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Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine between the Orange  
Revolution and the Euromaidan: political rhetoric.

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## **Declaration of Authorship**

I confirm that this Master's dissertation is my own work and I have document all sources and material used.

This dissertation was not previously presented to another examination board and has not been published.

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## 1. Introduction

*Of course there was a sea of blood flowing between the Poles and Ukrainians. Anyone who comes from the Borderlands knows this well. I think you have to be sincere in these matters. (...) I witnessed how the Ukrainians killed my professor at the Medical Academy, a Pole, and the Polish underground killed my Ukrainian professor. This is an example of mutual intolerance that led to bloodshed. But that will not be forgotten. I think that because of the interest or the rationale of the state of the Ukrainian and Polish people, there must be an agreement in this matter. If we are not honest and we will not reach an agreement, then Russia will most likely sooner or later swallow Ukraine, because Russia always has a terrible appetite.<sup>1</sup>*

-Stanisław Lem

In one of his few non-fiction books, *The Highcastle*, Stanisław Lem, Poland's renowned science-fiction writer, described his childhood experience in the inter-war Poland, which he spent in the city of Lviv. He drew an image of a vibrant town, from his birth until 1946, when together with his family Lem was resettled to Cracow. Lem's story is just one among many that present the difficult journey of people who, as a result of the Yalta agreement, had to leave Kresy Wschodnie (Eastern Borderlands) and move to other parts of the post-war Poland. However, in contrast to many other Polish narratives on the history of the Eastern Borderlands Lem's is one that Bogusław Bakuła, the Polish professor of philology, praised for its sensitivity towards national issues. Bakuła said that *The Highcastle* is 'one of the few Polish novels set in Lviv or Galicia in general to be accepted by Ukrainian readers'.<sup>2</sup> In his own work, Bakuła criticizes the Polish discourse

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<sup>1</sup> Eugeniusz Tuzow-Lubański, 'Spotkanie ze Stanisławem Lemem,' *Przegląd Polski*, May 9, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Tomasz Zarycki, *Ideologies of Eastness in Central and Eastern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 129.

on Kresy, arguing that even the label 'Borderlands' presupposes a sense of superiority, and indicates a barrier between us and the others.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the history of Polish-Ukrainian relations is difficult, to say the least, marked by long periods of animosity and mutual resentment. Adding to that is an ambiguous attitude towards the past on both sides. Commenting on the issue, the Polish historian, Marcin Król said that 'only by acknowledging its own past, Poles could be transformed into a modern state and avoid the pitfalls that bedeviled previous generations'.<sup>4</sup> Yet, despite a period of historical reconciliation initiated in the early 1990s, common past continues to play an important part in the political rhetoric both in Poland and Ukraine.

*The Highcastle* from Lem's book represents one of Lviv's landmarks – a heel in the North-Eastern side of the city, also known as the Union of Lublin Mound, constructed to commemorate the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Later, it also became the title of a Ukrainian daily newspaper, where Jerzy Giedroyc and Bohdan Osadczyk<sup>5</sup>, conducted a Polish-Ukrainian dialogue aiming to break the historic cycle of acrimony and stereotyping.<sup>6</sup> For the purposes of this dissertation, it therefore, appears necessary to discuss the historical background that perpetually shapes relations between Warsaw and Kiev. Particular attention will be paid to the decades that most often resonate in the Polish political discourse on relations with Ukraine. The introduction will, therefore, start with the above-mentioned Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, also known as the First Polish Republic.

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<sup>3</sup> Tomasz Zarycki, *Ideologies of Eastness in Central and Eastern Europe*, 128.

<sup>4</sup> Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and leadership in Poland, Russia and Ukraine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 103.

<sup>5</sup> Ukrainian historian and journalist, a longstanding freelance writer for the *Kultura* review.

<sup>6</sup> Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy*, 106

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth came into being in 1569, under the Jagiellonian dynasty. It encompassed the territories of today's Poland, Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine. As a result it became one of the largest states in Europe after Russia. It thus opened the possibility to compete for regional hegemony with the neighbouring Empire.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the main focus of the Commonwealth was on the East. Since then Poland developed a special sentiment for what we today know as Kresy Wschodnie or just Kresy (a term coined by Wincenty Pol in 1854). Nevertheless, the struggle for Eastern Borderlands was not one of merely territorial expansion; in Poland, it was treated as a civilizing Christian mission. Poles wanted to be the precursors of Western civilization in the East. Not-seldom it took the form of an all-encompassing *Kulturkampf*.<sup>8</sup>

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth ceased to exist in 1795, after the last partition by the three neighboring empires Prussia, Russia, and Austria. The period under partitions, a black spot in Polish history, did not, however, signify the end of the so-called Polish messianic mission in the East. It revived following the end of World War One and the gaining of independence by Poland, under the Chief of State Józef Piłsudski. Piłsudski himself had a special plan for the Eastern territories. Seeing Russia as an aggressor to Poland, the Polish statesman developed the idea of intermarium – a federation of the newly independent states, ranging from Finland to Caucasus, which resembled the previous Jagiellonian federative model. It is often argued, however, that Piłsudski was less concerned with certain ideological visions about the East, and that his ideas

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<sup>7</sup> Maciej Mróz, 'Historyczne uwarunkowania polityki wschodniej III RP' in *Polityka Wschodnia Polski: uwarunkowania, koncepcje, realizacja*, ed. Andrzej Gil, Tomasz Kapuśniak (Lublin-Warszawa: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2009), 17.

<sup>8</sup> Jan Olchowski, 'Kulturowo-cywilizacyjna tożsamość RP', in *Polityka Wschodnia Polski: uwarunkowania, koncepcje, realizacja*, ed. Andrzej Gil, Tomasz Kapuśniak (Lublin-Warszawa: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2009), 94.

steamed from tactical thinking – in terms of geopolitics and balance of power.<sup>9</sup> His main aim was to create a buffer zone on the doorsteps of Russia. Piłsudski's plan was, however, contested by a key opponent, Roman Dmowski. Dmowski maintained that Russia was Poland's natural Eastern ally and that a much greater threat was posed to the independent country by Germany. Piłsudski and Dmowski represented two conflicting ideological camps whose rhetoric was later used in the development of the different visions for Polish Eastern Policy.

The period of WWII brought strong divisions on the line Warsaw–Kiev. It was marked by tragedies on both sides. In the Polish national memory, an important place has the Volhynia massacre. Carried out between 1943 and 1945 by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA) in the regions of Volhynia and Eastern Galicia (Polish territories occupied by Nazi Germany) it marked the death of hundred of thousands of Poles.<sup>10</sup> For Ukrainians equally important is the memory of the Operation Vistula, organized by Polish authorities in 1947. It was an action of forced resettlement of Ukrainian minorities from their historical homelands in the South Eastern Poland to the annexed territories in the West of the country. In 1944 the Polish government in exile issued a declaration on the future aims of Poland, regarding domestic as well as foreign policy. The document offered a concept of a multinational country as well as made important references to Polish borders. In the East, it argued for a frontier designed according to the Peace of Riga, which ended the Polish-Soviet war, in 1921.<sup>11</sup> In the background of those events Polish intellectuals in the 1950s and 1960s, both in Poland and abroad, were

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<sup>9</sup> Maciej Mróz, 'Historyczne uwarunkowania polityki wschodniej III RP', 20.

<sup>10</sup> The accounts on the number of victims in the Volhynia Massacre differ, however, most estimates suggest that it must have been in total around hundred thousand Poles from different regions in the South-East of the country.

<sup>11</sup> After the Treaty of Riga Poland regained the territories that the country lost to Russia after the second and third partition in 1793 and 1795.



contemplating Poland's future role in Eastern Europe, hoping that one day the country will liberate itself from the communist yoke. On one side stood the group *Znak*. Although, its members began as conservative Catholic intellectuals who traditionally advocated reliance on the West they later changed their line of argument. Believing that Western powers had abandoned Poland during some of the most critical moments, they proposed a close alliance with the Soviet Union, thus resembling the rhetoric of Roman Dmowski. *Znak* members argued, however, that their choice had nothing to do with ideological implications. As suggested by Stanisław Stomma<sup>12</sup>, their stand had its roots in realist and positivist thinking.<sup>13</sup> Considering the current geopolitical situation it was only reasonable for Poland to remain in close relations with the USSR and to focus on improving Polish economic and social standing.

On the other side of the debate was the Polish émigré community gathered around the Paris-based *Kultura* review. In fact members of the *Kultura* group, and in particular its frontrunners Jerzy Giedroyc and Juliusz Mieroszewski, had the biggest impact on the development of Polish Eastern Policy after the fall of communism. It is often perceived that Giedroyc and Mieroszewski advocated what would be seen as a Piłsudski-based rhetoric, yet with different perceptions on Poland vis-à-vis Russia. Mieroszewski argued that independent Poland is necessary for Poles but it is not for Europe, therefore it must restructure its role in the international system.<sup>14</sup> This encompassed normalizing Polish-Russian relations. According to members of the *Kultura* review, the idea of playing the Christian bastion against communism, and defending Europe from Russia was not feasible anymore. Mieroszewski stated that: 'Poland must win the peace with Russia

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<sup>12</sup> Polish lawyer, publicist, and politician.

<sup>13</sup> Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy*, 81.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

because it cannot win the war'.<sup>15</sup> In that sense, they envisaged the role of Poland as a bridge between Russia and the West.

Crucially, the premises of *Kultura* and Piłsudski are connected in that they attach the same importance to the relationship between Poland and its immediate Eastern neighbors. Central to *Kultura's* thought was the relationship between Poland and the three countries: Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus (often referred to as the ULB area). *Kultura's* priority was that an independent Poland should recognize the sovereignty of the ULB states, without making territorial claims based on the pre-WWII borders. This, in particular, meant that Poles had to abandon their sentiments for places such as the Kresy Wschodnie and cure themselves of their own so-called imperial complex.<sup>16</sup> Some members of the intellectual and political class addressed the view with resentment; parts of Polish elite found themselves hard to resign to the loss of places such as Lviv and Vilnius. It marked an important break with the Jagiellonian tradition.

Giedroyc and Mieroszewski further believed that the long-term independence of Poland could only be guaranteed along with the supported declaration of independence by the ULB countries. They also suggested that the region of Eastern Europe was crucial in terms of Polish position with respect to the West, and it would decide about Poland's role in Europe. Yet, the structure of Polish foreign policy as perceived by *Kultura* was not adopted only until 1990-1991, although throughout the 1980s most Solidarity members empathized with it. Immediately after 1989, Poland led what was called a double-track foreign policy. What it mean is that the Polish authorities aimed at keeping positive relations with the Soviet Union, while simultaneously they supported independence

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<sup>15</sup> Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy*, 95.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

movements in the different Soviet republics. However, following the fall of the USSR 'double-track' lost its purpose. Poland was the first country in the world to recognize the independence of Ukraine, on the second of December 1991. This is often perceived as the first sign of the implementation of the *Kultura*-based approach to Polish Eastern Policy. Soon after that, Polish-Ukraine relations were named as 'strategic' and the countries signed declarations on good neighborhood.

It is not uncommon that Polish historical debates, and in particular those relating to the country's relations with its Eastern neighbors, are divided into two lines of thought-romantic and pragmatic. Andrzej Kijowski, the Polish literary critic, famously argued that in Poland 'realist knew how to spare the country from tragedies and romantics saved it from extinction'.<sup>17</sup> The post 1989 romanticism in Poland can be best described as a movement of active support for democracy in the newly formed post-Soviet republics in the name of the countries common history and the strategy to create a barrier against Russia, while pragmatism takes the form of a preference for swift democratic transition and western style civil society in countries such as Ukraine and Belarus but without contesting the role of Russia, which seems unproductive.<sup>18</sup> As such, in the early 2000s, supporters of Polish romanticism and pragmatism picked up an argument on the pages of the Polish weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*. Among them were Andrzej Olszański and Bartłomiej Sienkiewicz, two analysts connected to the Center for Polish Eastern Studies. To argue that Olszański and Sienkiewicz rejected the vision of *Kultura*, would be an exaggeration, yet, it is certain that both men remained skeptical when it comes to Poland's role in the East and specifically in Ukraine. As they

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<sup>17</sup> Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy*, 94.

<sup>18</sup> Melchior Szczepaniak, 'Between Romantic "Mission in the East" and Minimalism: Polish policy towards the Eastern Neighborhood' *Perspectives*, 12 (2011), 46.

maintained this was both due to Poland's limited potential, as well as because countries such as Ukraine showed little improvement in their domestic situation.

In his most famous article *Po pierwsze interes państwa* (*National interest comes first*) Andrzej Olszański argued that to discuss Polish Eastern policy as an isolated dimension is misplaced. According to the author, there is not, and there should not be, a separate Eastern Policy but an Eastern direction in the Polish foreign policy, designed according to Poland's global interests.<sup>19</sup> In addition to that Olszański believed that it was harmful to suggest that Poland's independence can be safeguarded only by a simultaneous independence of countries such as Ukraine. He believed that this would put Warsaw in direct confrontation with Russia. Olszański comes from the assumption that Ukraine chose to ally itself with Moscow. According to the author, this does not signify a re-integration of Ukraine to Russia or an immediate loss of Ukraine's independence. Rather, Ukrainian authorities recognize that their country is unable to stand alone on the international scene, and Russia serves as their support base. He, therefore, finds Polish willingness to intervene in Ukrainian affairs as unnecessary and paternalistic.

Olszański's argument was in line with the position of Bartłomiej Sienkiewicz, who too believed that Polish abilities to impact Ukrainian politics are minimal. Yet, Sienkiewicz, even more than Olszański, criticized Ukraine for their limited achievements in developing democracy and civil society. According to the author political change in Ukraine was a formality and crucially it did not inspire any changes in the national mentality. Thus Sienkiewicz argues that the boarder between Poland and its eastern neighbors, such as Ukraine, is also a border between 'two different worlds, governed by

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<sup>19</sup> Tadeusz Andrzej Olszański, 'Po pierwsze interes państwa,' *Tygodnik Powszechny*, March 18, 2001, 7.

completely different rules'.<sup>20</sup> The positions taken by Sienkiewicz and Olszański are important not only because they re-opened the question of Polish Eastern Policy but because they are connected to what is perceived to be Poland's current approach towards Ukraine. The outbreak of the Orange Revolution as well as the events of Euromaidan have seen a reinforced message of support from Poland to Ukraine. However, it is commonly argued that in particular since 2007 Polish key politicians reduced their interest in Ukraine, thus advocating a pragmatic approach.

### **1.1. Research Question and study design**

Having outlined the key points of the historical background it is necessary to state that it is not the purpose of this dissertation to undertake a historical analysis of the events. Neither is it to analyze the Polish Eastern Policy and Polish-Ukrainian relations as such. Rather, this dissertation will deal with the development of the rhetoric of Polish Eastern Policy as related specifically to Ukraine in the period between the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan, with respect to ideas produced by the *Kultura* review and in the debate between the romantics and pragmatics. This dissertation will aim to prove the hypothesis that although Polish political rhetoric vis-à-vis Ukraine borrows from the thought of *Kultura*, it does so with a degree of inconsistency. It prefers to construct its own vision, in reaction to the political events, while traditional concepts serve as a bridge to keep the image of continuity in the Polish thinking about Ukraine. This dissertation has sparked from a question posed by Andrzej Gil in his essay on *What happens after ULB?*, where he asks whether the Polish Eastern Policy as designed by *Kultura* was actually adopted by the subsequent governments in Poland after 1989, or if

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<sup>20</sup> Bartłomiej Sienkiewicz, 'Pochwała Minimalizmu,' *Tygodnik Powszechny*, December 24-31, 2000, 12.

the framework functions only as a slogan, flexible enough, that it can exist in the Polish political discourse unfulfilled.<sup>21</sup> From this, it follows that traditional understanding of Polish-Ukrainian relations can be used merely to support the idea that there is a coherent Polish Eastern Policy, while in fact, the picture is quite fragmented. One can, therefore, argue that there are two types of Polish Eastern Policy, one that functions in the area of the political rhetoric, strongly ideological, while the other is the policy of the consequent Polish governments who conduct the strategy with varying success.<sup>22</sup> Equally, this dissertation will try to present that divisions between romanticism and pragmatism today are blurred, which renders any such generalizations difficult. In order to do so, the dissertation will develop a set of categories, which will correspond to the current trends in Polish political rhetoric on Ukraine. Those categories will aim to expose to what extent the thought of *Kultura* and the romantics-pragmatics divide is referred to when addressing the issue of Ukraine during and in between the recent revolutions, and to what extent these concepts are left out for the benefit of innovation in the Polish political rhetoric on Ukraine.

These questions will be answered through a textual analysis that will include speeches, exposes and commentaries of Polish political figures, as well some policy statements. The dissertation has, however, narrowed down the scope of the political figures whose statements will be analyzed to three key actors; the president, the prime minister, and the minister of foreign affairs. This has been done in order to keep a high level of consistency of the dissertation, but even more so because the three particular actors

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<sup>21</sup> Andrzej Gil, 'Co po ULB? O potrzebie nowej idei polityki wschodniej Polski,' *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 11 (2013): 56.

<sup>22</sup> Roman Kuźniar, 'Polityka wschodnia III RP: sukcesy pragmatyzmu i porażki prometeizmu' in *Polityka Wschodnia Polski: uwarunkowania, koncepcje, realizacja*, ed. Andrzej Gil, Tomasz Kapuśniak (Lublin-Warszawa: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2009), 180.

have a decisive effect on the shape of the Polish foreign policy. According to the Polish constitution foreign policy is in the hands of the executive bodies (council of ministers, where the president, as a representative of the state in external relations, is working in this area with the prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs) with only limited role designed for the parliament, its lower and upper houses.<sup>23</sup> It is, however, important that often the foreign policy tasks are unequally spread between the three actors. As such, depending on the political atmosphere one of them can take precedence over the others. What has been observed with regards to this work, is that the prime minister takes the least active approach and the foreign policy goals are commonly decided by the president or the minister of foreign affairs.

In terms of the material that has been collected for this work, most of the primary sources come from official websites of the president, the prime minister and from the ministry of foreign affairs. Among them are the annual readings of the foreign policy goals for the upcoming years, produced between the years 2004 and 2015, as well as presentations and speeches delivered by the consequent Polish presidents and the prime ministers on occasions specifically related to the events in Ukraine. Vital for the dissertation was also the Polish Foreign Policy Strategy for the years 2012-2016. Produced under the Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, it was the first document of that kind in Poland. The strategy is especially valuable for this dissertation as it often confirms the importance of various foreign policy perspectives that were expressed in the political discourse.

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<sup>23</sup> Lech Mażewski, 'Prowadzenie polityki zagranicznej w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej,' *Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny*, 3 (2009): 9-13.

With regards to the secondary literature that informed this project, it consists of a variety of textual materials, ranging from books, journals, newspaper articles, scripts from debates and many others. Among some of the key sources were publications produced by the Polish Institute of International Affairs (Warsaw), specifically the Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy, which has provided the dissertation with the essential factual data. Equally important for the dissertation were publications from the Center for Eastern Studies (Warsaw), the Jan Nowak-Jeziorański College of Eastern Europe (Wrocław) as well as the Institute for Central and Eastern Studies (Lublin). The authors whose work has been especially significant for this dissertation include Andrzej Gil, Adam Szeptycki, and Paweł Kowal –long-standing Polish experts Eastern Policy and relations with Ukraine. The secondary literature also covers materials that helped this work construct the theoretical and methodological structure. Here it is important to mention in particular Alexander Wendt and Emmanuel Adler, key contributors to the development of constructivist theory, as well as Klaus Krippendorff and Margrit Schreier, and Philipp Mayring who elaborated on the use of qualitative content analysis in social science research.

The secondary literature on Polish-Ukrainian relations is indeed vast. Nevertheless, what can be seen as a trend is that most authors treat the impact of the *Kultura* review on the Polish political strategy towards Ukraine as a given. Similarly, many authors operate with the labels romantic versus pragmatic in a rather mechanical fashion. There is a consensus among most analysis that certain political fractions in Poland can be assigned to one or the other group. In this way, key Polish political figures have been identified as representatives of the different trends. It is assumed for instance that members of the Polish political party Civic Platform are essentially pragmatic while the



Law and Justice Party advocates romantic ideology. This dissertation will contribute to the field by elucidating the nuances in the Polish political rhetoric on Ukraine. It will aim to present the issue from a new perspective – one, which does not reject the importance of *Kultura* but that sees in a specific way, as a tool to maintain certain image about Polish-Ukrainian relations. By the same token, it will shed a new light on the division between pragmatics and romantics. The use of constructivist theory will help this dissertation to de-construct the above-mentioned concepts, and thereby present how they came to dominate the literature on the Polish Eastern Policy and in particular on the Polish-Ukrainian relations. The work will further utilize the qualitative content analysis methodology in order to define what are the recent trends in Polish political rhetoric on Ukraine, during the time between the Orange revolution and the events of Euromaidan. It will do so in a systematic fashion and by working closely with the primary materials. As a result, the dissertation will establish a set of categories, representing particular themes in the Polish political rhetoric on Ukraine. It has to be stressed, however, that by developing the categories this dissertation does not aim to create a new set of concepts that are transferable to other studies on Polish Eastern Policy. Indeed, the scope of this work focuses on creating a new awareness about the Polish Eastern Policy today and can be seen as a detailed profile of Polish intended political action towards Ukraine during the interlude between the two revolutions.

## **1.2. Structure**

The analysis begins with establishing a theoretical framework that will guide this work. Chapter 2 starts with an overview of social constructivism, as it is understood in International Relations. This includes the origins and background information on the

theory as well as a discussion on its key underpinnings. It elucidates the four main constructivists propositions: 1. the belief in social construction of reality and the importance of social facts, 2. the different types of structures and the role of norms in shaping them, 3. the concept of mutually constituted agents and structures and the power of practice, and finally 4. the role of identity in shaping actors interests and their logical of action.<sup>24</sup> In the further part of this section, the theoretical framework will be applied in order to investigate the emergence and the significance of the vision of Polish Eastern Policy, as designed by the *Kultura* review. In a similar fashion, the dissertation will approach the empirical part of this work. Chapter 2.2 is therefore likewise divided into two parts. It commences with the review of the principles and the aims of qualitative content analysis. Moreover, it positions the methodology within the field of content analysis and importantly it states the difference and the implications that derive from the divide between manifest and latent meaning. From that, the section turns towards an outline of the research design. It discusses the process of sampling, category development, coding and finally research evaluation. In Chapter 3 the dissertation will demonstrate the research findings. Those will be presented in four subsequent subsections, each representing different category/theme that has been developed through coding and textual analysis. Each category will be additionally supported by contextual information derived from previous academic work. Together the categories can be understood as a profile of the Polish vision of Ukraine, between the Orange Revolution and the Euromaidan. Lastly, chapter 4 will summarize the findings and draw conclusions. Most importantly it will highlight in what ways does the vision differ from that established by the *Kultura* group, and what are the reasons for it.

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<sup>24</sup> Trine Flockhart, 'Constructivism and Foreign Policy' in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, Tim Dunne (Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 2012), 82.

## **2. Theoretical and Methodological Framework**

The following chapter will demonstrate the principles of the theoretical as well as methodological framework that have shaped this work, including a brief introduction to the key issues as well as their application. Additionally, this section will present an outline of the research structure, coupled with an explanation of the methodological processes that have been undertaken as part of the study design.

### **2. 1. Principles and Application of Constructivism**

Constructivism is one of the youngest theories in the field of international relations, established in the 1980s. Among its pioneers was Alexander Wendt – author of the groundbreaking work *Anarchy is what states make of it*. The approach has its roots in critical theory and post-modernism. It originates from what in International Relations scholarship is defined as the third and the fourth debates. They were dominated by arguments between realists and idealists as well as behaviouralists and traditionalists. At the center of the disputes were both ontological and epistemological assumptions, such as the nature of international politics and human beings, and methodological concerns, mainly on the universality of IR theories.<sup>25</sup> At both sides of the arguments lied important obstacles. Ole Weaver stated that ‘on the rationalist side there is boredom – not much to discuss here. On the reflectivists side there is nihilism – how can we say anything meaningful if all we say is a reflection of the particular discursive

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<sup>25</sup> Jill Steans et al., *An introduction to International Relations Theory: Perspectives and Themes* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2010), 184.

circumstances'.<sup>26</sup> Thus constructivism was to take the middle ground between the two sets of extremes. The rise of constructivism coupled with the end of the Cold War was not coincidental. Both realists and liberals failed to predict and initially even explain the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>27</sup> In that sense, constructivism proved more competent in explicating the nuances that surrounded the end of the Cold War order and consequently gained its position as a new theoretical approach.

The term 'approach' used with reference to constructivism has a special purpose. Indeed, many scholars would argue that constructivism cannot be classified as an independent theory. In contrast to realism or liberalism, constructivism does not offer a set of coherent, testable hypothesis; instead, it operates based on a series of assumptions.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, constructivism does not strictly establish who or what are the main actors and issues in international relations and therefore it rarely proposes specific policy solutions. Furthermore, constructivists borrow from the reflectivist ontological and epistemological traditions, while at the same time they aim to understand and explain concrete outcomes in international relations.<sup>29</sup> At first glance, constructivism may, therefore, seem as unfocused or incoherent. Nevertheless, it is a useful approach that provides new insights into the discipline of IR. In very broad terms constructivism challenges the realist view that we can do little to alter the world, as well as the liberal perspective of a particular human progress.<sup>30</sup> At the heart of the approach is to question all that, which is taken for granted.<sup>31</sup> In this way, constructivism is vital for the purposes of this dissertation. It will help to deconstruct the premises of the *Kultura*

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<sup>26</sup> Jill Steans et al., *An introduction to International Relations Theory*, 184.

<sup>27</sup> Trine Flockhart, 'Constructivism and Foreign Policy', 79.

<sup>28</sup> Jill Steans et al., *An introduction to International Relations Theory*, 186.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>30</sup> Trine Flockhart, 'Constructivism and Foreign Policy', 79.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

review, and thereby set its context, as well as elucidate how it then come to dominate the Polish political thinking on Ukraine.

Most importantly, constructivism as a theoretical approach challenges some of the key concepts developed by realist scholars. The differences are, however, centered more around ontological rather than epistemological assumptions. It starts with the constructivist understanding of material reality. Constructivists do not deny the existence of it, yet, they argue that it has no meaning in itself and material objects cannot be known outside of human language. In constructivism, we therefore, speak not of facts, but social facts (facts that exist only by the way of human agreement).<sup>32</sup> Above all constructivists emphasize the significance of norms, discourse, identities, and interests, without which and prior to which the international order does not exist. As argued by Emmanuel Adler, constructivism builds up on the ontological assumptions of *Verstehen* (*Understanding*).<sup>33</sup> In fact, *Verstehen* is the social reality. Everything we aim to understand and interpret has already acquired its meaning through a prior process of explanation and interpretation. It is also important that meanings cannot be created individually; ideas and discourses must circulate between actors to become established. In constructivism, the process is known as 'social-act'.<sup>34</sup> Through social-act individuals create the intersubjective meanings, namely the collective knowledge. Shared knowledge, in turn, defines the social reality and it has the power to persist beyond the lives of individual social actors. Thus for constructivists, all knowledge structures are continuously constituted and reproduced by members of the society and their interactions.

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<sup>32</sup> Emanuel Adler, 'Seizing the middle ground: Constructivism in World Politics,' *European Journal of International Relations*, 3 (1997): 323.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>34</sup> Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it,' *International Organization*, 2 (1992): 405.

From that stems an important principle of constructivism, which is that actors interact not according to any pre-established order but based on the meaning that each develops for the other. Alexander Wendt presents the problem based on the idea of alter and ego. In simple terms, it signifies that states will act differently with relation to their enemies and friends. This notion undermines the realist assumption that states, according to Hobbes's idea of human nature, act based on egoism and power politics. Furthermore, it challenges the traditional understanding of anarchy. As the title of Wendt's crucial work suggests, *Anarchy is what states make of it*. Alexander Wendt doesn't treat anarchy as a concept on its own but sees it as one among many institutional frameworks. The author distinguishes between various types of structure, depending on the nature of the interaction that has developed between the actors. Those include: conflictual (based on the system of self-help as suggested by realist), competitive (based on rivalry as argued by many liberals) and friendly (based on cooperation and as proposed by Karl Deutsch).<sup>35</sup> It touches upon one of the most important issues in constructivism – that structures and agents are mutually constructed. This follows from Anthony Giddens's work on structuration, who argues that structures influence agents and vice versa.<sup>36</sup>

In constructivism, structures can be understood as entities of codified social norms, which agents are socialized into following.<sup>37</sup> The norms can be both formal and informal. What is, however, important is that they emerge as an outcome of routinized practices. In constructivism one can speak of the power of practice – that is the power to reproduce intersubjective meaning.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, norms make behavioral claims on

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<sup>35</sup> Trine Flockhart, 'Constructivism and Foreign Policy', 81.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>38</sup> Ted Hopf, 'The promise of constructivism in international relations theory,' *International Security*, 23 (1998): 178.

actors. They influence the actor's decisions as well as provide them with directions and goals. James March and Johan Olson named the process the logic of appropriateness.<sup>39</sup> Standards, which the actors follow, prescribe and require from them a certain type of action. Additionally, through such practice norms become not only part of the actor's commitments but more significantly they constitute its identity and interests.<sup>40</sup> As a result, norms are very often resistant to change. It can nevertheless, occur that actors will replace the hitherto established order with a new set of rules. This according to constructivists can happen following the so-called 'critical juncture'.<sup>41</sup> Usually, it is seen as a disruptive event that transforms the cognitive environment and therefore causes that the existing norms are no longer to be used.

Identity, which so far has been only briefly mentioned, constitutes one of the core concepts of constructivism. In basic terms, it is perceived as the actor's understanding and expectations of itself. However, such understanding does not develop in a vacuum. It is formed vis-à-vis other actors, in the space of the social world. Actors acquire identities through their interaction with others, they so-called 'mirror' the practices of their counterparts over time.<sup>42</sup> The self is, therefore, a reflection of actors socialization. In addition to that, through the process of socialization actors attribute certain identities to each other, while simultaneously reproducing their own. However, ultimately the producer of an identity is not responsible and does not decide how his identity is going to be perceived by others.<sup>43</sup> Thus identity performs a crucial function in the society, it

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<sup>39</sup> Jill Steans et al., *An introduction to International Relations Theory*, 188.

<sup>40</sup> Jeffery Checkel, 'The Constructivist turn in international relations theory,' *World Politics*, 50 (1998): 328.

<sup>41</sup> Trine Flockhart, 'Constructivism and Foreign Policy', 89.

<sup>42</sup> Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it', 404.

<sup>43</sup> Ted Hopf, 'The promise of constructivism in international relations theory', 175.

tells others who you are, as well as it tells you who you are and who others are.<sup>44</sup> According to constructivists identities offer each state the understanding of other states, its natures, motives, interests, probable actions, attitudes, and role in any given political context.<sup>45</sup> It therefore follows that the world without identity is a world of chaos.<sup>46</sup> Undoubtedly, identity is bound to specific historical, cultural or political context. When it comes to a group identity such as the state's identity, not seldom an important role in its formation plays 'collective memory'.<sup>47</sup> It is a set of myths, narratives, and traditions that constitutes who the group is and how it relates to others.

Like norms, identities have routine qualities, to which we assign meaning on the basis of institutionally defined roles.<sup>48</sup> In fact, institutions can be seen as relatively stable assets of structure of identities.<sup>49</sup> However, that is not to say that actors can have only one identity or that it cannot change over time. Indeed states often can have multiple identities, depending on their institutional roles. Beyond that, the reason why identity is crucial in the perception of constructivists is because it serves as the basis for interest formation. Constructivists see interest as endogenous, rather than as given prior to social interaction.<sup>50</sup> Actors define their interests in the process of defining situations, according to what is their role in the specific context. Therefore institutionalization is understood as the process, in which new identities and interests are internalized.<sup>51</sup> Yet, the fact that roles can be often 'taken' by states in itself suggests that actors also have the capacity for 'character planning' – to engage in critical self-reflection and choices

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<sup>44</sup> Ted Hopf, 'The promise of constructivism in international relations theory', 175

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>47</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 163.

<sup>48</sup> Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it', 398.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 399.

<sup>50</sup> Jeffery Checkel, 'The Constructivist turn in international relations theory', 326.

<sup>51</sup> Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it', 399.



designed to bring about changes in their lives.<sup>52</sup> The reason why actors might begin to think of themselves in a novel way are often connected to new social situations.

It needs to be emphasized that this work does not aim to elaborate on the notion of identity in the constructivist approach, nor does it want to produce a thesis on the origins of Polish national identity vis-à-vis Ukraine and how it developed. Rather, considering that identity makes an integral part of constructivism this dissertation understands and appreciates its importance. Consequently, it seems not only unavoidable but also crucial to touch upon the issue of identity. Yet, this dissertation will operate with the notion of identity in very strict terms. In order to do so, it has borrowed from the work of Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper. In their essay, *Beyond Identity*, the authors argue that scholars often overuse the term identity and thereby lose the sense of what it means in the context of their study. Brubaker and Cooper have thus established not only a set of understandings that the term 'identity' carries with itself but they also suggest useful linguistic substitutes for 'identity', which according to them better elucidate the different meanings of the term. Among them, the authors describe the notion of identity that can be understood as the source of political action. It serves the purpose of presenting that there are non-instrumental modes of action, driven by the particularistic self-understanding.<sup>53</sup> In fact, self-understanding and location are the term that they use in exchange of identity, in order to project the idea of non-mechanical behavior, based on the self-perception within certain social environment. Not insignificantly it overlaps in great part with the constructivist understanding of identity, specifically the way in which it can shape states interests. As a point of contrast other meanings of identity distinguished by Brubaker and Cooper include: the collective

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<sup>52</sup> Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it', 419.

<sup>53</sup> Rogers Burbaker, Frederick Cooper, 'Beyond Identity,' *Theory and Society*, 29 (2000): 6.

phenomenon to denote sameness, core aspects of 'selfhood' or as fundamental condition of social being, the processual interactive development of collective-self or 'groupness' and finally the fragmented nature of the contemporary self, as expressed in competing discourses.<sup>54</sup> This dissertation will, therefore, adopt the definition of identity that treats it strictly within the boundaries of its impact on the interests of the state and subsequently their political action. Identity will be treated only to the extent, to which it determines the Polish strategy towards Ukraine.

As stated in the introduction the impact of the *Kultura* review on the design of Polish strategy towards Ukraine is often considered as unprecedented. References to the ideas of Gideroyć and Mieroszewski can be observed almost on every occasion, where the Polish Eastern strategy is discussed, be it by academics or the political figures. Rather, however, than taking this concept for granted it is useful to see how it came to dominate the field by constructing a certain vision for Polish approach towards countries such as Ukraine. As such, in order to understand the phenomenon of *Kultura* one needs to see the context that it came from. The *Kultura* review came into being in 1947 only a year after the Polish émigré community opened the Literary Institute in Rome in 1946, which then moved to Paris. The journal was one among few outlets, where the Polish cultural and political elite expressed its anti-communist and anti-Soviet ideas. Those, in turn, found a very receptive audience back in Poland. In that sense, the *Kultura* review can be perceived as having played a similar role that the Catholic Church had for the faithful.<sup>55</sup> While this work focuses predominantly on the Eastern Policy aspects of *Kultura*, the magazine produced thoughts and ideas on a range of issues, often serving as a moral and

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<sup>54</sup> Rogers Burbaker, Frederick Cooper, 'Beyond Identity,' 6.

<sup>55</sup> Leopold Unger, 'Polityka wschodnia Polski w wizji paryskiej Kultury' in *Polityka Wschodnia Polski: uwarunkowania, koncepcje, realizacja*, ed. Andrzej Gil, Tomasz Kapuśniak (Lublin-Warszawa: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2009), 155.

intellectual guideline.<sup>56</sup> Consequently the journal and its founders, among them Jerzy Giedroyc and Juliusz Mieroszowski, initially gained their reputation and importance due to their anti-dictatorship rhetoric and the idea that communism in Poland should be overcome by any means, especially through culture, literature, and art. After 1989, treated as the stronghold of Polish intellectual thought during the time of communist oppression, *Kultura* was elevated to its current status. Although the review had no distribution base in Poland, its content was communicated through Radio Free Europe, or copies of the magazines were being reprinted in the underground.<sup>57</sup> The circulation of ideas was therefore achieved quite effectively. Among *Kultura's* most frequent readers, were members of the Polish intellectual elite who in turn influenced the masses. It shows how the concepts of the *Kultura* group were intersubjectively established. This process happened both at the forum of the magazine, through debates, discussions, and exchange of ideas, as well as part of the spillover effect, which included the general public.

Most importantly the *Kultura* review had a normative effect on the Polish foreign policy, especially its Eastern dimension. Using the language of constructivism one can argue that *Kultura* presupposed an essentially friendly structure for international relations. Wanting to break the tradition of regional rivalry it called for Poland to re-assess its Eastern Policy and reject its territorial claims in Ukraine, Lithuania, and Belarus. Furthermore, the authors of *Kultura* wanted to see a close alliance between Poland and the three countries, as well as normalized relations with Russia. Accordingly, *Kultura* was proposing that Poland should see its Eastern Neighbors as friends or allies rather than its historical foes. This considered especially Ukrainians who since the end of the

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<sup>56</sup> Leopold Unger, 'Polityka wschodnia Polski w wizji paryskiej Kultury', 155.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 154.

WWII were portrayed as sinister nationalists.<sup>58</sup> Juliusz Mieroszewski believed that Poles must overcome their 'hate-cum-contempt' attitude towards the countries East to its borders, which had long been part of their national ethos.<sup>59</sup> What stems from it, is that the journal was introducing not only new ways of thinking about the Poland's relations within its geographical area but also a new set norms. Those in turn, were to rule the Polish foreign policy. Although the journal did not make any direct policy solutions, through their argumentation and discussion it certainly made strong suggestions. Among the novel standards introduced by the *Kultura* review was the process of historical reconciliation. On the part of Poland, this meant coming to terms with some difficult periods in Poland's past, especially in connection with its neighbors. For much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Poles considered Ukrainians as the Polish offshoot whose assimilation was regarded as an indisputable, natural, generally understood fact.<sup>60</sup> What *Kultura* was arguing for was a break with the Jagiellonian tradition. In place of ideas such as messianism and overestimation of its international and even more so regional importance *Kultura* was proposing that Poland should stand as an equal partner for Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania. Following from their normative lessons the journal strongly opted for Polish authorities to act in accordance with the principle of appropriateness. This is best exemplified by the fact that both Giedroyc and Mieroszewski insisted that Warsaw must acknowledge the new Eastern border and therefore abandon its geostrategic aim of restoring places such as the city of Lviv or Vilnius.

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<sup>58</sup> Maciej Mróz, 'Historyczne uwarunkowania polityki wschodniej III RP', 22.

<sup>59</sup> Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy*, 96.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

Jan Olchowski rightly argues that national identity can be perceived as soft concept difficult to define, especially when it comes to its influence on the country's foreign policy.<sup>61</sup> As stated earlier this dissertation is not concerned with undertaking a study of the Polish national identity, its background and development. Rather the following section will highlight some of its features in order to demonstrate how it was understood by the *Kultura* review, as well as in what ways did it impact Poland's interests towards Ukraine. In the understanding of the Polish émigré community, the end of communism in Poland would mark an important critical juncture for their country. This would include changes not only in its regime's structure but even more importantly the introduction of new norms and standards. Traditionally Polish national identity was, and by some continues to be understood as a hybrid of two seemingly contradictory trends – Poland's imperial and victim complex. Yet, the fall of communism was supposed to bring a new way of self-understanding, as the *Kultura* members envisaged, one that would be defined by Poland's belonging to Central and Eastern Europe. Czesław Miłosz, the Polish noble laureate and the author of the *Captive Mind*, closely connected to *Kultura* stated: 'there is such thing as Central Europe, located between Germany and Russia, but it is neither the Mitteleuropa advocated by Friedrich Neumann nor an anti-Russian bloc, but a cultural bloc and an antidote to the region's obsession with the West'.<sup>62</sup> As can be understood from Miłosz's words Polish identity was embedded within certain geographical boundaries that also set Polish interests within the same circle. This explains why *Kultura* argued that Poland's position in Europe at large will depend on its relationship with the other Central and Eastern European states. What is, however, also important about the statement by Czesław Miłosz is the way it treats Poland's relations with the West. Writers of the *Kultura*

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<sup>61</sup> Jan Olchowski, 'Kulturowo-cywilizacyjna tożsamość RP', 85.

<sup>62</sup> Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy*, 97.

review were strongly disillusioned with Western culture and did not believe that this is where Poland's place was. As will be later presented this notion posed significant difficulties for the Polish government after 1989, its own European ambitions and the idea to bring Ukraine closer to the West.

## **2.2. Methodological Approach**

Having provided an analysis of how the premises of the *Kultura* review can be seen from a social constructivist perspective the dissertation will now turn to establish what are the recent trends in the Polish political rhetoric on Ukraine, in the time of the Orange Revolution and the events of Euromaidan. In order to do so, the dissertation has employed qualitative content analysis methodology. Crucially, the method facilitates a process of the categorization of meanings within the textual material; it could be otherwise described as 'thematic analysis'.<sup>63</sup> This is in contrast to other research methods that also address discourse (most famously discourse analysis) where the focus is on the elements and forms of speech rather than on meaning. Indeed this dissertation does not aim to demonstrate how particular language structures shape meaning in the Polish political rhetoric on Ukraine, but rather it wants to examine the themes that appear throughout their rhetoric. The principal question that is being asked is therefore what is the content of the textual material and what categories of meanings can be distinguished. The following section will provide a brief outline of the methodology, discussing its origins and the way its research design works. Finally, it will present the step-by-step process, by which the methodology was applied in this dissertation.

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<sup>63</sup> Drisko James, Tina Maschi, *Content Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 83.

Qualitative content analysis derives from a larger body of content analysis methodology that dates back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was first employed by Max Weber in his work on the 'enquiry of newspapers' (1910).<sup>64</sup> The method soon gained more popularity and was widely used in communication science in the 1940s and 1950s. It was connected to developments in media landscape, as well as the Second World War and the related interest of the US government in the study of Nazi propaganda.<sup>65</sup> Initially, content analysis was treated as a purely quantitative method. Today there is a distinction between basic content analysis, a statistical approach, and qualitative content analysis that uses the tools of interpretation. Academics still dispute, however, the extent to which a clear line can be drawn between basic and qualitative content analysis. The methods indeed share many similarities. Above all, they are concerned with a systematic description of data through coding. In that sense, qualitative content analysis differs from other qualitative research methods. Yet, the methodology likewise has its specific features, which distinguishes it from the traditional content analysis. While the focus of basic content analysis continues to be on manifest meaning, the qualitative content analysis is also applied to latent and context-driven data. The first to address qualitative content analysis per se was German sociologist Siegfried Kracauer. He believed that qualitative content analysis is a necessary extension of classical content analysis. Kracauer maintained that 'such a qualitative form of content analysis should also address the latent meanings (...), which you can communicate intersubjectively'.<sup>66</sup> More recently Klaus Krippendorff contended the notion as to a strict division between quantitative and qualitative content analysis. As he argues 'ultimately all reading of the

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<sup>64</sup> Udo Kuckartz, *Qualitative Text Analysis: A guide to methods, practice and using software* (London: Sage Publications, 2014), 29.

<sup>65</sup> Margrit Schreier, 'Qualitative Content Analysis' in *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data*, Uwe Flick (London: SAGE Publications, 2014), 171.

<sup>66</sup> Udo Kuckartz, *Qualitative Text Analysis: A guide to methods, practice and using software*, 31.

text is qualitative, even when certain characteristics of the text are later converted into numbers'.<sup>67</sup> Probably the most accurate definition of content analysis produced today comes from a German psychologist, Philipp Mayring. The definition follows that qualitative content analysis can be best understood as 'a set of techniques for the systematic analysis of texts of many kinds, addressing not only manifest content but also the themes and core ideas found in texts as primary content'.<sup>68</sup>

In consequence, qualitative content analysis can be seen as a method that lies somewhere in the middle between qualitative and quantitative approaches. This, however, poses significant difficulties for scholars who examine qualitative content from its ontological and epistemological perspective. In that sense, it appears much easier for academics to situate basic content analysis both ontologically and epistemologically. The methodology operates with realist assumptions. Researchers, therefore, agree that there is reality 'out there' and that it is represented in the text through manifest meaning.<sup>69</sup> This issue is, yet, more problematic when it comes to qualitative content analysis. In that respect, the method bears similarities with other research techniques from the qualitative field. Because qualitative content analysis looks at manifest, as well as latent meaning it, therefore, borrows from the constructivist ontology. From this, it follows that meaning is intersubjectively formed. However, there is no agreement among scholars as to the extent to which such clear-cut assumptions can be made. In broad terms, it depends on the research design, namely to what degree the researcher will prioritize manifest meaning over the later content or vice versa. With respect to this dissertation, it will assume a primarily constructivist ontology. The work will hence

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<sup>67</sup> Drisko James, Tina Maschi, *Content Analysis*, 85.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>69</sup> Margrit Schreier. *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012), 47.



agree that meanings observed in the text are a product of social construction. As a result, rather than just accumulating data from the text it will open the room for interpretation and situate collected information within its outside context.

This has further implications for the epistemology of qualitative content analysis. A lot of scholars still borrow from the language of basic content analysis that operates with positivist, quantitative concepts such as validity (the methodology succeeded to measure what was set out) and reliability (replicable data free of error) of findings.<sup>70</sup> Margarit Scherier, for instance, argues that in qualitative content analysis validity is emphasized over reliability.<sup>71</sup> This is due to the fact that in any qualitative research stability of data over time is usually difficult to achieve.<sup>72</sup> It is bound to the idea that research findings are often personal and context-oriented. Adopting a constructivist epistemology for qualitative content analysis (where social knowledge is the active product of human “knowers”. It is therefore situated and relative, it varies across people and their social groups and it is context-dependent) has, however, led other academics, such as James Drisko, to the assumption that it is more suitable to replace the wording ‘reliability’ and ‘validity’ with ‘credibility’ and ‘trustworthiness’.<sup>73</sup> According to Drisko, the terms do not assume a simple correspondence between facts or experiences and therefore better reflect the idea of multiple standpoints and meanings.

Leaving the discussion on ontological and epistemological issues in the qualitative content analysis, it is now necessary to examine what characterizes the methodology’s research design. The main aim of qualitative content analysis is to provide a detailed

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<sup>70</sup> Drisko James, Tina Maschi, *Content Analysis*, 92.

<sup>71</sup> Margrit Schreier. *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice*, 26

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>73</sup> Drisko James, Tina Maschi, *Content Analysis*, 92.

description of the material under study. The method is not equipped with tools that would allow for the development of new theories or concepts. Thus, rather what it does, is that it summarizes meaning in primary and secondary texts. The three principal features that describe qualitative content analysis are that the method is flexible, systematic and reduces data.<sup>74</sup> Flexibility in the qualitative content analysis has been already briefly discussed. It concerns the preoccupation with manifest and latent content, as well as the balance between concept and data-driven categories within the coding frame. Best examples of qualitative content analysis use coding frames that have a good proportion of data-driven categories, in order to provide a trustworthy description of the material. Connected to that is also the idea that in the qualitative content analysis the degree of interpretation may vary. It can be minimal or extensive, depending on the how much contextual information will be introduced into the study. Nonetheless, qualitative content analysis has been simultaneously described as the least interpretative of all the other qualitative research methods.<sup>75</sup> This is because the qualitative content analysis has limited potential to provide a wide, holistic overview of the text. It extracts from the material only those parts, which are strictly related to the research question.

This leads us to the second feature of qualitative content analysis, namely that the method is highly systematic. It focuses on a close, scrupulous examination of any section of the material that is relevant to the study. Furthermore, the research design proceeds in a number of predefined steps. The process can be iterative – going through some of the steps repeatedly, as a result of which it can modify the coding frame.<sup>76</sup> Nonetheless,

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<sup>74</sup> Margrit Schreier, 'Qualitative Content Analysis', 170.

<sup>75</sup> Drisko James, Tina Maschi, *Content Analysis*, 87.

<sup>76</sup> Margrit Schreier, 'Qualitative Content Analysis', 171.

the sequence and the substance of the ensuing stages remains the same. It includes: generating category definitions, segmenting the material into coding units and running both trial and final coding. The last part allows for testing the quality of the category definitions. They should be clear and unambiguous and provide that each time, coding yields similar results.

Finally qualitative content analysis, in contrast to many other qualitative research methods, helps reducing data. It does so by requiring from the researcher to focus only the selected parts of the material and entails strict coding rules. The number of categories developed throughout the analysis always depends on the scope of the research question. However, by allowing to form categories that to some degree abstract from the data, the qualitative content analysis makes space for classifications that under one heading can encompass a number passages from the text. While on one hand, this results in the loss of some of the specificities of a given passage, it also helps to gain a better understanding of how different parts of the material compare and relate to each other.<sup>77</sup> Accordingly, it has a significant impact on the generalizability of the research findings. It can be argued that depending on the cumulative effect of the assumed level of abstraction, the degree of interpretation and contextual information, the results can be more or less generalizable. Most qualitative content analysis, however, due to its primary function to produce an in-depth summary of specific material, is situational.<sup>78</sup> In consequence, the research findings are context-specific and they rarely go beyond that extent.

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<sup>77</sup> Margrit Schreier, 'Qualitative Content Analysis', 170.

<sup>78</sup> Margrit Schreier, *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice*, 22.

Qualitative content analysis operates with a two-way process, by which it can design categories – inductive and deductive coding. The difference between the two approaches lies to a large extent in their assumed level of abstraction. Deductive category coding starts with an orienting theory and evaluation of the research question.<sup>79</sup> It then uses prior empirical research to formulate coding definitions and rules. As a result, both main and subcategories derive from secondary literature. In this case, coding takes the form of a controlled assignment of categories to passages in the text.<sup>80</sup> Thus, deductive coding creates categories that are distant from the manifest meaning. This is in contrast to the inductive approach. In inductive coding, researchers draw on the textual material to formulate a working definition that best captures the meaning of the content found in the primary data.<sup>81</sup> Having established both the category definition as well the level of abstraction, coding then takes place while the text is being worked through. Consequently, inductive coding offers a way to create categories that ensue from the original content. Furthermore, they can often represent a phrase or a word that directly derives from the text. In order to maintain a higher level of credibility, this dissertation produced categories according to the rules of inductive coding. In most cases, they will be worded as they have appeared in the data. The following section will then present the research design that was conducted for this study, carefully describing the subsequent stages.

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<sup>79</sup> Drisko James, Tina Maschi, *Content Analysis*, 106.

<sup>80</sup> Philipp Mayring, 'Qualitative Content Analysis', *Forum Qualitative Social Research*, 2 (2000), accessed January 4, 2017.

<http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1089/2385>

<sup>81</sup> Drisko James, Tina Maschi, *Content Analysis*, 104.

### 2.3. Study Design

According to Krippendorff qualitative content analysis can be applied to different kinds of research design that depending on its purpose takes the following form: 1. exploratory or descriptive, in which knowledge of content and contexts is described or more clearly defined; 2. explanatory tests of hypotheses that examine the merit and utility of specified analytical constructs; and 3. explanatory tests of discriminant function that affirm or negate the explanatory power and utility of specified constructs.<sup>82</sup> This dissertation is in particular concerned with the first and the second function of qualitative content analysis and therefore will merge the two approaches. Through the methodology, the dissertation wants to provide a broader, more detailed overview of the Polish strategy towards Ukraine in recent years. Moreover, it aims to explore and elaborate on the main themes that appear in the Polish political rhetoric on Ukraine. In addition to that this work also wants to test the utility of the theoretical premises produced by the *Kultura* review. In order to do so, the dissertation started with the process of purposive sampling. The aim of it was to collect research materials that would allow creating a profile of the political attitude towards Ukraine in Poland, during the time of the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan. Its premise was to explicate new meanings and raise awareness. As such, the dissertation has drawn on textual materials of a different form. Those included both official presentations and speeches delivered by the key political figures to the government and the public (both on regular basis and on special occasions that were dedicated in particular to the problem of Ukraine), as well as interviews and debates. Consequently, the work managed to

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<sup>82</sup> Drisko James, Tina Maschi, *Content Analysis*, 90.

assemble a significant sample that shows a number of patterns in the Polish political rhetoric on Ukraine.

The research design then began with a close reading of the collected material. This process is also described by academics as ‘immersion’ in the data.<sup>83</sup> It familiarizes the reader with the narrative, helps to build good understanding and spot the important nuances in the text. Consequently, the researcher gets informed about the content, forms first conclusions and has the opportunity to design preliminary categories. Following from that, the full body of textual material was divided into parts, focusing only on those segments that were relevant to the research question. By a way of example, in the subsequent documents on the *Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Polish Government’s foreign policy* the dissertation has omitted the sections that were not related to the Polish Eastern Policy and its relations with Ukraine. Resulting from that was a body of material that focused exclusively on the issue under study. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, the exercise of immersion was then repeated.

Ensuing from the reading some initial themes were drawn. As the rules of inductive coding order, this then allowed for developing a clear category definition. The definition was formulated as: Polish approach towards Ukraine in response to the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan. The level of abstraction was consequently established as: concrete expression of Polish strategy towards Ukraine; what action Poland considers to take in light of the Orange revolution and the events of Euromaidan. From that followed the first process of coding. Some preliminary categories were established, such as:

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<sup>83</sup> Drisko James, Tina Maschi, *Content Analysis*, 90.

1. Poland as the promoter of open door policy in the EU and NATO
2. Poland as a positive example of transformation
3. Polish relations with Ukraine in the background of Polish relations with Russia
4. Poland's role in the region
5. The role of Poland in shaping EU's policy towards Ukraine
6. Historical reconciliation

Having, however, gone through about fifty percent of the material the research then conducted a 'formative' reliability check. As a result of it, part of the categories was revised. This included discarding some of the categories that rarely appeared in the text or overlapped. As such some of the categories were merged; categories 2 and 5, as well as 1 and 6, were connected. The coding frame then took the following shape:

1. Bringing Ukraine closer to the West
2. Poland as an example of positive transformation
3. Polish relations with Russia
4. Historical reconciliation

The research then continued with coding the rest of the text according to the revised categories. Reaching the end of the material another 'summative' reliability check was run. As part of that process, the coding frame was finalized. It encompassed ordering the categories into a hierarchy as well as establishing main and sub categories. However, in order to secure trustworthy results the method of the intra-coder agreement was applied. Using the finalized coding frame the material was once again worked through,

within a break of fourteen days. This has confirmed the categories, which can be presented in the following form:

1. Bringing Ukraine closer to the West
  - a) promoting Ukraine's entry into the EU
  - b) the policy of Eastern Partnership
  - c) Poland: the regional expert in the EU
2. Poland as an example of positive transformation
  - a) Sharing Polish experience with Ukraine
  - b) Poland leading the region
3. Polish relations with Russia
  - a) Improving the relationship
  - b) Decline in the relationship
4. Historical reconciliation

Although, qualitative content analysis usually does not prescribe the use of statistical methods it is often the case that with large data sets a summative table with the frequency of the results can be produced. This is in order to strengthen the credibility of the results. The following table, therefore, presents the frequency of categories as they appeared in the textual material under study in this work. It includes both the number of times that the categories appeared in the overall material as well as the number of separate texts where they were observed. For easier comparison across categories, the table includes only the main themes, excluding the subcategories. This was also done, as one of the categories was not divided into sub-parts.



Figure 1<sup>84</sup>

Category name	N of C	%	N of D	%
Bringing Ukraine closer to the West	51	48%	29	67%
Poland as an example of positive transformation	26	25%	11	26%
Polish relations with Russia	19	18%	15	35%
Historical reconciliation	10	9%	7	16%

What can be observed from the frequency table is that the first category constitutes the dominant theme in the Polish political discourse on Ukraine. This shows how important the idea of bringing Ukraine closer to Europe is for Warsaw. It adds to nearly fifty per cent of all the categories and appears throughout substantial part of the collected material (29 out of 43 documents). Together with the second biggest theme, Poland as an example of positive transformation, the two categories form almost seventy-five percent of the work. This pushes the other two categories to latter positions. Although they are also important they appear to be less dominant in the official Polish discourse on Ukraine, than the general literature would suggest. Having established the frequency of the categories it allowed for interesting observations. First is the hierarchy of the political issues regarding Ukraine, which forms a valuable ground for further analysis that will now proceed.

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<sup>84</sup> N of C- Number of Categories

N of P- Number of Documents (the overall number of collected documents is 43).

### **3. Thematic Analysis**

This chapter will describe in details the respective categories, following the order presented in the frequency table, namely from the most to the least frequent. Overall, the section serves as a profile of the Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine between the Orange Revolution and the events of Euromaidan, as represented in the political rhetoric. Moreover, it will discuss a number of important observations that derive from the divide between the current Polish strategy towards Ukraine and that of the *Kultura* review. This in turn will help to demonstrate that indeed the ideas of *Kultura* are today used in order to maintain a certain way of thinking about Ukraine and the Polish Eastern Policy.

#### **3.1. Bringing Ukraine closer to the West**

Stated in the Polish Foreign Policy Strategy (2012-2016) among its priorities, is supporting Ukraine's aspiration to improve the country's relations with Western institutions, most importantly the EU and NATO. Although Poland has been actively engaged in facilitating Ukraine's entry into both of the bodies this dissertation will focus particularly on Poland's role within the European Union. This is for a number of reasons. First, in comparison to Poland's role in NATO, the country's impact on EU policy has been significantly more emphasized throughout the collected material. It could be also argued that Ukraine's perspectives to join NATO alliance died relatively quickly. From the Orange Revolution in 2004, which initially brought outburst of euphoria in Kiev, Warsaw and in the West, it took only four years that the road to NATO for Ukraine was closed. Poland strived to grant Ukraine the NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP) by

2006 and full membership by 2008.<sup>85</sup> The efforts proved futile, especially when in 2006 Viktor Yanukovich (Viktor Yushchenko's opposing candidate in the run for the 2004 elections, which resulted in the outbreak of the Orange Revolution) had taken over the office of prime minister. He then terminated Ukraine's bid for the MAP. In 2007, following the revival of an 'Orange coalition', Poland resumed its efforts to extend the NATO Membership Plan to Ukraine, hoping that it could be confirmed at the Bucharest summit, scheduled for the 2-8 of April 2008.<sup>86</sup> Gathered in Bucharest the alliance refused, however, to grant MAP both to Ukraine and Georgia. Undoubtedly timing had a crucial effect on NATO's decision. By April 2008 tensions over the independence of Abkhazia and Ossetia between Russia and Georgia were growing, resulting in an armed conflict a few months later. NATO's turndown for Ukraine and Georgia was therefore designed to prevent a further crisis with Russia. Eventually, the alliance issued a rather vague statement suggesting that both countries will be granted membership in the future, yet it provided no further details. In comparison to this, the EU prospects for Ukraine survived much longer. It was only in 2013 that Yanukovich rejected the EU association agreement, leading to the events of Euromaidan.

### **3.1.1. Promoting Ukraine's entry into the EU**

Although members of the *Kultura* review strongly believed that Poland's place is in Europe they could hardly predict the country's entry into the European Union. Not only the alliance was just taking shape when the Polish émigré community was debating Poland's future role in the international order, but also they antagonized the idea that

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<sup>85</sup>Andrzej Szeptycki. 'Polish-Ukrainian Relations: From the successes of the "Orange Revolution" to Russia-first policy,' *Polish Quarterly of International Affairs* 19 (2010): 13.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

Warsaw should associate itself with the Western culture. Their primary focus was on a close alliance between the four states in the East, Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. In today's political discourse, as well as in the literature on Polish Eastern relations the idea of Poland's role as Ukraine's advocate in the European Union is vigorously discussed. Among many academics, the dominant view is that by conducting Polish-Ukrainian relations via the EU, it abandons the principles of Polish Eastern policy. A closer look at the political discourse sheds a light on the different views and perspectives. The following chapter demonstrates how Polish politicians try to link the idea of bringing Ukraine closer to the West with the framework designed by the *Kultura* review. As such it can prove that *Kultura* is often used as a tool to maintain the image that there is a longstanding Polish Eastern Policy. Additionally, the following chapter will present some discrepancies within the 'romantic' versus 'pragmatic' structure.

The year 2004 was important both for Poland and Ukraine. In Warsaw, the authorities were celebrating their country's entry into the European Union, while in Kiev it marked the outbreak of the Orange Revolution. Joining the EU was unquestionably one of the key priorities on Polish agenda since the end of communism. Based on its own experience the leaders in Poland believed that for Central and Eastern European countries there was no other alternative than entering an alliance in the framework of the EU or NATO. Consequently, Poland's calls for Ukrainian membership in the EU started early. Since 1998 Ukraine was expressing its willingness to join the European Union and in 1999 Poland initiated the Polish-Ukrainian Permanent Conference on European Integration.<sup>87</sup> Following from that, in 2002 Poland organized a conference entitled 'Ukraine in Europe'.

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<sup>87</sup> Tomasz Kapuśniak, 'Polityka Polski względem Ukrainy' in *Polityka Wschodnia Polski: uwarunkowania, koncepcje, realizacja*, ed. Andrzej Gil, Tomasz Kapuśniak (Lublin-Warszawa: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2009), 225.

Taking place, in Warsaw its aim was to assure a European future for Ukraine.<sup>88</sup> It gathered the authorities from Poland, Ukraine and a number of EU members. As a result of the summit in September 2002 the EU adopted an Agenda for Ukraine's Integration, preparing for an association agreement in 2007 and a full membership in 2011<sup>89</sup>. Two years later, speaking to the Polish parliament the current minister of Foreign Affairs, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, confirmed that following Poland's entry into the EU, the country: '(Poland) was and will continue to be an advocate for Ukrainian integration in NATO and the EU. (...) As a member of the EU Poland will act so that Ukraine will be presented with the European perspective, including membership, as soon as possible'.<sup>90</sup>

However, the Polish-Ukrainian relations in 2004 were also marked by a special relationship between the countries presidents. Alexander Kwaśniewski, the president of Poland from 1995 to 2005, developed close relations with Ukraine's former head of state Leonid Kuchma and was among the people who sat at Ukraine's round table and negotiated a solution to the crisis in 2004. Following the events of the Orange Revolution until his stepping out of office Kwaśniewski expressed himself about Ukraine on a number of occasions. This involved home events such as the VIII Poland-Ukraine Economic Summit in June 2005, as well as during his visits to Ukraine. Both times the president underlined: 'We are happy and proud about your success. We want to reassure you that you are not alone. Poland wants to and will accompany you in your aspirations. We believe that the moment will come when we will be able to welcome you in the European family'. (...) I am sure that the day will come when Poland together with

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<sup>88</sup> Tomasz Kapuśniak, 'Polityka Polski względem Ukrainy', 225.

<sup>89</sup> Roman Kuźniar, *Droga do wolności: polityka zagraniczna III Rzeczypospolitej* (Warszawa: Scholar 2008), 245.

<sup>90</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2004 roku przedstawiona na 67. Posiedzeniu Sejmu RP IV Kadencji* (Warszawa, 2004), 290.

other EU states, will welcome Ukraine in the European Union. I believe we will be on this path together and we will support each other'.<sup>91</sup>

Kwaśniewski's words represent a sense of euphoria and strong support for Ukraine, as well as the idea of responsibility with regards to Poland's neighbor. Similar ambitions were emphasized by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adam Rotfeld. In his presentation on the Polish foreign policy in January 2005 he stated that: 'Poland as NATO and EU member will aim to open a new chapter in the relations between Ukraine and the West'.<sup>92</sup> Commenting on the Orange revolution the Minister said: 'I want to express my conviction that Ukraine and the whole of Eastern Europe have come back on the agenda of the European Union and NATO. We have to take advantage of the situation to re-state current Western policy towards our neighbors, which in particular includes working on a realistic and impactful "opening package" for reformation forces in Kiev'.<sup>93</sup>

This sense of support for the Orange Revolution is argued to have survived only until 2007. Its climax is often ascribed to the years of the Law and Justice leadership. Following the parliamentary elections in 2005 the Law and Justice Party headed by Jarosław Kaczyński, won by about 2.9 per cent over Civic Platform.<sup>94</sup> Having failed, however, to form a coalition between Law and Justice and the Civic Platform a minority government was sworn under the Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz.

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<sup>91</sup> 'Udział Prezydenta RP w uroczystym otwarciu i poświęceniu cmentarza orląt lwowskich,' Prezydent.pl, Last modified June 24, 2005.

<http://www.prezydent.pl/aleksandra-kwasniewskiego/aktualnosci/rok-2005/art.151.121.udzial-prezydenta-rp-w-uroczystym-otwarciu-i-poswieceniu-cmentarza-orlat-lwowskich.html>

<sup>92</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2005 roku przedstawiona na 96. Posiedzeniu Sejmu RP IV Kadencji* (Warszwa, 2005), 304.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 315.

<sup>94</sup> 'Wyniki Wyborów,' Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza, Last modified: September 25, 2005. <http://www.wybory2005.pkw.gov.pl/SJM/PL/WYN/M/index.htm>

Additionally, one month later Poland voted for its new president. It marked another victory for the Law and Justice. Jarosław Kaczyński's brother, Lech, won the elections. Andrzej Szeptycki argues that for the brothers relations with Ukraine constituted Poland's *raison d'état*.<sup>95</sup> They were also named as the country's leading romantics. The president, Lech Kaczyński, took over the initiative to direct Polish Eastern Policy. According to Adrian Choja, who wrote about the importance of Eastern Policy in the ideology of the Law and Justice party, under Kaczyński the Chancellery of Polish President became the center of Polish strategy towards countries such as Ukraine.<sup>96</sup> The President's main aim was to improve relations between Poland, the Baltic states, the Visegrad group, Ukraine, and Georgia. It was seen as a counter balance to what Kaczyński perceived as aggressive Russian policy in the region. His idea was to create a regional block, coordinated by Poland, with the underlying purpose of creating common energy initiative. To achieve this end Lech Kaczyński organized a number of energy summits, starting in Cracow in 2007, where he gathered the leaders from Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan and a special envoy from Kazakhstan.<sup>97</sup> Based on that the Kaczyński brothers are given as an example of what could be seen as a continuation of a Jagiellonian foreign policy model and simultaneously solemn followers of Giedroyc and Mieroszewski.

Nevertheless, when it comes specifically to Polish relations with Ukraine, Lech Kaczyński mentioned them only briefly in his inauguration speech, where he said that:

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<sup>95</sup> Andrzej Szeptycki, 'Polish Ukrainian relations from the Orange Revolution to Russia-first Policy', 22.

<sup>96</sup> Adrian Choja, 'Polityka wschodnia Polski w myśli partii politycznej Prawo i Sprawiedliwość,' *Rocznik Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej* 5(2016): 304.

<sup>97</sup> Paweł Kowal, 'Sztuka Przekonywania, Polska Polityka Wschodnia Unii Europejskiej w latach 2004-2014,' *Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe* 6(2014), 87.

'strategic alliance between Poland and Ukraine should take a more concrete shape'.<sup>98</sup> In terms of practical solutions little was done to tighten the bond between the two countries. In fact, both brothers were rather exclusively relying on the idea that Poland needs to maintain its support for Ukraine's entry into the EU and NATO. As such, when answering the question posed by the Polish radio 'what should the new stage in the Polish-Ukrainian relations look like?' the president replied: 'it means that Poland supports Ukraine in its aspirations to join the EU and NATO. This will be continued with even more energy'.<sup>99</sup> Likewise, his brother, Jarosław Kaczyński, in the parliamentary expose from 2006 stated: 'we stand firmly for the enlargement of the European Union to Ukraine'.<sup>100</sup> Similarly reserved about bilateral relations between Poland and Ukraine seemed the current Ministers of Foreign Affairs. They too only confirmed the stand that Poland should advocate Ukraine's entry into the EU. Stefan Meller in his 2006 Information on Polish Foreign Policy communicated that 'the borders of the Union have to shift further to East and South East, including Ukraine'<sup>101</sup>, while Anna Fotyga merely repeated the statement in 2007, where she said that: 'we remain the proponents of European integration and further enlargement of the European Union to countries such as Ukraine, Moldova, further enlargement to the East'.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Uroczystość zaprzysiężenia Prezydenta RP Lecha Kaczyńskiego przed Zgromadzeniem Narodowym,' Prezydent.pl, Last modified December 23, 2005.

<http://www.prezydent.pl/archiwalne-aktualnosci/rok-2005/art.427.uroczystosc-zaprzysiezenia-prezydenta-rp-lecha-kaczynskiego-przed-zgromadzeniem-narodowym.html>

<sup>99</sup> 'Lech Kaczyński: wywiad Sygnały Dnia,' Prezydent.pl, Last modified March 1, 2006.

<http://www.prezydent.pl/archiwum-lecha-kaczynskiego/wypowiedzi-prezydenta/wywiady-krajowe/rok-2006/sygnały-dnia-1-marca-2006-r-/>

<sup>100</sup> 'Expose Jarosława Kaczyńskiego,' Prawo I Sprawiedliwość, Last modified July 19, 2006.

<http://old.pis.org.pl/article.php?id=4591&st=1>

<sup>101</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2006 roku przedstawiona na 10. posiedzeniu Sejmu RP V Kadencji* (Warszawa 2006), 327.

<sup>102</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2007 roku przedstawiona na 41. Posiedzeniu Sejmu RP V Kadencji* (Warszawa, 2007), 350.



In December 2007 the presidents of Poland and Ukraine signed a joint declaration on the strategic partnership. The document repeated that Poland would aim to support Ukraine in entering into the EU. Among other initiatives the declaration mentioned the Odessa-Brody-Gdańsk energy project, however, the pipeline never extended beyond the borders of Ukraine. In a similar fashion, the years between 2005 and 2007 brought mixed results when it comes to Warsaw's engagement in the UE for Ukraine. Only initially, Poland managed to change the EU's stand. The European Parliament adopted a resolution where it called the European Council and the Commission to change its policy towards Kiev, including improvement in visa regulations and recognizing the country as a market economy.<sup>103</sup> In addition to that, it reminded that according to article 49 of the European treaty the union is opened to all European countries.<sup>104</sup> The Polish deputies in the EU hoped, however, that they could lobby for better conditions in the agreement between the EU and Ukraine, which was supposed to be signed in 2008 and replace the 1994 Cooperation and Partnership agreement. Poland wanted the document to take the form of an association agreement and thus confirm Ukraine's European perspective. The postulate was, however, rejected by the European Commission arguing that countries under the European Neighborhood area do not possess the possibility to apply for EU membership.

The year 2007 brought significant changes on the Polish political scene. It marked the self-dissolution of the parliament and early elections. This time, however, the Civic Platform came first, being previously the largest opposition party. The new Prime Minister became Donald Tusk, and the office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs was handed to Radosław Sikorski, the longest serving Minister of Foreign affairs in Poland

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<sup>103</sup> Andrzej Szeptycki, 'Stosunki Polski z Ukrainą,' *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej* (2006), 134-135.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

after 1989. Since 2007 the period also saw a process of a rather uneasy cohabitation between the president and the prime minister, representing two conflicted sides. In terms of Polish-Ukrainian relations the duo Tusk-Sikorski is often defined in terms of a return to pragmatism.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, one can find juxtapositions between what is being called the Piast and the Jagiellonian foreign policy model (named after the first and the second Polish royal houses). What would be dubbed as a Piast tradition is attributed to Polish external affairs that prioritize its relations with the West, in particular, closer relations between Warsaw and Berlin.<sup>106</sup> It is justified that such was the concept of Sikrowski due to his publication in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, where in 2009 he assumed that the vision of a Jagiellonian-era Poland had to be abandoned, remembering that in 1939 that vision ended up in defeat. Additionally, it is argued that the leaders in Poland became gradually disillusioned with Ukraine, blaming the government in Kiev for its inefficiency. The Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy from 2011 described the phenomenon as 'Ukraine fatigue'.<sup>107</sup> According to its authors Polish authorities lost their hopes that the situation in Ukraine will improve and that the country still aspires to cooperate with Poland in order to find itself closer to the EU. However, looking at the statements in particular of Foreign Minister Sikorski one can draw rather different conclusions, contending the ideas that can be found in the literature on this topic.

It is best to start with Sikorski's Information on the Polish Foreign Policy from 2008. Although he called for a pragmatic approach towards Ukraine, not once the Foreign

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<sup>105</sup> Paweł Kowal, Paweł Kowal, Paweł Ukielksi, 'Ćwierć wieku polskiej polityki zagranicznej (1989-2014)' *Horyzonty*, 5 (2014), 47.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>107</sup> Łukasz Adamski, Anna Maria Dyner, Tomasz Sikorski, 'Praca u podstaw na wschodzie', *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej* (2011), 79.

Minister used references to Jagiellonian traditions, as well as to the history of the Polish Lithuanian-Commonwealth. He stated that the Polish foreign policy is designed 'according to both the Piast and the Jagiellonian spirit directed towards Western values, as well as close dialogue and cooperation with the East'.<sup>108</sup> Sikorski also added that: 'We believe that the message of the Union of Lublin will be fulfilled only once our Eastern brothers who aspire to be part of the EU will become its members'.<sup>109</sup> Like his predecessors, Radosław Sikorski on a number of occasions emphasized that Ukraine remains Poland's strategic partner and that the country will continue to support Kiev's ambitions to join the European Union. While he mentioned that Ukraine's entry is in the hand of Ukrainians, whose government did not fulfill many promises, it can be argued that Sikorski simultaneously saw Poland's role in bringing the country closer to Europe as an extension of a new form of Jagiellonian heritage. As he announced in 2013: 'The only possible way to implement Jagiellonian ideas is through the expansion of the European Union. (...)'.<sup>110</sup> While in an interview on the topic of EU's soft power in Ukraine he added that: 'Jagiellonian politics is understood not as an expansion but the process of bringing our Eastern neighbors closer to legal regulations or standards of the Western civilization'.<sup>111</sup> Reading from this it can be assumed that the Polish leadership under the duo Tusk-Sikorski was not only far from being essentially pragmatic in its approach towards Ukraine, but also that the period saw the development of a new, rather ambiguous concept of Polish Eastern Policy, which drew on many different traditions. Although in 2014 Sikorski argued that his concept of foreign policy has borrowed and

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<sup>108</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych na temat polityki zagranicznej RP w 2010 roku* (Warszawa, 2010), 2.

<sup>109</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych na temat polityki zagranicznej RP w 2008 roku* (Warszawa, 2008), 2.

<sup>110</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o założeniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2013 roku* (Warszawa, 2013), 12.

<sup>111</sup> 'Sikorski: Granice Unijnej Soft-Power na Ukrainie,' *Krytyka polityczna*, Last modified December 3, 2013.

<http://krytykapolityczna.pl/swiat/sikorski-granice-unijnej-soft-power-na-ukrainie-rozmowa/>

then improved the doctrine of Giedroyć and Mieroszewski<sup>112</sup> it is difficult to see how his ideas could form a coherent system. Most of his statements included contradictory visions, such as the connection between the Jagiellonian and the Piast examples, both of which were in turn rejected by members of the *Kultura* review. This proves that original concepts lost its meaning, as well as that Poland's approach towards Ukraine following the Orange Revolution was designed according to a novel strategy, primarily based on its potential to bring Ukraine closer to the European Union. The framework developed by the Polish Paris-based émigré community was thus deconstructed and replaced.

Poland's aspirations to help Ukraine become part of the European Union were eventually let down when during the third Summit on Eastern Partnership in Vilnius Viktor Yanukovich decided not to sign the Association Agreement and instead accepted an offer from Russia. It marked a significant blow to the Polish efforts towards Ukraine's membership, which since 2011-2012 intensified. The country hoped that an Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine would be ratified during Polish presidency in the EU<sup>113</sup>. This proved, however, unsuccessful. It was to a large extent due to Julia Tymoszenko's imprisonment that met with strong criticism from the West. In order to facilitate the crisis, the European Union launched a special mission including the former Polish President Alexander Kwasniewski and the former head of the European Parliament Pat Cox.<sup>114</sup> The two men were sent to Ukraine to monitor the case of Julia Tymoszenko as well as the preparations for the upcoming elections. The EU was not ready to sign an Association Agreement with Ukraine until Tymoszenko was released.

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<sup>112</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2014 roku* (Warszawa, 2014), 15.

<sup>113</sup> Ihor Hurak, 'Relacje Polski i Ukrainy 2010-2015: Ukraiński punkt widzenia,' *Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe*, 2 (2016), 187.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 2013, Kwaśniewski and Cox appealed for that to Yanukovych, while the current Polish president Bronisław Komorowski was simultaneously lobbying in the EU to allow Ukraine's entry into the Union, regardless of not having fulfilled all the criteria.<sup>115</sup> Yanukovych's message on 29 November 2013 came therefore as a shock, leading to an outburst of mass protest actors his country. However, although Poland hoped for a different ending to its efforts, the authorities did not cease to emphasize its support for Ukraine's membership in the European Union. It continued in the spirit of Euromaidan. Following the Vilnius Summit, President Komorowski confirmed: 'already today we need to start thinking about our actions following the Vilnius Summit. Poland absolutely cannot cease to present its support for Ukraine, abdicate from finding Ukraine's solemn place in Europe'.<sup>116</sup> He then added that: 'Poland's role will not only encompass keeping the doors of the EU opened for Ukraine, but also working on it so that the Ukrainian authorities will want to take part in it'.<sup>117</sup> In the rhetoric resembling that of *Kultura* the current minister of foreign affairs, Grzegorz Schetyna, additionally reassured that 'sovereign, democratic pro-European Ukraine is an integral part of the Polish raison d'etat'.<sup>118</sup>

What follows from the analysis of the textual material is that it is difficult to decide whether the theme of Poland supporting Ukraine's entry into the EU can be inscribed within the framework of *Kultura's* thought. It is a problematic matter mostly because the

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<sup>115</sup> Ihor Hurak, 'Relacje Polski i Ukrainy 2010-2015: Ukraiński punkt widzenia' 193.

<sup>116</sup> 'Prezydent w "GW" Jeszcze Ukraina nie zginęła,' Prezydent.pl, Last modified November 27, 2013. <http://www.prezydent.pl/archiwum-bronislawa-komorowskiego/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta/wywiady/art,238,prezydent-w-gw-jeszcze-ukraina-nie-zginela.html>

<sup>117</sup> 'Rola Polski utrzymanie drzwi otwartych dla Ukrainy,' Prezydent.pl, Last modified November 28, 2013. <http://www.prezydent.pl/archiwum-bronislawa-komorowskiego/aktualnosci/wydarzenia/art,2746,rola-polski-utrzymanie-drzwi-otwartych-dla-ukrainy.html>

<sup>118</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2015 roku (Warszawa, 2015), 6.

authors of the Paris-based review did not make a clear stand on it and consequently there exists no real point of reference. They, of course, could not predict such events, as the institution of the European Union did not exist at the time. One can only speculate that due to their disappointment with Western culture both Giedroyć and Mieroszewski would possibly have mixed feelings about this type of Polish rhetoric. The secondary literature brings equally ambiguous views on the topic. While on one hand scholars such as Andrzej Gil argue that forming Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine via the EU shows that Warsaw lacks its own ideas and gives up on the vision of *Kultura*<sup>119</sup>, the Polish political figures throughout their discourse try to prove, with varying success, that the Polish Eastern Policy is rooted in a certain historical framework. The ambiguity or the flexibility of this problem has further implication for the 'pragmatic' versus 'romantic' divide and exposes interesting deviations. It can be argued that pre-designed ideas about certain actors shape the different interpretations. Members of the Law and Justice Party considered to be devoted to the ideology of 'romanticism' proved, however, to express reserved opinions on Polish relations with Ukraine, rarely grounded in historical narrative, while people such as Radosław Sikorski traditionally perceived as pragmatic have frequently reaffirmed Jagiellonian and other historical connections in its stand on Ukraine. In conclusion, the idea of Poland's representation of Ukraine's interests in the EU reaches beyond standard explanations. This in turn strongly suggests that the premises of *Kultura* are indeed utilized to merely maintain an image of a continuation of a certain form of Polish Eastern Policy and devotion to its values.

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<sup>119</sup> Andrzej Gil, 'Co po ULB? O potrzebie nowej idei polityki wschodniej Polski', 60.

### 3.1.2. The Policy of Eastern Partnership

Similar problems of interpretation exist when it comes to the deciding on the role of the Eastern Partnership. The program was launched in 2008 thanks to joint efforts between Poland and Sweden. By the government of Donald Tusk and especially the current minister of Foreign Affairs, Radosław Sikorski, it was perceived as Warsaw's flagship project to support Ukraine. In the literature, Eastern Partnership is, however, often portrayed as a betrayal of Polish Eastern Policy. The program is referenced as evidence that since 2007 there has been a grand shift towards pragmatism in Polish relations with Ukraine. In his article entitled *The Polish government buries the ideas of Jerzy Giedroyc* (2009) Paweł Kowal argues that Eastern Partnership marked poor developments.<sup>120</sup> According to the author, 'it closes the doors of the European Union for Ukraine, to which Poland remains silent'.<sup>121</sup> Some other critics such as Adam Lipiński, founder of the Law and Justice Party in Lower Silesia, added that Eastern Partnership represents a failure in relations between Warsaw-Kiev and ignorance towards the region on the side of the Civic Platform.<sup>122</sup> According to Lipiński designing foreign strategy towards Ukraine via the European Union undermines the Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership.<sup>123</sup> The views are backed by the idea that Eastern Partnership further isolates Ukraine from Europe. It is believed that by situating Ukraine along states such as Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan prove that Poland and the EU do not treat Ukraine (as well as Belarus and Moldova) as part of the European family but only as its

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<sup>120</sup> Paweł Kowal. 'Obecny rząd grzebie idee Giedroycia,' *Polska Times*, September 18, 2009, accessed February 22, 2017.

<http://www.polskatimes.pl/arttykul/163554.obecny-rzad-grzebie-idee-gerzego-giedroycia.3.id.t.sa.html>

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Wojciech Jezusek, *Polska Polityka Zagraniczna: Materiały z konferencji zorganizowanej 22-24 listopada 2012* (Wrocław: Kolegium Europy Wschodniej, 2013), 232.

<sup>123</sup> Wojciech Jezusek, *Polska Polityka Zagraniczna: Materiały z konferencji zorganizowanej 22-24 listopada 2012*, 323.

neighbor. Furthermore, it is also interpreted as conciliation price for Ukraine in substitution of future full membership.

However, among the key political figures in Poland Eastern Partnership always received support. In 2009 President Lech Kaczyński stated during his speech to the Polish Foreign Corps that: 'the Eastern Partnership is undoubtedly a success'. In fact, the project was in line with Kaczyński's idea to form a coalition of countries around Central and Eastern Europe, which he aimed to pursue through energy cooperation. The Polish expert on the EU, Melchior Szczepaniak, argues that the Polish-Swedish initiative represented an evolution of the romantic thinking, which defines both the Civic Platform as well as the Law and Justice party.<sup>124</sup> According to Szczepaniak 'the Kaczyński brothers can be called model romantics, meanwhile, the Tusk government made some concessions to minimalism while remaining faithful to the key romantic principle of a democratic mission in the East'.<sup>125</sup>

The Eastern Partnership, as seen by its organizers, was the key project that would aid countries such as Ukraine to improve its domestic situation and therefore reach their European ambitions. Keeping in mind the words of Radosław Sikorski from the years 2013 and 2014 one could argue that his rhetoric on bringing Ukraine closer to the west, portrayed as a new form of Jagiellonian politics, suggests that Eastern Partnership made a significant part of it. Introducing the project during his 2010 Information on Polish Foreign Policy Sikorski stated that while to the South we are dealing with Europe's

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<sup>124</sup> Melchior Szczepaniak, 'Between Romantic "Mission in the East" and Minimalism: Polish policy towards the Eastern Neighborhood', 55.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 56.



neighbors to the east we have European neighbors.<sup>126</sup> He continued: 'this concept lies at the foundations of the Polish-Swedish initiative, which aims to support the transformations that take place in partner countries so that their standards come closer towards the *acquis communautaire*'.<sup>127</sup> The significance of Eastern Partnership was further elevated when the program found its place on the pages of the Polish Foreign Policy Strategy (2012-2016), among Poland's critical global activities. The document reads among its goals: 'raising the attractiveness of the Eastern Partnership offer and strengthening its impact on the transformation of Eastern European Countries and Southern Caucasus, through processes such as visa liberalization, support for building democracy and stability in the East of Poland and cultural exchange'.<sup>128</sup>

Like the overall Polish initiative to support Ukraine's entry into the European Union, Eastern Partnership, which constitutes part of it, is a problematic concept. Most importantly because it does not fall smoothly into the frames designed by the *Kultura* review. Consequently, it can be viewed differently according to various interpretations. Although it was a Polish initiative towards its Eastern neighbors, the program was not facilitated exclusively by Warsaw. As such, it can be argued that it diverges from the 'Poland plus ULB' vision of *Kultura*. Nonetheless, it remains the sole scheme developed by Poland strictly in support of the post-Soviet republics, which the key Polish officials try to present as one of its main successes.

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<sup>126</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych na temat polityki zagranicznej RP w 2010 roku*, 6.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>128</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Priorytety Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej 2012-2016* (Warszawa, 2012), 20.

### **3.1.3. Poland: the regional expert in the EU**

Polish membership in the European Union equipped the country with new tools to influence its policy towards Ukraine yet it too became the forum where Warsaw could boast about its expertise on the region of Eastern Europe. This resulted from its geographical position as well as due to historical connotations between Poland and its neighbors. Such concepts did not fall far from the rhetoric of the *Kultura* group. In fact, as they proclaimed Polish position within Europe was to be decided by its relations with the East. The textual material brings evidence that although such discourse is dominant in the Polish political rhetoric on the EU and Ukraine, there existed some voices of moderation. Nonetheless, it can be argued that in terms of the proximity between current Polish political rhetoric on Ukraine and the premises of the *Kultura* review, the idea of Poland as an expert on the region is probably one that over the years has remained as the most coherent. It is one of the few themes, which systematically helped to sustain the vision that there is historical continuity in the Polish Eastern Policy.

Looking at the textual material one could start with the information on the Polish Foreign Policy presented in 2005 by the Minister of Foreign affairs Adam Rotfeld. His speech combines both the concept of Poland having a special task within the EU, while at the same time arguing that Warsaw does not want to take advantage of the region in order to consolidate its place in the European Union. The part of his presentation on Ukraine stated therefore the following: 'Polish entry into the European Union and the events in Ukraine show (...) that there are situations in which Polish voice matters and it

should be listened to'.<sup>129</sup> Later he added, however, that: 'Poland does not perceive the region as its backyard through which the country could fulfill its ambitions at the EU forum'.<sup>130</sup> Rotfeld's words present a curious disparity. While on one hand, the Polish authorities could utilize its position to mark their presence in the European Union, they seemed equally aware of what consequences this might have in terms of Polish perception regionally. Nevertheless, the former took precedence in Polish political rhetoric. One year after Rotfeld, his successor Stefan Meller argued that: 'that the time has come when EU decisions and actions (...) should be based on solid fundamentals, a broad and rationalized knowledge about Russia, Ukraine, and other Eastern European countries. We are not only ready to share our knowledge on those matters, but we want actively participate in working on the development of appropriate decisions'.<sup>131</sup>

It is also interesting that Radosław Sikorski, who was proclaiming a pragmatic approach towards Ukraine and called for Poland to look at its potential impassively, has at the same time voiced his conviction that Polish expertise on Eastern Europe should be the country's asset within the EU. However, it has been already demonstrated that using the labels pragmatic or romantic can be often misleading. Sikorski was among the people who in their rhetoric have expressed themselves most openly about Poland's proficiency in its understanding of the situation in Eastern Europe. In his expose from 2008 the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that: 'EU activity in the direction of Eastern Europe should remain Poland's specialty (...) this is due to our geographical position, our historical experiences and cultural connections with the East, finally also because of our

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<sup>129</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2005 roku przedstawiona na 96. Posiedzeniu Sejmu RP IV Kadencji*, 308.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

<sup>131</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2006 roku przedstawiona na 10. posiedzeniu Sejmu RP V Kadencji*, 327.

potential and competencies'. In 2011 he added that: 'the European Union profits from our (Poland's) ideas, for example how to conduct relations with our Eastern neighbours'. His words found support in the person of the Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk who likewise assumed that 'Poland has justified ambitions to co-create the European Eastern Policy'. This line of rhetoric and Polish confidence in its regional expertise continued at least until the year 2013. Two days before the Vilnius Summit, where Yanukovych rejected the European offer, the Polish President Bronisław Komorowski was certain about Poland's success in bringing Ukraine closer to Europe. Prior to the meeting, he stated that: 'our influence in Europe will increase once the European Union will realize that we were right. This happens at a faster speed. In the EU they can ever clearly see that Polish actions are designed for the purposes of transforming Eastern Europe, without being led in this by any national phobias'.

Yet, the Ukrainian crisis soon exposed Polish weaknesses in on the European forum. Although Radosław Sikorski, was actively participating in the negotiations between Yanukovych and the protesters during the events of Euromaidan, Poland was then uninvited to the negotiations that followed the crisis. The conflict was being resolved within the so-called Normandy quartet, including France, Germany, Ukraine, and Russia. Political forces in Poland considered this move as a defeat of Polish diplomacy and strong disappointment. Indeed, the negotiations in Minsk revealed that in relations between Ukraine and Russia Poland has limited leverage<sup>132</sup>. Regardless of its alleged expertise, Polish authorities had to give way to their Western allies. Critics argue that it showed Warsaw's complete misunderstanding of the Ukrainian 'multivector' foreign

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<sup>132</sup> Buras, Piotr. 'Can Poland remain a leader of EU foreign policy?' *European Council on Foreign Affairs*, February 5, 2015, accessed February 12, 2017. [http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_can\\_poland\\_remain\\_a\\_leader\\_of\\_eu\\_foreign\\_policy418](http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_can_poland_remain_a_leader_of_eu_foreign_policy418)

policy.<sup>133</sup> It can be observed that this to some extent has decreased the Polish discourse on its role in Ukraine, and even more so on its role in the European Union as a safeguard of Eastern Europe. In an interview delivered on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2014, answering to the question whether Poland could persuade its European Partners to take a united stand on Ukraine, the president rather humbly stated that: 'We do not possess the tools to force anyone to take a certain position'.<sup>134</sup>

### **3.2. Poland as an example of positive transformation**

The second largest category that was identified throughout the textual material was the theme of Poland as a country that can share its democratic transition experience and therefore set an example within the region. This is a dimension that appears to receive limited coverage in the studies on Poland and Ukraine. The reason for it could be that it is difficult to position the notion within the traditional paradigm of thinking about Polish-Ukrainian relations. As perceived by the *Kultura* review, Poland following the end of communism should have taken an active role within Eastern Europe. Setting an example presupposes, however, a rather passive position. Yet, not all aspects of relations between Warsaw and Kiev can and should be understood through the ideological spectrum. Indeed, reasons for Polish insistence on its democratic know-how as a tool towards Ukraine spark from more profane grounds. It can be seen as the country's realization of its limited economic or military potential. This therefore further suggests

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<sup>133</sup> Rafał Czachor, 'Poland's Foreign Policy towards Ukraine and Belarus: the summary of a decade (2005-2015)', *Lviv University Series of International Relations*, 37 (2015): 196.

<sup>134</sup> 'Wywiad Bronisława Komorowskiego dla telewizji TVP, TVN i Polsat, Prezydent.pl, Last modified March 4, 2014.

<http://www.prezydent.pl/archiwum-bronislawa-komorowskiego/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta/wywiady/art,267,wywiad-prezydenta-bronislawa-komorowskiego-dla-telewizji-tvp-tvn-i-polsat.html>

that mentioning of the *Kultura* ideals within the Polish political rhetoric on Ukraine serves the purpose of maintaining the image of a consistent, historically established Eastern Policy, while in fact, the main authorities design their response towards the events to the east of Poland according to the current situation.

### **3.2.1. Sharing Polish experience with Ukraine**

Following the Euromaidan crisis the Polish President, Bronisław Komorowski, expressed himself about Polish support for Ukraine in the following way: 'Offering help (to Ukraine) has to happen on a bigger scale. It has to follow certain logic of action. The aid needs not only to take most generous but also the smartest form. Poland can find areas where we can particularly serve Ukraine. Those areas do not require significant financial input'. A special role in Ukraine for Poland could be the fight against corruption. Poland possesses positive experience in that regard, which we want to share with our close neighbor – Ukraine. We have to be as generous as we can afford. Our help has to be well addressed. We need to be guided by rationality so that our support has long lasting effects. We managed to succeed and we want to share our Polish success with Ukraine'.<sup>135</sup> Following his extensive statement on spreading Polish know-how to Ukraine, the president has then issued a special document where he identified the potential areas of action, towards which Poland could contribute in performing a positive transformation in Ukraine. Those included three main domains: creating

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<sup>135</sup> 'Chcemy mądrze pomagać w procesie zmian na Ukrainie,' Prezydent.pl, Last modified February 26, 2014.  
<http://www.prezydent.pl/archiwum-bronislaw-komorowskiego/aktualnosci/wydarzenia/art.2818, chcemy-madrze-pomagac-w-procesie-zmian-na-ukrainie.html>

conditions for the development of small and medium size businesses, reform of local government and fighting corruption.<sup>136</sup>

However, it was not only president Komorowski who in the aftermaths of the Euromaidan crisis proposed for Poland to share its experience on democratic transition with Kiev. The theme of Poland as a regional example appears across years in the official rhetoric on Ukraine. While, on one hand this can be seen as a way of Poland being aware of its limited capabilities, especially in terms of the financial support that it can provide, it may too be perceived as a way of creating a certain image about the country within the region – as an empathetic and generally supportive ally. Putting emphasis on the notion that the countries have gone through similar experience may have served the purposes of bringing Warsaw and Kiev closer together.

Thus, such ideas have resonated through the political discourse both immediately after the Orange revolution as well as the Euromaidan. Already in 2005 Alexander Kwaśniewski, commenting on the situation in Ukraine underlined that: ‘changes that are taking place in Ukraine (...) are an outcome of difficult processes connected to political and economic transformation, very well known in Poland’.<sup>137</sup> During the same year the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adam Rotfeld, then added that: ‘we want to offer the new president and government of Ukraine the necessary help and share with them our experience in developing and consolidating a democratic and pro-European

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<sup>136</sup> Chcemy mądrze pomagać w procesie zmian na Ukrainie,’ Prezydent.pl.

<sup>137</sup> ‘Oświadczenie Prezydenta RP w sprawie sytuacji na Ukrainie,’ Prezydent.pl, Last modified September 8, 2005.

<http://www.prezydent.pl/aleksandra-kwasniewskiego/aktualnosci/rok-2005/art.151.331.oswiadczenie-prezydenta-rp-w-sprawie-sytuacji-na-ukrainie.html>

transition'.<sup>138</sup> However, reading the textual material one can also conclude that the idea of Poland as an example-setter is as dominant because the authorities take pride in the recent history of Poland, the ability to overcome communism and the consequences of it. This has been particularly apparent in the Presentation on Polish Foreign Policy in 2007. Stefan Meller, from the Law and Justice Party, stated that: 'We observe with utmost satisfaction that Polish example can inspire other national elites and societies, especially in Ukraine, who are disappointed with the previous model to act. Our longstanding tradition in fighting for freedom and independence and specifically our experience of a successful transformation constitute a rich political know-how'.<sup>139</sup> Quite important is also the fact that the concept of Poland's special background is often accompanied with a strong emphasis on the longstanding history of this experience. It helps to consolidate the belief that Warsaw has good reasons to aspire to the role of a regional expert in matters of successful democratic transition.

Additionally, the idea of Poland as experienced in the transition process helps to build a profile of a country that following the collapse of communism became a reliable international partner, both for Ukraine as well as in Europe. This dimension did not, however, rise immediately after the events of 2004. Being still a young member of the European Union Poland lacked the confidence to pronounce its new qualities. Nonetheless, throughout the years such notion became progressively more present. It is visible especially in the speeches of members of the Civic Platform party, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, between 2013-2014. During the party's national meeting in 2014, which hosted some guests from Ukraine, such as the former

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<sup>138</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2005 roku przedstawiona na 96. Posiedzeniu Sejmu RP IV Kadencji*, 304.

<sup>139</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2006 roku przedstawiona na 10. posiedzeniu Sejmu RP V Kadencji*, 332.



boxer and now Ukrainian politician Vitali Klitschko, Donald Tusk affirmed that: 'We can today conduct an effective policy towards Ukraine thanks to being perceived as a competent state, who does not fear risk but also does not want to expose anyone to danger. It is a precious brand that we accomplished'.<sup>140</sup> Radosław Sikorski supported the view by stating that: 'Ukrainians don't see Poland as a condominium, a ruin, a crust but rather as an example to follow'.<sup>141</sup> During his time in office Sikorski elaborated on the topic on Poland as a positive case of democratic transition. On another occasion he emphasized: 'we have to show our friends from Ukraine that positive transformation is possible. During the last quarter century, the Polish path lead across what may have seemed as inexorable geopolitics. With the case of Ukraine it could be similar, but we hope that nothing is more contagious as a good example'.<sup>142</sup> Indeed, spreading the Polish example became one of the country's main tools to react towards Ukraine and an important motive in the concept of the Polish Foreign Policy Priorities (2012-2016). In the section on Poland's objectives in the East, the document reads that: 'Poland can make available its experience of uneasy systemic transformation and offer its support to its eastern neighbours. Reform-oriented measures in Eastern Europe and in South Caucasus are necessary not only as a goal in itself. Bringing stability and the rule of law across the Eastern border, they provide security and implement Poland's and the EU's interests'.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> 'Przemówienie Donalda Tuska na radzie krajowej,' Platforma Obywatelska, Last modified March 22, 2014.

<http://www.platforma.org/aktualnosc/36018/przemowienie-donald-tuska-na-radzie-krajowej-po-tekst>

<sup>141</sup> 'Sikorski: Granice Unijenej Soft-Power na Ukrainie,' Krytyka polityczna.

<sup>142</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2014 roku*, 16.

<sup>143</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Priorytety Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej 2012-2016*, 17.

### 3.2.2. Poland leading the region

Among some of the key premises of the *Kultura* review was the idea that Poland should take a leading role in the region of Eastern Europe. It is, nonetheless, difficult to find references to that notion throughout the textual material. It could be argued, as suggested in the previous section of this work, that such role has shifted and found its place on the forum of the European Union. Poland, rather than being an active player within its geographical area, prefers to take a leadership position on matters related to the region within the EU. As such Warsaw portrays itself as an expert on Eastern Europe in Brussels. Previously it has been stated, however, that under the leadership of Lech Kaczyński some attempts were made in order to consolidate Poland's leading position within the region. It needs to be reminded that those efforts ended with limited or in fact no success. The material under study suggests that within its political rhetoric Poland even shied away from presenting itself as the key player and leader in Eastern Europe. This could prove that Polish authorities remained cautious to make any direct statements as to its role in the region. Adam Rotfeld in 2005 said that 'Poland does not perceive the region as its backyard or a mean to pursue its political ambitions on the EU forum. We do not aspire to become the regional leader. We have other priorities: we want to use our prestige and our position within the European family to secure the region's interests'. In April 2015 Grzegorz Schetyna added to that: 'it needs to be reminded that over the past 25 years we have never forced anyone and we will not force our neighbors to undertake certain solutions or decisions'.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2015 roku, 6.

### **3.3. Polish relations with Russia**

The issue of Poland's role within Eastern Europe leads us to the next category, namely Polish relations with Russia. Although it is not the purpose of this dissertation to undertake an in-depth study of relations on the line Warsaw-Moscow they nonetheless play a significant part in the Polish approach towards Ukraine, and it is one of the most frequent categories of the material under study. It yet, needs to be stressed from the beginning that that unlike most of the other sections, where the relation between the current Polish political rhetoric on Ukraine and the premises of the *Kultura* review were disputed the theme of Polish-Russian relations is quite consistent and seems to be in line with the thought of Giedroyć and Mieroszewski. In pair with the theme of Poland as an expert on Eastern Europe within the EU, it helps to maintain the idea that there is a traditional Polish Eastern Policy. Once again, it will be questioned, however, whether there is a purpose in using the solid pragmatic and romantic labels. In opposition to the general literature, which suggests that the Law and Justice party presents itself at times as explicitly Russophobic the material under study proves that since 1989 Poland uphold the stand that positive relations with Moscow are both possible and desirable. As a form of introduction to the topic, the following section will start with a brief outline of Polish-Russian relations, starting from the fall of communism and focusing on the period between 2004-2013/2014.

### 3.3.1. Improving the relationship

When reflecting on Poland's relations with Moscow, Jerzy Giedroyc noted that: 'Poland must come to terms with Russia (...) and abandon romantic visions of the West'.<sup>145</sup> As stated in the introduction, following the end of communism Warsaw pursued the so-called double track foreign policy. Yet, the collapse of the Soviet Union rendered the Polish strategy futile. Consequently, since 1994 Poland began what was then named 'partnership for transformation'.<sup>146</sup> The concept implied three key goals, including the development of friendly bilateral relations with the post-Soviet republics, economic cooperation as well partnership for peace and security.<sup>147</sup> Most importantly, however, the program envisioned that Poland would share its responsibilities within the Eastern European region with Russia. This, in turn, necessitated smooth and effective relations with Moscow. In 1995 Poland elected its president Aleksander Kwaśniewski, who was committed to the task. In relations with Russia Kwaśniewski decided to focus on economic exchange, as gradually cooperation within the area of security became difficult. This was due to Poland's ambitions to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which Russians opposed. However, for most of Kwaśniewski's time in office and the center-left government in Poland, the overall exchange with Russia remained rather on a positive note. Only a year after Kwaśniewski's coming to office Warsaw made a number of gestures towards their Russian counterparts, including the

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<sup>145</sup> Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy*, 94.

<sup>146</sup> Kuźniar Roman, Szczepanik Krzysztof, *Polityka Zagraniczna RP 1989-2002* (Warszawa: Akson 2002), 225.

<sup>147</sup> Katarzyna Mącznik, 'Wpływ Relacji Polsko-Rosyjskich na Kształtowanie się statusu politycznego obszaru postradzieckiego (1990-2011),' *Ekonomia i Nauki Humanistyczne*, 19 (2012): 74.

setting of a series of round-table meetings and even the introduction of Polish-Russian military cooperation.<sup>148</sup>

Although the events from 2004, including Poland's support for the Orange Revolution and the country's entry into the European Union, could have imperiled relations between Warsaw and Moscow, the Polish authorities strived to maintain good cooperation with Russia. This is best exemplified by Adam Rotfelds speech from 2005. The aim of his expose was to assure Russians that Poland's role in the Orange Revolution was to safeguard certain ideals, rather than to enter into an open conflict with Moscow. In addition to that, the Foreign Minister mentioned that Poland wants to see increased cooperation between Russia and the West via different institutional frameworks, which not-accidentally Warsaw recently became part of. The extract from his speech reads as follows: 'our engagement in what has happened in Ukraine was not directed against Russia. Our goal was to support fundamental values; it was not a struggle for interests. (...)There was no foreign conspiracy. We also firmly believe that the events in Ukraine will prove beneficial for Russia. Never in the history did Russia have so many friendly nations to the West of its borders. We want Russia to have close and tight connections with Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the European Union'.<sup>149</sup>

It is understood that, ironically, the Polish-Russian relations stepped into a colder period not due to the conflict in Ukraine, but after the coming to power of the Law and Justice Party. The Kaczyński brothers, through their emphasis on a closer cooperation between

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<sup>148</sup> Kuźniar Roman, Szczepanik Krzysztof, *Polityka Zagraniczna RP 1989-2002*, 230.

<sup>149</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2005 roku przedstawiona na 96. Posiedzeniu Sejmu RP IV Kadencji*, 316.

Poland and the some of the post-Soviet Republics, are said to have initiated a confrontational policy towards Moscow. In 2010 the Polish weekly *Wprost* concluded that Lech Kaczyński, due to his close alliance with the President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich and the Georgian head of state, Mikheil Saakashvili, led an anti-Russian, quasi-imperial foreign policy.<sup>150</sup> Similar views were also expressed by Katarzyna Mącznik, Polish political scientist from the University of Marie-Curie Skłodowska in Lublin, who in her study on the Polish-Russian relations between 1990 and 2011 wrote that Kaczyński advocated for a hardline policy towards Moscow.<sup>151</sup>

However, considering the textual material under study in this work one can conclude that Lech Kaczyński as well as other members of the Law and Justice party, including his brother and the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, refrained from an openly anti-Russian rhetoric. Contrary to the popular view they underlined the importance of good, normalized relations with Moscow. In December 2005, during his inauguration ceremony, Kaczyński stated that: 'An important issue are our relations with Russia, which despite different twists and turns, remains our great neighbor. We look at the relationship, taking into consideration the historical perspective, but we remain patient and convinced that there are no objective reasons why Polish-Russian relations should not be good'.<sup>152</sup> A year after that in an interview with the Polish radio Kaczyński added that: 'it is our duty to show that the crisis in Ukraine is an autonomous issue. It does not

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<sup>150</sup> Azrael Kubacki, 'Koniec Polityki Wschodniej Lecha Kaczyńskiego,' *Wprost*, January 19, 2010, accessed January 5, 2017.

<https://www.wprost.pl/swiat/184828/Koniec-polityki-wschodniej-Lecha-Kaczynskiego.html>

<sup>151</sup> Katarzyna Mącznik, 'Wpływ Relacji Polsko-Rosyjskich na Kształtowanie się statusu politycznego obszaru postradzieckiego (1990-2011)', 77.

<sup>152</sup> 'Uroczystość zaprzysiężenia Prezydenta RP Lecha Kaczyńskiego przed Zgromadzeniem Narodowym,' Prezydent.pl, Last modified December 23, 2005.

<http://www.prezydent.pl/archiwalne-aktualnosci/rok-2005/art.427.uroczystosc-zaprzysiezenia-prezydenta-rp-lecha-kaczynskiego-przed-zgromadzeniem-narodowym.html>

derive from problems or relations with Russia. Together with president Yushchenko, we have been stressing the importance of good relations with Russia'.<sup>153</sup>

The Foreign Minister, Stefan Meller, expressed a similar view on Russia. His speech on the aims of the Polish foreign policy from 2006 read that: 'in our relations with Russia we care the most about the fact that they should be normal and based on a partnership that draws on our positive experience, especially within the sphere of economic cooperation'.<sup>154</sup> As a result, it can be argued that there existed a disparity between the political strategy of the Law and Justice party and its rhetoric. It henceforth proves the point that the Polish Eastern Policy functions on two distinct levels, one within the area of political action and the other as represented by the discourse. However, it can be also stated that the usual description of the Kaczyński brothers and the other members of the Law and Justice party as essentially anti-Russian is overstretched. What should constitute for such labeling is a combination of both determined political action represented by similar trends in the rhetoric. In this case, it can be observed that not only Kaczyński's plan to create a community of Eastern European states in competition to Russia gained very limited success, but also that the anti-Russian rhetoric was scarce.

As the general literature on the topic suggests an important breaking point for the Polish-Russian relations came in the year 2007 when the Civic Platform replaced Law and Justice in the parliament. It is argued that this transition and the subsequent stand towards Moscow had significant implications for the Polish-Ukrainian partnership. The current Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, is often accused of having initiated what Andrzej

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<sup>153</sup> 'Lech Kaczyński: wywiad Sygnały Dnia,' Prezydentnet.pl.

<sup>154</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2006 roku przedstawiona na 10. posiedzeniu Sejmu RP V Kadencji*, 337.

Szeptycki called the Russia-first policy, thereby putting relations between Warsaw and Kiev aside.<sup>155</sup> In the Yearbook on Polish foreign policy in 2009 Szeptycki further argued that there were in particular three reasons why some claimed Tusk to be prejudiced against Ukraine. This included the will to differentiate himself from the Law and Justice politics, not understanding the importance of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation as well as staging a priority treatment for Russia.<sup>156</sup> With regards to the final point it is supported by the fact that Tusk, upon taking his office, decided to first visit Moscow, and only later he went to Ukraine. Moreover, in 2009 Putin responded with a similar trip to Warsaw and Poland revoked its veto, which until then blocked negotiations on the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the Russia and the EU.<sup>157</sup> Considering the above, some could suggest that after 2007 Ukraine should have been worried about the stability of its relations with Poland. Not insignificant was also the fact that during the same time Poland joined the Schengen zone, which imposed strict visa regulations for Ukrainians. However, while visa issues were met with dissatisfaction in Ukraine, improvements between Polish and Russian authorities were taken as a positive sign. From the perspective of Kiev such arrangement provided for greater stability in the region.

Drawing on the textual material one can observe that the theme of normalized relations with Russia simply continued when the Civic Platform was in power. Donald Tusk started his premiership with an expose where he emphasized that: 'although we have our own opinion about the situation in Russia, we want a dialogue with Russia as it is.

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<sup>155</sup> Szeptycki, Andrzej. 'Polish-Ukrainian Relations: From the successes of the "Orange Revolution" to Russia-first policy', 5.

<sup>156</sup> Andrzej Szeptycki, 'Polityka Polski wobec Ukrainy,' *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej*, (2009); 162.

<sup>157</sup> Melchior Szczepaniak, 'Between Romantic "Mission in the East" and Minimalism: Polish policy towards the Eastern Neighborhood', 55.



Lack of such dialogue does not serve either of the sides. It damages the interests and the reputation of both countries. This is why I am convinced that the time has come to initiate a positive change in that regard'.<sup>158</sup> What is especially important about Tusk's statement is that he called for normalized relations with Moscow despite Russia's domestic situation and its poor record on the international scene. Undoubtedly, his premise was to improve Poland's reputation in particular within the EU, which due to historical reasons was often dubbed as Russophile. In a study completed in 2007 on the balance of forces in Russia-EU relations Poland and Lithuania were identified as 'the Cold War warriors'.<sup>159</sup> Tusk's position was thus supported by Radosław Sikorski, who also argued that Warsaw has 'abandoned the logic, where everything that is bad for Russia is good for Poland'.<sup>160</sup> Furthermore, in his information on the Polish foreign policy in May 2008, Sikorski also stated that: 'If Russia sticks to its own system of values, based on its traditions and cultural codes, then organizing Russia-EU relations around clear "rules of the game" must be sufficient also for us'.<sup>161</sup>

The statement of the Foreign Minister on Russia is especially important in that it came after it was clear that Poland has lost its bid for NATO membership for the two countries Georgia and Ukraine. As mentioned earlier this was largely due to growing tensions between Moscow and Tbilisi. Although the Polish authorities were disappointed by the outcome of the Bucharest summit, they nonetheless, argued for a stand towards Russia

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<sup>158</sup> 'Expose Premiera Donalda Tuska - Fragment dotyczący polityki zagranicznej,' *Stosunki międzynarodowe*, Last modified November 23, 2007. <http://stosunki-miedzynarodowe.pl/teksty-zrodlowe/przemowienia/1137-expose-premiera-donald-tuska-fragment-dotyczacy-polityki-zagranicznej-23-listopada-2007-r>

<sup>159</sup> Szeptycki, Andrzej. 'Polish-Ukrainian Relations: From the successes of the "Orange Revolution" to Russia-first policy', 24.

<sup>160</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych na temat polityki zagranicznej RP w 2011 roku* (Warszawa, 2011), 9.

<sup>161</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych na temat polityki zagranicznej RP w 2008 roku*, 6.

that was in line with the EU's concept. Later in the summer, when the five days war between Russia and Georgia broke out Sikorski warned of Moscow's aggression against the post-Soviet republics, mentioning even that a similar problem might in the future appear in Ukraine. Yet, beyond that Poland's policy towards Russia did not change. This type of conciliatory attitude towards Russia continued in Poland even despite some major disruptions, such as the 2010 Polish Air Force crash. The plane carried representatives of Polish political elite who were on their way to Smoleńsk to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Katyń massacre. All 96 people on the board of the plane were killed, including the President Lech Kaczyński and his wife. The tragic event was then followed by a number of conspiracy theories, promoted by some Polish political figures. The theories suggested that the crash was a political assassination staged by Russia. Although, it sparked a number of controversies and conflicts in the Polish politics the events did not alter Warsaw's official stand towards Moscow. In his presentation on the Polish Foreign Policy presented after the catastrophe Radosław Sikorski mentioned even that the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Katyń massacre marked a historical moment for Poland and Russia, where the Prime Ministers of both countries commemorated the victims of the Stalinist regime.<sup>162</sup>

### **3.3.2. Decline in the relationship**

Poland has refrained from expressing itself openly against Russia until the very last moment when the events of the Euromaidan broke out and after the Russian annexation of Crimea. In fact normalization of Polish-Russian relations became one of the key points of the Polish Foreign Policy strategy for the years 2012-2016. The document read that:

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<sup>162</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o założeniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2013 roku*, 15.

'Poland is opened for a dialogue with Russia and wants to support the country in its modernization, understood as the state of law, political pluralism and freedom of speech'.<sup>163</sup> Sikorski defended such approach towards Moscow suggesting that it directly derives from the principles of Giedroyć and Mieroszewski.<sup>164</sup> Having found justification for the Polish strategy towards Russia in the ideals of the *Kultura* review, until March 2013 the Foreign Minister continued to advocate for an improved Polish-Russian relationship. He was particularly interested in cooperation on a regional level and called for a number of bodies to coordinate the exchange, among them the Polish-Russian Regional Forum as well as Centers For Dialogue and Understanding recently established in both countries.<sup>165</sup> Nonetheless, what followed after the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius marked a critical juncture in the Polish-Russian relations. In January 2014 the Foreign Minister stated: 'Prime Minister Donald Tusk in his first expose said that Poland will lead a policy towards Russia 'as it is'. This logic remains the only reasonable alternative (...) when Russia wants to cooperate with the world and respects its rules. (...)However, when Russia attacks the territories of its neighbors and threatens them with violence we make our conclusions very quickly. I will say even more: we will be the first ones to applause it, when Russia turns away from the path of aggression'.<sup>166</sup> Other members of the Polish leadership followed in line with Sikorski. Russian aggression against Ukraine, similarly to the events in 2004, sparked a wave of support for Kiev in Poland. Warsaw was most importantly determined to show that they are disappointed about the recent development but they must strongly condemn Russian actions in Ukraine. As such, in 2015 the new Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Grzegorz Schetyna

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<sup>163</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Priorytety Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej 2012-2016*, 13.

<sup>164</sup> 'Sikorski: Granice Unijenej Soft-Power na Ukrainie.' *Krytyka polityczna*.

<sup>165</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o założeniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2013 roku*, 15.

<sup>166</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2014 roku*, 2.

emphasized that ‘against our will, the conflict in Ukraine has brought a deterioration in Polish-Russian relations, both economically as well as politically. We look with deep unrest at how Russia is furthering itself from Europe. Our critical examination of the situation (in Ukraine), does not, however, change the fact that we remain neighbors and economic partners (with Russia)’.<sup>167</sup>

### **3.4. Historical reconciliation**

As stated in the introduction to this work history constitutes an important but difficult part of the Polish-Ukrainian relations. Although a process of historical reconciliation was initiated soon after Ukraine gained its independence, some historical events continue to cause resentment on both sides of the border. The following part will focus in particular on how history is presented in the Polish political rhetoric on Ukraine. The aim of this section will be to demonstrate that attitudes towards the countries common past have seen its ups and downs in Poland. There seems to be a trend where the process of historical reconciliation was undertaken with particular force in the early 2000s and especially following the Orange Revolution, yet gradually Poland has adopted a more reserved stand towards the Polish-Ukrainian past. This was accompanied by a number of controversial events, which can, therefore, explain some of the drawbacks. Quite surprising, however, might be the fact that history is not among the main themes in the Polish discourse on Ukraine, but positions itself last. It can be argued that the key political figures in Poland who shape the country’s foreign policy are reluctant to introduce their perceptions on historical matters into the official rhetoric, as those often

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<sup>167</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Informacja Rady Ministrów o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w latach 2014-2015*, by Grzegorz Schetyń (Warszawa 2014), 5.

constitute the most difficult and intense topics. It yet does not signify that such debates are not taking place in other political forums, as the secondary material shows. What thus happens is that the Polish authorities introduce historical perceptions in a reserved manner, by which they do not dissatisfy the domestic audience and simultaneously stay away from a confrontation on history with their Ukrainian counterparts. Partially it also helps to maintain the image that Polish Eastern Policy follows this traditional path and can be inscribed into the historically established formula designed by the *Kultura* review. Nonetheless, from the subtle nuances in the text, one can conclude that the process of historical reconciliation is not yet, if not far from, completed.

The process of historical reconciliation became especially important in 2004. That year the presidents of Poland, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, and Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovych, commemorated in a joint ceremony the victims of the Volhynia massacre. Additionally, following the Orange Revolution, the Ukrainian authorities opened the newly renovated Cemetery of the Defenders of Lviv. It is a place of particular significance to Poland as the cemetery is a memorial and burial place of Poles who died as a result of the Polish-Ukrainian war and Polish-Soviet war in 1918 and 1920. Indeed, this became one of the main reasons for Kwaśniewski's visit to Ukraine in 2005. As part of his two-day trip, the President gave a number of speeches where he emphasized how valuable the Polish-Ukrainian partnership was, especially in its historical dimension. During the first day of that visit, Kwaśniewski expressed his special appreciation of President Yanukovych and his personal commitment towards the restoration of the Polish cemetery. Moreover, he mentioned how important it is for both countries to face the painful parts of their past. On that occasion, Kwaśniewski also acknowledged the injustice caused to Ukrainians as part of the Operation Vistula, which was warmly welcomed in Ukraine. The Polish

president stated that: 'Of great important for building trust and openness between our nations are the Polish-Ukrainian achievements that took place earlier today – the joint commemoration of the Volhynia massacre and the condemnation of violence (...) during Operation Vistula. The process of historical reconciliation (...) must be continued'.<sup>168</sup> In his second day, Kwasniewski spoke more broadly about what Poland and Ukraine have already done and must still do in order to overcome their difficult history. He declared that: 'In the past decade Poland and Ukraine have completed a very important path- the path of reconciliation. I feel great satisfaction that I could participate in that process. It was not an easy path and we are still stepping on it. There were too many harms, wounds, and grievances in our common history. We have to speak about together but not in order to ponder or recollect but to remember and forgive each other'.<sup>169</sup>

The period under Kwaśniewski seems to have marked the peak of Polish-Ukrainian relations in terms of the countries collaboration on difficult aspects from their common past. Only a few years after his visit to Ukraine, a number of incidents caused that historical resentments once again found its place in the political exchange between Warsaw and Kiev. In July 2009 Valentin Nalivachenko, head of Ukraine's security service, compared the pre-war Polish policy with the actions of NKVD and Gestapo, arguing that it aimed to destroy Ukrainian identity.<sup>170</sup> In response to that, the Polish Sejm on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July adopted a resolution 'On the tragic fate of Poles in Eastern

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<sup>168</sup> 'Wizyta Oficjalna Prezydenta RP z małżonką na Ukrainie (dzień pierwszy),' Prezydent.pl, Last modified November 24, 2005.

<http://www.prezydent.pl/aleksandra-kwasniewskiego/aktualnosci/rok-2005/art,151,463,wizyta-oficjalna-prezydenta-rp-z-malzonka-na-ukrainie.html>

<sup>169</sup> 'Wizyta Oficjalna Prezydenta RP z małżonką na Ukrainie (dzień drugi),' Prezydent.pl. Last modified November 25, 2005.

<http://www.prezydent.pl/aleksandra-kwasniewskiego/aktualnosci/rok-2005/art,151,460,wizyta-oficjalna-prezydenta-rp-z-malzonka-na-ukrainie-dzien-drugi.html>

<sup>170</sup> Andrzej Szeptycki, 'Polish-Ukrainian Relations: From the successes of the "Orange Revolution" to Russia-first policy', 17.

Borderlands'.<sup>171</sup> It spread a lot of controversies in Ukraine and found its president appealing to Warsaw, stating that the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA) has a similar place in Ukrainian national awareness as the 'AK' – Armia Krajowa (Home Army) in Poland.<sup>172</sup> Moreover, the Ukrainian authorities in the district of Tarnopol and Lviv made an official statement arguing that 'political circles in the Republic of Poland and the parliament of that country opted for a dangerous course of inciting national enmity'.<sup>173</sup> The unfriendly exchange between Poland and Ukraine continued when in July 2009 Polish priest Tadeusz Issakowicz-Zaleski organized a protest against granting Viktor Yanukovych the title of honoris causa by the Catholic University of Lublin.<sup>174</sup> Finally, in 2010 Poland was particularly angered when the Ukrainian president announced that Stepan Bandera, the head of UIA, was the country's national hero.<sup>175</sup>

In light of the various events, the Polish political rhetoric on Ukraine and its history has shifted. Although most political figures still expressed themselves positively about the reconciliation process a more assertive attitude can be observed in their discourse. Most importantly the consequent Polish presidents, as well as Foreign Ministers, stressed how much work remained to be done in order to reach a historical agreement between Poland and Ukraine. Less emphasis was therefore put on the obstacles that have already been overcome. In 2006 Lech Kaczyński stated for instance that: 'the difficult history is being defeated but certainly we still need to take more steps in that direction, as this indeed was not always a good past. Yet, we need to do it, each year a step or two

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<sup>171</sup>Łukas Adamski, 'Poland's policy towards Ukraine,' *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 1 (2010): 158.

<sup>172</sup> Łukas Adamski, 'Poland's policy towards Ukraine', 157.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>175</sup> Andrzej Szeptycki, 'Polish-Ukrainian Relations: From the successes of the "Orange Revolution" to Russia-first policy', 18.

forward'.<sup>176</sup> His successor Bronisław Komorowski seemed to be even more forceful in his considerations on the Polish-Ukrainian history. Following the events of the Euromaidan, where Poland was frequently accused of supporting an essentially Ukrainian nationalist uprising that historically Warsaw should antagonize, Komorowski declared that: 'I think that Ukrainians will have to live with a national myth very difficult for us to accept. It will be difficult also for us, although some aspects can be dealt with. (...) We will have to work on this'.<sup>177</sup> The most decisive approach was, however, taken by the Polish Foreign Minister Grzegorz Schetyna, who came into office as part of the newly selected Civic Platform government under Ewa Kopacz. In his annual report on the Polish Foreign Policy Schetyna announced that Poland will not remain silent on historical issues that involve Ukraine. As his statement followed: 'We want to continue the process of historical reconciliation, based on truth. We will not conceal our harms and the Polish victims, including the Vholynia massacre, but we also do not want to disregard sensitive historical matters of our neighbors. Ukraine today is building its national identity, (...) which however does not exempt them from looking critically at their past. This is what mature nations do'.<sup>178</sup> Schetyna's statement made it clear that Poland expects Ukraine to take a certain stands on its history, one that would be accepted by Warsaw and lead to a process of true reconciliation.

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<sup>176</sup> 'Lech Kaczyński: wywiad Sygnały Dnia,' Prezydent.pl.

<sup>177</sup> 'Wywiad Bronisława Komorowskiego dla telewizji TVP, TVN i Polsat,' Prezydent.pl.

<sup>178</sup> Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2015 roku, 6.



## 4. Conclusion

This work aimed to investigate the Polish strategy towards Ukraine during the time between the Orange Revolution and the events of the Euromaidan, as expressed in the political rhetoric. What has been examined is how the political discourse uses the concepts developed by the Polish émigré society of the *Kultura* review in order to maintain an image of a traditional and longstanding Polish Eastern Policy, specifically with regards to Ukraine. It also looked at the concepts of romantic and pragmatic approach in order to demonstrate their utility. The work has established four separate categories and a number of subcategories that can be treated as a profile of the Polish-Ukrainian relations. What emerges from the study is that a great majority of the themes prove the hypothesis that the Polish authorities prefer to form their own, new responses to the consequent crises in Ukraine, while framework of *Kultura* serves the purpose of maintaining stability in Polish perceptions of Ukraine. First, the dissertation discussed the issue of Polish-Ukrainian relations through the prism of Poland's membership in the European Union. With exception of the sub-theme of Polish expertise on the region of Eastern Europe, the overall category demonstrates that Polish efforts to bring Ukraine closer to the European Union, poses different issues of interpretation. It appears difficult to treat the topic within the common framework of being either a stronghold or the betrayal of the Polish Eastern Policy, as it has been historically established. Connected to this is the idea developed by Andrzej Nowak, who stated that: Polish Eastern Policy only makes sense when there appears a civilization clash.<sup>179</sup> The central point of such vision is a dilemma, which side (East or West) chose countries such as Ukraine. This also brings

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<sup>179</sup> Andrzej Nowak, 'Polityka Wschodnia Polski: historyczne inspiracje współczesne dylematy,' in *Polityka Wschodnia Polski: Uwarunkowania, Koncepcje, Realizacja*, edited by Andrzej Gil, Tomasz Kapuśniak, (Lublin-Warszawa: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodnie, 2009), 140.

us to questions of Poland's place in the international and even more narrowly the European order.

Second, the dissertation looked at the category that the literature on Polish-Ukrainian relations treats only to a limited extent, namely the role of Poland as a positive example of democratic transition. As has been established the category further exemplifies that Poland's engagement in Ukraine is less active than proposed by the *Kultura* review. Although some of Poland's leaders may have strived to establish Warsaw's strong position within the region of Eastern Europe, the country has limited potential and resources do so. Equally, what prevents Poland from being an impactful player in its geographical area are its still vibrant historical resentments. It is duly argued by Aleksander Smolar that in Poland 'history plays part in the definition of the future. We have to think about the future in strategic terms, but the past inevitably co-defines our policy'.<sup>180</sup> As such, it can be stated that the concept of Polish Eastern Policy, as it functions today is based rather on traditional assumptions and a set of appearances. This notion might stem from the will or need to present itself in a certain way to the international as well as domestic audience. The fact that Poland proves at time inconsistent in its Eastern Policy demonstrates that the country still searches for its place in the region and Europe. Similarly the country faces significant challenges when having to decide on its approach towards Ukraine based on a bi-lateral or multi-lateral structure. This finds some support in the words of Olaf Osica, head of the council of the Center for Eastern Studies, who stated that: 'We Poles like to think about ourselves as

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<sup>180</sup> Melchior, Szczepaniak, 'Between a Romantic "Mission in the East" and Minimalism: Polish policy towards the Eastern Neighborhood', 52.

Western Europeans, but this label comes easily off, especially when Poland has power'.<sup>181</sup>

As the research suggests only in a few respects the Polish strategy towards Ukraine exposes behavior that is coherent over time. Ironically this regards Polish relations with Russia. In that sense Warsaw has found a stable position, which also derives from the principles of *Kultura*, namely the normalizing approach towards Moscow. It is a theme that deserves further attention, especially in terms of the origins of such strategy and whether it can be solely explained by Poland's will to improve its image abroad.

The dissertation proposed a different perspective on the way the *Kultura* review is treated in the Polish political discourse on Eastern Policy and specifically Ukraine. It concludes that the traditional concepts are utilized in order to retain a stable image about the region and Ukraine in particular, yet this is done in order to mask the fact Warsaw is still coming to terms with its position between the East and West. Nonetheless, the dissertation has not exhausted the topic. By highlighting an important part of it, it simultaneously sheds light on different dimensions that might benefit from further research. Most importantly, this work focused on a limited representation of the Polish political class, including the three key actors. Expansion in terms of the political figures, parties or fraction could provide interesting new material.

Similarly, the topic could be further considered from the perspective of the domestic influence on the political class and therefore the Polish approach towards Ukraine. This would include questions such as to what extent the domestic audience impacts the

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<sup>181</sup> Wojciech Jezusek, *Polska Polityka Zagraniczna: Materiały z konferencji zorganizowanej 22-24 listopada 2012*, 31.

shape of the Polish foreign policy in general, as well as whether public views on Ukraine find its place in the official discourse on the Polish Eastern Policy. Finally, in order to provide for a fuller picture of the topic a mirror study could be conducted based on the examination of Ukraine's political rhetoric towards Poland. This would answer the question to what extent Polish support for Kiev finds a response on the other side of the boarder. Moreover, it would help to decide whether a pragmatic or a romantic approach is more appropriate when addressing the Polish Eastern Policy.

In conclusion, it needs to be once again stressed that this dissertation did not aim to refute the importance of *Kultura* review in the Polish foreign policy but rather to provide a new perspective on the way it is utilized. The work emphasizes, that an alternative view on the Polish Eastern Policy can be taken, which exposes a range of interesting discrepancies. It is therefore hoped that by producing this profile of Polish policy towards Ukraine and, through it, presenting the idea that *Kultura* can be seen as bridge between traditional and novel ways of thinking about Poland's Eastern neighbors, the dissertation has therefore enriched the field with fresh opinion on the topic.

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