro-western position. These liberal elites occupied the leading positions in Russian Media, culture and education. These elites called themselves "democrats" in 1980-1990-s (later they defined themselves as "liberals"). They believed that for the further development and prosperity of Russia, they should simply copy the Western experience and get rid of not only the Soviet values but also the traditional Russian values rooted in the countries' political culture in a much earlier period. Starting from the end of 1980-s Russian history was revised. All the Soviet period was cleaned away and history turned around with a kind of "historic inferiority complex" in public mentality. It was popular at that time to call Russia a country "with an unpredictable past".

In many aspects that kind of propaganda appeared to be quite efficient as the majority of the population started to see their country exactly as it was presented to them: underdeveloped, backward and unmodern through all the 1990-s- 2000-s. Such images of one's own country testify of a serious "national inferiority complex".

Our studies of political perception in that period confirmed this point (Shestopal, 2008). We have found that not only political and ideological values and norms of the Soviet period were dropped; together with these, many traditional values of Russian culture and history were questioned and replaced by some standardized "global", "Western", "European" values and aims of development. Liberal politicians, journalists and historians tried to persuade the Russian society that the 70 years of the Soviet period brought nothing but lagging behind of the "civilized" world, and that Russia had to catch up as soon as possible, becoming a part of this world, and even paying a price of losing face.

This trend dominated until 2010-s. Only after 2014 the country image in the minds of people started to transform. Unification with Crimea played a decisive role in this process: it has shown to Russian society the genuine face of the "collective West" who decided to punish the country for its' independence. Events of 2014 for the first time in a Post-Soviet period called into question the previous picture of the world where Russia was regarded as a second-grade country whose citizens were ashamed of it. The double standards of USA and Europe destroyed this "liberal" point. Instead of questioning the actions of the Russian President, citizens united round him, as he reminded them about the forgotten role of their country as a "great power". Naturally, this picture entered into controversy with the "national inferiority complex" of the post-Soviet period.

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2 In Russian history the so called "Zapadniki" ("westerners") appeared much earlier as well as their opponents "slavjanofils". But it was in the end of 1980-s when the growth of pro-western moods of Russian elite overlapped with the diminishing of ideological mechanisms of their inhibition that were so strong in the Soviet period.

# The Influence of Early Childhood Socialization on Political Decision Making in Adulthood: Benyamin Netanyahu's Potential to Become a Peacemaker

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## **Abstract:**

This paper examines Benyamin Netanyahu's potential to reject his current 'hawkish' views and to become a peace maker during his fifth (and probably last) term in office as the Prime Minister of Israel. Netanyahu continues to live in the shadow of the legacy of two deceased family members: his older brother Yonatan and his father Benzion. His brother Yonatan was killed in action in 1976 while leading his troops in the renowned counter-terrorism rescue mission 'Operation Entebbe'. As a result, Yonatan became an Israeli national hero. His father Benzion, who worked as a prominent Israeli historian for decades but was rejected by the Israeli academic and political mainstream due to his 'hawkish' views, died in 2012 at the age of 102. It is my assumption that Netanyahu's political activity up to the present has stemmed in part from his emotional hunger resulting from his need to measure up to the 'larger than life' images of his father and brother. The fact that both influential figures are deceased may now enable him to give greater expression to the more pragmatic sides of his personality in the future, and to enter history books – on his own – as a peacemaker.

**Keywords:** family, foreign policy, international relations, political leadership, political psychology

*"We all owe everything to our parents"*  
– Benyamin Netanyahu

The controversial research method known as psychohistory, or psychobiography, dates back to Freud's study of Leonardo Da Vinci and was later adopted by writers who were practicing psychoanalysts or closely familiar with the field of psychoanalysis. Initial studies of this kind focused on known events in the lives of their subjects that held deep symbolic meaning for them. However, the development of the psychology of the ego and the transformation of psychoanalysis into a form of psychology suitable for general use expanded its purview to include the functioning of the subject's ego and its origins during

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childhood. Also examined were the impact of real-life events on the internal lives of the subjects of study, as well as the interaction between the id and the super-ego.

Clinical experience teaches that emotional regression to earlier developmental stages is unavoidable during adolescence and that such regression actually facilitates development. At this stage, adolescents loosen their grip on childish emotional representations of themselves and of important figures in their lives to whom they had clung until that point. They now undergo an internal transformation, a general overhaul of sorts, which – barring any complications – engenders a mental reorganization that includes internal representations of the broader world and the many groups it contains: peoples, tribes, religions, and their histories. At this point, young adults typically consolidate their emotional investment in the history of their allies and their enemies, whether permanent or changing.

This stage also witnesses the crystallization of cultural, ethnic, and national symbols that constitute an inseparable part of the individual's identity and sense of self, and that are so powerful that some individuals would rather die than renounce them. The most important contribution to psychohistory and sophisticated psychoanalytical biography comes from the developmental model, which enables us to understand the transition that takes place during adolescence as an important step in the formation of an individual's personality. Only after years of development can a child's psyche incorporate a consistent representation of the self and others to achieve a solid sense of self – that is, a strong sense of 'I' as clearly differentiated from others.

We all try to achieve congruence between the needs of our personalities and our internal conflicts – particularly the need to protect our sense of self – and the external world around us. Charismatic political and military leaders attempt to achieve such congruence using the historical arena. Had they undergone psychological treatment, many such leaders may have quite likely been diagnosed as suffering from narcissistic personality disorder. Although they appear to be incessantly concerned with achieving success, power, rule, and admiration, and with their unlimited sense of entitlement, more in-depth examination typically reveals that beneath their glamorous lifestyles, they are actually experiencing strong feelings of envy, inferiority, and emotional hunger.

Some charismatic and narcissistic leaders truly do become great leaders in their age and, more importantly, are perceived as such by their followers. Although some of these leaders experience personal suffering in their private lives, they are able to subordinate the external reality to their internal needs. Some are destructive whereas others build and restore. Destructive leaders attempt to maintain their eminent image by diminishing the importance of others and are typically dangerous. Indeed, history is replete with examples of leaders who have sacrificed multitudes of victims due to their immense need to humiliate others. Leaders who restore, on the other hand, seek the recognition and appreciation of their supporters, whom they value and work to advance and benefit in order to give their efforts as impressive an appearance as possible. Such leaders act in the national interest and are viewed as saviors and redeemers.

When we psychologically analyze a person, who was never actually 'on our couch', we lack the tools customarily used in such psychological treatment. We must therefore rely on other sources of information, such as journals, letters, documents, and interviews with those who know our subject. From such sources, we can glean information not only