Natalia Moen-Larsen

Brothers and Barbarians

The social construction of ‘refugees’ in Russian newspapers, 2014–2015

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But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought. A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation even among people who should and do know better.

(George Orwell, *Politics and the English Language*, 1946)

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Natalia Moen-Larsen
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Summary

How were ‘refugees’ socially constructed in Russian newspapers in 2014–2015? This dissertation analyses 1,146 newspaper articles published in three Russian newspapers with nationwide circulation – pro-government *Izvestiya*, government-critical *Novaya gazeta* and the government’s official daily, *Rossiiskaya gazeta*. The findings contribute to filling the knowledge gap on refugee representations in Russian media, on representations of refugees from Ukraine and on Russian interpretations of the European ‘refugee crisis’.

Viewing ‘refugee’ as an initially empty signifier that gains meaning through discourses, I apply discourse theory to illustrate how micro links to macro: how ‘refugee’ is filled with meaning by competing discourses on the micro-level, and how these discourses are linked to antagonistic representations of Russia’s identity on the macro-level. Using discourse theory as my entry point to the study of refugees, I introduce a novel framework, combining concepts from discourse theory (articulation, subject position, discourse, myth) and other theoretical approaches (boundary-work, narrative, character). This conceptual framework forms the basis for my analysis of the social construction of refugees in Russian newspapers. I contribute to the literature on the social construction of meaning by showing how taking a starting point in one word ‘refugee’ leads to a wide range of culturally specific meanings. Depending on the context, the narrative, or the discourse, the three Russian newspapers selected for examination represent a refugee as an ‘alien’, ‘barbarian’, ‘brother’, ‘colleague’, ‘employee’, ‘an illegal’, ‘pupil’, ‘student’, ‘terrorist’, ‘victim of interventionism and democratization’ or ‘victim of war’.

This dissertation consists of an introductory section and three journal articles. In ‘Brothers and barbarians: Discursive constructions of “refugees” in Russian media’ (published in *Acta Sociologica*) I map the hitherto unexplored terrain of representations of refugees in Russian newspapers, applying discourse theory and the concepts of ‘subject positions’ and ‘symbolic boundaries’ to analyse these representations. I find two main discourse contexts that feature the subject-position ‘refugee’ – the war in Ukraine and the ‘refugee crisis’ in Europe – and two main refugee representations – ‘refugee from Ukraine’ and ‘refugee from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)’. Drawing on in-depth examination of the data, I identify four main discourses: humanitarian, security, integration and nationalist. Analysis of subject-positions in these four discourses reveals contrasting representations of refugees from Ukraine and MENA refugees, with the latter represented as threatening, and the former as similar to Russians. I

argue that nationalist discourse merges with humanitarian, security and integration discourses, creating contrasting symbolic boundaries between these two groups of refugees and Russians. This indicates a discursive mechanism through which refugees are classified as 'preferred' or 'non-preferred' migrants on the basis of their ethnic and cultural proximity to Russians.

In '"Suitcase – shelling – Russia": narratives about refugees from Ukraine in Russian media' (published in *East European Politics*), I examine the meaning-making process surrounding the arrival of refugees from Ukraine in Russia in the summer and autumn of 2014. Narrative analysis reveals three main thematic groups of narratives in my data: narratives about war, narratives about refugee reception and aid, and narratives about international relations. Taken together, they articulate the subject position 'refugee from Ukraine' as a 'victim' and 'recipient of aid', serving as arguments in support of receiving refugees from Ukraine in Russia and allocating funds to them. The accounts of war, death and destruction act to legitimize the presence of these refugees in Russia. Narratives about refugee reception and aid serve to position Russians as aid providers – the message being that it is morally correct to help these refugees. Finally, Russian narratives about international relations assign blame for the war in Ukraine to 'Others' – specifically, the West as being to blame for why people from Donbas had to leave their homes and flee to Russia.

In '"Victims of democracy" or "enemies at the gates?" Russian discourses on the European "refugee crisis"' (forthcoming in *Nationalities Papers*) I explore the representation of the 2015 'refugee crisis' in Russian opinion pieces and interview articles. Also here I employ discourse theory and the concept of 'subject positions'. In addition, I discuss the myths about Russia, Europe and the West that are (re)produced in my empirical material. I find three main discourses that have shaped the debate on the European 'refugee crisis' in Russian newspapers: the security, humanitarian and geopolitical discourses. Whereas also other studies of European and US media representations of the 2015 'refugee crisis' have identified security and humanitarian discourses, the geopolitical discourse appears particular to Russian media. Thus, this article unpacks a refugee representation not previously addressed by research on the 2015 European 'refugee crisis' – the refugees as victims of interventionism and democratization processes promoted by the West in the Middle East and North Africa. This discursive construction (re)articulates a centuries-old myth of the antagonistic relationship between Russia and the West, and forms part of the ongoing discussions on Russia's identity vis-à-vis Europe and the West.

Introductory section

1. Introduction

How were 'refugees' socially constructed in Russian newspapers in 2014–2015? That is the overarching research question of this dissertation, which I answer in three individual articles that explore the representation of the *subject position* (Davies & Harré 2007) 'refugee' in Russian newspaper texts. The first article maps the terrain and analyses how refugees from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and refugees from Ukraine were represented in contrasting ways in *discourse* (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002). The second article focuses on the meaning-making process surrounding the arrival of refugees from Ukraine in Russia in the summer and autumn of 2014. The third article analyses the discourses on the European 'refugee crisis' and the representations of MENA refugees in that context. Together the three articles shed light on different aspects of the social construction of refugees in Russian newspapers – on the construction of *symbolic boundaries* between groups (Lamont & Molnár 2002), on the legitimation of refugee reception through *narratives* (see Richardson 1990), and on how the subject position 'refugee' is embedded in discourses that compete over the meaning of 'refugee' but also (re)produce cultural *myths* (Barthes 2000; Laclau 1990) and compete over the meaning of Russian identity.

It is important to study media representations because *words* do matter, and the media disseminate combinations of words simultaneously to large audiences. 'Media power is generally symbolic and persuasive, in the sense that the media have the potential to control to some extent the minds of readers or viewers, but not directly their actions' (van Dijk 1995: 10). A systematic study of what newspapers say about refugees can help to explain how some groups

become stigmatized while others do not, and how some perceptions of reality become naturalized within a cultural context (Wilhelmsen 2017). Collective representations of refugees have an impact on refugee reception policy and whether budgetary funds are to be spent on building fences or asylum reception centres. This is an issue highly relevant in Europe today.

On 24 February 2022, Russia began a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Over 2.3 million people are estimated to have fled from Ukraine to neighbouring countries during the two first weeks of the war (UNHCR 2022a).[1] This amounts to approximately 5% of the population of Ukraine: more than the entire populations of, for example, Latvia or Slovenia.[2] As of this writing (early June 2022), the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine is evolving rapidly and large numbers of people continue to flee Ukraine.[3] The world mass media are monitoring the situation closely. Interspersed with highly emotional reports from train and bus stations in Poland, accounts from refugee centres and reports on government spending and EU rules, there are voices criticizing the 'double standards' of the refugee reception in Europe. Critics have noticed how certain European countries have been more welcoming to refugees from Ukraine than they were to other refugees in the past, and how Ukrainians can enter European countries more easily than refugees from the Middle East and North Africa (see, e.g., *Asharq Al-Awsat* 2022; Berlinger 2022; Hankir & Rabah 2022; Jakes 2022; Zaru 2022).

> An NBC News correspondent said, 'These are not refugees from Syria. … These are Christians, they are white, they're very similar to the people that live in Poland.' On CBS News, a correspondent said, referring to Kyiv, 'This is a relatively civilized, relatively European … city.' The Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Kiril Petkov, put it bluntly: 'This is not the refugee wave we have been used to – people we were not sure about their identity, people with unclear pasts, who could have been even terrorists.' (Okeowo 2022)

Thus, part of the media discussion about refugees from Ukraine is about contrasting representations of Ukrainian refugees and MENA refugees. I could note similar contrasting representations of refugees in Russian newspapers in 2014–2015. The exodus from war-ridden Ukraine was indeed massive in the winter and spring of 2022, but refugees were leaving

[1] Between 24 February and 10 March 2022.
[2] All population figures are from https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/population-by-country/ (Accessed 10 March 2022).
[3] On 1 June 2022, 4,712,782 individual refugees from Ukraine were recorded across Europe and 2,928,252 refugees from Ukraine were registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe (UNHCR n.d.).

Ukraine eight years ago – in the spring of 2014, one year before I started working on this dissertation. According to UNHCR (2014), in that year Russia was the main recipient of refugees from Ukraine, with 271,200 persons applying for refugee status or temporary asylum. These people fled their homes due to the armed conflict between Russia-backed separatists and Ukrainian military forces in the Eastern Ukraine, in the Donbas area, which consists of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. That armed conflict started in 2014; eight years later, it served as the pretext for the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In February 2019, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR 2019: 1) announced that the total civilian death toll of the conflict thus far was as at least 3,321 persons, more than 80% of whom had been killed before mid-February 2015.

The year after the war erupted in Donbas, more than one million people from the Middle East and North Africa arrived in Europe by boat, crossing the Aegean and the Mediterranean (UNHCR 2015: 32). The UNHCR declared 2015 'the year of Europe's refugee crisis' (Spindler 2015). The almost concurrent arrival of refugees from Ukraine in Russia and MENA refugees in Europe triggered some comparisons in Russian media. Commentators pointed out that MENA refugees looked different from European refugees, they had a 'foreign' religion – and they were potentially dangerous. In contrast, refugees from Ukraine looked like Russians, spoke Russian or the closely related Ukrainian language and were almost 'family' (Moen-Larsen 2020a). As in Europe today, in Russia in 2014 receiving refugees from Ukraine was deemed preferable to having to deal with refugees from other areas. Take the following statement by the pundit and provocateur, Eduard Limonov:

> (…) the migrants will change the world beyond recognition (the footage from the train station in Budapest is striking and powerful, because it is not Europe but the Middle East, Asia or Africa on the photos and in videos). They are already changing it. Either there will be another religion, black eyes and dark skin (…) or fascist and racist states (…) in Russia today there are 2.5 million refugees from Ukraine (more precisely, 2,503,680 people), but you cannot distinguish them from Russians. (…) We have the same eyes, the same skin, the same religion. (Limonov 2015)

In this dissertation I analyse such representations of refugees, viewing them as *social constructions*. Specifically, I explore how the word 'refugee' was used in three Russian newspapers – *Izvestiya, Novaya gazeta* and *Rossiiskaya gazeta* – between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2015. The study combines concepts from cultural sociology, structuralism and

post-structuralism. Drawing inspiration from cultural sociology, I view texts as carriers of cultural beliefs. From structuralism, I understand language as a system of differences, and from post-structuralism I adopt the idea that meaning is never fixed: language is 'a site of variability, disagreement and potential conflict' (Burr 2003: 54). Using various analytical tools from the toolkits of these fields of study, I explore how 'refugee', as an empty *signifier* (Saussure 2013), has been filled with meaning in Russia. In articles I and III in this dissertation, I apply *discourse theory* (Laclau & Mouffe 2014) to shed light on discursive struggles over the representation of refugees as found in Russian newspapers in 2014–2015. In Article II, I examine the *narratives* – the stories about refugees – in the newspaper texts. Other important analytical concepts used in this dissertation are subject positions, symbolic boundaries and myths. Through this theoretical framework, the dissertation explores the social construction of refugees in Russian newspapers, and the connections between representations of refugees and ideas about Russians, Russia and the West that circulate in Russian society.

1.1 A note on terminology

Several scholars have pointed out how immigration-related terminology is frequently used in fuzzy and imprecise ways, for example, as when the media refer to migrants, illegal migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees interchangeably (see Burroughs 2015; Cooper et al. 2021; Goodman et al. 2017). Olga Gulina (2016: 336) notes that Russian discourse on humanitarian migration is characterized by tangled terminology caused by conflicting legal principles in migration law. Russian law enforcers use labels such as 'refugee', 'asylum seeker', 'person with temporary asylum' and 'forcefully displaced person' interchangeably.

In the academic sphere, there are competing views about as to who can be recognized as 'refugees'. Some (e.g., Shacknove 1985) argue for a broad use of the term, to include persons who left their homes because their basic needs were not being protected by their state of origin. Others advocate a narrow definition, where refugees are 'people who are outside their states of origin and are unwilling or unable to return home because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, social group membership, or political opinion' (Price, 2009: 17). Matthew E. Price (2009) calls the latter 'Convention refugees', referring to the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol (UNHCR 2011), stressing the importance of fear of *persecution* in order for an individual to be considered a refugee.

Also Gulina (2016: 339) advocates a narrow definition of 'refugee', and holds that the label 'Ukrainian refugee', widely used to describe mass migration from South-East and Eastern Ukraine to Russia in 2014–2015, has no legal basis as regards the term 'refugee'. Firstly, she notes that very few of those labelled as 'Ukrainian refugees'[4] have refugee status in Russia; and secondly, migrants from Ukraine do not fit the legal criteria drawn up by the Refugee Convention (Gulina 2016: 339). Nevertheless, politicians, mass media and the public in Russia use the term 'refugee' in referring to individuals forced to leave South-East and Eastern Ukraine in 2014–2015 (Kuznetsova 2018: 578). People who fled Ukraine can be seen as 'refugees' under the broad definition of the term. Within the theoretical framework of this dissertation (introduced below), this discussion is an illustration of *signification struggles* over the meaning of the word 'refugee'. Are refugees to be interpreted in terms of juridical, humanitarian or some other discourse?

This study explores the social construction of the meaning of 'refugee' in Russia. Operating with a wide, and empirically driven definition, I view a refugee as a person (or group of people) occupying the *subject position* 'refugee' in a discourse, or as a character in a narrative. In this dissertation, the meaning of 'refugee' is defined by representations of refugees I have unpacked through my analysis of Russian newspapers.

1.2 Ethical considerations

The analysis in this dissertation is not based on sensitive data and confidential information. All newspaper articles used are listed in Appendix 1; these articles are openly available on the websites of the three newspapers: iz.ru, novayagazeta.ru, and rg.ru. If, for example, my research design had included qualitative interviews with refugees or with other research subjects, that would have required quite another level of ethical awareness.

However, certain ethical considerations should be noted. Refugees make up a vulnerable group. As research communications may potentially influence public opinion, and research results may serve as basis for policy changes, it was important for me to consider carefully how my research

[4] I have chosen to apply the label 'refugees from Ukraine' for people who fled South-East and Eastern Ukraine in 2014–2015, and not 'Ukrainian refugees' due to lack of information about the ethnic belonging of these people in my empirical material. However, Gulina (2016) uses the term 'Ukrainian refugees' (*ukrainskie bezhentsy*).

might be interpreted. All research necessarily involves simplification and categorization. For example, this study re-articulates Russian cultural stereotypes about people from the Middle East and North Africa as 'barbarians', as contrasted with people from Ukraine as 'brothers',[5] and Russian views about the antagonistic relationship between Russia and the West. I have sought to be clear about the possible social implications such stereotypes may have for Russian refugee policy and actions in the area of international relations. In my research I have striven for clarity and transparency; have accounted for the process of data selection and analysis, contextualized the study and clarified the scope of the claims made. In other words, I have sought to follow good research practice, to ensure the scientific integrity of this dissertation.

1.3 Outline of the dissertation

In Chapter 2, I contextualize the study through an account of literature on representations of migrants and refugees in Russia and the literature on representations of migrants, refugees and the 2015 'refugee crisis' in the international and Russian media. Further, I explain how Russian ideas about Europe and the West serve as important contexts for my findings. Chapter 3 introduces the theoretical framework of this dissertation. I describe the epistemological stance of social constructionism, discuss the connection between social constructions and power, and define the key analytical concepts 'discourse', 'narrative', 'subject position', 'symbolic boundary', and 'myth', and visualize the relationships among these key concepts in a conceptual framework model. Chapter 4 presents my methodology. I discuss the mass media in Russia and describe the rationale underlying my choice of data sources and the process of data selection. l also note some of the trends found in my empirical material, and summarize the research designs of the three articles presented in this dissertation. Chapter 5 provides summaries of the content of these three articles. Finally, in Chapter 6 I discuss the main findings and contributions of this dissertation, employing the conceptual framework model introduced in Chapter 3 to visualize these. Further, I explain how the findings from the three articles together answer the overarching research question, showing how 'refugees' were socially constructed in Russian newspapers in 2014–2015.

[5] The newspapers in my data use masculine family metaphors in writing about refugees from Ukraine: Ukrainians as *brothers,* Ukraine as a *fraternal* country and the war in Ukraine as *fratricidal* war. However, a few texts in my empirical material refer to Ukraine as a *sister* to Russia (Novoselova & Yakovleva 2014) and the people of Ukraine 'as our brothers and sisters' (Benediktov 2014). Even though the most common family metaphors used in describing the refugees are masculine, many texts report that most of the refugees arriving in Russia from Ukraine in 2014 were women and children.

2. Background and literature

When I started working with this dissertation, the European 'refugee crisis' was a frequently discussed topic in the Norwegian media. The daily repetition of the word 'refugee' in Norway, the country where I grew up, led me to wonder how this debate took shape in Russia, the country where I was born. In my experience, Russian discourse sometimes stands in contradiction to the Norwegian discourse, whereas in other cases the two align.[6] I began to wonder: what do Russians mean when they use the word 'refugee'? Whom are they talking about, and how do they talk about them?

In this dissertation I apply a wide, empirically driven definition of 'refugee', a definition that rests on a claim formed by discourse theory (Laclau & Mouffe 2014): 'refugee' as such is itself an *empty signifier* that gains meaning through competing discourses.[7] A key concept in discourse theory is 'discursive struggle' (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 6). Thus, studies of migrant and refugee representations that employ discourse theory often have an explicit focus on antagonisms and oppositions in discourse and on hegemony (see, e.g., Buonfino 2006; Hardy & Phillips 1999; Heinkelman-Wild et al. 2019; Mašanović 2021; Mattissek & Schopper 2019; Yilmaz 2016). Like these studies, I focus on antagonistic representations of the refugee identity. My contribution to this literature is to use discourse theory to illustrate how micro links to

[6] A striking example of contrasting discourse is the clash between the current dominant interpretations of the war in Ukraine in Russia and in the West. However, many Russians and Norwegians would agree in their views on, say, education, art, sport, or romantic love.

[7] In Chapter 3, I give a detailed account of the theoretical framework of this dissertation; here, I present some core theoretical points important for contextualizing the study and defining its contribution.

macro: how 'refugee' as an empty signifier is filled with meaning by competing discourses on the micro-level, and how these discourses are linked to antagonistic representations of Russia's identity on macro-level.

In addition, although discourse theory is my entry point to the study of refugees, in Chapter 3 I introduce a novel framework, combining concepts from discourse theory (articulation, subject position, discourse, myth) and other theoretical approaches (boundary-work, narrative, character). This conceptual framework forms the basis for my analysis of the social construction of refugees in Russian newspapers.

There are many approaches to discourse analysis (see e.g., Dunn & Neumann 2016; Gordon 2021; Jorgensen & Phillips 2002). Several studies of representations of refugees in the media that I discuss in this chapter do not employ discourse theory, but rely on other approaches, such as critical discourse analysis (CDA). The main distinction between CDA and discourse theory is that the former distinguishes between the discursive and non-discursive realms, whereas the latter does not (Dunn & Neumann 2016; Jorgensen & Phillips 2002).[8] With CDA, the researcher focuses on the linguistic features of the text, the process related to text-production and consumption, and the social practice of which the communicative event is part (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 68). Discourse theorists do not analyse non-discursive realms: they hold that the world becomes meaningful through discourse, so there are no non-discursive realms to analyse.

Despite the apparent ontological and epistemological differences between CDA and discourse theory, there are also significant similarities: for example, researchers working with both approaches are interested in identifying issues related to power and in exposing dominant ideologies. There are also similarities in how researchers conduct discourse analysis using these approaches (Dunn & Neumann 2016: 41). Thus, I am aware of the methodological differences between my research and the other studies discussed here. Empirically, my research fills the gap in the literature on representation of refugees by being one of the first studies on Russian refugee representations, the first study to focus systematically on contrasting media representation of MENA refugees and refugees from Ukraine, and introducing a representation

[8] As I do not use CDA or other alternative approaches to discourse analysis in my study, but focus on developing a novel discourse-theoretical framework, a detailed account of the differences between these approaches falls outside of the scope of this dissertation.

not previously discussed in the literature on media representations of refugees: of the refugee as a victim of Western interventionism and democratization.

Below I begin by contextualizing the study through a brief account of literature on representations of migrants and refugees in Russia, and of some trends in Russia's refugee reception system. Then I present some key findings from the literature on representations of migrants, refugees, and the 2015 'refugee crisis' in the international and Russian media, and discuss how my research speaks to this literature. Finally, I briefly sketch out some of the basic ideas about Europe and the West that have informed Russian identity construction for centuries, and offer some words on how a study of the subject position 'refugee' also contributes to the field of studies of Russian identity vis-à-vis the West.

2.1 Migration and refugees in Russia

The social construction of refugees in Russian press has been shaped by culture, history and the context of the field of migration. Representations of refugees must be analysed in connection with representations of *other* migrants. Ever since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia has been the destination for labour migrants from many former Soviet republics, including Ukraine (Heusala & Aitamurto 2017; Mkrtchyan & Florinskaya 2018; Yudina 2005). In the context of labour migration, studies have shown that Russian politicians and state officials draw a distinction between 'preferred' migrants from Belarus and Ukraine and 'non-preferred' migrants from Central Asia (Abashin 2017: 27, 31; Lassila 2017: 61–63). Moreover, according to Stephen Hutchings and Vera Tolz (2015), Russia is prone to 'new racism': hostility to alien customs and beliefs rather than biological differences, and securitization of migration. The securitization of migration occurs when exclusion of migrants becomes 'legitimized' by perceiving migrants as a threat to the host society (Ibrahim 2005). A large body of literature has documented the rise and prevalence of nationalism, xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments in Russian politics, media and society (see, e.g., Blakkisrud & Kolstø 2018; Heusala & Aitamurto 2017; Hutchings & Tolz 2015; Kolstø & Blakkisrud 2016; Laruelle 2019; Moen-Larsen 2014; Tolz & Harding 2015).

In contrast to the rest of Europe, Russia does not have a long history of refugee reception and

is not considered a major recipient of international refugees.[9] According to the Civic Assistance Committee (2020), a Russian regional public charity organization which aids refugees and migrants, the institution of (formal) asylum has been diminishing in Russia. Today there are two types of asylum available in the Russian Federation, 'refugee status' and 'temporary asylum'. Whereas the global numbers of refugees have been rising, the number of persons accorded official refugee status and temporary asylum in Russia has been decreasing since 2015.[10] In 2019, Russia, the largest country in the world in terms of area, granted asylum to less than 0.2% of the world's refugee population (Civic Assistance Committee 2020: 3).

Most persons who have been granted asylum in Russia are from Ukraine and belong to the 'preferred migrant' category mentioned above. As of mid-2017, Russia hosted 187,785 temporary asylum-holders and 589 persons who had been granted refugee status. Of these, only 2,294 temporary asylum-holders and 410 persons with refugee status were from countries other than Ukraine. In 2017, the four largest non-Ukrainian asylum groups in Russia were persons from Syria, Afghanistan, Georgia, and Uzbekistan (UNHCR 2018: 1–2). Also according to UNHCR (2018: 2), Russia applies different rules and practices regarding refugees from Ukraine than with refugees from other places. Refugees from Ukraine encounter a simplified migration regime, whereas non-Ukrainian refugees face greater difficulties: non-admission, hampered access to asylum procedures, growing rejection rates, and lack of integration opportunities. This differential treatment illustrates how the refugee reception system in Russia is influenced by the social stratification trends indicated above.

There have been some studies focusing on the post-2014 influx of refugees from Ukraine to Russia. For example, Jussi Lassila (2017) discusses contrasting views on migrant workers from Central Asia and refugees from Ukraine in the context of the Russian labour market. Others have written on the encounters of Ukrainian forced migrants with Russian migration and citizenship policies (e.g., Kuznetsova 2020, 2018; Myhre 2018; Stegnii & Antip'ev 2016, 2015), and the reaction of Russians to the influx of asylum-seekers from Ukraine (Mukomel

[9] In 1993, Russia adopted the Federal Law on Refugees and established the Federal Migration Service (FMS); in 2016, FMS was replaced by the General Administration for Migration Issues under the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

[10] As mentioned in the introduction, in 2014 Russia gave shelter to many forced migrants from Ukraine. Thus, the number of people with asylum status surged in 2014–2015, before returning to more usual levels. It is reasonable to assume that the number of people with asylum status in Russia will rise again in 2022 due to the war in Ukraine; however, as yet there are no reliable statistics available.

2017). However, there have been no studies that systematically explore the representations of refugees from Ukraine in the Russian media using the concepts that I have employed, nor has there been research on the social construction of meaning concerning refugees from Ukraine in the immediate aftermath after their arrival to Russia in 2014.[11] Thus this dissertation contributes towards filling a gap in the literature (see summaries of Articles I and II).

2.2 Media representations of refugees and the 2015 'refugee crisis'

There has been extensive research on representations of refugees and migrants in international media. This body of literature has explored the connection between primarily negative images and complex political and social processes. For example, the press in the USA, Europe and other Western countries often represents the topic of immigration as 'a problem' – if not 'a threat'– using metaphors such as 'invasion' or a threatening 'wave' and implying that 'refugees' are actually economic migrants and therefore 'fakes' (van Dijk 1995: 19; see also Lueck et al. 2015 for examples from Australia; Burroughs 2015 for Ireland; Laudar et al. 2008 for the UK). Similarly, studies of media representations of the 2015 'refugee crisis' have identified representations of refugees and asylum-seekers as threats and thus part of the process of securitization of migration: for example, in Austria (Greussing & Boomgaarden 2017; Rheindorf & Wodak 2018), Greece (Boukala & Dimitrakopoulou, 2018), Hungary (Bocskor 2018; Thorleifsson 2017), Poland (Krzyżanowski 2018), Serbia and Croatia (Sicurella 2018) and in Slovenia (Vezovnik 2018).

In addition to representations of refugees as threats ('threat frame'), research on the 'refugee crisis' has identified a 'moralization frame' which blames wars for the refugee crisis and views refugees as victims (Triandafyllidou 2018). Whereas negative representations in the media

[11] There has been very little research on the social construction of refugees from Ukraine in the Russian media. Studies on Russian media and journalism and the war in Ukraine (pre-2022) have focused on the dissemination of fake news, propaganda and the information war (e.g., Baysha 2018; Bonch-Osmolovskaya 2015; Gerber & Zavisca 2016; Kazun 2016; Khaldarova & Pantti 2016). Studies of the strategic narratives employed by the Russian authorities find that the war in Ukraine has reinforced pre-existing anti-Western narratives in Russian political and media discourse, and the recurrent enemy image of Ukrainian radicals (Gaufman 2017: 103–123; Hansen 2015; Hutchings & Szostek 2015). The Russian authorities employ such narratives strategically to legitimize Russia's behaviour and to strengthen the image of Russia as a great power (Østevik 2017; Szostec 2017a, b). However, instead of examining such strategic narratives, my aim is to explore the nuances in Russian mediated narratives on the war in Ukraine (pre-2022) by introducing a focus on refugees.

serve as arguments for excluding migrants and refugees from host societies, and for the introduction of restrictive measures (see Bennett et al. 2013; Leudar et al. 2008; Lueck et al. 2015), the moralization frame employs references to shared European humanitarian values, and appeals to European solidarity and showing humanity (Triandafyllidou 2018: 211). Several researchers have identified a change in media representations of refugees during the crisis, with the moralization frame being replaced by the threat frame (see Goodman et al. 2017; Hovden et al. 2018; Krzyżanowski 2018; Vollmer & Karakayali 2018). However, shifts in dominant representations of refugees from 'threats' to 'people in need of help and protection' have also been identified (see Lafazani 2018). Further, Heinkelmann-Wild et al. (2019: 221) note that much of the literature on the European 'refugee crisis' has emphasized a binary representation of refugees, 'being either victimized or criminalized, patronized or securitized, the threated and the threatening'.

In general, there is not much literature on representations of refugees and the 'refugee crisis' in Russian media: the few studies that have been published on this topic find similar representations to those identified in the West. For example, as in other research on this topic, these studies identify representations of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa who came to Europe in 2015 as threats (e.g., Kalsaas 2017; Khismatullina et al. 2017). Perhaps unsurprisingly, studies of Russian interpretations of the European 'refugee crisis' have addressed the representations of refugees in light of Russian representations of Europe and the West. For example, in her analysis of the discourse in four Russian newspapers Johanne Kalsaas (2017) finds that that refugees are represented as a European, not a Russian issue. Her data also show a lack of stories about refugees in Russia (Kalsaas 2017:14). Anna Smolyakova (2017) analyses the framing of refugees in the German Russian-language newspaper *Russkaya Germaniya* and finds similarities with other press outlets in Europe. However, she argues that one frame sets *Russkaya Germaniya* apart: representations of the refugees as an 'apple of discord' for the European Union. This frame concerns negotiations and disagreements about refugees between EU member-states.

Mark Simon (2018) holds that Russian political and media spheres primitivize the EU's handling of the 'refugee crisis', representing the humanitarian aspect of European migration either as a form of complacency that threatens European security, or as a cover-up for ulterior self-serving motives (Simon 2018: 12). Stefano Braghiroli and Andrey Makarychev (2018: 823) claim that the 'refugee crisis' has widened the room for Russia's return to the European

(geo-) political scene by 'redefining Europe in more conservative and traditionalist terms, as opposed to the liberal cosmopolitanism of EU's project'. Karina Pipiya (2016: 162) has noted negative attitudes towards the refugees and refugee reception politics in the EU among Russians, and sees these attitudes in connection to negative attitudes towards migrants in general as well as a Russian anti-European, anti-Western position that has emerged out of the disagreements between Russia and the West over Ukraine and Syria.

This dissertation contributes to the literature identified above by being the first study to focus systematically on contrasting media representations of the refugees from Ukraine who started coming to Russia in 2014 and MENA refugees who arrived into Europe in 2015, linking these contrasting representations to nationalist sentiments. In addition, I show how the distinction between 'preferred' and 'non-preferred' migrants is reproduced when the authors of Russian newspaper texts distinguish between different groups of refugees (see summary of Article I). Moreover, as one of only a handful of studies of the social construction of the European 'refugee crisis' in Russia, my dissertation aims at further developing the literature on the mediation of the 'refugee crisis' by introducing the representation of the refugee as a victim of Western interventionism and democratization in the Middle East and North Africa (see summary of Article III).

As several other studies have done, I note the connection between the representations of refugees in Russian newspapers and the representations of the West. In order to deconstruct the former, it is necessary to explain the latter – to which I now turn.

2.3 Russia and the West

As discussed in the theory section below, all social constructions of meaning must be interpreted in light of cultural and historical contexts in which they are situated. Readers not familiar with Russian approaches to geopolitics, international relations and national identity may find some plotlines and viewpoints in my data peculiar. For example, the Russian military intervention in Syria in 2015 is legitimized as Russia's contribution to a global fight against terrorism, and as a way for Russia to bring an end to the European 'refugee crisis'. In the context of the war in Ukraine and refugees from Ukraine, Ukraine is represented as infiltrated by right-wing radicals and Nazis, a pawn in the hands of the West and a victim of Western manipulation.

To help contextualizing my empirical findings, I will briefly sketch out some ideas about Europe and the West that have been part of Russian identity construction for several centuries.

Among the factors that influence Russia's identity construction are its size, geographical location in both Europe and Asia, Russia's imperial past and its more recent history as part of the Soviet Union. Since the dissolution of the latter, Russia's self-image has evolved, from self-identification as a member of the West to that of a self-contained great power balancing against the USA in a multipolar world and a regional hegemon dominating its own periphery (Hopf 2012: 274). Some trace this shift in Russia's relationship with the West to Vladimir Putin's second term as President. In 2006, Dmitri Trenin, then Deputy Director of Carnegie Moscow Center, wrote:

> Until recently, Russia saw itself as Pluto[12] in Western solar system, very far from the center but still fundamentally a part of it. Now it has left that orbit entirely: Russia's leaders have given up on becoming part of the West and have started creating their own Moscow-centered system (Trenin 2006: 87).

Back in 2006, Trenin argued that Russia was leaving the West, but was not anti-Western. Since then, relations have deteriorated rapidly, resulting in what scholars consider a new Cold War (see, e.g., Black et al. 2016; Karaganov 2018; Legvold 2016; Wilhelmsen 2021; Wilhelmsen & Gjerde 2018). There is an ongoing debate about the exact meaning of this term, and the difference between the 'classic' and the 'new' Cold War (Legvold 2016). In any case, a new Cold War signifies mutual distrust and competition between Russia and the West and the West's return to its traditional role as Russia's Other.

For almost three centuries, Europe and the West have served as significant Other in Russia's national identity debates (Tsygankov 2016). According to Iver B. Neumann, 'the idea of Europe is the main "Other" in relation to which the idea or Russia is defined' – thus, the Russian debate about Europe is also a debate about 'what Russia itself should be' (Neumann 2017: 3; see also 2016: 1395). Europe's role as Other for Russia has been traced back to Peter the Great, the ruler of Russian Empire in early 18th century, and since World War II this role has been assigned to the West in general. 'To many Russians, the West represented a superior civilization whose influences were to be emulated or contained, but never ignored' (Tsygankov 2016: 2), and thus,

[12] In that same year, Pluto was re-classified from 'planet' to one of five 'dwarf planets' in the solar system.

Russian rulers have sought for Russia to be recognized by and modernize like the West (Tsygankov 2016: 18).

Moscow's policy choices often depend on whether the Russian leadership perceives the West as potentially accepting Russia as an equal and legitimate member (Tsygankov 2016: 1). Identity construction and policy production are thus influenced by Russia's relationship with the West. Several scholars have emphasized that Russia's contemporary identity is linked to reassessing its status as a great power and visions of greatness still defined through references to the Soviet past (see Clunan 2014; Hopf 2016; Neumann 2008, 2016; Morozov 2015; Toal 2017; Tsygankov 2005). One might say that Russia's identity and foreign policy rest on whether or not it is recognized by the West as a great power (on this, see Freire 2019; Larson & Shevchenko 2014; Wilhelmsen 2019, 2021).

History is never static, and relationships between states undergo developments and changes. Over time, Russia's relations with the West have alternated between cooperation and discord. In this context, Russian societal and political development has been partly determined by Russia's simultaneously belonging to and being excluded from Europe, resulting in conflicting articulations of its national identity (Morozov 2015: 41). Neumann (2017; also 2016) finds a cyclical pattern in Russia's debate about Europe, where periods of westernization alternate with periods of nationalist celebration of domestic models for political and economic life:

> [a]s long as Russia looks primarily to western powers for recognition as a Great Power, and as long as some new, alternative way of ordering economic and/or political life does not emerge from within Russia itself – we must expect the cyclical pattern of the Russian debate about Europe to continue. (Neumann 2016: 1399)

Further, Neuman (2017) notes how, during the Putin years, xenophobic nationalist representations of Europe have grown stronger and liberal westernizing positions weaker. My data are situated in a cultural and historical context where Russia's claims to greatness are not recognized by the West, and Russian ideas about Europe are largely shaped by xenophobic nationalist discourse. In this context, anti-Western conspiracy theories have flourished in Russian media and society, serving to 'reinforce ideas of Russia's difference from the West and of Russia's national greatness, which the West was allegedly attempting to destroy' (Yablokov 2014: 627; see also Gaufman 2017; Kragh et al. 2020; Yablokov 2015, 2018). Such

conspiratorial thinking feeds ideas about the West/USA as an enemy that poses a range of threats to Russian security, as with the Chechen terrorist threat (Wilhelmsen 2017), NATO (Wilhelmsen & Roth Hjermann 2022) or the 2014 Euromaidan in Ukraine (see Gaufman 2017; Szostek 2017b).

Representations of the West as Russia's significant other – as the antagonist to Russia's protagonist – are also evident in my data. In this dissertation I show how the social construction of refugees in Russian newspapers links to identity discussions on both the micro- and the macro- levels. On the micro-level, newspaper stories about refugees reflect ideas about who Russians are and what their role is in relation to the refugees (see summary of Article I and II). On the macro-level, representations of refugees in Russia are part of the national identity discussion – what the relationship between Russia, Ukraine, Europe, and the West is/should be, and how Russia can contribute to solving the refugee-related challenges of 2014 and 2015 (see summary of Article II and III).

In the following chapter I introduce the core analytical concepts and tools that anchor this multidisciplinary study in the theoretical framework of social constructionism.

3. Theoretical framework

According to Vivien Burr (2003: 2–5), studies that are defined as social constructionist rest on four key assumptions: (1) a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge; (2) historical and cultural specificities; (3) that knowledge is sustained by social process; and that (4) knowledge and social action go together. Burr sees social constructionism as challenging the view that knowledge in based upon objective observations of the world. Social constructionists argue that knowledge is constructed through interactions between people who are situated in given historical and cultural contexts, and that such constructions of the world have implications for social action. For example, judges have the power to send people to prison, but teachers do not.

These four key assumptions question the existence of scientific objectivity, an issue that many philosophers have attempted to clarify. Is there such a thing as objective knowledge? 'Philosophically, the modern image of science associates science with method, and the idea of method was conceived by the so-called natural philosophers as a set of rules of reasoning completely separate from either individual judgement or social context' (Montuschi 2014: 123). Method conceived in this way would lead to objective knowledge about natural facts. In contrast, social constructionists do not seek to find 'objective' knowledge; they invite us to be critical of the idea that knowledge can be completely unbiased (Burr 2003: 3). They are critical of realist philosophy, and question the existence of objective facts. 'All knowledge is derived from looking at the world from some perspective or other, and in the service of some interests rather than others' (Burr 2003: 6)

Social constructionism does not make claims about ontology; it does not say that objects do not exist in an independent reality. There are rocks, and trees and people on this planet – social constructionism does not question their existence. However, it does make epistemological claims, confining itself to the social construction of knowledge (Andrews 2012). Rocks exist independently of us as human beings – but our knowledge about rocks, the classifications (e.g., 'intrusive'/'extrusive' rocks), the science that deals with rocks (geology), and the scientists working with rocks (geologists) are all socially constructed.

The theoretical approaches applied in this dissertation emphasize the importance of language for the social construction of ideas about things in the world; they take their starting point in structuralist and poststructuralist linguistic philosophy, which claims that 'our access to reality is always through language' (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 8). Ferdinand de Saussure (2013) saw language as a system of signs and introduced a way of studying signs: semiology. A sign, according to Saussure, consists of a *signifier* (the linguistic sign 'rock') and the *signified* (the concept or idea associated with a rock). A sign may be understood as anything that produces meaning (Thwaites et al. 2002: 1), but it is always interpreted in relation to other signs. Language can then be understood as a system of differences, a system of signs that mutually define each other. A rock differs from a plant or a dog, and it is precisely because of this difference that a geologist can say that she is dealing with granite and not with Saint Bernards. Saussure called this system *langue*, and the concrete use of language as *parole*. Whenever we use language and communicate something, we draw on *langue*, and this gives meaning to that which is being said (as noted in Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 10). The connection between a rock-sign and the actual thing that is called a 'rock' is arbitrary: 'granite' is a classification determined by humans – this type of mineral material might have been called something else. The same can be said about 'refugee'.

3.1 The power of social constructions

How do social constructions take root in a society, and why do they matter? The answer to these questions lies in the connection between power and knowledge:

> What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no; it also traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network that runs through the whole

> social body, much more than a negative instance whose function is repression. (Foucault 2000: 120)

According to Michel Foucault (2000) power is not only repressive: it is also enabling, producing both opportunities and restraints. Such power is everywhere – but where does it come from? Foucault views power as constituted through an accepted form of knowledge that is spread through scientific disciplines. For example, he describes the intervention of psychiatry in the field of law as the 'psychiatrization of criminal danger' (Foucault 1978: 3). This process has produced a set of objects (e.g., books) and concepts (e.g., pervert) that has redefined the way we categorize crime. The original focus on the *crime* that has been committed has gradually been transferred to the *person* who has committed the crime. Foucault traces the process whereby penal law has redefined the dangerous individual 'from the rare and monstrous figure of the monomaniac to the common everyday figure of the degenerate, of the pervert, of the constitutionally unbalanced, of the immature, etc.' (1978: 17). As a result, people can now be categorized as, for example, 'degenerates' or 'sadists'. In line with Foucault's argument, it is possible to claim that the disciplines of psychiatry and law have produced 'dangerous individuals'.

How people categorize other subjects and objects does matter, because the process of categorization is connected to practices. For example, are 'drug addicts' criminals because of illegal substance abuse, or are they sick persons? If society categorizes them as criminals, then they are the responsibility of the penal system. In contrast, if drug addiction is seen as an illness, then the addicts are the responsibility of the healthcare system. Precisely because concepts have this productive type of power, they should be subjected to rigorous scientific scrutiny.

With this productive power in mind, I ask: how does Russian society categorize refugees? In this dissertation I treat 'refugee' as an empty signifier, and argue that it is important to study the representations that fill this signifier with meaning. In what follows I introduce the core theoretical tools that I have used in exploring the nuances of this meaning production. Discourse theory sheds light on the struggle over the meaning of 'refugee' in Russian newspapers. Narrative analysis illustrates how social actors (re)articulate familiar plots, protagonists and antagonists when they encounter a new phenomenon – in this case, the sudden appearance of large numbers of refugees from Ukraine in Russia. In the three articles presented in this dissertation, I employ the concept of 'subject position' to highlight that the meaning of 'refugee'

depends on how the refugee is positioned in a given newspaper account. Finally, the concepts of social boundaries and myths are useful in analysing identity processes – the construction of the 'self' in relation to others on the micro- and macro- levels.

3.2 Discourse theory

Discourse analysis is a useful tool for exploring how and why things appear the way they do, how certain actions become possible, and for revealing the effects of 'naturalizing' one social reality rather than another (Dunn & Neumann 2016: 2,4). 'Discourse' can be broadly defined as a 'particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)' (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 1), a discourse is not a single statement: 'it is a thick grid of hundreds of statements that shape social reality' (Wilhelmsen 2017: 46). In this dissertation, I view particular ways of writing about refugees in newspapers as *discourses about refugees*. Some refugee discourses become dominant through a process of repetition, and through the exclusion of alternative discourses. People internalize certain ways of talking and thinking about refugees (and other groups of people), but there are always possibilities for change.

In analysing discourse, I employ concepts from discourse theory as formulated by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2014: 91), who define a discourse as 'a structured totality' from the 'articulatory practice' which is 'any practice establishing a relation among elements,' for example by speaking or writing. However, the practice of articulation does not consist solely of linguistic phenomena: it also permeates the institutions, rituals and practices that structure discursive formations (ibid.: 95). As any and every sign potentially has several possible meanings, all articulations of signs are made possible because of the existence of the field of discursivity – 'a reservoir for the "surplus of meaning"' (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 27). The field of discursivity consists of elements which, when articulated, become reduced to *moments* in discourse. Because of the surplus of meaning that always surrounds discourse, such reduction of meaning of elements can never be total, and '[a]ny discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre' (Laclau & Mouffe 2014: 98–99). In other words, a discourse is established when signs are temporarily fixed as 'moments' in relation to other signs and when other possible meanings of the signs are excluded.

Whereas *moments* are the various positions within a discourse, *nodal points* are privileged discursive points of this partial fixation (Laclau & Mouffe 2014: 91, 99). Nodal points give meaning to other moments within a discourse. For example, in this dissertation, 'refugee' serves, *inter alia,* as a nodal point in security discourse, when combined with moments like 'fence,' 'flood,' 'illegal' or 'terrorist' in relation to the 2015 'refugee crisis' (Moen-Larsen 2020a; Moen-Larsen forthcoming). Because 'refugee' is a nodal point in several competing discourses, it is also a *floating signifier* (Laclau 1990: 28). Whereas the term 'nodal point' refers to 'a point of crystallisation' within one discourse, the term 'floating signifier' refers to 'the ongoing struggle between different discourses to fix the meaning of important signs' (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 28).

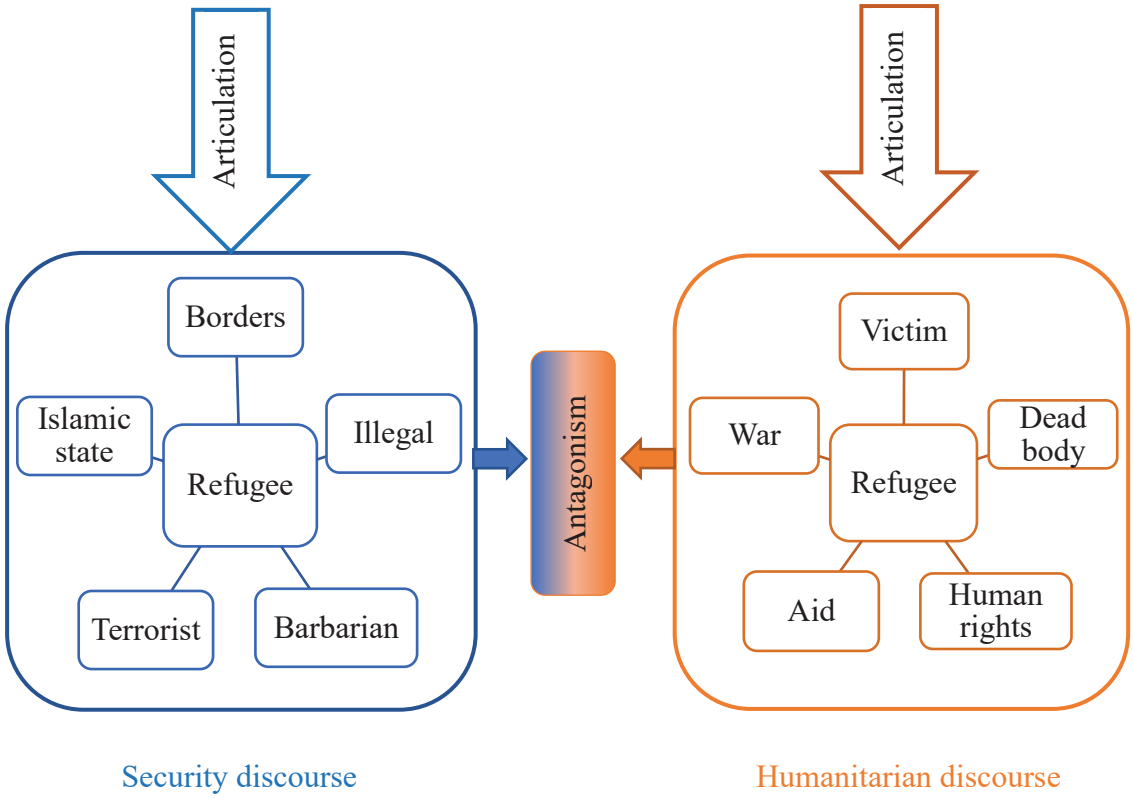
As noted, the analytical focus on antagonistic articulations is what sets discourse theory apart from other approaches to discourse analysis. The term *antagonism* points to this ongoing struggle over meaning. According to Laclau and Mouffe (2014), due to the existence of the field of discursivity and antagonistic articulatory practices, a society can never exist as an objective and closed system of differences. Thus, an antagonism is 'a witness of the impossibility of a final suture', and the '"experience" of the limit of the social' (Laclau & Mouffe 2014: 112). Antagonisms signify that efforts to construct society are unstable and that meaning can never be totally fixed. Antagonisms arise when two identities compete over the same terrain, blocking one another (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 32). Further:

> In our conception of antagonism (…) we are faced with a 'constitutive outside'. It is an 'outside which blocks the identity of the 'inside' (and is, nonetheless, the prerequisite for its constitution at the same time). (Laclau 1990: 179)

According to Matissek & Schopper (2019: 249) the antagonistic other can never be 'a neutral outsider': this other is by definition threatening and characterized by negative traits.

Figure 1 illustrates how I use concepts from discourse theory in Articles I and II, identifying discourses that compete over meaning of 'refugee' in Russian newspapers. For example, representations of refugees as victims in a humanitarian discourse and refugees as terrorists in a security discourse compete for the same 'terrain' (the meaning of 'refugee'), blocking one another. Such representations are the antagonisms of either side.

Figure 1: Discourse theory: articulation, nodal points and moments, and antagonism



3.3 Narratives with characters

Human beings are storytellers who apprehend and represent the world narratively. Narratives are everywhere – not only in books, films and comic strips, but also in music, social histories and conversations (Richardson 1990: 117). As noted by Roland Barthes:

> (…) in this infinite variety of forms [narrative] is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; indeed narrative starts with the very history of mankind; there is not, there has never been anywhere, any people without narrative (…). Like life itself, it is there, international, transhistorical, transcultural. (1975: 237)

Whereas a discourse is a system for conveying expressions and practices that are reality-constitutive and that exhibit a certain degree of regularity (Neumann 2021: 22), a narrative can be defined as an account of a casual sequence of events based on a *plot with characters* (Alexander, in Larsen 2014: 77; see also Tanum & Krogstad 2014: 250; Polletta et al. 2011:

111). The plots in the narratives shape the symbolic relationships between humans or human-like characters who are often represented in binary ways – hero versus villain, or subject (the protagonist) versus opponent (the antagonist) (Jacobs 2013; Polletta et al. 2011). Protagonists and antagonists are arranged in relations of similarity to and difference from each other, and serve as embodiments of a society's deep cultural codes (Jacobs 2013: 216). The two are often in conflict with each other over a desired object (see for example, Greimas' actantial model).[13] The object that is the source of the antagonistic relationship is not necessarily a physical thing, it may also be an abstract idea – for example, 'democracy' (Rafoss 2015).

Laurel Richardson (1990: 129) writes that people make sense of their lives through narratives and try to fit their lives into stories available to them. A narrative also makes a normative point, communicating the values of the culture that shaped the story, while the plotlines communicate desirable and undesirable versions of the future (Polletta et al. 2011). In other words, a narrative is a bearer of underlying guiding principles for people's daily lives, or the 'moral' of a story. The meaning of narratives is dependent on the cultural and historical context, making context an important part of analysis of narratives (Tanum & Krogstad 2014: 254). For example, the story of the fall of the Soviet Union has become part of the cultural repertoires of a significant share of the world's countries. However, this narrative is told differently in, say, Moscow, Washington DC and Berlin.

We interpret the world through the prism of cultural narratives. If we seek to understand the social construction of refugees in Russia, then it is useful to analyse the narratives spread through newspapers. When audiences are exposed to newspaper stories about refugees, they read them in light of other stories about refugees that they have heard or read before. When social actors talk about refugees, they (re)articulate familiar plotlines and sets of characters. Texts are interpreted by their audiences, and serve as basis for the production of new texts. 'In this ongoing textual reading and production, the history, or histories of a society unfold' (Thwaites et al. 2002: 117).

[13] Algirdas J. Greimas was a central figure in the development of structuralist narratology. Building on the work of the Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp, he proposed a model that can be used to analyse the structure and content of narratives, the *actantial model*. In this model an action can be broken down into six actants and three axes: subject and object (axis of desire), helper and opponent (axis of power), and sender and receiver (axis of transmission) (see, Greimas 1987; Hébert & Tabler 2019: 80–81).

Figure 2: Narrative analysis: the plot, the character and the moral

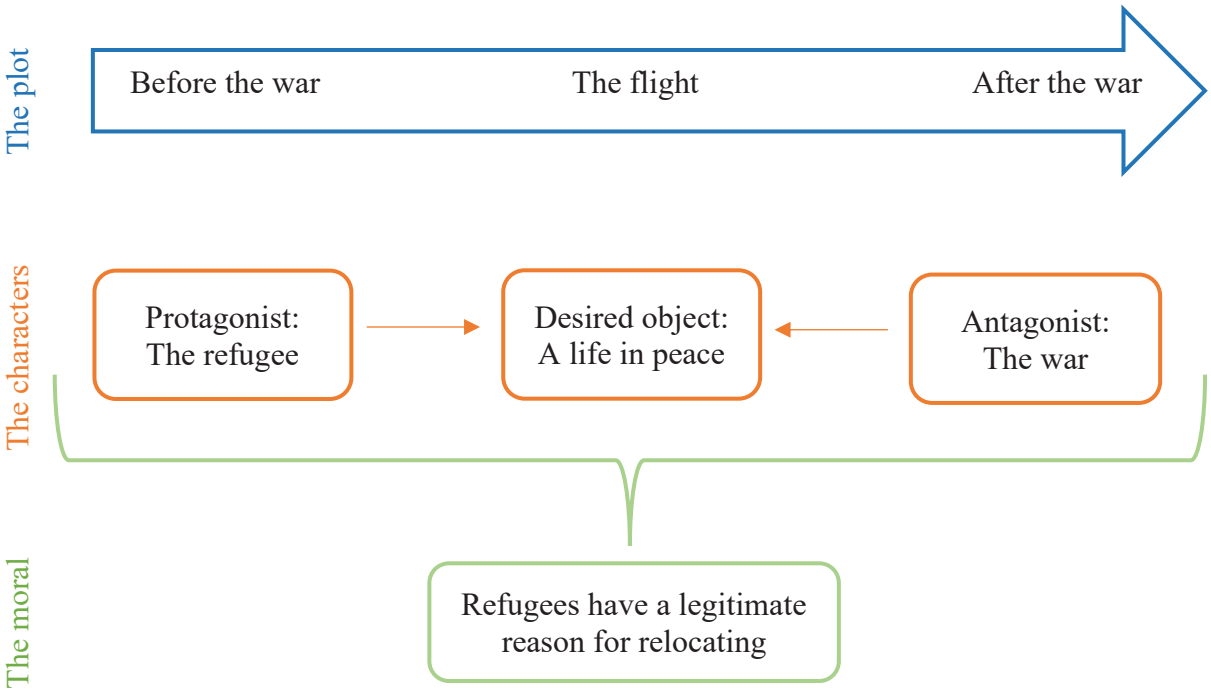


Figure 2 illustrates my use of narrative analysis in this dissertation, using a plotline identified in Article II, 'narratives about the war'. There I identify the structure of the narratives that feature refugees from Ukraine in my data, focusing on *the plot* (the sequence of events in the narrative), identifying *the characters* (protagonist, antagonist, and the source of the conflict between them), and *the morals* of the narratives – the underlying messages in the stories.

3.4 Subject positions

Our categorizations of others, and their categorizations of us, are also a question of identity. Social constructionism claims that a person's identity originates from the social realm (Burr 2003: 209); it is 'achieved by a subtle interweaving of many different threads' (Burr 2003: 107). These threads are constructed through culturally and historically specific discourses.

Some social constructionists use the concept of *subject positions* in connection with production of identities (Burr 2003: 111). Also Laclau and Mouffe (2015: 97, 101) view identities as relational and constituted by subject positions within a discursive structure. According to the

theoretical framework of this dissertation, 'drug addict', 'refugee' and other labels we use when categorizing ourselves and others are subject positions that discourses compete to define. As mentioned above, I apply 'subject positions' as an analytical concept across all three articles presented in this dissertation.

According to Bronwyn Davies and Rom Harré (2007: 262), 'the constitutive force of each discursive practice lies in its provision of subject positions. An individual's experience of their identity can only be expressed and understood through discourse.' They use the concept of *positioning* to underline that identity is shaped through active cooperation between agents. When we speak of others and ourselves in particular ways, we take part in constructing subject positions. For example, we often construct in- and out-groups through positive self-presentation and negative presentation of others (Richardson & Wodak 2009; Wodak 2009: 582). Individuals cannot escape the subject positions that are offered to them: they can either accept them or try to resist them. If a person accepts a subject position within a particular discursive practice, she starts seeing the world through the vantage point of that position internalising the language, metaphors and story lines that are attached to that subject position (Davies & Harré 2007: 262). Furthermore, she is locked in the system of rights and obligations accompanying that position (Burr 2003: 111). Thus, we are the total of the subject positions that we occupy in discourses: some of these positions are fleeting ('student', 'bride'), others more stable ('Russian'). Given the fluidity of subject positions, our identities are never fixed, but always open to change (Burr 2003: 124).

> Accordingly, who one is, is always an open question with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within one's own and others' discursive practices, the stories through which we make sense of our own and others' lives. Stories are located within a number of different discourses, and thus vary dramatically in terms of language used, the concepts, issues and moral judgements made relevant and the subject positions made available within them. In this way poststructuralism shades into narratology (Davies & Harré 2007: 263)

Narratives and discourses do not exist in separate realms, they are interwoven parts of meaning-making processes in a society. The characters, plot and moral in any narrative are shaped by discourses in which that particular story is located. Therefore, although the analysis of subject positions is primarily part of a discourse-theoretical toolkit, it is useful also in the analysis of narratives (Moen-Larsen 2020b; Tanum & Krogstad 2014). Narrative analysis offers tools for

analysing characters in a narrative structure: protagonists are the 'heroes' of the stories and antagonists are the 'villains.' For example, a newspaper story driven by humanitarian discourse might be about Jamal, a refugee from Syria (protagonist) who survives a dangerous journey across the Aegean Sea and finds shelter in Germany. On the other hand, a story shaped by security discourse can be about the victims of the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris conducted by radicals who had entered France posing as refugees (antagonists).

Here the concept of subject position sheds light on the flexibility and flow of the meaning-making process. Whereas protagonists/antagonists are characters locked in a binary system, subjects (refugees) may be positioned as either protagonists, antagonists or other characters in a narrative, depending on the context of the story and the discourse shaping it.

3.5 Symbolic boundaries

The process of construction of subject positions and of positioning the self and others in discourse can be analysed as boundary-work. Sociologists use the concept of boundary-work for the process of demarcation and people's self-definition in relation to others (Gieryn 1983; Lamont et al. 2015). Social boundaries are part of 'the classical conceptual tool-kit of social scientists' (Lamont & Molnár 2002: 167), and highlight that social groups are constructed in relationship to each other (Phelps et al. 2011: 188). Within the social sciences, the concept of boundaries has been traced back to Emile Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and the profane, and to Max Weber's focus on boundaries between groups in the creation and reproduction of inequality (Lamont et al. 2015: 850). Also Fredrik Barth (1969) advocated focusing analysis on the social boundaries that define ethnic groups: 'If a group maintains its identity when members interact with others, this entails criteria for determining membership and ways of signalling membership and exclusion' (Barth 1969: 15). Further, according to Barth, the persistence of an ethnic group depends on *boundary maintenance* through expression and validation of group membership and through dichotomization of others as strangers: a type of boundary-work.

Michèle Lamont and Virág Molnár (2002) distinguish between symbolic and social boundaries. While the former are 'conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space' the latter are 'objectified forms of social differences

manifested in unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities' (Lamont & Molnár 2002: 168). Thus, the boundary concept encompasses representations which define social groups and construct reality and institutionalize and reproduce inequality (Phelps et al. 2011). Because this concept is well suited for understanding all forms of group identity, I find it useful in an analysis of how social actors construct and maintain boundaries between 'us' and 'others' when they write about refugees. As this is a study of newspaper texts, the focus of analysis is on conceptual distinctions – *symbolic boundaries.*

Figure 3: Positioning and symbolic boundaries

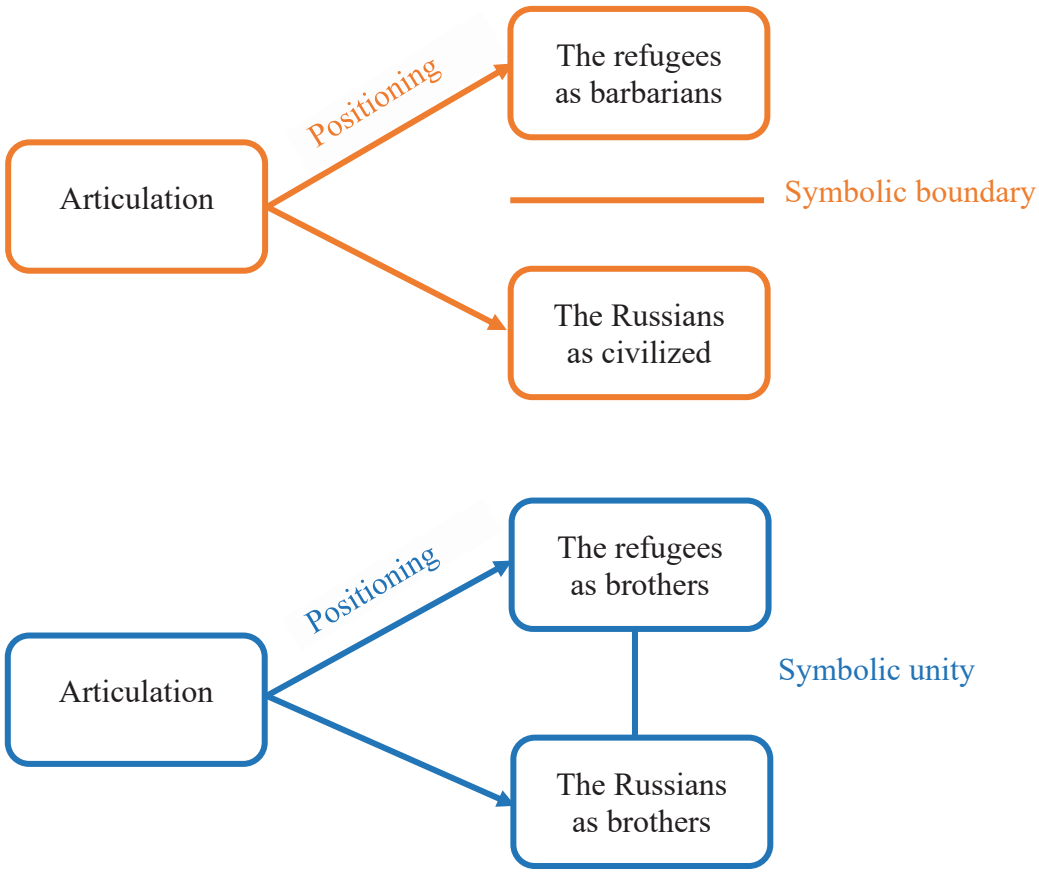


Figure 3 illustrates how I use the concept 'symbolic boundaries' in Article I in this dissertation, on how newspaper texts position MENA refugees and refugees from Ukraine in contrasting ways. For example: when newspapers position MENA refugees as 'barbarians', a symbolic

boundary is constructed between the refugees and civilized Russians, but when newspapers position refugees from Ukraine as 'brothers', this blurs the symbolic boundary between the refugees and Russians. In Figure 3 such validation of group membership is termed 'symbolic unity'.

3.6 Myths

The entry-points for the analysis in this dissertation are representations of refugees in Russian newspapers. However, the analysis also illustrates how representations of refugees are part of an ongoing (re)articulation of Russia's identity vis-à-vis the West. The discourses identified in my data include, *inter alia*, representations of Russia, Europe and Syria as discursive moments temporarily fixed in a relation to representations of refugees. To analyse representations of Russia and other geographical entities, and to distinguish between the positioning of individuals and the positioning of states, I supplement my conceptual framework with the concept of *myth*.

In cultural studies, a myth is defined as 'a coding in which a dominant term stands metonymically for all terms in the system and a dominant metonymic relationship among terms stands metonymically for all relationships' (Thwaites et al. 2002: 67). This interpretation is not to be confused with the widespread everyday definition of a myth as being a legend, a fable, or a symbolic narrative, and as synonymous with 'untrue'. No, according to the definition applied here, a 'myth' is a radical simplification of all relationships within a system (ibid.). For example, myths can divide the world into binary oppositions such as light/dark, good/evil or culture/nature (Lévi-Strauss 1983; Lewis 2006: 153; Thwaites et al. 2002: 67). To give a timely example: in the West today, Russia is perceived as an aggressive military power that has used violence to invade Ukraine, and is ruled by a cynical authoritarian leader. This is a current 'myth' about Russia. There is much evidence that can serve as empirical proof of this myth. However, according to Tony Thwaites et al. (2002: 68) myths are not necessarily true or untrue: they are highly selective – and that makes them difficult to dislodge. The myth of Russia as aggressor currently overrides all other possible types of representations of Russia in Western discourse.

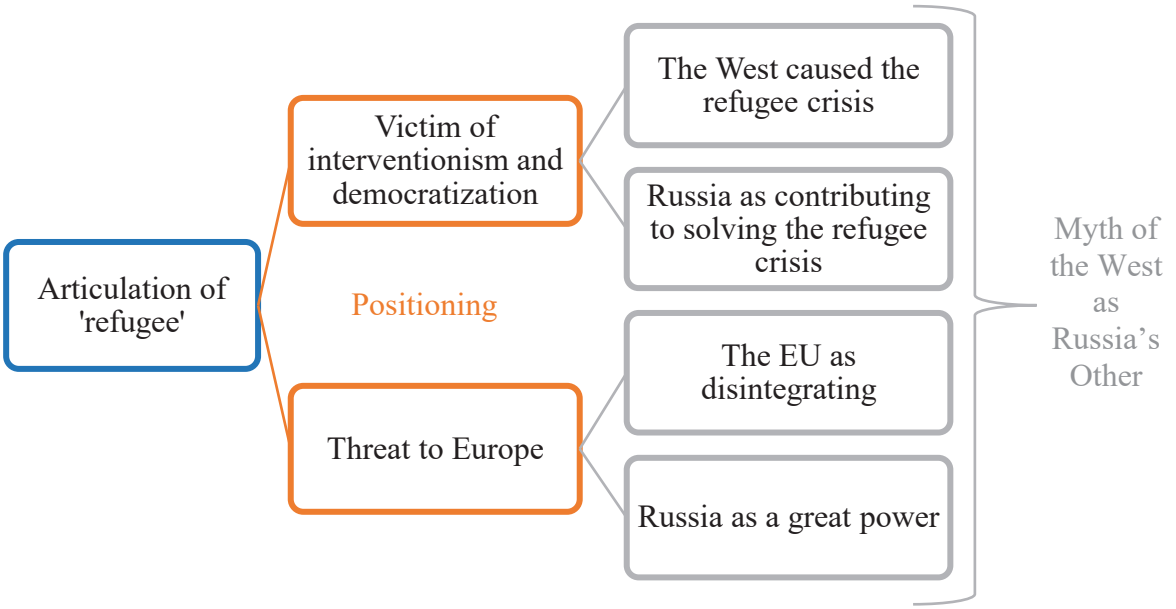
According to Roland Barthes (2000: 142) the function of myth is to transform history into nature. Building on semiology introduced by Saussure, Barthes postulates that all signs can

become part of mythical speech; and, 'since myth is a type of speech, everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse' (Barthes 2000: 109). Barthes sees myth as a second-order semiological system (*a metalanguage*) in which the signifier (the linguistic sign) and the signified (the concept or idea) from the first order become the signifier in the second order. For example, the arbitrary combination of the word 'Russia' and a flag in the first-order system becomes the Russian flag in the second-order system, 'the Russian flag' can then signify, for instance, 'great power'. This myth works when one sees a Russian flag and thinks 'great power'. In his analyses Barthes seeks to explain the ideological foundations of myth, arguing, 'some narratives are so frequently repeated in culture that they are essentialized or "naturalized" as absolute common-sense truth' (in Lewis 2006: 155). Myths are ideological constructions because they are prevailing representations that support dominant socio-cultural structures (ibid.). Like discourse, myths naturalize some representations through a process of repetition, while concealing others. Consequently, myths are often sites of struggle over meaning (Thwaites et al. 2002: 69).

Although 'everything' can be a myth, according to Barthes, I do not apply this concept to all types of representations. In this dissertation, I link Barthes' theory to the definition of 'myth' that is part of *discourse theory*. Within a discourse-theoretical framework, a myth is a floating signifier that refers to a totality while at the same time providing an image and a feeling of unity (Laclau 1990: 99) – like, say, society, nation or Norway. Thus, the conceptual tools of discourse theory can be applied to Russia as a myth. One aim of discourse analysis is to point out 'the myths of society as objective reality that are implied in talk and other actions' (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 40). This fits well with the definition of myth introduced above. For example, a common myth about Norway is that it is an egalitarian society. In fact, that is not a reality for many in Norway who encounter economic difficulties, ethnic or other discrimination – but the myth constructs egalitarianism as an objective reality for everyone. There is a parallel here to Benedict Anderson's (1991) concept of the nation as an 'imagined community'. Social actors construct their societies, cultures and nations in particular ways and in contrast to other societies, cultures and nations. Within the conceptual framework of this dissertation, I analyse such constructions as *mythical*.

In Article III, I analyse how the discourses articulated by Russian elites concerning the European 'refugee crisis' produce myths about Russia and the West (Fig. 4).

Figure 4: Positioning and myth

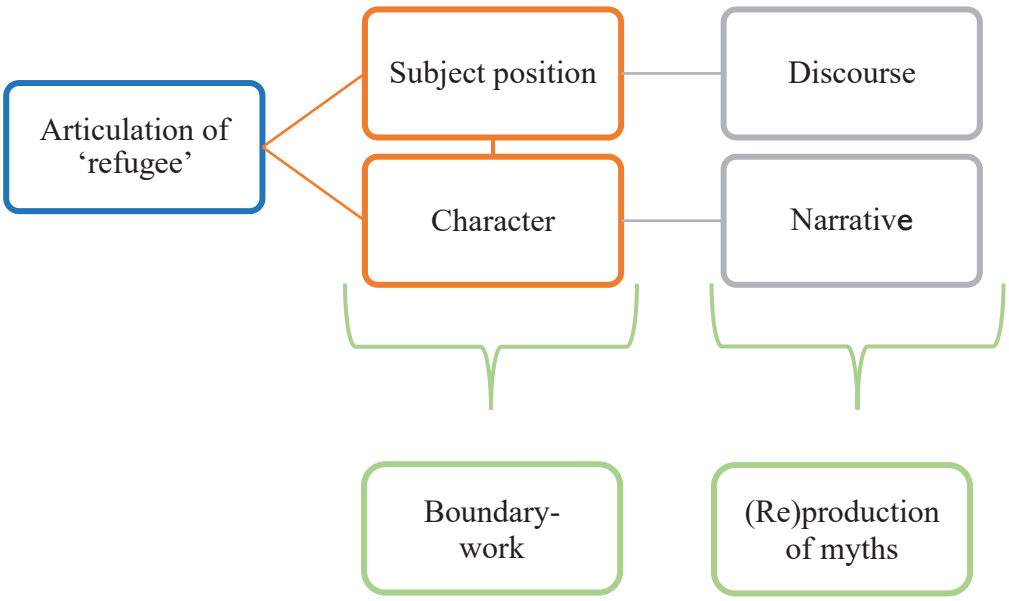


For example, in the geopolitical discourse articulated in pro-government newspapers in my data, refugees are positioned as victims of interventionism and democratization; the West is represented as 'the villain' that caused the crisis in the first place; and Russia is 'the hero' that can help to solve the 'refugee crisis' by bringing peace to Syria. In the security discourse, I have found the refugees positioned as a threat to Europe – with the EU represented as weak and disintegrating, and Russia as a great power. Taken together, such representations (re)articulate a myth of the West as Russia's Other. Thus, in the third and final article of this dissertation I explore the relationship between the subject position 'refugee' and the mythical construction of Russia, Europe and the West.

3.7 Summary of concepts

Figure 5 sums up the main theoretical concepts used in this dissertation and the connections between them. I view all uses of the word 'refugee' as articulations and as part of the social construction of refugees. When social actors write about refugees, they articulate subject positions and position the refugees in discourse. These subject positions are also articulated as characters in the plotlines of narratives. I use discourse analysis to investigate antagonistic articulations of refugees in Russian newspapers, and narrative analysis to explore the sequence of events and underlying morals of stories that feature the refugees.

Figure 5: Conceptual framework



On the micro-level, an analysis of subject positions in discourse and of characters in narrative structures illustrates how symbolic boundaries between groups are constructed and maintained (boundary-work) within a cultural context. On the macro-level, analysis of narratives and discourses can unpack grand myths that are (re)produced in a society. Together these concepts help to answer the overarching research question of how 'refugees' were socially constructed in Russian newspapers in 2014–2015, from various angles and on different levels of abstraction.

The following chapter gives an account of the methodology used for answering this research question – my sources, and the choices made in selecting empirical materials, as well as some trends I have identified in the data.

4. Methodology

How to 'unmask' our social constructions is a question of methodology. I chose to collect data from three Russian newspapers with nationwide circulation in the period 2014–2015. Although it is not controversial to choose newspapers as source of data in a study of Russian representations, narratives and discourse (see, e.g., Edenborg 2017; Levintova 2010; Oreshkina & Lester 2013; Roman et al. 2020; Wilhelmsen 2017), it is important to explain the particularities of the Russian media sphere that serves as backdrop for the three articles in this dissertation.

4.1 Mass media in Russia

Russia has a quantitively large and technologically diverse media industry; in 2016, there were 80,606 media outlets, of which 55,378 were print media (Vartanova 2019: 26). However, this large number of media outlets is not matched by media pluralism. The initial post-Soviet period was characterized by a multiplicity of voices and opinions. This changed after Vladimir Putin came to power in 1999, as oppositional voices gradually became marginalized in the mass media (Oates 2007: 1286; Oates 2016: 402.). According to Sarah Oates (2007: 1294), the post-Soviet media have been characterized by a strong bias in the material that purports to be 'news', and widespread self-censorship as a result of the persecution of journalists. The commercial media are under heavy governmental influence; media harassment and violence against journalists are common.

Although Russia lacks freedom of expression and the government controls all the national news channels, a handful of independent news outlets still operated until March 2022 (Freedom House 2022). However, over the past twenty years, the Russian public has had increasingly limited access to critical opinions that challenge the Kremlin's policies. In the first three weeks after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, media freedom in Russia went from being severely limited to being non-existent. On 4 March 2022, the Russian State Duma passed a new law making it illegal to spread 'fake news' about Russian armed forces (Russian State Duma 2022). This law criminalizes writing about 'the *war* in Ukraine': the journalists are to use the term 'special operation in Ukraine'. What was left of critical mass media in Russia has been blocked, taken off air, or temporarily paused.[14] *Novaya gazeta*, the last remaining national newspaper to represent the critical opposition in Russia, had to suspend activity 'until the end of the "special operation on the territory of Ukraine"' after several warnings from the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology, and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor) (*Novaya gazeta* 2022). Thus, government-critical counter discourse has completely disappeared from traditional media channels.

The situation in 2014 and 2015 was somewhat better. When I made decisions about my empirical material, I viewed Russian newspapers as channels that produced, reproduced, and disseminated discourse: questions of whether the newspapers were part of Kremlin's disinformation campaign fell outside the scope of my enquiry. The point was not to attempt to evaluate the truthfulness of my data. However, I sought to obtain varied empirical material, sampling both pro-government and government-critical newspapers. When I gathered data for this dissertation, *Novaya gazeta* was still an important source of critical opinion.[15] Together with *Izvestiya* and *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, as sources of pro-government and official discourse, I included *Novaya gazeta* in my data sample as a potential source of counter-discourse.[16]

[14] For example, *Ekho Moskvy*, a popular Moscow-based radio station, was first taken off the air and later permanently shut down by its board of directors (Reuters 2022) and the internet-based TV channel *Dozhd* temporarily suspended its work (*Dozhd* 2022).
[15] In 2021, the editor of *Novaya gazeta*, Dmitrii Muratov, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his 'efforts to safeguard freedom of expression, which is a precondition for democracy and lasting peace'. The prize was awarded jointly to Muratov and Maria Ressa (of the Philippines) (NobelPrize.org 2021).
[16] See https://iz.ru/ for *Izvestiya*, https://novayagazeta.ru/ for *Novaya gazeta* and https://rg.ru/ for *Rossiiskaya gazeta*.

4.2 *Izvestiya*, *Rossiiskaya gazeta* and *Novaya gazeta*

The three Russian newspapers from which I have gathered data have nationwide circulation. *Izvestiya* is a pro-government broadsheet daily that publishes reports on current affairs in Russia and abroad: business, economy, and culture as well as comments and opinion pieces. I chose *Izvestiya* to represent the mainstream pro-government discourse. *Novaya gazeta*, until March 2022 issued twice weekly, was one of the few remaining government-critical Russian newspapers known for its investigative reporting. The third newspaper, *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, is the official daily newspaper of the government of the Russian Federation. It is authorized to be the first to publish information about new legislation and executive enactments, and thus represents the official discourse in my data sample. All three newspapers have a strong online presence and a high citation rate. Indeed, since 2015 the three have consistently been ranked among the ten most-cited newspapers in Russia.[17] This ranking was particularly important for my choice of *Izvestiya* over other similar Russian newspapers (such as, *Komsomolskaya pravda* or *Argumenty i fakty)* as *Izvestiya* has repeatedly topped the list of rankings. As to *Rossiiskaya gazeta* and *Novaya gazeta,* they were selected primarily on the basis of their political outlooks – representing the official discourse of the Russian government, and a government-critical stance respectively.

Russian audiences get their news primarily from the television (Hutchings & Tolz 2015; Vartanova 2012), in particular from the state-run First Channel (*Pervyj kanal*) (Oates 2016). Nevertheless, in this dissertation I have chosen the print media. Newspapers are valuable sources of data for discourse analysis and narrative analysis. Large databases such as Integrum World Wide make Russian newspaper data readily accessible to researchers, and word searches make it possible to download large amounts of text on your topic of interest. There are currently no databases available that provide similar access to stored material from television broadcasts. By choosing printed versions of three newspapers and limiting the timeframe to two years, I was able to map *all* uses of the word 'refugee' that occurred in my data sample. It would have been more difficult, if not impossible, for one person to map all refugee representations available in three TV channels over a two-year period. Moreover, it would be difficult to know in advance which television programmes mention refugees and which do not, and the amount

[17] Since the start of this project in August 2015 I have followed the media monitoring company Medialogiya's rating of Russia's top-10 most cited newspapers (Medialogiya.n.d.). Medialogiya has developed a Citation Index based on information from more than 74,000 mass-media sources: TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, news agencies, online media, and blogs. In addition, Medialogiya bases its rating on the number of links to media texts posted by users in their social media accounts.

of data to be downloaded, transcribed and analysed would be overwhelming. With my data I have been able to map discourses and narratives about refugees that circulated in three Russian national newspapers in the period 2014–2015.

4.3 Data and research design

I have used the databases East View Information Services and Integrum World Wide[18] to identify texts that have used the word 'refugee' and that were included in the print versions of *Izvestiya*, *Novaya gazeta* and *Rossiiskaya gazeta* in the period between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2015. Because all articles available in the printed versions of these three newspapers can also be read online, the potential readership of the material extends far beyond the readership of the print editions. As explained in Chapter 3 the point of departure for this dissertation is that words as such are 'empty signifiers' that get their meaning from context-specific discourses. My project has mapped all available 'refugee' representations in the data sample. I used one word – 'refugee*' (bezhen*) – to identify the texts for the data sample. From this word search, I found and downloaded 1,146 newspaper articles – 264 from *Izvestiya,* 288 from *Novaya gazeta* and 594 from *Rossiiskaya gazeta* (Fig. 6; Appendix 1).

I decided to limit the data to a two-year period because I wanted to be able to read and analyse all the selected texts and map all available refugee representations. I chose to focus on 2014 and 2015 because of two highly medialized refugee-related events that occurred within that timeframe. First, the escalation of violence in Eastern Ukraine, following Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, resulted in an outflow of refugees from Ukraine to Russia. Second, the 'refugee crisis' in Europe intensified in the summer and autumn of 2015, just as I started working on this dissertation. I assumed that I would find representations of refugees from Ukraine and MENA refugees in my data. However, I also wanted to explore and map any other representations of refugees. I coded all articles preliminarily and sorted the data manually before uploading the data in NVivo and developing a more elaborate coding scheme. Further, in NVivo, I re-coded the material for each article, because of the differences in research

[18] I downloaded all data between 1 January 2014 and 11 October 2015 from East View Information Services, and all data between 12 October 2015 and 31 December 2015 from Integrum World Wide. The reason for the swich concerned access. My subscription to East View Information services had expired before I finished the data collection and I discovered that I had access to another database with similar coverage, Integrum World Wide, through the University of Oslo Library.

questions, angle and research design (See Table 1). As the empirical material was in Russian, I myself have translated all quotes included in my articles.

In my material, representations of refugees from Ukraine dominated almost completely in the period between June 2014 and July 2015. Then, from August 2015 onwards, the main refugee representations in Russian newspapers concerned Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) refugees. Comparatively little space was accorded to refugees from other places. A total of 576 texts in the data sample feature representations of refugees from Ukraine; 360 texts, representations of MENA refugees; and 210 texts, representations of all other refugee groups taken together (see Fig. 7). The label 'Other' includes refugees from Chechnya; refugees in Russia and Europe during World Wars I and II; refugees from the Balkans; refugees from Palestine; refugees from Georgia (South Ossetia and Abkhazia) and Russians who apply for political asylum abroad. In addition, the word 'refugee' was sometimes used as a metaphor for people, groups and organizations that are forced to leave a virtual space, for example 'refugees from LiveJournal and Facebook'. Articles that mentioned refugees in this way were also counted as 'Other'.

Because most of the texts in my data are about refugees either from Ukraine or from the Middle East and North Africa, I chose to focus the in-depth analysis in my three articles on these two main types of refugee-representations. One aim of my dissertation has been to explore how the meaning of the word 'refugee' changes with context, and to identify the words used to describe refugees from Ukraine and MENA refugees. To get an initial impression of similarities and contrasts between the two main types of refugee-representations in the data, I started by running a word frequency query in NVivo.[19] The ten words used most frequently in the articles that feature representations of refugees from Ukraine in my data sample are 'Ukraine', 'Russia', 'refugees', 'people', 'person', 'region', the number 'thousand', 'here', 'citizens' and 'Ukrainian'.[20] In contrast, the words most frequent in articles representing MENA refugees are 'refugees', 'Syria', 'Russia', 'USA', 'EU', 'countries', the number 'thousand', 'ISIS', 'migrants' and 'UN'.

[19] Word frequency query in NVivo lists the most frequently occurring words in the data. In order to carry out this analysis I separated Ukraine-articles and MENA-articles in two folders and ran a query in each folder. I excluded personal pronouns from the query because they appear often, but it is difficult to determine what their implications are for the data in this study.
[20] The words are presented in the order of most frequent to least frequent on the list.

Figure 6: Empirical material, January 2014–December 2015 (N=1,146), *Izvestiya* (Iz), *Novaya gazeta* (NG), *Rossiiskaya gazeta* (RG)

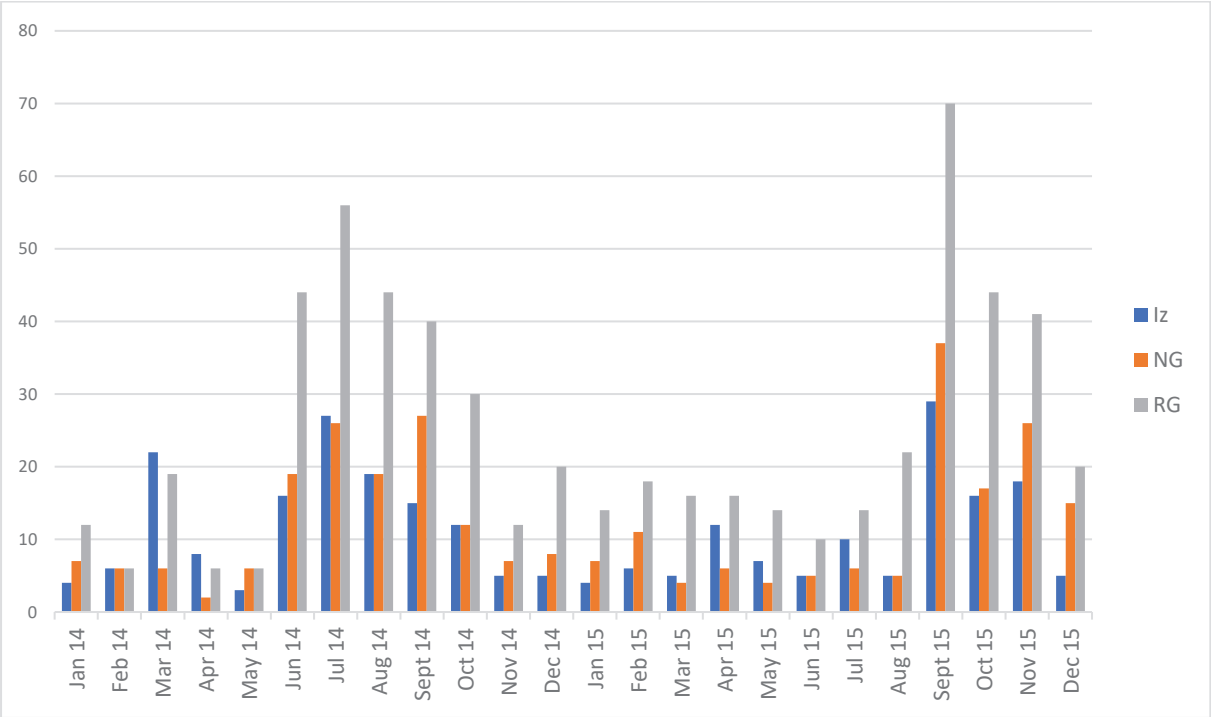


Figure 7: Refugee from Ukraine, MENA refugee and Other

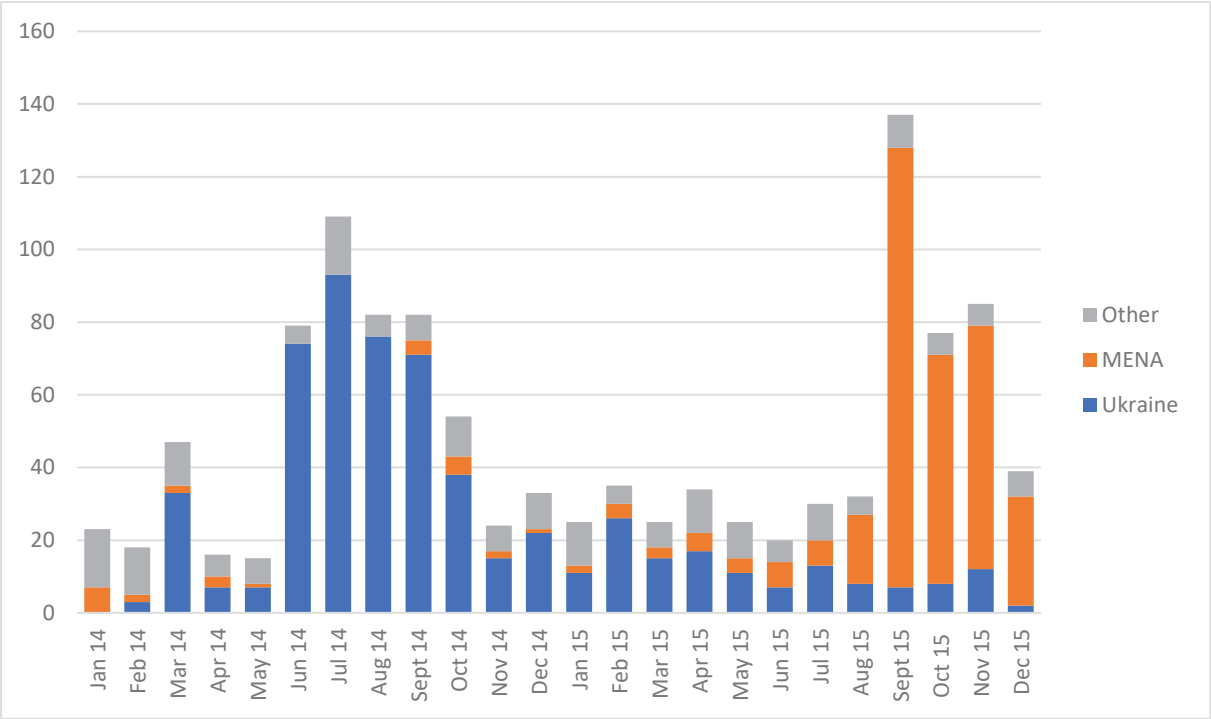


Table 1: Research design in the three articles

	Article I: Compare and Contrast	**Article II: Refugees from Ukraine**	**Article III: MENA refugees**
Research questions	• How were refugees discursively constructed in Russian newspapers in the period 1 January 2014–31 December 2015? • Who are the refugees? • In what discourses do they appear? • What kinds of symbolic boundaries are maintained by these representations?	• How was the subject position of 'refugee from Ukraine' constructed in the narratives that circulated in Russian newspapers in the period 1 June–30 September 2014? • What were the narratives? • Who were the narrators? • How were refugees positioned? • What attitudes towards refugees from Ukraine were cultivated in the Russian media in summer and early autumn 2014?	• How was the 2015 'refugee crisis' represented in Russian newspapers in the period 1 January–31 December 2015? • What discourses did elites articulate in the context of the 'refugee crisis'? • What were the interrelations between the positioning of refugees, Russia, and the West? • How was Russia's identity constructed in these texts?
Data	All texts that used the word 'refugee' in the period, 2014–2015 1,146 texts: • 264 from *Izvestiya* • 288 from *Novaya gazeta* • 594 from *Rossiiskaya gazeta*	All texts mentioning refugees from Ukraine, from 1 June–30 September 2014. 314 texts: • 70 from *Izvestiya* • 74 from *Novaya gazeta* • 171 from *Rossiiskaya gazeta*	Opinion pieces and interview articles that mentioned MENA refugees, 1 January–31 December 2015. 127 texts: • 43 from *Izvestiya* • 24 from *Novaya gazeta* • 60 from *Rossiiskaya gazeta*
Analytical approach	Discourse-theoretical approach to discourse analysis Focus on: • Discourses • The subject position 'refugee' • Symbolic boundaries	Analysis of narratives Focus on: • The plot and the characters • The subject position 'refugee' • The morals of the narratives • The narrators	Discourse-theoretical approach to discourse analysis Focus on • Discourses • The subject position 'refugee' • Identity construction • Myth

From this I conclude that the similarities between the two core types of representations are that they are concerned with geographical locations (e.g., Ukraine, Syria and Russia), subject positions (e.g., refugees, migrants and citizens), and numbers (in particular the number 'thousand'). The biggest contrast between the two, judging by word frequency, is that representations of refugees from Ukraine are about people (e.g., people, person, citizen), while articles that mention MENA refugees take a macro view in the context of geopolitics and international relations (e.g., UN, EU, USA). Importantly, one of the ten most frequent words in texts featuring MENA refugees proved to be ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), which implies that MENA refugees are often mentioned in articles that discuss security-related issues. Although one obviously cannot base a discourse analysis on word frequency alone, it does provide an idea about the general content of the empirical material.

An interesting point about the refugee representations in my data which, due to space constraints, was not explored in any of the three research articles has to do with *voice*. Do *Izvestiya*, *Rossiiskaya gazeta* or *Novaya gazeta* give a voice to the refugees? Or is someone else speaking on their behalf? The answer can indicate whether the newspapers represent refugees as actors and subjects, or whether refugees are spoken for and acted for by others. This is a relevant issue, as other studies have found that voices of asylum-seekers and refugees are largely overlooked in newspaper coverage of them (e.g., Lueck et al. 2015), and in discourse articulated by humanitarian agencies (Rajaram 2002). Moreover, studies of mediated immigration debates in general have also noted that the voices of immigrants are silenced in the media (see Thorbjørnsrud & Figenschou 2016: 338).

My empirical material indicates similar tendencies in Russia. Of the total number of articles featuring refugees from Ukraine, only 13% cite the refugees themselves (6% in *Izvestiya,* 24% in *Novaya gazeta* and 11% in *Rossiiskaya gazeta*). Only 5% of all articles about refugees from the Middle East and North Africa include refugee quotes (1% in *Izvestiya,* 20% in *Novaya gazeta* and 4% in *Rossiiskaya gazeta*). In other words, although *Novaya gazeta* stands out from the other two newspapers and was found to include refugee voices in almost a quarter of their text, the overall impression from my data is that not much space was offered to let the refugees themselves express their viewpoints. It was others – journalists, experts, volunteers, public officials, cultural elites etc. – who positioned them.

Table 1 shows the research design in the three articles that form the core of this dissertation. Together, answers to the research questions in the three articles contribute to answering the overarching research question in this study: how 'refugees' were socially constructed in Russian newspapers in 2014–2015. In Articles I and III, I explore the social construction of the meaning of 'refugee' through discourse analysis; in Article II, I analyse such social constructions in narratives.

In Article I all 1,146 texts in the data sample form part of the analysis. The focus of analysis is on the combination of discourses, subject positions, and symbolic boundaries. The strength of this design is that I am able to identify some dominant hegemonic refugee-representations in my data sample. On the other hand, presenting the main trends in the material across the three data sources did not leave much space for discussion of nuances and alternative representations. As a result, Article I does not include an analysis of similarities and differences between *Izvestiya, Novaya gazeta* and *Rossiiskaya gazeta*.

In Article II, I analyse narratives where refugees from Ukraine are in one or another way part of the plot, either as protagonists or as subsidiary characters. The data sample consists of 314 texts published between 1 June and 30 September 2014. The smaller size of data sample enabled me to highlight some differences between the narratives in the three newspapers and give a detailed account of plotlines and characters. One limitation of this study is that, by choosing to focus on the first four months after the arrival of the large number of refugees from Ukraine to Russia, I could not analyse whether and how narratives about these refugees changed over time.

Finally, in Article III, I further limit the data sample to 127 texts, and analyse opinion pieces and interview articles mentioning refugees from the Middle East and North Africa in 2015. The focus of the analysis is on the combination of discourses, subject positions and myths, and how these concepts are part of the construction of identity and difference. The focus on elite discourse and texts with a clear author voice makes it possible to explore whose opinion is being disseminated through the three newspapers. Furthermore, the relatively small data sample enabled me to give a detailed account of the differences between the discourses in the three newspapers. Of the three articles, this illustrates the counter-discourse in *Novaya gazeta* in greatest detail. One limitation of this study is that by choosing to limit the data to opinion pieces and interview articles, I exclude all texts that have quotes from refugees from my data sample. Although, as noted, the number of such texts is limited, it could have been interesting to include

the position of MENA refugees in the analysis and reflect upon how journalists use quotes from refugees in their articles.

Here, I have briefly discussed the advantages and limitations of the research designs in the three articles that are part of this dissertation. In the following chapter I present more detailed summaries of these articles.

5. Summaries of the articles

5.1 Article I: Compare and Contrast

In 'Brothers and barbarians: Discursive constructions of "refugees" in Russian media' (published in *Acta Sociologica*) I map the representations of refugees in *Izvestiya*, *Novaya gazeta* and *Rossiiskaya gazeta* in the period between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2015. I ask who the refugees are, in what discourses they appear and what kinds of symbolic boundaries these representations maintain. I find two main discourse contexts that feature the subject position 'refugee' – the war in Ukraine and the 'refugee crisis' in Europe – and two main refugee representations – 'refugee from Ukraine' and 'MENA refugee'. In-depth examination of the data reveals four main discourses: humanitarian, security, integration and nationalist. Analysis of subject positions in these four discourses shows contrasting representations of refugees from Ukraine and MENA refugees.

Both refugees from Ukraine and refugees from the Middle East and North Africa are part of a *humanitarian discourse,* and are represented as victims fleeing from death, destruction, and war. The *security discourse*, however, predominantly features MENA refugees. Articles articulating this discourse tend to position MENA refugees as 'barbarians', 'illegals' and 'terrorists'. In other words, as part of a security discourse, refugees are positioned as *threats*. In contrast, refugees from Ukraine emerge as predominantly part of an *integration* discourse, a discourse about a range of measures concerning the conditions of immigrants after immigration. Across the three newspapers, this integration discourse concerns housing, employment, and education for the refugees in Russia. The subject positions available for refugees from Ukraine

are ‘employee’, ‘colleague’, ‘student’ and ‘pupil’. Finally, a nationalist discourse focuses on ‘cultural proximity’ of the refugees. MENA refugees are represented as different from Russians and Europeans, on the basis of their appearance, culture and values. In some articles, MENA refugees are seen as representing an altogether different civilization, whereas the nationalist discourse positions refugees from Ukraine as similar to, indeed sometimes the same as, Russians – Russians and Ukrainians are brothers; Ukraine is a fraternal country.

Combining the concepts of subject position and symbolic boundaries is useful to highlight the relational aspect of subject positioning. When one positions others, one is also positioning oneself. Russians are from a different ‘civilization’ than the MENA refugees, but are regarded as part of the same ‘ethnocultural group’ as refugees from Ukraine. Thus, my findings indicate that the nationalist discourse merges with the security, humanitarian, and integration discourses, creating contrasting symbolic boundaries between MENA refugees and Russians, and refugees from Ukraine and Russians. Articles expressing a nationalist discourse construct and maintain a symbolic boundary between MENA refugees and Russians, by representing the refugees as alien and different, and as not belonging in Europe. The nationalist discourse merges with the security discourse to produce a dominant view of MENA refugees as a threat, represented as *dangerous* because they are *different*. In contrast, refugees from Ukraine and Russian people are symbolically united, represented as culturally and ethnically close – discursively blurring and even erasing the symbolic boundary between them. This social construction of ‘refugee’ legitimizes the presence of refugees from Ukraine in Russia, explaining their position as part of integration discourse.

This shows a discursive mechanism through which refugees are classified as ‘preferred’ or ‘non-preferred’ migrants on the basis, not of their situation, but of their ethnic and cultural proximity to Russians. The three Russian newspapers examined construct refugees from Ukraine as part of ‘us’, and represent provision of shelter and integration of these refugees as a responsibility of Russia. By contrast, MENA refugees are ‘others’. The responsibility for receiving them and attending to their needs rests with Europe and has little to do with Russia.

5.2 Article II: Refugees from Ukraine

In '"Suitcase – shelling – Russia": narratives about refugees from Ukraine in Russian media' (published in *East European Politics*), I examine the meaning-making process surrounding the arrival of refugees from Ukraine in Russia in the summer and early autumn of 2014 through an analysis of narratives in *Izvestiya, Novaya gazeta* and *Rossiiskaya gazeta.* The overarching research question here is: How was the subject position of 'refugee from Ukraine' constructed in the narratives that circulated in Russian newspapers in the period 1 June–30 September 2014? To answer this, I identify the narratives in the data, their plots, and characters. I look for the protagonists, antagonists and the conflict between them. I investigate how refugees from Ukraine are positioned in these narratives – whether they are protagonists, antagonists or other characters. Further, I discuss the underlying moral of these narratives and the attitudes towards refugees, as cultivated by three major Russian newspapers in 2014.

I find three main thematic groups of narratives in the data – narratives about war, narratives about refugee reception and aid, and narratives about international relations. The most dominant plotline in the material, appearing in 50% of the articles in *Izvestiya*, 49% in *Rossiiskaya gazeta* and 30% in *Novaya gazeta,* is about reception and aid. All three newspapers published numerous stories about the large numbers of refugees arriving in Russia and the help they received there. The other two themes are unequally distributed in the data: the government-critical *Novaya gazeta* has most stories about war (38%, against 16% in *Izvestiya* and 28% in *Rossiiskaya gazeta*), whereas the pro-governmental *Izvestiya* has the highest percentage of grand narratives about Russia in international relations (28% in *Izvestiya*, 11% in *Novaya gazeta*, 11% in *Rossiiskaya gazeta*). Thus, readers of these newspapers are exposed to different interpretations of the reasons for the refugee influx. Detailed reportages from Donbas, interviews with refugees in temporary refugee accommodation centres in Rostov-on-Don and expert opinions on the Western origins of the conflict in Ukraine are potential sources of competing narratives.

Narratives about war crystalize and legitimize the subject position of the refugee as a victim of war, an individual in need of help and deserving it. In these narratives, refugees are often the protagonists: the war itself is the antagonist. The moral is that the refugees have legitimate reasons for relocating to Russia: they are fleeing from death and destruction, and they long for a life in peace. In the *narratives about refugee reception and aid,* the main protagonists are the aid providers whose goal is to help the refugees from Ukraine. In these stories, the aid providers

manage to overcome the chaos created by the refugee influx, the lack of resources, and the underdeveloped refugee reception system. Here refugees are positioned as passive recipients of aid. Finally, of the three themes, the *narratives about international relations* present the clearest symbolic opposition between Good and Evil. In these narratives, as articulated in the two pro-government newspapers in my data, the West supports regime change in Ukraine and Ukrainian aggression in Donbas, which has led to the stream of refugees to Russia. In this story plotline, Russia is the protagonist, and the West and Ukraine are the antagonists – 'refugee' is used as a signifier of violent conflict, a faceless and voiceless victim.

Taken together, all three thematic groups of narratives articulate the subject position 'refugee from Ukraine' as a victim and recipient of aid. Furthermore, these narratives serve as arguments in support of receiving refugees from Ukraine in Russia and allocating funds to them. The accounts of war, death and destruction legitimize their presence in Russia. Narratives about refugee reception and aid position the Russians as aid providers: the message in such narratives is that it is morally correct to help the refugees. Finally, stories focusing on international relations in the pro-government newspapers assign blame for the war in Ukraine to 'others'. It is the West who is to blame, forcing people from Donbas to leave their homes and flee to Russia.

5.3 Article III: MENA refugees

In the final article, '"Victims of democracy" or "enemies at the gates?" Russian discourses on the European "refugee crisis"' (forthcoming in *Nationalities Papers*), I ask how the 2015 'refugee crisis' was represented in Russian newspapers in the period 1 January–31 December 2015. What discourses did elites articulate in the context of the 'refugee crisis'? What were the interrelations between the positioning of refugees, Russia, and the West? How was Russia's identity constructed? Using discourse theory, I analyse representations of refugees, Russia, and the West in opinion pieces and interview articles in *Izvestiya*, *Rossiiskaya gazeta* and *Novaya gazeta*. I find three main discourses that have shaped the debate on the European 'refugee crisis' in Russian newspapers: the security discourse, the humanitarian discourse and the geopolitical discourse.

Other studies of European and US media representations of the 2015 'refugee crisis' have also identified security and humanitarian discourse, whereas the geopolitical discourse appears particular to the Russian media. My study has unpacked a refugee representation not previously

noted in research on the 2015 European 'refugee crisis' – the refugee as a victim of the interventionism and democratization processes promoted by the West in the Middle East and North Africa.

In the *security discourse* (most common in *Rossiiskaya gazeta* and *Izvestiya*), the refugees are represented as a threat to Europe and a danger against which Europeans must protect themselves – either because the number of refugees arriving is overwhelming or because they might prove to be terrorists. This discourse supports a myth that sees Europe as weak and threatened, with the EU on the verge of disintegration due to internal disagreements over refugee policy. However, opinion pieces and interviews in *Rossiiskaya gazeta* and *Izvestiya* argue that the 'refugee crisis' can be solved through Russian intervention in Syria. Here Russia is positioned as a reliable partner to Europe, the West and the Assad regime in Syria. Thus, elite voices articulate the myth of Russia as a hero that can save Europe by stopping the war in Syria, bringing an end to the refugee influx. Moreover, this myth legitimizes Russian military intervention in Syria by representing it as part of the global fight against terrorism.

In contrast to the image of refugees as a threat and Europe as threatened, the *humanitarian discourse* represents the refugees as victims of a violent conflict or war seeking asylum in Europe (most common in *Rossiiskaya gazeta* and *Novaya gazeta*). Some argue that Europe and the EU have the capacity to receive these refugees; others claim that many European countries lack the will to do so. However, few contributions in this data sample concern refugees from the Middle East and North Africa coming to Russia. Overall, I find a naturalized view of refugee reception as a 'European issue': the crisis is often referred to as 'the European refugee (or migrant) crisis', in Russia and internationally. This crisis is generally not viewed as a challenge that Russia is meant to deal with domestically. Such representations are part of the social construction of Russian identity as positioned in contrast to Europe.

Also, the *geopolitical discourse* sees the refugee as victim, not merely the victim of conflict or war, but as the victim of interventionism and democratization process in the Middle East and North Africa promoted by the West (only in *Izvestiya and Rossiiskaya gazeta*). This discourse focuses on the origin of the crisis and the role of the West, headed by the USA, in creating and supporting the revolutions that have forced the refugees to leave their homes. In this discourse the 'refugee crisis' is seen as a rightful 'punishment' for Europe for meddling in the internal affairs of other countries, and it becomes the responsibility of the West to give asylum to these

refugees. There are clear contrasts among the three newspapers in their articulation of geopolitical discourse. Whereas the subject position 'refugee' as 'a victim of interventionism and democratization' is articulated in pro-government *Izvestiya* and the government's own *Rossiiskaya gazeta,* it does not appear in my data from the opposition-oriented *Novaya gazeta.* Furthermore, the contributions in *Izvestiya* and *Rossiiskaya gazeta* generally re-articulated the myth of the West as Russia's Russophobic 'Other', and of Russia as a great and strategic power now claiming its rightful place in the global order. In contrast, those writing in *Novaya gazeta* articulate a rival geopolitical discourse, and position Russia as part of Europe and Western civilization. They argue that Russia and Europe should work together to find a common solution to the 'refugee crisis'.

In sum, in this article I show how one word – 'refugee' – can contribute to unpacking a complex set of ideas and contested mythical representations of Russia, Europe and the West that circulate in Russian society. Representations of the subject position 'refugee' and some of the discourses of which they are part serve to (re)produce the centuries-old myth of the antagonistic relationship between Russia and the West. However, this mythical construct is challenged by contributors to *Novaya gazeta*, which shows how a range of representations of 'Russia' are part of the ongoing discussion of Russia's identity vis-à-vis Europe and the West.

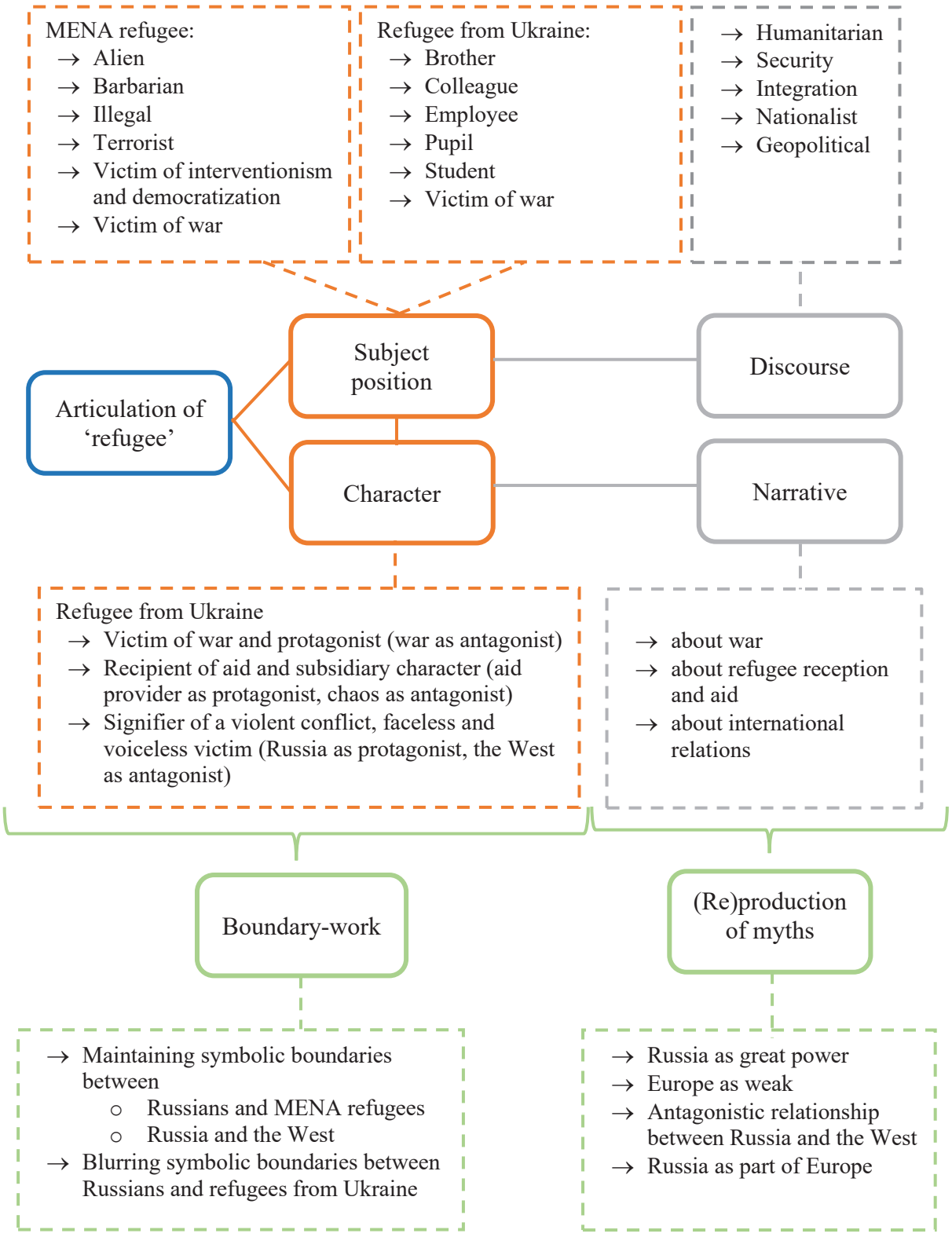
6. Concluding discussion

6.1 'Refugee': an empty signifier

In this dissertation I have introduced a novel conceptual framework that can be used to analyse the social construction of meaning of any identity. This framework combines concepts of subject positions, social boundaries, discourse, narrative and myth. I view knowledge as constructed through interactions between people situated in historical and cultural contexts. My aim has been to unpack the social construction of 'refugee' in Russian newspapers by viewing the refugee as a subject position represented in a discourse or narrative structure. Indeed, it has been fascinating to map how one word, 'refugee', can lead to a wide range of culturally specific meanings. Depending on the context, the narrative, or the discourse, the three Russian newspapers selected for examination represent a refugee as an 'alien', 'barbarian', 'brother', 'colleague', 'employee', 'an illegal', 'pupil', 'student', 'terrorist', 'victim of interventionism and democratization' or 'victim of war'.

In Figure 8 I have incorporated key findings (highlighted in dotted-line boxes) into the conceptual framework presented in Figure 5 in Chapter 3. The figure illustrates the connection between theoretical concepts and empirical findings in the dissertation. It has been useful to analyse 'refugee' as an empty signifier, as that methodological position enabled me to be open to the potential of all kinds of meaning attributions in the empirical material.

Figure 8: The social construction of ‘refugee’ in Russian newspapers



Although some of my findings may not be surprising, I feel confident that, through careful reading of all the articles in the data sample, I have identified all representations of 'refugee' present in my empirical material. Here, it should be noted that, because all research involves delimitation and simplification of the data, not all representations of 'refugee' found in the newspapers are discussed in the three journal articles presented here. For example, Figure 8 does not show narratives about MENA refugees – not because there were no such narratives in the newspapers examined, but because these narratives were not part of my analysis.

Research is also a process. In these three articles, I have not written about refugees from Ukraine represented as victims of Western interventionism – simply because the articulation of 'refugee' as 'victim of interventionism and democratization' did not become apparent to me until when I was working on Article III, and analysing representations of MENA refugees. At that point, Article I and II, where I explore the representations of refugees from Ukraine, had already been published. However, in retrospect, I see that, in the narrative about international relations, I could have labelled the representation of refugees from Ukraine 'victims of Western interventionism'. The plotline in that narrative constructs the West as the antagonist to Russia's protagonist, thus positioning the refugee as the victim of actions conducted by the West.

Figure 8 shows how the findings in the three articles in this dissertation can be integrated into one whole. For example, the writer of a newspaper story may articulate the subject position 'refugee' as, say, Iryna from Donbas, who has been accepted as a student in a Russian university through a program specifically designed for refugees from Ukraine. Here Iryna is positioned as student in an integration discourse. Moreover, Iryna can be integrated rapidly because she is already familiar with Russian culture and language. This representation of Iryna as culturally similar to Russians blurs the symbolic boundary between refugees from Ukraine and Russians. Further, as part of the special student program, Iryna is positioned as the recipient of aid in a narrative about refugee reception. In addition, in a by-line to this story, the writer notes that the West supports Ukrainian aggression in Donbas, and this is the reason why Iryna had to flee from Ukraine in the first place. A story about refugee reception placed in a discourse about integration can thus also articulate the myth about the West as an antagonist and Russia as the morally good provider of aid. It is through such interconnections between cultural representations of people, abstract concepts, identities and institutions that the social construction of meaning takes place.

6.2 Future research

There is much literature on representations of refugees and the 'refugee crisis' in international media; however, not much has been written on such representations in Russian media, especially not in English. This dissertation contributes towards filling the knowledge gap on this topic. As no research design can capture all aspects of a social phenomenon, more studies are needed to explore the social construction of 'refugees' in Russia from other angles – for example, tracing developments in this field over time and in other Russian media outlets. It is also important to investigate, through qualitative interviews, how Russian people speak about refugees, and to trace opinion changes over time through survey analysis.

One limitation of this study is that I have not analysed the illustrations that accompanied the written texts in the newspapers. There can be no doubt that images and illustrations presented in the media are important elements in the social construction of meaning. For example, in September 2015 the photograph of a dead little boy, the two-year-old Alan Kurdi, of Kurdish/Syrian origin, became a symbol for the suffering of refugees who were trying to get to Europe crossing the Aegean Sea. The spread of the image of Alan Kurdi in the media, the emotional responses to this image and the resultant political impact are already the subject of much research (see, e.g., Adler-Nissen et al. 2020; Ibrahim 2018; Olesen 2018; Sohlberg et al. 2019). This image was also disseminated in Russian newspapers and discussed in my data sample. Thus, the visual rhetoric of refugee-photos in Russian media is also an important topic for future research.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent refugee crisis open up important new research agendas. Up until 24 February 2022, there had not been much research interest in refugees from Ukraine to other countries than Russia; now there can be no doubt that the current refugee crisis will be an important topic for future research. As this dissertation is one of very few studies of Russian media representations of refugees from Ukraine pre-2022, it can serve as a starting point, contributing valuable insights for future research on refugees from Ukraine in general, and their representation in the media in particular.

As mentioned in the introduction, the differential treatment of refugees from Ukraine and other refugees in Europe is already a topic of discussion in the international media. Article I in this dissertation is the first ever to compare newspaper representations of MENA refugees and refugees from Ukraine systematically, and show how nationalist discourse plays a role in the

way these refugees have been constructed in contrasting ways. This finding is of relevance for future research on refugees in Europe and elsewhere. In March 2022, Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, spoke out against 'the "ugly reality" that some refugees fleeing across the Ukraine border, and Third Country Nationals, have been subjected to racism and discrimination' (UNHCR 2022b). Recently the EU has invoked a temporary protection directive to help people fleeing from Ukraine (European Commission 2022); back in 2015 some EU countries were talking about erecting fences (see, e.g., Rheindorf & Wodak 2018). The social construction of refugees varies with context. It is essential to continue documenting how contextual factors influence refugee representations, and to discuss how these constructions can affect the daily lives of those people who occupy the subject position 'refugee'. In the words of High Commissioner Grandi (UNHCR 2022b), 'we need to ensure that global responsibility sharing is strengthened for all refugees, no matter where they come from'.

Recently, there have also been some crucial developments in Russian discourse that call for further research. Noting the narratives about the 'Nazi problem' in Ukraine and the need for Russia to 'denazify' Ukraine that currently circulate among Russian politicians, media and society, I cannot help wondering about the changes in Russian discourse and the representations of Ukrainians as brothers. There are still refugees from South-East Ukraine coming to Russia. How will Russian society accept them? I assume there must have been a change in the drawing of the symbolic boundaries between refugees from Ukraine and Russians now that 'Nazism' has entered the discourse. New research is needed to explore how such symbolic boundaries are being redrawn in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

6.3 Turning history into nature?

The social construction of the world has implications for social action, as one social reality is naturalized rather than another (Dunn & Neumann 2016). In this dissertation I have shown how Russian newspapers articulate a position that makes supporting and accommodating refugees from Ukraine a Russian responsibility, whereas MENA refugees are seen as the responsibility of Europe. There were a few articles about MENA refugees in Russia in the data set (mostly in *Novaya gazeta*); however, the issue of reception of MENA refugees in Russia was not debated. Thus, my findings support those of Kalsaas (2017), who found that Russian news discourse on refugees is characterized by silence regarding refugees on Russian territory.

According to refugee reception statistics there are relatively few refugees from other places than Ukraine in Russia. By mid-2017, Russia was hosting 185,491 temporary asylum holders from Ukraine and 2,294 temporary asylum holders from other countries (UNHCR 2018: 1–2). There are many factors that affect people's choice of refugee route and destination country, and based on my data, it is not possible for me to make any claims about why MENA refugees do not go to Russia. However, the lack of discussion of reception of MENA refugees in Russian newspapers says something about the social construction of the meaning of the institution of asylum and of asylum seekers who are to be considered as legitimate and belonging in Russia. Based on my findings, it does seem reasonable to assume that the 'social reality' currently naturalized in Russia is one where Russia does not receive any signific amounts of refugees from other countries than Ukraine.

According to discourse theory, meaning can never be totally fixed (Laclau & Mouffe 2014). Although discourses represent some versions of social reality as natural and others as unthinkable, there is always a possibility of change. This change may come about as a result of antagonistic representations and discursive struggles.

In this dissertation I have examined some of the struggles over the meaning of 'refugee' between the Russian pro-governmental newspapers *Izvestiya* and *Rossiiskaya gazeta* and government-critical *Novaya gazeta.* The latter clearly accorded more space to the voices of refugees, humanitarian discourse and narratives about the war in Ukraine. It also challenged the official construct of the West as Russia's Other, claiming that Russia is part of Europe and the West, and criticising Russia's domestic and foreign policy and refugee reception system. *Novaya gazeta* and other critical media outlets have been important sources of antagonisms in Russian discourse. The fact that these media outlets are now silenced in Russia is a worrying indicator of the future development of Russian society.

My findings concerning the pro-government *Izvestiya* and the official daily newspaper of the government *Rossiiskaya gazeta* support the trends identified by other researchers (e.g., Braghiroli & Makarychev 2018; Pipiya 2016; Simon 2018). I find that a significant share of newspaper texts about the 'refugee crisis' in Europe and the (pre-2022) war in Ukraine also concern Russia's relationship with Europe and the West. In newspaper texts about refugees, the 'collective West' is a significant Other for Russia. I have found representations of Europe as weak, in contrast to representations of Russia as strong. The narrative about the West as

‘standing behind’ the war in Ukraine depicts Ukraine as a pawn in a power game played by ‘our European neighbours and transatlantic partners’ (Naryshkin 2014) – whereas Russia is positioned as peace-builder and hero.

Of course, my findings are a snapshot of Russian meaning production at a particular time in history. The representations I have found will develop and change over time – they already have. Since I started writing, relations between Russia and the West have deteriorated further. However, if Neumann’s (2016, 2017) analysis and expectations about the cyclical pattern in Russia’s debate about Europe still hold true, at some stage the pendulum is certain to swing the other way.

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Appendix 1: Empirical material

Izvestiya (Iz), *Novaya gazeta* (NG) *Rossiiskaya gazeta* (RG), in chronological order, with article titles in Cyrillic

2014

RG (9 January) Канцлер не железный
Iz (13 January) Тбилиси ищет помощи Берлина в выстраивании отношений с Москвой
RG (13 January) На штурм Берлина
Iz (14 January) Ариэль Шарон как олицетворение израильской мечты и трагедии
NG (15 January) Прощание длиной в восемь лет
RG (15 January) Приказ Министерства труда и социальной защиты Российской Федерации от 18 ноября 2013 г. N 682н г. Москва "Об утверждении профессионального стандарта "Психолог в социальной сфере""
RG (16 January) Бандитам помогут всем миром?
RG (16 January) Сказали как отрезали
RG (16 January) Бонус на беженцах
NG (20 January) Без стыда
NG (20 January) Пограничное сознание
RG (22 January) Команда: в укрытие!
RG (23January) Африканцы в Сибири
RG (23January) Ленинградцы
RG (24 January) Приказ Министерства финансов Российской Федерации (Минфин России) от 12 ноября 2013 г. N 107н г. Москва "Об утверждении Правил указания информации в реквизитах распоряжений о переводе денежных средств в уплату платежей в бюджетную систему Российской Федерации"
RG (24 January) Внук трех генералов
NG (24 January) Вид с метромоста
NG (27 January) Европа – Россия: Сумерки
RG (28 January) Семья – это наше все!
Iz (28 January) Сено-солома
Iz (29 January) ‘Пишу кандидатскую диссертацию по педагогике’
NG (31 January) ‘Мы скрываемся’
NG (31 January) Афиша
RG (4 February) Лица сдавали в багаж
Iz (4 February) Грузия возвращает миссию ОБСЕ
RG (7 February) Некуда бежать
NG (10 February) ‘Меня скоро убьют...’
NG (12 February) Министр изменил ‘ромовым бабам’
NG (12 February) Враг государства
RG (13 February) Все решают деньги и профессия
RG (14 February) Приказ Министерства образования и науки Российской Федерации (Минобрнауки России) от 25 декабря 2013 г. N 1394 г. Москва ‘Об утверждении Порядка проведения государственной итоговой аттестации по образовательным программам основного общего образования’
RG (14 February) Приказ Министерства образования и науки Российской Федерации (Минобрнауки России) от 26 декабря 2013 г. N 1400 г. Москва ‘Об утверждении Порядка проведения государственной итоговой аттестации по образовательным программам среднего общего образования’
Iz (14 February) Тбилиси вырабатывает предложения к встрече с российским президентом
Iz (14 February) Сирийские беженцы выпили всю воду в Иордании
NG (17 February) Напрасные слова
Iz (18 February) Угонщику самолета не дадут политубежище в Швейцарии

2014

RG (19 February) Приказ Федеральной миграционной службы (ФМС России) от 26 декабря 2013 г. N 700 г. Москва "Об утверждении Порядка подачи заявления о несогласии на выезд за пределы территории Российской Федерации не достигшего возраста восемнадцати лет члена семьи лица, признанного беженцем"
NG (19 February) Generation взрослеет
NG (26 February) Обострение русского вопроса
Iz (27 February) Незалежный Крым
Iz (28 February) Аватары русского национализма
Iz (3 March) Регионы готовы принять беженцев
Iz (3 March) Взвешенно и жестко
Iz (3 March) ‘Ярошей скоро не станет, а нам жить в мире и согласии’
Iz (3 March) Когда срывают компромисс
RG (3 March) Когда приходит черная беда
Iz (4 March) И то, что было нами завоевано, мы никогда врагу не отдадим
Iz (4 March) Силовики взяли беженцев под особый контроль
Iz (4 March) Жители регионов вышли поддержать Крым
Iz (4 March) Совет Федерации обратится к губернаторам за помощью Украине
RG (5 March) Крымская ночь – тишина под охраной
RG (5 March) У края России
RG (5 March) ‘Поверьте, это по-настоящему страшно’
Iz (5 March) Казаков привлекли для патрулирования границы
Iz (5 March) Крымчанам не терпится самоопределиться
NG (5 March) Правда и вымысел в сообщениях с украинского фронта
Iz (6 March) ‘Великобритания хочет лишить Россию права выступать в ПАСЕ’
Iz (6 March) Ливия реабилитирует королевскую семью
RG (6 March) Граница открыта
RG (6 March) Крымская весна
RG (7 March) Главное – участие
RG (6 March) Бег
RG (7 March) Без высокомерия
RG (7 March) Кто поможет беженцу
Iz (11 March) Русские своих не бросают
Iz (11 March) Москвичи готовы поделиться с крымчанами деньгами и кровью
Iz (11 March) Скр расследует дела об угрозах губернаторам
RG (13 March) Кто на замену
Iz (13 March) До 25 мая украинцам упростят получение убежища
RG (13 March) Спасительный Гудини
NG (17 March) Здравствуй, Игорь!
NG (17 March) Киевская грусть
Iz (17 March) Нарушения прав человека необходимо расследовать
Iz (17 March) Режим для беженцев упростят
RG (17 March) Ждут своих коллег
RG (17 March) Добро пожаловать
RG (18 March) Квота по требованию
RG (19 March) Кадриль в ритме лезгинки
Iz (19 March) Москва и область трудоустроят беженцев с Украины
RG (20 March) Это было под Ровно...
RG (25 March) А об Украине подумали?!
Iz (25 March) Украинский сценарий для Эрдогана
Iz (25 March) Перемены на ближневосточном фронте
NG(26 March) Ахтырка
NG (26 March) Готовим ушки…
NG (28 March) Неизвестная блокада
Iz (31 March) Украинцам предоставят временное убежище
RG (31 March) Прорывное десятилетие
Iz (2 April) Музей под открытым небом
Iz (7 April) ‘США, давая оружие, забывают, что плодят этим только смерть и разрушения’
Iz (7 April) Президентские выборы в Сирии не готовы признать 11 стран

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Iz (7 April) Израиль угрожает подать на Махмуда Аббаса в Международный уголовный суд
RG (7 April) Жить стало лучше, но противнее
RG (7 April) Мальчик с пальчик
Iz (14 April) Мы не можем рисковать жизнями заложников
RG (14 April) ‘Тут живет москаль’
RG (15 April) Весеннее обострение
RG (15 April) Колючая свобода
Iz (22 April) Первые украинцы получили статус беженцев
Iz (23 April) ‘Взрослым нужны утешительные сказки и рыцари без страха и упрека’
NG (23 April) Гадание на ‘ромашке’
RG (24 April) Совершенно летние дети
Iz (24 April) Первые три бойца ‘Беркута’ получили российское гражданство
NG (30 April) Империя лицемерия
NG (5 May) Война за статус-кво
NG (5 May) Черный месяц и детские игры
NG (5 May) В Херсоне все свое, украинское
Iz (5 May) Подмосковье подберет вакансии для безработных из Крыма
Iz (5 May) Украинские власти ответят за одесскую трагедию перед ЕСПЧ
RG (7 May) Федеральный закон Российской Федерации от 5 мая 2014 г. N 127-ФЗ "О внесении изменений в статью 13 Федерального закона ‘О правовом положении иностранных граждан в Российской Федерации’
RG (8 May) Родня по крову
RG (14 May) Донбасс! Кузбасс тебя слышит
RG (14 May) Постановление Главного государственного санитарного врача Российской Федерации от 24 февраля 2014 г. N 8 г. Москва ‘Об усилении мероприятий по санитарной охране территории Российской Федерации’
NG (19 May) Как мы с отцом кутили
RG (20 May) Долгая дорога домой
Iz (21 May) Война с картинкой
RG (28 May) Приказ Федерального фонда обязательного медицинского страхования от 28 февраля 2014 г. N 19 г. Москва "Об утверждении формы N 8 ‘Сведения о численности лиц, застрахованных по обязательному медицинскому страхованию’ и порядок ее ведения"
NG (28 May) Папа, смиренный странник
NG (28 May) Погибли при исполнении
RG (2 June) По детям – из гаубиц
NG (2 June) Кличко работает ‘огнетушителем’ Майдана
RG (4 June) Что делать?
RG (4 June) Во вторник о проблемах беженцев
RG (4 June) Спасти Женю Езекяна
Iz (4 June) ‘Нужен гуманитарный коридор с Украины’
NG (4 June) Пошел по партийной линии
RG (5 June) Бег
RG (5 June) Право на паспорт
RG (6 June) Люди напуганы
Iz (6 June) Новая ‘дорога жизни’
Iz (6 June) Российская молодежь поможет беженцам
Iz (6 June) Башар Асад в третий раз стал президентом Сирии
NG (6 June) Кто не желает штампа в паспорте, идет ‘самоходом’
NG (6 June) Заложники конфликта
NG (9 June) ‘Границы больше нет!’
NG (9 June) Дез-инфекция
RG (10 June) Лето без войны
RG (10 June) Исход из Счастья
Iz (10 June) В Славянске отключили мобильную связь
RG (11 June) Встречают по-братски
RG (11 June) Двери не закроем
NG (11 June) Фермы для ‘диких гусей’
NG (11 June) Рамзан Кадыров: ‘все говорят – ла-ла-ла. Я не такой. Я люблю говорить правду’
NG (11 June) Рожай – не хочу
Iz (11 June) Самопровозглашенные
NG (16 June) Дез-инфекция
RG (16 June) Карателі стреляют в беженцев
RG (16 June) Никакой политики
NG (16 June) Хлеб скитальцев

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RG (17 June) Следы ведут на юг
Iz (17 June) ‘Народный фронт’ расширяет гуманитарную деятельность
Iz (17 June) Дипломатический ‘зевок’
RG (18 June) В Багдаде все неспокойно
RG (18 June) Остановить русофобию
NG (18 June) ‘Ваш муж добровольно пошел под обстрел’
NG (18 June) Звонок чужому другу
Iz (19 June) Худой мир вместе с доброй ссорой
Iz (19 June) Украина мешает беженцам обрести Родину
RG (19 June) Без ботаников
RG (19 June) Лицензия на убийство
RG (19 June) Летающие каратели
RG (20 June) Налетайте к поездам
Iz (20 June) Граждане смогут перерегистрировать документы, оформленные за рубежом
RG (20 June) Портфель поправок
RG (20 June) Восточный поток
RG (20 June) Снайперши попали
RG (23 June) Цензуры.net
RG (23 June) 14 шагов Порошенко
RG (23 June) Поддержать историю рублем
RG (23 June) Обвиняются в убийствах
RG (23 June) Пушилин развеял мифы
RG (23 June) Репортаж под страхом смерти
RG (23 June) Прощание на улице Правды
NG (23 June) План ‘дожить и пережить’
RG (24 June) Подальше от границы
RG (24 June) Бегут и летят
RG (24 June) Главное –подальше от хунты
RG (24 June) Взгляд из Донецка
NG (25 June) Гуляй-поле
NG (25 June) ‘Из-под Луганска мы...’
NG (25 June) Никого, кроме нас
RG (25 June) Следите за руками
RG (25 June) Взгляд из Луганска
RG (25 June) На прививку марш
Iz (26 June) Президент занялся гуманитарными вопросами
Iz (26 June) Детей-беженцев отдадут в патронатные семьи
Iz (26 June) ФМС разъясняет беженцам с Украины их права
RG (27 June) Равнение на Суворова
RG (27 June) Переселенцев не бросят
RG (27 June) Коломойский в уголовном деле
Iz (27 June) Думская оппозиция усилит поддержку юго-востока Украины
NG (27 June) Свобода с латышским акцентом
Iz (30 June) Доброволец наемнику не ровня
NG (30 June) Пункт назначения
RG (30 June) ‘Азов’ крови
RG (30 June) С грамотами в Кремль
RG (30 June) Вся правда – до конца
RG (30 June) Язык проглотишь
Iz (1 July) Россия допустит наблюдателей на свои КПП
Iz (1 July) Эдвард Сноуден хочет остаться еще на год
RG (1 July) Снова бегут
RG (1 July) Школа беженца
Iz (1 July) Беженцам предоставят временное жилье
NG (2 July) ‘Защищали Янука от Майдана. Теперь защищаем Майдан от Янука’
NG (2 July) Дез-инфекция–3
RG (3 July) С беженцев денег не берут
RG (3 July) Дмитриев ковчег
RG (3 July) Киев бомбит города
RG (3 July) Рим станет посредником?
Iz (3 July) Русский гамбит
Iz (3 July) В Подмосковье беженцев ждет почти 5 тыс. Вакансий
Iz (4 July) МИД подготовил новое издание ‘Белой книги’
Iz (4 July) Визит на выходные к бабушке
Iz (4 July) Оправдание слабости – непростительно
NG (4 July) ‘Лишь бы у нас не воевали!’
NG (4 July) Юнус-бек Евкуров: ‘Из войны вышли’
NG (4 July) Герои восстания
RG (4 July) Снова перелет?
RG (4 July) ‘Мама, уедем! Тут стреляют’...

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RG (4 July) Киноостров Крым
RG (4 July) 20 000 пишем, 60 000 – в уме
RG (4 July) Стрельба в детей
Iz (7 July) Донецк готовится к обороне
Iz (7 July) Бизнес готов предоставить работу украинским беженцам
NG (7 July) Убежище
NG (7 July) Беженцы мечтают о доме
RG (7 July) 'Рекс' пошел в партизаны
RG (7 July) Приняли как дома
RG (7 July) Неподалеку от города Донецка
RG (7 July) Чемодан – обстрел – Россия
Iz (8 July) МИД представил новое издание 'Белой книги'
Iz (8 July) Для беженцев планируют создать целевую программу
Iz (8 July) В Подмосковье протестируют украинских школьников
RG (9 July) Погостили на войне
RG (9 July) Не верь и не 'пости'
Iz (9 July) Общежития начали бесплатно принимать беженцев
NG (9 July) 'Ошиблися. Они нам обещали... А сами жируют'
NG (9 July) За что?
NG (9 July) К приему не готовы
RG (9 July) Приказ Министерства труда и социальной защиты Российской Федерации от 29 января 2014 г. N 59н г. Москва 'Об утверждении Административного регламента по предоставлению государственной услуги по проведению медико-социальной экспертизы'
RG (10 July) Народные контролеры
RG (10 July) Европа ищет приключений
RG (10 July) Женю научили дышать
Iz (10 July) Украинских беженцев выведут в онлайн
Iz (10 July) Область увеличит квоту на иностранцев ради беженцев
RG (10 July) Письмо из Луганска
RG (11 July) Учения для беженцев
NG (11 July) Когда решили ликвидировать 22 тысячи поляков
Iz (14 July) Депутаты Госдумы сыграют в футбол
NG (14 July) Как ломали Руслана Кутаева. И почему он не сломался
RG (14 July) Каникулы для вуза
RG (14 July) Приход в помощь
RG (14 July) Убойный 'гостинец'
RG (15 July) География беспредела
RG (15 July) Куда бежать?
RG (15 July) Нарисовано слезами
RG (16 July) Приоткрыли кордон
Iz (16 July) На юго-востоке Украины собирают информацию о преступлениях Киева
NG (16 July) Включать сирену не будем: люди испугаются
NG (16 July) И это –не предел?
NG (16 July) Отпетый Крым
RG (17 July) Бронежилет под свадебной фатой
RG (17 July) Уехать от войны
RG (17 July) Две сестры и Украина
RG (17 July) Главное за неделю
RG (17 July) Пять событий недели
RG (17 July) Карманные доходы
RG (17 July) Трасса стала 'дорогой смерти'
RG (17 July) Успешная душа
RG (17 July) Принять и помочь
RG (17 July) Во мне живут семь 'я'
Iz (18 July) Резали по живому
NG (18 July) Откуда прилетел 'град'?
NG (18 July) Атаман академик и князь
NG (18 July) Эгоизм против диктатуры
RG (21 July) Депортации не подлежат
RG (21 July) Сталь вне санкций
Iz (22 July) Совбез выработает меры противостояния информационным атакам
RG (22 July) Взгляд с другой стороны
RG (23 July) С видом на полгода
RG (23 July) Для них начинается новая жизнь
RG (23 July) Коридор помех
NG (23 July) 'Мы – безымянные, мы просто цифры в сводках...'
NG (23 July) Подземная война
Iz (24 July) Жерара Депардье призвали помочь в информационной войне с Западом
Iz (24 July) Отказаться от дворников-гастарбайтеров не получилось

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RG (24 July) Позабытый букет
RG (24 July) Убежавшие от войны
RG (24 July) Пока мир молчит о беде
RG (25 July) Улика из телефона
NG (25 July) Крошки со стола №1
NG (25 July) ‘Украину больше не берут’
NG (25 July) ‘Враждебно-подданные’
NG (25 July) Когда созреет ‘капуста’
Iz (28 July) Из-за притока беженцев квоту на мигрантов увеличат в два раза
Iz (28 July) Символ Русской эскадры вернется в Севастополь
NG (28 July) Крым пока не наш
NG (28 July) Маленькой беженке нужна помощь
RG (28 July) В беде не оставили
RG (28 July) Возраст не помеха
RG (29 July) Министр сказал, как отрезал
RG (29 July) Саакашвили не пришел на допрос
RG (30 July) Нововведения для трудовых мигрантов
Iz (30 July) СПЧ подключится к решению проблем беженцев
Iz (30 July) Маленьких беженцев возьмут в сельские детские сады
RG (31 July) Право на жизнь
Iz (31 July) Новороссия – Новая Россия
RG (1 August) В окопах Большой войны
RG (1 August) Общее горе
Iz (4 August) Экономное гостеприимство
Iz (4 August) Создается Антифашистский антимайданный совет
NG (4 August) Исход (судьбы)
RG (4 August) Война и дети Толстого
Iz (5 August) Православные открывают фонд помощи юго-востоку
RG (5 August) Приказ Министерства здравоохранения Российской Федерации (Минздрав России) от 12 мая 2014 г. N 215н г. Москва ‘Об утверждении перечня документов, удостоверяющих личность (в том числе личность иностранного гражданина или лица без гражданства в Российской Федерации) и позволяющих установить возраст покупателя табачной продукции’
RG (5 August) Доступные школы
Iz (6 August) Беженцы должны получать приют сразу, а гражданство –после проверки
Rossii'skaia gazeta (6 August) Ростовская область. Беженцы
NG (6 August) Внутри себя, внутри страны
NG (6 August) ‘Лучше быть живым в России, чем мертвым героем дома’
NG (6 August) Это война
NG (6 August) Израиль: на войну и обратно
RG (7 August) Они хотят есть
RG (7 August) Между тем
RG (7 August) Мост на Русский остров
RG (7 August) Бегут от бомбежек
RG (7 August) Колокола Сморгони
Iz (7 August) Дезертирам с Украины дадут льготы
RG (8 August) ‘Приму семью с трехнедельным малышом’
NG (8 August) Афиша
Iz (11 August) Власти Ингушетии отказали в жилье добровольным переселенцам
Iz (11 August) Мечта о садах
NG (11 August) Пограничное состояние
RG (11 August) Одесская Хатынь: 100 дней спустя
Iz (12 August) Россию попытаются вывести из-под международной юрисдикции
Iz (12 August) Вузы просят дополнительные места для абитуриентов из Новороссии
RG (12 August) Извлечем уроки, выстоим
Iz (13 August) Беженцам помогут с переездом к родственникам
NG (13 August) Пограничное состояние
RG (13 August) Времена крови
RG (14 August) Война и Мара
RG (14 August) Бег
RG (14 August) Архипастырь на трудные времена
RG (14 August) Парта-палатка

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Iz (14 August) Не лососем единым
Iz (15 August) Интеграция Крыма и Севастополя будет продолжена
RG (15 August) Крым – наш долг
RG (15 August) Принять как своих
NG (15 August) ‘Приднестровский генерал’ Владимир Антюфеев: ‘слабаки! Испугались санкций!.. Где клад, там и сердце’
Iz (18 August) СПЧ создаст портал правовой поддержки беженцев
Iz (18 August) По ту сторону ‘двойного стандарта’
NG (18 August) Андрей Макаревич: ‘Значит, я не один такой идиот’
RG (18 August) Приказ Федеральной миграционной службы (ФМС России) от 4 августа 2014 г. N 469 г. Москва ‘Об утверждении форм документов, применяемых при предоставлении иных межбюджетных трансфертов из федерального бюджета бюджетам субъектов Российской Федерации для оказания адресной финансовой помощи гражданам Украины, имеющим статус беженца или получившим временное убежище на территории Российской Федерации и проживающим в жилых помещениях граждан Российской Федерации, в 2014 году’
RG (18 August) ‘Пишу и плачу’
RG (19 August) Пройдут без документов
RG (19 August) Гоголю и не снилось
RG (19 August) Всем миро'
Iz (20 August) Грабли на ‘Невеселой ферме’
Iz (20 August) Беженцев с Украины проверят на ВИЧ, туберкулез и гепатит
NG (20 August) Пока заряжался телефон
NG (20 August) Жизнь сначала
RG (21 August) Миллион ‘пятачков’
RG (21 August) Спасти от зимы
RG (21 August) Война опустошила полки
NG (22 August) ‘Рёву везде...’
NG (22 August) Рэпер Noize MC: ‘Россияне заскучали по твердой руке генсека’
RG (22 August) Европе не до чужой боли
NG (25 August) Тетради, ранцы, школьная форма
NG (25 August) Смета города берет
RG (25 August) Из первых уст
RG (25 August) Храмовая война
Iz (26 August) Большинство признает события на Украине гражданской войной
RG (26 August) Вас встречает Крым
NG (27 August) Тыл
NG (27 August) ‘Друзья хунты’ идут в наступление
RG (27 August) Привыкнуть к этому нельзя
RG (27 August) Ничего героического – просто война..
RG (28 August) ‘Подарите робота’
RG (28 August) Будут в форме
RG (28 August) Детский сад на вырост
RG (28 August) День шахтера с актуальными мыслями
Iz (28 August) Проблему дефицита сельских врачей решат беженцы с Украины
RG (28 August) Пошли на сделку
RG (28 August) Бегущие от войны
RG (28 August) ‘Они другие русские’
RG (28 August) Четыре пары украинских беженцев сыграли свадьбы в Астрахани
Iz (29 August) Беженцев лишат пособий при трехкратном отказе от работы
NG (29 August) Кризис не перевалил через пик
RG (29 August) Приняли как дома
NG (1 September) Украинцы возвращаются на Донбасс
NG (1 September) Украина не выдаст
RG (1 September) Наша Маша
Iz (1 September) На переселение беженцев выделят полмиллиарда
RG (2 September) С Амура с любовью
RG (2 September) В духе Толстых
NG (3 September) Раны на стенах
NG (3 September) Папина дочь
RG (4 September) Стоп-кадр

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RG(4 September) План Путина
RG (4 September) Война –премия –война
RG (4 September) Хьюман Райтс Уотч обвиняет Киев
Iz (4 September) Президент предложил мирный план для Украины
RG (4 September) Украинских беженцев ждут тысячи вакансий
RG (5 September) Конвой ждет
Iz (5 September) Депутаты подготовили законопроект об интернированных
Iz (5 September) ФМС предлагает упростить процедуру проверки беженцев
Iz (5 September) Фотограф, снимавший страх
Iz (5 September) Жулькомхоз
Iz (8 September) Украинские беженцы ищут работу в русской культуре
NG (8 September) Менеджмент мира
NG (8 September) 'Просим не предавать нас'
NG (8 September) Политика здесь не мешает делать добро
RG (8 September) Объектив мужества
RG (9 September) Под своим крылом
RG (9 September) 'Мы знамена не меняем'
RG (9 September) Спешат домой
RG (9 September) Самосуд
RG (10 September) Кто 'повелитель мух'
NG (10 September) Враг не пройдет
NG (10 September) Сами они неместные
NG (10 September) 'Домой? Если на неделе будет спокойно...'
NG (10 September) Ошеломительная тишина
RG (11 September) Как пройти семь шагов к миру
RG (12 September) Самые обсуждаемые региональные документы:
RG (12 September) Помощь не ждет
RG (12 September) Обращенный Достоевским
Iz (12 September) Большевики агрессивного ислама
NG (12 September) Враги сожгли родную хату?
NG (12 September) Наш мир болен
NG (15 September) бараний рок
NG (15 September) Плачьте с нами
NG (15 September) Тамара и Лида вернулись домой
Iz (16 September) Фонд мира посадит украинцев за стол переговоров
RG (16 September) Чрезвычайная помощь
RG (16 September) Найди меня
RG (17 September) Устроились хорошо
NG (17 September) Смотр партийных рядов
Iz (18 September) Президент призвал создавать широкие коалиции в регионах
RG (18 September) Куда податься беспризорным донецким лабрадорам
RG (18 September) Городской романс
RG (18 September) Дети и женщины ищут спасения
RG (18 September) Зимнее бремя
NG (19 September) Ад со всех сторон
NG (19 September) 'Мы, живые и мертвые...'
Iz (22 September) Бары 'ЛНР' и 'ДНР' откроются на соответствующих улицах
NG (22 September) Российские 'мистрали' уйдут с миром
NG(22 September) Ассоль не дождалась
RG (22 September) Мир без стен
RG (22 September) Киев не заметил перемирия
RG (23 September) Дом и хата
RG (23 September) Дух Львова
RG (24 September) Удар приняли первыми
Iz (24 September) Кооператив 'Армагеддон'
NG (24 September) Мы, живые и мертвые...
NG (24 September) 'Под выстрелы можно спать'
RG (25 September) Каждый пятый мигрант – украинец
RG (25 September) Застенчиво молчат
RG (25 September) Зимние квартиры ждут
RG (25 September) Геноцид

2014

RG (25 September) Диагноз для жесткой посадки
RG (25 September) Сказано
NG (26 September) Ковалев. Человек имеет право
NG (26 September) Выхлоп
RG (26 September) Цензуры.net
RG (29 September) Свеча под дождем
Iz (29 September) На Поклонной горе помянули невинно убиенных
Iz (29 September) Сердце тьмы
NG (29 September) Кадыров у Евкурова беженцев увел
NG (29 September) Газовая атака
RG (29 September) Немцы нашли свой 'Гуантанамо'
Iz (30 September) Бездомным доверят кроликов
Iz (1 October) 'Мы работаем как саперы. Одна ошибка – и всё'
RG (1 October) 'Это не туристы'
RG (2 October) Играл на износ
RG (3 October) Справились с потоком
RG (3 October) Против лома
RG (3 October) Судебный риск
RG (3 October) Плата за независимость
RG (3 October) Министр попал в дело
NG (3 October) Миграционная служба отца Николая
Iz (6 October) Соратник Навального скрылся в Англии
NG (6 October) Премия имени Анны Политковской присуждена Виан Дахиль, депутату иракского парламента
RG (6 October) Спортивный прием
RG (7 October) Дом для брата
RG (7 October) Беглый фигурант
Iz (7 October) Гражданская оборона получит новую стратегию
RG (8 October) Наёмник недорогого стоит
NG (8 October) Врозь
RG (8 October) Федеральный закон Российской Федерации от 4 октября 2014 г. N 285-ФЗ 'О внесении изменений в статьи 217 и 224 части второй Налогового кодекса Российской Федерации'
RG (8 October) Просто подарил
RG (9 October) Турция будет ждать
Iz (9 October) Наказание без преступления
RG (9 October) Люди и война
RG (9 October) 'Самое страшное – когда летели бомбы'
RG (9 October) Без цены
NG (13 October) Макаревич не продается
RG (13 October) Цензуры.net
Iz (14 October) СПЧ просит увеличить сроки за коррупционные преступления
Iz (15 October) Андрей Макаревич продолжит зарабатывать на 'Смаке'
RG (15 October) 33 вопроса
Iz (16 October) Беженцы создают свой союз
RG (16 October) Простые вещи
RG (16 October) Стратегический запас карман не тянет
NG (17 October) Президент услышал не всех
RG (17 October) Мир каждому дому
RG (17 October) Фитиль для майдана
Iz (20 October) КПРФ откроет приемные на территории ДНР и ЛНР
RG (20 October) Прав? Да!
NG (20 October) Вербовщики. Они берут на войну даже детей
RG (24 October) Миссия остается
NG (24 October) Отблеск 'свечки'
Iz (27 October) Последняя Рада, или Выборы без Донбасса
NG (27 October) Юнкер и его команда
NG (27 October) Что поменялось в Лизе Глинке из-за этой войны?
NG (27 October) Нервы сдали
RG (28 October) Двери закрываются
NG (29 October) Спикер парламента Новороссии Олег Царев: в рейтинге ненависти на Украине я первый после Путина
NG (29 October) Руслан
Iz (30 October) ЛДПР требует лишить Барака Обаму Нобелевской премии
RG (30 October) Спасение на крыле
RG (30 October) Британцы покинули 'Тритон'

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Iz (31 October) Минтруд обеспечил пенсиями всех беженцев
Iz (31 October) Парламенты ДНР и ЛНР выберут на основании Минских соглашений
RG (31 October) Спасение утопающих дело рук
RG (31 October) Голоса подешевеют
NG (5 November) Тетя Катя
RG (5 November) Выбор сделан
RG (7 November) На Эболу нет креста. Красного
NG (7 November) Материнство в России – подвиг
NG (12 November) Голодные обмороки
NG (14 November) ‘У меня лучшую подружку убили’
RG (17 November) С царем
Iz (18 November) ‘Войну глазами жертв’ выставили под ‘Рабочим и колхозницей’
RG (19 November) Картофельное сердце
NG (19 November) Подлецы и певцы
Iz (20 November) Святогорск – пригород Славянска, а Макаревич – анти-Сусанин
RG (21 November) Кодекс для мигрантов
NG (24 November) Каски Майдана
RG (24 November) По следам ‘Тучки...’
RG (24 November) Барин отъехал
RG (24 November) Нелегалов вывели на свет
Iz (25 November) Барщевского обвинили в давлении на суд по иску Макаревича к Проханову
Iz (25 November) ‘Ростов’ – не единственный клуб, в котором не платят зарплату
RG (26 November) Евросоюзу поставили диагноз
RG (26 November) Зачем Киеву боевые пловцы?
Iz (26 November) Услужливый дурак опаснее врага
RG (27 November) Киев поставил пытки на поток
RG (27 November) Почта ‘союза’
NG (28 November) Операция ‘Золотое Кольцо’ и Галич
RG (3 December) Они не догадаются, что мы украинцы
RG (3 December) Раздели с товарищем
Iz (3 December) Литва отказывается возвращать российских ребят
NG (3 December) ‘Хотим, чтобы кто-то в нас нуждался’
RG (4 December) Здоров? На работу!
RG (5 December) Главное за неделю с 28.11 по 05.12.2014 г
RG (5 December) Французский кульбит
NG (8 December) Империя наизнанку
RG (8 December) Бесплатная мышеловка майдана
RG (10 December) ‘Тишина’ грохочет
NG (10 December) Число погибших неизвестно
RG (11 December) Цифра года
Iz (11 December) Пострадавшие на Украине ищут справедливости в Европе
RG (11 December) Столица по имени Любовь
NG (15 December) Ну здравствуй, оружие!
RG (18 December) Как лечить синдром Дракона
RG (19 December) Детский праздник на войне
NG (19 December) Добро помогает выжить
NG (22 December) Некуда бежать
RG (23 December) Эффективно сработали
RG (23 December) Перестала понимать по-русски
Iz (23 December) Благотворительные фонды теряют жертвователей
Iz (24 December) Вступая в 2015 год
RG (24 December) Федеральный закон Российской Федерации от 22 декабря 2014 г. N 446-ФЗ ‘О внесении изменений в отдельные законодательные акты Российской Федерации по вопросам защиты и охраны Государственной границы Российской Федерации’
RG (24 December) Жизнь как праздник
RG (24 December) Детям и взрослым

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NG (24 December) Перемирие. Тонкое, как бритва
NG (24 December) Надежда Савченко: ‘я солдат, а не маньяк-убийца, и у меня здоровая психика. В институте им. Сербского это подтвердили’
RG (25 December) 2015-й, чрезвычайный
RG (29 December) Приказ Министерства труда и социальной защиты Российской Федерации от 24 ноября 2014 г. N 935н г. Москва ‘Об утверждении Примерного порядка предоставления социальных услуг в стационарной форме социального обслуживания’
Iz (30 December) Поток украинцев может снизиться на 20–30%
RG (30 December) Приказ Федеральной налоговой службы (ФНС России) от 26 ноября 2014 г. N ММВ-7-3/600@ г. Москва ‘Об утверждении формы налоговой декларации по налогу на прибыль организаций, порядка ее заполнения, а также формата представления налоговой декларации по налогу на прибыль организаций в электронной форме’
RG (31 December) Приказ Министерства труда и социальной защиты Российской Федерации от 24 ноября 2014 г. N 939н г. Москва ‘Об утверждении Примерного порядка предоставления социальных услуг в форме социального обслуживания на дому’

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Iz (12 January) Западу угрожают новыми терактами
RG (12 January) Приказ Министерства труда и социальной защиты Российской Федерации от 24 ноября 2014 г. N 938н г. Москва ‘Об утверждении Примерного порядка предоставления социальных услуг в полустационарной форме социального обслуживания’
RG (12 January) Отрадное, Рождество
RG (13 January) Рождество у черных дроздов
RG (14 January) Зимний "Град"
RG (14 January) Бесплатно на такси
RG (16 January) Приказ Министерства труда и социальной защиты Российской Федерации от 28 ноября 2014 г. N 958н г. Москва ‘Об утверждении перечня документов, необходимых для установления страховой пенсии, установления и перерасчета размера фиксированной выплаты к страховой пенсии с учетом повышения фиксированной выплаты к страховой пенсии, назначения накопительной пенсии, установления пенсии по государственному пенсионному обеспечению’
NG (16 January) Переменам нужен масштаб
NG (19 January) Расстрелы января
RG (19 January) Смерть до востребования
RG (21 January) Приказ Министерства здравоохранения Российской Федерации (Минздрав России) от 29 декабря 2014 г. N 930н г. Москва ‘Об утверждении Порядка организации оказания высокотехнологичной медицинской помощи с применением специализированной информационной системы’
RG (21 January) Документы трагедии
RG (23 January) Перешли на десять полос
RG (23 January) Мишка, Мишка, где твоя улыбка?
Iz (26 January) Уступки ПАСЕ по украинскому вопросу невозможны
NG (26 January) Карикатура на международный терроризм
NG (26 January) Служба розыска врагов
NG (26 January) Равнодушие и предательство
RG (27 January) Позитивных перемен стало больше
RG (27 January) На все четыре страны

2015

Iz (28 January) Украинская резолюция ПАСЕ нуждается в поправках
RG (30 January) Любовью и спасемся
Iz (30 January) Президент дал губернаторам мастер-класс по управлению
NG (30 January) ‘Я приехал сюда из словакии сражаться с Евросоюзом’
NG (30 January) ‘Люди слишком ленивы, чтобы долго кого-то ненавидеть’
NG (2 February) Западня
NG (2 February) ‘В декабре мы отмечали до десяти обстрелов за сутки. Сейчас по 142 в день валит’
Iz (3 February) ‘Хотела бы попросить политубежища’
NG (4 February) Притихший Дон
NG (4 February) Если это не война, то что?
RG (5 February) Взбесившийся автобус
RG (5 February) Европа: похищение голоса
RG (5 February) Средневековый Интернет
RG (5 February) Как ‘ИГ’ набирает боевиков в грузии
RG (5 February) Эбола осталась без средств
RG (6 February) Беженцам дадут приют
RG (6 February) Бегут из окопов
NG (6 February) Плен после Катыни
Iz (9 February) Десуверенизация Европы
NG (9 February) Речь в защиту Москвы
NG (9 February) ‘Хорошая страна, просто попала в плохие руки’
RG (9 February) Украинские силовики не выпускают мирных жителей из зоны боевых действий
RG (11 February) Кто управляет хаосом
Iz (11 February) СКР просят арестовать российские активы Петра Порошенко
NG (13 February) И снова – люди на полу
NG (16 February) С чего начинается массовое убийство?
NG (16 February) День, когда должен начаться мир
NG (16 February) Открытие волонтера Гуреева
Iz (17 February) Минская бессонница
RG (18 February) Украинские силовики сдаются в плен
RG (19 February) Спасатели к миссии готовы
RG (19 February) Год кровавого тумана
Iz (20 February) В Совете Федерации призывают ООН создать трибунал по Украине
Iz (20 February) Хитрый план Киева
RG (20 February) Взлетаем по сигналу SOS
RG (20 February) Киев позвал европолицию
RG (25 February) Поезд шел на войну
RG (25 February) Бесплатный гектар. Дорого
RG (26 February) Площадь без революции
RG (26 February) Киев похоронил свободы
RG (2 March) Постановление Конституционного Суда Российской Федерации от 17 февраля 2015 г. N 2-П город Санкт-Петербург ‘по делу о проверке конституционности положений пункта 1 статьи 6, пункта 2 статьи 21 и пункта 1 статьи 22 Федерального закона ‘О прокуратуре Российской Федерации’ в связи с жалобами межрегиональной ассоциации правозащитных общественных объединений ‘АГОРА’, межрегиональной общественной организации ‘Правозащитный центр ‘Мемориал’, международной общественной организации ‘Международное историко-просветительское, благотворительное и правозащитное общество ‘Мемориал’, региональной общественной благотворительной организации помощи беженцам и вынужденным переселенцам ‘Гражданское содействие’, автономной некоммерческой организации правовых,

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информационных и экспертных услуг ‘Забайкальский правозащитный центр’, регионального общественного фонда ‘Международный стандарт’ в Республике Башкортостан и гражданки С.А.Ганнушкиной’
NG(2 March) Очень хочется строить
RG (4 March) Пистолет в воду?
RG (6 March) Телевидение с Сусанной Альпериной
Iz (6 March) Экзамен для беженцев будет стоить в два раза дешевле
NG (6 March) Исповедь украинской летчицы
RG (10 March) Кармалита и два Германа
RG (10 March) Почти станичный детектив
RG (10 March) В марте четырнадцатого
Iz (11 March) Украинцы поставили рекорд по числу уехавших в Европу
Iz (11 March) ЦБ запретил выдавать деньги по справкам беженца
RG (12 March) У террора детское лицо
RG (12 March) ‘Я помню все’
NG (13 March) ‘Техосмотр’ беженцев
RG (13 March) Федеральный закон Российской Федерации от 8 марта 2015 г. N 23-ФЗ ‘О внесении изменений в отдельные законодательные акты Российской Федерации в связи с введением в действие Кодекса административного судопроизводства Российской Федерации’
NG (16 March) Русские идут. И скупают
RG (16 March) Крым: в марте 2015-го
RG (17 March) Увидеть своими глазами
RG (18 March) Лекарство от ненависти
RG (25 March) Дорога в пекло
RG (26 March) От беженцев до вкладчиков
RG (26 March) Ракета над мечетью Омейядов
RG (27 March) Запугать не получится
Iz (30 March) Губернаторов посчитали по росту и падению
Iz (30 March) Президент пообещал поддержку интернет-бизнесу
Iz (1 April) Гражданам Украины станет проще натурализоваться в России
RG (3 April) Сейфы нараспашку
RG (6 April) Федеральный закон Российской Федерации от 30 марта 2015 г. N 58-ФЗ ‘Об особенностях правового регулирования отношений, связанных с исполнением воинской обязанности отдельными категориями граждан Российской Федерации в связи с принятием в Российскую Федерацию Республики Крым и образованием в составе Российской Федерации новых субъектов – Республики Крым и города федерального значения Севастополя, и внесении изменений в Федеральный закон ‘О воинской обязанности и военной службе’
RG (8 April) Федеральный закон Российской Федерации от 6 апреля 2015 г. N 76-ФЗ ‘О внесении изменений в отдельные законодательные акты Российской Федерации в целях совершенствования деятельности уполномоченных по правам человека’
NG (8 April) Кто срывает Минские соглашения?
Iz (13 April) ‘Кампания в Йемене подтвердила кризис международных организаций’
Iz (13 April) ЕС не сможет ужесточать санкции
RG (14 April) Послесловие – Умер писатель Гюнтер Грасс
Iz (14 April) Крым как краеугольный камень России
NG (15 April) Красная черта
NG (15 April) ‘Все подступы к Мариуполю защищены. Они будут пытаться продвигаться вперед, а мы должны давать по зубам при любой провокации’
RG (16 April) Звоните сегодня

2015

Iz (16 April) Минобрнауки просят определиться с абитуриентами из Новороссии
Iz (16 April) Граждан пугают рост цен и международные конфликты
Iz (17 April) ‘Нужно иметь не только голову, но и сердце’
NG (17 April) Обыкновенный геноцид
Iz (20 April) В Москве прошел митинг в память об Олесе Бузине
RG (20 April) Никто не доплыл до Европы
RG (21 April) Европу накрывает волна мигрантов
RG (22 April) Цензуры.net
Iz (22 April) ФСКН намерена помогать в трудоустройстве бывших наркоманов
Iz (22 April) От Ливии до Йемена
NG (22 April) Хватит ненавидеть
Iz (23 April) Смута стоит очень дорого
NG (24 April) Европа: нашествие с юга
RG (28 April) Всегда вместе
RG (29 April) Подготовка сорвалась
RG (29 April) ‘Нет справки из концлагеря? Не верим’
RG (29 April) Сделать карьеру и жизнь
RG (29 April) Мой Горький город
Iz (29 April) Пятьдесят оттенков Кернеса
RG (30 April) Наградной лист
RG (30 April) Свидетельство о браке
RG (30 April) Хлебная карточка
Iz (5 May) СПЧ обсудит готовность России к новой волне беженцев
RG (5 May) Миротворцы испачкали флаг
NG (6 May) Крымская мечта
Iz (7 May) Макаревичу предлагают отказаться от гражданства
RG (7 May) Доклад Уполномоченного по правам человека в Российской Федерации за 2014 год
RG (7 May) Тройной контроль
RG (8 May) Мир приближается?
Iz (12 May) Поток российских нелегалов в Европу значительно сократился
RG (12 May) Мигранты достанутся всем
Iz (13 May) США увеличили финансирование НКО
Iz (14 May) Пожары опалили рейтинги глав Хакасии и Забайкалья
RG (15 May) Европа готова бомбить
Iz (15 May) Кто поджигает Македонию
NG (15 May) Париж, или пилигримы
RG (21 May) Русский Голливуд
RG (21 May) Какое небо голубое
RG (21 May) Евросоюз встанет на путь пиратства?
RG (21 May) Чрезвычайно надежный
NG (22 May) ‘Я уже давно в патриотике’
Iz (25 May) Тихая победа Москвы
RG (26 May) Казус года
RG (27 May) Когда б мы досмотрели до конца...
NG (27 May) Путинское большинство живет на улице Савушкина
RG (28 May) ‘Язык Победы’
RG (29 May) Стерилизацию поддержали лайками
RG (4 June) Куда украинцу податься?
NG (5 June) Илья Новиков: ‘наша задача –вывернуть все это белье наизнанку, дерьмом наружу’
Iz (8 June) ‘По шкале ‘рукопожатности’ я спустился ниже ада’
Iz (9 June) МЧС почти наполовину сокращает расходы на авиацию
Iz (11 June) Эндшпиль в Сирии
NG (15 June) Посольские войны
RG (15 June) Джихад-турист: анфас и в профиль
RG (16 June) Рим угрожает Европе планом ‘Б’
Iz (18 June) В Москве увековечили память о погибших в Донбассе сотрудниках ВГТРК
RG (18 June) Мигранты могут развалить Евросоюз
RG (19 June) Наши офицеры взяли Париж
NG (22 June) Так выглядит подвиг – и зачем его прятать?
NG (22 June) Шубохранилище Ричарда III
RG (22 June) Мигрантов здесь не ждут
RG (23 June) Остров Приднестровье
Iz (25 June) Крысолов революции
RG (25 June) Граждане Европы отвергают Евросоюз

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RG (25 June) А Петр слушает...
NG (29 June) Власти отступают перед Площадью Свободы
RG (29 June) Трудное плечо помощи
NG (1 July) ‘Вроде все как в Донбассе – только не всерьез’
NG (1 July) стороны свободы
Iz (7 July) Детей мигрантов просят свободно принимать в школы
RG (9 July) Вспомнят всех
Iz (10 July) Беженцам предоставят бесплатных юристов
Iz (10 July) Для подачи в ЕСПЧ собрали 17 тыс. Исков граждан Украины
Iz (10 July) БРИКС и ШОС против диктата США
RG (10 July) Бомбы из запретных списков
RG (10 July) ‘Проливается черными ручьями эта музыка прямо в кровь мою’
RG (13 July) Мы несем потери
Iz (14 July) Приток эмигрантов с Украины за год удвоился
RG (15 July) Вергилий с фотокамерой
NG (15 July) ‘Мальчика’ не было, но он живет
RG (16 July) Выиграем и эту войну
RG (16 July) Помощь как с неба – МЧС
RG (16 July) Кстати
RG (16 July) Чемпионат мира-2016 по футболу примет Абхазия
Iz (17 July) Германия решает в одиночку
NG (20 July) Место событий
RG (20 July) ‘Снегири’ и яблоки
RG (23 July) Прием хороший
RG (23 July) Беженцы идут
Iz (23 July) В Совете Федерации предлагают подать встречные иски к Украине
Iz (24 July) ‘Срок годности’ побед на школьных олимпиадах составит четыре года
Iz (28 July) Граждане России стали реже искать убежище в Евросоюзе
RG (28 July) Мест нет
NG (29 July) ‘Халифат? Приманка для Дураков!’
NG (29 July) Иван, Абрам и Адольф
Iz (29 July) Крым летом-2015
RG (30 July) Свадьба в Мариновке
Iz (3 August) Российское паспортное наступление
RG (3 August) Тяжело ты, бремя гостеприимства
RG (4 August) В туннеле никому не светит
RG (5 August) Местным евро нужнее
NG (5 August) Оппозиция для ‘партии войны’
RG (6 August) Саакашвили приказал убивать
RG (7 August) свидетелей
RG (10 August) Брюсселю шпроты не нужны
RG (10 August) Русские в зеркале Греции
Iz (13 August) Шесть НК0 уличили в нарушении закона об иностранных агентах
Iz (13 August) Прощайте, русские сезоны
RG (13 August) Хаос пришел с моря
RG (13 August) Затопить ‘евротуннель’
NG (19 August) Михаил Саакашвили: ‘Не знаю, кто внушает россиянам глупость о непобедимости коррупции’
Iz (20 August) На сайте госуслуг появится раздел для беженцев
RG (20 August) Доктор Ватсон под покровом Покровского
Iz (21 August) Проверка не выявила нарушений в ростовской полиции
RG (21 August) Задание на осень
RG (21 August) Граница пройдет по Евротоннелю
NG (24 August) Проблема N 1
RG (24 August) Европа отступает
RG (25 August) Волна мигрантов не захлестнет Россию
RG (26 August) Визы –чемоданами
RG (26 August) Забор в помощь
RG (27 August) Событие
RG (27 August) Цензуры.net
RG (28 August) Не позвали к первому звонку
RG (28 August) Их в дверь, они в окно
RG (31 August) Война ради власти
RG (31 August) Европа как спасение

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NG (31 August) Мигранты не заслужили траура Европы?
NG (13 August) Достучаться до ЕС
Iz (1 September) Великое переселение жертв демократии
RG (1 September) Европа выбирает будущее
RG (1 September) Взгляд из Рима
RG (2 September) Мост из Москвы
RG (2 September) Отгородят от контрабанды
NG (2 September) Маугли русских джунглей
NG (2 September) Зона сплошной смерти
RG (3 September) Мигранты ссорят европейцев
Iz (3 September) Гвоздь в голове
RG (4 September) Арии нищих спели по-новому
RG (4 September) Сколько страны ЕС тратят на мигрантов
RG (4 September) Конец Шенгена
RG (7 September) Свободная гавань
RG (7 September) Набежавшая волна
RG (7 September) Восточный вокзал
Iz (7 September) ‘Говорить об участии в коалиции против ИГИЛ преждевременно’
NG (7 September) Меркель начищает ‘плавильный котел’
NG (7 September) Беженское
RG (8 September) Опера спасения
RG (8 September) Берлин сдается?
RG (8 September) Афера на негражданах
Iz (8 September) Православным иностранцам хотят упростить получение гражданства
Iz (8 September) Нашествие варваров
NG (9 September) Велосипед есть? Цена не важна’
NG (9 September) Вспышки под солнцем
RG (9 September) Свежая голова
RG (9 September) Список Бастрыкина
RG (9 September) Европейский потоп
RG (9 September) Брюссель не признает ошибок
RG (9 September) Поворотный пункт
RG (10 September) Нашествие с юга
RG (10 September) Подножка толерантности
RG (10 September) Еврофония
RG (10 September) Бег
RG (10 September) Исламские боевики выдают себя за беженцев
RG (10 September) В Европу бегут и террористы
Iz (10 September) СПЧ предлагает принять сирийских беженцев
Iz (10 September) ‘Все иллюзии по поводу единой Европы рухнули’
Iz (10 September) Ученики Вашингтона на Ближнем Востоке
Iz (11 September) Доставку помощи в Сирию заблокировать не получилось
RG (11 September) Карета жизни
RG (11 September) Через край
RG (11 September) Запад допустил ошибку
NG (11 September) Новый старый свет
NG (11 September) Как закалялась дамасская сталь
RG (14 September) Сокуров ‘Льву’ не по зубам
RG (14 September) В Афины пришел ‘маленький кабул’
Iz (14 September) Новая сирийская инициатива
Iz (14 September) Процесс пошел, процесс самоуничтожения Запада
NG (14 September) Это волшебное слово ‘шанс’
NG (14 September) Кремль попал к Асаду
NG (14 September) Точка отсчета – Сирия
NG (14 September) Зыбкое право на остров
NG (14 September) ‘Политики в новых правилах выдачи шенгенских виз нет’
Iz (15 September) Попавших под санкции граждан России пустят лечиться в ЕС
RG (15 September) Из России –без ненависти
RG (15 September) Взгляд из Франции
RG (15 September) Порог Европы превратился в стену

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RG (16 September) Цензуры.net
RG (16 September) От Сирии до космоса
RG (16 September) Враг у общего порога
RG (16 September) Риски ‘Большой игры’
RG (16 September) Беженцы атакуют
RG (16 September) Америка ищет виноватых
RG (16 September) Цинизм без границ
Iz (16 September) Для борьбы с ИГИЛ надо забыть о геополитических интересах
NG (16 September) Дети первого января
NG (16 September) Новый мир не боится заборов
NG (16 September) Пограничное стояние
NG (16 September) Разворот над Атлантидой
NG (16 September) Место событий
NG (16 September) Безопасное далёко
RG (17 September) Когда шутки неуместны
RG (17 September) Человек на полустанке
RG (17 September) Как закалялась Дамасская сталь
RG (17 September) В кризис с беженцами вмешался Совбез
NG (18 September) Как стать нелегальной мигранткой и как перестать ей быть. Пособие
NG (18 September) ‘В Европу бежит средний класс’
NG (18 September) Charlie Hebdo. К чему эта черная злая сатира
RG (18 September) Кто не успел, тот опоздал
RG (18 September) Конец ‘эры социализма’
RG (18 September) Не допустить ‘эффекта домино’
Iz (21 September) Дети-переключатели
Iz (21 September) Остановка в пустыне
NG (21 September) О чем ревут моторы и лязгают гусеницы
NG (21 September) Иван Вырыпаев: ‘Сами хитрите, а сыну говорите: ‘Будь хорошим, открытым мальчиком!’
NG (21 September) Пять мифов о ‘катастрофе’ европы
NG (21 September) Мой счастливый билет за 35 евро
RG (21 September) Министры на связи
RG (21 September) Беженцы раскололи Европу
RG (22 September) Неуправляемый хаос
RG (22 September) Лондон: град претензий
RG (22 September) Сириза 2.0
RG (22 September) Пляски на костях
NG (23 September) Старая притча для новых времен
NG (23 September) Рельсовая война
NG (23 September) Вырастет ли Ялта на обломках Сирии
Iz (23 September) Друг у ворот
Iz (23 September) ‘Американцы не поймут ‘Солнечный удар’
RG (23 September) Забытые слова
RG (23 September) Остров на переправе
RG (23 September) Большой развоз
RG (23 September) Коалиции страхов
Iz (24 September) Полмиллиона донецких беженцев вернулись в ДНР
Iz (24 September) ‘Стремитесь опередить друг друга в добрых делах’
RG (24 September) С больной головы Европы
RG (24 September) Белый дом меняет партнеров
RG (24 September) Беженцы: уже 3 тысячи погибших
NG (25 September) Велобег
NG (25 September) Германия манит
NG (25 September) Европа: отзывчивость и человечность
NG (25 September) Слобо и дело
Iz (25 September) ‘Санкции –пережиток прошлого’
Iz (25 September) ‘Пуля’
Iz (25 September) Иная геополитическая площадка для России
RG (25 September) Сила слабого пола
RG (25 September) Еще одна подножка
RG (25 September) Москва принуждает Вашингтон к диалогу
RG (28 September) ООН и они

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Iz (28 September) ‘С Обамой можно договариваться о тактике, а не о ‘большой игре’
Iz (28 September) Перелетный майдан для Европы
Iz (28 September) Папа и американские выборы
NG (28 September) Трубный запах
NG (28 September) Не мусульмане, но обездоленные
NG (28 September) Как мы дошли до края
RG (29 September) ООН на распутье
RG (29 September) Мультипликатор
NG (30 September) Донецк вернулся на карту России
RG (30 September) Мир без экспорта революций
RG (30 September) Едины в подходах
RG (30 September) В Брюссель продавали мертвые души
RG (30 September) Тук-тук, полиция!
Iz (30 September) В Уголовный кодекс хотят ввести статью за клевету на государство
Iz (30 September) Европейские парламентарии ищут встречи с российскими
Iz (30 September) Мировые СМИ назвали выступления Владимира Путина и Барака Обамы поединком
Iz (30 September) Остров порядка
RG (1 October) Без России не обойтись
RG (1 October) Упреждающий удар
Iz (1 October) СПЧ обсудит с президентом статус иностранных агентов НКО
Iz (1 October) Коалиция против черной силы
RG (2 October) Дивизий у Мальтийского ордена нет
RG (2 October) Боевики пиара не боятся
RG (2 October) Выдвинулись на позиции
RG (2 October) Доктрина Путина
Iz (2 October) Произвол против права
Iz (5 October) Валентина Матвиенко совершит визит в Африку и на Ближний Восток
Iz (5 October) Храни вас Господь, русские летчики!
RG (5 October) Европа устала от Украины
RG (5 October) Тестам нужна реформа
NG (5 October) Агитпроп меняет дислокацию
RG (6 October) Тюрьма вместо убежища
RG (7 October) Мир на Донбассе обретает плоть
NG (7 October) Премия Анны Политковской присуждена сирийской журналистке Холуд Валид
NG (7 October) Америка открывает второй фронт
NG (7 October) Правила применения огня
Iz (8 October) Открыть второй фронт
RG (8 October) Запад не должен избегать Москвы
RG (8 October) Беженцев просят уйти
NG (9 October) ‘Сирийская ловушка. Всерьез, но не надолго’
NG (9 October) ‘Я вижу ваше лицо’
NG (9 October) Убить дракона в спальне
RG (9 October) Цветы без посредников
RG (9 October) По данным Генштаба
RG (9 October) Стены все равно не устоят
NG (12 October) Слава роботам?
RG (12 October) Закончилась ли эпоха ценностей и ‘мягкой силы’?
RG (12 October) Бежать некуда
Iz (13 October) Зато не казенная, а своя законная
Iz (14 October) Роскомнадзор убрал почти 900 страниц вербовщиков в ИГИЛ
RG (14 October) Цензуры.net
RG (14 October) День независимости минус Бал
RG (15 October) Наступят ли в Латвии ‘арабские времена’?
RG (16 October) Событие 15.10 четверг
Iz (19 October) Родос без понтов
Iz (19 October) Валентина Матвиенко осудила ‘навязываемую демократию’
NG (19 October) Терминальная стадия

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NG (19 October) Путь, которого нет
RG (19 October) ‘Сушки’ заходят с моря
RG (19 October) Мир без барьеров
RG (19 October) Выборы длинных ножей
RG (19 October) Получила премию и угрозы
RG (19 October) Выбор по-новому
Iz (20 October) Миф ИГИЛ
Iz (20 October) Россия увеличила вложения в казначейские обязательства США
RG (20 October) Диалог без суеты
RG (20 October) Что решает Кремль
RG (20 October) Боевики бегут с позиций
NG (21 October) Гюлистан и конвоиры
RG (21 October) Беженцы в Европе и в России
Iz (22 October) Рассуждения о действиях России в Сирии
RG (22 October) Беженцы ищут бреши
RG (22 October) Перемещенные лица
Iz (23 October) Основатель Gulagu.net сбежал, опасаясь ареста
NG (23 October) Без оружия она уже не враг
RG (23 October) ООН перешагнула седьмой десяток. Что дальше?
NG (26 October) Танцы с диктатором
NG (26 October) Открытость –признак слабости
NG (26 October) Забыть Украину
RG (26 October) Событие 25.10 воскресенье
RG (26 October) Книга – живучее существо
Iz (27 October) Новые приключения Джельсомино
RG (27 October) Не надо строить новых стен. Тем временем
RG (27 October) Правый марш на Брюссель
RG (27 October) Мир без разделительных линий
NG (28 October) Валдай –Мадрид
RG (28 October) Пошли на вторую попытку
RG (28 October) Польша и европейский символизм
RG (28 October) Человек рассеянный с улицы Бассейной...
RG (29 October) Евросоюз начал строить
RG (29 October) Взгляд из Берлина
Iz (30 October) Башар Асад заявил, что готов к политическим реформам
RG (30 October) Мундир не спасает
NG (30 October) Если скажут – езжайте обратно, поедем. Лучше умереть, чем так жить
Iz (2 November) В Вене прошла международная встреча по Сирии
NG (2 November) Добро пожаловать в войну
NG (2 November) Нас даже в магазин не выпускали. Мы в тюрьме?
NG (2 November) Тут какие-то провокационные вопросы идут!
RG (2 November) Приказ Федеральной миграционной службы, Министерства внутренних дел Российской Федерации от 31 июля 2015 г. N 367/807 ‘Об утверждении Административного регламента по исполнению Федеральной миграционной службой, ее территориальными органами и органами внутренних дел Российской Федерации государственной функции по осуществлению федерального государственного контроля (надзора) за пребыванием и проживанием иностранных граждан и лиц без гражданства в Российской Федерации и трудовой деятельностью иностранных работников’
RG (2 November) Украинцам дали месяц
Iz (3 November) Библиотека в Марокко получит имя А.С. Пушкина
Iz (5 November) Отложенный триумф
RG (5 November) Десять на одного
RG (6 November) Студенты ушли на бунт
RG (6 November) Награда за белый месяц
Iz (9 November) Срок временного пребывания украинцев просят продлить

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Iz (9 November) Германия: трансформация неизбежна
NG (9 November) Вы и Шарли
RG (9 November) Восточные северяне
RG (9 November) Сила слова
RG (10 November) Счет идет на месяцы
RG (10 November) Таллин обвинили в расизме
RG (11 November) По домам за счет ЕС
RG (11 November) Предъявите ваши пальчики
Iz (12 November) Смертельно опасная миграция
Iz (12 November) МИДу советуют создать карту угроз для путешественников
RG (12 November) Добро не пожаловать
RG (12 November) Между тем
RG (12 November) Саммит
Iz (13 November) Для переселенцев из ДНР и ЛНР просят ввести льготное налогообложение
NG (13 November) Обратная тяга
NG (13 November) Конституционный строй подрывают репрессии
RG (13 November) ‘Киборги’ готовы грызть дула танков
Iz (16 November) Хенде хох. Так победим
Iz (16 November) Вводится режим закрытости
Iz (16 November) Вы хоть понимаете теперь, чего вы натворили?
Iz (16 November) Смертников начали готовить давно
Iz (16 November) Парижская трагедия не остановит борьбу с террором
NG (16 November) На защиту республики
NG (16 November) Отказ от свободы – победа террора
NG (16 November) Наземная операция началась
NG (16 November) Не те и не там
NG (16 November) Эмиграция – наш путь в Россию
NG (16 November) Вполголоса
NG (16 November) Светлана Ганнушкина: ‘Музыку заказываем мы, граждане’
RG (16 November) Смерть в Париже
RG (16 November) Фронт двадцати
RG (16 November) Жерло вулкана
RG (17 November) Охота к перемене мест
RG (17 November) В погоне за террористами
RG (17 November) Саммит солидарности
RG (17 November) Кто взял в заложники Париж
NG (18 November) Это не война цивилизаций
NG (18 November) Интернационал террористов: следующая цель – Вашингтон
NG (18 November) Поглощение Европы
NG (18 November) Витрина родины
NG (18 November) Била так, что огромные мужики отрывались от земли
RG (18 November) Доллар задержится
RG (18 November) Моленбек, бар смертников
RG (18 November) В Париж? Запрещено
Iz (19 November) Права мигрантов из ‘опасных’ регионов предлагают ограничить
RG (19 November) Коалиция как предчувствие
RG (19 November) Позолоти ‘точку’
Iz (20 November) Нерон против ИГИЛ
Iz (20 November) Элизиум смертей
NG (20 November) Присудили штраф и срок в транзитной зоне
NG (20 November) Эмиграция – наш путь в Россию
NG (20 November) Базар скорби
NG (20 November) Сделано гражданским обществом
RG (20 November) По поддельным паспортам
RG (20 November) Новый Свет закрывает дверь
RG (20 November) Солдаты Шенгена
NG (23 November) Я сегодня такая счастливая, нас выпустили!
RG (23 November) Событие 22.11

2015

RG (23 November) Парижанам не до божоле
RG (23 November) Антитеррор
RG (23 November) Бомбы и мандарины
RG (24 November) Право против хаоса
RG (24 November) Теракт неизбежен?
NG (25 November) Вина Парижа
NG (25 November) Народная вольница
NG (25 November) Сестра солдата
RG (25 November) Тайна Абдеслама
RG (25 November) Рифмы и рифы истории
RG (25 November) Картина маслом
Iz (26 November) Цена упрямства
RG (26 November) Эрдоган меняет показания
Iz (27 November) Экономьте не на пенсиях
RG (30 November) Шенгенная инженерия
RG (1 December) Анкара предъявила счет
NG (2 December) Глобально не потеплело
NG (2 December) Уроки Польского
RG (2 December) Цензуры.net
RG (3 December) Мнение, Александр Рар
RG (3 December) Мнение, Александр Сокуров
NG (4 December) Американский тыл Ближнего Востока
NG (9 December) Марин Ле Пен больше Олланда и Саркози
NG (9 December) Русские всегда возвращаются
RG (9 December) Призрак баронессы
RG (10 December) Мутная вода Анкары
Iz (11 December) Утешительный приз от мировой элиты
NG (11 December) Чемодан – вокзал – Алеппо?
NG (11 December) Настоящих буйных много
RG (11 December) Белый дом разослал комиссаров
Iz (14 December) Умеренный джихад в рамках законности
RG (14 December) Беженцы стали разменной монетой
RG (14 December) Криминал
NG (16 December) Ниже уровня проходимости
NG (16 December) Идите вы к прокурору!
RG (17 December) Фантомные боли из прошлого
Iz (18 December) В искусстве должна быть провокация
NG (18 December) Архив Цезаря
NG (18 December) Под молотом живого слова
NG (18 December) Немецкий стандарт
Iz (21 December) Слабость Большой Европы
NG (21 December) Общество отшвартовывается от пристани ‘государство’
RG (21 December) Приправлено ‘укропом’
RG (22 December) Скандал
NG (23 December) Жители некоторых территорий
RG (23 December) Иноверцам вход запрещен
RG (23 December) Камень вместо алмаза
RG (23 December) 2015: попытка найти позитив
RG (24 December) Каюты с видом на ЕС
NG (25 December) Светлана Алексиевич: Всем мужества идеализма
Iz (28 December) Упокоение в месте злачном
RG (28 December) Оленей велено не пускать
RG (28 December) По доброй воле
RG (29 December) Симфония отношений
RG (31 December) Федеральный закон Российской Федерации от 29 декабря 2015 г. N 388-ФЗ ‘О внесении изменений в отдельные законодательные акты Российской Федерации в части учета и совершенствования предоставления мер социальной поддержки исходя из обязанности соблюдения принципа адресности и применения критериев нуждаемости

Article I
Compare and Contrast

Article

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Brothers and barbarians: Discursive constructions of 'refugees' in Russian media

Natalia Moen-Larsen
Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo, Norway

Abstract

This article maps the unexplored terrain of representations of refugees in Russian media, using discourse theory and the concepts of subject positions and symbolic boundaries to analyse these representations. The research questions are: Who are the refugees? What discourses do they feature in? What kinds of symbolic boundaries do these representations maintain? This study analyses the three Russian newspapers *Izvestija*, *Novaya gazeta* and *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, focusing on how, between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2015, these newspapers came to employ the term 'refugee' for persons from Ukraine and for those from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Analysis of the subject position of 'refugee' in discourses about security, humanitarianism, integration and nationalism reveals contrasting images of refugees from Ukraine and MENA refugees. The latter are represented as 'threatening' and 'alien': symbolic boundaries are maintained between Russians and these refugees as well as between 'superior' Russia and 'inferior' Europe. In contrast, refugees from Ukraine are often presented as similar to Russians. Nationalist discourse merges with security, humanitarian and integration discourses, creating contrasting symbolic boundaries between these two groups of refugees and Russians. Refugees are classed as 'preferred' or 'non-preferred' migrants on the basis not of their situation, but their ethnicity.

Keywords

Refugees, Russia, discourse, subject position, symbolic boundaries

The number of refugees is increasing globally: by the end of 2015, some 65.3 million people were considered forcibly displaced (UNHCR, 2015: 2). In 2014, the Russian Federation was the largest single recipient of new asylum claims worldwide, mostly involving refugees from Ukraine, where the armed conflict had brought the total number of refugees in the Russian Federation up from 3400 in 2012 to

Corresponding Author:
Natalia Moen-Larsen, Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo, Postboks 1096 Blindern, 0317 Oslo, Norway.
Email: natalia.moen-larsen@sosgeo.uio.no

231,800 (UNHCR, 2014: 10). Much scholarly work has been done on representations of refugees in Western news media, public and political discourses (e.g. Bocskor, 2018; Cederberg, 2014; Figenschou and Thorbjørnsrud, 2015; Holzberg et al., 2018), but Russian refugee representations remain largely unexplored.[1] This article seeks to fill that gap through systematic examination of representations of 'refugees' in Russian news media.

I operate with a broad, empirically driven definition of the term 'refugee': refugees are persons or groups of people who occupy the subject position 'refugee(s)' in a discourse. Drawing on discourse theory, I view 'refugee' as a *floating signifier* that can never be fully fixed in any particular discursive chain (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 28). The analysis combines *discourse theory* and *subject positions* (Laclau and Mouffe, 2014), with *symbolic boundaries* (Lamont and Molnár, 2002) and *boundary maintenance* (Barth, 1969). In analysing how refugees were discursively constructed in Russian newspapers in the period 1 January 2014–31 December 2015, I examine subject positions – *who* the refugees are and in *what* discourses they appear – as well as the symbolic boundaries maintained by these representations.

The reason for using newsprint media as a source for data collection is twofold. First, an analysis of newspapers gives access to representations of 'refugees' that circulate in Russia. Second, media representations are bearers of symbolic and persuasive power. The media cannot control people's actions, but may shape the minds of the public (Van Dijk, 1995: 10). Further, newspapers often feature national rhetoric that reinforces the '"legitimate" identity of the citizen' by placing immigrants in the role of 'other' (Burroughs, 2015: 167). An analysis of newsprint media is therefore a fruitful way to explore the symbolic boundaries constructed and maintained by Russian refugee representations. Differing ways of presenting refugees have implications for public opinion about refugees and Russian refugee policy. Refugee representations demarcate identity options for those positioned as refugees, as well as identity options for Russians.

Representations of refugees in the Russian press cannot be analysed separately from Russia's historical and cultural context, and Russian discourses about migration in general. Russia takes part in international migration as a destination for many migrant workers from former Soviet Socialist Republics (Heusala and Aitamurto, 2017). According to Stephen Hutchings and Vera Tolz (2015), Russia is currently prone to securitisation of migration and 'new racism', 'a prejudice based on a pseudo-rational hostility to alien customs and beliefs rather than biological difference'. A large body of literature documents the continuing rise of anti-immigrant sentiments, nationalism and xenophobia in Russian politics, media and society (e.g. Heusala and Aitamurto, 2017; Hutchings and Tolz, 2015; Kolstø and Blakkisrud, 2016; Moen-Larsen, 2014; Rulyova and Zagibalov, 2012; Schenk, 2012; Tolz and Harding, 2015). Recently, anti-immigration campaigns have used Islam as a marker of migrant identity and a threat to Russian culture and security (Tolz and Harding, 2015). Russian politicians and state officials have been shown to distinguish between 'preferred' and 'non-preferred' migrants, with Belarussians and Ukrainians considered as part of the former category while Muslims from Central Asia are in the latter category (Abashin, 2017: 27, 31; Lassila 2017: 61–63).

Until 2014, Russia was not a major recipient of refugees, and is therefore different from other countries in Europe with a longer history of refugee reception. The majority of refugees in Russia come from Ukraine and are part of a 'preferred migrant' category. This merger of the categories 'preferred migrants' and 'refugees' makes Russia a particular case in European context. However, although the institution of refugee reception in Russia is different from other countries in Europe,[2] images of refugees also tend to cross national borders. Certain shared principles shape perceptions about insiders and outsiders, compatriots and foreigners across cultures.

Research of representations of immigrants and refugees in Western media has tended to focus on negative images. Teun A van Dijk (1995: 19) notes that immigration is often presented as an 'invasion' or a threatening 'wave', tacitly implying that refugees are actually 'economic refugees' and therefore 'fakes'. Leudar et al. (2008) argue that representations of refugees and asylum seekers from the Middle East and Africa in the UK have been structured along 'hostility themes'. Others have connected refugee

representations to a process of 'securitisation of migration'; for example, in the case of Chinese refugees in Canada (Ibrahim, 2005), and refugees from Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in Hungary (Bocskor, 2018; Thorleifsson, 2017). Such negative representations serve as arguments for excluding migrants and enforcing restrictive policies (e.g. Bennett et al., 2013; Leudar et al., 2008; Lueck et al., 2015). Studies have also found a humanitarian discourse; for example, in Greek (Lafazani, 2018) and Irish media (Burroughs, 2015) that positions refugees as victims in need of help. However, images of refugees as victims do not necessarily imply a right to protection. For example, Holzberg et al. (2018) argue that the German discourse of the refugee crisis frames asylum in terms of deservingness, rather than a legal right, and 'refugees continue to be racialised "others" who have to prove that they are worthy of protection' (Holzberg et al., 2018: 547).

In sum, Russian and Western literature have found significant use of negative images and a tendency towards exclusion of migrants and refugees; however, there is also room for alternative representations – for example, refugees as victims and migration as inevitable and necessary. In Russia, in recent years there has been a tendency to speak of certain groups of international migrants as more, or less, desirable – Slavs placed in the former group and Muslims in the latter. As I will show, this tendency is evident when Russian newspapers represent refugees from Ukraine as more civilised than refugees from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Moreover, most Western studies of refugee representations have concerned images of 'them' coming 'to us' – refugees from geographically or culturally distant locations, seeking asylum in the West. Russian refugee-representations, however, depict two simultaneous but quite different streams of refugees. This offers a unique opportunity to explore the dynamics of subject positioning and ethnic boundary maintenance, through analysis of similarities and contrasts between Russian representations of Ukrainian refugees and MENA refugees.

Theoretical approach

Fredrik Barth (1969) advocated the importance of investigating the social boundaries that define ethnic groups, not the 'cultural stuff' they enclose. The persistence of ethnic groups is dependent on *boundary maintenance* through expression and validation of group membership, involving identification of fellow members of ethnic group and dichotomisation of others as strangers: 'If a group maintains its identity when members interact with others, this entails criteria for determining membership and ways of signalling membership and exclusion' (Barth, 1969: 15). As an analytical concept, 'boundary' is well suited for investigating any kind of group identity, not only analysis of ethnic groups. Michèle Lamont and Virág Molnár (2002: 168) call social boundaries 'symbolic' because they are 'conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorise objects, people, practices, and even time and space…[such boundaries] separate people into groups and generate feelings of similarity and group membership' (Lamont and Molnár, 2002: 168). Discourses about migration articulate symbolic boundaries between insiders and outsiders, and construct perceptions about ethnic groups. In this article, I address boundary maintenance through a discourse analysis of refugee representation in Russian newspapers.

My analysis here is inspired by the discourse theory created by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, who see discourse as 'a structured totality from the articulatory practice' (2014: 91). An articulatory practice is 'any practice establishing a relation among elements' (Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, 2014: 91). Speaking and writing are such articulatory practices. Being 'a structured totality', a discourse is more than one single statement: 'it is a thick grid of hundreds of statements that shape social reality' (Wilhelmsen, 2014: 63). For Laclau and Mouffe (2014: 101) 'the subject' is the same as subject positions in a discursive structure. Like other moments in discourse, subject positions are part of struggles over meaning. When different actors articulate contrasting representations of refugees, they are taking part in struggles over the dominant – or hegemonic (Gramsci, 1978) – meaning of these subject positions. Identities are made up of multiple subject positions in different discourses and can be expressed and understood only through discourse (Davies and Harré, 2007: 262).

There is a fruitful connection between the concepts of 'subject positions' and 'symbolic boundaries'. Together they can shed light on the mechanisms involved when actors articulate an apparently similar subject position – refugee – in contrasting ways for different groups of people. By asking *who* the refugees are in Russian newspapers, I map the subject positions available to refugees in Russian discourses. By examining discourses where the subject position of refugee appears, I seek to show how different ways of speaking about refugees are part of boundary maintenance between groups, with differing policy implications. The literature on media coverage of refugees has found that refugees are sometimes represented as security threats, fake or victims (e.g. Leudar et al., 2008; van Dijk 1995: 19) – three different ways of representing the subject position 'refugee' in discourse. Whereas subject position refers to a particular position in discourse, symbolic boundary highlights the relational aspect of subject positioning. To whom do the refugees pose a threat? Positioning refugees as threatening is a way of maintaining a boundary between insiders (Germans, Norwegians, Russians etc.) and outsiders (refugees).

In addition to discourses, subject positions and symbolic boundaries, I use moments and nodal points as analytical tools for structuring the analysis. Laclau and Mouffe (2014: 91) call the different positions within a discourse 'moments' and label privileged moments 'nodal points' which give meaning to other moments within a discourse (Laclau and Mouffe, 2014: 99). For example, means of transportation, refugee routes, reasons for leaving the country of origin and refugee policies are all moments in discourses about refugees. However, the moments that get included in one discourse are also dependent on the nodal points in this discourse. For instance, Islamic state and terrorism are nodal points in security discourse; the articles that connect refugees to terrorism also position them as security threats. Other moments in security discourse are border controls, penalties, weapons and policing. According to discourse theory, meaning can never be permanently locked in one discourse; it is subject to flow and change. Thus, elements in a discourse are also 'floating signifiers': signs that different discourses are struggling to define (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 28). Representations of refugees are such floating signifiers because refugees are positioned in contrasting ways in discourses about security, humanitarianism, integration and nationalism.

Data and method

Television is the main source of news in Europe, also in Russia (Hutchings and Tolz, 2015: 30). I have chosen to analyse newspapers articles for pragmatic reasons: their availability and the possibility to do word searches. According to Freedom House (2015), Russia lacks freedom of the press; Russian news media are part of the Kremlin's policy strategy, and the few remaining independent media outlets are constantly under threat of closure. In exploring how refugees are depicted in newsprint media, I treat Russian newspapers as channels that produce, reproduce and disseminate discourse.

The analysis builds on data from three Russian national newspapers – *Izvestiya (Iz)*, *Novaya gazeta (NG)* and *Rossiiskaya gazeta (RG)* – chosen because they have very different profiles. *Iz* is a pro-government broadsheet daily that publishes reports on current affairs in Russia and abroad, business, economy and culture as well as comments and opinion pieces. *NG*, issued twice weekly, is one of the few remaining newspapers to challenge official positions and conduct investigative reporting. Finally, *RG* is the official daily of the Russian government, authorised to be the first to publish information about new laws and executive enactments, thus presenting the government's official position. In April 2018, all three newspapers were rated among the five most influential Russian newspapers, based on the number of citations.[3] I assume that their differing affiliations and positions will illustrate various meanings of 'refugee' within the field of discursivity.

In my data, *NG* is an outlet for alternative articulations. Whereas *Iz* and *RG* write of all the good that Russia does for Ukrainian refugees, and how the EU is failing when faced with MENA refugees, *NG* commonly views Russia as a failing humanitarian actor unable to provide for refugees – Ukrainian or MENA. Due to space limitations, I have not been able to explore different voices and editorial choices

Table 1. 'Refugee' in *Iz*, *NG* and *RG*, absolute numbers (*N*) and percentages.

	IZ		*NG*		*RG*		SUM	
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Refugees from Ukraine	151	57	141	49	284	48	576	50
MENA refugees	76	29	81	28	203	34	360	32
Other groups[a]	37	14	66	23	107	18	210	18
SUM	**264**	**100**	**288**	**100**	**594**	**100**	**1146**	100

[a]'Other groups' includes refugees from Chechnya in Europe; refugees in Russia and Europe during World War I and II; refugees from the Balkans; refugees from Palestine; refugees from Georgia (South Ossetia and Abkhazia) and Russians who apply for political asylum abroad.

here. The analysis focuses on the *diversity of subject positions* found in this rich empirical material. However, it is also important to acknowledge the presence of *alternative* representations.

I base my discourse analysis on a large mass of texts: 1146 newspaper articles – 264 from *Iz*, 288 from *NG* and 594 from *RG* – downloaded from East View Information Services and Integrum World Wide. All three newspapers have online versions, but in order to delimit the empirical material I focus on their printed versions. The data sample consists of all texts that used the word 'refugee' in the period 1 January 2014–31 December 2015. I chose to limit the data to two years because I wanted to be able to read and analyse all the selected texts and map all available refugee representations. I preliminarily coded all articles and sorted the data manually before uploading the data in NVivo and developing a more elaborate coding scheme. I created the codes based on both deductive and inductive reasoning. Some codes had theoretical labels (e.g. subject position), while others emerged from repeated observations in the texts (e.g. geography, mobility, war). As a result, I focused the coding on two core points of reference:

1. *Subject position* (Who is the refugee – from where? a man/woman/child/elderly person? What other subject positions are synonyms for 'refugee'?) What other subject positions feature in the texts? (volunteers, soldiers, politicians etc.).
2. *Context:* What other moments are part of the story? (Main topic, location, transportation, refugee routes etc.) Which moments in the text are nodal points, and what discourses do they point to? ('Islamic state' and 'terrorism' are nodal points in security discourse; 'human welfare' and 'humanitarian aid' are nodal points in humanitarian discourse.)

Who are 'the refugees'?

To answer the first research question and see *who the refugees are* in Russian newspapers I have sorted the empirical material according to the *place of origin* of refugees mentioned (see Table 1). In the data sample, 936 of 1146 texts feature either refugees from Ukraine (576) or MENA refugees (360). In all three newspapers, references to the former dominate, while articles mentioning 'MENA refugees' outnumber articles addressing 'Other groups'. Thus, in the period 1 January 2014–31 December 2015, the subject position of refugee in *Iz*, *NG* and *RG* was articulated mainly within two overarching discursive contexts – the crisis in Ukraine, and the refugee crisis in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. Representations of 'refugee from Ukraine' and 'MENA refugee' are part of a struggle for being the dominant signified for the signifier 'refugee', the first image associated with the word 'refugee'. Figure 1 shows developments over time and the number of articles that mention refugees from Ukraine, MENA refugees and other groups, illustrating the struggle over the meaning of 'refugee' month by month.

Representations of refugees from Ukraine began appearing in February 2014, becoming most frequent in the period June–September 2014. In February 2014, the former president of Ukraine, Viktor

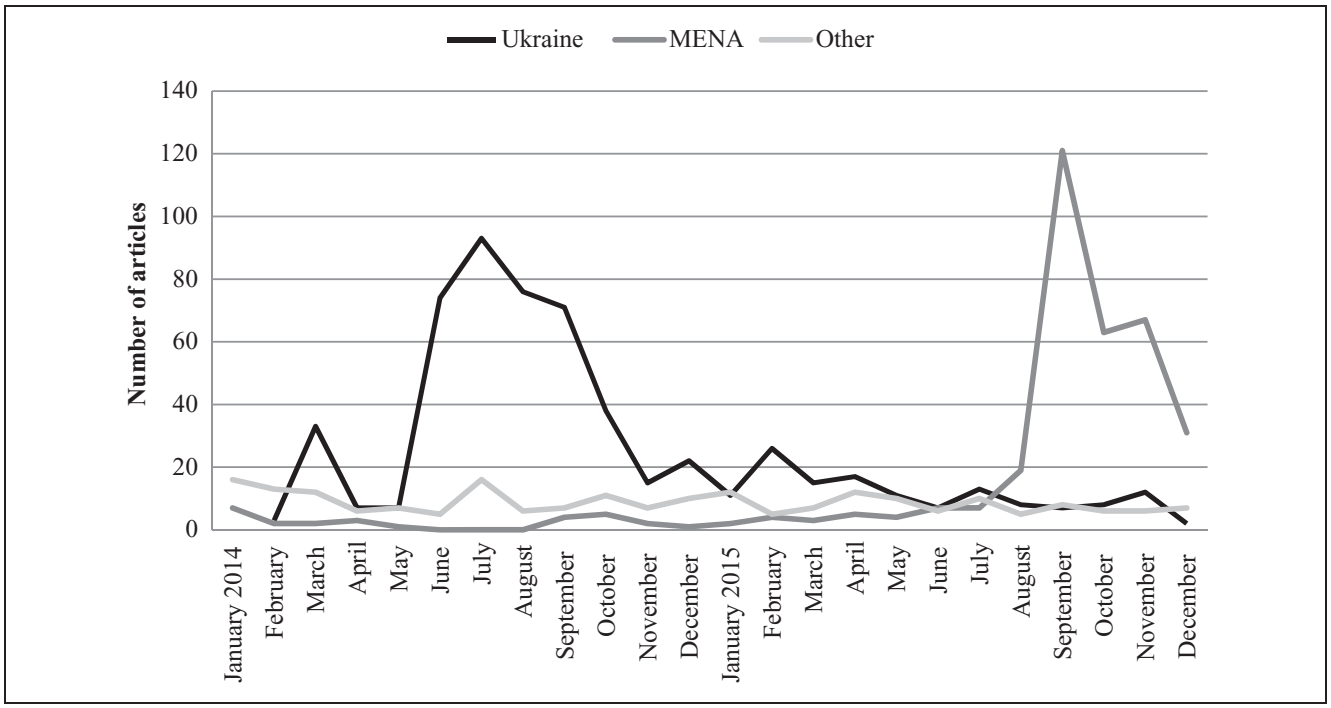

Figure 1. Development over time. Number of articles in the empirical material mentioning refugees from Ukraine, MENA refugees and other groups, 1 January 2014–31 December 2015.

Yanukovych, was ousted and fled to Russia. The escalation of violence in East Ukraine that followed the annexation of Crimea in March 2014 resulted in an outflow of refugees from Ukraine to Russia. This explains the first peak in Figure 1. Then, in the summer and autumn of 2015, many people from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) tried to get to Europe by crossing the Mediterranean or Aegean Seas – some succeeding, others losing their lives on the way. Refugees and refugee crisis were hot topics in European mass media and politics in that period, so it is not surprising that MENA refugees featured also in Russian newspapers, as shown by the second peak in Figure 1.

In the period June–August 2014, when refugees from Ukraine dominated the newspapers, MENA refugees were not mentioned at all. However, Figure 1 shows how refugees from Ukraine gradually lost their hegemonic position as the main refugee-image in Russian newspapers, to be replaced by MENA refugees. Finally, Figure 1 shows the frequency of other refugee representations appearing in the data: their presence is quite low, thus supporting my choice of focusing on Ukraine and MENA refugees in the further analysis.

In the following, I show how the meaning of 'refugee' is not given and fixed: it changes with context, as do the words that newspapers use to describe refugees.

Discourse analysis

I have identified two main discursive contexts that feature the subject position 'refugee': the crisis in Ukraine; and the refugee crisis in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. We now turn to the second and third research questions, identifying discourses that represent refugees, and discussing symbolic boundaries constructed and maintained through those discourses. As it is impossible to present an exhaustive account of all discourses and subject positions present in the almost 1000 newspaper articles in the material,[4] I describe the dominant representations of refugees, illustrated with quotes from the data.[5]

Meticulous reading and coding of the data revealed four main discourses: *security*, *humanitarian*, *integration* and *nationalist*. These labels are in line with the literature on representations of refugees and migrants (e.g. Bocskor, 2018 on security; Rajaram, 2002 on humanitarianism; Hagelund, 2003: 161–217

on integration; Moen-Larsen, 2014 on nationalism). I argue that nationalist discourse merges with security, humanitarian and integration discourses and creates contrasting symbolic boundaries between MENA refugees, refugees from Ukraine and Russians.

Security discourse

Securitisation of migration occurs when the migration discourse shifts to focus on security, and exclusion of migrants becomes legitimised by viewing them as a threat to the host society (Bryan and Denov, 2011; Ibrahim, 2005). The subject positions available to the refugee within the security discourse represent her or him as a danger and a threat. When actors articulate security discourse they construct symbolic boundaries between dangerous refugees and threatened selves and others. *Barbarian*, *illegal* and *terrorist* feature as synonyms for 'refugee'. Security discourse has the power to produce fear and therefore maintain symbolic boundaries between Russian readers and refugees – refugees are dangerous, deviant and therefore unwanted. Although some articles represent refugees from Ukraine as a security threat to Russia(ns),[6] the focus of security discourse in my data mainly concerns MENA refugees.

It is predominantly in stories where MENA refugees are connected to the nodal point Europe/EU[7] that refugees become a dangerous 'force of nature' or a threatening 'wave'. For example, 'The stream of refugees has no end. Europe is in danger!' (Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban, quoted in *RG*, 7 September 2015). MENA refugees are represented as a destructive force that will bring about the demise of the EU. In security discourse, the goal of refugee policy is to restrict the mobility of refugees and control them. Physical boundaries, fences and walls are introduced as measures to block refugees from moving across the EU. Nevertheless, many articles note that the EU has proven powerless to stop MENA refugees.

The arrival of MENA refugees in the EU is sometimes presented as an invasion of barbarians. For example: 'Here in Russia the current wave of migration to Europe is imagined as a barbarian invasion of a civilization' (*NG*, 11 September 2015). In Russian – as in English – barbarian connotes primitive, uncultured or uncivilised. Some authors point out that 'most of the barbarians intruding into Europe are young men' (*Iz*, 14 September 2015), aiming to conquer Europe and in the end to oust Europeans. 'In one generation Europeans will become a minority in Europe' (*Iz*, 8 September 2015). The nodal point Europe is constructed as a distinct civilisation, and the arrival of refugees in Europe can be interpreted in line with Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' hypothesis (Huntington, 2002).

Extract 1

> The collapse of Europe looks like this in figures: From the beginning of this year, the borders of united Europe have been crossed by more than 500 000 illegals. Another two million are waiting for an opportunity [to go to Europe] in Turkey. […] Hundreds of thousands of unregistered illegals have already crossed the EU borders, and remain unpunished. (*RG*, 16 September 2015)

Both Russian and Western media occasionally represent migration as 'illegal' (Burroughs, 2015; Hutchings and Tolz, 2015). Arguably, representing refugees as illegal is also part of the securitisation process: illegality implies that these persons are engaged in unlawful activity, and may be undesirable, perhaps dangerous. As Extract 1 shows, MENA refugees are represented as illegal because they have crossed EU borders without registration. Furthermore, in the context of security discourse, the large numbers of refugees signify a threat to Europe. The reference to unprotected EU borders contributes to the representation of a weak and victimised Europe.

Another representation of MENA refugees as threats is articulated when the refugee is linked to the nodal point 'terrorism'. Some articles claim that terrorists are infiltrating the EU posing as MENA refugees, for example,

Extract 2

A few months ago, NSA specialists broke the encrypted conversation of leaders of the 'Islamic State' and revealed that four terrorist groups have entered European countries as refugees. (*Iz*, 12 January 2015)

Many articles in the empirical material mention the Islamic State, its ideology and recruitment in refugee camps. While some articles construct insecurity based on the potential for terrorism in Europe, others link 'fake' refugees to actual terrorist attacks. For example: 'At least two of the terrorists who killed people on 13 November 2015 in Paris and Saint Denis infiltrated Europe posing as Syrian refugees' (*NG*, 9 December 2015). All subject positions are relational: because the EU is overwhelmed by large groups of refugees, refugees can remain unregistered and cross EU borders illegally – making it difficult to identify terrorists among the refugees. Not all MENA refugees are represented as terrorists, but the fact that some of them are spreads doubts about the motives of the whole group. Because security discourse has the potential to spread fear, it is a powerful way of constructing refugees as dangerous, and arguing against a liberal refugee policy.

Humanitarian discourse

Advocates of a humanitarian view on asylum emphasise that the state should protect persons whose security is under threat (Price, 2009: 4). The humanitarian discourse opens for asylum for people fleeing from violence, civil war or extreme poverty (Price, 2009: 4). Scholars have criticised humanitarian discourse for reducing refugees to ahistorical universal victims, blurring the 'individual politics and histories behind the pictures of teeming masses of bodies' (Rajaram, 2002: 252). I do not claim that humanitarian discourse produces entirely positive images of refugees while security discourse does the opposite – both can be criticised. However, security discourse and humanitarian discourse position the refugees in ways that have differing policy implications. Within the frame of the security discourse, it becomes logical to argue for stricter border security and control of refugees. In humanitarian discourse, the focus turns to protection of human rights and provision of humanitarian aid. Russian newspapers articulate humanitarian discourse when human welfare is an important nodal point and when refugees are represented as *victims* – threatened, not threatening. They represent both MENA refugees and refugees from Ukraine as people fleeing from danger and death, conflicts and wars.

Extract 3

According to Konstantin Dolgov, the Russian Foreign Ministry's Commissioner for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, the humanitarian situation in Ukraine is already comparable to that in Syria. 'Today we are counting hundreds of thousands of refugees, they are headed into the unknown, they are being fired on underway.' (*Iz*, 3 July 2014)

The humanitarian discourse positions refugees in relationships with *humanitarian actors*, such as volunteers, aid providers and states that receive refugees. In this context, the nodal points 'Russia' and 'EU states' are articulated in contrasting and sometimes binary ways. Ideas about Europe as 'Other' have always been a part of Russian identity construction (Neumann, 2017), so it is not surprising to find that these ideas feature in Russian discourses about refugees. *Iz* and *RG* claim that the EU is failing as a humanitarian actor and is unable to handle the inflow of refugees, due not least to poor cooperation within the Union: 'Meanwhile the EU heads, who have many times called for European solidarity, are unable to reach agreement on what to do with the stream of refugees that is growing every day' (*RG*, 1 September 2015). Images of a disintegrating EU feature in both humanitarian and security discourse in Russian newspapers. Whereas Europe is failing as a humanitarian actor, Russia is said to have handled the inflow of refugees in an exemplary matter.

Extract 4

> We often hear criticism of our state and appeals to follow the example of European countries. But now all talk about a unified and prosperous Europe and common values has collapsed. And the reason for this is not a war, but 'merely' refugees. […] In this context, it is useful to remember the situation in Russia in mid-2014 when the stream of refugees poured in from east Ukraine. […] Our country has worked in an exemplary way: no one died, arrivals were provided with temporarily housing, were fed, medical assistance was provided to those who needed it. (Deputy Chairman of the State Duma, quoted in *RG*, 21 October 2015)

Articles about refugees from Ukraine often depict Russia as a successful humanitarian actor. They tell of the assistance provided by the government, regions, voluntary organisations and private individuals. Here, refugees from Ukraine are often represented as passive recipients of help – they are 'clothed, fed, given humanitarian aid' (*RG*, 9 June 2014). Humanitarian discourse articulated in Russian newspapers focuses on representations of the EU and Russia, rather than offering detailed images of refugees as such. MENA refugees and refugees from Ukraine are moments in this discourse, represented through images of bodies, voiceless victims (Malkki, 1996; see also Rajaram, 2002), contributing to construct the EU as a failed humanitarian actor and Russia as a successful one. When newspapers articulate the humanitarian discourse in this way they also construct symbolic boundaries between the EU and Russia. That can have positive effects on Russians' attitudes towards refugees, as refugee reception is constructed as a competition with Europe and thus serves as an incentive to outdo Europe.

Integration discourse

'Integration' is a controversial term, the understanding and the use of which varies greatly (Aitamurto, 2017: 113; Kortmann, 2015: 1058–1016). Most Western European scholars agree that that integration is successful when immigrants participate in central societal institutions like the educational system and the labour market (Kortmann, 2015: 1060). Russian politicians understand integration as an aspect of cultural education, and use 'integration and adaptation of migrants' with reference to Russian society and values (Aitamurto, 2017: 115). My interpretation of integration is more in line with the use in Western scholarship. Integration stands 'for the variety of measures concerning immigrants' lives after the moment of immigration' (Hagelund, 2003: 161), and I use the term 'integration' as a label for a discourse that discusses such measures.

As in the humanitarian discourse, integration discourse adopts the humanitarian view that a refugee is someone in need of assistance. Humanitarian discourse places refugees in the process of transition from a state of crisis in the home country to a host society where they intend to apply for asylum or refugee status. Integration discourse takes over after arrival in the new country and after the host society has recognised them as refugees. Newspapers in my empirical material focus on integration of refugees from Ukraine because this discourse is particularly relevant for Russian readers – most refugees from Ukraine head for Russia. The representations of MENA refugees do not feature in the discussion in this section.

The sudden arrival of many newcomers represents a financial strain on state and regional budgets. It is essential to integrate them into society as quickly and smoothly as possible.

Extract 5

> We take refugee reception very seriously […] refugees from Ukraine are housed in sanatoriums, hostels, hotels; some of them are lodging with people who live alone. We want these people to be socialised as soon as possible and start working. We give them places in kindergartens and schools. (Senator of Bryansk oblast, quoted in *Iz*, 23 July 2015)

Extract 5 lists the integration measures that the Russian regions must address, and the nodal points in integration discourse articulated by Russian newspapers: housing, employment, education. Here, the

subject positions available for refugees are *employee* and *colleague*, *pupil, student.* In line with Lassila (2017), I find that the newspapers often position employees from Ukraine as a potential resource for Russia – President Putin even called refugees from Ukraine 'petrol for the economy' (*Iz*, 30 March 2015). Some articles are optimistic about the inflow of specialists; for example, claiming that '[t]he shortage of doctors in rural areas will be solved by refugees from Ukraine' (*Iz*, 28 August 2014).

Education is another important nodal point in this integration discourse. The empirical material notes the need for places in kindergartens and schools for children from Ukraine, and the wish of young adult to study. Refugees from Ukraine are not represented as competitors to Russians. For example: 'places in preschool institutions in municipalities where *there is not a high demand* for places in kindergartens may be offered to [children of refugees]' (*Iz*, 30 July 2014, emphasis added). 'The education programs in Ukraine and Russia differ with regard to some subjects. We will consider this issue and help every child gain *the missing knowledge* […] during the school year' (*Iz*, 8 July 2014, emphasis added). The articles emphasise that children from Ukraine will not be competing with Russian peers over scarce places in kindergartens. Furthermore, they stress Russian education as superior to the education that pupils and students get in Ukraine.

Hegemonic representations of refugees from Ukraine in the context of integration have the power to produce positive attitudes towards them among Russian readers. Refugees are represented both as a potential resource for the Russian economy (in regions where qualified workers are scarce) and as not threatening the Russian population. The symbolic boundaries produced here subtly position refugees from Ukraine as inferior to Russians, but in a way that can strengthen the readers' willingness to receive and integrate refugees.

Nationalist discourse

The meaning of 'nationalism' is widely discussed. For instance, studies of Russian nationalism have distinguished between ethno-nationalism that emphasises ethnic unity, and imperial nationalism that is nostalgic towards the imperial or Soviet past (Kolstø 2016; Pain 2016). Nationalist discourse constructs symbolic boundaries between Russians and refugees through a focus on cultural proximity. I argue that a nationalist discourse produces views of some ethnic groups as being more threatening than others, and influences how Russian newspapers position MENA refugees and refugees from Ukraine in connection with security, humanitarianism and integration.

Ruth Wodak (2013) notes that writers reporting on immigration and religious differences often use 'culture' as an argument – culture is imagined as bounded and static, something that differentiates 'us' from 'them'. Russian newspapers use the nodal point 'culture' both to differentiate and to unify. A common representation of MENA refugees sees them as 'people from a different culture, who were brought up with completely other values' (*Iz*, 9 November 2015). They are categorically different from Europeans and Russians. Other nodal points that contribute to the representation of MENA refugees as different are 'religion' and 'values'. Some articles position MENA refugees as representatives of a different civilisation. This brings the analysis back to security discourse, and the representation of MENA refugees as a threat to Europe. MENA refugees are threatening *because* they are different. Europe is an arena of a tug-of-war between contrasting cultures, values and religions, and threatened with 'replacement of European civilization'. MENA refugees do not belong in Europe: they are 'aliens' who will 'water down' European culture (*RG*, 31 October 2014).

Also in representations of MENA refugees as victims of war in humanitarian discourse, the failure of EU to help them is a core moment. The refugees are unwanted in the EU – but they are the EU's responsibility. Such representations alienate Russian readers from MENA refugees. Nationalist discourse maintains a symbolic boundary between Russians and refugees by claiming that MENA refugees are categorically different from 'us' and by placing all responsibility for these refugees on the EU. In contrast, in writing about refugees from Ukraine, Russian newspapers position them as culturally close to Russians.

Extract 6

Our undisputable advantage in this situation is that these people [refugees from Ukraine] are from the same culture as us, they speak Russian, making adaptation easier [than for MENA refugees in Europe]. (*RG*, 21 October 2015)

Extract 6 is an example of a common representation of refugees from Ukraine as similar to Russians. The similarities are articulated as culture (and language). Sometimes, all differences between Russians and Ukrainians are completely erased: 'I do not distinguish between Ukrainians and Russians. In my opinion, they are one people' (Putin in *Iz*, 17 April 2015). While MENA refugees are depicted as members of an alien culture, refugees from Ukraine are seen as being like Russians. Indeed, some texts give Russianness as a reason why people had to leave Ukraine. For example: 'The [refugee] woman says that practically all the Russian-speaking population of Eastern Ukraine is today under the threat of annihilation by [Ukrainian] nationalists' (*RG*, 5 March 2014). Furthermore, when Russian newspapers write about refugees from Ukraine they often use family metaphors: Ukrainians as brothers, Ukraine as fraternal country and the war in Ukraine as fratricidal war. For example, 'Today we are gathered to support our brothers in Ukraine, we are sincerely worried about their well-being and ready to help them – it is in our blood' (Governor of Krasnodar Oblast, quoted in *RG*, 3 March 2014).

Nationalist discourse tears down symbolic boundaries between Russian readers and refugees. When newspapers articulate nationalist discourse, and represent refugees from Ukraine as brothers, culturally similar to Russians or as Russian, that serves to legitimise their presence in Russia. This may explain the few representations of refugees from Ukraine as part of security discourse. Because refugees from Ukraine are the same as 'us', they are not a threat. Further, when humanitarian discourse introduces the view of refugees from Ukraine as victims of war, their cultural closeness works as an argument for helping them: 'it is in our blood'. Finally, the positioning of refugees as brothers suggests a smooth integration process. Because refugees are of the same culture, language and values, few extra measures are needed for them to be able to work or attend school in Russia.

Concluding discussion

This article has mapped the unexplored terrain of refugee representations in Russian newspapers, using discourse theory and the concepts of subject positions and symbolic boundaries to analyse these representations. Between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2015, the three Russian newspapers studied here operated with two main refugee representations: refugee from Ukraine, and MENA refugee. Examination of subject positions in discourses about security, humanitarianism, integration and nationalism reveals contrasting images of refugees from Ukraine and MENA refugees (see Table 2).

Combining the concepts of subject positions and symbolic boundaries has proven invaluable for illustrating the relational aspect of discursive positioning. The analysis has shown how different ways of positioning the refugee in discourses construct and maintain symbolic boundaries between groups. Within the nationalist discourse, for instance, a symbolic boundary is constructed between Russians and refugees, when MENA-refugees are positioned as someone with different culture and values who does not belong in Europe. Nationalist discourse merges with security discourse to produce a dominant view of MENA refugees as a threat. In contrast, the newspapers position refugees from Ukraine as culturally and ethnically close to Russians, thereby legitimising the presence of refugees from Ukraine in Russia. The newspapers produce ideas about refugees from Ukraine as part of 'us' and 'our' responsibility, whereas MENA refugees are 'other' – and are the responsibility of 'others'. It is precisely these ideas that emerge when refugees from Ukraine are called 'brothers' and MENA refugees are labelled 'barbarians'. Furthermore, when MENA refugees are positioned as threats in the security discourse, that feeds the idea of the EU as weak and threatened, and of Russia as superior to the EU.

Table 2. Refugee representations in three Russian newspapers, 1 January 2014–31 December 2015: summary.

Discourse	Who?	Nodal points	Subject positions synonymous with 'refugee'	Symbolic boundaries between
Security	Primarily MENA refugees	The EU Borders Islamic State	Barbarian Illegal Terrorist	Russians and MENA refugees Russia and the EU
Humanitarian	MENA refugees Refugees from Ukraine	Human welfare Humanitarian aid Humanitarian actors	Victim	Russia and the EU
Integration	Primarily refugees from Ukraine	Housing Employment Education	Employee Colleague Pupil Student	Russians and refugees from Ukraine
Nationalist	MENA refugees Refugees from Ukraine	Religion Culture Values	MENA refugees as aliens Refugees from Ukraine as brothers	Russians and MENA refugees Blurring the boundary between refugees from Ukraine and Russians

All texts can be considered as instances of the use of power 'in which writers act as governing subjects vis-a-vis readers, who become objects of the power' (Autto and Törrönen, 2017: 65). The authors of the texts analysed here attempt to shape the readers' understanding of refugees and gain their support for certain policies. In 2014–2015, it seemed unlikely that the Russian public would be mobilised in support of asylum for MENA refugees, whereas 81% of Russians surveyed were positive towards receiving refugees from south-eastern Ukraine in July 2014 (Levada-Center, 2014). However, the attitudes of Russians towards Ukrainians have shifted over time. In a report on xenophobic sentiments in Russia, Pipiya (2018) documents an increase in negative attitudes to migrants from Ukraine. For example, the percentage of respondents who said they did not want to see Ukrainians in Russia has increased from 13% in 2010 to 22% in 2018. Possible reasons for this change in public opinion may include the negative coverage of events in Ukraine and the Kremlin's demonisation of the Ukrainian government as 'fascist' (Alexeev and Hale 2016: 208). Systematic study of post-2015 representations of refugees from Ukraine goes beyond the scope of this article, but should be the focus of future studies.

This analysis has focused on representations of refugees in Russian newspapers, but that does not mean that the mechanisms explored here are exclusively Russian. Also elsewhere, the process of articulation of subject positions in specific ways contributes to the construction and maintenance of symbolic boundaries between groups. When we speak of people as 'compatriots' we usually also treat them as such – likewise for 'aliens'. Social constructs like these come with a prescribed treatment plan: victims need to be helped, the sick need healthcare, children should attend school, adults should work and serve as a resource – whereas terrorists should be neutralised and criminals incarcerated. Such social constructions enable policies and practices. Our perceptions about refugees play a part in determining their opportunities and limitations in our society. Future research should study representations of refugees comparatively in different cultural contexts, asking whether and why some groups are ranked as 'worthier' than others, and what kind of group boundaries such representations maintain. Answers to these questions may bring out contrasting ideas about refugees that underlie disagreements about refugee policy, not least within the EU.

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Notes

1. There are some recent studies of Russian refugee representations; for example, Braghiroli and Makarychev (2018) explore Russian representations of 2015 refugee crisis, focusing on geopolitics, and Lassila (2017) discusses the representation of Ukrainian refugees in Russian political discourse.
2. In 1993 Russia adopted its Federal Law on Refugees and established the Federal Migration Service (FMS). In 2016 FMS was replaced by the General Administration for Migration Issues of the Interior Ministry of Russia. In June 2017 Russia had 187,785 temporary asylum holders and 587 individuals with refugee status; only 2294 temporary asylum holders and 410 individuals with refugee status had non-Ukrainian background (UNHCR, 2018: 1–2). These figures are relatively low. For example, in Norway, with a population of only 5.3 million, there were 228,161 people with refugee background in 2018 (Statistics Norway, 2018). Ukrainian refugees in Russia enjoy a simplified migration regime not available to non-Ukrainian refugees. The main challenges for non-Ukrainian refugees in Russia are 'hindered access to the territory, non-admission or hampered access to the asylum procedure, growing rejection rates of persons of concern to UNHCR and lack of integration opportunities for TA [temporary asylum] holders and recognized refugees' (UNHCR, 2018: 2).
3. Available at: http://www.mlg.ru/ratings/media/federal/4748/#gazeti (accessed 25 April 2018).
4. Refugee representations excluded from this analysis because of space limitations included issues connected to ideas about homeland, mobility, health, history, war, economy, politics, popular and high culture.
5. All citations of Russian media statements were translated by the author.
6. Some articles mention illegals from Ukraine, people who cross the border from Ukraine illegally or take part in criminal activities. Other articles write about Ukrainian militants who crossed the Russian border posing as refugees.
7. Russian newspapers do not distinguish between the EU and Europe, but use these terms interchangeably; I will follow this (technically incorrect) practice in the analysis here.

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Author biography

Natalia Moen-Larsen is a PhD candidate at the Department of Sociology and Human Geography at University of Oslo. Her PhD project examines the discursive construction of 'refugees' in the Russian context. She has also published articles about the development and political use of new media (internet, blogosphere, social networks) in Russia and Russian female migrants in Norway. Other research areas are migration, culture, values, ethnic/national identities, nation building, patriotism and Russia's demographic issues.

Article III
MENA refugees

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ARTICLE

"Victims of Democracy" or "Enemies at the Gates"? Russian Discourses on the European "Refugee Crisis"

Natalia Moen-Larsen

Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo, Norway
Email: natalia.moen-larsen@sosgeo.uio.no

Abstract
With over one million people arriving in Europe as refugees, the UN Refugee Agency declared 2015 "the year of Europe's refugee crisis." This article explores the meaning-making process surrounding the "refugee crisis" in a Russian context, using discourse theory to analyze representations of refugees, Russia, and the West in opinion pieces and interview articles in three major Russian newspapers. In addition to the humanitarian and security discourses presented in existing studies, I identify a geopolitical discourse that represents refugees as victims of interventionism and democratization processes that the West has promoted in the Middle East and North Africa. More generally, this study adds to the literature on discursive construction of identity and difference.

Keywords: refugee crisis; discourse; Russian media; Russia; Europe

Introduction

In 2015, more than one million refugees, mainly from the Middle East and North Africa, came to Europe. Ever since, the refugee question has been high on the European agenda, closely monitored by the mass media – and highly politicized. Far-right parties in the EU have used discourses of threat and fear of the refugees to gain political influence and electoral success (see e.g., Feischmidt 2020). With few exceptions, research on the so-called 2015 European "refugee crisis" has generally focused on European experiences and responses (see Greussing and Boomgaarden 2017; Vollmer and Karakayali 2018; Hovden, Mjelde, and Gripsrud 2018). This article expands the focus, arguing that it is also important to study how the 2015 "refugee crisis" has influenced debates in countries not directly affected. Here, I offer an exploratory study of media representations in the Russian Federation. Some observers have argued that leaders such as Vladimir Putin (*CNBC* 2016) and Aleksandr Lukashenko (*Deutsche Welle* 2021) have used refugees as a "hybrid weapon" against the EU. This warrants closer examination of how the European "refugee crisis" has been interpreted in countries beyond the EU and the West.

Media representations of refugees carry meaning that goes beyond descriptions of persons who fit the legal criteria drawn up by the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol (UNHCR 2010).[1] These representations reflect other aspects, such as political views on immigration policy and the assignment of responsibility and blame, positioning the Self – an imagined "us" – in relation to ideas about "them."

Russian discourse offers a relevant vantage point for studying media representations of the "refugee crisis." With its unique geographical location between the East and the West, Russia has had an ambivalent relationship with the West throughout history. Contrasting ideas about Russia as

part of Europe, and of Europe as Russia's "Other," have always been part of Russian identity construction (Neumann 2017). Are representations of the "refugee crisis" in Russian media similar to or different from representations in the European media? An important contextual factor is that the European "refugee crisis" has not affected Russia directly. Russia has not been a final destination for any of the refugee routes, nor has it contributed much in terms of burden-sharing as regards the recent influx to Europe.[2] Even so, I argue that Russian commentators have used representations of the crisis strategically to position Russia vis-à-vis the West.

Studies of media representations of the European "refugee crisis" have generally concentrated on the European media: German (Vollmer and Karakayali 2018), British (Goodman, Sirriyeh, and McMahon 2017), Polish (Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, and Wodak 2018; Krzyżanowska and Krzyżanowski 2018), Austrian (Greussing and Boomgaarden 2017; Rheindorf and Wodak 2018), and Scandinavian (Hovden, Mjelde, and Gripsrud 2018). Little has been published in English about Russian interpretations of the crisis (however, see Kalsaas 2017; Braghiroli and Makarychev 2018; Moen-Larsen 2020a). The focus has been on the general media discourse on refugees and on how Russia has used the "refugee crisis" to reenter the European political scene. In contrast, this article offers an in-depth study of elite discourse based on opinion pieces and interview articles in three major Russian newspapers, focusing on the interrelation between the positioning of refugees, Russia, and the West.

Media representations in general, and elite discourses in particular, carry symbolic and persuasive power. Analyzing the discourses articulated by elites in Russian newspapers is an effective way to gain insights into Russian meaning-production on the "refugee crisis" and Russia's identity in that context. This study sheds light on an aspect not addressed by earlier research – representations of the refugee as a victim of interventionism and democratization processes initiated by the West in the Middle East and North Africa. More generally, the study adds to the literature on discursive construction of identity and difference.

Studies of Media Representations of the European "Refugee Crisis"

This article both builds on findings from relevant studies and contributes to this body of literature by delving into an under-researched case: Russia. In studies of media representations of the 2015 "refugee crisis," the refugees themselves are rarely in the center of the analysis: the focus is on macro-processes, such as politization and medialization of migration, social construction of a crisis, and the potential breakdown of European solidarity. Like other studies of media representation of asylum seekers and refugees (see, e.g., Lueck, Due, and Augoustinos 2015; Bennett et al. 2013; Leudar et al. 2008), most research on the 2015 "refugee crisis" finds negative images of refugees in the media. For example, in Poland, refugees and asylum seekers are framed as "a threat" and as "profoundly different" from the Polish "native" population (Krzyżanowski 2018, 92). Such representations of refugees as threats are part of a security discourse that has been identified across Europe – for example, in Austria (Greussing and Boomgaarden 2017; Rheindorf and Wodak 2018), Greece (Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou 2018), Serbia and Croatia (Sicurella 2018), and Slovenia (Vezovnik 2018).

Anna Triandafyllidou (2018) notes two main frames identified by research on representations of the 2015 "refugee crisis": moralization and threat. The moralization frame blames wars for the "refugee crisis," views refugees as victims, refers to common European values, appeals to solidarity and the "obligation of Europe to stand true to its humanitarian values of providing protection to those who are persecuted, to show its humanity" (Triandafyllidou 2018, 211). In contrast, the threat frame represents the wave of asylum seekers as unmanageable and unpredictable, and holds that "what migrants-refugees 'achieve' comes at the expense of the natives who welcome them" (Triandafyllidou 2018, 212). Researchers have noted a change – a discursive shift (Krzyżanowski 2018, 78) – in media portrayals of the refugees during 2015 and early 2016, when the moralization frame was replaced by a threat frame (see Vollmer and Karakayali 2018; Goodman, Sirriyeh, and

McMahon 2017; Hovden, Mjelde, and Gripsrud 2018). According to Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, and Wodak (2018, 7), a main discursive shift was the "ever-more obvious endorsement of anti-immigration rhetoric and/or of a harshened stance on openness toward refugees."

Also, studies of Russian media have identified the reoccurrence of a threat frame and overall negative representations of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa (e.g., Kalsaas 2017; Khismatullina, Garaeva, and Akhmetzyanov 2017), although a humanitarian discourse, compatible with the moralization frame, has also been identified (Moen-Larsen 2020a). On the macro-level, studies of Russian representations of the 2015 European "refugee crisis" and attitudes towards this crisis also say something about Russian ideas about Europe. The humanitarian aspect of European migration policy is perceived either as a form of complacency that threatens European security, or as a cover-up for ulterior self-serving motives (Simon 2018, 12). Papiya (2016, 162) argues that these negative attitudes toward refugees and EU refugee reception policies are connected to negative attitudes toward migrants in Russia and Russia's anti-European, anti-Western position that has emerged from the disagreements between Russia and the West about Ukraine and Syria.

Thus, research on media representations of the "refugee crisis" has explored the connection between primarily negative images and complex political processes. Here, I will discuss how authors of opinion pieces and interview articles use the discourse about the European "refugee crisis" to legitimize Russia's actions in the field of international relations. Whereas previous research discusses the connection between ideas about refugees, Russia, and the West only indirectly, this article places the identity debate at the core of the analysis.

Discourse Theory

This article is about communication and meaning-making processes in society. As words and practices are closely connected, it is essential to study what the media write about migrants and refugees. Discourse analysis is useful for scrutinizing written and spoken words and revealing the effects of "naturalizing" one social reality rather than another (Dunn and Neumann 2016, 2). "Discourse" can be broadly defined as a "particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)" (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 1). Based on this definition, a *discourse about refugees* is a particular way of speaking about one group of people and interpreting phenomena that involve refugees within a specific cultural and historical context. All discourses about refugees within a given society are part of the social construction of the meaning of "refugee." "Social constructs come with a prescribed treatment plan: victims need to be helped, the sick need healthcare, children should attend school, adults should work and serve as a resource – whereas terrorists should be neutralised and criminals incarcerated" (Moen-Larsen 2020a, 237). Social constructions enable policies and practices – and are therefore important objects of research.

My theoretical framework is discourse theory as formulated by Laclau and Mouffe (2014, 91), who define a discourse as "a structured totality" from the "articulatory practice," which is "any practice establishing a relation among elements," for example, by speaking or writing. However, the practice of articulation does not consist solely of linguistic phenomena: it also penetrates institutions, rituals, and practices that structure discursive formations (ibid., 95). For Laclau and Mouffe, "any discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre" (ibid., 98–99). Various positions within a discourse are "moments," whereas "nodal points" are privileged discursive points of this partial fixation (ibid., 91, 99). Nodal points give meaning to other moments within a discourse. For example, discourse theory sees "social class" as a nodal point in Communist discourse. Concepts such as "struggle" and "consciousness" are moments that gain meaning from their connection to "social class."

According to Jorgensen and Phillips (2002, 40), one aim of discourse analysis is to point out "the myths of society as objective reality that are implied in talk and other actions." The definition of a "myth" within the discourse theoretical framework differs from common definitions that see a myth as a symbolic narrative or a legend. For discourse theorists, myths refer to a totality while at the same

time providing an image and a feeling of unity (Laclau 1990, 99), as with, for example, "society" or "country." Although "society" does not exist as an objective reality, in our daily lives we act as if it does. According to Jorgensen and Phillips (2002, 40), "the myth, 'the country,' makes national politics possible and provides the different politicians with a platform on which they can discuss with one another." Here, I see a parallel to Anderson's (1991) concept of the nation as an imagined community – "the nation" is a myth. According to Laclau (1990, 61, 66), "the effectiveness of myth is essentially hegemonic" because it manages hegemonically to impose a particular social order. To put it differently, "myth overcodes an entire sign system onto a single denotation […]. In particular it is a powerful agent of the naturalization of meaning, and is often a site of struggles over meaning" (Twaites, Davis, and Mules 2002, 69).

In this article, I have chosen to use the concept of "myth" to distinguish between representations of individuals (refugees) and representations of states or other geographical entities (Russia or Europe). Social actors represent their societies and nations in contrast to other societies and nations, and I view such representations as mythical. Thus, I analyze representations of Russia as myths. People view Russia as an objective reality and continuously rearticulate elements that infuse "Russia" with meaning. Antagonisms reveal the taken-for-grantedness of hegemonic ideas about Russia. Is, for example, Crimea part of "Russia"? The contradictory answers to this question indicate the ongoing struggle over what "Russia" is culturally and geographically.

The articulation of particular images of others is also a question of identity. Laclau and Mouffe (2014, 97, 101) view identities as relational and constituted by subject positions within a discursive structure. According to Davies and Harré (2007, 262), "the constitutive force of each discursive practice lies in its provision of subject positions. An individual's experience of their identity can only be expressed and understood through discourse." They use the term "positioning" to underline that identity is shaped through active cooperation between agents. When we speak of others and ourselves in particular ways, we take part in constructing subject positions. For example, we often construct in- and out-groups through positive self-presentation and negative presentation of others (Richardson and Wodak 2009; Wodak 2009, 582). We position others to make them understandable to us – and in positioning others, we position ourselves.

In his study of Russia's centuries-old debate about Europe, Neumann claims, "the idea of Europe is the main 'Other' in relation to which the idea of Russia is defined" (Neumann 2017, 3). Thus, an analysis of Russian discourse about the European "refugee crisis" can illustrate the complexity of identity construction. How social actors position refugees in the discourse and the ideas they articulate about Europe in the context of the 2015 "crisis" also reflects how they see themselves and Russia. In this article, I show how one word – "refugee" – can contribute to unpacking a complex set of ideas and contested mythical representations of Russia, Europe, and the West that circulate in Russian society.

Data from *Izvestiya*, *Novaya Gazeta*, and *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*

According to Freedom House (2021), the Russian government controls all the national television networks, and many radio and print outlets. A handful of independent outlets still operate, most of them online and constantly under threat of closure. This study treats Russian newspapers as channels that produce, reproduce, and disseminate discourse. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the differing points of departure for media texts on the "refugee crisis" produced in Western Europe and media texts produced in Russia.

This article analyzes data gathered from three Russian newspapers with nationwide circulation: *Izvestiya* (*Iz*), *Novaya gazeta* (*NG*), and *Rossiiskaya gazeta* (*RG*). *Izvestiya* is a daily newspaper that publishes reports on current affairs in Russia and abroad. In my data sample, *Izvestiya* represents mainstream pro-government discourse. *Novaya gazeta* is known for its government-critical position and investigative reporting. It was, until March 2022, one of the few remaining newspapers that represented the critical opposition in Russia. In 2021, its editor, Dmitrii Muratov, was awarded

the Nobel Peace Prize for his "efforts to safeguard freedom of expression, which is a precondition for democracy and lasting peace" (Nobel Peace Prize 2021).[3] Finally, *Rossiiskaya gazeta* is the official newspaper of the government of the Russian Federation and thus represents the official discourse in my data sample. In 2015, the year the analyzed texts were published, circulation figures (as of September) for the printed version of *Izvestiya* were 73,520; 216,550 for *Novaya gazeta;* and 159,118 for *Rossiiskaya gazeta*. While these figures may seem quite modest, all three newspapers have a strong online presence and a high citation rate.[4] Indeed, since 2015, the three have consistently been ranked among the ten most-cited newspapers in Russia.[5]

I have used the databases East View Information Services and Integrum World Wide to identify opinion pieces and interview articles that mention refugees from the Middle East and North Africa and that appeared in the print versions of *Izvestiya*, *Novaya gazeta*, and *Rossiiskaya gazeta* in the period January–December 2015.[6] The printed versions of the newspapers were chosen because of their accessibility and the possibility of downloading large amounts of text, based on word searches. As all articles available in the print version of the three newspapers can also be read online, the potential readership of the material is not limited to the readers of the physical edition. Further, I chose to focus on opinion pieces and interview articles because these reflect the personal opinion of a specific author or interviewee, or the position of an organization or government that the writer represents.

The authors and interviewees[7] in my data are drawn from the Russian and non-Russian elite (see Table 1). Yablokov (2018, 106) found that the use of non-Russian experts to provide legitimacy to controversial statements is a distinct characteristic of the official Russian discourse: "The fact that these experts from the West had similar ideas to those in Russia provided Russian journalists' reports with pseudo-objective appearance, as though they were presenting how the events were seen from abroad" (Yablokov 2018, 106). I have chosen to keep the texts with foreign authors as part of the analysis because, like all the other texts in the data sample, they are part of the construction of the meaning of the "refugee crisis" in Europe for Russian audiences.

I concur with Sicurella (2018, 62) who argues that public intellectuals and other elites have symbolic power to shape people's beliefs and attitudes. Not all societal actors can publish their

Table 1. Authors of opinion pieces and interviewees[8]

	Iz	*NG*	*RG*	SUM
Expert	10	10	23	43
Journalist	10	4	6	21
Cultural elite	4	4	7	15
Pundit	9	1	3	13
Non-Russian expert	6	1	6	13
Political elite	2	2	6	10
Non-Russian head of government/ state	–	–	4	4
Non-Russian political elite	1	1	1	3
Non-Russian cultural elite	1	–	2	3
Economic elite	–	1	–	1
Head of state	–	–	1	1
Non-Russian religious elite	–	–	1	1
SUM	43	24	60	127

opinions in a newspaper, but elites have access to means of mass communication and therefore the opportunity to make their representations of reality available to a large readership. That makes it important to scrutinize the discourse articulated by elites.

The data sample includes 43 texts from *Izvestiya* (39 opinion pieces, 4 interview articles), 24 from *Novaya gazeta* (20 opinion pieces, 4 interview articles), and 60 from *Rossiiskaya gazeta* (39 opinion pieces, 21 interview articles). The great majority of texts – 116 of 127 – were published between September and December 2015. Several events can explain this heightened focus on refugees after September 2015: the appearance of the picture of the drowned three-year old refugee Aylan Kurdi in international news media, Russia's involvement in the conflict in Syria, and the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris.

I have used NVivo to sort and code the data. In the coding, I have focused on five core points: overarching theme, author of the text/interviewee, subject position "refugee," representation of Russia, and representations of Europe/the EU, USA, or the West in general. The top five recurring themes in the data are international relations (40 texts), the "refugee crisis" (23 texts), the conflict in Syria (17 texts), culture (e.g., literature, film, books) (9 texts), and terrorism in France (8 texts).[9] Throughout the analysis, I focus on the relationship between ideas about "us" and ideas about "them" – "others" who are different from "us" and who define "us." Ideas about "us" are examined in connection with how the myth "Russia" is reproduced in my empirical material. Ideas about "others" are representations of refugees and articulations of the myths of "the West," "Europe," and "the USA."

Representations of Refugees

The authors of the opinion pieces and the interviewees in my data often use the term "refugee" without any further explanation. For example, in 27 texts, "refugee" is used in referring to a topic of conversation or a news item. However, the articulations of the subject position "refugee" that I have identified in most texts are consistent with the findings of the research cited above. Commentators in the two pro-government newspapers *Izvestiya* and *Rossiiskaya gazeta* articulated mainly negative representations of refugees coming to Europe, representing the subject position "refugee" as a threat to the EU and to Europe, and as part of security discourse (*Iz* 12, *RG* 24). In contrast, only two commentators in the liberal opposition newspaper *Novaya gazeta* did so.

When representing refugees as a threat to Europe, authors combine the nodal point "refugees" with moments such as "Europe," "crisis," "threat," "illegals," "barbarians," "flood," "uncontrolled flow," "invasion," and "borders." These moments signal a security discourse where the refugees are represented as a danger against which Europeans must protect themselves: "At this moment there are hundreds of thousands of people at the gates of Europe, they are not enemies of the Europeans but have nevertheless become a serious threat to the European Union" (non-Russian political elite, op-ed, *Iz*, September 23); "The migrant invasion in Europe is the worst challenge to Europe in its entire history" (pundit, op-ed, *Iz*, September 14); "the illegals are weakening the Old World" (expert, op-ed, *RG*, April 21); "The EU countries are experiencing a total flooding by uninvited strangers" (expert, op-ed, *RG*, September 11); and with the large numbers of refugees coming to the EU, "Europe will be brought to its knees" (cultural elite, op-ed, *NG*, November 16).[10]

Further, and as part of a security discourse, some authors, primarily in *Rossiyskaya gazeta,* represent refugees as a security threat with reference to moments such as "terrorist," "terrorism," and the "Islamic State" (IS) (10 texts in *RG*, 4 in *Iz*, 2 in *NG*). Sergey Ivanov, Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration, asks rhetorically, "Do you think that there are no so-called 'sleepers' among them [the refugees]? 'Sleeping' agents and terrorists who come to the Old World to establish themselves quietly, to hide and to wait?" (political elite, op-ed, *RG*, October 20). Aleksandr Lebedev, a well-known Russian businessman, compares IS with a cancerous tumor that is spreading across the continents, "assisted by the flows of countless refugees with whom the bearers of the ideology of hatred penetrate Europe and America" (economic elite, op-ed, *NG*, September 14).[11]

Also, traces of a humanitarian discourse emerge in my data (16 texts in *RG*, 11 in *NG*, 5 in *Iz*). Moments the commentators articulate together with the nodal point "refugee" range from "war" and "death" to "humanism" and "human being." Indeed, some authors position the refugees as the victims of war or violent conflict – for example, as "war-bitten refugees" (journalist, op-ed, *NG*, September 23, 2015). However, some of these are non-Russian voices referred to in the Russian newspapers: for example, researchers from the German Institute for International and Security Affairs are reported as saying that the violence in Syria will continue to push people out of the country (non-Russian experts, op-ed, *NG*, December 18). In an interview, Vygaudas Ušackas, EU Ambassador to Russia, stated: "We [in the EU] follow the principle of humanism: we need to help those who flee from war or other threats to life, and respect the human dignity of each human being" (non-Russian political elite, interview, *NG*, September 14). In contrast to the image of refugees as a threat and Europe as threatened, these non-Russian authors in *Novaya gazeta* represent the refugees as threatened and Europe as a humanitarian actor that can provide shelter to them.

Other authors represent refugees as victims, as shown by images of those who drowned at sea or suffocated in a trailer on their journey through Europe. "People who some years ago were useful members of society, heads of families, mothers with children, who built, plowed, and gathered olives have turned into human dust, driven along the roads, or into fish food" (journalist, op-ed, *Iz*, April 22). Some invoke the pathos-laden victim trope of "women and children" – for example, "A refrigerated truck containing 71 bodies of refugees from Syria was found on the side of the Autobahn southeast of Vienna. Apparently, these people died from suffocation: and there were women and children among them" (expert, op-ed, *NG*, August 31). The author of this text argues that these Syrian victims were not accorded the mourning they deserved in Austria, and that this reflects "the general wariness or even anger of Europeans towards the uninvited guests" (ibid.) Also here, victim representations are used to construct an idea about Europe – but in contrast to the image of Europe as a successful humanitarian actor, Europe is now represented as cold and unfeeling toward the refugees.

What most clearly sets the Russian media discourse apart from the refugee-representations found in other European media is the representation of the refugee as a victim of Western interventionism and the democratization processes in the Middle East and North Africa (8 texts in *RG,* 6 in *Iz*). Here, commentators combine the representation of the refugee as a victim with moments like "the West," "democratization," and "the Middle East" – all of them part of a geopolitical discourse rather than the above-mentioned humanitarian discourse. In the words of the conservative pundit Egor Kholmogorov:

> Today's refugees come from until recently relatively prosperous countries in the Middle East and North Africa, which were destroyed by the "Arab Spring" initiated by the United States and enthusiastically supported by the European leaders. Europe is dealing with the fruits of its own labor and its own stupidity. […] The entire stream of refugees sailing from Libya to Italy and making their way through Turkey and Greece to Hungary and then to Germany are people whose problems Sarkozy, Hollande, and Merkel are directly responsible for, together with Obama. (Pundit, op-ed. *Izvestiya*, September 1)

Likewise, Konstantin Dolgov, Commissioner for Human Rights at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, claims, "these refugee flows are another consequence of the notorious democratization in the Middle East and North Africa region" (political elite, op-ed, *RG*, July16).[12]

In addition to scrutinizing the written word, it is important to note the gaps in the discourse – what is *not* said? Above, I mentioned the argument put forward by some Western European and US observers about refugees being used by Russia and Belarus as a hybrid weapon against the EU. However, I do not find this discourse articulated in my data. Although the metaphor of the refugees-as-weapons is a construction rooted in security discourse, it is not part of the Russian security discourse on refugees – it is a construct of actors in the West. This Western discourse

securitizes Russia and produces an image of Russia as an antagonist in a hybrid war. Such representations of Russia can be viewed as an extension of other enemy images of Russia originating in the West and some post-Communist countries (Lanoszka 2016; Wither 2016; Fridman 2018). Thus, the absence of representations of the refugee-as-weapons in my empirical material is quite logical – this way of seeing Russia is foreign to Russians.[13]

In contrast, the representation of refugees as *victims* of Western interventionism and democratization is a Russian construct: Russian actors position the collective West as a perpetrator, responsible for conflicts in Middle East and North Africa. This illustrates how contrasting representations of refugees and the discourses of which they are part also rearticulate the myth of Russia and the West as each other's opponents.

Thus, we find three discourses in the empirical material – security, humanitarian, and geopolitical – that elites articulate in discussing refugees in the context of the 2015 "crisis." The representation of the subject position "refugee" in these discourses must be analyzed in relation to other nodal points. Op-eds and interviews are never "only" about the refugees: they also articulate myths about Russia, Europe, and the West. In the following sections, I discuss such myths in light of these three overarching discourses.

Representations of Russia

Although my criterion in data collection was the use of the word "refugee," most of the texts were not primarily about refugees as people. The most frequent overarching topic was international relations in general (40 texts). Thus, in addition to saying something about the social construction of the subject position "refugee" in Russian newspapers, my empirical material shows how the commentators rearticulate the myth of Russia as an actor in the field of international relations. The two most frequent representations of Russia are as a partner (27 texts) or as an object of criticism (14 texts). There is a clear divide here, between opinions articulated in *Novaya gazeta*, on the one side, and in *Izvestiya* and *Rossiiskaya gazeta* on the other. Whereas many of those writing in *Novaya gazeta* voice criticism of Russia, the representations of Russia in *Izvestiya* and *Rossiiskaya gazeta* are mostly positive.

The timeframe for this study coincides with the first few months of Russia's military intervention in Syria, which started on September 30, 2015 (*Al Jazeera* 2015). Because many refugees who fled to Europe in 2015 came from Syria (UNHCR 2016), several of the texts voice opinions about Russia's intervention in Syria. Such discussions of Syria are part of the geopolitical discourse mentioned above; the nodal point "Russia" is combined with discursive moments such as "the West," "Syria," "Assad," "Europe," "USA," and "the global order." Those writing in *Rossiiskaya gazeta* and *Izvestiya* position Russia as partner to Europe and the West, and to Assad's regime in Syria. They claim that, by assisting Assad, Russia is helping Europe to deal with the refugee question.

Further, the geopolitical discourse about the conflict in Syria is linked to a security discourse about the global fight against terrorism. Some authors equate siding with Assad with fighting IS terrorism or terrorism in general. For example, the above-mentioned Sergey Ivanov explains Russia's official position in the following way: "Russia considered it possible to answer the legitimate leadership of Syria to help him [Assad] in the fight against terrorists […], as the situation became intolerable" (political elite, interview, *RG*, October 20). German political scientist Alexander Rahr claims: "In Syria, Russia seeks to become the leading force of the anti-terrorism alliance" (non-Russian expert, op-ed, *RG*, October 8).[14]

Several commentators in *Izvestiya* articulate a myth of Russia as a hero that will protect the world from the chaos caused by the emergence of IS: Russia "warned that this uncontrollable chaos would come […] Russia is doing what she can in order to […] defeat the evil force [IS] that calls into question our entire culture, the entire Christian world" (expert, op-ed, *Iz*, October 1). Whereas those writing in *Izvestiya* represent Russia as heroic, commentators in *Rossiiskaya gazeta* stress Russia as a strategic actor, for example, through references to status and to the "Great Game" in

international relations. "Through military operations on the side of Assad, Russia has entered the 'Great Game' because it concerns participation in the building of a global world order" (non-Russian expert, op-ed, *RG*, October 8). By intervening in Syria, Russia has shown that it is a "great power" now "getting up from its knees" (cultural elite, interview, *RG*, February 26).

Moreover, several writers claim that the West perceives Russia primarily as a threat, or use the expression "Russian threat" (e.g., journalist, op-ed, *RG*, September 22).[15] Some commentators connect this "Russophobia" (e.g., pundit, *Izvestiya*, September 14) with the "erroneous" perception "that Russia's actions provoked the powerful flow of refugees to Europe" (expert, op-ed, *RG*, November 25) – a perception that, according to these writers, flourishes in the West. On the contrary, they hold, by intervening in Syria Russia is assisting the world in solving the "refugee crisis":

> Our planes are fighting for Syria, to save it, and to prevent the spread of a terrible black pit […]. By preventing the emergence of a black pit, we are also saving Europe. Because millions of new refugees would pour out of this pit and […] overflow the European world. (Pundit, op-ed, *Iz*, October 20)

In contrast to the articulations of the myths of Russia as heroic and strategic, commentators in *Novaya gazeta* are critical of Russia's actions on the international arena and its geopolitical ambitions. For example, one expert claims that Putin sees himself as the liberator of "not only Europe but the whole world," and Russia's imperial ambitions explain why it is meddling in European affairs (expert, op-ed, *NG*, November 18).[16] In addition to the geopolitical discourse noted above, those writing in *Novaya gazeta* articulate a humanitarian discourse when they criticize Russians for their lack of compassion and for expressing contempt towards refugees from the Middle East and North Africa. For example, "Educated Russians openly fear and despise refugees who are fleeing to Europe from war" (pundit, op-ed, *NG*, September 28); "Almost no one is coming to us from the Middle East, nevertheless [Russians] speak with great contempt of refugees who are not even coming to us" (expert, op-ed, *NG*, November 16). That author is one of the few who mention the absence of refugees in Russia. Overall, the texts are quiet on the possibility of Russia offering asylum to the refugees.[17] This indicates a naturalized view of refugee reception in the context of the "refugee crisis" as a European challenge that Russia is not meant to deal with domestically.

In contrast to ideas of the West as Russophobic, several authors in *Novaya gazeta* see Russia as *part of* Western civilization. For example, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in France in November 2015, one Russian expert stated, "we are the people of Western civilization. Together with other European countries, Russia will defend its values – the republic, the enlightenment, the secular state – from all who encroach on them" (expert, op-ed, *NG*, November 16). Similarly, Grigorii Yavlinskii, a well-known liberal politician, predicted a future for Russia together with Europe:

> It will become clear that Russia follows a common historical path with other European countries, including Orthodox countries, NATO members, together with the United States and all who share affiliation with European civilization in the broadest sense. (Political elite, op-ed, *NG*, October 19)

Representations of the EU/Europe, USA, and the West

In writing about refugees, commentators often refer to Russia's relationship with EU/Europe, the USA and the West. Europe has been identified as Russia's main "Other." When Russians discuss Europe, they are also discussing themselves; thus, dominant ideas about Europe among political

actors are crucial for the course of domestic and foreign policy (Neumann 2017, 3). The representations of the "refugee crisis" in my data represent a recontextualization of the discourse that has characterized Russian discussions of Europe for centuries: the question of whether Russia and Europe share the same path. In addition, ideas about the West may merge with ideas about the USA. Studies have noted that, in Russia, the West/USA is often represented as a distant enemy masterminding various plots against Russia, such as the Chechen terrorist threat (e.g., Wilhelmsen, 2014) and the 2014 Euromaidan in Ukraine (e.g., Gaufman, 2017; Szostek, 2017; Moen-Larsen, 2020b). For many Russians, it has become natural to see the West as an opponent to Russia: this is a common myth about the West.

The three most frequently articulated representations in my data are of the West as the cause of the "refugee crisis" (47 texts), of the EU as disintegrating or being in crisis (26), and of disagreements about refugees in the EU (22 texts). Many texts claim that the West itself caused the 2015 "refugee crisis" and that the wave of refugees serves as "a punishment" to Europe (22 texts in *Izvestiya*, 3 in *Novaya gazeta*, and 22 in *Rossiiskaya gazeta*). Discursive moments such as "the West," "the USA," "Europe," "NATO," "the Middle East," and "Africa" signal a geopolitical discourse. "The arrival of the barbarians is a punishment for your [the West's] destruction of the Middle East, Asia and Africa for a whole millennium" (pundit, op-ed, *Iz*, September 8). According to Evgenii Shestakov, editor at the international politics desk at *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, "one of the key reasons for large-scale immigration from Libya was the military operation of the coalition headed by the USA, which led to the fall of the Gaddafi regime" (expert, op-ed, *RG*, June 18). The controversial Russian-Israeli journalist Israel Shamir presents the chronology of events thus:

> NATO bombs Libya, the country falls to pieces, Gaddafi is lynched, and thousands of refugees leave the country – some go to the south of Africa, others over the sea. The colonies of refugees are growing in Europe, and the European social structure is falling apart under their weight. (Journalist, op-ed, *Iz*, April 22)

The above quote is representative of the texts that employ this line of argument. It is also the official Russian position, expressed by both President Putin (head of state, speech, *RG*, October 27) and his Chief of Staff Sergey Ivanov (political elite, interview, *RG*, October 20).[18] Some authors in *Izvestiya* and *Rossiiskaya gazeta* stress that the role played by Europe is minor in comparison to that of the USA: the USA is the main villain, with Europe as its weaker "little brother." However, although the USA, as "the most influential force in the modern world," is to blame for the conflicts that have led to the "refugee crisis," Europe too bears responsibility, because it "did very little to stop the conflicts when that was still possible" (non-Russian political elite, op-ed, *Iz*, September 23). According to these commentators, US interference in conflicts in the Middle East brought about the rise of Islamic extremism, in turn forcing people to flee from their homes and become refugees (e.g., journalist, op-ed, *Iz*, November 16; political elite, op-ed, *Iz*, December 21; expert, op-ed, *RG*, November 17).

In addition to the geopolitical discourse, and discussions of the origins of the "refugee crisis", the authors in my data also note the effects the crisis has had on the EU. Some writers, primarily in *Rossiiskaya gazeta,* claim that the "refugee crisis" poses a severe threat to the very existence of the EU. These commentators articulate a security discourse, combining the nodal point "the EU" with discursive moments such as "disintegrating," "dying," and "in great crisis" – all signaling the significance of the threat that the refugees pose to the EU (6 texts in *Iz*, 1 in *NG*, 19 in *RG*). For example, in a text titled "Migrants can ruin the EU," the writer argues: "the illegals are becoming the main threat to the unity of the European Union" (expert, op-ed, *RG*, June 18). On a similar note, other commentators write, "The entire concept of the European Union is coming apart at the seams" (political elite, op-ed, *Iz*, December 21); "all illusions about a united Europe have collapsed" (non-Russian cultural elite, op-ed, *Iz*, May 6); "Europe is experiencing the most serious crisis in its

history" (non-Russian expert, op-ed, *Iz*, November 9); and "the foundations of a united Europe have cracked" (political elite, op-ed, *RG*, October 23).[19]

Other commentators paint a less dramatic picture: the European Union is perhaps not disintegrating, but the EU countries cannot agree on how to deal with the "refugee crisis" (4 texts in *Iz*, 3 in *NG*, 15 in *RG*). Key moments here are "disagreement" and "refugee quotas." Several writers emphasize that the lines of disagreement about refugees go between countries in the West (except for the UK) and those in the East of Europe. For example, "Such a dramatic influx of refugees from the Middle East into Germany could seriously damage its policy. Eastern Europe does not share the Germans' over-tolerance towards migrants and is closing its borders" (non-Russian expert, op-ed, *Iz*, September 25); "small states feel that their interests are not sufficiently taken into account, and refuse to obey common decisions" (non-Russian experts, op-ed, *NG*, December 18).[20]

Contributions in the government-critical newspaper *Novaya gazeta* display a range of opinions. For example, several authors point out that the EU countries cannot agree on what to do with the refugees. However, there is less focus on refugees as the potential cause of Europe's imminent collapse, or on representations of the West as the main cause of the Syria conflict, terrorist attacks, and the "refugee crisis," although this discourse is articulated in *Novaya gazeta*. The opposite view is also represented: Europe can handle the refugees (non-Russian political elite, interview, *NG*, September 14). Those writing in *Novaya gazeta* focus less on rearticulating the myth of the USA as the main villain, with Europe as its weaker "little brother." Several *Novaya gazeta* writers contest these myths and rearticulate the idea of Russia as part of Europe and the West.

Concluding Discussion

This analysis of opinion pieces and interview articles reveals three main discourses – the security discourse, humanitarian discourse, and geopolitical discourse – that have shaped the Russian media debate on the European "refugee crisis" (summarized in Table 2). Earlier studies of refugee representations in European media have found examples of the security discourse and humanitarian discourse, but the geopolitical discourse seems particular to the Russian media. This article has thus unpacked the representation of the refugee as a victim of interventionism and

Table 2. Discourses, moments, and representations: main findings

	Security discourse	Humanitarian discourse	Geopolitical discourse
Moments	• Borders • Invasion • Islamic State • Terrorism	• Humanism • Human being • Death • War	• Russia • The West • Middle East • The global order
Refugee	• Threat	• Victim of violent conflict or war	• Victim of Western interventionism and democratization
The myth of Russia	• Partner in the global fight against terrorism	• Partner in bringing peace to the Middle East • No compassion for the refugees	• Great power • Strategic • Meddling in Europe's business • Part of Western civilization
The myth of Europe, the USA, and the West	• Threatened • EU disintegrating • EU countries in disagreement	• Europe/the EU has the capacity to receive refugees	• The West as "Other" • The West as cause of the refugee crisis • Russophobic • Partner to Russia

democratization processes promoted by the West in the Middle East and North Africa, an image not previously featuring in research on the 2015 European "refugee crisis."

The *security discourse* represents refugees as a threat to the EU, whether as a result of the sheer numbers arriving in Europe or because the refugees are seen as potential IS terrorists. Writers who articulate this discourse voice the myth of EU as weak, torn by internal conflict, disintegrating and, according to some, dying. Russia is presented as the hero who can save Europe, and the discourse legitimizes Russian military intervention in Syria as a contribution to the global fight on terrorism and neutralizing the IS threat.

In contrast, the *humanitarian discourse* views the refugees as victims of a violent conflict or war, now seeking asylum in the EU. From this perspective, it might seem reasonable to expect that Russia would consider contributing to solving the "refugee crisis" by granting asylum to refugees from Middle East and North Africa. However, given the near-complete absence of this discussion in my data, it is clear that the overwhelming majority consider Russia's military intervention in Syria as its main contribution to resolving the "refugee crisis." According to some authors, Russia's motive for military intervention is to bring peace to the Middle East, so that people will have no reason to flee to the EU: instead, they will have incentives to return home.

Whereas the security and humanitarian discourses focus on the consequences of the "refugee crisis" for Europe, the *geopolitical discourse* focuses on the origins of the crisis. Authors here argue that the West, headed by the USA, has fueled revolutions and created conflicts that have forced the refugees to leave their homes. These refugees are the "punishment" for Europe's meddling in the politics of other countries. Most of the contributions in the two pro-government newspapers rearticulate the myth of the West as Russia's Russophobic "Other," and with Russia as a great and strategic power now claiming its rightful place in the global order. Because the West has caused the "refugee crisis," it must bear the responsibility for giving asylum to the refugees. By contrast, writers in the opposition-oriented *Novaya gazeta* articulate a rival geopolitical discourse, positioning Russia as part of Western civilization. They argue that instead of intervening in Syria, Russia should cooperate with Europe to find common solutions to the "refugee crisis."

A discourse-theoretical framework has proven a useful tool for exploring the antagonisms and struggles over meaning in Russian newspapers. Threat representations of refugees are most common in pro-government newspapers, whereas images of refugees as victims appear in almost half of the texts in the government-critical *Novaya gazeta*. Importantly, none of those writing in *Novaya gazeta* portray the refugees as victims of Western interventionism and democratization. This clearly points to a clash between supporters of official discourse and the opposition as regards the meaning of "refugee." Discourse-theoretical concepts have made it possible to tap into the core of these disagreements on how to interpret the 2015 "refugee crisis": whether the refugees should be feared or helped, and why; who is to blame for the "crisis"; and how to solve it.

In addition, this article has shown how social actors recontextualize familiar discourses in interpreting a new phenomenon. The 2015 "refugee crisis" was in many ways unprecedented – at least, in recent history. When a new phenomenon arises, society needs a logical explanation and interpretation. If the phenomenon is framed as "a crisis," then there is also a demand for a solution. In my data, Russian pro-government newspapers (re)articulate the decades-old myth about the antagonistic relationship between the West and Russia, presenting the West as responsible for the "crisis" and legitimizing Russian military intervention in Syria as a logical solution to the refugee problem. In contrast, several writers in *Novaya gazeta* are critical of Russia's actions on the international arena and its geopolitical ambitions and view Russia as part of Western civilization. Thus, mythical representations of "Russia" become points of struggle between different discourses over the meaning of Russia's identity.

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Notes

1 "A refugee, according to the Convention, is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (UNHCR 2010, 3).
2 In 2019, Russia granted asylum to less than 0.2% of the world's refugee population (Civic Assistance Committee, 2020).
3 The prize was awarded jointly to Maria Ressa and Dmitry Muratov (Nobel Peace Prize 2021).
4 See https://iz.ru/ for *Izvestiya*, https://novayagazeta.ru/ for *Novaya gazeta*, and https://rg.ru/ for *Rossiyskaya gazeta*.
5 Since August 2015, I have followed the media monitoring company Medialogia's rating of Russia's top-10 most cited newspapers (Medialogia n.d.). Medialogia has developed its own Citation Index based on information from more than 72,000 mass-media sources: TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, news agencies, online media, and blogs. In addition, Medialogia bases its rating on the number of links to media texts posted by users in their social media accounts.
6 This study is part of a larger project based on a total of 1,146 newspaper articles: 264 from *Izvestiya*, 288 from *Novaya gazeta* and 594 from *Rossiiskaya gazeta* – all the texts that used the word "refugee" in the period January 1, 2014–December 31, 2015. The point of departure for this project is that words in themselves are "empty signifiers" that get their meaning from context-specific discourses. The project then maps all available refugee representations in the data sample. Only one search word was used to find the texts for the data sample – "refugee*" (*bezhen**). I found that 936 of the texts concern either refugees from Ukraine (576) or refugees from Middle East and North Africa (360). This article focuses on the texts that cover refugees from Middle East and North Africa between January and December 2015. Further, I limited the data to opinion pieces and interview articles in order to eliminate all texts without a distinct author voice, resulting in 127 texts.
7 Henceforth, I do not distinguish between authors of opinion pieces and interviewees in the running text but refer to all as authors, writers, or commentators.
8 As to the categories, *expert/non-Russian expert:* scientists, researchers, academics, defense analysts and editors. *Cultural elite/non-Russian cultural elite:* professionals working in the fields of literature, music, theater or film. *Political elite/non-Russian political elite:* ministers, elected or appointed officials, and politicians. The sole commentator from the *economic elite* is a well-known businessman. *Head of state/non-Russian head of state or government:* President Putin, the Prime Minister of Bulgaria, the presidents of Syria, Italy, and Austria. The representative of *the non-Russian religious elite* interviewed in the data sample is the Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.
9 The remaining 30 texts concern domestic affairs in Russia (4), migration (3), values (3), human rights (2), religion (2), the USA (2), Germany (2), the war with IS (2), securitization (1), France (1), Putin's politics (1), refugees (1), the economy (1), Brexit (1), Europe (1), Nazism (1), IS terrorism (1), and Turkey (1).
10 Other examples of refugees as "threats to Europe": cultural elite, op-ed, *Iz*, Sept. 3; pundit, op-ed, *Iz*, Sept. 8; expert, op-ed, *Iz*, Oct. 1; journalist, op-ed, *NG*, Sept. 14; expert, op-ed, *RG*, June 18; non-Russian expert, op-ed, *RG*, Aug. 10; pundit, op-ed, *RG*, Oct. 12; expert, op-ed, *RG*, Nov. 16. All dates 2015.

11 Other examples of refugees as "potential terrorists": pundit, op-ed, *Iz*, Nov. 20; expert, op-ed, *NG*, Nov. 16; expert, op-ed, *RG*, April 21; cultural elite, interview, *RG*, Sept. 9; journalist, op-ed, *RG*, Dec. 1. All dates 2015.

12 Other examples of refugees as "victims of democracy": cultural elite, op-ed, *Iz,* Sept. 3; pundit, op-ed, *Iz*, Sept. 14; expert, op-ed, *Iz*, Oct. 1; expert, op-ed, *RG*, Sept. 19; political elite, op-ed, *RG*, Oct. 23; Vladimir Putin, speech, *RG*, Oct. 27. All dates 2015.

13 In 2015, the representation of refugees-as-weapons featured in Norwegian media discussions of "the Arctic route" used by asylum-seekers to get Norway and Finland via Russia (Wilhelmsen and Gjerde 2018, 394). This route was not mentioned at all in the data sample used for this article. However, it was the topic of five articles in *Novaya gazeta* (Sept. 9, Sept. 25, Nov. 2, Nov. 13, Dec. 11) and one article in *Rossiiskaya gazeta* (Nov. 9) in the data of the overarching research project discussed in note 6. Neither of these articles used the image of refugee-as-weapon in their discussion of the Arctic route.

14 Other examples of Russia as "a partner": pundit, op-ed, *Iz*, Oct. 5; non-Russian expert, op-ed, *Iz*, Oct. 22; journalist, op-ed, *Iz*, Nov. 16; economic elite, op-ed, *NG*, Sept. 14; expert, op-ed, *NG*, Sept. 23 expert, op-ed, *RG*, Sept. 16; Bashar al-Assad, interview, *RG*, Sept. 17; political elite, interview, *RG*, Oct. 20. All dates 2015.

15 Other examples of Russia as "a threat": cultural elite, op-ed, *Iz*, Sept. 3; political elite, op-ed, *RG*, Oct. 12; political elite, interview, *RG*, Oct. 20; expert, interview, *RG*, Dec. 10. All dates 2015.

16 Other examples of criticism of Russia: non-Russian political elite, interview, *NG*, Sept. 14; journalist, op-ed, *NG*, Sept. 23; political elite, op-ed, *NG*, Oct. 28; expert, op-ed, *NG*, Nov. 9. All dates 2015.

17 Lack of texts about refugees in Russia is partly due to my limiting the data sample to op-eds and interviews. There were a few articles about refugees from Middle East and North Africa in Russia in the complete data-set described above (mostly in *Novaya gazeta*). Some of these are mentioned in note 13.

18 Other examples of "the West as the cause of the 'refugee crisis'": non-Russian cultural elite, interview, *Iz*, May 6; pundit, op-ed, *Iz*, Sept. 1; expert, op-ed, *Iz*, Oct. 1; cultural elite, op-ed, *NG*, Nov. 16; economic elite, op-ed, *NG*, Sept. 14.; political elite, op-ed, *RG*, Oct. 2; non-Russian expert, op-ed, *RG*, Oct. 8; expert, op-ed, *RG*, Nov. 24. All dates 2015.

19 Other examples of "disintegration of the EU": political elite, op-ed, *Iz*, Dec. 21; expert, op-ed, *NG*, Nov. 18; expert, op-ed, *RG*, Aug. 24; non-Russian expert, op-ed, *RG*, Oct. 8; expert, op-ed, Dec. 9. All dates 2015.

20 Other examples of "disagreements about refugees within the EU": expert, op-ed, *NG*, Aug. 31; expert, op-ed, *NG*, Nov. 16; expert, op-ed, *RG*, Oct. 28. All dates 2015.

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