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Russia's Security Policy under Putin: A critical perspective

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Acknowledgements

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Abbreviations

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CS	Copenhagen School of Security
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
EU	European Union
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
UN	United Nations
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organisation
YUKOS	Yuganskneftegaz Kuybyshevnefteorgsintez

1. Introduction

Although losing its superpower status with the end of the Cold War, Russia continues to be seen as a central player within international security. In recent years, for example, it has played a high-profile role in a number of pertinent security events, crisis and developments. These include making use of its status as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council to, alongside China, veto a number of UN resolutions on the Syrian civil war, the signing of the 'new' START agreement on nuclear arms reductions with the US in 2010, an armed conflict with Georgia over the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2008, and most recently its role and actions during the 2014 Ukraine crisis, which saw the annexation of Crimea, and have led to the re-emergence of high-level tensions in its relationship to Europe and NATO.

In light of its continued, and often somewhat unpredictable and antagonistic, role within international security, understanding Russia as a security actor continues to attract attention. Indeed, the increasingly conscious effort by the Putin-led regime to take a more assertive line in its foreign security policy, and to reassert its 'great power status' in general, has been followed closely by both Russia-watchers and those interested in international security writ large (Mankoff 2012; Kanet 2011). In parallel, the internal political situation in Russia has also been a source of interest to the some of the same audiences, who have sought to understand the rise of the Putin regime, its political project and the extent of its control over all aspects of Russian life. In this way, the nature, and future trajectory, of Russia as both a domestic polity and a foreign policy actor remains a pertinent question for scholars, analysts and policy-makers alike.

However, due to the divisions between academic disciplines, these two realms of interest – Russian foreign security policy and Russian domestic politics – have largely been treated separately from one another, creating an artificial divide between two facets of what this book sees as connected whole. The consideration of domestic and foreign policy as independent from one another is a trend that is noticeable - and increasingly recognised as problematic - with regard to scholarship on and the analysis of many state actors within the international system. It, however, seems particularly self-limiting for understanding and interpreting Putin's Russia, in which the interconnections between the regime's state-building project and both its domestic and foreign security policy have been publically asserted within official discourse, from the regime's first day in office through to its reactions to the mass-protests against the return of Putin to the Presidency in 2012.

Making Russia strong again - both domestically and internationally - was and, to a large extent, remains the stated prime objective of the Putin regime. The regime's efforts to this end have encompassed a domestic state-building project, efforts to both consolidate and expand the regime's power domestically, and regain

the prestige of a "great power" within the international system. And, as the Putin regime's policies, perceptions and reactions have evolved since 2000, there have been various shifts in its state-building macro-discourse, which, in turn, has both shaped, and been shaped by, changes in the self-identification and prioritisations of Russia as a security actor.

Taking this into account, this book sets out to investigate and account for the evolution of Russia's security policy since 2000, under the presidency of both Putin and Medvedev. It seeks to shed light on this subject by dispensing with the artificial separation between domestic and foreign policy. This study, rather, focuses on tracing the mutually-constituted relationship between Russian state identity and security discourses - both foreign and domestic - since Putin came to power. Not only does this study avoid the pitfalls of 'black boxing' the domestic from the foreign, and vice versa, by considering security policy in relation to the regime's wider state building political project, it also analyses domestic and foreign security policy as a coherent and interdependent whole around the internal-external security nexus

To examine the mutually-constituted interrelationship between state identity and security prioritisation discourses in Putin's Russia, this study traces its impact on a single security policy: Chechnya. And how, in turn, this single policy issue impacted on these macro-level discourses. By analysing this particular single-policy, this study aims to gain insight not only into this specific policy issue, but also how the interrelationship between state identity and security discourses impacted on, and was impacted by, the evolution of individual policy decisions and discourse. In this way, the ebbs and flows of Russia's discourses and policies towards Chechnya can be seen as illustrative of concurrent shifts in Russia's national state identity and security discourses and priorities.

On coming to power, the Putin regime depicted Chechnya as a major threat to the fundamentals of the modern Russia nation-state - its territorial integrity and national sovereignty -, with the regime making direct connections between the 'Chechnya issue' and wider state identity and their political project to rebuild Russia from a 'weak' to a 'strong' state. Whilst no longer considered a pre-eminent security concern by the Putin regime, a strong emphasis on the wider regional instability and terrorism in the North Caucasus, of which Chechnya is an important part, remains evident in both state and security discourses. Taking this into account, this book seeks to explain how Chechnya's symbolic importance within Russian state identity and security discourses altered from representing an existential threat in the early 2000s to being held up as an example of a wider trend of successful state-building by the end of the decade. In other words, it seeks to account for how the image of Chechnya changed from that of a *state-breaker* to *state-maker* in official Russian discourse under Putin and Medvedev.

Furthermore, this study's longitudinal approach will enable the changes and continuity within the nature of Russia as security actor since 2000 to be assessed. It will trace the interrelationships between all these discourses – state identity, internal security, external security and single policy issue – across this period. And thus provide a contextualised account of how they came together to shape Russia as a security actor at a particular time, and hence how changes in these discourses influenced one another, and ultimately impacted on Russian security policy. Therefore, rather than presenting Russia or the Putin regime as a more or less fixed entity as is often the case, this longitudinal approach reveals that the nature of Russia as a security actor has evolved in a much more dynamic manner than is usually suggested.

MOVING BEYOND THE EXERNAL-INTERNAL DIVIDE IN ANALYSISNG RUSSIAN SECURITY POLICY

There is an extensive body of literature on the directions, interests and priorities of Russian security policy under both Putin and Medvedev. Most of these studies are situated within the International Relations (IR) literature, and apply theories and concepts from this field to an empirical examination of Russian foreign and security policy. Such studies have focussed on Russia's relations with the West in general (de Haas 2010; Kanet 2005), and its external relations with the US, NATO or the EU in particular (Hallenberg & Karlsson 2006; Trenin, Kuchins & Gomart 2008; Averre 2005; Kaveshnikov 2010; Pouliot 2010). Others are based on Russia's approach and role with regard to particular international security issue areas, such as the proliferation and reduction of nuclear weapons (den Dekker 2010; Cimbala 2009; Shoumikhin 2002), the international arms trade and arms control agreements (Lahille 2008), weapons of mass destruction (Tsypkin 2009) or energy security (Dellecker & Gomart 2011; Wood 2009; Hadfield 2008; Proedrou 2007). In response to Russia's renewed interest in what it considers as its region, a number of works have examined Russia's external relations with other post-Soviet states in general (Freire & Kanet 2012; Pirchner 2005), and more specifically with regard to Central Asia (Strokov & Stolpovski 2009), the increasingly problematic relations with its Western neighbours of Ukraine and Belarus (Nygren 2005), and growing tensions with states in the South Caucasus, and Georgia in particular (Nygren 2007a). Within this body of works, there is an implicit assumption that Russian security policy is largely the product of the external, or the international, rather than the internal, or Russia's domestic, context.

While fewer in numbers, a series of studies on Russia's internal security context have appeared in recent years. These cover a wider-range of topics, including the nature and dynamics of the Russian military and its reform (Vendil, 2009; de Haas, 2004), the power and the influence of the *siloviki* in Russia (Renz, 2006; Soldatov and Borogan, 2010; Taylor, 2007), the politics of security (Galeotti 2010) and questions of food

and environmental security (Sedik & Wiesmann, 2003; Funke, 2005; Stuvøy 2010; Wegren 2011). Such works have highlighted the impact of corruption, elite politics, the inefficiency of Russian bureaucracy, the misuse of resources and structural constraints on internal security problems in Russia. They, however, largely considered the Russian domestic security context as distinct to the international context of Russian foreign security policy (Hedenskog *et al* 2005).

Whilst both sets of work provide valuable insights into Russian security policy, they proceed from a self-imposed and artificial separation between the internal/domestic or the external/international spheres of the Russian policy-making context, resulting in assessments exclusively focused on one or the other. As such, the interconnections and interrelationship between the domestic and foreign contexts of Russian security policy remain under analysed. This book seeks to contribute to this gap in understanding, by approaching its analysis of the evolution of Russian security policy since 2000 from a perspective that considers the domestic and foreign security policy contexts as interrelated around an internal-external security nexus, whereby the internal and external spheres impacts on, and are impacted by, one another. In this way, it seeks to make a contribution to the existent literature by providing a comprehensive account of the evolution of Russian security policy from 2000 to 2013.

A POST-POSITIVIST ACCOUNT OF THE INTERNAL-EXTERNAL NEXUS IN RUSSIAN SECURITY POLICY

In large part, the self-governing and largely artificial separation between the internal and the external context within the analysis of Russian security policy stems from the fact that most studies take their theoretical lead from the realist perspective in IR. In contemporary IR, a structural realist perspective remains the default approach to analysis. Within such perspectives, states are treated as 'black boxed' units within an international system defined by anarchy, whereby the behaviour of and interaction between these units becomes the sole focus of analysis, with this being determined by the shifting balance-of-power or order within the system. In other words, developments inside state units are excluded from the analysis, and deemed irrelevant to the task in hand: analysis of the structural determinants governing state's behaviour towards each other (e.g. Waltz 1979). Against this background, many studies of Russian security policy - either explicitly, or implicitly by virtue of the fact that they underlie many proclaimed a-theoretical works - take their lead from such assumptions, and thus focus on the external dimension and exclude the internal.

In recent years, and in large part seeking to escape this 'black boxing' of domestic factors, a number of studies have sought to provide a post-positivist reading of Russian security policy (Neumann 2005; Hopf

2005; Morozov 2008; Tsygankov 2005, 2007, 2013; Clunan 2009). Thus, rather than focussing on examining objective structural determinants of Russian security behaviour and relationships with other actors, these works have sought to address post-positivist inspired research questions relating to how Russia interprets itself, others and the contexts in which its functions, and how this came to impact on certain policy decisions and actions. An illustrative example of how this approach to the analysis of Russian security policy switches the focus of investigation from 'why' to 'how' questions is that such studies are not interested in whether Russia is objectively a 'Great Power' within the international system, but rather in 'how' Russia has sought to construct its identity as based on being a 'Great Power', and, in turn, how this impacts on its security policy. Hence, the focus is on the nature and interrelationship between state identity and security, and the key principles, norms, discourses and parameters within this relationship (Lomagin 2007; Kassianova 2001; Hopf 2005; Williams & Neumann 2000). These studies demonstrate the way in which particular identity constructions – such as the example above of Russia as a 'Great Power' – enable, but also constrain, foreign and security policy options and outcomes (Clunan 2009; Tsygankov 2013).

However, as with positivist research on Russian security, most of these studies focus primarily on Russia's external security policy (Blum 2008; Neumann 2005; Morozov 2008; Tsygankov 2005, 2007, 2013; Clunan 2009), with the analysis approached from a foreign policy perspective. Hence, while the adoption of a post-positivist perspective opens up the possibility of extending the focus of investigation to include how domestic dynamics influence on foreign policy, and vice versa, the majority of these studies have taken a uni-directional focus: how domestic state identity shapes foreign policy. Therefore, there is a lack of post-positivist research on Russia's internal security policy in relation to its wider state and security agendas, and which traces the interrelationship between the internal and external security context in a bi-directional perspective around an internal-external security nexus. This book sets out to address this gap in post-positivist analysis of Russian security policy. To do so, it draws on insights from the Critical Security Studies research agenda that has emerged in recent decades, and in particular securitisation theory.

CRITICAL SECURITY STUDIES IN NON-WESTERN CONTEXTS

Since the end of the Cold War, the Critical Security Studies research agenda has sought to introduce a greater range of issues, theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches to the study of security within IR (see Browning & McDonald 2011; Peoples & Vaughan-Williams 2010). Of particular relevance to this study, many of these works have focused on investigating the nature of domestic insecurities. Indeed, with a focus on issues such as terrorism (Jackson 2005: Closs Stephens & Vaughan-Williams 2009), modes

of governance (Bigo 2002; Dillon & Reid 2001), biopolitics (Epstein 2007; Bell 2006; Elbe 2006), borders and migration (Hysmans 2006: Doty 2007; Salter 2006) and risk and resilience (Beck 2002; Aradau & Van Munster 2007), these studies have sought to challenge the traditional 'black boxing' of security as based exclusively on external threats to states. Instead, these scholars ground their analysis within processes that take place within the domestic domains of states.

Until recently, this research agenda has only, by and large, been applied to European, North American and other 'Western' contexts. However, in recent years, there have been increasingly calls from within the Critical Security Studies community for a greater engagement with non-Western contexts and experiences (see Bilgin 2010; Vuori 2008, 2010; Wilkinson 2007). Indeed, reflecting the widespread academic focus on global order change and the growing role played by non-Western actors within this new order during the last decade, it is increasingly acknowledged that it is no longer sufficient to examine questions of global security primarily, or exclusively, through the experience of West (see Agathangelou & Ling 2009; Bilgin 2008; Hobson 2007; Barkawi and Laffey 2006). This realization is leading to a shift in the focus within IR, whereby the study of non-Western contexts and the position of non-Western powers is no longer deemed as 'alternative' or considered secondary to our reading and understanding of global security, but is now seen as at the very heart of it (see Zakaria 2011; Kupchan 2012; Murray & Brown 2012). Against this background, it is being increasingly suggested that Western theoretical models and labels designed for study of security should also take into account the positions, views and interests towards questions of security held within these non-Western contexts (Bilgin 2010; Vuori 2008, 2010; Wilkinson 2007; Acharya & Buzan 2007; Tickner & Wæver, 2009; Shilliam 2010, Shani 2008; Barkawi & Laffey 2006; Agathangelou & Ling 2009).

More specifically, this book seeks to build on the securitization model of security, as put forward by by Buzan and Waever in their foundational text: Security: A New Framework for Analysis (1998). According to the theory of securitization, all issues in official state discourse are either non-politicized (the state does not deal with it, and it is not an issue in the public debate), politicized (an issue that is part of public debate and policy) or securitized (an issue that is presented as an existential threat, and can be dealt with using measures outside normal politics), and 'any issue can end up on any part of the spectrum' (Buzan, Waever & de Wilde 1998, p. 24).

Despite being the subject of vibrant and extensive theoretical debate over the last decade (McDonald 2008; Stritzel 2011; Van Munster 2007), the majority of both empirical and theoretical works using the securitisation model have been based on cases from within Western, and particularly European, contexts.

With some notable exceptions (e.g. Wilkinson 2007; Coskun 2008; Vuori 2008, 2010), few studies have tried to utilise the securitisation model to investigate non-Western security contexts, or to refine the model theoretically on the basis of such cases. In addition, most works have focused on examining the securitization of an issue, while some have sought to analyse an initial desecuritisation of an issue. There are, however, not many studies that have sought to examine the full cycle of (de)securitization, tracing an issue from its initial securitization throught to its complete desecuritization. This study seeks to consider the full cycle of (de)securitization by investigating not only the precise moments of securitization or desecuritization, but also the constituted processes, discourse and practices in between them.

In this context, this study represents an attempt to comprehensively operationalize theories and models from Critical Security Studies to the study of a 'non-Western' power. It argues that when operationalizing theoretical models of security in non-Western contexts – and in order to garner a more comprehensive reading of how actors such as the Russian state conceptualise their security policy – it is important to take into account not only the local contexts in which they operate, but also these actors' readings of statehood and security and the way in which their security principles and priorities evolve across time. In so doing, this book seeks to re-engage Critical Security Studies with the changing landscape of the IR discipline.

METHODS, SOURCES AND DATA ANALYSIS

In view of its post-positivist theoretical perspective, an inductive and qualitative analytical approach was adopted here. As noted by Checkel, post-positivists 'are committed to a deeply inductive research strategy that targets the reconstruction of state/agent identity' (Checkel 2004, p.231). In other words, post-positivist research methodologies seek to faithfully reconstruct discourse within the context in which it was articulated. According to Bevir & Rhodes, researchers 'should treat data as evidence of the meanings or beliefs embedded in actions. They should not try to bypass meanings or beliefs by reducing them to given principles of rationality, fixed norms or social categories' (Bevir & Rhodes 2004, p.203). Hence, only by reproducing the contextual normative significance of an actor's discourse, including its ideas and beliefs is it possible to fully comprehend their actions. Following this particular methodological assumption, discourse analysis should not only seek to 'recover agents' understandings in order to obtain an insider perspective on social life', but also 'put meanings into their intersubjective context' (Pouliot 2007, p.365). Taking this into account, the aim of this book is to reproduce Russian official discourse by 'thickly inductive and empirical' discourse analysis (Hopf 2002, p.3), so as to analysis this discourse according to the context in which it was articulated and from which it gains its meaning.

To illustrate the relationship between wider state and security agendas and individual security policies, the single 'case plus study' method (Hansen 2006) is adopted, by examining the evolution of a single case, in this case Chechnya, across an extensive period of time. In contrast to a neo-positivist use of case studies to test ideas or theoretical models deductively and provide verifiability of this study by replication in multiple cases or by a defined objective criteria (George & Bennett 2004, pp.7-9), a single case study is here used in order to examine a particular subject in great detail. As argued by Hansen

> One might ask why one large case study rather than a series of smaller ones was chosen, and the answer is that while...discourse analysis can be applied to a wide variety of topics, it is a form of analysis which requires extensive knowledge of the case in question and which therefore can only be undertaken in a small number of cases (Hansen 2006, p.11).

Studies using the 'case plus study' method are not concerned with establishing causal relationships within and between case studies. Instead, the aim is to investigate the specifics of a particular issue in more depth, and to do so by analysing it in its own right. As outlined by Dessler & Owen (2005, p. 599) 'constructivists tend to develop and support their general claims about particular cases by working "upwards" from the details of these cases to theoretically informed claims that capture relevant patterns and relationships within them'. The evolution of Russia's discourse on Chechnya is, thus, used a 'case plus study' for exploring both the evolution of Russia's state identity and security priorities under Putin and Medvedev, and the symbolic relationship between a single security issue and the wider national and security discourse within this context.

In this respect, a key element of the post-positivist research agenda is accounting for the 'historicization of meanings' of a discourse (Pouliot 2007). Or in other words, analysing how a discourse relates to the context – other contingent discourses at that moment in time - within which it was originally articulated. To this end, this study sets out to contextualise and trace the significance of Russian discourse on state identity, security agendas and its policy towards Chechnya across a period spanning the first two terms of the Putin Presidency, the Medvedev Presidency, and the first two years of Putin's third term as president. However, a certain degree of flexibility was introduced with regard to the temporal boundaries outlined above, in order to best capture and analytically conceptualise the contextual dynamics shaping this extensive period. Therefore, sources from autumn 1999, prior to Vladimir Putin becoming acting Russian President in January 2000, were included. These four months represented a critical juncture in Russo-Chechen relations (Souleimanov 2007), marking the re-start of large scale military operations. Crucially, even during his Premiership, Vladimir Putin was viewed as the leading figure of the restart of the Second Chechen

campaign. Not only was he heavily involved with the launch of military operations in Chechnya in 1999, his handling of this issue was seen by many commentators, at the time, as highly significant for his early popularity as President (Sakwa 2008).

According to Hansen, in analysing official discourse on foreign policy or, in this case, security policy, the discourse of 'the heads of states, governments, senior civil servants, high ranked military, heads of international institutions, official statements by international institutions' should be examined (Hansen 2006, p.64). This seems appropriate in the case of Putin's Russia, which as many analysts have highlighted, has seen the Presidential office maintain a strong grip on Russian official discourse (Koltsova 2006). In turn, Ortmann suggests that by analysing state elites' official discourse in the public domain, 'the scripts and narratives producing the identity of the new Russian state can be traced' (Ortmann 2008, p.366). Taking this into account, the source material for analysis was drawn from official Russian public sources. This included the key Russian ministries responsible for security issues and Chechnya, as well as key actors, such as Putin, Medvedev, the Kremlin, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior, who articulated wider state identity and security discourse.

In selecting texts from these sources, this book followed what Hansen (2006) outlines are the two primary considerations for discourse analysis. Firstly, that a text should come from the period under investigation; and secondly, that 'the body of texts should include key texts that are frequently quoted and function as nodes within the intertextual web of debate, as well as a larger body of general material' (Hansen 2006, p.82). To this end, this study's analysis focusses primarily on policy documents, statements, speeches, articles and interviews, by the actors outlined above, that had a strong resonance within the official discourse, which were identified as such by an on-going review of both primary sources and the secondary literature.

In addition to documentary analysis of primary sources, analysis of secondary sources and fieldwork interviews were used to create methodological "triangulation". Triangulation, as defined by Bryman (2001, 274) is a process which "entails using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena" to widen and deepen the analyst's understanding of the context under study. As outlined, understanding the context within which discourses are articulated is central to this study's methodological approach.

This innovative step seeks to address the current shortcoming of some discourse analytical methodologies, which despite "talking" about the importance of context in discourse analysis (Bevir & Rhodes 2004, p.203), say little about how this knowledge of the context should be acquired (see Wodak 2001; Neumann

2002). To the end of understanding the context under study, the conduct and analysis of fieldwork is an important methodological step, as it enables the researcher to better "read" and "perspectivize" discourses/texts according to the context in which they have significance, rather than imposing their own *a prior* assumptions and biases onto the discourse. Taking this into account, as well as undertaking a thorough review of the secondary literature on Russia's state-building project and security agenda, twenty-five fieldwork interviews were conducted in Russia between April – May 2007 and April – June 2008, with practitioners from and experts on the foreign-policy making bodies outlined above, analysts from leading think tanks, scholars from academic institutions and practitioners from NGOs

These interviews were conducted using a flexible form of semi-structured interview technique (Bryman 2001, 314). This was the most appropriate approach since the aim was not to compare the answers of different respondents, but to collect as much contextual information about the topic as possible, which was then utilised to refine the researcher's analytical perspective on the corpus of official discourse, rather than being used as primary sources themselves. These interviews, in combination with the secondary literature review, were invaluable in elucidating the Russian context, in which the concept of "security" itself has a different contextualised significance compared with its use in the IR literature. Hence, whilst the focus of this study is primarily on official discourse, these interviews provided important background knowledge from which the contextual significance embedded within these discourses could be reassembled.

In line with its inductive discourse analytical approach, rather than formulating a fixed hypothesis at the outset, this study placed emphasis on letting the discourse speak for itself. As Hopf (2002, p.25) argues, in analysing discourse 'it is absolutely imperative that meanings remain what they mean and do not become what the researcher needs to test a hypothesis'. In other words, the hypothesis should emerge from the data rather than *vice versa*. In taking an inductive and interpretivist perspective on discourse analysis, the researcher should follow a series of analytical steps, to avoid the pitfalls of imposing *a priori* hypotheses and assumptions onto the corpus under investigation. Firstly, the researcher should immerse themselves in the data, before proceeding to formulate an initial assessment of the key themes and trends within the discourse, in order to 'recover the subjective meanings', and establish some broad categorisations for analysing the discourse (Pouliot 2007, p.369). The researcher should then repeatedly revisit and consider this initial reading and categorisation, going backwards and forwards between the data collected and their analysis, until a clear sense of the context emerges. This process of analysis and reworking of key themes, categories and concepts continues until saturation point, when it is felt that the data has been analysed in full, and this process has been exhausted (Bryman 2001, p.394).

Whilst in practice, documents are analysed, and often coded, individually, it is also critical to relate the discourse and its meanings from individual documents to the wider context in which they are embedded. In other words, texts and their meanings can only be made sense of in relation to other texts (Hansen 2006). Therefore, a process of inter-textuality is vital, whereby the researcher relates their analytical understanding of different texts and discourses to one anoter, in order to re-capture the wider context in which each text is situated and to provide a more nuanced and detailed reading and understanding of the discourse under study. As a researcher, it is therefore important to move not only between the data and their, constantly refined, analytical categories and concepts, but also between the different data being analysed throughout the research process, in order to build up an understanding of the interrelated contexts of different discourses (Bryman 2001, p.381).

As inductive discourse analysis is not driven by aims of replicability and generalisability, instead of testing its authenticity in terms of reliability, a more appropriate test is one of 'confirmability' (Lewis & Ritchie 2003 p.270). For discourse analysis, confirmability is seen in terms of whether another researcher looking at the same material would come to roughly the same conclusions. In light of this, inductive qualitative research must be very open and clear about the way in which a research project has been constructed and undertaken, to provide this confirmability. Taking this into account, a detailed list of sources analysed is provided at the end of the book.

To better account for the evolution of Russian official discourses over such a long period (2000-2014), the empirical analysis has been divided into four shorter time periods, in order to both enhance the clarity of the book and as an analytical aid for explaining the evolution of Russian state and security discourses coherently (Hopf 2002). These periods were identified by a preliminary analysis of the discourse and supported by a survey of the existent literature. These sub-periods are: Russia in crisis (1999/2000-2001); the rebuilding of Russia (2001-2004); Russia as a strong state and a great power? (2004-2008); and the modernisation and resecuritisation of Russia (2008-2014).

To illustrate the way in which Russia's overall security agenda impacted on the conceptualisation of the Chechen issue, each of these temporal analytical categories are analysed in two chapters: the first, examining Russia's macro state and security agendas; and, the second, investigating the way in which these changing agendas impacted on the specific policy towards Chechnya and the North Caucasus region more broadly.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

As outlined, the empirical analysis of Russia's state identity and security discourses, the interrelationship between these, and how this impacted on, and was impacted by, the approach to Chechnya under Putin and Medvedev is divided into four consecutive time periods, each comprising of two chapters. However, before the empirical tracing of these discourses begins in chapter three, the next chapter lays out the book's conceptual framework.

Chapter two, thus, details the main premises and assumptions of this study's post-positivist approach in greater detail, setting out the framework and concepts that will guide the analysis of the evolution of Russian security policy since 2000. This analytical framework takes into account the role of state identities, local contexts, the importance of policy clusters in the study of individual security policies, and the role of key turning points in the evolution of state security policies. Secondly, it demonstrates the way in which this approach can be operationalised in relation to three concepts, considered key for this study: weak/strong states, internal/external security, securitization/desecuritization. It is argued that rather than taking these binary conceptual divisions as objective principles for characterising the strength of a state actor's statehood and the nature of its security context, they can be considered as discourses that are subjectively constructed by actors, which provide not only their analytical assessment of a given context, but can have real impacts on the shaping of their security policies.

The first empirical part of the book covers the 1999-2000 period, which saw Putin come to power and the initial programmes for Putin's Russia announced. Chapter three argues that in the early Putin years, Russian state identity centred on a construction of itself as a weak state that was threatened by a series of existential threats, in both its internal and external spheres. Chapter four illustrates the way in which this discourse served to structure the construction of Chechnya as one such existential threat, in which both Russia and specific context of Chechnya were depicted as failing and weak entities, experiencing fundamental security threats. It demonstrates how Chechnya was positioned at the heart of Russian state identity discourse and as a key security concern in both its domestic and foreign policy during the early 2000s. In other words, it outlines how the securitisation of Chechnya between 1999 and 2001 came to symbolize Russia's overall weaknesses as a state.

Part two addresses the period from 2000-2004, in which the Putin regime sought to move beyond its initial prognosis for arresting Russia's decline into weakness, and elaborate their own vision for Russia's future. Chapter five suggests that having identified the key causes for Russia's weakness, the Putin regime then sought to systematically combat these problems in order to rebuild Russia both domestically, but also

internationally. In chapter six, it is argued that this shift in the official discourse from portraying Russia as a weak state, towards it being a state in the process of 'rebuilding' itself, dramatically altered the earlier securitisation of the Chechen issue. The Russian authorities increasingly argued that Chechnya, like Russia as a whole, was in the process of being rebuilt, through a series of desecuritisation processes. At the same time, a parallel on-going securitisation of certain groups remained, in line with Russia's wider national and security priorities. In the wider context of Russian official discourse, Chechnya lost some of its salience as an issue, as other problems, notably tensions with the West and growing concerns with the security situation in the wider North Caucasus, came to dominate the central tenets of Russia's identity and security discourses.

The third empirical part covers the period from 2004-2008. Chapter seven examines how official discourse now began to construct Russia as a 'strong' state, whereby on-going security threats became articulated within, rather than in opposition to, Russia's image of itself as a 'strong' state. At the same time, there was a widening of the regime's image of its enemies to include any groups, actors or movements that appeared to challenge this hegemonic construction of Russia's identity. And, thus, the security of the regime became tightly interlinked with national security. Chapter eight highlights the ways in which the official discourse on Russia as a 'strong' state directly impacted on the image of Chechnya, which was now constructed as a desecuritised Republic. However, this desecuritisation was closely intertwined and interconnected with the development of a 'strong' local regime, resulting in an increasing localisation of power in Chechnya under President Ramzan Kadyrov. The desecuritisation of Chechnya also marked a re-emergence of Chechnya in the federal discourse, with the image of a desecuritised Chechnya increasingly utilised, both internally and externally, to further Russia's image of itself as a 'strong' state.

The fourth empirical section covers both the Medvedev (2008-12), and the first two years of the third Putin (2012-4), presidency. Chapter nine outlines how the Medvedev presidency sought to address the consequences of the global financial crisis by placing a modernisation drive at the centre of official discourse, but with little success and his term ending with large-scale protests erupting around the 2011 Duma and 2012 Presidential elections. In this context, the third Putin term as president has seen a reorientation of the regime's national programme towards the promotion and protection of 'traditional' Russian values, alongside the flaring up of anti-Western sentiments in the country. This has involved a wide-scale securitisation of actors both within and beyond Russia (as seen during Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 or the clamp down on independent media and internet in early 2014), who are said to be seeking to destabilise Russia, increasingly understood as the survival of the regime. Chapter ten examines how in spite of a return to recognising the on-going violence and insecurity and a number of

large-scale terrorist attacks across Russia, the instability in North Caucasus has been increasingly normalised within official discourse, and even detached and separated from state identity discourse for the rest of the country in light of the narrower 'nationalist' ideology promoted by the regime. Thus, in spite of it operating largely beyond federal control in many respects, Chechnya and the North Caucasus has come to play a low priority in comparison with popular protests within the rest of Russia, and developments in the wider post-Soviet region, notably in Ukraine.

The final chapter of the book outlines the conclusions reached from the tracing of Russian state identity, security and Chechnya policy discourse across the period from 1999 to 2014. It, firstly, outlines the main changes and turning points within the Putin regime's construction of Russian state identity since 2000, detailing the key security priorities and considerations that have driven Russia's security agenda during this period, and highlighting how the two have been constructed in relation to another. This interrelationship is then considered in relation to the regime's specific policy discourse and practices towards Chechnya and the North Caucasus, assessing both how the relationship between state identity discourse and security policy played out in this issue-area, and how the discourse and practices on Chechnya and the North Caucasus were not only shaped by, but also shaped, the nexus of these wider state identity and security agenda discourses. Secondly, its consider what implications can be drawn from this multi-faceted and longitudinal approach to analysing Russian security policy, which treats domestic and foreign security policy as inherently interconnected and traces the evolution and changes within security discourse over time respectively, for understanding Russia as a security actor. Thirdly, it examines the theoretical insights that can be taken from this study. It is suggested that a more interpretivist, post-positivist and longitudinal perspective is needed both to provide a more nuanced reading of the notions of 'weak' and 'strong' states within the existing IR literature, and in the application of the Copenhagen School's (de)securitization model to the study of security in non-Western contexts.