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Article

From "UkrainEUkraine" to "F**k the EU":

Europe in the public spheres of Ukraine, Russia, and Poland during the Euromaidan

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Abstract

The place of Europe in post-Cold War national mythologies of different countries varies widely. In three arguably most dramatic examples, Poland rethought itself as "the somehow decentered heart of Catholic Europe" (Dayan & Katz, 1994, p. 166), while Russia gave reasons to conclude it "leaves the West" (Trenin, 2006, p. 87) and Ukraine stuck with its view of Europe as a normative example (Orlova, 2010, p. 26). To what extent does this remain true if one is to look empirically at the discourses that currently inhabit news media? This paper points out, on the example of the public discourses around Euromaidan, to how narratives of Europe are instrumentalized in political discussions in the three countries that followed very different paths since the collapse of the communist bloc. The presentation includes results of qualitative analysis based on an open coding approach; the focus rests on the most prestigious news outlets (*Rzeczpospolita*, *Gazeta wyborcza*; *Izvestia*, *Kommersant*; *Dzerkalo tyzhnia*, *Korrespondent*) but also includes important online blog platforms.

Keywords: Europe, public sphere, Poland, Russia, Ukraine

The recent mass protest movement in Ukraine, known as Euromaidan, brought complicated relations of Eastern and Western Europe once more to the foreground. After a lead-up of nerve-racking Brussels-Kyiv negotiations and a clash of sorts with the Kremlin over it, thousands of protesters occupied the streets of the Ukrainian capital to protest, among other things, against the frozen European integration and for closer ties with the EU. This, in almost unanimous consensus of international media and experts, became the only mass movement the EU has ever inspired. Apart from the unintended consequences of the Crimea annexation and war in Donbas (*de facto* between Russia and Ukraine), the movement's initial goal was attained with the signing of the Association Agreement and its simultaneous ratification by European Parliament and *Verkhovna Rada* on September 16, 2014. What the media did not so readily report about was that with the time the protesters distanced themselves from this initial goal, refocused on the internal agenda, and the EU flags, in the end of the day, were seen less often in the streets of Kyiv. Still, how could people be ready to risk their lives in brutal clashes with the riot police for something that otherwise would seem ridiculous to die for: a trade agreement, Brussels bureaucracy, and a union whose members increasingly seem weary of? And why is it not happening elsewhere? Research into the recent media coverage is in no way capable of explaining everything, but it can offer some clues.

I suggest inquiring into how Ukrainian influential media constructed Europe against the backdrop of how it was done in two other significant countries, Poland and Russia[1]. The comparison helps to make correct inferences from findings that might otherwise lead to false conclusions. Moreover, these three countries make an almost ideal case for comparison. With their closely intertwined histories and not unrelated cultures, they had few differences in their political systems and social life from the end of WWII until the collapse of communism and the Soviet Union. However, their paths after 1989-1991, including policies, reforms, approaches to democratization and European integration, have been following different directions, which enables finding different patterns of media environment. Poland enjoys an insider view from within the political Europe, the European Union; both Russia and Ukraine use an outsider optic of two different kinds, as Moscow never intended (and would probably never be allowed, due to its size and history) to become part of the EU. While Ukraine—the least researched country of all three--has seen many U-turns on its long and winding road of European integration. At the same time, all three countries lend their relations with Europe as top priority, and perceive the self-identification towards Europe as the key to defining their own place in the world (cf. Poland's ideas of "the West's betrayal" or "coming back to Europe"; Ukraine's Westernizing and nativist projects; Russian Eurasianism).

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[1] While the semantic complications and contradictions of the notion of Europe will be given due consideration in this work, during the actual research a more "ad-hoc" understanding thereof was adopted: *what the analysed texts and statements imply by "Europe".*

All these similarities and differences provide a precise background for finding parallels in public spheres of the three countries. I use the conceptualization of the "public sphere" by Habermas (1962/2011) as "the sphere of private people come together as public" (p. 27) with some reservations (Habermas, 2006) – hence the quotation marks in the title. Although "Habermas remains centrally engaged in the project of identifying the still-valuable normative ideals of modernity" (Calhoun, 1992, p. 40), the concept of the public sphere has often been criticized. Some have argued for an end of the "private/public" divide (Sheller & Urry, 2003); others have revised the concept to be able to apply it to the media systems in regions such as Southern Europe which do not always quite correspond to the Habermasian model of the public sphere (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). This is especially true of Eastern Europe where constellations of private and group interests were proposed as an alternative explanation for the functioning of the media (Splichal, 2003). It must be recognised that while Habermas' theory works well for setting the standards of normative models and checking just how much reality corresponds to them, it may have many weaknesses in explaining realities that do not fit with what is considered to be the norm for democracy.

Yet, recent examples make it necessary to rethink this criticism at least in part. Even in rather extreme situations, such as the one unfolding right now in Ukraine, the media strive to project their impact when conventional political means appear to be ineffective or exhausted: the initial Maidan protest on November 21 (the very day the government announced its decision to reverse the nation's external course) was gathered by one of the most read journalists, Mustafa Nayyem, with just two posts (see, e.g., Nayyem, 2013) on his Facebook profile that together were shared over 3, 000 times. Another journalist and citizen of Russia Artem Skoropadskii who previously worked in a Ukrainian localization of the Russian *Kommersant* got involved in radical politics and became a spokesman for the much demonized "Right Sector" group. Many journalists and activists who were associated with Euromaidan have later successfully run for parliament in the 2014 snap elections (among them, notably, Mr. Nayyem). The Ukrainian protests could even be interpreted as a rebellion of the public sphere against the government that tried to ignore it, and this actually seems to be a productive approach for explaining what happened.

This is in many ways similar to the events in Poland during the 1980s; it is beyond the scope of this work to review all historical details of those developments, but it is interesting that the idea of Europe, and of Poland's return to it, figured prominently in the protest against the Jaruzelski regime before, during, and after the martial law. Just as in other Central European countries, this helped Poland to take a lead in the "democratic transition" in the postcommunist realm (Carothers, 2002). It has since become commonplace that Poland's view on Europe is determined by identity politics (Cordell, 2002). But the contemporary perception of Europe and of Poland's place in Europe could be most immediately linked to the changes in symbolic geography that can be traced back to the "Solidarność" movement and John Paul's II famous visits that offered the Poles a view on "their country as an outpost of Western Europe. They

were no longer an extension of the Soviet Union, but the somehow decentered heart of Catholic Europe" (Dayan & Katz, 1994, p. 166). The Poles perceive Europe as part of their own lived, familial experience: the history of Poland was marked by feeling to be a severed part of Europe that strove for reuniting with the "rest of the West" (Michnik, 2003); this attitude is perhaps best represented in Czesław Miłosz's 1959 book *Rodzinna Europa* (*Native Realm* in English translation, but meaning literally "The Familial Europe"). Rather unsurprisingly, the Polish media system became one of the most Westernized in all former Eastern bloc countries (Jakubowicz, 2007).

This was not the case for Russia whose encounter with Western Europe has always been troubled and more multifaceted. Adamovsky (2005) argued that the West orientalized Russia for its purposes of economic and political domination. Others found out that the relationship with the West created in Russia what some call an "inferiority complex" (Sahni, 1997, p. XIV). "Whereas the British mimicked no one but themselves, the Russians were mimicking the French and British, to whom, again, they had long felt culturally inferior" (Moore, 2001, p. 120). The change in this complicated dynamic of representations has come in earnest after neither 1917 nor 1991, as the same logic seems to have been recreating itself in Russia's self-positioning in relation to Europe. Since at least the first Putin's presidency, the West in general, the EU less so, is again perceived as a rival, as an adversary—and this is the image the Russian media are projecting, too (see Zassoursky, 2005; Kratasjuk, 2006). Russian political scientist Trenin recognised already eight years ago: "Russia's leaders have given up on becoming part of the West and have started creating their own Moscow-centered system. […] In the past year, Russia has begun acting like the great power it was in tsarist times" (Trenin, 2006, pp. 87, 92). However, even in the 1990s it did not abandon hopes to resurge—now as a regional power, trying to mobilize ethnic Russians on its former imperial periphery for the Russian cause, sometimes contrary to their own dispositions (Barrington, Herron & Silver, 2003). Of course, statements such as "the majority of the Russian Federation's population [is] favoring eventual EU membership" (Liotta, 2005, p. 79) should apparently be considered with a grain of salt. Meanwhile, the internal situation in Russia qualifies the country for what in political science is called a "hybrid regime" combining elements of authoritarian rule and a democratic facade with ineffective political opposition and low political participation (Ekman, 2009). Sparks and Reading (1998) emphasized that, despite many transitional processes, the changes in Eastern Europe in many cases were less significant than the continuities, and it is perhaps in Russia that this is most clearly the case.

Within cultural studies and political science some attention has been paid to a general perception of Europe in Ukraine as well as its impact on Ukraine's transformation. Oleksandr Hrytsenko has exposed what he called the "creolization" of the imported Western-looking goods (so-called "euro-things": "euro-windows," "euro-doors," "euro-renovation") that, in a new consumerist environment, acquire new quality and new meaning, comparable to the ones existing within aboriginal "cargo cults" (Hrytsenko, 2001). Olia Hnatiuk (2005) defined the Westernization (and Europeanization) project as one of the key identity-building projects in

Ukraine, along with the Soviet and nativist ones. Wolczuk (2000a) showed how, in the lack of a unifying national project, Ukraine as a "nationalizing state" opted for this Europeanization, this reaffirmation of its European identity as a compromise between democratic nationalist groups and the ruling post-communist elites. Still, the same author found it possible simultaneously to call this Europeanization "declarative" (Wolczuk, 2000b), and nothing has really challenged her account until now; perhaps, the fatal November decision of the Yanukovych government became the high point of this declarative Europeanization. The events that took place before, during, and after the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius in November 2013 confirmed this observation once again, yet also made visible a major discrepancy between the conventional policy making in Ukraine and civil society's aspirations.

Arguably one of the most interesting research works on the representation of Europe in Ukrainian public discourses which also can be applied to other Eastern and at times even Central European contexts derives from Dariya Orlova who focused mainly on the EU as a normative model in the most popular Ukrainian live political talk shows from 2006 to 2010. According to Orlova (2010), in the mediatized political discourse, the following was expressed:

> "'Europe' is largely referred to as embodiment of normality and development, advanced social and political practices. However, this reference frequently constitutes part of the discursive strategies employed by actors of discourse to legitimize or delegitimize certain practices and decisions within the Ukrainian context. [...] Therefore, 'Europe' is mostly referred to as a reference point, which evidences that symbolic aspect of references dominates over institutional." (pp. 26 – 27)

Thus Europe could in the Ukrainian discourse be constructed twofold: 1) as a final destination point, and 2) a separate geopolitical entity.

What all these previous findings leave in the dark is how Europe is shown and seen in the press where serious debate is taking place—the media outlets that can have the strongest infuence among policy-makers and the most active and empowered social classes. Studies of fiction or of popular TV shows give little to no direct view into the core of the political branch of the public sphere; however, with the presentation of the results of this research this will provide such an opportunity. This is also of considerable importance, as it not only explains to some degree the role of media in the large-scale protests in Ukraine, but also puts it into a wider regional context and contrasts it against the differences with Russia that has not experienced neither European integration nor protests against the government on such scale. It can also pinpoint some circumstances of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Additionally, such an approach allows understanding what changes occur once a country becomes part of the EU (the Polish case).

The aim and principal research question of this paper is to find out how Europe is constructed in the public sphere debates in Ukraine, Russia, and Poland. The most influential newspapers—still read by decision-makers and a sign of prestige for middle class--were selected

for the analysis. In Ukraine, these include *Dzerkalo tyzhnia*, an influential liberal weekly broadsheet with links to the political forces that can be defined as pro-European or "Orange," and *Korrespondent*, a liberal weekly magazine associated with values of objective reporting (until it changed owners and editorial team very recently). The Russian newspapers analyzed here are a pro-Kremlin compact *Izvestia* and a more balanced *Kommersant* (both dailies). *Gazeta wyborcza*, of liberal-left orientation, and more conservative and establishment-oriented *Rzeczpospolita* represent Polish media. Additionally, the author added a preliminary analysis of the most prestigious online blog platforms where opinion leaders set principal frames for narrating Europe, such as Ukraine's most read blog section at *Ukrainska pravda*, Russia's *Snob.ru* and *Dziennik opinii* at *Krytyka polityczna* in Poland. This will arguably give a better and more up-to-date overview of the three countries' public spheres and Europe's place in them.

The research is based on the method of thematic coding which Jensen (2004) summarized as "a loosely inductive categorization […] with reference to various concepts, headings, or themes" (p. 247). I also accept a post-positivist approach and consider the meaning to be constructed rather than transmitted by the text; Bertrand and Hughes (2005) define this tradition as assuming that "a text is not a vessel into which meanings are poured for transmission to others, but a structure (or a 'system of signification') by which meanings are produced within cultural context" (p. 173). It was decided to sample the most recent articles published between March 2013 and February 2014, thus giving an overview of the entire Euromaidan period and the lead-up to it, but no strict sampling procedure was performed given the qualitative character of the methodology applied. Overall, 97 articles from 6 newspapers were analyzed, plus 17 blog entries from 3 blog platforms. I tried to avoid any preconceptions and develop the categories directly from the material; while reading the articles closely, I marked the themes and frames that construct the idea of Europe, the repeating themes were then united into categories. If new semantic constructions appeared later on, they established a new category. The articles were read and analyzed until no new categories appeared and the results demonstrated the expected saturation. The analysis was qualitative, not quantitative, and does not represent any statistical data.

Additionally, some interesting particular examples were singled out for consideration with discourse analysis approach practiced by Fairclough (2003) and critical discourse analysis as described by Wodak and Meyer (2009). According to the latter, "analyzing discourse is understood as the systematic attempt to identify patterns in text, link them to patterns in the context, and vice versa" (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 124), which makes it easily compatible with the thematic coding approach. Fairclough (2003) suggested grammar and semantic analysis as particular tools to decipher social meanings of texts as well as locating "orders of discourse" defined as social practices in their linguistic aspect (p. 24). What is also important, in the view of the scholar, is the discovery of the "assumptions," implications given in the text as "the unsaid," the universally accepted (ibid., p. 40). The
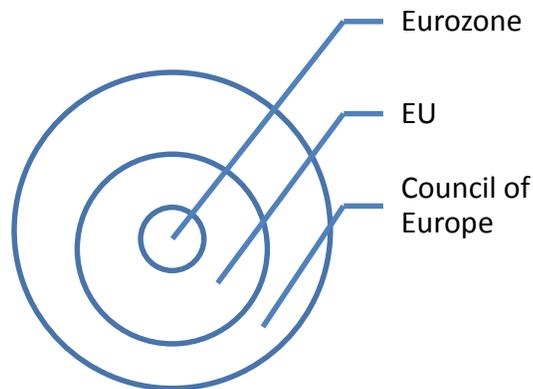
concept of discourse applied in this work also refers to its understanding as "language […] as an element of social life which is dialectically related to other elements. 'Discourse' is also used more specifically: different discourses are different ways of representing aspects of the world" (pp. 214-215). Often, I also used the concept of "narrative" which suggested chronologically organized discourse. Both these concepts have been debated and can stir much methodological and theoretical argument but are used here as practical ways to operate the object of the research—linguistic events aimed at the public and focused on Europe—so, I will refrain from walking into theoretical entanglements and accept the concepts inasmuch as they are productive for the research.

Some explanation is provided on Figures 2-4 that organize the data and how they should be read. They contain no quantitative findings and simply codify the discourses that are present in the newspapers, without referring to their prevalence (as this is not a quantitative study). The column width/depth etc. should not be associated with any statistical representation; the coloring is for the sake of a clearer understanding. The lower-tier categories represent more specific themes extracted immediately from the material; the upper-tier categories are broader generalizations that unite particular lower-tier categories and enable some theoretical conceptualization.

It is important to note that, in spite of the perceived saturation, this is still a work in progress. The results presented here come from a pilot study for a larger doctoral research that is simultaneously a part of the "Narratives of Europe" research project aimed at investigating the relation between media and power in Eastern Europe. Even within this pilot study, the results are somewhat preliminary and may be incomplete in details, although the general picture could be trusted as adequate.

Figure 1. Europe: Gradations of meanings

How, then, does this picture look like? The Ukrainian, Polish, and Russian press share a few key features in their coverage of Europe. There is certainly an ambiguity concerning what "Europe" means in the analyzed articles even in the narrower and most immediate sense (see Figure 1). First of all, Europe is a geographical entity: a continent with indefinite yet somehow negotiated limits that define whether or not any particular country is European according to an unspoken agreement between journalists and audiences. Such is the context in *Dzerkalo tyzhnia* (Dec 6): "We are second in

Europe […] in terms of the HIV prevalence." This fundamental idea then may be led through several rounds of clarification that narrow it further down, as a rule, on the basis of institutional criteria. The wider institutional meaning is associated with the Council of Europe (this is what is meant in the article "Russia responds to Europe" from *Kommersant*, Oct 1). One more step closer towards a narrower Europe is of course the EU, and it can be concluded that this is what is meant by Europe in most articles. In *Kommersant*, "Europe" occasionally comes to mean the European market which is probably also thought to be identical with the EU. And then there is an even narrower definition that is perhaps typical for Polish newspapers that meticulously define the euro zone as some special kind of Europe: the European hardcore. This distinction seems, however, largely irrelevant for the Ukrainian and Russian newspapers.

Some categories are found in all newspapers. One such theme is what could be referred to as "Europe in distress" and includes a depiction of economic and social troubles in the EU. Another fundamental narrative of Europe that is present in every newspaper is Europe as unity or sometimes subject. While this might end up just mentioning it as a location of the events (the continent), most typically Europe is constructed as a political subject, in phrases such as "Europe is seriously concerned" (*Dzerkalo tyzhnia*, Dec 13), or, in the context of external policy, as a consolidated geopolitical actor pursuing ends of its own: "Europe begins to understand that its Ukraine policy, inflexible and declarative, proved ineffective" (*Kommersant*, Dec 19).

Figure 2. Categories for Russian media

Izvestia								
Europe in distress					Threatening Europe			Europe as unity
Extreme crisis (economic, leadership)	Weakness and ineffectiveness	Division	Protectionist and closed	Dependent and passive	Hypocritical, cynical and hysterical	Aggressive	Authoritarian and imperialist Brussels	(Geopolitical actor)

Kommersant								
Europe in distress			Threatening Europe		Symbolic Europe	Conflict	Europe as unity	
Crisis (economy, leadership, migration)	Division	Failing, weak and ineffective	Aggressive	Unjust	(Better and more stable system)	Europe vs. Russia	Europe as market	Geopolitical actor
		(Accepting challenge)						

These are virtually all the similarities between the newspapers, and significant differences begin here. It is already evident in how newspapers report the crisis. This category arguably occupies different amounts of space in different newspapers, which could be seen in the diversity of subcategories. While the Ukrainian media only report on some aspects of the financial crisis and disagreements within the EU, the Russian newspapers uncover a full-scale apocalyptic picture in front of their readers. A Spanish court is granting an early release and

financial compensation to 54 dangerous terrorists under the pressure of the European Court of Human Rights: "In Spain, terrorists and rapists walk free [vypuskaiut iz turem]" (*Izvestia*, Oct 25); the use of cocaine is spreading in Europe thanks to the crisis, a Roma girl gets deported after she was captured by the French police at a school trip, the authority of Brussels is perceived illegitimate within member states (*Izvestia*; Sept 13, Oct 23, Oct 22). *Izvestia* is especially notorious for its overwhelmingly negative and sensationalist coverage of Europe, but, although *Kommersant'*s reporting is far more balanced, it also focuses on the EU's migration problems, crisis of leadership and gloomy economic figures in darker colors than any other sampled newspaper: "28 member states comprise the EU, but in none of them citizens are content and happy" (*Kommersant*, Jan 22), one could read in a telling sentence.

In a strong and striking difference from the journalists from two other countries, Russian newspeople often choose to portray Europe as an adversarial agent, as a threat. Brussels and Strasbourg act as authoritarian centers that command and exploit member states (*Izvestia*, Oct 25); the EU "feels it is an empire" (*Izvestia*, Nov 1). It is no coincidence the same newspaper interviewed French far-right populist leader Marine Le Pen during her visit to Moscow (Jun 25). "European bureaucrats are obsessed with a messianic idea of common home, erased borders between nations, genders etc. These people perceive themselves and their task very pathetically, so most likely will sulk over the renegade Ukraine for a long time" (*Izvestia*, Nov 25). When Yanukovych rejected the association with the EU, "Europe's political elite lost their face. A bacchanalia broke out. Yanukovych was openly teased, humiliated, and literally threatened [derzili, khamili, bukvalno ugrozhali]" (*Izvestia*, Dec 2). Brussels "corners the Eastern Partnership countries" to force them into choosing between Russia and the EU (*Kommersant*, Oct 18).

Closely related to this "aggressive Europe" category is the narrative that depicts the EU as being in a conflict with Russia. It occupies a prominent position in both *Kommersant* and *Izvestia*. The EU has "an objective to outplay [pereigrat] Russia" in Ukraine (*Kommersant,* Dec 19); the Council of Europe seeks to humiliate Russian pride with its requirements and if the Vilnius summit fails, "we will celebrate another diplomatic victory" (*Izvestia*, Nov 29). Europe, depicted as a weakling in most Russian newspapers, seems nearly doomed to fail everywhere: over Ukraine, the US spying affair, Syria, the South Stream project or just anything else. In the end, "the most admired European," according to *Izvestia*, is Vladimir Putin himself (Jan 15).

It is especially worth noting that the Russian newspapers are keen on using extremely emotionalized language speaking about the EU, which constructs Europe as unsure of itself and almost hysterical: "the experience of Uruguay **scares** Europeans" (Jan 23), "Europe is **afraid** of Russia" (Jan 15), "**shock** and **anxiety** [trepet], **disappointment** and **irritation** in European capitals," Europe "**sulks**" (Nov 25) – *Izvestia*; "entire Europe **embittered** against the US" (Oct 26), "Europe **doesn't want** to serve in Afghanistan" (Oct 22) – *Kommersant* [my emphases].

Figure 3. Categories for Ukrainian media

Dzerkalo tyzhnia							
Europe as unity		Europe as goal		Symbolic Europe			Europe in distress
(Rational) geopolitical actor	As region / location	Europe as task/challenge	Aspirations / prizes	Europe of values	Observing authority	Europe as center	(Crisis and division)

Korrespondent							
Europe as unity		Europe in conflict	Successful Europe		Symbolic Europe	Europe in distress	
(Rational) geopolitical actor	Institutions	(EU vs Russia)	Attractive (investments)	Affluent	(Europe as choice)	(Division)	

To some extent, the narrative of conflict is also present in the Ukrainian media, at least in *Korrespondent* which portrays external reactions to the Ukrainian situation as a clash between Brussels and Moscow. But what really defines the dominant Ukrainian view of Europe are the categories of a successful and advanced society, a symbolic Europe of values which imposes "attaining Europe" as both a task of and a path to modernization. The Ukrainian coverage of Europe is as positive as the Russian is negative. Europe is a vessel of "the European standards" (*Dzerkalo tyzhnia*, Nov 15), it is also a "resource" of investment (*Korrespondent*, Nov 26). One *Korrespondent* columnist, a chief executive of a news agency, compared on May 31 the EU to a bourgeois family that "renovated its apartment in a European way, with comfortable furniture and good house appliances, and lives peacefully and safely," unlike Ukraine and Russia that resemble down-and-out dysfunctional families living in filthy holes. However, Europe can be idealized and criticized at the same time.

> When we say "European choice", we mean political orientation and material abundance. In fact, this implies the choice of the most vital values, freedom, human rights, rule of law. The Western world is far from ideal. It is diverse. Its freedom often borders on lewdness. Its democracy is sometimes a caricature. Its liberalism often means lack of principles. (Yevhen Sverstiuk, *Dzerkalo tyzhnia*, Oct 11)

Against the Europe of values background, Ukraine is perceived as deficiently European, its condition as the lack of Europe:

> Europeans and people from Pechersk hills [Ukraine's ruling elite] speak different languages. They are not from different worlds, they are from different planets. "We're absolutely incompatible!" one European diplomat admitted in despair. Of course you are! Some [the Europeans] speak of principles and values and are used to trusting each other's word. Especially the one given at the presidential level. The others [Ukrainian elite] only believe in and act according to the laws of the criminal world. (Dzerkalo tyzhnia, Nov 15)

These values constitute the symbolic Europe and thus empower those who can associate with them to speak from a position of authority. By "right of birth" these are Western European countries and the EU as these countries' alliance and fulfillment of those same values. Europe controls and monitors the actions of Ukraine's elite; it is in the eyes of the EU that Putin wants to discredit Ukraine (*Dzerkalo tyzhnia*, Dec 13). Europe is also empowered to decide on how well Ukraine completes Europe as its self-assigned task. Europe is, in some cases, also the center where the most interesting and topical trends are to be found.

This portrayal of Europe seems to be endemic to Ukrainian media. In Russia, there was only one case that activated such discourse, also in Ukrainian context (a telling detail!), stating that "many Ukrainians wish to integrate into Europe with its greater stability, better developed institutions, welfare and security" (*Kommersant*, Dec 3). For the Polish newspapers, Europe appears in its symbolic dress only when articles concern the EU enlargement (and, it seems, only in *Rzeczpospolita*). It also helps Poland distinguish itself from Russia:

> That state [Russia] did not have Middle Ages, gothic architecture, nor took part in the conflict of the faculties. It developed neither the respectable bourgeoisie, nor the nobility. Tsar looked on everything from above, besides God, keeping his people in fear and obedience. (Jan 18)

The relations of Europe with Russia are seldom portrayed on conflictual terms; more often the newspapers refer to the Russian influence outside the framework of open conflict, for example:

> By overturning the table on which the association agreement must have been signed, Ukraine's government confirmed the opinion of those European politicians who believed Yanukovych leads Europe a pretty dance to bargain as much as possible from Russia. (Gazeta wyborcza, Nov 22)

Figure 4. Categories for Polish media

Gazeta wyborcza						
Europe as unity			Europe in distress	Institutional (internal) perspective		Identity
As region / location	(Geo)political actor	Pan European trends	(Crisis)	Complex structure and hierarchy	Institutions	(Culture and history)

Rzeczpospolita										
Europe as unity		Europe in distress			Symbolic Europe	Identity		Institutions	Successful Europe	
Geopolitical actor	As region / location	Division	Crisis: economy, ideology, trust, bureaucracy	Weak and failing	(Europe as task/destination; values)	Europe vs. Poland	History and culture		Recovery from crisis	Europe's potential and advancement

What the Polish newspapers bring is some, albeit limited, attention to history and culture, mainly in the form of entertaining life stories (e.g., the one on Europe's most famous cemeteries; in this case rather a death than life story though). More significant is another Poland-specific category, the European institutions. It is already present on the periphery of some Ukrainian articles, but in the Polish newspapers it is much broader and enriched with a perspective from within the EU. Polish journalists indeed report Europe in much greater detail with attention to many more subtleties than their Eastern colleagues do. Not only do they mention internal divisions and disagreements in the EU, but they also explain at great length where the common interest prevails, where particularism is stronger and what is the most likely final outcome. In *Rzeczpospolita*, Europe gets its moment of luck with rather optimistic reportage on the early signs of recovery from the crisis, the EU's great potential (mostly seen as unfulfilled) and its successes (such as the new space mission—Jan 25).

While Russia isolates itself from Europe and Ukraine accepts it as a task, Poland in many cases reports the EU events with a sense of shared responsibility, yet in many cases also chooses to oppose itself to Europe. Such is the article "Europe opens, Poland closes" (*Rzeczpospolita*, Oct 25) on different closing times policies in the retail of various countries, or, as one sees in another text: "Poland is one of the few countries [in the EU] that do not sell passports" (*Rzeczpospolita*, Dec 21).

The enquiry into emerging online public sphere confirms these findings. During the fall and winter, the blog section at *Ukrainska pravda* became a hub of discussion on the association with the EU. In itself, it is a site where many public figures (politicians, analysts, writers, artists, lawyers, activists and journalists) have their diaries and which sets an agenda for the political and cultural debate to some extent. What is seen here is the use of Europe as a "reference point," in the words of Orlova; in his blog entries, Vadym Kolesnichenko (2014), one of the most hated pro-Russian MP's and a staunch Yanukovych supporter, demanded on the ground of the European Parliament resolutions that the Ukrainian rightists who celebrated the birthday of Stepan Bandera, a historical figure associated with their movement, should be punished. He entitled his much earlier entry "The future belongs to the united Europe" (Kolesnichenko, 2013). If the "Eurosceptical" members of the Ukrainian elite were this pro-European in their discursive imitations, one should not wonder why one of the Maidan protesters' slogans went "UkrainEUkraine".

This enthusiasm for Europe radiates from the blogs written in the earlier stage of the protest. Pro-opposition journalist Serhiy Andrushko explained "Why our politicians do not want to integrate in the EU," citing numerous well-known examples of the Yanukovych regime corruption: "Being in the EU means transparent tender procedures. […] Buying raspberry for 70 euros [per kilo] or a subway bench at the price of an inexpensive car will be impossible. […] Look at how MEPs report the gifts they receive" (Andrushko, 2013). One of the protest leaders Yuri Lutsenko summarized this even more sharply: "Europe is a system of relations where a man

[liudyna—literally, "a person," "a human being"] is the center of power. Everything works towards the man [liudyna]" (Lutsenko, 2013).

The trend was however sad for Europe. As the protest went on without any tangible support from the EU, the discussions in January 2014 became more sober if somber. "Europe is responsible for violence in Kyiv because of its inaction and silent observation" (Sokolenko, 2014), one activist and journalist exclaimed. "Neither government nor Europe hear us, people are forced to resort to uprising as the last option. So, we urge Europe to intervene and impose sanctions. If Europe just stands by watching, we can repeat Munich 1938." As a final chord, the frontman of one of Ukraine's leading rock bands wrote: "Stop referring to the protest as 'pro-European'. Europe doesn't give a shit about us. And it's not about her anyways" (Iarmola, 2014). So when an alleged conversation among the US officials was leaked supposedly by the Russian special services, the scandalous "f**k the EU" tagline became a permanent topic for countless jokes, demotivators, and other urban lore in social media.

Bloggers at the important Russian blog platform *Snob.ru* reiterated the same apocalyptic and agonistic discourses as their country's mainstream media. Anecdotic evidence suggests that Russian web space is already abundant with half-invented stories about the West's moral decay, juvenile justice, gay prides for kids, and other symptoms of the *Untergang* of *Geyropa* ("Gayrope", an ironic reference of the Russian conservatives to the European understanding of human rights). With *Snob.ru*, one could recently see entries on the idea of Europe being destroyed by the US and Russia (Tikhomirov, 2013), an open question on whether Jews are really fleeing Norway because of the xenophobic Muslim migrants (Ianov, 2013a), reflections on the geopolitical mega-fight for Ukraine between the EU and Russia (Timofeiev, 2013) and on French neo-colonialism in Africa (Tikhonov, 2013). Eduard Limonov, the leader of Russia's National Bolsheviks and a nearly modern classic writer, suggested: "In fact, it would be good for us if Europe broke down. It is in our interests, in the interests of Russia to support the migrants in Europe against the European indigenous populations to weaken Europe" (Limonov, 2013). At the same time, the difference from the printed media is that on Internet one can also find examples (e.g., Morozov, 2013) of the symbolic use of Europe as the source of values and righteous practices. One blogger dwelled on how the idea of Europe coincides with that of political modernization (Ianov, 2013b). Importantly, the website launched a series of articles entitled "Why Russia lags behind Europe."

Poland may lack any single most prestigious blog platform that takes part in agenda-setting and framing the most important issues. Most blogs at the news outlets' websites are run by the journalists who work for them. So *Dziennik opinii* at the leftist intellectual publication *Krytyka polityczna* is rather a poor substitute. However, it is interesting to note Europe was not a prominent topic at it in 2013. Few opinion pieces that referred to it focused on the EU's internal crisis and some aspects of the then on-going Ukrainian protests—interestingly, the latter by a Ukrainian author (Radynski, 2014).

But the observation of Polish newspapers alone leads to an interesting conclusion. One practice extremely typical for both *Rzeczpospolita* and *Gazeta wyborcza* is the generalization of Europe. The article often contains a story from just one, maybe two countries, which are still generalized as representative for Europe in the headline and/or lead. Examples are *Gazeta* articles "Europe Homo+" (April 24) on the legalization of gay marriage in France or "Europe protects its culture from the US" (June 5) on new French measures to close the markets for American cultural product. Although these stories may have some significance for other European countries, there is nothing in them that allows assuming it is about more than just national action. The "Europe" of these articles is rather a figure of speech, in this case a synecdoche which substitutes the whole with its part (or vice versa).

This says volumes about how Europe is used in the three countries' media discourses, more specifically how they differ in the use of it. The primary difference lies in how they use Europe as a linguistic device. Overloaded with different meanings, the word "Europe" functions as a semantically empty trope; Europe is not "what," it is "how." Broadly speaking, it is most likely a metonymy in which something is called by the name of something else that is closely associated with it instead of being called by the name of its own. For Poland, a part of the EU, this part can more easily substitute the whole in a synecdoche (which is often seen as a form of metonymy). Ukraine prefers ordinary metonymy, using Europe as shorthand for the values and practices it sees as important, useful and vital for its own survival, just because the values originated in Europe and are associated with it. Russia pushes the limits of metonymy further to the brink of metaphor where anything at all can substitute for anything else, perhaps reaching the catachresis, an extreme form of metaphor, literally "an abuse" of a word used arbitrarily without any connection to its semantic context, therefore facilitating the construction of the stories of decline-and-fall or epic battle that are metaphoric if hyperbolic.

There is of course a more down-to-earth explanation for this. Polish newspapers see Europe from within and have a more precise idea about it; this is perhaps one of the reasons for the presence of institutional and market aspects (they entail more precise definition of Europe). What is Europe is clearly defined and demarcated (see Figure 4). In Russia and Ukraine, these criteria are more blurred and therefore more metonymic and even catachrestic. If the aspect of values and authority dominates in Ukraine, Russia sees Europe from the perspective of conflict and geopolitical game where Europe is the losing side.

The conclusions of this paper include three main points: 1) journalists in each of the three countries agree that Europe has primarily geographical and institutional dimensions; 2) although all newspapers more or less agree that Europe acts as a political subject and faces hardly its best times, there are vast differences in the main angles of how Europe has been reported; Russians focus on the dramatic crisis in the EU along with the perceived "aggressiveness" of Brussels, while Ukrainians strongly prefer symbolic understanding (Europe of values; Europe as self-assigned modernization task) and Poles are unique in their attention to the institutional

framework of the EU; 3) these differences are likely related to the political status of each country as regards Europe and at the same time to their discrepant uses of language on Europe, not only with different semantic but with different rhetorical form as well, suggesting a variation from synecdoche in Poland to metonymy in Ukraine to catachresis in Russia. For all three, Europe is a figure of speech rather than meaning.

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