

**Ideas & Foreign Policy: The Institutionalisation of the 'Russian
Idea' in Russia's Foreign Natural Gas Policy Towards Ukraine**

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SUMMARY

This thesis examines the institutionalisation of ideas in Russian foreign policy in order to gain a better understanding of Russian foreign natural gas policy and its broader implications on Russian/CIS relations. The main goal of this study is to explore how the Putin's Presidency marked a change in Russian foreign policy (after 2000) after the previous decade of 'liberalisation' and 'westernisation'. Drawing upon an engagement between historical institutionalism and Foreign Policy Analysis, the thesis focuses on how domestic arrangements, and relations between formal and informal institutions within Russia, impact on foreign natural gas policy. The thesis argues that after 2000, we see the emergence of a renewed form of Russian nationalism which has broader implications for the practice of government. Under the notion of the new "Russian idea", Russian-ness became increasingly defined by civilisational superiority and this underpins a new style of governing called 'sovereign democracy'. This shapes the direction of foreign natural gas policy, and is even articulated through informal institutions such as the media and private companies. Utilising a case study on the Ukraine, the thesis reveals how the institutionalisation of the 'Russian idea' at the domestic level has important implications for Russia's relations with its 'near abroad'. As the 2014 Maiden crisis illustrates, the politics of Russian civilisational 'patriotism' also has wider repercussions for Europe and the 'West'. Whilst focussing on natural gas policy, this thesis reveals the importance of the 'Russian idea' on foreign policy.

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Introduction

Russian gas supplies to Ukraine were seriously reduced in 2014; this came in the wake of “anti-Russian” protests in Maidan Square in the Ukrainian capital, Kiev (BBC, 2014a). The reduction of Russian gas supplies to Ukraine is important for two reasons. Firstly, Ukraine is highly dependent on Russian gas for energy consumption; secondly, the reduction of supplies emerged in the wake of the Russian state’s annexation of Crimea in the name of “defending the rights of the ethnic Russian population”. These gas supplies to Ukraine are crucial for the Ukrainian economy and for its transit into the EU. This reveals some of the complex interconnections established between Russian gas policy and wider foreign policy objectives. However, this was not the first time that Russia had used its gas supply as a political weapon. Russia cut off natural gas supplies to Ukraine in 2006 and 2009 under the pretext that the Ukrainian government had failed to pay its debts (Kupchinsky, 2005; Stern, 2006). Whilst experts have agreed that there were “payment problems” from the Ukrainian side, the decision was preceded by political changes and pro-European policies from the Ukrainian government.

How then are we to understand these decisions to cut off Russian gas supplies to Ukraine within the wider context of Russian foreign policy? Can the decision to cut off gas merely be understood as an example of how the gas market has become a tool of the Russian state? After each crisis, where gas has been cut off or reduced, it has been attributed to Russia’s “national interests” (Ivanenko, 2008) or “Russia’s pipeline imperialism” (Smith, 2007, p. 9). In this thesis, I argue that this assumes that Russian interests are fixed and imperialism is a *given idea*. A given fact is a “reflection of material or even social circumstance” (Hay, 2011, p. 67). Instead, I propose that interests are constructed and imperialism should be understood within wider policy strategy: “the Russian idea”. This thesis takes an historical institutionalist approach to examine the role of ideas and institutions in the making of foreign policy.

As this thesis studies the impact of the “Russian idea” on foreign natural gas policy, this idea needs to be defined. The “Russian idea” dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries when there were mainly two schools of thought. These schools of thoughts have their own idealised view of Russia’s foreign policy, its identity and its position in the world and were mainly driven by Russian intellectuals. Thus, these ideals or interpretations on the country’s identity and its position in the world combined to form the “Russian idea”. These ideas not only have an impact on the foreign policy (as this study argues) but have also affected Russian theory of International Relations (IR) (Tsygankov and Tsygankov, 2010, p. 664). The two schools of thought are called: Slavophiles and Westernisers. While Westernisers affected the policies of President Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Kozyrev in the 1990s, Slavophiles affected the elites during the 2000s. In his millennium speech in 1999 Putin reformulated the Russian idea into four principles: “patriotism, greatness of power, statism and social solidarity” (Putin, 2000). Among these principles, the nationalism, statism and greatness of Russia play an important role. This thesis argues that Russian foreign (natural gas) policy is grounded in this Russian idea and this is important in understanding Russia’s foreign policy towards the CIS and how this idea was institutionalised by the Russian elites during 2000s. This will be explored in details in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

In the study of foreign policy behaviour in Russia, considerable attention has been given to ideas of the elites and leaders of Russia. In particular the “new Russian idea” has become the ideology of the new Russian state in the 2000s. Although this thesis does not claim that the Russian state has an official ideology as such, it does claim that the “Russian idea” has been adopted by the Russian leadership as a guiding principle that provides a way of then structuring the state in order to establish stability within the country. Ideas as road maps and world views (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993) and ideology as interacts with policy ideas (Ikenberry, 1994, p. 2; Hall and Taylor, 1996, p. 938) have a close relationship. How does this study understand ideology then? To one scholar it is “a configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound

together by some form of constraint of functional independence” (Converse, 1964, p. 207). Or Holsti defines it as: “a set of lenses through which information concerning the physical and social environment is received. It orients the individual to his environment, defining it for him and identifying for him its salient characteristics.... In addition to organizing perceptions into a meaningful guide for behaviour, the belief system has the function of the establishment of goals and the ordering of preferences” (Holsti, 1962, p. 245). Jost et al. (2009, p. 309) state that “ideologies also endeavour to describe or interpret the world as it is –by making assertions or assumptions about human nature, historical events, present realities, and future possibilities – and to envision the world as it should be, specifying acceptable means of attaining social, economic, and political ideals.” This study shares the definition of North: “the subjective perceptions that people have about what the world is like and what it ought to be; ideology therefore affects people’s perceptions about the fairness or justice of the institutions of a political economic system” (North, 1988, p. 15).

Thus, can we treat ideology as ideas? Meyer et al. argue that it is important to discuss it in as institutionalist theory: “many of the core concepts of institutional theory, such as institution, legitimisation, social categories, institutional logics, and theorization, are in one way or another, closely related to the notion of ideology” (Meyer et al, 2009, p. 2). In this study, it is argued that the Russian idea is grounded as an ideology in Russia’s relations with the CIS.

As well as ideology, historical institutionalism provides many aspects which would be of interest for studies on nationalism: “it provides a view on structure and agency which takes institutions seriously yet leaves room for action, conceptualised in terms of power and power relationships, and it offers a genuine historical perspective” (Lecours, 2005, p. 183). For instance, the last three empirical chapters demonstrate how civilizational nationalism has shaped and driven the domestic and foreign policies of Russia. When Putin became president, the country was still trying to attain stability. The three main empirical chapters argue that

ideas determine the foreign policy outcomes in Russia both towards the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Ukraine.

The main question which concerns this thesis still remains: what is the driving force behind Russia's foreign (natural gas) policy towards Ukraine? This thesis argues that Russia's gas policy can be better understood by this new form of "the Russian idea" which consists of patriotism, the greatness of Russia, statism and social solidarity embedded in both formal institutions (the presidency, Gazprom and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and informal ones (the church, youth groups, media). This idea which was renewed by Putin in 1999 was also institutionalised through different structures. Firstly, Putin strengthened state power through centralisation. Secondly, he appointed his own elites (whom he befriended in St. Petersburg) to important government positions (also to state-owned companies such as Gazprom). Through this perspective we can view this form of government as a top-down system, referred to as "power vertical". Thirdly, this realignment of institutional structures and elites is supported and underlined by the development of a new ideological formation -Kremlin ideologist Vladislav Surkov introduced the idea of "sovereign democracy" (2006) which believes that Russia is a part of the wider European civilisation, but should follow its own path in democracy. He defined that as:

A manner of political life for society, under which authorities, their agencies and their decisions are chosen, formed and directed exclusively by Russia's nation, in all of its diversity and entirely, for the sake of achieving material well-being, freedom, and justice for all of its citizens, social groups, and nationalities that comprise it (Surkov, 2006).

Lastly, informal institutions were also given important roles by the Russian state to strengthen patriotic ideas and state power in society: the church, media and youth groups.

Thus, the institutional change in foreign policy has happened as a result of the new ideas in foreign policy during the 2000s. As the main theoretical framework of this study, historical

institutionalism (HI) suggests, institutional change happens in several circumstances: “first, broad changes in the socioeconomic or political context can produce a situation in which previously latent institutions suddenly become salient, with implications for political outcome. Second, changes in socioeconomic context or political balance of power ends can produce a situation in which old institutions are put in the service of different ends, as new actors come into play who pursue their (new) goals through existing institutions” (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992 p. 16). In the case of Russia, broad political/economic changes in the 1990s have raised the importance of new foreign policy ideas and new actors in the 2000s. These new ideas have changed the structure of the institutions.

Some scholars who work on the ideational factors in institutional analysis focus on both structure and agency. For instance, Hall discusses the movement from Keynesian to monetarist model of economy in Britain and argues that economic developments, conflict among interest groups and new ideas played an important role (Hall, 1992, pp. 94-95). On the other hand this study suggests that, as well as economic changes in the 1990s, leadership and agency played an important part in changing the institutional structures in Russia. New foreign policy thinking among the elites and Putin’s presidency has structured a new way of governance in the country with more pragmatic/nationalist views. This kind of new ideology, mainly the Russian idea, has changed and shaped the function of the institutions. This is the main argument in this thesis where institutional change will be discussed through the change in foreign policy ideas during the 2000s. As well as this institutional change, this thesis looks at how President Putin has changed the institutional structure of the country. As discussed in the theory chapter, the role of individuals as agency will be also the main focus here. This is not to claim that he overuses his power, rather individuals have important roles in the institutions.

This thesis argues that both formal and informal structures defined above are important to understand the gas policy of Russia and gas crises as an outcome of this policy. Ideas (the

ideological forms of the new Russian idea) in these institutions not only affected the policy outcomes but also shaped the crises in 2006 and 2009. These crises reveal the importance of studying Russia's foreign policy for two reasons: its implications for the CIS and its implications for the European Union (EU). Russia is the main natural gas exporter to the EU and the EU is highly dependent on Russian gas. As a result of the gas crises in 2006 and 2009, the EU was also highly affected by the cut off. However, this thesis focuses on the implications to the CIS because the region was and still is very important for Russia's wider foreign policy. Ukraine is particularly important for Russia because of its cultural, political and economic ties.

This thesis suggests that these implications can be best understood when approached from an institutionalist perspective. Thus it positions itself within an institutionalist approach to Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). The study argues that the Russian idea which was renewed by Putin in his Millennium speech was institutionalised into formal/informal structures and this still drives Russia's foreign natural gas policy since 2000. To understand this policy strategy and state building, a historical institutionalist approach will be deployed in this study. The main goal here is to explore the articulation of "the Russian idea", its growth and institutionalisation through different historical periods; through this perspective we can gain a better grasp of the country's foreign gas policy.

Within the current literature, Russia's gas policy and the outcome of the crises are mostly interpreted through International Relations (IR) theories. However, this approach does not provide an efficient account of gas policy and the construction of wider foreign policy for several issues: it fails to account for why Ukraine is important for Russia? How are national interests constructed? What are the components of gas policy? Which institutions are important? What are their ideas / and how are these ideas structured in the wider foreign policy towards Ukraine? I propose that the answers to these questions can best be answered through an

institutionalist framework and that this will enhance our understanding of Russia's foreign policy towards Ukraine.

1.1 Research questions

The study seeks to answer one very broad research question: How do preferences/ideas/institutions have an impact on Russia's foreign natural gas policy over time towards Ukraine? This is why this study will take "the Russian idea" and formal/informal institutions as the core of this thesis and develop the argument to interpret the policy towards Ukraine.

After this very broad question, each of the empirical chapters will focus on a subordinate question. In Chapter Four, the study asks: What are the key foreign policy ideas in formal institutions? How have these ideas become important in Russia's foreign natural gas policy? The aim of these questions is to explore the foreign policy ideas and the political discourse of the elites and the leaders. This will give us a better understanding of why certain ideas become more important than others. It is also important to trace the sources of foreign policy thinking to interpret the foreign policy outcomes in their historical context.

Chapter Five asks: if ideas and institutions are important, how ideas are institutionalised in formal/informal structures. How did foreign policy institutions change under Putin in the 2000s? Answering this question will allow us to understand how ideas are structured and can affect the policy outcomes. What are the key formal institutions? How are informal institutions important in the policy-making processes? Do they have a direct or an indirect impact on policy-making? How does the institutionalisation process work? Who actually institutionalises these ideas?

Chapter Six will draw attention towards Ukraine after studying the main ideas and their institutionalisation process. The questions here are: How do ideas and formal and informal institutions work in relation to Ukraine? How do they affect Russia's natural gas policy towards this country? This is the last empirical chapter in which Russia's foreign (natural gas) policy behaviour towards Ukraine will be explored in detail. Why is Ukraine important to Russia? What is the importance of natural gas for these two countries? What have been their economic and political relations since the end of the Cold War? How can we trace the history of gas relations? Is the economy interconnected with politics and do they have an impact on one another?

1.2 The core contributions of this thesis

This thesis makes a contribution to the existing literature and debates on Russian foreign natural gas policy in three ways. First, in the current literature, Russian foreign gas policy has been analysed mainly through power maximization, from a realist perspective, where interests were treated as "fixed" and "given". In contrast, this thesis specifically explores the impact of ideas, how these ideas were institutionalised informal and informal structures through a new form of ideology. This is to suggest that not only ideas but also interests are constructed over time. Thus, it is about historical institutionalisation of ideas into an ideological structure.

Second, the vast literature has analysed Russia's natural gas policy only by its outcomes. By contrast, this study takes an ideational standpoint and investigates the sources of gas policy through an institutionalisation process. To understand the sources of these policies, this study focuses on the individual behaviour and agents involved in the policy-making process. For instance, why and how Putin institutionalised the Russian idea between 2000 and 2010.

Third, Russia's policy towards Ukraine has only been seen as a narrow form of the imperial ambitions of Russia. "The Russian idea" has only been discussed in the literature to a limited extent, even though unpacking this would give a wider analysis of the imperialist views of the country. As well as policy towards Ukraine, this thesis contributes by exploring the institutionalisation of formal and informal structures and how these institutions can be utilised for the continuation of the foreign policy ideas particularly in foreign natural gas policy.

1.3 The current literature

In the current literature, there are three main perspectives which correspond to Russia's foreign gas policy: political economists and constructivists. According to the political economy literature, many view gas policy (and gas crises) more as an economic issue rather than a foreign policy one (Milov et al, 2006; Stern, 2006; Yafimava, 2011). The main concern of this literature is to analyse institutional deficiencies in the gas market. For instance, some believe that "Russia's energy policy is fragmentary and contradictory. Its structure is dictated by rather short-term and medium-term interests related to the functioning of the capital-intensive energy sector. The gas industry has remained one of the least liberalised among the large sectors of the economy" (Milov et al, 2006). On the other hand, Aslund, who is a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute, discusses this statement and argues that Russian energy policy is erratic but not random; rather he claims that it is the outcome of ever-changing energy policies (the old soviet model, a liberal or oligarchic model a recent state capitalist model) in the country and different interest groups at those times (Aslund, 2006, p. 321). Although this study also explores the economic relations and disagreements between the two countries, foreign policy analysis is still the main approach and this study perceives gas crises as a foreign policy issue.

From an International Relations perspective, this study shares the ontological position of the constructivist literature in which interests are treated as endogenised and are constructed over social interaction. However, the existing Constructivist literature focuses strongly on identity. In the case of Russia this revolves around the notion of the “identity crisis” (Light, 2003). Rather this thesis suggests that identity is always in crisis, so the arguments around Russian foreign policy being constructed around a loss of national identity are not the core of this research.

As interests are not given to actors (see theory chapter) they are socially and politically constructed overtime. If the Russian state is acting rationally, why is this so? What are the national interests? How are they constructed? What are the main ideas in the making of foreign natural gas policy? How are national interests shaped? Thus, ideas matter because they shape interests and form part of accepted institutional structure and influence certain forms of behaviour. They are the primary source of political behaviour (Beland and Cox, 2011, Blyth, 2011, Hay, 2011, Schmidt, 2011).

It is worth noting that the main concern in this thesis is not only the outcomes of the foreign policy, but also the sources of it. Much of the existing literature focuses on the outcomes of Russian foreign policy. However, there are only a couple of studies (Arbatov, 1993; Malcolm, 1996; Neumann, 1996; Pravda, 1997; Pravda, 2001; Prizel, 1998) that have explored the sources of foreign policy-making in Russia (discussed in the Literature Review). Thus, if there were two natural gas crises in 2006 and 2009 and recently the Crimean crisis, what does it tell us about Russia's policy-making? Or what does Russia's foreign policy-making tell us about the crises and the last Crimean crisis? I view policy making as more complicated than simply power maximization. If the Russian state seeks to maximize its power, how does it structure its policy?

1.4 Theory and methodology

The main theoretical framework of this study is historical institutionalism, which studies how ideas and institutions shape policy outcomes. The main reason behind choosing this theory is the fact that it provides the best answers for my research questions. The institutionalist approach prioritises institutionalisation to understand human actions or society (March and Olsen, 1998, p. 948) and concerns with institutions as well as ideas on policy change (Steinmo et al. 1992). Historical Institutionalism has these main arguments: it focuses on institutions' and individuals' behaviour; policy outcomes are driven by policy structures; changes can be understood through history and institutions interact with culture, ideology and policy ideas (Ikenberry, 1994, p. 2; Hall and Taylor, 1996, p. 938). As this thesis prioritises the sources of foreign policy-making, ideational factors are very important to understand the constructed interests of the leadership in Russia. I argue that state power is strengthened further by centralising and structuring informal institutions in the country as well as through the Russian state. This is why ideas and institutions are the main units in the foreign policy analysis here. The way that historical institutionalism is used in this study is outlined fully in Chapter Three.

This study is situated within an interpretivist framework where it applies document analysis and draws on a small number of elite interviews which were conducted in Moscow in 2012 and also by Skype and telephone in the UK. In utilising document analysis, the study looks at foreign gas policy documents, newspapers, elite speeches of the leaders. The documents are analysed to interpret their discourse towards Ukraine and gas crises between the two countries. The main methodological challenge this study had to face was on the elite interviews. Although elite interviews were only a secondary method to this study, there were two main challenges: 1) although the author sent emails and followed them up, only two gas companies responded to these requests. 2) The access to the elites was very limited or there was a "culture of secrecy" on the topics on which I wanted to conduct the interviews. However, even the small number of interviews that were conducted has given this study an insight into the thinking of the Russian

elites in Moscow and the state of Russian politics which has itself been very useful. The research methods and methodology employed in this thesis are explained in Chapter Two.

1.5 Definitions and the main concepts

This study situates itself within the wider Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). Foreign policy analysis suggests three main theories to understand foreign policies: realism, liberalism and constructivism. However, this study mainly challenges the rationalist approach. Russia's foreign natural gas policy is instead analysed through historical institutionalist theory.

Foreign policy has been defined in many ways in order to understand the behaviour of states. Hill has defined this as: "the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations" (2003, p. 3). As well as Hill, Neack provides an important definition of foreign policy. She argues that "the study of foreign policy analysis is the study of the statements or policies of decision makers as well as the behaviours or actions of states" (Neack, 2008, p. 27). It is important to see that foreign policy is an outcome of both domestic and international spaces (Neack, 2008 p. 7). Hudson defines that as the: "approach chosen by the national government to achieve its goals in its relations with its external entities" (2008, p. 12). Although it is a valuable definition, it limits its analysis with the national governments. I agree with the definition of Mark Webber and Michael Smith who defined it as "Foreign policy is composed of the goals sought, values set, decision made and actions taken by states, and national government acting on their behalf, in the context of the external relations of national societies" (2002, p. 9-10).

It is important to note that the aim of deploying Foreign Policy Analysis and Historical Institutionalism is to understand Russia's foreign gas policy towards Ukraine. In this study, gas policy is understood within the wider context of foreign policy rather than only as an economic

or energy policy. This is one of the contributions of this thesis to combine Foreign Policy Analysis and historical institutionalism to understand the policy-making behaviour of the Russian state in the gas sphere. In the case of Russia, this study views gas policy as part of foreign policy for several reasons. Firstly, in the official foreign policy documents, the energy policy of Russia has been mentioned as a foreign policy issue. Secondly, Russia does not have a competitive gas market. Gazprom is a state-owned commercial company which has the monopoly to export gas to the EU and the CIS. This sometimes harms the company's credibility in the international market. Thirdly, when Putin became the president in 1999, he emphasised the importance of natural monopolies as part of a foreign and security policy issue. Fourthly, during the two main crises between Russia and Ukraine, the Russian state approached the crises as a foreign policy issue. Lastly, in the history of Russian Ukrainian relations, gas discounts have been given to Ukraine in return for extending the lease of the Black Sea Fleet which was part of Ukraine until 2014.

Although the state is the main representative in foreign policy, it is far more complicated to define the actors. It is difficult to define the state because "it is a complex process of interaction between many actors, differentially embedded in a wide range of different structures" (Hill, 2004, p. 28). Thus, who are the actors and what are the structures? Carlsnaes defines these actors as heads of state, head of government, foreign ministries, inner executives, security councils, parliament, political parties (2008, p. 86). This study also includes some other actors into this analysis: the church, media, youth groups. The relationship between these structures and the state is important in Russia. Chapter 5 argues how these structures have been utilised to strengthen state power and how foreign policy ideas have been supported and developed. On the other hand, structures can be: political, economic, cultural, national, global, and ideational (Carlsnaes, 2008, p. 86).

In the current literature there are two different focal points in the study of foreign policy: decision-making processes and the analysis of choice of processes and policies (Carlsnaes, 2013, p. 304). This thesis attempts to analyse decision-making processes by exploring ideas and choice of processes and policies. Below, Table 1 has four perspectives on how to follow these processes. Table 1 demonstrates that we can explain foreign policy from two different levels: ontological and methodological. This study relies on a social-institutional and interpretative actor perspective to understand Russia's foreign natural gas policy.

Table 1: Four types of perspectives in Foreign Policy

Ontology	Methodology	
Holism	Objectivism Structural perspective	Interpretativism Social-institutional perspective
Individualism	Agency-based perspective	Interpretative actor perspective

Source: Carlsnaes, 2013, p. 307

Table 2 demonstrates the way foreign policy is analysed. Carlsnaes extends the methodological perspectives used in Foreign Policy Analysis into several approaches. Within this table, this study agrees with the premises of social constructivism (below) or logic of appropriateness (see theory chapter) “which conceives of norms as aspects of social structure emerging from the purposive behaviour of actors in specific communities and then these, in turn, shape such behaviour by constituting the identities and actions of such actors” (Hoffmann, 2010, p. 2 cited in Carlsnaes, 313). However it also sympathizes with the individualistic ontology of interpretative actor perspective.

Table 2: Current approaches in Foreign Policy Analysis

<p>Structural perspective</p> <p>Realism</p> <p>Neo-liberal institutionalism</p>	<p>Social-institutional perspective</p> <p>Social constructivism</p> <p>Discursive approaches</p>
<p>Agency-based perspective</p> <p>Foreign policy decision making (FPDM)</p> <p>Cognitive and psychological approaches</p> <p>Bureaucratic politics</p> <p>Neo liberalism</p>	<p>Interpretative actor perspective</p> <p>Interpretative actor approach</p>

Source: (Carlsnaes, 2013, p. 307).

If we apply foreign policy analysis to Russia’s natural gas policy, in the current literature gas policy has been analysed from three main approaches: realism, constructivism and International Political Economy (IPE). Given the purpose of this study only two of them will be examined here: realism and constructivism. Realist theory mainly focuses on three main assumptions: groupism, egoism and power centrism (Wohlforth, 2008, p. 32) and a “realist emphasis on a dispassionate analysis of the relative power positions of groups in anarchy and the ubiquity of power politics” (Wohlforth, 2008, p. 39). On the other hand, Wendt argues that self-help and power politics do not follow “either logically or causally from anarchy” (1992, p. 394). Thus, constructivist Foreign Policy Analysis endogenises interests and argues that they are constructed through “a social interaction” (Checkel, 2008, p. 73).

Although the approaches of International Relations theorise Foreign Policy Analysis in detail, the books on foreign policy through a new institutionalist perspective are few (Checkel, 1997; Goldstein and Keohane, 1993). However, this study will argue Russia's foreign policy behaviour and ideas through historical institutionalism. This study mainly explains foreign policy through two important concepts: ideas and institutions. Ideas in this study are defined as world views and beliefs (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993). Institutions, on the other hand, are defined as formal and informal structures (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992).

1.6 Chapter outline

After this introductory chapter the wider literature will be discussed in Chapter 1. In the first part, Russian foreign natural gas policy will be explored mainly from a constructivist approach. In the second part, the literature on domestic sources of foreign policy will be viewed from a Foreign Policy Analysis perspective.

Chapter 2 will reflect on the main methodology of this study. This study applies two methods to understand Russian foreign policy-making: document analysis and elite interviews. This study has applied discourse analysis through some official documents: Kremlin and Gazprom websites; speeches of Russian presidents, foreign ministers and political/economic elites; official journal of the foreign ministry: *International Affairs/Moscow*; the address of the federal assembly speeches by the presidents, Russian and other newspapers, and so on. For the interviews, the author conducted interviews in Moscow in 2012 and Skype interviews during 2012 -2013.

Chapter 3 will contextualise the theoretical framework of the thesis. Historical Institutionalism will be deployed to interpret the sources of Russia's foreign gas policy towards Ukraine. It will be argued that preferences, beliefs and ideas are endogenous to institutions and they are

socially and politically constructed. Russia's foreign policy can be best understood within this framework, where ideas and institutions shape the outcome of policy-making, particularly towards Ukraine.

Chapter 4 is the first empirical chapter of this research. The aim of this chapter is to analyse how and why ideas matter. The chapter will argue that after Putin came to power in 1999, foreign policy ideas in the country changed and these ideas were the key determinants that shaped the institutions and affected the foreign policy outcomes.

Chapter 5 will argue that nationalist ideas are structured through formal/informal institutions. This structuring is part of Putin's domestic and foreign policy governance which centralises state power by utilising other institutions to legitimise its own power. The chapter will also focus on the importance of natural gas in the Russian economy and will discuss the importance of Gazprom in policy making.

Chapter 6 explores Russia's gas policy towards Ukraine. Ukraine is important for Russia in being a transit country for Russian gas to the EU. Also, the country has historical, religious and ethnic ties with Russia. The chapter will investigate the breakdown of economic and political relations between the two countries.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by summing up the main findings of this study. One of the main findings of this thesis was the impact of renewed nationalism (which is part of the "Russian idea") over the outcomes on foreign policy and gas crises. This nationalism was not only statist, but also civilizational and cultural. This chapter also reflects back to three main empirical chapters (3, 4 and 5) by demonstrating the interconnections through a historical institutionalist perspective. At the end of this chapter, the author also summarises possible areas for further research.

1.7 Conclusion

This thesis aims to explore the institutionalisation of ideas in the making of Russia's natural gas policy towards Ukraine. This topic is important for two main reasons: firstly, it has foreign policy implications both for the CIS and the EU in their gas relations with Russia; secondly, to understand Russia's perception by exploring important ideas within their historical context. The thesis deploys a Historical institutionalist approach which prioritises the importance of the interaction between ideas and institutions for policy outcomes. In order to do this, it follows an interpretivist methodology and applies document analysis and interviews.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

The aim of this chapter is to review the literature explaining Russia's foreign (natural gas) policy from different perspectives. In the analysis of the foreign natural gas policy of Russia, the existing literature has primarily been located within a constructivist perspective. The constructivist authors have focused on policy as being driven by national identity. Some other authors also focused on a combination of realist and constructivist approaches. This thesis argues that neither of these approaches fully appreciates the complexity of Russian foreign natural gas policy. It contends that institutionalist perspectives, of which there is a much smaller literature that focuses on Russian foreign policy, is the approach that offers most insight. This is because of the complex organizational structure of formal and informal institutions in the country. It is too simplistic to see the Russian state as a unitary actor, rather there are different political and economic elites with different roles within the foreign natural gas policy making institutions, and each of these elites have their own preferences. Throughout the history of Russia, foreign policy has been driven by different national institutions in the country, and it is impossible to understand Russia's foreign natural gas policy today without considering these formal and informal structures.

Because of the limitations of the literature on foreign natural gas policy, this chapter will take foreign policy in a broader context and will explore different interpretations of this policy-making according to different approaches. The literature on Russian foreign natural gas policy has several distinct features. First, the studies have mostly been empirical rather than theoretical. There are very few studies that have tried to theorise the foreign policy making of Russia. The most important are *Russian Foreign Policy and International Relations Theory* (Pursiainen, 2000). In his book, Pursiainen analyses Soviet and Russian foreign policy from three different theories: realism, liberal institutionalism and constructivism. Second, the current literature (as will be discussed in this chapter) tends to focus on the possible outcomes of foreign gas policy, such as Russia's energy disputes with neighbouring countries rather than the

sources of the foreign (natural gas) policy. This reveals a latent sympathy with traditional ways of approaching Russian foreign policy, especially realism. In this thesis, my entire focus is on the formulation of Russian foreign policy and the importance of formal and informal institutions in this process. Thus, this research goes some way to filling a gap in the literature by focusing on the role of institutions and ideas in the making of Russia's foreign natural gas policy.

This study not only aims to understand the outcomes (and the implications) of broader Russian foreign policy, but also to analyse the sources and the formulation of the foreign policy from an inside-out approach which looks at the impact of the political/economic actors (policy-makers as well) and their ideas on foreign policy-making in Foreign Policy Analysis. This is why this study argues that to understand the outcomes of Russian foreign policy, it is important to look at foreign policy ideas and how they, become institutionalised in Russia's foreign policy. In the institutionalist literature, there are few studies which explore foreign policy ideas and thinking (Checkel, 1997; Malcolm et al, 1996; McFaul, 1999; Tsygankov, 2010). The aim of this study is to extend these arguments to suggest that interests and even identities can be best analysed by looking at these institutionalised ideas in policy-making.

To understand the literature on the sources of Russia's foreign policy, this section is divided into two parts. The first part examines the role of Russian identity, or rather the lack of "national identity" in the country, which has been the key focus of constructivist authors. To some scholars, particularly the first years after the breakup of the USSR, Russia had to cope with regime/ideology/identity change which had an effect on its foreign policy behaviour. The second part focuses on the literature written from a new institutionalist approach.

1.1 Constructivism and Russian Foreign Policy

From a constructivist approach, the identity of the country during and after the Cold War has been discussed in the existing literature on the analysis of the foreign and natural gas policy in

Russia. The literature focuses on Russia's history as a former empire and having a presumed "common ideology" during the time of the Soviet Union; it conceptualises the country as suffering from "ideology" and "identity crises" after the dissolution of the USSR.

Among IR theorists, the main problem with formulating a foreign policy has been pointed out as defining Russia's new national identity and new national interests. For instance, Arbatov, the director of the Centre for Geopolitical and Military Forecasts in Moscow, argues that four changes shaped Russian foreign policy in the 1990s. First; "Russia has lost its near and far outposts, its colonies and semi-colonies; even the nucleus of Russia has started to split" (Rotar, 1992, cited in: Arbatov, 1993, p. 6). The second is the economic and social crises in the country caused by the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The third is the lack of new foreign policy leadership elite. The last one is due to the changes in the international system (Arbatov, 1993, p. 8). I will focus particularly on identity and national interests before moving on to ideas and institutions.

Many scholars argue that the collapse of the Marxist-Leninist ideology with the disintegration of the Union caused identity crises in the country. As LSE professor Margot Light argued, the problem behind formulating a foreign policy has been seen as a lack of ideology and identity in the country following the breakup of the USSR (2003, p. 43). She compared the formulation of Russian foreign policy before and after 1991 and discussed how during the time of the USSR, foreign policy had been motivated by ideology or by national interest, this is why she poses the question of whether Marxist Leninist ideology has been replaced by a new ideology in modern Russia. She also claims that this "identity crisis" (which occurred with the disintegration of the USSR) has compounded the obstacles beyond formulating a foreign policy. Although there have been big debates on Russian identity after the breakup of the Soviet Union, this study does not agree with these arguments which considers the main problem behind formulating foreign policy is ideology or identity crises.

By defining national identity, in another article Light also argues that Russia has always been perceived as an empire and the loss of being an empire played an important part in foreign policy-making in Russia. The loss of the empire also raised the question of Russia's status in the international system (Light 2005, p.225). She claims the main problem was "the insistence on great power status frequently alternated with demands for economic assistance, and the combination of being a supplicant for aid while wanting to be accepted as a great power, together with a tendency to indulge in 'declaratory' politics, made Russian foreign policy seem very inconsistent" (Light, 2005, p. 228). Poussenkova, who is a scholar both for Moscow Centre and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, also emphasises Russia's loss of an empire and its impact on the economy and foreign policy of the country (2010). On the contrary, this study explores the impact of the renewed Russian idea on foreign policy and its outcomes. As will be discussed in Chapter 5 and 6, this study argues that civilisational nationalism has been one of driving force of foreign policy during the 2000s.

By analysing the importance of identity and ideology in foreign policy-making, the existing literature has also associated national interest with these two. To formulate a new foreign policy by defining the country's "security threats" and "national interests" were the priorities of the new government at the end of the Cold War. Russia was no more able to define the country's "foreign policy preferences" or "national interests" than during Soviet times. As I will analyse in the following chapters, different foreign policy behaviours before and during Putin's administration have had different policy implications both in domestic and international affairs.

For the discussion of national interests and identity, Shearman, a scholar at the University of Melbourne, discusses the link between "national interest" and "the politics of identity" in the formulation of Russian foreign policy. He argues that, it is important to define national identities in order to formulate a foreign policy. He points out the main problem in Russia of not having national interest and foreign policy as a consequence of failure to define the country's national

identity (2001, p. 254). However, I find this problematic and I do not agree that “national identity” is a precondition for defining the “interests” of the country.

In the comparison of national identity and ideology Ivanov, who is a former foreign minister of Russia, suggests that Russian foreign policy should be derived from national interests not from political ideology because “Russian diplomacy has always succeeded when guided by realistic, pragmatic considerations and failed when dominated by imperial ideology and messianic ambitions” (Ivanov, 2001, p. 8). I find the definitions of “identity crises” problematic in understanding Russian foreign energy policy. Moreover, it is difficult to define any country’s interests by their “constructed” national identity.

As well as national identity, defining national interests is problematic and brings many other interpretations to the analyses of foreign policy. In the existing literature, Russia has been claimed to define its national interests by the country’s natural gas resources. Some authors have attempted to combine elements of realism and elements of constructivism in order to examine the interplay of interests and identity (Heikka, 1999; Mankoff, 2012; Thorun, 2009; Tsygankov, 2012), and these studies are quite useful in attempting to overcome some of the limitations of those author s working from within a purely neo-realist or constructivist framework.

Smith argues that the formation of foreign policy depends on two factors: national identity and national interests (Smith, 2007, p. 39). To him, national identity can be explained by “great power mentality”. I agree to some extent that great power mentality plays an important role in Russian foreign policy and affects the relations of Russia both with the EU and the CIS. However, I argue that this mentality can be interpreted as part of foreign policy thinking rather than the country’s identity. Another author defines state interests “within a context of geographical and cultural factors but these factors are not fixed and immutable” (Rieber, p. 206).

Another scholar who explains Russian foreign policy through realism and constructivism is Laenen (2012). Although she argues that Russian leaders (Putin and Medvedev) follow a realist

foreign policy, she applies constructivism to understand the complexity of defining the national interest and foreign policy. She places emphasis on the ideational factors and says “national interest is derived from the national identity” (2012, p. 18-21). As well as Smith she also argues that both during Yeltsin’s and Putin’s presidency “Russia’s great power identity and its ensuing interests instead took place” (Laenen, 2012, p. 33). Importantly, she discusses “national idea” (which will be discussed later) as part of the national identity. To her, national identity grows organically and discursively through the interaction between state and society and cannot simply be forced upon a nation top-down. However, then she admits that the national idea as a project was imposed in a top-down manner (Laenen, 2012, p. 25). However, she does not explore the national idea or institutionalisation process of this.

In his book, *Honour and International Relations*, Tsygankov discusses the question of Russia’s international motives and analyses honour in the formation of Russia’s foreign policy. He states that his book does not neglect realist theories and combines realism and constructivism for his analysis (Tsygankov 2012, p. 7). In the case of Russia, it is important to understand what honourable behaviour is and how it has been defined in the formulation of foreign policy. Tsygankov’s book is quite important in framing the notion of honour and reflecting that in Russia’s foreign policy; I find similarities in my research when I explore the importance of “patriotic ideas” in the institutions under this study. However, it is still difficult to find answers to the research questions posed in this research, such as: which ideas are important and how are they institutionalised in Russia’s foreign policy?

Another scholar who explores the role of ideas in foreign policy focuses on explaining change in Russia’s foreign policy (Thorun, 2009). He also combines realism with a thin version of constructivism to understand Russia’s foreign policy and strives “to contribute to the body of literature that shows how material and ideational factors interact” (Thorun, 2009, p. 2). He emphasizes the endogenous nature of interests and ideas (2009, p. 22) but does not address how these ideas and interests are institutionalised in the country. Nevertheless, some parts of

this study are very convincing, particularly in the cases studies which focus on collective ideas and foreign policy.

Mankoff also argues that power is not the only force in the international system, and that identity is also important. He does not prioritise the importance of ideas but he states that they do matter “as well” (Mankoff, 2012, p. 5). However, he does go some way towards discussing the importance of institutions in the making of Russia’s foreign policy.

Thus, as we have seen, the bulk of the literature on Russian foreign natural gas policy which comes a constructivist approach does not fully explain the formulation of policy inside Russia, or the way in which policy changes over time. In Chapter 3, this study outlines in more depth why it contends that Historical institutionalism is the most appropriate framework through which to understand where Russian foreign natural gas policy comes from, but first this chapter will examine the work on Russian policy from a new institutionalist perspective, of which Historical institutionalism is one key strand.

1.2. New institutionalism and Russian foreign policy

In the new institutionalist literature there are more works on Russia’s domestic context than its foreign policy. Most of the scholars who focus on domestic context and sources of foreign policy have an empirical focus rather than a theoretical one. These scholars (Malcolm et al, 1996; McFaul, 1999) have analysed sources of foreign policy and foreign policy thinking which I would take here to be within the institutionalist framework. Although these works are important for this study, some of them are limited to foreign policy thinking during the 1990s.

In the institutionalist approach more generally, the leading book on foreign policy and ideas is Goldstein and Keohane’s *Ideas & Foreign Policy* (1993). The book is important for analysing the impact of institutions and ideas on foreign policy. Although they take a more rationalist position to understand the role of institutions and embedded ideas within these institutions, they still

prioritise the importance of ideas on foreign policy outcomes. I find this book important for the study of foreign policy and institutions and important for this study.

Another key book for this research is by Checkel (1997). In his book he takes a Historical institutionalist position and argues how ideas and institutions can affect policy outcomes in Russia. In his book, *Ideas and International Political Change*, he contributed to the area by examining domestic and international variables to explain change in international politics. To do so, he argues that both structure and individual agents affect the ideas on state policy. He explores how political leaders are affected by institutions and international structure (Checkel, 1997). Another book is by Ledeneva called *How Russia really works* (1999). The author discusses informal practices which she views in the context of the institutional framework (Ledeneva p. 3) during the 1990s.

2. Individuals, institutions and Russian foreign policy

Many scholars agree that Russian foreign (particularly natural gas) policy has changed sharply since Putin came to power, especially after his second term in 2004. As discussed in the theory chapter (Chapter 3), historical institutionalism provides an insight into understanding individual behaviour and how these individuals are motivated within the institutions. This study takes a historical institutionalism framework which argues that the impact of individual behaviours which affect the policy outcomes are shaped by their ideas (March and Olsen, 1998; Peters, 2011; Steinmo et al. 1992). As the actions of individuals are problematic and “constructed” over time, their actions and interests are not given but more ideational.

This understanding suggests that in Russia’s foreign policy, the behaviour of actors is not irrelevant to our understanding about the world. Their ideas as well as their interests are constructed socially and politically over time. For instance, foreign policy of Russia has changed in a more nationalist/pragmatic way after Putin became the president in 2000. During his

administration, Gazprom was nationalised, government control was increased, liberalisation was weakened and government intervention in the economy (especially in the energy sector) increased (Milov et al., 2006). Putin not only eliminated the control of power of the oligarchs in the oil and gas sectors, but also increased the control of the state over the particular sectors. This is the other main criticism of Putin that he desires to utilise the resources for political gain. This is the main concern of this thesis, to understand the ideas of the leadership and to interpret their effect on the institutions. This is what this study means by “the sources of the foreign policy” in Russia.

As well as the importance of the leader, there are three influential groups or elites around the president at different times. These groups “The ‘Family’, siloviki, ‘St. Petersburg lawyers’” (Kroutkin, 2008) in Russia are important for understanding the foreign policy. The lack of institutionalised coordination between different domestic groups in Russia especially in the first decade of the new federation was a main constraint behind implementing a new foreign policy (McFaul, 1999, p. 395). As well as these constraints, competing ideas in different institutions also affected the institutions in different ways. Russian transition from communism brought different ideas by many different actors. Some political actors early in the transition had liberal ideas to counter the ideas of the old system. Liberal Westernisers, Pragmatic Nationalists and Fundamentalist Nationalists are the main groups in foreign policy making in Russia (Mc Faul, 1999; Shadrina, 2010).

This study will put forward the position that the leadership provided by Putin and Yeltsin and elites are important for understanding Russian foreign natural gas policy. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, two of the regime changes in Russian history were elite driven. This is why, analysing the political groups and their discourse under the leadership of Putin and Yeltsin is crucial to understand Russian political thinking. Thus, the next section aims to review the importance of ideas, institutions and ideas of the leaders/institutions.

2.1. Ideas, institutions and Russian foreign policy

Ideas in this study are defined as world views and beliefs. They are not only important for shaping the behaviour of the individuals but also affect the individuals as well. Institutions, on the other hand, are defined as formal and informal structures. From a HI perspective, ideational factors are important for shaping the policy outcomes both in domestic and foreign policies. In the case of Russia, there is a vast literature on the domestic sources of foreign policy focusing on the foreign policy thinking in Russia and how it affects the policy outcomes (Arbatov, 1993; Malcolm, 1996; Neumann, 1996; Pravda, 1997; Pravda, 2001; Prizel, 1998). All these studies are very important for understanding the first decade after the dissolution of the Soviet Union as well as understanding policy-making today. However, most of these covered Yeltsin's years and competing ideas in the 1990s. This thesis, in contrast, wants to contribute to the Putin administration's foreign policy thinking and how ideas have been structured and institutionalised during his presidency with a particular focus on natural gas policy toward Ukraine.

There are some scholars who have worked on individuals and foreign policy in Russia; for instance, Orttung and Overland (2011) focus on the domestic actors of the foreign policy making process. They argue that a large amount of elites have controlled key positions in policy making processes in Russia during Putin's administration. Especially at the end of Putin's second term, these elites were powerful in political, economic and security institutions. They say this is mainly because of the Russian state's lack of capacity to advance policies. Like Kroutikhin (2008), they also claim that these groups are only willing to protect their positions for their short or medium term interests. During his presidency, Putin has annexed the media to suppress any kind of mobilisation in society. More pertinently, Gazprom played a key role during these actions. He discusses how the state utilised Gazprom's power (its power and capital) in controlling these media companies indirectly rather than nationalising them to deploy its own influence (Kroutikhin , 2008, p.59). As well as "Western opinions" on the

importance of the domestic actors from a “domestic view”, Ivanenko argues that Russian elites see energy as an economic interest of the country and favours Gazprom and Rosneft being supported by the government (2008, p. 270).

Shadrina (associate Professor of International Economic Relations and Chair of World Economy and Foreign Economic Links at the Khabarovsk State Academy of Economic and Law-Russia) also argues that Russian foreign energy policy is a product of the polarised structure of Russian society. She mentions two major groups – Slavophiles and Westernisers – who have influenced Russian policy-making. She mentions two different groups in Russian society but with little attention on these groups. She says that 1991-1993 were mainly focused on liberal ideas in the country, whereas from 2004 onwards state control increased in importance. Sakwa focuses on the presidency of Russia, but states that “the regime system can be seen as a dynamic set of relationships that include the President, the various factions in the presidential administration, the government and informal links with various powerful oligarchs, regional bosses and other favoured insiders” (Sakwa, 2005, p.13).

In a recent book, Van Herpen analyses the wars in Chechnya and Georgia in a broader context to understand domestic politics during the Putin years. He traces the roots of Russian imperialism through history. Importantly, he also analyses nationalist rhetoric in the making of policy in Russia (Van Herpen, 2014, p. 53).

In terms of the institutions in Russia, the main institution that determines foreign policy is the president of Russia. In his book, Mankoff discusses the making of Russian foreign policy and argues that the president overshadows the prime minister, the parliament and the foreign ministry (Mankoff, 2012 p. 54). This study agrees with this argument. Especially after Putin came to power in 1999, with the constitutional powers he held and the centralisation of all the state structured, he became the main policy-maker. This is the reason why this thesis will mainly focus on Putin and Medvedev’s ideas in the making of Russian foreign policy.

In the current literature, there are some scholars who worked on “the Russian idea”, “national idea”, patriotism, nationalism/patriotism and ideology in Russian domestic and foreign policies (Breslauer, 2009; March, 2007; March, 2012; McDonald; Laruelle, 2009; Lucas, 2008; Okara, 2007; Panov, 2010; Selezneva, 2003; Shnirelman, 2009). As this study aims to understand Russian foreign natural gas policy through foreign policy ideas, it shares many similarities with this literature. Although these are mainly on broad foreign policy, this thesis explores the impact of these ideas on natural gas policy in Chapter 3, 4 and 5.

There are many ideas this study tries to explore: nationalism, the Russian idea and discourse and rhetoric of the leaders. Arguably nationalism is the most important one in determining the foreign policy of Russia. In his article Luke March traces the impact of Russian nationalism on foreign policy by taking Georgia as a case study. He argues that in the Georgian case, nationalism was exploited for domestic policy purposes (March, 2012, p. 64). However, he discusses how the line between domestic nationalism and foreign policy was quite hard to draw. This is mainly because “the foreign policy consensus has been dominated by the statist, who have an ambiguous relationship to nationalism...their central concepts are statehood and great power status” (March, 2012, p. 66-67; March, 2014, p. 13). As well as March, Laruelle discusses state nationalism by defining the term in civic and ethnic terms. According to her, “it is neither ethnic, inasmuch as it points to Russia’s multinational nature, nor civic, inasmuch as it encourages its subjects to think of themselves as citizens. Instead, it seeks to emphasise the historical and cultural markers that, directly and indirectly, work above all to define Russia as a state” (Laruelle, 2009, p. 7).

Although there is no official state ideology in Russia, the regime has a positive attitude towards ideology as in the example of the Russian idea (March, 2012a, p. 404) and this kind of ideology is defined based on “soviet nostalgia and xenophobic rhetoric because it partly or even wholly believes in it” (Lucas, 2008, p. 127). One other scholar argues that Russia is still an ideological nation and the doctrine in foreign policy can be described as a mixture of “neo -imperialism,

liberalism and social-chauvinism” (Selezneva, 2003, p. 11). Thus, according to Selezneva, this kind of mixture of ideology serves everyone, whoever is Westerniser, or the ideology of Great Russian statehood (p. 12-13). On the other hand, Mankoff describes Russian foreign policy as non-ideological: “some of the more salient and visible approaches include extreme Russian ethno nationalism, imperialistic Eurasianism, a kind of centrist derzhavnost, and liberal Atlanticism. Still, Russian foreign policy is for the most part fairly pragmatic and non-ideological. Particularly influential is the centrist tendency, which is characterised by an eclectic borrowing of ideas and initiatives from the other, more ideologically coherent camps” (Mankoff, 2012, p. 65).

As the importance of the leader was discussed in this chapter, some scholars also emphasised nationalist discourse under Yeltsin and Putin. For instance, March argues that on the one hand Putin is a conservative statist-nationalist as seen in his millennium speech (2007, p. 45), on the other hand, he is less careful than Yeltsin with nationalist language (46). His patriotism “incorporates both ‘post-soviet’ and ‘neo-soviet’ elements that often make it very ambiguous” (March 2007, p. 46).

Another scholar also explores the importance of nationalism in the historical context and analyses Russian nationalism in a historical continuity (Laruelle, 2009). Laruelle argues that new Russian patriotism “endorses reformulations, modernised by post-soviet conditions, both of former soviet ideology and of traditional Russian nationalism...Russia is said to lie not in its political regime – imperial, communist, presidential republic – but instead in the country’s greatness” (2009, p. 26). This is also the main argument of this thesis that natural gas policy is driven by this renewed greatness of Russia.

As well the myth greatness of Russia, another literature which works on this idea takes the Russian state as “civilizational nationalist”. Pain analyses the importance of civilizational and ethnic nationalism in Russian politics: “Modern national –imperial projects in Russia are grounded on this feature of a mass consciousness that has been formed under a non-democratic

regime. There are two types of such projects, although the central element of both conceptions is the same idea: to create unequal status for different peoples under Russian domination. There is civilizational nationalism and ethno-nationalist. There are not many differences between two” (Pain, 2008, p. 148 - 149). He mainly discusses The Kremlin’s main institutionalisation project “sovereign democracy” and argues that “the state doctrine of sovereign democracy rests upon the recognition of certain immutable civilizational characteristics of the Russian people, to which western-style democracy is supposedly unacceptable...Many of their ideologues believe that if it was possible to build up a managed democracy, then it should be feasible to have managed nationalism” (Pain, 2008, 149-150).

In conclusion, the vast literature explains Russia’s foreign policy either from neo – realist/constructivist or only constructivist approaches. From a constructivist perspective, the lack of a national identity in the country was given as the outcome of the state’s political behaviour.

Although some of these arguments are on the surface convincing, they do not adequately explain Russian foreign policy for two reasons. By contrast, it aims to extend the literature which analyses ideas and foreign policy and the impact of embedded ideas in formal/informal structures on foreign policy. For this reason, the literature which focuses on the sources of foreign policy and foreign policy ideas is central to this study.

This thesis argues that Russian foreign gas policy can be best understood by analysing the discourse of its presidents. For this reason, the literature which focuses on nationalism, civilizational nationalism, greatness of Russia, the Russian idea, patriotism will be the main concepts to explore in this thesis. The next chapter will be on the methodology which is based on discourse analysis and elite interviews.

Chapter 2: Methodology

While the following chapter will outline the theoretical perspective employed in this research, this chapter outlines the methodological approach that has been adopted, namely interpretivism, before going on to explain the practical research methods employed in order to gather and analyse the empirical material.

This thesis analyses the impacts of institutions and embedded ideas in policy making. This is a multi-levelled investigation so that we can gain a better understanding of Russian foreign natural gas policy towards Ukraine. To understand the foreign policymaking and to explore foreign policy behaviour I want to analyse the “meanings” rather than just the “facts” in this process. This means that this work is situated within an interpretivist framework. The aim is to explore how policy-making is situated in a relationship to ideas, meaning and agential behaviour which is not always recognised in other more quantitative strategies.

The “interpretivist” position is broad but it can be suggested that “for researchers working within this tradition, social phenomena do not exist independently of our interpretation of them; rather it is this interpretation/understanding of social phenomena which affects outcomes” (Marsh and Furlong, 2002, p. 26). We are thus situated within the construction of meaning and cannot step outside of this. In this way we should deploy a framework which takes this into account; it should reflect and consider how the texts, institutions and agents we intend to analyse are situated in relation to each other and wider social meaning. Likewise it should be unshakably open about the researcher’s own viewpoint and how this affects interpretation and claims of “neutrality”. Following this understanding, this thesis will deploy a qualitative research method to answer research questions such as: How do preferences/ideas/institutions have an impact on Russia’s foreign natural gas policy over time towards Ukraine?

From the Foreign Policy Analysis perspective, I aim to investigate the behaviours of Russian policy makers. By doing that this study does not treat states as rational unitary actors, since it argues that Russia’s foreign policy can be understood better if institutions and their embedded

ideas are analysed within a historical context. The impact of ideas (world views, beliefs) and institutions (formal and informal structures) in Russia can arguably be best observed by a qualitative approach because to me “preferences” and “policy-making” of the actors are not facts that one can measure.

In qualitative research, meaning is important as well as the interaction of the individuals with their own world (which is socially constructed) (Merriam, 2002, p. 3). Moreover, interpretive qualitative research deals with the interaction of the individuals involved in institutional processes. This means trying to understand how they interact and “practise” their social worlds and what that means for them and for the other individuals. This suggests that we should try to realise what “words”, “texts” and “behaviour” mean for them and for the other individuals who make up the organisations in question (Merriam, 2002, p. 4).

With an ontology and epistemology that stresses the “constructed” nature of social reality; qualitative research suggests that no objective science can evolve independently from beliefs, values and concepts which were constructed/formed to comprehend the world itself (Devine, 2002, p. 201). As I mentioned above, when conducting and analysing interviews alongside document analysis, this study does not claim to present or merely interpret the “objective facts” or truths which are “out there”; instead, to “interpret” the conversation with the respondents and to analyse how patterns of understanding appear and are reflected in primary and secondary texts.

As qualitative researchers deal with the meanings and how people construct, interpret and experience “social reality”, measurable facts and events are not just presented as secondary issues, but as contested and negotiable points which demonstrate how certain viewpoints are claimed as “truth” (Gerson and Horowitz, 2002, p. 199). I have chosen this methodology because the quantitative method seeks to describe and explain behaviour in any related research; on the other hand in qualitative research the main aim is to analyse the meaning of such behaviour (Read and Marsh, 2002, p. 232). This presents a framework to acquire a deeper understanding

of how political and social relationships, institutional action and agential behaviour relate to the policy of states. It helps us understand how there are more complex interactions taking place than merely the rational calculation and realpolitik geostrategic alliances through which realism and positivist methods have understood states and foreign policy.

Instead, foreign energy policy as an outcome is not an objective fact and must be understood as being constructed by so many dynamics within any country. This traces social, economic and cultural alliances which form and change through time.

1. The methods and research design


In qualitative research, there are three different sources of data: Interviews, observation and documents (Merriam, 2002, p. 12). This thesis has determined that document analysis and interviews provide the best answers to my research questions. As Heath and Hindmarsh discuss, “research cannot provide the mirror reflection of the social world that positivists strive for, but it may provide access to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds” (2002, p. 100). In my research I do not claim that by deploying interviews and document analysis, the results will reflect the social facts about the “real world” but they will give the experiences of these actors within the same society. This does not mean that interpretation is not possible, only that it is always engaged in these unavoidable dynamics. This is why this study proposes that we should strive towards understanding how agents who are embedded in institutions and organisations deliver meaning. This interpretation is always partial and incomplete.

Because of this, analysis of official documents from the Russian government, speeches of the elites and elite interviews were utilised in this study. This thesis found the document analysis of primary sources to be important alongside conducting interviews when analysing foreign policy. This allowed me to understand how actors in the foreign policy process understand meaning themselves but also how this meaning is delivered through texts. In this way we can hope to “read” the various struggles that interact in this varied process. Collection of data from official

texts, speeches and interviews has provided the ideas of foreign policy institutions and their policy-making processes towards their neighbours.

From this point of view this thesis followed an inductive logic by focusing on the small parts which constitute the foreign energy policy. It takes into account the micro level of agents, institutions and then the state, the idea being that foreign policy-making occurs at different levels and through different converging agendas – not just that of “the state”.

Table 3: Inductive logic of research in a qualitative study (Adapted from Creswell, 2003, p. 132).



Generalisations or theories to past experiences and literature	Past experiences and theory will already be investigated through theoretical framework and generalisations.
Researcher looks for broad patterns, generalisations, or theories from themes or categories	After conducting interviews, generalisation had been applied for understanding of the Russia’s gas policy towards Ukraine.
Researcher analyses data according to themes or categories	Interviews and analysis of some official documents have been utilised through the research process.
Researcher asks open-ended questions of participants	Conducted interviews with the bureaucrats, academics and political/economic elites by asking open-ended questions.
Researcher gathers information (eg. Documents, interviews)	Gathered information based on document analysis (texts and speeches)

Table 3 demonstrates how inductive logic of research in a qualitative study is deployed in this study. In the first column, Creswell explains how this kind of research is done. In the second column, I explain how this study adapted what should be done in order to analyse Russian foreign natural gas policy towards Ukraine. Thus, this study started by gathering information from texts and speeches and identified whom to interview and how to do this. As well as the discourse analysis throughout the thesis, some interviews were conducted in Russia and some on the phone. Then generalisation was applied to understand Russian gas policy towards Ukraine.

2. Document analysis

In conjunction with conducting some interviews, documents such as official documents both from the state and private sources, newspapers and internet sources (Bryman, 2001, p. 370) and speeches of the representative of the formal institutions provided the methodological framework for this study. The documents of the Russian government, political speeches of the presidents, speeches and publications of the Kremlin advisors, publications of research centres and newspapers are the units of analysis in the research. With document analysis, this study aims to analyse the importance of institutions and embedded ideas and the interaction between the Elites, the Oligarchs and Gazprom with the Russian state. In the document analysis, the most important element is the classification of the documents that the researchers will use in their research (Burnham et al., 2004, p. 166). Documentary data and sources also provide a great opportunity for researchers to interpret important events (Burnham et al., 2004, p. 184). According to Silverman, in the analysis of documents researchers should look beyond texts and should seek a connection between texts. Documents like any other text should make sense and be related and linked to each other (Atkinson and Coffey, 1997, p. 56).

2.1. The rationale for using document analysis

As a primary source, official documents of the Russian Federation from the Kremlin's website gave the organisational structure of the government and important positions in the state. As well as that, the Presidential Directorate of Domestic Policy which "provides the information, analytical and organisational support for the exercise of the President's constitutional powers to set the main outlines of the country's domestic policy" (President of Russia, 2014) and Presidential Directorate of Foreign Policy which "helps to draw up general foreign policy strategy and supports the President in exercising his powers to direct the country's foreign policy" (President of Russia, 2014) also helped to explore the hierarchical structure in the government. Beside these documents, the other documents are listed below:

- Russian Energy Strategy, which was confirmed by the government in 2003, covers the energy policy of the state up to 2020. This document will help in exploring the energy policy of the country and the main strategies of important state departments of Russia.
- The Constitution: this study aimed to look at the Constitution for the importance of the formal institutions of the country (1993).
- The written texts of formal/informal institutions of the country (the Kremlin, Gazprom, etc...)
- The speeches of the president and the ministers (the address of the presidents – Putin and Medvedev - to the Federal Assembly, the articles of President Putin, the speeches of foreign ministers, the articles of former minister Andrei Kozyrev)
- The speeches and publications of Putin's and Yeltsin's advisors, also called the Kremlin's advisors (For instance Kremlin ideologist Surkov's articles)
- Publications of the former Russian deputy energy minister who is also a political scientist himself (Vladimir Milov).

- Documentary films which were made with the Oligarchs and interviews in these films.

2.2. Advantages and disadvantages of Document Analysis

This study puts the emphasis on documentary analysis more important than elite interviews because it mainly provides the background information in my own “story”. Without the analysis of official documents and research/policy papers, this study would not understand Russian political/economic/social structure to be able to interpret my interview analysis. Although the elite interviews give the opportunity to access the data the researcher cannot explore anywhere else, document analysis provides the background information for the interviews and interview questions. Without primary and secondary sources, my research could have been very constrained.

One of the strongest parts of the documentary analysis is perhaps the easy access to the documents. In comparison, one of the biggest challenges in elite interviews is getting access with the busy schedule of the elites. Particularly in my fieldwork, my trips to Russia, getting access to the elites and arranging the meetings led to the risks mentioned below. By contrast, document analysis is more flexible, easy to access, time saving and cheaper. Having a qualitative methodology and an interpretive approach, document analysis will provide the emergence of the elites, their importance, their interaction with the Russian state and their impact on Russian foreign energy policy.

The other advantage of the documentary analysis is the access to the energy policy papers of the government. The energy strategy of the government until 2020 enriches this research. The other advantage would be the publications of some Kremlin advisors on foreign policy and the natural gas strategy of the country. These sources are still primary sources and they are all published in English.

3. Interviews in qualitative research

Mason argues that how we ask questions, listen to answers and interpret the responses depends on our theoretical position whereby we engage, perceive, understand and satisfy our theoretical backgrounds in our research (2002, p. 225). The main theoretical framework of this research is historical institutionalism which prioritises the importance of institutions and embedded ideas for policy outcomes. This is why political and economic discourse was investigated through an interpretivist approach. Meanings rather than measurable facts were discussed and also were the main methodology in the entire thesis.

In contrast to the quantitative method with structured, closed-ended questions, in qualitative interviewing researchers can be more flexible with their answers and can ask some other questions which are not already in their schedule (Bryman, 2004, p. 320). This can give flexibility to the interviewees in their responses. Qualitative interviewing also seeks to discover how social actors perceive their own world and how they perceive themselves within this world (Lawler, 2002, p. 242). This was particularly important for my research since I wanted to explore the ideas of the political/economic actors regarding policy-making.

The main question would be how the actors interpret their own world and how they perceive and position themselves within this world. From this point of view Lawler discusses that not only do actors tell “stories” about themselves and about their interaction with the world, but also the social world is ‘storied’ (2002, p. 242). To be able to “analyse” these questions, semi-structured and structured interviews are deployed in this study. As qualitative research suggests other methods, this study deployed interviews because this technique gave me the chance to interview different policy makers in Russia.

3.1. Who to interview?

Interviews were aimed at bureaucrats in the Russian government, at officials in the state-run natural gas company, Gazprom, representatives of the private sector, independent oil and gas

companies, analysts and sociologists in Russian research centres and also at some academicians who work on Russia both in the UK and in Russia. I also aimed to interview the Russian businessmen (Russian Oligarchs) who live in London. This study identified these people through the texts that I have been reading, through the foreign policy organisational charts of the government, through official documents and through the publications of the research centres.

In gathering the information from the interviewees, document analysis was useful for finding the names of the potential respondents. In gathering all the information from the documents, I had the information on whom to interview and who the important key actors were in domestic and foreign policy. This study also checked the government's website for the organisational chart of the government and the parliament. This thesis also aimed to utilise a referral (or snowball) when getting some other contacts for my interviews. This is why this study aimed to conduct interviews with the academics and sociologists in Russia first to provide any further information for the elite interviewing.

3.2. How to interview the bureaucrats

I sent letters to all potential respondents first, and followed up these letters with phone calls while I was still in the UK. I wanted to arrange the interviews according to the replies from these letters. All the letters were written in English and some of them in Russian as well. I aimed not to have any language barrier before the interviews. Because of the limited funding opportunities I only had the chance of one trip to Russia to conduct the interviews. Interviews were conducted using open -ended questions to discuss the issues on a semi-structured basis (Devine, 2002, p. 198). All these interviews were conducted in English.

Among the three types of interviews — fully structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Peabody et al., 1990, p. 452), I employed semi-structured interviews. According to Mason,

structuring the interviews or framing the conversations is more important than how we ask the questions (2002, p. 231). This is why I did not aim to have unstructured interviews, which are mostly applied in journalism. I also wanted to be aware of the limited time of the Russian elites and also I did not have the chance to go to Russia repeatedly. As Aberbach and Rockman discuss, elites (and well educated people as well) do not like to be put in a situation where they have to answer “structured” and “closed-ended questions” (2002, p. 674). For this reason, I aimed to conduct my interviews in a semi -structured manner. I particularly wanted to avoid closed-ended questions when interviewing the elites.

As Peabody suggests, the first questions are very important in the interview and should be simple, direct and reflect the researcher’s knowledge about the issue (Peabody et al. 1990, p. 452). I aimed to have questions before the interview to be able to pre -structure my interviews in a certain manner, but I also thought that interviews can be re structured during the process according to the dynamics between me and the interviewee. To me, structuring the interview by structuring the themes and topic that I wanted to cover was more important than the structured/closed-ended questions. I started the interviews by introducing myself and my work and then asked the questions of my respondents. At the end of the interviews, I asked them whether there was anything they wanted to add.

Because of the limited research funds, for interviewing the academics and people in the research centres I aimed to use semi-determined questions via e mail and via Skype, rather than interviewing them face-to-face. I selected the interviewees from several sources: most of them were found through research papers, the government’s website, policy papers and people who are experts on Russia.

3.3. The limitations and challenges of interviews

The most common challenge for elite interviewing is perhaps access to the interviewees. In my experience, this was the main challenge I had to face when I was arranging the interviews. Although I had a university affiliation, this was still a big challenge in my experience. When I

was choosing my interviewees, I had a long list of elites whom I should interview including energy companies, bureaucrats, former ministers, journalists, strategists, analysts, Gazprom and advisors. The letters were sent to energy companies both in English and in Russian to remove the language barrier. Following these emails, I made follow-up phone calls for a second request. However, none of the energy companies replied to these emails.

Strategists and analysts refused my interview request for confidentiality reasons. Some of the elites never replied, others refused because of their busy schedule. The state owned company Gazprom also sent an official email stating that they do not give any interviews to the public apart from the representatives of the press. However, during one of my interviews in Moscow, one of the respondents said he could not guarantee but could try to arrange an interview if I had more time in Moscow, but he said it could take up to a couple of weeks. Because of my limited funding in Russia, I could not stay longer.

The other major problem was the culture of “secrecy”. Rivera et al. (2002, p. 684) put this problem down to a post-communist country’s culture; it was both hard to contact and arrange interviews with the elites. Being an insider and outsider in the country can be either a problem or an advantage. In my trip to Russia, some of the centres, journalists and academics were reluctant to give interviews to a foreigner because of the fear of public speaking or lack of trust towards an outsider. When I was arranging an interview with a journalist, I was asked to call her back five times. After a couple of phone calls, she asked me to send her an email. Only after sending an email from a university-affiliated account, could she believe that I was the person I told her I was. Another respondent was also a bit tense about the reason for my interview. He was not convinced that I wanted to have an interview with him and not with somebody else.

The other common problem during the interviews is: the interviewee’s answer to the interviewer’s question might be very implicit and can be indirect (Mason, 2002, p. 231). This was another challenge in my interviews where respondents were either indirect or went off the subject on two or three occasions. Although I had an interview structure before the interview, it

was hard to lead the conversation during my questions. As one of my respondents said before the interview, he already knew what he was going to say. It was a bit frustrating before starting the questions which were a bit meaningless for the respondent.

The other main problem, according to the scholars is a methodological problem about how to treat interviews: as a direct access to experience or as constructed narratives (Silverman 2000, p. 36; Silverman 1993, p. 20; Holstein and Gubrium, 1997). However, all kinds of methods hold this sort of risk. Even the interaction between the interviewee and interviewer can change the nature of the interview itself.

3.4. Advantages of the interviews

In spite of having the problem with accessibility, my trip to Russia has given me a better understanding of how institutions work in Russia. My experience at the energy companies, at the universities and research centres has helped me to observe these structures and how they cooperate with each other in sharing their ideas.

The second advantage was creating a network which I could contact again either via email or phone call. All my respondents have provided me with their future contact details and I have been asked to contact them if I have any more questions for my research. In one of the research centres, I have been provided with an official publication of this centre.

4. Ethical issues

The main concerns when conducting interviews by qualitative methods are ethical issues and the confidentiality of the interviewees. By getting informed consent, the interviewee had the right to take part or refuse the interview. He/she was also informed about the purpose of the research, what is to be done during the research, the potential benefits and harm to them and

confidentiality of the data and the interview conducted (Gilbert, 2008, p. 150). De Vaus argues that “even if a researcher revealed his or her identity and gained permission to undertake the study, the question arises of how to get informed consent, and from whom to obtain that consent” (De Vaus, 2001). Informed consent should be offered to the interviewees before conducting interviews and the participants should not be put at risk (Creswell, 2003, p. 64). In conducting research, the American Political Science Association indicated some principles regarding the ethical issues: “The researcher must avoid any deception or misrepresentation concerning his or her personal involvement or the involvement of respondents or subjects, and must avoid the use of research as a cover for intelligence work or for partisan political purposes” (APSA, 2008).

Since I conducted interviews with some representatives of the domestic groups, ethical issues and confidentiality of the interviewees is one of the most important parts of my research. By getting informed consent, the interviewee had the right to take part or refuse the interview. I also informed the interviewee about the purpose of the research and confidentiality of the data.

I signed the ethical form of the university to conduct the interviews.

5. Conclusion

This study took an interpretivist position in the analysis of ideas and institutions in Russia’s natural gas policy towards Ukraine. As qualitative research focuses on the meanings rather than objective facts, the main aim of this study was to understand the preferences of the policy makers through a Foreign Policy Analysis approach. To investigate the policy makers in foreign policy and how their preferences change over time, I applied qualitative research methods – document analysis and interviews.

After utilising primary and secondary sources, I aimed to “interpret” this information through a foreign policy analysis framework. In the interpretation of the official state documents, I aimed

to gain access to the organisational chart of foreign policy making in Russia. As I stated before, documents should be interpreted together/as a whole and the analysis of these documents should also reference each other. For this reason speeches of Russian presidents and advisors to the Presidents were important to investigate the foreign policy making process as well. In addition to these documents, former foreign ministers and ambassadors of Russia and their publications on domestic policy makers did contribute to my research. Besides document analysis, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with Russian energy centres, academics and former advisors to the presidents in Moscow in 2012, understanding the importance of formal/informal structures in the country.

In the next chapter, Historical Institutionalism will be presented for the purpose of this study's theoretical background. This study argues that not only ideas but also institutions are the key determinants of foreign policy formation in Russia.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework: Historical Institutionalism and Russia's Foreign Natural Gas Policy

This chapter concerns the analytical framework of historical institutionalism. It focuses on the changing structures of formal and informal institutions and how embedded ideas in these institutions can affect policy change. By exploring the importance of ideas and institutions, I aim to analyse change and continuity in domestic structure and its effect on Russia's foreign policy. Institutions, as well as ideas embedded in these formal and informal structures, have played an important role in Soviet as well as Russian history. I seek to explain the sources of these ideas historically as well as the way they are articulated in foreign policy.

The chapter consists of three parts. In the first section, I will give an overview of March and Olsen's two logics of action to provide a background discussion on how individuals behave, what institutions do and how these two interact with each other. This is also to suggest how elite preferences, state behaviour and foreign policy may change over time. Then I will turn to Historical institutionalism where I state my theoretical framework for my empirical case. In the second part, I explore what historical institutionalism is, how ideas and institutions interact with one another and how it affects foreign policy. In the last part I explore how path dependency, institutional configuration and institutional change in domestic and foreign policies are related to foreign policy.

Throughout the history of Russia, foreign policy has been driven by different institutions. After the breakup of the USSR, foreign policy had been highly determined by the elites in several institutions. These institutions tended to be dominated by certain liberal ideas and had an impact on domestic and foreign policies. However, when Putin became president, he reconstructed the institutions with new policy ideas which have become important both in domestic and foreign policies. Institutional change and continuity in these institutions and embedded ideas are the main empirical focus of this research.

I propose that foreign policy is driven by ideas (which are embedded in institutions) as well as power and interests. This is one of the main problems in the literature – the treatment of ideas and interests as unrelated and separate concepts (Blyth, 2002, p. 17). This is why the primary theoretical framework of this thesis is historical institutionalism which concerns the importance of institutions as well as ideas on policy change (Steinmo et al. 1992). As there is a vast literature on ideas and institutions for my empirical analysis, I draw upon two detailed perspectives from Checkel (1997) and Goldstein and Keohane (1993). I then apply their analysis of foreign policy to understand how ideas and institutions interact with one another to form Russia's foreign natural gas policy.

“New institutionalism” is often presented as comprising three approaches: rational choice institutionalism (RCI), historical institutionalism (HI) and sociological institutionalism (SI). Going further, Peters (2012) argued that- new institutionalism has seven different types, including discursive institutionalism (Schmidt, 2008; 2011) and constructivist institutionalism (Hay, 2011). Here, I will focus on the debate between rational and historical institutionalism and base my empirical work upon historical institutionalism. Historical institutionalism, as my main theoretical framework, has four main arguments: first, it focuses on the relationship between institutions and individual behaviour. Secondly, it suggests that policy outcomes are driven by political structures and these structures shape and constrain the policies of the other factors. Thirdly, these constraints can be understood through history (path -dependency). Lastly, institutions interact with other factors such as culture, ideology and policy ideas (Ikenberry, 1994, p. 2; Hall and Taylor, 1996, p. 938). Institutions are at the centre of institutional analysis, as well as the outcomes of political strategies (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992, p. 10; Hall and Taylor, 1996, p. 938).

By “institutions”, this study refers to both formal (executive, legislative, political parties, etc...) and informal structures (shared norms, rules, values, identities, meanings and understandings). As to ideas, I borrow Goldstein and Keohane's definition in which ideas are defined as world

views and road maps. The main question here is how ideas and institutions interact with each other and how they affect foreign policy. However, institutions are the main structures through which ideas are articulated in foreign policy. This is particularly important for countries such as Russia, where both formal institutions and informal structures are important in policy-making. In this particular case, informal structures have been articulated in policy-making by formal institutions through the understandings and ideas of these institutional bodies. Institutions here are not single individuals (for instance strong leaders like in Russia) but organizational structures both in formal and informal entities.

When considering structure and agency debate we need to consider what constitutes action and how we understand and analyse behaviour. Thus we need to understand what actions are. March and Olsen's two logics which will be discussed in the next section offer us a perspective on this.

1.1. Two logics of action

The book *Rediscovering Institutions* has opened up an important research agenda in the study of institutions (March and Olsen, 1989). After March and Olsen's book, there have been important projects on institutions, the role of institutions, institutional change and how ideas affect the structure of these institutions (Steinmo et al. 1992; Blyth, 2002; Beland and Cox, 2011). March and Olsen suggested that a new form of institutionalism and the role of institutions could be based around two logics of action: 1) "a logic of appropriateness" and 2) "a logic of consequences". Although I will apply the definitions of March and Olsen, there are also other contentions in the literature which define these two approaches in similar ways but with different names: "calculus and cultural approaches" (Hall and Taylor, 1996, p. 940), "rationalist" and "constructivist" (Ikenberry, 1994, p. 5), "rationalist" and "reflectivist" (Keohane, 1988). March and Olsen's model is worth looking at in detail because it still dominates the current approach.

These two logics (or approaches) contextualize and interpret individuals' behaviours, the role of institutions, and the relationship between actions in different ways. According to the logic of consequences, individuals are egoistic, self-interested power maximizers who are trying to maximize their own interests. More importantly their behaviour is driven by their preferences. On the other hand the logic of appropriateness views actions as driven by identities (March and Olsen, 1998, p. 949). In their article (1996) they discuss institutional theory without denying "the elements of exchange in politics and the many ways in which politics aggregate exogenous individual preferences" (p. 247) but emphasize "the endogenous nature and social construction of political institutions, identities, accounts, and capabilities" (p. 248). In this form of storytelling, political actors' behaviours and actions are socially constructed (p. 249). However, in exchange (rational) theories, individuals act according to the anticipated consequences which would best serve their interests. These interests are consistent, stable and exogenous to the political system (p. 250). On the other hand institutional theory suggests that these preferences are changing, inconsistent and endogenous when formed within political institutions (1996, p. 250; 1998, p. 950). Their interpretation of institutionalism rejects the full rationality of individuals. This is how "a logic of appropriateness" is created by the members of the institutions "that help to define the institution –provide the context of behaviour of the members" (Peters, 2012, p. 29).

Although there are many differences between these two logics, there are also strong connections. The distinctive characteristic of these two logics is not to suggest that political action is taken only from one perspective. It is also worth noting that in some policy cases, both actions can be important and affect policies in countries. According to March and Olsen and their four main interpretations of the relations between two logics (1998), this chapter takes a position between the two logics as follows: both identities and preferences are clear (as opposed to one of them being superior or more visible than the other) and they constrain a decision. However, preferences are not given, but they are socially and politically constructed. In other words, the logic of consequences is important only as a supplementary factor over the

logic of appropriateness. This is also relevant for Russia, this study argues, where institutions act according to ideas embedded in those institutions. This perhaps explains institutional changes in Russia after Putin came to power in 1999.

In short, there are four main factors within this institutional framework:

1) Preferences, beliefs, identities are not exogenous, but endogenous to political history. This suggests that preferences and beliefs are not given but develop within embedded institutions over time. Political actors act on the basis of their identities which are shaped within history.

2) Actors act appropriately to fulfil their identity within the political system. This is a challenge to the approaches which perceive human behaviour as rational and self interested.

3) Histories and meanings are socially constructed. If we contextualize human actions as we interpret them through our ideas and world views, the meanings of these actions, accordingly, would be the outcome of our interpretations. Thus, this can only be understood over history which is also constructed.

4) Politics adapts to changing environments (March and Olsen, 1996, p. 259).

1.2. An institutionalist approach

Institutionalisation refers to the emergence of institutions and individual behaviours within them. An institutional approach is one that emphasizes the role of institutions and institutionalization in the understanding of human actions within an organization, social order, or society (March and Olsen, 1998, p. 948).

Following March and Olsen's institutionalist approach, this chapter seeks to outline how this study will analyse political actors and their behaviour in political institutions. It is also the focus to see how important these institutions are for policy outcomes in Russia.

Foreign policy and policy making have often been explained through rationality and power: how preferences are shaped, how states maximize their own interests and how they compete with each other. I propose that foreign policy can be best understood through interpreting the role of institutions which shape and change policy-making. This change can be stronger or weaker and/or top-down or bottom-up. Russia is important in this case because the country has had strong institutions and leadership in history and witnessed re-formation of the institutions after the regime change in the 1990s. If institutions are important, how and why do they affect policy outcomes? How are ideas important in these institutions? This next section will address these questions.

New Institutionalism analyses how institutions affect and change policy outcomes. The core question for the institutionalist approach is how do institutions affect the behaviour of actors/individuals? It is perhaps through individual actions. To understand actions March and Olsen ask certain questions of policies, outlined in Table 4 below:

Table 4: The logic of actions

Anticipatory action	Obligatory action
1. What are my alternatives?	1. What kind of situation is this?
2. What are my values?	2. Who am I?
3. What are the consequences of my alternatives for my values?	3. How appropriate are different actions for me in this situation?
4. Choose the alternative that has the best consequences	4. Do what is most appropriate

Source: March and Olsen, 1989, p. 23.

In the anticipatory questions, actions are considered to be related to their consequences. People act after choosing the best alternative among their options. The best alternative is chosen according to what suits their interests. On the other hand, in obligatory actions, the questions are more related to identities. This is why appropriateness is considered to be the one which fits best to one's identity. Thus the two logics which suggest these actions represent theories and approaches about politics and how it can be seen and why politics is the way it is (Goldmann, 2005, p. 37). According to these actions, one approach sees politics as a matter of rationality, on the other hand the other views that through identity. In their actions, actors compare their alternatives and get the alternative which has the best consequences. In the logic of appropriateness, however, the actions are taken according to their values, not their preferences. March and Olsen argue that political actions cannot be only interpreted by either logic, because actors' behaviours would be constitutive of both their identities and interests. However, they also emphasize that the two logics are distinct and should be seen differently (March and Olsen, 1998, p. 952 -953).

In new institutionalism there are three main approaches: rational choice, historical and sociological. Although they have differences, they focus on two main problems: "how order is created and maintained and how change is possible" (Blyth, 1997, p. 244). While rational choice belongs more to the logic of consequences, sociological institutionalism considers identity more. However, historical institutionalism is more eclectic. Historical institutionalist theorists use both logics, or in Hall and Taylor's terms they apply both calculus and cultural approaches (Hall and Taylor, 1996, p. 940). There are three main questions in new institutionalism that have slightly different answers to each of them: how do individuals behave, what are their motivations? How do they interact with institutions? How do institutions change or continue over time?

1.3. Individual behaviour

The most important distinction between the two approaches (RCI and HI) is perhaps on individual behaviour. In contrast to exchange theories, institutional theory argues that under some circumstances, individuals might act not on the basis of self-interest but for the common good, the good of the community (March and Olsen, 1996, p . 253). Thus the main focus of rational choice institutionalism is on the rationality of the actors. According to this approach, actors are self-interested, egoistic interest maximizers within a given institutional setting. In other words, according to rational choice, actors always consider the best alternatives for their values rather than selecting the most appropriate. In comparison, the main concern in historical institutionalism is what political actors are trying to maximize and why they choose some goals over others (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992, p. 9). Rather than solely focusing on rationality, historical institutionalism focuses on how individual behaviour is constructed historically and within certain political contexts. While the main concern for rational choice institutionalism is “actors acting strategically to maximize their own ends”, for historical institutionalism the question is rather what they are trying to maximize and why some goals/ideas prevail over others (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992 p. 9). This is where historical institutionalism provides a research strategy to investigate the behaviours of actors. Different from rational choice theory, historical institutionalism tends to see political actors as rule-following satisfiers rather than rational maximizers. In other words, rather than thinking rationally in every action, actors follow socially defined rules (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992, p. 8).

This kind of rationality also brings up the question of preference formation. There are mainly two discussions about this formation. Are preferences given or constructed? Are they exogenous or endogenous? Rational choice takes preference formation as given and treats preferences as exogenous. On the other hand, according to historical institutionalism, they are socially and political constructed. Endogenous interests are not given, but they develop and evolve out of actors’ ideas and beliefs (Berman, p. 30; March and Olsen, 1998, p. 952; Thelen and Steinmo, 1992 p. 8-9). In his article Hay argues that actors’ desires, interests, motivations are not given but are “irredeemably ideational, reflecting a normative orientation toward the

context in which they will have to be realized” (Hay, 2011, p. 67). In other words, preferences are not treated as unrelated to our understanding of the world and environment. Thus the process HI takes is the actions of individuals are more “problematic” and constructed over a path -dependent idea. As well as the statement of actors wanting to achieve their own ends, it is also important to ask how those interests are defined and achieved” (Ikenberry, 1994, p. 2-3).

According to materialists, change happens when individuals’ circumstances alter and affect their preferences. On the other hand the ideational approach views preference change as the change in actors’ understanding of their own world (Beland and Cox, p. 11). Unlike rational choice institutionalism, preferences are endogenous, contexts specific and more problematic according to Historical Institutionalism (Scott, 2008, p. 35).

1.4 Institutions and individuals

New institutionalism analyses both “the social context of politics” and “the motives of individual actors” (March and Olsen, 1984, p. 738; 1989, p. 17). For this analysis, political institutions are key players in domestic and foreign policies. There are different definitions of institutions in the literature. According to one definition, “institutions are the formal and informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy” (Hall and Taylor, 1996, p. 938). These formal and informal organizational structures also define the identities of individuals and societies (March and Olsen, 1989, p. 17). Thelen and Steinmo define them as “Both formal organizations and informal rules and procedures that structure conduct” (1992, p. 2).

According to this research, institutions are defined (following Hall and Taylor) as both formal and informal structures, norms, routines embedded in the organizational structures. They are the main forces that drive politics. Individuals, the ideas of actors and interests of individuals are all shaped in formal and informal structures. However, the motivations of individual

behaviour have been understood in different ways from the two institutionalist approaches (RCI and HI). On the one hand, rational choice institutionalism views individual behaviours (beliefs as well as actions) as motivated by their preferences (March and Olsen, 1989, p. 160-161); on the other hand, historical institutionalism discusses the role of ideas that shape individual behaviour (Peters, 1992, p. 84).

Within these formal and informal structures, individuals interact with each other and institutions have an impact on policy outcomes. Individual behaviour can be understood differently by different approaches. According to the logic of consequences, the reasons for the actors' actions are to maximize their own interests. Accordingly, history is also seen as a consequence of wilful actors with their consistent interests (March and Olsen, 1998, p. 950).

Political actors are driven by institutional duties and roles as well as, or instead of, by calculated self-interest; politics is organized around the construction and interpretation of meaning as well as, or instead of, the making of choices; routines, roles, and forms evolve through history-dependent processes that do not reliably and quickly reach unique equilibria; the institutions of politics are not simple echoes of social forces; and the polity is something different from, or more than, an arena for competition among rival interests (March and Olsen, 1989, p. 159).

The motivations of the actors and their self-interested, utility maximizing wills are interpreted differently in historical analysis. The behaviour of actors within institutions is seen more like a path-dependent historical based process. Even the interests can be/and are constructed in the institutions only over time. Sewell defines path dependence as "that what has happened at an earlier point in time will affect the possible outcomes of a sequence of events occurring at a later point in time" (1996, p. 16).

Table 5: Assumed logic of action

		Logic of Consequences	logic of appropriateness
Conception of history	Efficient history	Functional rationality	Functional institutionalism
	Inefficient history	History-dependent rationality	History-dependent institutionalism

Source: March and Olsen, 1998, p. 957

As the table demonstrates the logic of actions and conception of history, this study believes that history can be understood with path-dependency. Mahoney argues that path-dependency has three different arguments. First, it studies causal processes in the early stages of a historical order. Second, “in a path -dependent sequence, early historical events are contingent occurrences that cannot be explained on the basis of prior events or "initial conditions." Third, once contingent historical events take place, path-dependent sequences are marked by relatively deterministic causal patterns” (Mahoney, 2000, p. 510-511). People also interpret changes according to changes in their perspectives over time, which Cox calls the “path-dependency of an idea” (Cox, 2004, p. 207-208).

1.5 Ideas in historical institutionalism

Embedded ideas (or beliefs) within institutions are major determinants of policy outcomes. Ideas become more important when they are internalized within the organizational structures. That is how they become internalized and institutionalized. However, with this

institutionalization process they also become externalized by being adopted in other organizations through the path-dependency of these institutions (Crawford, 2006, p. 268).

Ideas are epiphenomenal to realist theory in IR (Berman, 1998, p. 17) as well as to Marxists. However, according to the ideational approach (the concern of this chapter) they are important and can drive policies as much as interests. As Blyth argues ideas are more than filters or fillers, and are more like norms and ideologies that help to produce explanations (Blyth, 2002, p. 95).

Ideas are defined as broad concepts and beliefs (Checkel, 1997, p. 5), policy solutions, problem definitions (Mehta, 2011, p. 27), causal beliefs (Beland and Cox, 2011, p. 3) and world views (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993, p. 3). Berman defines ideas in a middle range position between ideologies or worldviews and policy positions; he calls them “programmatically beliefs” (1998, p. 21). I also define ideas as causal beliefs and world views which are embedded in institutions and affect policy outcomes. Ideas are beliefs of our interpretation of the material world, as well as the connection between things and people (Beland and Cox, 2011, p. 1-2).

As ideas are defined as broad concepts and causal beliefs, some scholars (Jackson, 1993, p. 112) define “interests” as ideas. According to Jackson, interests are also constructed according to our understandings, thoughts and in relation to the social world. While interests are instrumental, ideas are normative (non-instrumental) (Jackson, 1993, p.112-113). However, if interests are socially and politically constructed as ideas, how important are ideas for policy outcome?

Thus, the questions that concern this next section are not whether ideas matter, but how and why ideas matter in understanding policy outcomes, how ideas embedded in political institutions change over time, how path-dependent the change is and how this shapes or provides the context for certain kinds of action and why these ideas are more important than other ideas in one country. This is why the main concern is, as in Historical Institutionalism, how political institutions evolve over time following a logic of path-dependency (Mehta, 2011, p. 47). It is not my aim to challenge interests, but how they are constructed in politics, where they come from and how institutions (with embedded ideas) would affect policy-making.

Some scholars (both from ideational and rationalist approaches) work on the impact of ideas on foreign policy (Checkel, 1997; Goldstein and Keohane, 1993); some other scholars argue that ideas are a primary source of political behaviour (Beland and Cox, 2011; Blyth, 2011; Hay, 2011; Schmidt, 2011); others work on ideas and their importance in institutional analysis (King, 1992; Weir, 1992). Some scholars have worked on the impact of ideas over institutional development (Beland, 2005). Others examine ideas on state behaviour in an institutional context (Checkel, 1993). Peter Hall also analyses the relations between ideas (he calls them “policy paradigms”) by exploring the impact on economic policymaking between 1970 -1989 (Hall, 1993). In contrast, this study also discusses the impact of ideas on foreign policy.

Much of the current institutionalist literature is from a comparative politics perspective. However, international relations literature has also dealt with institutionalism which is more relevant to this study. One of the most important books is Goldstein and Keohane’s book, *Ideas & Foreign Policy*, which challenges the rational choice perspective. The book mainly emphasizes the importance of ideas and suggests that ideas as well as interests are important in explaining human action (1993, p. 4). The authors state that the volume is a challenge to both rationalist and reflectivist approaches; they highlight that “the rationalist approach is often a valuable starting point for analysis” but they challenge “its explanatory power by suggesting the existence of empirical anomalies that can be resolved only when ideas are taken into account” (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993, p. 6). They focus on the importance of ideas and that ideas matter for policy change and outcome. However, this does not mean that they challenge the source of actions. They still argue that individuals behave rationally to achieve their ends (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993, p. 5). Thus, their challenge is with approaches which deny the importance of ideas, not the behaviour of individuals. In their book, they argue that they apply a rationalist approach because of the importance of the interests and power relationship. On the other hand, ideas are also important as interests for policy outcomes. However, they limit their ideational approach by stating that “ideas often become efficacious only in conjunction with other changes, either in material interests or in power relationships” (Goldstein and Keohane,

1993, p. 25). According to them these changes are more likely if there is uncertainty in an issue area. However, for new ideas to be institutionalized and legitimized, they emphasize the importance of preferences. However, this limits the conditions of uncertainties to a small amount of change rather than a broader institutional change. As seen in Russia, uncertainties after the end of the Cold war and the adopting of new institutions can not only be understood by material interests but also with the change of ideas over identities. In other words, ideas are changing through the re-construction of identities in Russia. However, it is more path-dependent; this is why history matters. There was room for new ideas with the failure of other ideas which are not necessarily related to material interests. Although they challenge both approaches, their null hypothesis is that “the actions described can be understood on the basis of egoistic interests in the context of power realities: the variations of interests are not accounted for by variations in the character of the ideas that people have” (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993, p. 27). This is why Goldstein and Keohane’s challenge is still limited because they do not analyse the source of the limitation, Goldstein and Keohane only define it (Gofas and Hay, 2010, p. 19).

Although they treat ideas as an important concept, they define them as beliefs “held by individuals”. Blyth argues that in historical institutionalism, ideas can be held by individuals but “neither defined by individuals nor limited in their effects to them” (Blyth, 1997, p. 239). There is an ontological priority where ideas exist prior to individuals. In other words individuals are born into a system of ideas that their preferences are constructed and defined within that system according to ideas within those institutions (Blyth, 1997, p. 239).

Gofas and Hay argue that rational choice theory has an ontological dualism that sees the individual as distinct from any collective or structural ideas. The theory supports the view of any idea in the form of individual interests (Gofas and Hay, 2010, p. 19). In other words, their understanding of ideas is socially constructed but they are still not more important than individual preferences. Ideas are only as important as interests. Other scholars propose that

rational choice has a methodological individualism where “all social structures and institutions are reducible to individual utility calculi” (Blyth, 1997, p. 230).

If ideas are prior to material interests and if interests are constructed over time, how do ideas become important and institutionalized? This is perhaps when there is a regime change, uncertainties during economic, political or identity crises, etc...this is also when institutional change becomes more relevant to the institutionalist approach. In times of uncertainty for instance, the regime might demand stability and coordination, so this will leave room for new ideas to be adopted; for instance, “even if the regime was not convinced that the Stalinist notion of socialism was ideal, strong incentives nevertheless existed to adopt it and punish any deviations from it” (Halpern, 1993, p. 89). It is argued in the following chapters that Putin became president in Russia at the time of this uncertainty.

If ideas are world views and beliefs and these can be adopted more easily during times of uncertainty, how are they institutionalized? They are arguably institutionalized through several networks and structures. If ideas are ideologies, they are more likely to be systemically institutionalized than any other ideas. For instance, some scholars discuss the shift in ideas from Keynesianism to monetarism and how it was institutionalized in the UK (Hall, 1992).

The methodological difficulty, perhaps, in studies of ideas is the visibility of their impact on policy outcomes. This is also the main critique from rationalist approaches as well. Cox argues that proving the effect of an idea is possible when change occurs. He discusses that if the impact is not seen very easily then it would be hard to talk about the importance of it (Cox, 2004, p. 206). Goldstein and Keohane also argue that researchers should interpret what is in people’s heads to explore the ideas (1993, p. 26). They state that “we do not observe beliefs directly; we observe only claims about beliefs and actions presumably based on beliefs” (ibid).

1.6 Historical institutionalism and Russia’s foreign natural gas policy

As I discussed above, historical institutionalism focuses on individuals and their relationship with institutions. New institutionalism (particularly Historical Institutionalism) theory is more relevant for my research for a couple of reasons. Before moving onto these, I point out my research questions that I analyse in the following empirical chapters:

Main question:

- How do preferences/ideas/institutions have an impact on Russia's foreign natural gas policy over time towards Ukraine?

Subordinate questions:

- What are the key foreign policy ideas in formal institutions? How have these ideas become important in Russia's foreign natural gas policy?

- How are ideas institutionalised in formal/informal structures? How did foreign policy institutions change under Putin in the 2000s?

- How do ideas, formal and informal institutions work in relation to Russian natural gas policy towards Ukraine?

It is important to note that the main concern with this research is to understand change and continuity in the formal and informal institutions in Russia in the presidency of Putin. It is also the aim to analyse how these institutions affected the foreign natural gas policy of Russia towards Ukraine. For this reason it is worth analysing why institutions changed when Putin became president in the 2000s and which ideas are institutionalized in policy-making.

Historical institutionalism helps in understanding the formal and informal structures in Russia in two ways: It treats institutions not only as formal structures but also as informal ones that

affect the outcome of foreign policy. After the regime change in the 1990s, with privatization the country attempted to restructure its formal institutions compatible with market institutions. However, with Putin important sectors were nationalized again; part of the implementation of new institutions in the country. The focus of this research is to understand this change and continuity with Putin's presidency during the 2000s. Not only the constitution but also the continuity of these institutions is crucial, by exploring the ideas of powerful elites and the presidents within these structures. As historical institutionalism focuses on change and continuity, the theory treats these concepts within the concept of "path -dependency". Moreover, path-dependent decisions are adopted and developed in these institutions with ideas from the leaders of the political parties, the presidents, elites and ministers of the state.

As this chapter follows March and Olsen's two logics of actions, the logic of appropriateness sheds light on understanding individual behaviour within institutions and their motivations in decision-making. As I argue in the following chapters, after the breakup of the Soviet Union there have been many competing ideas in the making of foreign policy in Russia. With Putin's takeover in 1999, the pragmatist-patriotic ideas both for domestic and foreign policy were soon institutionalized and these ideas were also adopted by the elites in Russia. Different from 1990s, these ideas have become more state-centric and state-controlled to implement "stability" in the country and to improve "Russia's position" in the world. These ideas have driven Russia's foreign policy as well as Russia's national interests since 1999. Nationalization of private companies and re-institutionalization of them created a dual-state as Sakwa (2011) argues both in domestic and foreign policy. Putin's emphasis on patriotism, declaring his domestic opponents as traitors, suppressing media and intervening in commercial relations created a dual foreign policy in international politics. According to one aspect of this politics, the presidency -as the strongest formal institution- has the constitutional right to drive foreign policy; on the other hand natural gas policy - according to official discourse- is Gazprom's commercial interest and driven by Gazprom. However, as a commercial institution, on the one hand Gazprom follows its commercial interests in the international market; on the other hand

this institution is inseparable from Russia's broader foreign policy, which is both driven by patriotism and national interests.

If we recall March and Olsen's two sets of questions (anticipatory and obligatory) Russia's institutions affect policy outcomes both from identity and individual perspectives. However, more important is the idea that patriotism is presented in Russia as a new form of ideology and protector of stability and has become institutionalized both in domestic and foreign policy institutions. Russia's interests have only become important after defining the country's status in the world. As I discussed in this chapter before, I believe that material interests are not given but are socially and politically constructed. These interests cannot be separated from ideas in foreign policy. Interests are defined here as constructed ideas, and as in the case of Russia the constitution of Russia's foreign policy has always been a concern regarding national interests. These "national interests" however, are ideas of Russian leaders and elites and how they perceive Russia's status in international politics.

This is why Chapter 5 focuses on institutionalization of patriotism in Russia, because this is seen by Putin as implementing stability in Russia. In his speech in 1999, he emphasized that the importance of stability and national interests can only be protected if Russia is a stable country. This is why the country should know its interests and history in order to be stronger in the international market.

As I discussed in this chapter (p. 3), preferences and beliefs are not exogenous but endogenous to political history. And political actors act to fulfil their own identity. This particularly explains the institutional change in Russia in the 2000s under Putin's administration; how he defined the country's position and importance of national identity in the international system. More importantly according to Historical Institutionalism, histories and meanings are socially constructed as well. In the empirical chapters, I argue that political discourse and the idea of patriotism is very much driven by the history of Russian nationalism but is also utilized as a uniting force for Russians to protect their own interests. For this reason, national interests are

not only defined by means of national identity but also constructed over a path-dependent history.

In order to understand natural gas policy, I also argue that is contradictory since gas policy is driven by two different embedded ideas in formal institutions in the country. On the one hand Russia desires to strengthen its position in the world as an equal partner to the West; on the other hand it challenges the independence of former Soviet Union countries by punishing them with natural gas cut-offs. It is not to claim that the Russian state is a single unitary actor that acts as a rational actor. Rather, it is a combination of different institutions and networks with different embedded ideas.

This chapter is followed by three main empirical chapters. In the first empirical chapter, foreign policy ideas in Russia in the 1990s and 2000s are discussed. In this chapter, the “Russian idea” is presented along with its importance for domestic and foreign politics. I aim to focus on the domestic policy of Russia which cannot be separated from foreign policy according to political discourse. It is also important to analyse domestic policy to understand the relations between Russia and the former Soviet countries— because these countries used to be Russia’s “domestic space” until the breakup of the Soviet Union.

In the second empirical chapter, I investigate foreign policy institutions and how ideas (Chapter 4) are institutionalised in formal/informal structures in the country. The main focus is both formal and informal institutions: the presidency, Gazprom foreign ministry, the Church and media in Russia. In this chapter natural gas policy is taken as a case study in broader foreign policy.

In the last empirical chapter, the research focuses on natural gas policy towards Ukraine, as an example. This chapter demonstrates how nationalist ideas are institutionalised in formal/informal institutions and affect foreign policy towards Ukraine.

1.7. Conclusion

This study argues that in order to understand policy-making, institutional dynamics, change and configuration, Historical Institutionalism offers a better analysis among other foreign policy analysis approaches. This chapter explored two approaches to institutional analysis by applying March and Olsen's two logics of actions. These two logics not only suggest two alternative ways of interpreting politics, but also argue politics and policy-making from different ontological standpoints. This chapter explored these two approaches by analysing individual behaviour, institutions and embedded ideas.

For individual behaviour and actors' actions, this chapter believed that the preferences of individuals are not exogenous or given to individuals but are politically and socially constructed over time. In other words, individuals are not treated as utility maximizers but satisfiers. Although it was not the aim of this chapter to challenge any of the rationalist premises, it does argue that actions are more problematic than being given.

For these reasons institutions as formal and informal structures are important for the analysis of foreign policy in Russia. Institutions are not only important for understanding the organizational structure in countries, but also to see the structure of policy-making and the determinants of this process as well. In this sense, institutions can both affect and constrain actions.

If institutions can affect policy outcomes, how can they do that? I believe that embedded ideas, defined as beliefs and world views, which are held by individuals and these formal and informal structures can construct the policy outcomes of the institutions. These ideas can be economic ideas, policy changes, ideologies, regime change and so on. Most importantly, my focus here is foreign policy ideas. In the following chapters, the main focus is on institutional change and

continuity during the 2000s. The main questions are as follows: how do institutions change? What ideas were important over others? How did ideas and institutions affect foreign policy outcomes in Russia?

Chapter 4: The Elites and the Sources of Foreign Policy Ideas in Russia

We need a national policy strategy based on civil patriotism. Any person living in our country should not forget their faith and ethnicity. But before anything else, he must be a citizen of Russia and be proud (Putin, 2012a).

This thesis argues that ideas are the key determinants of foreign policy outcomes, and that Russia's foreign "natural gas policy" is an expression of competing ideas in society. The main focus of this chapter is the evolution of ideas both in foreign and natural gas policy in Russia. This is why I aim to explore how different elite groups hold ideas and how interests are politically, economically and socially constructed over time. This suggests that the "reproduction of the practice of international action (i.e. states) depends on the reproduction of practices of domestic actors (i.e. individuals and groups)" (Koslowski and Kratochwill, 1994, p. 216). This is the main deficiency in the current foreign policy literature, as the ideas (as world views) of elites are paid little attention in understanding the natural gas policy of Russia. It is important that this deficiency is rectified as "societal ideas, interests, and institutions influence state behaviour by shaping state preferences, that is, the fundamental social purposes underlying the strategic calculations of governments" (Moravcsik, 1997, p. 513). The ideas in society, the preferences of different elites and government institutions have a(n) direct/indirect impact on foreign policy-making. This is why historical institutionalism gives the best insight into interpreting the ideational elements of Russian foreign policy which would help to understand foreign gas policy towards Ukraine. It is the aim of this chapter to demonstrate the change in ideas from 1990 to 2000 and to explore how new ideas could be institutionalised during Putin's years in the 2000s.

After the "chaotic" and "unstable" years of the 1990s, for Putin and his elites stability was the most important thing. This provided a chance for the new ideas to become important in foreign policy. Ideas in 2000 were road maps (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993) for the new elites. It was

also important to unite Russia with a different idea (than liberalism in 1990s) which was suggested by Putin in 1999. This was “the Russian idea”. Thus, this chapter argues that this renewed Russian idea as the main driving force of the foreign policy since 2000s.

Historically “the Russian idea” dates back to 19th century when there was an intellectual debate on Russia’s role in the world and whether Russia was part of western civilisation or had its own civilisation. This intellectual debate was resurrected after the collapse of the USSR. Many intellectuals discussed Russia’s position and its identity in the world (Stankevich, 1992; Karaganov and Vladislavlev, 1992), especially with the decline of Russia’s power and influence.

After Yeltsin’s resignation in 1999, Putin stood for a new ideological movement and offered the new “Russian idea” for the Russian people to follow in his Millennium speech (Putin, 2000). According to this new idea, Putin was willing to revise the notion of that Russia was a “great power”. A central part of this vision was the reassertion of Russia’s “great power” status within the international system. In comparison to Yeltsin’s years, Putin had a strategy of defining national identity and interests based on the “uniqueness” of Russian civilisation, which the Russian people should be proud of. Thus, economic sentiments of “great power” status and cultural sentiments of “uniqueness” had different nationalist reference points.

As discussed in the theory chapter (Chapter 3), there are three key issues in Historical Institutionalism that can help us to understand foreign policy formation in Russia: Individual behaviour, institutions and individuals and how individual behaviour is constructed through history (path dependency). This relies on the assumption that individual behaviours, their interests and motivations are not given but ideational (Hay, 2011, p. 67). Throughout the history of Russia, individuals and actors have also been important. These individuals were mainly either leaders of Russia or its elites during the soviet times, the Oligarchs in 1990s and “St. Petersburg lawyers”¹ in the 2000s.

¹This is the name which has given to Putin’s elites. These elites are mostly people who he befriended when he worked in St. Petersburg.

The ruling elite class which was called *nomenklatura* had a long history of influencing foreign policy making in the Soviet Union. Although the characteristic of this ruling class has changed since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the socioeconomic dynamics in Russia created new economic/political elites accordingly in the 1990s. Most importantly the regime change in Russia perhaps altered all the other dynamics in society including political discourse, interest groups, ruling elite, the press and even the voters' behaviours. The analyses of these elites, their backgrounds and ideas are vital reference points for our understanding of policy-making and Russia's natural gas policy towards the CIS.

The new elites and their ideas changed dramatically during Yeltsin's and Putin's administrations. The aim of this chapter is to give the sources of their ideas to understand the political/economic outcome for foreign natural gas policy. The interest driven and idea-driven natures of these elites are still playing a key role in shaping the Russian foreign policy. To understand this, the liberal ideas and business elites during

Yeltsin's administration in the 1990s and then the new elites with more statist ideas during Putin's administration in the 2000s will be analysed. The struggle of the elites with each other and their cooperation with the government were important in the 1990s. The breakup of the USSR, with an elite driven revolution, was followed by another revolution in 1999 when Putin became the president. Both the 1991 and 1999 elite-driven movements were to challenge the existing system in Russia. Although there was no coercive element in 1999, the 1998 economic crisis and pressure from the elites meant Yeltsin needed to resign and his elites assigned Putin as a candidate for his position. The clash of ideas on Russia's position in the world, national interest and national identity shaped foreign natural gas policy from the 1990s to 2010. This had major implications on the making of gas policy towards Ukraine.

The elites (business elites and "the Family") during the 1990s were trying to get the Communists out of the country. On the other hand, after the hard economic days of the 1990s the country's main objective was maximizing "the national interest" rather than maximizing the

interests of a small number of people. Even under the liberal policies of the 1990s the business elites were seeking political power in Russia. The businessmen of Yeltsin's years (some of them with dual citizenship) had only tried to maximize their interests. The importance of the Yeltsin years is to give an idea of the development of the elites in the country and how their policies have become more popular in the 2000s.

The chapter is divided into two main sections. In the first part, the main goal is to explore how the elites became powerful with privatisation policies and some liberal ideas during the 1990s. For this investigation, this section will focus on their ideas and how these ideas affected foreign policy. In the second part, I analyse Russian foreign policy thinking in the 2000s. There have been three main schools of thought, namely, liberal Westernisers, extreme nationalists and pragmatic nationalists, with different understandings on Russia's interests and identity and position in the world. Although

Yeltsin and his elites were liberal Westernisers, this changed when Putin came to power. In the 2000s, the elites were mainly using a more pragmatic/nationalist discourse. To be able to understand nationalist discourse in Russia's foreign policy, Steinmo et al's book *Structuring Politics* (1992) gives a good understanding of historical institutionalism and Andre Lecours's article "Structuring Nationalism" (2005) provides an excellent analysis on the theoretical importance of HI for the study of nationalism. I will investigate these to understand the foreign natural gas policy of Russia.

1. Yeltsin, his elites and privatisation policies

We must provide economic freedom, lift all barriers to the freedom of enterprises and of entrepreneurship and give people the opportunity to work and to receive as much as they can, casting off all bureaucratic constraints (Yeltsin, 1992 cited in White 2000, p. 123).

The long history of elites as a class has always been important in understanding the policies of the leader, as well as the policy makers in Russia. The elites in the formal and informal institutions and their ideas have been the key determinant of the foreign policy outcome over the years. As Pareto put it “Revolutions were above all a matter of elite change” (Pareto, 1935 cited in Kryshantovskaya and White, 1996, p. 711). The emergence of the elite as a class in new Russia during the 1990s and Yeltsin’s administration provide an understanding of the first years of Russia. During the 1990s, the struggle among the elites made elite conflict normalised (Sakwa, 2011, p. 3) and created a background for further elite conflict in the country. Apart from a few people in very senior political positions, elites from Communist times were able to survive in post-Communist Russia. (Kulberg et al. 1998, p. 120).

Some scholars have argued that one of the most important characteristics of the Soviet elite was “it was highly integrated, in the sense that the different segments of it (political, economic, military) constituted integral parts of the whole; they were not autonomous from each other but were interlinked through institutional and informal personal channels and networks” (Gill, 1998, p. 139). However, in contrast, Steen argues that the Russian elites are not integrated. He argues that even during the Soviet times, there was pluralism among the competing elites. This competition was linked to their connection to regional interests and clan traditions (Steen, 2003, p. 57-58).

Russia had two regime changes in 1917 and 1991. Importantly, they happened to be driven by struggle among the elites not by negotiations (Kulberg et al. 1998, p. 123). These struggles have shaped the character of the system many times in Russian history as seen in the rise of the Oligarchs in the 1990s and new pragmatic elites of Putin in the 2000s. The regime change in 1991 had been driven by the elites (Steen, 2003, p. 51), and in 1999 and 2004 these elites played a key role in determining Russian domestic and foreign policy.

To understand the ideas of the elites shortly after the breakup of the USSR, it is worth focusing on liberalisation and privatisation under Yeltsin’s administration. Liberal ideas both in domestic

and foreign policies and their outcomes were the driving forces of Russia in the first decade of its history. However, it is worth noting that the policies of Putin in the 2000s are an outcome of the instability in the country and debates on national interests and national identity. After discussing the liberalisation of Yeltsin's years, I turn to these debates and new ideas in Russia.

1.1. The first wave of privatisation

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Yeltsin was the first President of the Russian Federation with some new liberal ideas both at domestic and international level. These ideas at the domestic level are important for understanding the transformation of the foreign policy institutions in the country. Some of these institutions have a direct effect on natural gas policy, for instance recentralisation and renationalisation of institutions like Gazprom after Putin became the president. The most important developments driven by the liberal ideas during his Presidency have been arguably the transformation of the socialist state economy into a market economy and privatisation reforms. Yeltsin's liberal economic ideas and integration with the market economy not only transformed the state-economy into the market economy but also supported new liberal ideas and new liberal groups in society. To be able to achieve his economic reforms, he asked for advice from Western economists and some international institutions like the IMF and the World Bank. In return the economic solution for Russia was "shock therapy" meant to liberalise prices and promote privatisation. As the architect of the program, the Acting Prime Minister of Russia, Yegor Gaidar, offered an ambitious program. In 1992, Yeltsin started the program of free vouchers. Although each citizen had equal rights to buy these vouchers, intermediaries bought them with cash in return. This is also how the new business elites of Russia emerged: the Oligarchs. The oligarchy as a class is important for understanding the control of some business elites over energy companies, which they own. They also held enormous power in the media, the energy sector, the economy and politics. They not only utilised institutions for their propaganda, but also influenced Yeltsin's policies as well.

Kryshtanovskaya and White (2005) argue that “oligarchy is based on the interaction of two elite groups: the political “establishment”, which is financed by big business and provides it with access to the most profitable forms of entrepreneurship, and businessmen themselves” (p. 296). Although not having long term interests, the business elites and “the Family”² in the 1990s had the common interest of keeping the Communists out of the system (Sakwa, 2008, p. 91). Thus the new Russian regime and liberal ideas in the first decade of Russia’s history led liberal and business elites to become more important in the government and in the private sector.

In the immediate post-Soviet era, elites could be divided into three groups: “at the top level are politicians and their allies, who compete among themselves for power. The middle layer consists of entrepreneurs, who finance the politicians’ electoral campaigns, lobbying newspapers and television; and at the bottom level are the security services which not only maintain order but also act as a means of influence and contract enforcement” (Kryshtanovskaya and White, 1996, p. 723). As well as competing ideas, the struggle for power among the elite groups was rising dramatically. While Yeltsin and Kozyrev were institutionalising liberalisation and privatisation in Russia and strengthening their relations with the US, the second level oligarchs were supporting Yeltsin’s power by utilising their power in the press and the newspapers.

They also had an enormous impact on policies as well as in the economy. The oligarchy even had close ties with the state. Rutland argues that “elites are seduced into corruption by the easy money flowing from oil and gas exports, and have no incentive to create clean electoral democracies” (2008, p.3). The close relations between Yeltsin and these business elites had important policy outcomes in foreign policy making. The most important political influence of the Oligarchs could be seen when the Kremlin regarded Mikhail Khodorkovsky as a presidential candidate and (the Kremlin) warned Putin to stop him (Kryshanovskaya, 2009). As well as the economic objectives of privatisation in Russia, Yeltsin’s administration had been seeking

²The “Family” is the name given to Yeltsin’s extended family including himself, his daughter, his sons –in law, their advisor and their backers. Not only Yeltsin, but his family was very influential in political life.

political gains and stabilisation in the country. It has been argued that during privatisation, economic institutions had been shaped by the country's politics (Boycko et al. 1993, p. 250).

The economic objectives of privatisation in the first half of liberalisation of the prices and later in 1996 have been criticised as an economic disaster. Russia's vice-president Aleksandr V. Rutskoi described Yeltsin's economic policies as "policy of economic genocide" (Bohlen, 1992). This was perhaps more visible before the 1996 presidential elections when Yeltsin promoted the second privatisation phase for the support of Russian business elites in the country.

1.2. Second wave of privatisation – 1995

Following the first privatisation initiatives, in 1995 Yeltsin initiated another wave of privatisation to close the foreign debts, which is known as "loans for shares". In 1995, Khodorkovsky and Vladimir Potanin offered Yeltsin \$1.8 billion, in return they asked to have shares from some government assets in the iron, oil, and steel industries. This was later known as "loans for shares" (Sixsmith, 2010, p. 35). In this second phase of privatisation, the government shifted from voucher privatisation to cash privatisation to provide some cash needs. In 1995, privatisation was offering some of the state enterprises (energy, telecommunication and the media) in exchange for bank loans. The other main reason was the wish to gain support from the business elite in his upcoming presidential elections in 1996.

The emergence of the new business elites was different from the traditional state market relations. In Russia the business elite was highly dependent on the state rather than in a more independent entrepreneurial way (Sakwa, 2008, p. 136). Rutland (2005) divides the power of these insiders and outsiders into two phases. Management insiders had gained control during the first phase of privatisation; on the other hand politically favoured outsiders became the owners of some oil and metal companies (p. 188). Thus, the economic power of some

individuals or groups gave economic control during the first phase. More importantly, in the second phase these groups were influential in domestic policy.

Because decision-making is not very transparent in Russia, governmental and private actors and their informal relationships remain behind the scenes. However, it is known that they affect policy outcomes and governmental actions (Willerton, 2005, p. 33) and even the natural gas policy as well. These three factors, namely privatisation, the economic crises, liberalisation and the Oligarchy, contributed to the rise of nationalism in Russian politics.

So the new class, the Oligarchs, gained not only economic but also political power in Russia. This class was an interaction between two factions: “the political ‘establishment’, which is financed by big business and provides it with access to the most profitable forms of entrepreneurships and businessmen themselves” (Kryshtanovskaya and White, 2005, p. 296). As well as their economic power, the business elite also held political power over the media (using the media for their own interests), the opposition, trade unions and state officials (Kryshtanovskaya and White, 2005, p. 299).

1.3. 1996 elections and the power of the Oligarchs

The oligarchs’ power and control was not limited to the media and energy sector. The oligarchs also had their own ministers, officials and deputies (Kryshtanovskaya and White, 2005, p. 294).

The former finance minister, Alexander Lifshitz, emphasises their impact in an interview:

The meeting took place in one of the biggest banks. They gave me a list of their demands, which included consultation with them about all decisions, the appointment of ministry personnel only with their consent, and so on”(in Kryshtanovskaya and White, 2005).

The Oligarchs were not only appointing their own ministers who would cooperate with the m, but also were using the media for the presidential campaign. One of the most famous “impacts” of the Oligarchs is perhaps known as the “Davos Pact” where some of the Oligarchs gathered in

Davos and talked about the re-election of Yeltsin in the 1996 elections (Rachman, 2011; Hale, 2006, p. 309) and prevented a Communist resurgence (Cowell, 2007). Boris Berezovsky, one of the most influential Oligarchs in the 1990s and a political insider declared that seven bankers had been helpful in the re-election of Yeltsin in 1996 (Sakwa, 2011, p. 7). The deputy director of Novaya Gazeta said "The media barons have their own goals and, naturally, if journalists want to keep their jobs they have to go along with those views," emphasizing that the media had been owned by powerful businessmen (Gray, 2000). For instance, Berezovsky said he persuaded the president to buy 49 per cent of state owned ORT³ to supply political support for the 1996 elections (Financial Times, 2011). So the control of the business elites over the media was enormous during the 1990s. Because of their control over the media and television, the communist and nationalist parties did not even have access to the media. In 2013, Gennady Zyuganov, First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, said in an interview: *The law allows us 15 minutes on the air, but they would not let us in, they blocked all the channels.* (Zyuganov, 2013).

Berezovsky further stated that: "I spent a lot of money on Yeltsin's campaign and gave him support through ORT, one of the main political tools that contributed to his victory" (2013).

Another influence was arguably Yeltsin's shock decision to dismiss his government which had been taken after long discussions with Kremlin insiders who are also known as "the Family": Yeltsin's daughter, a billionaire and his ghost writer" (the Independent, 1998). Although Putin had a KGB (now FSB) background Yeltsin's inner circle ("The Family") supported and promoted Putin as the next president in 1999 (Los Angeles Times, 2000). However in his second year in power, Putin was able to assign his own circle for decision-making and important positions in the government. As acting president, he even signed a decree for Yeltsin's immunity from legal prosecution (BBC, 1999).

³ORT: Public Russian Television. From 1995 to 2002, and then named as Channel One.

2. Putin and the Oligarchs

In their time in the 1990s, they (The Oligarchs) did their share of stealing, took billions of rubles, together with the likes of Berezovsky and others now serving their terms. Having been dragged away from the cash cows, they're somewhat short on money and they want to come back and line their pockets (Putin, 2010).

Yeltsin had resigned as Russian President in 1999 and his prime minister, Vladimir Putin, had taken over the office as an acting president in 2000 until the next elections on 26 March 2000 (BBC, 1999). Putin nationalised most of the state enterprises and assured the Oligarchs that as long as they stayed out of politics they would continue to have their business (Rutland, 2005, p. 190). Business elites were not only powerful in politics, but had also become an important actor in Russian domestic policy. For instance, Mikhail Khodorkovsky was a candidate in the presidential elections. Nevertheless, Putin's policy towards the Oligarchs and any political group that had an influence on domestic and foreign policies was not very tolerant. The main reason was perhaps that Putin and the Oligarchs had different ideas about managing the economy and determining foreign policy. As is discussed in the next section, Putin perceived these business elites not as "patriots" who love their country. As well as nationalising the main state enterprises and destroying the business elites, Putin created his own inner circle composed mostly of people who he worked with in St. Petersburg. These people were lawyers and economists; this is why they are called "the St. Petersburg lawyers".

The political influence of the Oligarchs over the government and the president lasted until Putin's election in 1999. With rapid privatisation, control over the media and even influence (sometimes pressure) over the decision-making in the country, Putin's first attempt to nationalise all the strategic sectors of the government (oil and natural gas as a priority) was arguably the outcome of what he inherited from Yeltsin (Shetsova, 2007, p. 42). The main objective behind nationalisation had been arguably a protection against the liberal policies but particularly privatisation of state assets. The increasing power of the Oligarchs over the media (politics as well) and the liberal ideas of Yeltsin have played a role in the idea of centralisation of

power. As Putin had a KGB background, he believed in a strong state which must act whenever it is needed. In an interview on Radio Mayak, he declared that the Oligarchs should be dissolved as a class (Sakwa, 2008, p. 185; Jamestown Foundation, 2000). In Spanish media he said: “Back in the mid-1990s oligarchic groups substituted for government in Russia. They were elected to parliament and lobbied laws beneficial for specific financial and industrial groups instead of the society. They also ensured fulfilment of these laws through their representatives in high places. I do not think this meets the public interest” (Putin cited in Sakwa, 2008).

With the attacks on two oligarchs, Boris Berezovsky (who supported Putin’s presidency in 1999) and Gusinsky and because of two big TV channels ORT and NTV (Goldman, 2010, p. 103) and the arrest of Khodorkovsky, Putin made it clear that the government was not going to be blackmailed any more as it had been in the past (Kryshtan ovskaya and White, 2005, p. 306). His policy of “equal distancing” meant they either had to support the government or do their own business without intervening in government policies (Kryshtanovskaya and White, 2005, p. 307).

After the 1998 financial crisis, most of the industrial groups in Russia either collapsed or lost their power and Gazprom was the only company which had the power “to influence government or even deal with it on equal terms” (Pappe, 2000: p. 46, cited in Kryshtanovskaya and White, 2005, p. 299). After nationalisation of Gazprom in the 2000s and increased control over the company, the company was often criticised for influencing Russian foreign gas policy. This will be discussed in more details in Chapter 5.

When Putin became the president, there were several debates in Russia around domestic and foreign policy. Both according to polls and political elites, the country was suffering from the 1998 economic crisis and instability in society was increasing. Russia needed a stable economy, a defined national identity and interests and recovered prestige in the international system. Thus Putin came to power and transformed all these concerns into a new form of idea. The next section goes on to explain the new form of ideas and elites during Putin’s administration.

3. Putin, his ideas and a new direction in foreign policy

In order to educate an individual, a patriot, we must restore the role of great Russian culture and literature. They must serve as the foundation for people's personal identity, the source of their uniqueness and their basis for understanding the national idea (Putin, 2013).

Ideas do matter in Russia, as was always so in the Soviet Union. Checkel argues that the Soviet state had tried to inhibit new ideas in society; ideas were still important and had an impact on policies and interests (Checkel, 1997). I argue that ideas are important because “societal ideas, interests, and institutions influence state behaviour by shaping state preferences, that is, the fundamental social purposes underlying the strategic calculations of government” (Moravscik, 1997). In this section, liberal ideas until the 2000s and pragmatic/patriotic ideas to the present day will be analysed. As the main theoretical framework of this study, historical institutionalism helps to understand foreign policy ideas (this chapter) and how these ideas are institutionalised (next chapter) in Russia.

Ideas in this study refer to world views and political thinking in the formal and informal structures in the country. These ideas are mainly on national interests, Russia's position between the East and the West, the national identity and foreign policy priorities. Since the early 19th century, there has been a long debate on the division of Russian society between Westernisers and Slavophiles (Shevtsova, 2003, p. 173) and whether Russia belongs to the West or the East. These controversies in the 19th and 20th centuries formed “the Russian idea” (which Putin later used in his Millennium speech) among the intellectuals.

There were two main philosophical questions in these two centuries: “Is the historical path of Russia the same as that of Western Europe, or has Russia a special path of its own with its civilisation belonging to another type?” (Berdyayev, 1947, p. 39). According to these two intellectual movements the Slavophiles believed in Russia's unique way of development and viewed Russia as unique and separate, whereas Westernisers believed in the need to follow

Western civilisation for cultural/political development and wanted Russia to be part of the western civilisation (Ria Novosti, 2010; Bayer, 2012). Moreover according to some scholars, the Slavophiles' efforts were an attempt to solve the identity crises in the country; in this sense it was a project for social change (Rabow-Edling, 2006, p. 2). This is why she argues that it can be best understood when this debate is situated in cultural nationalism. This is the main intellectual background of the current foreign policy approaches in political parties, the State Duma and the presidency.

With the breakup of the Soviet Union and collapse of the official state ideology of the USSR, the questions about Russia's position came under discussion again. With the privatisation of state assets and liberal political discourse of the elites, there were several policy ideas in society. These ideas were defined in similar ways but with different names: "Fundamentalist nationalist, liberal Westernisers and Pragmatic Nationalists" (Light, 1996, p. 34); "pro -Western idealists, pro-Western pragmatists, anti-Western pragmatists, and anti-Western ideologues" (McFaul, 1999). These definitions are used to distinguish foreign policy thinking and foreign policy behaviour in the country. It is possible to analyse Russia's foreign policy in four phases mainly defined by foreign policy ideas: 1991 to 1993 as a pro -Western period, 1993 to 2000 and a focus on Russian assertiveness (Bukkvoll, 2001, p. 1143), 2000 -2004 Putin's struggle with the elites and institutionalisation of his ideas and after 2004 to present pragmatic patriotism.

The liberal ideas of Yeltsin, privatisation and business elites were the dominant ideas in the country until Putin's administration. Russia's former foreign minister Ivan Ivanov(1998-2004) argued that by 1991, Russia had to answer questions such as "What were its core national interests?" "How did it conceive of its place and role in global affairs?"(Ivanov, 2002, p. 162). The first couple of years after the breakup of the USSR were dubbed the "romantic years" in the foreign policy of Russia. The main reasons have been outlined as integration with the West and good relations with the former Soviet Union countries. It was not only the foreign policy of Russia, but also domestic policy, political parties, national interests and national identity that

had concerned the country. This is why Sakwa argues that foreign policy was highly “domesticated”, and domestic reform was given a high priority (2003, p. 350) with the implementation of a new foreign policy. For this reason, domestic reform by adopting a semi presidential system, a new foreign policy ministry and Russian State Duma were predominant in domestic and foreign policy.

Russia’s most critical foreign policy problem is the unresolved question of which is more important: economic development and prosperity, which lay the foundation for future influence or current prestige – prestige that is often ephemeral (Karaganov, 2000).

No matter what foreign policy thinking is, there is always a debate on Russia’s identity and position in the international system. Karaganov’s statement (he had been an advisor to Yeltsin and Putin) above has been the main debate among the intellectuals since 1991. As well as these questions, the question of whether Russia is a superpower or a great power (Kokoshin, 2002, p. 12) is at the centre of the debate.

The debate on Russia’s position and its identity has reflected the foreign policy of the country in different years: 1991 -1994 (pro-western, privatisation, new constitution and Massandra summit), 1994-1999 (privatisation of the assets), 1999 -2004 (centralisation of the assets, pragmatic foreign policy objective), 2000 -2005 (the orange revolution, transit fees, Russia’s pragmatic foreign policy), 2005-2013 (second gas crisis in 2009, extension of Black Sea Fleet lease). During all these years, the representatives of the political parties in the State Duma had different approaches to foreign policy. However, to understand the foreign policy behaviour of Russia, one should look at the ideas and how these ideas are contextualised in formal and informal institutions.

In his article, entitled “Russia in Search of Itself”, Stankevich discusses foreign policy and how Russia searches for itself in the international system. He argues that “dealings with the surrounding world are helping shape Russian statehood and helping Russia recognise its interests”. With an opportunistic pragmatism in foreign policy, according to him, Russia’s

mission should be “conciliator, connecting and combining”. He also mentioned that it is Russia’s long-term strategic interest to have special ties with the CIS (Stankevich, 1992, p. 47).

Karaganov and Vladislavlev in their article also discuss “the Russian idea”. To them, “Russia has a unique historical chance to frame an integral national-interests-oriented policy capable of filling the vacuum of ideas and power” (Karaganov and Vladislavlev 1992, p. 32). Thus, the discussions in the 19th and 20th century became known as Atlanticist and Eurasianist. However Stankevich supports the idea that Russia needs a new balance within eastern and western orientations (Stankevich, 1992).

Rather than forming a foreign policy, it has often been argued that Russia has a “mission” in the world, to develop the dialogue between the west and the east and between cultures and civilisation. From this point of view, being a negotiator was seen as Russia’s mission between the west and the CIS. If these countries recognise Russia’s position in international politics and “do not conduct an anti-Russia course” then it would be possible to have “unilateral concessions” with the CIS (Primakov, 2006, p. 22).

All these debates and questions had an impact on foreign policy in different ways. There are three main perspectives which I will present here: Westernisers, fundamentalist nationalists and pragmatist patriots and my main focus will be pragmatist patriots who arrived mainly with Putin. By the 2000s “the language of power and of the elite changed and different words filled the air – stability, statehood, order, sovereignty, greatness, power, patriotism” (Shevtsova, 2003, p. 164) .

3.1. Westernisers and business elites

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, liberal ideas became dominant, and the main foreign policy priority was the introduction of Western liberalism and the view that Russia should integrate with the West. In the first couple of years, integration with the West was given more

importance than the CIS. These couple of years were mainly influenced by former foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev (1991 -1996). Their foreign policy orientation was mainly equality between states and mutual corporation and partnership (Jackson, 2003, p. 34).

In his articles (1992 b, 1995) Kozyrev often called for a strong partnership with the West and the US (1995), the importance of human right and democracy (1992 a) and he discussed Russia's great power status as well: "No doubt Russia will not cease to be a great power. But it will be a normal great power" (1992 b).

These liberal Westernisers held liberal ideas and favoured close ties with NATO and the European Union (White, 2007, p. 149). Kozyrev especially in 1992 had a great influence on Yeltsin's thinking and preferences (Checkel, 1997, p. 108). Thus the political elites of Russia including Kozyrev, Yeltsin and Deputy Minister Yegor Gaidar voiced liberal ideas of Russia's national interests (Donaldson and Noguee, 1998, p. 113). This was influential during the 1990s.

3.2. Fundamentalist nationalism

Extreme forms of nationalist views were supported by fundamentalist nationalists such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (founder and the leader of the Liberal Democratic party of Russia) and Aleksandr Dugin (philosopher, geopolitician and adviser to the chairman of the State Duma). They criticised the liberal reforms of the 1990s. This group not only opposed the close ties with the West but also wanted closer relations with the CIS. Although they belong to different camps, Dugin argued in those days that Russia's policies had more Eurasian ideas than before: "individualistic Americanism that is so utterly unnatural and inimical to us ... the victory of Eurasian ideas came with the Putin administration" (Dugin, 2001, p. 14). This form of nationalism was more of an imperial desire of Russia in the post-Soviet sphere. Even in their relations with Slavic nations like Ukraine, they expressed some imperial desires that Russia should follow. Zhirinovskiy once told *Vseukrainski Vedomosti* that: "The Russian army will

march over Ukraine, eliminating everything in its way, and will deploy its garrisons everywhere it meets resistance” (Zhirinovskiy, 1995).

Although these two different schools of thought have different foreign policy ideas, they have similarities in their form of interpretation of Russia’s policies. As discussed their understanding of Russia’s position in the world is different for Westernisers and fundamentalist nationalist. There is finally another foreign policy idea which is mostly associated with Putin’s administration after 2000 when he became the president of Russia, namely pragmatic patriots. Before moving onto explain this perspective, it is important to distinguish between different forms of nationalism in Russia during the 1990s which is also applicable to today’s’ politics. Tolz (2001, p. 272) draws five categories of nationalism that had been defined among the intellectuals in the 1990s: firstly, imperial nationalism: this refers to imperial people and their mission to create a supranational state. Secondly, Slavic or cultural nationalism: united by common culture. Thirdly, nationalism as a community of Russian speakers. Fourthly, ethnic nationalism. Lastly, civic nationalism: which combines all citizens of Russia regardless of their ethnic or cultural background. Although there are three main foreign policy ideas in society (Westernisers, fundamentalist nationalist and pragmatist patriots) only pragmatic patriots had an influence on the foreign policy in the 2000s. Westernisers were powerful during Yeltsin’s administration in 1990s, but fundamentalist nationalists have never driven the main political discourse in the 1990s and the 2000s. However pragmatist patriots ideas became more important with Putin and his new elites in 2000s. This is why the next section will analyse their ideas and the foreign policymaking process in detail.

3.3. Pragmatist patriots and the emphasis on stabilisation

We need a national policy strategy based on civic patriotism. There is no need for anyone living in Russia to forget their religion or ethnicity. But they should identify themselves primarily as citizens of Russia and take pride in that (Putin, 2012).

The Russian people and Russian culture are the linchpin, the glue that binds together this unique civilisation (Putin, 2012).

Pragmatist political/economic thinking arrived with Putin and his new elites. Putin (see above) stated many times in 1999, 2005 and 2012 that Russia has a unique culture itself and citizens of Russia should be proud of this uniqueness. Unlike Yeltsin and the business elites in the 1990s, Putin and his new elites (also called St. Petersburg lawyers/economists) believe that “Russian ownership of Russia’s resource base is critical to Russia’s economic recovery and the country’s re-emergence as an important international actor” (Olcott, 2004, p. 16). This is arguably the importance of Gazprom as a way of recovering the economy and prestige in the international system.

When Putin won the election in 1999, the country was still recovering from the 1998 economic crisis and corruption in the government institutions. During these years the most important goal according to the elites was stability, which was important both for national interests and Russia’s prestige in the international system. This is why in the first years of the 2000s, Putin’s main focus had been the stabilisation of the country’s economy and recovering its status among other countries. As he emphasised in his articles and speeches, a strong Russia (independent from other developed economies) would be respected more than a dependent economy as had been the case during the 1990s.

In his millennium speech, Putin presented a new idea or outlook for Russia. According to him, the “new Russian idea” was based on patriotism, the Greatness of Russia, Statism and Social solidarity (1999) and this idea was going to provide ‘stability’ in the country. To understand both foreign and foreign natural gas policy, through an institutionalist framework which prioritises ideas and institutions, I find it worth understanding the discourse of this speech for the analysis of my following chapters. Here, historical institutionalism sheds light on this analysis of understanding ideas within formal and informal institutions. This theory not only helps to understand the individual behaviour but also highlights the importance of ideational

factors in determining the individual behaviour. As the focus of this chapter is the ideas and the next chapter will be on how these ideas are institutionalised within formal and informal structures, it is interesting to see how Putin developed his vision for Russia.

Putin's Millennium speech (in which he revived the "Russian idea") is important for two reasons. First, it was a manifesto for a new idea on national interests, on Russia's prestige, on greatness for the society and on solidarity; second it was a declaration for implementing stronger institutions and a stronger state. In other words, it was a declaration of this new idea not only for the Russian people, but for Russia's neighbours and partners. In an interview human rights activist and historian Roginsky said "Putin wants to revive the ideology that we are a great country and a great nation, respected throughout the world, feared even" (Roginsky, 2012). This declaration of the need to institutionalise these ideas could only have been achieved through a strong state. In other words, these ideas were declared to be institutionalised in formal and informal structures in Russia. This is why this study argues that ideas and institutions are not separable and they are important for understanding policy outcomes. In the creation of this new ideology, formal institutions in Russia were responsible for implementing this new ideology which would in turn hold society together. This was more important than defining national interests, because to Putin, solidarity and stability in was more important than anything else. And he could only achieve this stability through "patriotism". Although nationalism is not at the core of historical institutionalist framework, there are importance features that would help us to understand nationalism better as in this study: "Historical institutionalism provides a view on structure and agency which takes institutions seriously yet leaves room for action, conceptualised in terms of power and power relationships, and it offers a genuine historical perspective" (Lecours, 2005, p. 183). I analyse how this ideology has been institutionalised in the next chapter and how Putin used "power vertical" to implement the power of his elites and state control in governance. He maintained this idea in foreign natural gas policy through institutionalisation, which will be covered in the following chapter. First it is necessary to explore in more depth Putin's "new idea" for Russia.

3.4. The new Russian idea

This section explores four main themes within the new Russian idea, namely patriotism, Russia's "greatness", statism and social solidarity. In this form of idealisation "Russians are viewed as the people of great historical mission, as those who inherited special spirituality" (Panov, 2010, p. 92). This kind of historical mission dates back to Russia's 1,000-year old traditions and the emphasis on Russia's values (cultural, spiritual and moral) consists of both nationalist and conservative elements (March, 2012, p. 405). Four elements of this idea are crucial to understanding Russia's institutionalisation process and foreign policy behaviour towards Ukraine. Each of them offers a great sense of Russia's state re-formation and idealisation of Russia's position in the world. The section starts with patriotism and it follows with an analysis of the implications of these values on foreign policy.

3.5 Patriotism

Patriotism is a feeling of pride in one's country, its history and accomplishments... It is the source of people's courage, staunchness, and strength. If we lose patriotism and the national pride and dignity that are connected with it, we will no longer be a nation capable of great achievements (Putin, 2000).

This is perhaps the most important part of the new Russian idea as outlined by Putin. Since nationalism is very important in this "Russian idea", "it is a form of politics, and therefore develops in the context of competition and power struggles; it is bound to be affected by the institutional environment" (Lecours, 2005, p. 185). In his speech, he mainly declares three key issues: national pride, Russia's greatness and patriotism. While Putin opposes the idea of ethnic nationalism and official state ideology, he was suggesting that patriotism should be the main Russian idea. In his terms, he defines patriotism as a form of "civic nationalism". Thus this call is for every "Russian" in the country regardless of their ethnic background. However, this

understanding of “unity” created some problems for other ethnic groups who did not want to integrate with Russia but wanted to determine their own sovereign policies. Any disagreement from former Soviet Union countries was perceived as “anti-Russian” policies as in the example of Ukraine in 2009. Moreover, his “civic nationalism” changed its meaning in the recent Ukrainian crisis when he defended the rights of ‘ethnic Russians’ in Crimea.

3.6 The greatness of Russia

Russia was and will remain a great power. It is preconditioned by the inseparable characteristics of its geopolitics, economic, and cultural existence. They determined the mentality of Russians and the policy of the government throughout our history and they cannot help but do so now” (Putin, 2000).

As discussed before, in his articles former foreign minister Kozyrev often argued that Russia was only a “normal great power” not a great power. In contrast to the political discourse of the 1990s, Putin reminds people of the greatness of their country, not only because of its geopolitics, but also its economy and culture. It is important to emphasise the economy because of oil and gas reserves and culture because of the country’s civilisation and history.

On economic greatness, he often emphasises the importance of the national monopolies. For instance in this speech, “we still have our natural resources. So the country has a worthy future in store” (2000) he makes a call to unite people within the path of a great country. One should be proud to be a Russian. This is also where the current literature mostly blames Russia for acting like an “imperial power”, not only because of its history but because of the emphasis on greatness. I agree with some of these studies that Russia follows an imperial foreign policy especially in its relations with the CIS. However, I suggest that we have to move a bit further and understand these policies not only by economic pressure on these countries but also by other elements of this “greatness”. This takes us to the other half of the greatness which is the cultural aspect. On the cultural aspect of greatness, Putin on many occasions praised the unique civilisation which has its “own special path” in wider European civilisation. It was again in this

greatness that Ukrainians were called “little Russians”. This is why the gas crisis should be understood within this wider Russian idea to be able to see the wider picture in foreign policy-making.

3.7 Statism

Russia will not become a second edition of, say, the US or Britain, where liberal values have deep historical traditions. Our state and its institutions and structures have always played an exceptionally important role in the life of our country and its people. For Russians, a strong state is not an anomaly to be gotten rid of. Quite the contrary, it is a source of order and main driving force of any change (Putin, 2000).

As is discussed in the next chapter, statism is one of the most important institutional changes Putin made after he became the president. He not only centralised state power but also strengthened the role of the Russian church to support this “superiority” as in Soviet times. In the statement above he reminds the Russian people of the reasons for the greatness of Russia. While he is suggesting that its history, economy and culture are something to be proud of, he also warns that the greatness of Russia is also the result of a strong state. This is also a criticism of the weaker state in the 1990s and its incapability of dealing with the power of the oligarchs and the 1998 economic crisis. One Russian historian argues that this totalitarian stereotype is in the head of many Russians that “I am just a single man but the government and the state are great and vital” (Roginsky, 2012).

3.8 Social solidarity

Paternalistic sentiments have deep roots in Russian society and the majority of Russians are used to depending more on the state for improvements in their own condition than with their own efforts, initiatives, and flair for business. And it will take a long time for this habit to die (Putin, 2000).

In the same Millennium speech, while he was emphasising that Russia should learn its lesson from the privatisation in the 1990s, he stated the importance of state regulation in the economic sphere. To him “the country’s social stability is directly dependent on its energy stability” (Putin, 2000). Obviously that was a new “millennium” in Russia’s economic and political history particularly after the liberalisation and privatisation of the state’s assets. Nationalist implications in Putin’s speech and his call for patriotism had indicated that he was not going to follow a liberal economic and political foreign policy as President.

3.9 Putin and the transformation of the elites

This section explores how Putin could transform his ideas within domestic and foreign policies. Historical Institutionalism helps to understand how “nationalist leaders, or political parties stimulate mobilisation, bolster identity or achieve more concrete goals such as increased autonomy” (Lecours, 2005, p. 186). This section seeks to understand the elite mobilisation of Putin during 2000s.

Because of Putin’s KGB background and close relations with the Yeltsin family, there were many debates about him, his background and his new ideas. In the year that Putin became the President, in 2001, Oleg Kulikov, the secretary for information and analysis said: “to many voters, Putin seemed like a communist. After all, he embraced our patriotic ideology in many ways. The party largely supports the course he has adopted in foreign policy, and what happened with the national anthem was also seen by some voters as an indication that the president is an heir to our old patriotic traditions” (Dugin, 2001). Lilia Shevtsova argued that: “(Putin presents) something of a paradox. On the one hand, (he) proclaims a model focused on mobilization, thereby becoming a figure the Communists and nationalists can consider “one of their own” (2001, p. 7). On the other hand, he is trying to make innovations and this is neutralising us liberals, to some extent” (Shevtsova, 2001, p.7). Given public opinion and the

comments by the experts, Putin was not understood very easily in the first years of this presidency.

During the first couple of years (2000 -2004) the aim of the president was to install his own elites into important positions. However, the elite transformation of Putin was not very fast. Unlike Yeltsin and the business elites in the 1990s, Putin and his new elites believe that Russian natural resources are important and critical for Russia's economic recovery and position in the international system (Olcott, 2004, p. 16). When he first came to power there were several circles around him. The first circle was the old Yeltsin political group, also called "the Family". Putin was elected as president with the support of Yeltsin's inner circle (The Family). The "Yeltsin Family" is a combination of elites who were close to Yeltsin and his daughter and this group had more Western ideas. This group were also defined as "liberal Westernisers".

The second group was the liberal technocrats, most of them from St. Petersburg. These people had key economic positions. As soon as he got into office, he appointed people from St. Petersburg to important positions in management (Kroutikhin, interview, 2012). The importance of these appointments is perhaps creating an inner circle of people whom he can trust and who are not part of "Yeltsin's family".

The third group was people who had been colleagues in the KGB, also called Siloviki (Shevtsova, 2003, p. 86; Kroutikhin, 2008). Despite his background in the KGB, Putin has been closer to the St. Petersburg lawyers and economists. For instance, Alexei Miller Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors worked with Putin in the foreign relations committee in St. Petersburg. The importance of these three groups and the dominance of the St. Petersburg Lawyers in the natural gas policy brought pragmatist nationalist ideas back into foreign policy.

In his first term, his main intention was to achieve national stability in the country and abolish the Oligarchy as a class. The business elites should not be able to threaten the state but should be cooperating with it. For this reason, the priority was not professional allegiances or ideological or political affiliation (Shetsova, 2007, p. 44) or appointing the best qualified people, but

ensuring stability (Sakwa, 2011, p. 116) with people who he worked with in St. Petersburg during the 1990s. Thus, in his first term, he not only diminished the Oligarchs as a class, but also replaced the business elites with his bureaucrats. However these years were a shift from “the open competing lobbying networks of the Yeltsin years to the intra-regime factional conflict” (Sakwa, 2011, p. 113). Because of forming his government with these technocrats, Shevtsova tells a political joke about this inner circle in Moscow: “The St. Petersburg train arrives in Moscow. Every disembarking passenger is approached by official-looking people and asked: “Would you like to work in the Kremlin” (Shevtsova, 2003, p. 165). The joke is also an indicator of how much the liberal elites of the country have changed towards pragmatist views.

In his first and second years, the shift from liberal ideas to patriotic / masculine forms of politics appeared in the media as the new government’s political language. As well as the power of the state symbols, he also used his own image as a form of strong public image. The alpha-male figure of Putin and his paternalistic policies in foreign policy was to create an image of a fairy-tale- “Prince,” the “strong shoulder,” (Sperling, 2012) and saviour of the Motherland (Wood, 2011, p. 172). As well as masculine politics, he utilised patriotism in his speeches for “national solidarity”.

It was only in 2004 that Putin could change all the political/economic elites of Yeltsin with his own “technocrats” and elites (Olcott, 2004, p. 4). He defeated Khodorkovsky who challenged him in a government meeting; he replaced all the existing ministers and officers with his own circle from St. Petersburg or people loyal to him. Thus he was not only strengthening the “state” control on strategic sectors, but “they are also being put under the personal authority of representatives of the Russian state in the form of members or chairmen appointed to the boards of directors. Since these representatives are generally regarded as Putin’s men and come from Putin’s own staff, the Presidential Administration, it is clear that not only was Putin strengthening state control over the natural monopolies, he was also strengthening direct

presidential control. This is true for the energy sector as well as other strategic sectors” (Fredholm, 2006, p. 9).

4. Foreign policy ideas and the relations with the CIS

The main task of the foreign policy is to advance and safeguard our national interests (Putin, 2003).

Thus, if Putin transformed his ideas through a newly-formed idea and was supported by powerful elites, what are the implications for foreign policy towards the CIS? How important is the CIS for Russia’s foreign policy and Russia’s position in the world? It is worth noting that the foreign policy of Russia towards these countries has always been a priority apart from the first years of contemporary Russia (until 1993). However, this importance has changed at different times in the history of contemporary Russia.

In the 1990s Russia had tried to transform its economy into a market economy and the country needed the West for the economic and democratic transformation. However, this changed when Igor Ivanov (1998 -2004) became the foreign minister of Russia after Yevgeny Primakov (1996-1998). The “policy now lacked the groundless assurance that Russia was a great power, and it was the West’s misfortune not to recognise this” (Sakwa, 2008, p. 355). Thus, Russia was not a dependent country any more, but a powerful independent country that could compete in the international market with its natural resources. However, even in the 2000s a former foreign minister was advising that it would be best for Russia to join the West, especially NATO (Shelov-Kovedyaev, 2005).

The main difference between pragmatic nationalist and Westernisers is that the former see Russia as a great power that needs to restore its prestige in the international system (Jackson, 2003, p. 35). This kind of greatness presented by Putin has many nationalist implications within it. This form of nationalism and nationalist discourse among

Russian bureaucrats and intellectuals became more institutionalised during Putin's presidency. Putin not only strengthened the role of the state for the country's prestige but also for national pride. His main strategy particularly after his second term was based on the principles of the free market, a strong state, an active foreign policy respecting the country's traditions and patriotism (Nikonov, 2005). The political discourse at this time was based on the assertiveness in foreign policy which is "strategic and reflects Russia's unique role in international affairs, in history and in the development of civilisation" (Putin, 2012b). It has also been emphasised many times that policy was based on the country's interests.

The growth of economy, political stability and the strengthening of the state have had a beneficial effect on Russia's international environment (Putin, 2004).

While developing this kind of assertiveness, the fear from the Cold war era hung over the discourse of the elite. Russia told the western countries to recognise its sovereignty as an independent state but also to ensure global security by including Russia not by "trying to demote it, weaken it geopolitically or undermine its defensive potential" (Putin, 2012b). This was more obvious in Putin's speech at the Munich security conference in 2007 when he told the US just to mind their own business and not to teach democracy to Russia (Putin, 2007).

I have said before that Russia should build its foreign policy on the basis of clearly defined national priorities, pragmatism and economic effectiveness (Putin, 2001).

The most important foreign policy objective of Russia is "based on the principles of pragmatism, predictability and the supremacy of international law" (Putin, 2006). For this kind of pragmatism, economic interests have become more important relations to natural gas resources. The main goal was to promote economic interests rather than to counterbalance US power as in the old Cold War days (Shevtsova, 2003, p. 199). The most important economic instrument has been the management of natural resources and oil and gas companies as well. This is perhaps because natural gas is the most important element for economic recovery and prosperity. For the economic prosperity and development of the country, this has been a rational stage.

However, rather than structuring a reliable gas producer company, Gazprom became less transparent. Because “the lawyers spun off Gazprom’s financial subsidiaries for their own, and Putin’s, personal benefit” (Kroutikhin, 2008, p. 26), Russian energy policy became more problematic.

The independence of our foreign policy is in no doubt. The foundation of this policy is pragmatism, economic effectiveness, and the priority of national tasks (Putin, 2000).

CIS is a regional organisation whose participants are former Soviet Union countries was formed after the breakup of the USSR. Among the member countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), Ukraine did not ratify CIS Charter but declared itself as an “associate member” of the organisation (D'Anieri, 1999, p. 142). Thus, what is the importance of the CIS for Russian foreign policy and what are the implications of this policy on the relations with these countries? Most importantly, the rise of nationalist ideas advocated the ideas of integration with the CIS. To some scholars (Donaldson and Noguee, 1998, p. 157) the CIS has been an instrument of Russia’s foreign policy, an instrument for implementing Russian hegemony and a way to coordinate or control member states. I agree that the CIS has been the main priority for Russia’s foreign policy since 1992 because of political/economic and cultural interconnectedness. As well as strengthening the relations with the West, the main foreign policy priority was the integration with the CIS. For instance, in a report called “Strategy and Tactics of Russian Foreign Policy in the Near Abroad” first deputy Prime Minister Fedor Shelov-Kovadiaev said that Russia should have a more active foreign policy in its relations with the former soviet republics (cited in Donaldson and Noguee, 1998, p. 172). As well as the speeches, in foreign policy documents (2000, 2008, and 2013) the importance of the CIS for Russia has always been emphasised. Apart from the first years after the dissolution (dubbed as “romantic years”), Russia has always conceptualised a foreign policy including the CIS. However, the foreign policy has changed over time for two reasons: the

relations with the West / the US and the emphasis on national identity and the place of Russia in the world.

Different than other countries, Belarus and Ukraine are important for Russia for two reasons: Russia claims that both countries are Slavic nations who share the same cultural background as Russia does. These claims can also be found under tsarist Russia where some parts of Ukraine was defined as “little Russia” which Ukrainians find it “insulting” (Steele, 1994, p. 216). Thus, Russia was defined as “big Russia”, Ukraine as “little Russia” and Belarus is “white Russia”. In a controversial speech in 2009, Putin referred to the diaries of Anton Denikin, a commander in the White Army, where he addresses Ukraine as “little Russia” (Marson, 2009). Putin gave this speech as a reaction to Western interference in Russian-Ukrainian relations.

Second, both countries are important in transferring the Russian gas to the European countries. Although Belarus has close relations with Russian state, Ukraine since 2004 (the Orange Revolution) wanted to join to the EU and NATO. Russia provides quarter of the demands of the EU countries and 80 % of this gas is piped through Ukraine (BBC, 2009a). Different than Belarus, Ukraine has special importance for Russia as discussed in chapter 6: the country is the birth of place of the Russian state; there is a large Russian speaking population; geopolitical importance of black sea fleet and the country is the main transit of Russian gas to the EU. Over recent history, Russian foreign policy towards Ukraine can be divided into two: foreign policy during 1990s and foreign policy during 2000s. Deploying historical institutionalism, this thesis argues that foreign policy has changed after 2000s due to the change in foreign policy ideas and institutions. During 1990s, there were two important foreign policy issues: transit of the gas to the EU and the use of Black Sea Fleet in Crimea⁴. Until 2004, Kuchma Government in Ukraine

⁴Black Sea Fleet is an important strategic Navy which is located in the Black Sea is under the command of Russian federation. The fleet is important for Russia for its geopolitical importance. Because of its geopolitical location, Russia has a lease to use the facilities in the Fleet. This lease was extended several times in return of a gas discount which was signed by both Russian and Ukrainian governments.

had close ties with the Russian state. The policy towards Ukraine only changed after 2004 when orange revolution happened in Ukraine.

The next section analyses how the regime's "Russian idea" (patriotism, greatness of Russia and statism) can help to understand the policies towards the CIS. In the first part, patriotism will be explored to interpret the relations with the Russia. Following this the greatness of Russia and statism will be investigated through speeches of the leaders to analyse the discourse towards post-soviet states.

4.1. The "Russian idea" and the CIS: Patriotism

Either civic or ethnic, nationalism is motivated by the idea of building a nation. Verkhovsky argues that there are two cases where nationalism can be successful: either with the idea of social modernization (as in the French revolution) or institutionalising the state (2009, p. 89). As in the case of Russia, nationalism has been mobilised through formal/informal structures. During 2000s, Putin utilised formal and informal institutions to build a new nation (see Chapter 5). From 2008 to 2012 Medvedev has followed the same path of institutionalisation by adding modernization of Russian society as well. As it was an attempt to mobilise Russian society, this kind of patriotism should be analysed as an ideology (Laruelle, 2009, p. 1). As Laruelle argues it is important to see that nationalism and nationalist ideas are not new to Russia and it is not an opposition to soviet regime but a continuation of it (Laruelle, 2009, p. 2).

Shevel argues that there are three forms of definitions of nation in Russia: Russia as a community of ethnic Russians, as a community of Eastern Slavs or as a community of Russian speakers. She also argues that they depend on cultural rather than political principles; this is why these can still be defined as ethnic rather than civic (Shevel, 2011, p. 180).

Tolz applies five approaches to the "Russian question": civic, pure ethnic, cultural, statist/imperialist nationalisms (March, 2007; Tolz, 2001). Although Putin is opposed to any

state ideology (Putin, 2000) civic elements of the constitution and being against skinheads and extreme form of nationalism (March, p. 45), his emphasis on patriotism still makes him a statist nationalist. Putin's foreign policies "have been informed by a perception of Russia's new-found strength and by an emotion akin to resentment – a nationalism that is driven by a pervasive and strong sense of grievance" (Breslauer, 2009, p. 370). This kind of nationalism is very important in determining the relations between the former Soviet Union countries.

Putin's idea of patriotism and Russia's assertiveness not only played an important role in the relations with the West and the US, but also with the CIS countries. The country's greatness has also been discussed during Putin's tenure where it has been seen as "Greater Orient" (Luzyanin, 2007) or "civilised nation". As he discussed many times: "working with CIS countries is Russia's main priority in foreign policy" (Putin, 2002).

In their addresses to the federal assembly, both Putin and Medvedev emphasised on "patriotism" many times:

The unity of Russia is strengthened by the patriotism inherent in our people, by cultural traditions and common historic memory (Putin, 2000).

There is patriotism, along with the most sober and critical look at your country's history and our far from ideal present, belief in Russia that shines through no matter what the circumstances, deep-rooted love for our native land and our great culture (Medvedev, 2008).

The democratic organization of the country and the new Russia's openness to the world, do not contradict our uniqueness or patriotism, and do not hinder us from finding our own answers to issues of spirituality and morals. And we do not need to look for a national idea specifically. It is already ripening in our society (Putin, 2000).

The CIS has always been important for Russia. However, it has become more important since the colour revolutions which have been perceived as a threat to Russia's stability. It is perhaps the fact that Russia's perception towards these countries has many dimensions. Although the political discourse towards these countries is of them being sovereign states, there is also a contradiction in the relations with Ukraine. Because of the common history and Russian

population in Ukraine, Russia sees this country more like domestic space rather than a foreign space.

4.2. The “Russian idea” and the CIS: the greatness of Russia

Looking after the Russian language and expanding the influence of Russian culture and crucial social and political issues. Genuine art has a serious educational mission, helps to forge patriotic spirit, promotes moral and family values, respect for work and respect for one’s elders (Putin, 2007).

Russia not only viewed itself as superior to its “little brothers” but also perceives these countries as passive victims of the breakup of the Soviet Union. On top of this, Putin’s speech after the colour revolutions explains his idea towards the CIS countries:

Russia should continue its civilising mission on the Eurasian continent. This mission consists in ensuring that democratic values, combined with national interests, enrich and strengthen our historic community (Putin, 2005).

Putin not only suggests patriotism in foreign policy, he also perceives the countries as uncivilised and needing to be developed by Russia’s higher democratic values. Arbatov argues that the Russian idea historically was “the necessary psychological protection and support of the nation through centuries of bitter struggle for its very survival” (Arbatov, 2005). To him it was also part of the “colonial consciousness” of a nation that wants to extend its civilisation to the undeveloped nations and countries. Understanding this discourse with Putin’s idea gives us a bigger picture of Russia’s perception towards the CIS. It is this perception which holds itself and its civilisation “unique” and desires to extend this civilisation to the other CIS countries which are in its own perception less civilised or already inseparable from Russian culture. As well as the understanding of this other, political discourse treats these countries as a domestic

space as well as a foreign space. Foreign space as independent countries, but domestic space as if these countries are part of Russia's own space within this wider civilisation.

The only real choice for Russia is the choice of a strong country. A country that is strong and confident of itself (Putin, 2000).

In the first years of his presidency, Putin only emphasised Russia's need to be a strong power. In the following years the emphasis was extended to the state as well.

We often talk of the greatness of Russia. But a great Russia is not just a great state. It is above all a modern, developed society, which does not just arise by itself (Putin, 2003).

The most fascinating part of these addresses is their reference to uniqueness: "We will be able to achieve our goals only if we maintain respect for our native language, for our unique cultural values, for the memory of our forebears and for each page of our country's history" (Putin, 2007).

Looking back at the more distant past, we recall the talk about the civilising role of colonial powers during the colonial era. Today, "civilisation" has been replaced by democratisation, but the aim is the same- to ensure unilateral gains and one's own advantage, and to pursue one's own interests (Putin, 2007).

I think it could hardly be otherwise when we are talking about a people with more than a thousands years of history, a people that have developed and brought civilisation to a vast territory, created a unique culture and built up powerful; economic and military potential, a people who act on the solid basis of values and ideals that have taken shape over the centuries and stood the test of time (Medvedev, 2008).

4.3. The "Russian idea" and the CIS: statism

The state must act where and when it is needed; freedom must exist where and when it is required (Putin, 2000).

Civil society needs a strong state as a tool for development and maintaining order, and for protecting and strengthening democratic institutions (Medvedev, 2008).

As well as cultural civilisation, in a later article Putin discusses the idea that "state civilisation" will unite all the ethnic groups in Russia only within a common language and culture and "this

kind of civilisational identity is based on preserving the dominance of Russian culture” (Putin, 2012). State civilisation in his eyes is “reinforced by the Russian people, Russian language, Russian culture, Russian Orthodox Church and the country’s other traditional religions. It is precisely the state-civilisation model that has shaped our state polity” (Putin, 2013).

We set ourselves the objective of building an effectively functioning executive vertical power structure (Putin, 2001).

Only a strong, or effective if someone dislikes the word “strong”, an effective state and a democratic state is capable of protecting civil, political and economic freedoms, capable of creating conditions for people to lead happy lives and for our country to flourish (Putin, 2000).

As well as the president, the ideologists and advisors of the Kremlin were also taking part in the foreign policy ideas in the country. These patriotic ideas both in the domestic policy and foreign policy towards the CIS were determining Russia. Liberal, conservative and nationalist factions among these elites all played a part in foreign policy towards the CIS countries, but at different levels because of the emphasis on the importance of the CIS. It is worth noting that the relations with the CIS are highly emphasised both in the National Security Strategy as “the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with member states of the CIS is a priority direction of the Russian foreign policy” (NSS, 2009) and in the Foreign Policy Concept as “Development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the CIS member states constitutes a priority area of Russia’s foreign policy” (The Kremlin, 2008).

March argues that although statist’s foreign policy is not fully nationalistic, its central part is. This statist rhetoric represents great power status almost as a “national mission, and it sees itself in quasi-nationalistic emotional and even spiritual terms” (March, 2014, p. 18).

4.4. Conclusion

The ideas discussed here have been the key determinants of Russia’s foreign (natural gas) policy in the 1990s and 2000s. The ideas of the elites and the intellectuals have been important

since Soviet times. Since the nineteenth century, Russian elites and intellectuals in the country have been motivated by two important schools of thought: Slavophiles and Westernisers. These two schools have opened up a debate about whether Russia belongs to the West or the East. In spite of the nationalist element of these two groups, their ideas on foreign policy have been different.

The elites have had different powers in the 1990s and 2000s. In the 1990s, with privatisation business elites became very powerful in politics, the media and economy. Their control over the media and their power to re -elect the President (Yeltsin) in the 1996 elections gave them an enormous influence. During this time, the most important government assets were being privatised and controlled by a small number of people and the ideas of the liberal westerners were dominant. There are mainly three schools of thoughts in Russia: liberal Westernisers, fundamentalist nationalism and pragmatic patriotism. During 1990s, liberal Westernisers had an influence on domestic and foreign policies. However, the characteristic of the elites changed during the 2000s when nationalism and pragmatic patriotism became more important in the foreign policy of Russia. These ideas were first presented by Putin in his Millennium speech in 1999. In this speech, he outlined the main concepts of his “new Russian idea”. There were four elements of this idea: patriotism, greatness of Russia, statism and social solidarity. Not only can Russia’s foreign policy towards the West and the EU be read as part of this idea, but also towards the CIS. If we look at the recent natural gas policy in Russia, we can see some nationalist elements of this outlook.

This chapter aimed to give an historical and intellectual overview of the elites and their ideas throughout the history of Russia since the nineteenth century and how the ideas have been important in foreign policy particularly in the 2000s. With Putin’s administration in the 2000s, pragmatic ideas arrived and this new elite class defined a new Russian idea in foreign policy. According to this idea, patriotism, statism and greatness of Russia are the key elements. Russia’s

elites not only aimed to revive Russia's status in the world but also wanted to create a state civilisation within Russia and the CIS.

Chapter 5: The Institutionalisation of Russian Foreign Natural Gas Policy

We still have our natural resources. So the country has a worthy future in store. Today's situation necessitates deeper state involvement in the social and economic processes. While establishing the dimensions and planning mechanisms for the system of state regulation, we must be guided by the following principle: the state must act where and when it is needed, freedom must exist where and when it is required (Putin, 2000).

The “new Russian idea” which is based on national pride and patriotism has been the key determinant of foreign policy since 2000. This new form of “ideology” drives the foreign policy of Russia with a stronger state and more controlled formal institutions. In this new form of governance, the presidency is the key institution that determines the foreign policy. The representation of the Russian state is defined around several layers of management: the president, the MFA, the State Duma, the Security Council. Among these different structures, the president is the voice of these groups and represents different national/prevaling ideas. While Chapter 4 argued that ideational factors are important to understand foreign policy outcomes, this chapter examines the ways in which these ideas have been institutionalised. The first part of this chapter aims to analyse the most important of these institutions, their ideas and how their ideas are institutionalised in the foreign natural gas policy of Russia towards the CIS. In the second part, informal institutions and their impact on foreign policy will be explored. This study is limited to the policy towards the CIS. The CIS is very important for Russia given the independence of these countries. This importance is mainly because of Russia's perception about itself and the future of these countries in the region. Russia views some of these countries as “domestic space” rather than “sovereign countries”. For instance the perception of Ukraine is more of a domesticated foreign space for Russia rather than acknowledging the country's independence (this is discussed in Chapter 6).

This chapter argues that formal and informal institutions in Russia intertwined with each other to implement a nationalist ideology in foreign policy. As the president has executive power, the political elites drive the country with nationalist ideas which determines the foreign policy.

Although these ideas have always been important among the intellectuals, Putin (2000-2008) made this idea more institutionalised both in domestic and foreign policy. With Medvedev's presidency (2008 -2012) we have seen continuity in this institutionalisation process. Accordingly, this concept has been the main driving force of foreign policy towards the former Soviet Union countries since 2000. With the recovery of the economy and Russia's position in the world, the institutions and the state power have been more centralised for implementing "stability". According to the policy makers and intellectuals, a stable economy would make Russia strong enough to deal with its neighbours on equal terms. This is how "national monopolies" and particularly gas companies (like Gazprom) and gas policy became more important a decade after the breakup, which is the particular interest of this chapter.

For foreign policy analysis, the most important ideas for exercising Russian great power status were "Russian pride" and "Russian civilisation". "Russian civilisation", which refers to the country's special path in determining foreign policy, has been praised many times by Russian intellectuals and the presidents (Putin and Medvedev). In his first speech (Millennium speech) as president in 1999, Putin argued that foreign policy objectives(see Chapter 4) can only be achieved through a strong economy. For a strong economy, he emphasised the importance of a strong and centralised state. Arguably it is a very sensible perspective on the development of the economy which is highly dependent on natural monopolies (like Gazprom). In the current literature gas policy has been understood as an outcome of the policies of the Russian state. These studies did not focus on the formation of this policy, rather the outcomes of it. However, I would argue that foreign policy interests are politically, economically and socially constructed over time according to prevailing foreign policy ideas. Nationalist ideas of the Russian leaders were institutionalised in formal and informal structures in forming a new Russia.

After Putin became the president, the Russian state was constructed as a central organ designed to control the stability of the country with a top -down approach. With the recentralisation of important companies and the mobilisation of "loyal elites" around Putin, the "Russian idea" has

been presented to drive foreign natural gas policy since the 2000s. As ideas are the key determinants of the foreign policy (chapter 4), this chapter seeks to explore institutionalisation of these ideas. Institutions are at the core of HI which studies the connectivity of individuals, ideas and institutions (Chapter 2). This chapter follows a Historical Institutional framework which concerns the importance of institutions as well as ideas on policy change (Steinmo et al. 1992). Historical institutionalism will frame this chapter with four main arguments: 1) there is a direct relationship between the individual and individual behaviour (it will be discussed how individual behaviour is shaped and changed over time) 2) policy outcomes are driven by political structures and these structures constrain policies 3) these constraints can be understood through history 4) institutions interact with culture, ideology and policy ideas (Ikenberry, 1994, p. 2; Hall and Taylor, 1996, p.938). Two main research methods have been used in order to understand the relationship between ideas and institutions: document analysis and interviews which were conducted in Moscow in 2012.

This chapter seeks to explore these key issues and consists of five parts. In the first part, it will focus on the overall foreign policy of the country and the importance of gas for the Russian economy. In the second part, the formal institutions will be the core of the analysis. These institutions are: the presidency and the Foreign Ministry of Russia (MFA). In the third part, the governing style of the Russian state will be examined. In the fourth part, the focus will be informal structures and how they have an impact on policy making. In the last part, energy relations with the CIS will be investigated. Thus, the next section will start with the importance of natural gas for the Russian economy and prestige. It will also discuss the importance of gas policy in the official documents.

1. The importance of natural gas: Official documents

According to 2011 data, Russia is the world's leading oil producer, surpassing Saudi Arabia. The country is also the second-largest producer of natural gas; Russia holds the world's largest

natural gas reserves, the second-largest coal reserves, and the eighth largest crude oil reserves (CIA, 2013). This is why foreign policy is highly dependent on economic developments. The economy is a main determinant of domestic and foreign policies. Natural gas is the main driving force of the Russian economy and the Russian economy is dependent on gas revenues.

In the current literature, Russian natural gas policy has been analysed as driven by both economic and geopolitical thoughts. According to the literature in political economy, the narratives mostly view the gas policy as driven by Gazprom's commercial interests (Yafimava, 2011; Anon. 7, interview, 2012). From a geopolitical approach, the literature sees gas policy as an imperialist attempt to control the post-soviet space (Economides and Evans, 2005; Economides, 2006; Litvin, 2006). However, the approach in this study is to explore the ideas in the formulation of these outcomes and how the formal/informal structures are embedded with these ideas. The only research on this topic is Rutland's paper on "Oil and national identity in Russia" (2014). In his paper, he analyses how nationalist narratives of political discourse have an impact on the oil and gas policies. In this chapter, I demonstrate how ideas (as the last chapter discussed) are institutionalised in formal structures in the making of natural gas policy.

This chapter draws on several key official documents of the Russian government on energy policy, which are mainly aimed at economic prosperity. These documents demonstrate how the Russian leadership views its national interests and foreign policy. They have also been an important tool in the institutionalisation of Putin's new patriotism in the way that they outline foreign policy and energy policy. As seen in the energy documents, the most important objective is control over gas production, distribution and transportation of this gas to consumer countries. This is why it was stated that "The sectors of gas production and distribution are supposed to function on the market basis while state regulation will be preserved in the sphere of gas transportation" (Energy Strategy for Russia, 2009, p. 81). Especially during the post-Soviet years, gas was the safe part of Russian industry and the Russian population greatly needed gas in the 1990s otherwise they might have frozen to death in winter (Pirani, 2007, p. 7). Natural

gas resources accordingly have been an important economic and foreign policy tool for the country's transition period. The importance of economic development and independence has been emphasised for Russian national security/foreign and economic objectives (NSS, 2009; The Kremlin, 2008, ES, 2009).

The most important foreign policy documents are: the National Security Strategy (NSS), the Foreign Policy Concept (FPC) and the Energy Security (ES) papers. In all of these documents economic development, relations with the CIS and energy security have been emphasised. It is also important that economic development has been seen as part of the national security objective: "Conceptual assumptions in the area of ensuring national security are based on the fundamental interconnectedness and interdependence of the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020 and the Concept for Long Term Socio-Economic Development of the Russian Federation to 2020" (NSS, 2009).

The implications in both NSS and FPC documents mostly refer to the country's economic stability and the national interest. Even relations with CIS countries are part of Russia's regional sphere and the "possibilities of regional economic and financial organizations to protect the interests of the Russian Federation in the corresponding regions and paying special attention to the activities of organizations and institutions that contribute to the strengthening of integration processes in the CIS space" become more important (Foreign Policy Concept, 2008). The most important reference point on economic resources is through economic prosperity as Russia "In accordance with the norms of international law, uses all available economic leverage, resources and competitive advantages to protect its national interests" (The Kremlin, 2008).

It is worth noting that relations with the Commonwealth Independent States (CIS) countries are emphasised in the National Security Strategy as "the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with member states of the CIS is a priority direction of the Russian foreign policy. Russia will seek to develop the potential for regional and sub-regional integration and coordination among member -states of the CIS" (Russia's national security strategy, 2009) and

in the Foreign Policy Concept as “Development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the CIS Member States constitutes a priority area of Russia's foreign policy” (The Kremlin, 2008).

As seen in these foreign policy documents, the main objective in the energy policy is providing secure energy transit, to develop the economy by national resources and to have good relations with the CIS countries. As Fredholm argues, the state control of strategic sectors in Russia means the desire to control economic development by avoiding economic dependence on the European countries. He discusses the similarities between the perceived threat of Russia the same way as CIS countries and the EU perceive Russia as a (un)secure gas exporter (Fredholm, 2005, p.21).

As discussed in the previous chapter, Europe has always been important for Russia both for economic and cultural reasons. The intellectual discussions of Russia about its position in the world perhaps strengthened the relations with these countries. Despite having cultural links with Europe, it has always been a foreign space for Russia in foreign policy. According to many Russian intellectuals, Russia has been defined as having a unique civilisation (Russian civilisation) connecting Europe and Asia (see Chapter 4). However the relationship with the CIS has always been one of “domestic space” for Russia. This chapter investigates how this domestic space has been articulated as a foreign space through formal institutions. For this purpose, the chapter analyses the official discourse of the elites, presidents, the bureaucrats and official documents of the institutions.

2. Institutions: The president and the MFA

There are different definitions of institutions in the literature: “institutions are the formal and informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organisational structure of the polity or political economy (Hall and Taylor, 1996, p. 938). These formal and informal organisational structures also define the identities of individuals and societies (March

and Olsen, 1989, p. 17). Thelen and Steinmo (1992) define them as “both formal and informal rules and procedures that structure conduct” (p. 2). This study defines institutions as formal and informal procedures, norms and identities in organizational structures (Hall and Taylor, 1996, p. 938). The main concern of this chapter is how ideas (presented in Chapter 4) and institutions interact with each other and how they affect foreign policy. I argue that political institutions in Russia were largely constituted by the ideas of the elites and the institutionalisation process happened through certain practices. Ideas that shape the individual behaviour (Peters, 1992 p. 84) were discussed in chapter 4. In this chapter, the institutionalisation of nationalist/civilisational ideas will be explored in the first part of this section and it will be analysed how these were conceptualised by certain practices (see table below).

Table 6: Institutionalisation of ideas and their outcomes

Ideas	Formal/informal structures	Institutionalisation (tools, practices)	Outcome
Patriotism/ nationalism	President (Putin (2000-2008), Medvedev (2008-2012), Putin (2012-present))	Presidential decrees / centralisation / statism / power vertical ⁵ Foreign policy and energy documents	Gas crises in 2006 and 2009 (There might be another one in 2014) Chechnyan war
Civilisational nationalism	Security services MFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	Power vertical Power vertical	Annexation of Crimea
Statism	Gazprom (state-owned)	Power vertical, Propaganda	
Greatness of Russia	Media (Gazprombank)	Propaganda, censorship over opposition	
	Church	Awards from the patriarch	
	Youth Groups	Rallies, patriotic camps, mobilisation of young people	

⁵ Will be explored in the next section

Table 6 demonstrates the main foreign policy ideas in formal/informal institutions and how these ideas could be structured in these institutions. In the 'Ideas' column, nationalism, civilisational nationalism, statism and greatness of Russia are presented as they are discussed in Chapter 4. In the second column, the table demonstrates the main formal and informal structures in the country which are the presidents, the security services, Gazprom, media, the church and youth groups. The chapter discusses the interaction between these ideas and institutions. In the third column, the table demonstrates the institutionalisation process of these ideas within these institutions as it is discussed later on in this chapter. These are: presidential decrees, centralisation, statism, power vertical, propaganda and mobilisation of youth groups in the country. The last column gives the outcome of this institutionalisation process. Among these institutions, the president is the main executive who determines the foreign policy. This is why he also has the power to implement the foreign natural gas policy. Although the security services have become more important since Putin came to power, in natural gas, the St. Petersburg lawyers who are still more influential are recruited to governmental positions and Gazprom.

If the institutionalist approach emphasises the role of institutions and institutionalisation in the understanding of human actions within an organization, social order or society (March and Olsen, 1989, p. 948), how do we then understand this institutionalisation process? Different factions from different parties and political views have been important to Russian foreign policy. However, through inefficiency or lack of transparency in the formal institutions, the division between these institutions was not very clear. This was also seen in the gas crisis between Ukraine and Russia, where Gazprom's and the Russian state's roles were indistinguishable.

Since 2000 natural gas policy has been driven by patriotic ideas. As the overall natural gas policy depends on many different variables, there are perhaps some important events that have shifted this policy in certain directions. The liberalisation and liberal ideas in the first days of the Russian Federation led the business elites to form the political thinking and shaped policy

making in Yeltsin's administration. These ideas were Western-oriented and led to the process of privatisation in Russia. As discussed in the previous chapter, the 1998 economic crisis affected Russia deeply. The liberal policies during the 1990s and the "voucher system"⁶ did not give equal opportunities to all Russian citizens. Everyone could buy these vouchers, but intermediaries bought these from people to make even more money. The liberal views during this time were criticised for not being good for Russian economic interests (Anon. 1, interview, 2012). As well as the economic liberalisation in Russia, close ties with the West lost importance with the arrival of new pragmatic/patriotic ideas.

It was during this economic unrest that Putin became the president in 1999. After his Millennium speech it became clear that his and the political/economic elites' policies were different to those of Yeltsin. This shift from liberalisation to nationalisation, recentralisation of the strategic companies and the emphasising of Russia's national interests not only changed the policy makers and their ideas, but also brought confusion to the consumer countries of Russian natural gas (CIS and the EU). Although Russia has bilateral gas agreements with some countries (such as Germany) two important gas disputes between Russia and two neighbouring countries in 2005 and 2007 were perceived as a new term in the relations between Russia and the consumer countries. According to new Russian foreign policy, Russia was no longer a "recovering economy" but an important economic player and gas supplier in the international system.

For "building the institutions that have a measure of legitimacy" (Ikenberry, 1993, p. 59) and ongoing uncertainties about Russia's position in the world and national interests, through constitutional power the president could implement these ideas in formal structures. I will now turn to the formal institutions where patriotic and pragmatist ideas were institutionalised.

⁶ Voucher system or voucher privatisation was a system adopted in mid 1990s. According to this, citizens of Russia were given or could buy inexpensive vouchers to represent their shares in state-owned companies. Later on some citizens sold their vouchers to intermediaries and these intermediaries sold them to businessmen.

2.1. The president

The President of the Russian Federation in accordance with his constitutional powers directs the foreign policy of the country and as a Head of State represents the Russian Federation in international relations (Foreign Policy Concept, 2013).

As stated in the Foreign Policy Concept (2013) and in the Constitution “The President of the Russian Federation shall, in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation and federal laws, determine the basic objectives of the internal and foreign policy of the State” (Article 80) and “shall direct the foreign policy of the Russian Federation” (Article 86). Over the last twenty-two years, Russia has had three presidents: Yeltsin (1991-1999), Putin (2000-2004, 2004-2008), Medvedev (2008-2012) and Putin (2012-present) again. All three presidents have similarities but also differences in their foreign policy objectives and ideas. Perhaps the main difference between Yeltsin and Putin’s presidencies is in their foreign policy ideas as discussed in Chapter 4. While Yeltsin and his elites were of the Westernisers school of thought, Putin belongs to the pragmatic nationalist school. Because of Putin’s elites statist ideas, ideas (as beliefs) were more institutionalised during Putin’s administration. Putin’s executive power not only determines the foreign policy but also governs the country with a top -down approach (Anon. 2, interview, 2012). In gas policy, decision making is driven “by the considerations of domestic, social and economic development and social stability and so on” (Mitrova, interview, 2012).

Table 7: Institutional change and continuity during Yeltsin, Putin and Medvedev

	Ideas	Institutional change / continuity
Yeltsin (1992-1999)	Westerniser (see Chapter 4)	Establishment of new institutions in new Russia / privatisation / liberal policies
Putin (2000-2004) (2004-2008)	Pragmatic / statist / nationalist (Chapter 4)	Institutional change / nationalisation / centralisation / statism
Medvedev (2008-2012)	Pragmatic / statist / nationalist (Chapter 4)	Institutional continuity

Table 7 demonstrates the institutional change and continuity during Yeltsin, Putin and Medvedev’s administration. The first key difference between Yeltsin and Putin’s presidencies and foreign policies lies in their ideas as discussed above. On the other hand, the Putin and Medvedev administrations have so many similarities. Most importantly Medvedev is in one of Putin’s main circle of elites whom Putin befriended in St. Petersburg. They do not have many differences in their foreign policy ideas, mainly because they are from the same school of thought. This is why this chapter proposes that Medvedev’s years were a continuation of the institutionalisation process during Putin’s administration and specifically there are not many differences in their policies towards Ukraine. To understand change and continuity in foreign policy, the theoretical framework of this study sheds a light on this investigation. New institutionalism analyses how institutions affect and change policy outcomes. Following March

and Olsen “anticipatory and obligatory actions” (1989, p. 23; also see Chapter 2) individuals’ actions are shaped either by their preferences or their values. As this study understands these actions by individuals’ ideas / behaviours, institutions are also shaped through the change and continuity in individuals’ behaviours through history (see Chapter 3). As in the case of Russia, Putin’s “new Russian idea” not only determines state interests but has also affected foreign policy since 2000. This new “Russian idea” which is based on patriotism, greatness of Russia and statism was presented by him when Putin first became president (1999). There are different ways by which he institutionalised the new Russian idea. These are vertical power, sovereign democracy, fighting with the oligarchs, strengthening control over Gazprom, fighting with terrorism and relations with the CIS. The whole discourse around these structures was managed with presidential decrees. As well as in domestic politics, in foreign policy this Russian idea has been articulated towards the CIS in different ways. In the natural gas policy, not only the patriotic idea but also being against Russian culture have been reasons given for the clashes between Russia and Ukraine.

The institutionalisation of these ideas, or in other words the centralisation of this ideology from a top-down approach was implemented in the early 2000s. Putin’s executive power to centralise the state was implemented through several ways including fighting against terrorism and managing natural gas resources especially through Gazprom. Checkel argues that during the 1990s there was a weak link between political parties and interest groups which gave political elites more chance to shape political outcomes (Checkel, 1997, p. 116). However, in the first part of the 2000s formal institutions (especially the president) played an important role by institutionalising patriotic ideas. This has provided the opportunity for informal structures to play a role both in domestic and foreign policies.

The aim for an institutional change and to strengthen “state power” was first mentioned in the Millennium speech. His speech was not only a manifesto for a new ideology, but also a declaration for institutional change in the country. In domestic policy a more stabilised country

was the goal. On the other hand, in foreign policy it was to have a stronger economy through gas supplies in Russia. During these years gas policy was constructed and utilised in foreign policy through the formal (the President, the MFA) and informal (Gazprom, the Church, youth groups and the media) institutions in the domestic context. The aim for the centralisation of Gazprom was not only giving less chance for Independent Gas Producers (IGPs) to compete but also in the international system to let the partners know that they had to negotiate with the Russian state. Because gas policy is led by the state, mainly the president (Anon. 6, interview, 2012), we need to look at Putin's ideas on Russia's foreign policy ideas.

The main policy priority was arguably the stability of the country which Putin had emphasised first in his Millennium Speech (Putin, 1999). In his New Millennium Speech in 1999, Putin said:

We still have our natural resources. So the country has a worthy future in store. Today's situation necessitates deeper state involvement in the social and economic processes. While establishing the dimensions and planning mechanisms for the system of state regulation, we must be guided by the following principle: the state must act where and when it is needed, freedom must exist where and when it is required (Putin, 2000).

In the same Millennium speech, while he was emphasising that Russia should learn its lesson from the privatisation in the 1990s he was stating the importance of state regulation in the economic sphere. To him "the country's social stability is directly dependent on its energy stability" (Putin, 2000). Obviously that was a new "millennium" in Russia's economic and political history particularly after the liberalisation and privatisation of the state's assets. Nationalist implications in Putin's speech and his call for patriotism had indicated that he was not going to follow liberal economic policies as the President.

After Putin became the president, he declared the 1990s as chaotic years and he also saw liberalisation as the main reason behind Russia's lack of negotiation capacity with the West. As the power of the media and government assets had been an "instrument" between the Oligarchs and President Yeltsin, he first challenged the powers of the Oligarchs (discussed in Chapter 4). This is how statist/pragmatist ideas became important again. It is worth noting that these ideas

have always been important in Russian society. However, with Putin they became institutionalised through the government institutions and bureaucratic elites. At the end of the first year of his leadership he declared the success of the state and stated that: “Russia has made significant progress toward strengthening the Russian state” (Putin, 2004a). State power has not only been seen as a “stability provider” but also a necessity to fight terrorism: “today it is obvious that only a strong state can oppose terrorism, and that terrorism can be stopped only by using the whole might of the state and the support of Russian society as a whole” (Putin, 2004b).

2.2 The MFA and the Foreign Minister

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation develops a general strategy of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, presents relevant proposals to the President of the Russian Federation, works to implement the foreign policy of the Russian Federation in accordance with the Concept and the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 605 of May 7, 2012. “Measures to Implement the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation” and coordinates foreign policy activities of federal executive authorities in accordance with the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No.1478 of November 8, 2011 “Coordinating Role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in Implementing a Common Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (The MFA, 2013).

As stated in the foreign policy document and executive order by the president “On Measures to Implement the Russian Federation Foreign Policy”, the foreign ministry of Russia has been instructed to implement the foreign policy signed by the president (Putin). This is why particularly after the 2000s, the foreign policy has been mainly driven by the president in the country.

In the early 1990s liberal ideas were the main driving force in foreign policy. Kozyrev who was appointed foreign minister in 1991 aimed for close ties with the West and the US. This was one of the main reasons he had been criticised by the nationalists and Communists in the State Duma (CD, 1994). The main reason for the disagreements between Kozyrev and factions in State

Duma was the foreign policy towards the CIS. The opposition's main criticism against Kozyrev had been his romanticism and obsession with the West, and his unsuccessful policies with the former Soviet Union countries (Sakwa, 2008, p. 350-353).

In his article, he admits the existence of differing ideas and opinions in the Parliament and argues that public opinion and the legislature is important in Russian foreign policy and needs to be taken into consideration (Kozyrev, 1995, p. 8). Kozyrev argued that "in domestic policy, our home grown centrism ... is incapable of offering anything but political primitivism and banalities from the neo -Soviet arsenal, a selection of ideological dreck that's been given the fancy name of "statism". In foreign policy, "centrism" amounts to balancing on the brink of outright confrontation with the US and the West – a stance that is also certain to power sterile Russia but convenient for the bureaucracy" (CD, No. 3, 52, 2000). However as Sakwa argues, "this kind of statism damaged his credibility as a liberal and he became less effective as a foreign minister" (Sakwa, 2008, p. 354).

From 1996-1998 Primakov was the Russian foreign minister. In comparison to Kozyrev, he was a pragmatic politician, who focused on Russia's national interests and the country's role as a great power (Sakwa, 2008, p. 355). It is important that with Primakov, the CIS became more important again in Russia's foreign policy, because the emphasis had switched from liberal ideas to pragmatic ones. Because of the lack of control over state assets, the importance of business elites in politics and the relations between the president and between them, in foreign policy the president had less control over policymaking. In comparison with the Putin years, he was more in control of policy making and the implementation of it. Because of the self-European image of the westerners in the country, relations with the CIS were very weak. The other reason is the president and the MFA were equally oriented themselves with the West; on the other hand during the 2000s, the president and the inner circle's focus was towards the CIS.

From Putin's first term, until his second term, the foreign minister of Russia was Igor Ivanov (1998-2004). During these years, as was discussed in the first years of independence, national interests were emphasised in the making of foreign policy. For

Ivanov Russia's foreign policy reference point "was the consistent protection of Russia's national interests" (Ivanov, 2002, p. 13). In comparison to former foreign ministers, with the new president, foreign policy became more pragmatic and patriotic and domestic and foreign policy intensified. The foreign policy goals were: "to ensure stability in all areas – politics, the military, economics, humanitarian concerns, and law enforcement; to help transform CIS countries into politically and economically stable states, with policies friendly to Russia; to strengthen Russia's leadership role in the creation of a new system of intergovernmental political and economic relations; and to extend and further institutionalise the process of integration among the member states of the CIS" (Ivanov, 2002, p. 84). The foreign ministry posted a press release on foreign policy results in 2004 which praised the developing relations between Russia and the CIS: "substantial intensification of cooperation by Russia with the CIS countries with regard to our partners' increased understanding of the advantages of integration" (The MFA, 2004).

In his article in 2011 Ivanov critiqued the perception of the West towards Putin and his policies. He argued that "In the West there has been much talk about 'Putin's U-turn' in Russian foreign policy, and frequent comparisons of Putin's pragmatism and the romanticism of the previous period. But we should not forget that the early years of Putin (at least 2000-2003) saw a distinct 'integrationist' trend in foreign policy. What did we get in response to the desire for strategic partnership with the West? The West exerted great efforts in terms of political penetration into the territory of the CIS countries to weaken the Russian position here. Therefore, Putin's U-turn which culminated with the famous 'Munich speech' was obviously to some extent inevitable" (Ivanov, 2011). As his articles indicate, during these first years, the aim was to revive the

country's great power status and this is how patriotism became important in Putin's policies both inside and outside.

After 2004, with Putin's second term as president, the influence of the foreign minister in foreign policy decreased. The fragmented structure of the ministry and the presidency before this time provided equal roles in policy making. However, increasing the importance of Putin and his elites in the important sectors and their positions in formal institutions strengthened the role of the presidency and made it the most important authority in the country. The other reason for diminishing the importance of the foreign minister is the mobilisation of Putin's elites in the State Duma and the ministries.

However, foreign natural gas policy is an outcome of a governing style which is supported by a strong centralised state where all the powers are distributed from a top down system. After discussing the formal structures, the next section will focus on the institutionalisation process in Russia.

3. Governing style: 'Power vertical' and sovereign democracy

One of the most important aspects of Putin's policies is his ideas. However these ideas only became important through structuring them within the formal and informal institutions. The next section will explore his governing style and will analyse how these ideas were institutionalised. Two concepts are presented here: power vertical and sovereign democracy.

3.1. The institutionalisation of statism: Power vertical

"The advantage of our country is natural resources.... The only question is the mechanism of control." (Putin, 2006).

Table 8: Government Power Structure in Russia

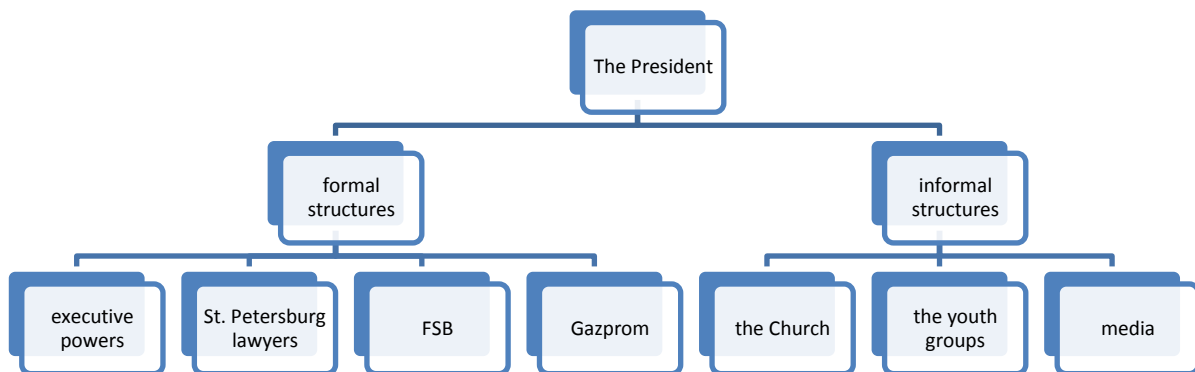


Table 8 demonstrates the layers of power structure in Russia. Because of its constitutional powers, the presidency is the most powerful formal institution. This section mainly explores how this form of top-down power structure works in Russia and how institutions strengthen state power as well as the formal institutions.

The new Russian idea which is based on patriotism was institutionalised through a new form of governance in the 2000s. As Putin manifested new governance for the first time in the millennium speech, he institutionalised patriotic ideology through a more centralised controlled government. The shift from liberalism to more centralised state policies and the declaration of the main reason for instability being privatisation in the 1990s, not only prioritised the economic and social stability but also emphasised that public opinion was backing his statist policies: “Russians are alarmed by the obvious weakening of state power” (Putin, 2000).

Stalinist ideas derived their policies (and became institutionalised) mainly from two major problems: uncertainty and the need for coordination (Halpern, 1993, p. 89). This is how Putin’s policies and his top-down policies became successful after the chaotic years of Yeltsin and his economic policies. On the one hand he successfully centralised decision-making, on the other he diminished his political opponents (Bacon and Renz, 2006, p. 4). The control over media,

constructing civil society and cooperation with the security forces and the Russian church transformed patriotic ideas which were necessary for a wider foreign policy.

For the transformation of the private companies into state assets and implementing a more centralised government Putin followed a policy which was dubbed power vertical, which refers to top-down government. In his first address to the federal assembly he said “The authorities must be guided by the law and the single executive power vertical that is formed in accordance with it” (Putin, 2000). He also emphasised the importance of the executive power vertical in the following year’s address to the federal assembly (Putin,2001).

For the implementation of the power vertical and the institutionalisation of patriotic ideas through the practices of Putin’s executive power, Putin appointed some loyal lawyers from St. Petersburg whom he befriended before 1999. During the early 2000s, after he got into office, he especially appointed people from St. Petersburg to important positions in management (Kroutikhin, 2012). The importance of these appointments was perhaps in creating an inner circle of people he could trust who were not part of the “Yeltsin family”.

In the first years of his presidency, it was Putin’s aim to mobilise his own elites who were more loyal to him than the Moscow elites (Corwin, 2001). Because of different circles around him, it was in 2004 that he could replace all the political/economic elites (the Oligarchs) of Yeltsin with his own “technocrats” and elites (Olcott, 2004, p. 4). Thus Putin was not only strengthening “state” control over strategic sectors, but “they are also being put under the personal authority of representatives of the Russian state in the form of members or chairmen appointed to the boards of directors. Since these representatives are generally regarded as Putin’s men and come from Putin’s own staff, the Presidential Administration, it is clear that not only is Putin strengthening state control over the natural monopolies, he is also strengthening direct presidential control. This is true for the energy sector as well as other strategic sectors” (Fredholm, 2005, p. 9).

The power vertical was perhaps more obvious after appointing bureaucrats to some important positions in the state and some important companies like Gazprom. More importantly in the gas sector, natural resources were seen as restoring Russia's myth of being a great power and with the impact of nationalism and special path of Russian civilisation, (natural resources) has been seen as part of the national interest and national identity. Within this power vertical, the key rule was being loyal to the state and the president. For instance, as seen in 2005, Putin removed his economic advisor from his position because of his harsh criticism; according to Tatyana Lokshina, people who criticise government policies over Chechnya would find it hard to get a visa for the country (Lokshina, 2005).

Under this power vertical, the main objective was strengthening the state power and restoring "state patriotism" as also mentioned by Stalin. As a former FSB officer, during his first years "reforms reconsolidated most federal coercive agencies back under FSB control, including border guards, intelligence gathering, and economic crimes" (Easter, 2008, p. 208). Patriotic education, the Soviet national anthem with new lyrics⁷, a pro Kremlin patriotic youth group, symbols of Russian national identity with the cooperation of media have been utilised for this centralisation of state power. As well as the image of a strong state, as the head of the state Putin has often given the image of a "tough guy" in the Russian and international media.

3.2 The Institutionalisation of the idea of 'uniqueness': Sovereign democracy

The concept of sovereign democracy most closely corresponds to the foundations of Russian culture. This is because: 1) it justifies centralisation 2) the text of SD is personified, inasmuch as it interprets the course set by president Putin (Surkov, 2008, p. 36).

⁷ The soviet national anthem was a symbol of a strong state in the strongest time of the USSR. After the emphasis of President Putin to strengthen state power, many Soviet symbols have been used to emphasise on the glory days of the Soviet Union, how strong it was as a state and the top down management for governing the state. Putin's millennium speech clearly stated that there was need to adopt a strong state. This was arguably to remind Russians their background, their superior identity and their patriotic values.

With the centralisation of the state's power after 2000, foreign policy objectives of restoring Russia's great power identity in the world have been transformed through the Russian idea. Patriotic and statist emphasis on the creation of a new Russian idea, foreign policy, particularly in the military and energy areas followed a nationalist path of "democratization" and "modernization" only compatible with Russia's own identity. For this reason, the concept of sovereign democracy was presented by Surkov who was Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office, and Aide to the President between 2004-2008. After 2008 he was the First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office.

The key to this new ideology was to institutionalise patriotic ideas in formal and informal structures. Not only does the constitution of the Russian federation state that "there is no official state ideology", Putin also declared many times that Russia does not hold any state ideology as in soviet times. However, the key Kremlin ideologist Surkov offered idea for Russia in which Russia should follow its "own path" of democracy. He presented this new idea as "sovereign democracy" which "claims to express the strength and dignity of the Russian nation through the development of a civil society, a reliable state, a competitive economy, and an effective mechanism of influence on world events" (2009, p. 9). This kind of state doctrine, arguably, has implications with civilisational nationalism which was discussed in Chapter 4. Sovereign democracy "rests upon the recognition of certain immutable civilisational characteristics of the Russian people, to which western -style democracy is supposedly unacceptable" (Pain, 2008, p. 149). For implementing this idea in society, the regime "recalls the heroic military past, evoke fear of enemies, suppress the national movements of ethnic minorities" (ibid).

Naturally, the fundamental principles of democracy and the institutions of democracy must be adapted to the reality of today's life in Russia, to our traditions and history (Putin, 2005a).

However, it is different to any other form of democracy “by its intellectual leadership, its “united” elite, its nationally-oriented open economy, and its ability to defend itself” (Surkov, 2009, p. 15). In his articles and speeches he defends “Russian civilisation” as being part of “European civilisation” but only “in a specific Russian version of that civilisation” (Surkov, 2008, p. 11). In this specific version Russia needs to practise its own way of understanding based on its own political culture. He reminds the Russian elites not to lose Russia’s own self-identification: “we shouldn’t lose our self-identification, we shouldn’t be dissolved and we shouldn’t be receiving external direction” (Surkov, 2006; 2010, p. 81). In comparison to the domestic affairs in the 1990s and 2000s, Surkov stated that “Russia performs better when it disregards the interests of international players (sovereignty) to maximize the payoffs to local residents (democracy)” (Ivanenko, 2008, p. 268).

For the implementation of this Russian way of democracy, “vertical power now with an ‘ideology’ accepted fully by the people” needs to be enriched (Surkov 2006; 2010, p. 78). This power vertical presented by Putin and referring to the centralisation of state power and the governance of bureaucratic elites from the top government aims to construct stability and Russia’s prestige and great power in the international system. In 2006, Putin officially “endorsed sovereign democracy as the government’s official ideology (Mijnssen, 2014, p. 24). Not only this ideology but Surkov also highlighted the importance of the leadership in Russia. He defends the “personification of the political institutions”:

People say that in our country personality displaces institutions. It seems to me that in our political culture the individual personality is an institution – by no means the sole institution but a very important one. Doctrines and programs do, of course, matter. But they find expression, above all, through the image of a charismatic personality, and only then with the aid of words and syllogisms. The largest public organisation in the country, United Russia, regards the president as its leader and calls its platform the ‘Putin plan’ (Surkov, 2008, p. 13).

In this form of top-down governing, the state and centralisation of these institutions under the control of the executive power has given Putin stronger power. In foreign gas policy, as the main

executive authority, Putin is the policy maker in cooperation with the energy ministry and Gazprom. However, the St. Petersburg lawyers, as people loyal to Putin, have been appointed to important positions in Gazprom, Rosneft and Transneft as well as in other industries (Kroutikhin, 2012).

According to some scholars “systematic energy policy does not exist yet” (Milov et al. 2006, p. 311); to others, it does exist but is an outcome of competition between the “soviet model, liberal/oligarchic model and state capitalist model” (Aslund, 2006, p. 321). From the interviews which were conducted in Moscow in 2012, the president of Russia is the main policy maker. Because of the illiberal market structure (Gazprom has the monopoly to export gas) the gas market still has problems. As well as the monopoly of Gazprom, the other main problem is the poor quality of management because people are appointed according to their “personal loyalty” to the leader (Kroutikhin, 2012). This loyalty is also very evident in foreign policy decisions, as well as in the gas crises.

4. Informal institutions

The new Russian idea has been articulated in foreign policy since 2000 through formal and informal institutions. As discussed in the first part of this chapter, the presidency which is the main institution has the executive power to determine the foreign and foreign natural gas policy. Although the president and the foreign ministry have the legislative and executive powers, the informal structures and how they are constructed are important to understanding the intertwined relations of these institutions. I argue that the articulation of patriotic ideas in informal institutions and how they are structured will give us a better understanding of how these institutions support the power of the formal structures.

The first part of this chapter analysed how formal institutions can affect foreign policy outcomes both domestically and towards the former Soviet Union countries. The aim in this second part is

to extend this analysis to the informal structures in Russia and to propose that without informal structures, norms and routines, formal institutions remain weak in the policy outcomes.

I propose that policy outcomes can be best understood within the wider organizational structure which includes individual behaviour, national interests, ideas and interaction between formal and informal structures. If institutions directly or indirectly have an impact on the foreign policy outcomes, how do they interact with each other? I propose through shared beliefs and ideas. It is either ideas that bond them together or ideas become the tools for policy implementation in the formal structures.

In understanding the foreign policy outcomes of Russia towards the CIS, the second part of this chapter concerns how the ideas of individuals or institutions are constructed and how they become the instruments for policy-making in domestic and foreign policy. For instance, what are the roles of other informal institutions in the country? How did the Kremlin's new patriotic ideology become successful in society and how did it affect foreign policy?

In the first part, the two main actors of natural gas policy will be examined. In this part, the analysis will focus on Gazprom as the main exporter of natural gas to the EU. The reason that Gazprom will be examined as an informal institution is the controversial role of the company in natural gas policy and the question of whether the company is a private or a state company. Then, I will focus on media, youth groups and the Russian church and their importance in supporting the power of the executive authority. I do not claim that these have a direct impact on the foreign natural gas policy, but they have an indirect effect by implementing power of the executive authority.

4.1. Gazprom

Particularly after 2004, gas policy became a nationalist project of president Putin and this was institutionalised in government structures. The new imposition of power vertical and the

emphasis on Russian uniqueness (Chapter 4) not only supported the Russian state to structure its influence over big companies but also enhanced cooperation between the Russian state and other informal institutions.

During the interviews, the respondents stated that the main institution in foreign policy making is the president of Russia (interviews, 2012). As well as his constitutional powers, it has been discussed in the previous chapters how he mobilised his elites through power vertical in domestic and foreign policy. In gas policy, the president is the main policy maker in cooperation with Gazprom. Government and the president have strong influences on decision-making processes if it is a strategic decision. Moreover, Gazprom and other players have to obey these decisions (Mitrova, interview, 2012). For this reason, two main formal institutions are addressed here as key players: the Russian state and Gazprom. This chapter does not cover the MFA or the Ministry of Energy as part of this policy making. The constitutional power of the president in determining foreign policy, not only through presidential decrees but also through vertical power, is the main focus of this section.

This section demonstrates how Putin's power vertical and nationalisation of foreign policy created two outcomes in gas policy. The mobilisation of elites (who are loyal to Putin) created institutional deficiencies in state gas company Gazprom. Second, as well as these deficiencies, the close cooperation between the Russian state and Gazprom intensified with the nationalist ideas of the Russian state, which had a direct impact on the gas policy towards Ukraine.

4.1.1. Gazprom and its importance

The major natural gas producer company Gazprom was founded in 1993 and it is the main exporter of natural gas to the European countries. The Russian government holds 50.01% of the company. Up until 2003, the Russian energy policy was determined by both state and private sector. Energy companies were also part of the decision-making process (Fredholm, 2005, p. 1).

However, Putin reappointed his executive officers to important positions in the state controlled companies, mostly the people who he worked with in St. Petersburg. When Putin first formed the cabinet, there was still an “old power bloc” from the Yeltsin administration which was a result of an agreement between Yeltsin and Putin (Shevstova, 2003, p. 88). Chapter 4 discussed the elite transformation across the country and how powerful business elites were replaced with Putin’s bureaucratic elites. However, after 2003 the status of important companies, mainly Gazprom, has started to change. As discussed in Chapter 4 the main objective of Putin and his new elites was driven by statist and centralised ideas where by Russia can revive its “great power status”.

In 2003, a policy memo was written by a group of Russian foreign policy and energy experts (Kupchinsky, 2008). This policy memo was never published. The memo was a discussion of Russia’s vast resources and the rulers in the Kremlin. The main debate around that time was about breaking up the company or opening the industry to competition by Mikhail Kasyanov’s cabinet (Nemtsov, 2008). The appointment of Alexei Miller and the mobilisation of people from St. Petersburg shifted the power from Yeltsin’s group to Putin’s elites (Kupchinsky, 2008). On dividing Gazprom into companies, in 2003 at a reception to celebrate Gazprom’s 10th anniversary, Putin said: “Gazprom is a powerful political and economic lever of influence over the rest of the world, and as a strategically important company, should be kept, and has been kept, as a single organism” (Putin cited in Belton, 2003).

As Putin declared in his Millennium speech “we still have our natural resources” (Putin, 2000); since he came to power the company was seen as a tool for the recovery of the Russian economy and prestige. With the statist ideas of the elites and new governing style, “power vertical”, Gazprom was intended to be kept as a single organism. Gazprom has not only been seen as a tool to recover Russia’s prestige but also the economy. For instance this explains why price regulation in the domestic and international markets is different. Although Gazprom buys gas from independent gas producers at regulated domestic prices, until now as the only gas

exporter it exports gas at international prices (European Dialogue, 2008). According to the current regulations in Russia, Gazprom has the monopoly on gas exports. Novatek, the second largest Independent Gas Producer in Russia signed a contract with German utility EnBW (Platts, 2012). However, for the purpose of the country's prestige, Russian leaders not only wanted to keep the company as one single unit but also the main commercial company in the international market.

For the purpose of centralisation of important companies by the powerful business elites, Putin had to fight with Oligarchs. As well as transforming his elites, the next objective of Putin's regime in 2003 was abolishing the Oligarchy as a class in Russia. As the most well-known of the Oligarchs, Mikhail Khodorkovsky was expelled from politics by Putin. When Putin first became President in 2000, he had a "deal" with the Oligarchs that he did not want them involved in politics; they were only able to have their own business. But Khodorkovsky was gaining more power every day. Putin made it clear to the businessmen that, as long as they stay out of politics, Putin himself would support their commercial activities. This paternalistic way of controlling the economy and politics very much explains the politics of the Russian state and market complexity. Despite the control over businessmen in the first years of his presidency, he still supported these people but only under the control of the government and on the condition they stay out of politics. In contrast to the 1990s, all strategic companies have been nationalised by Putin. As stated before, power vertical and nationalisation of companies had two outcomes: institutional deficiencies of Gazprom and the implications for the outcome of the gas policy. The next section will deal with these issues.

4.1.2. Institutional deficiencies of Gazprom

Gazprom as the main exporter of Russian gas to the EU and the Russian state (the president in particular) as the main policy maker in the country have some mutual interests in the gas sector. With their economic interests they often agree on policies. In economic terms, they both want

high revenues and secure markets; however “It tends to be less well remembered that there are also divergences of interests: the company, at least if it trusts its ability to compete, would surely want faster increases of domestic gas tariffs than the state, mindful of social concerns, is willing to contemplate” (Sutela, 2012, p. 121). Apart from the first couple of years of independence, Russian foreign policy has changed to focus more on the relations between Russia and the CIS countries (Nygren, 2008, p. 24).

Gazprom “has the monopoly of gas export and it is ruled by the government” (Agibalov, interview, 2012) and it is the main exporter of Russian gas to the EU through Ukraine. Moreover, Feigin stated that “in Russia, legislation is for national monopolies. If you are a national monopoly, you have to be regulated specifically” (Feigin, interview, 2012). This is why there are concerns about the company’s reliability in international trade. Reliability has become an issue following two gas crises between Russia and transit countries. The Russian state claimed that the main reason for the crises was payment problems between the two countries. In economic terms, there are two problems behind the gas crises which also indicate Russia’s policy towards Ukraine. First, the institutional problem in the Russian gas sector and second the inefficiency of the company. Although Gazprom is called a “commercial company” by the top management, it still has the monopoly on exports approved by federal law in 2004. The status of a “government-backed private company” diminished its credibility for the European consumers particularly in the last gas disputes between the supplier and the transit countries. Gazprom has not only been the main exporter but also has blocked the existence of domestic gas producers for gas export. Although the market is becoming more competitive by allowing Novatek in the gas market, the company is still not very transparent. Moreover, according to a Russian consultant the influence of ‘clans’ is growing in the company (Kroutikhin, interview, 2012). It has been labelled as a corrupt company many times. In an article written by the economist “Grease my palm”, corruption has been said to be the main ‘institution’ which has penetrated the political, economic and judicial system in Russia (the Economist, 2008). According to the cable which was recorded in 2009 at the US embassy in Moscow “Gazprom is not a competitive global company.

It is a legacy of the old Soviet Ministry of Gas and still operates much the same way. Gazprom's legacy and the government's ownership of the company also mean the interests of its political masters, even at the expense of sound economic decision making" (Wikileaks, 2011). Transparency International declared that according to their annual report, Gazprom was one of the most non-transparent oil and gas companies in the world (Pravda, 2011).

The other institutional deficiency is the structure of top management. I have discussed before the importance of the elites and their role in Putin's administration. Kroutikhin argues that the energy industry is mainly structured by people who are loyal to Putin and eligible to control cash flows in energy companies such as Gazprom, Rosneft and Transneft (2011). Aslund argues that Gazprom's management consists of 'corruption and outlandish arrogance', which exercise a similar Soviet-style centralised monopoly over the consumer countries (Bloomberg, 2013). According to another cable there are two camps in the government regarding the management of Gazprom. One supports the current national company, the other seeks a more competitive and modern gas sector. The cable says "how to increase government revenues from the company" is more effective (Wikileaks, 2011). A cable recorded that Putin's wealth is linked to a "secretive Swiss -based oil trading firm" called Gunvor (Bloxham, 2010).

One of the founders of Gunvor is Gennady Timchenko who is Putin's close ally. According to Kroutikhin the importance of Putin's allies is growing in Gazprom. The second and third most important gas companies in Russia Novatek and Itera are in a similar position to Gazprom and Gazprom has sold some assets to these companies (Anon. 5, interview, 2012). On the other hand rent-seeking is the other problem: "while private companies in Russia often operate according to market rules, state -controlled entities pursue a policy that is rarely informed by commercial wisdom" (Kroutikhin, 2011). Thus, not everyone is benefiting equally from the system. This is what he calls 'nationalisation of the cost, privatisation of profits' (Kroutikhin, interview, 2012).

As well as the non-transparency in the company, its control over the media is growing. Gazprom owns some television stations and newspapers which makes the company more powerful. More

importantly, it has been labelled more “inefficient, politically driven, and corrupt” (the US ambassador to Moscow, 2011).

The main reason behind the institutional deficiencies is the nationalisation of Russia’s foreign policy. As nationalism became the main priority in foreign policy, efficiency of the company and its competitiveness has been disregarded. The second part of this section demonstrates how Gazprom has been utilised in foreign policy as a nationalist project.

4.1.3. The nationalisation of Gazprom and relations with the Russian state

Although economic problems and inefficiency exist in the company, the policy towards Ukraine has altered with institutional change. Many scholars have argued that imperialism (Van Herpen, 2014), bureaucratic authoritarianism (Shevtsova, 2004), resource nationalism and great power politics (Baev, 2008) have played a key role in foreign policy. I argue that rising nationalist ideas, particularly after Putin’s second term, have affected the foreign policy and gas policy till now.

The reason for this change had been the change in the ideology of the Russian state. Within this ideology, gas policy has been used as a tool for recovering Russia’s position as a great power in the world. As a result of this policy, Gazprom has become the representative of the Russian state in relations with the CIS. The nationalisation of the company and mobilization of Putin’s elites into the top management have strengthened the state’s power both domestically and in international relations.

In his first term (2000-2004) the Putin administration and his new elites not only changed the relations between Russia and its neighbours but also domestic policy. The former Russian foreign minister Ivanov argued in an article that in the early 2000s “the West exerted great efforts in terms of political penetration into the territory of the CIS countries to weaken the Russian position there” (Ivanov, 201). The fear of potential Western intervention in Russia’s domestic and foreign policy and dealing with the West on equal terms were the main

preferences for the elites during these years. Putin was still trying to mobilise his own elites from St. Petersburg and eliminate Yeltsin's political and economic elites, who were referred to as Yeltsin's family and the Oligarchs.

The main difference between Putin's mobilisation and the Yeltsin years is the centralised governing style of these two leaders. It was Putin's aim to strengthen the formal institutions and central powers while depoliticising the energy sector and the Oligarchs' power. Apart from the Massandara summit between Yeltsin and Kuchma in 1993, Russia and Ukraine did not have any disputes until 2005 when the institutionalisation and mobilisation of the elites became established in the country with Putin's administration.

After 2005 the economic crises became more politicised through a more nationalist ideology. It is worth noting that Ukraine's pro-Russian Kuchma government was working in cooperation with the Russian state on gas issues. Even before the 2004 elections, Putin supported Yanukovich as opposed to Yushchenko (BBC, 2010a). In return "Kuchma agreed to sell Russia parts of Ukraine's gas transit system to offset the debt of roughly \$2billion to Moscow for energy deliveries" (Tsygankov, 2010, p. 151).

After the mobilisation of the elites, Russia's foreign policy as well as its gas policy shifted towards more nationalist policies. Particularly after the nationalisation of Gazprom, the role of the company and the Russian state became indistinguishable. Many people agreed with the slogan "What is good for Gazprom is good for Russia". On the role of the company in the last two crises, Gazprom was also accused of being used by the Russian state. As the most important institution after the presidency in Russia, as Mitrova argues, does not have a separate agenda: "Gazprom is a very close organization. Each department of Gazprom has its own agenda; it has its own operational agenda. But when it comes to the main strategic issue, it is quite consistent and it is quite on the line with the government" (Mitrova, interview, 2012). The company has become as part the Russian state's nationalist project both inside and outside of the country.

In recent years Gazprom has initiated campaigns to improve its public image by using nationalist slogans like “national treasure” (natsional’noedostoyanie) (Rutland, 2014, p. 2). These videos can be found on YouTube (Gazprom, 2009). As well as commercial videos, there was a more controversial video on using social media for public image. Academic ensemble of the Moscow military district appeared on Ren -Tv on January 2009 and performed a show on the dependency of Ukraine on Russia’s gas. The video was mocking Ukraine and saying that Russia could cut the gas off whenever they want (Rutland, 2014; Gazprom, 2009).

Thus this demonstrates how patriotism became embedded in the main foreign policy institutions. The vertical nature of Putin’s power has centralised all power structures under state control. After discussing the relations between the Russian state and Gazprom, the next will explore the political changes in Ukraine which was seen as a challenge to Russia's great power status. This section consists of three sub-sections: The Orange Revolution, “anti-Russian policies” and Maidan Crisis.

As stated before, the Russian state holds the majority of Gazprom’s shares. However, the company still claims that it has a commercial company which follows some commercial interests. Because of this controversial status, there are some discussions around Gazprom whether the company is commercially - or politically-driven. The reason that the company has been accused of being politically orientated was the increase in the gas prices for the transit countries (Ukraine and Belarus) after 2005. From the transit and the EU countries’ perspectives, Russia’s cutting off of natural gas in 2005 and 2007 was a reaction to the Orange Revolution in the former Soviet Union countries which were claimed to be under the sphere of influence of Russia. By cutting the gas, Russia was punishing their betrayal and utilising the natural gas for political discipline. However, from the Russian state and Gazprom’s perspective these cut-offs were due to payment problems and debts from Ukraine and Belarus (Anon. 3, interview, 2012).

The current Deputy Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors of Russian energy company Gazprom, Alexander Medvedev, defines Gazprom as “a commercially-driven company” and argues that:

The suggestion that Gazprom would invest billions of dollars in expensive gas export pipelines so that we could then disrupt them for political reasons looks absurd, especially in view of the substantial contribution these gas exports make to Russia’s budget and the country’s economy. And it is often forgotten that Russia is currently more dependent on the EU than vice versa. The EU depends on Russia for 25% of its gas consumption, yet Gazprom depends on the EU for over 70% of its export earnings. The bottom line is that Gazprom needs Europe as much as Europe needs our gas (Medvedev, 2008).

However, some other analysts see this picture of “asymmetric inter -dependence” as not all of the EU countries having “equal” opportunities in the liberal free market and not competing with Russia with the same “economic capability” (Leonard and Popescu,2008). It is true that Russia has bilateral agreements with European countries, but these relations rely on Russia’s commercial and trade relations with these countries (for instance Germany) not because of Russia’s pressure towards these countries. As Russia and Germany have special trade relations (gas in return for infrastructure from Germany) this is very similar to Russia’s relations with the CIS countries. A barter system, rather than cash payment until 2004 was also the main “payment method” between Russia and the former Soviet Union countries.

Grigoriev takes Gazprom’s and Russia’s priorities separately and argues that the interests of Gazprom and Russian authorities are complex and different from each other. He emphasizes that Gazprom’s primary interest is becoming the largest global energy company, keeping export prices stable and securing commercial (not political he says) conditions for transiting its gas to the markets (Grigoriev, 2011, p. 162). It is perhaps evident that Gazprom as a producing company of natural gas has commercial objectives, but to what extent these objectives are commercial and to what extent they are political is contested. After the gas crises, Gazprom’s role and the Kremlin’s intertwined relations have made it even more complicated to unpack the role of Gazprom, the role of the elites and the role of the Kremlin. I believe that

political/economic interest/preferences/objectives cannot be separated from one another. However, more important is which of these motivations is more important as a foreign policy outcome for Russia. My argument is that all of this affects foreign natural gas policy to some extent and these effects might be direct or indirect but still need to be analysed.

Despite the discourse from Russian experts and Gazprom managers, the Russian government had awarded Ukraine a 30 percent gas discount and in return Russia received another 25 years to have their Black Sea fleet in Sevastopol. More importantly this was from the Russian government's budget, not Gazprom's. The treaties between Medvedev and Yanukovich were not always ratified by the Gazprom board of directors (Svoboda, 2011, p. 27). Mitrova argues that Gazprom does not have a strategy independent of the government, because it is a critical sector for the Russian state (Mitrova, interview, 2012).

Chapter 4 argued the importance of the "Russian idea" and this kind of ideology evident in Gazprom's gas policy. Particularly in recent years, Gazprom has used the media to improve its image and, as Rutland argues, the role of gas and oil were important in Russian national identity (2014). In most of Gazprom's commercials, it is seen as "national treasure". This kind of nationalist image implies the company's as well as Russian greatness. In sum, Gazprom is the most important company for economic recovery in Russia. Particularly since 2003 the company has been seen as an important institution to recover Russia's prestige in the international system. This is why St.Petersburg lawyers governed the company with a vertical of power and some patriotic ideas.

4.2. The Russian Orthodox Church

The Orthodox Church was banned in the Soviet Union for years. After the dissolution of the USSR, the new Patriarch in Russia received a new position. The Orthodox Church has become an important institution for the mobilisation of people and legitimising state power. It is important

both because it has an agenda outside of Russian territories and has regular meetings with the foreign ministry in Russia (Barry, 2012). Particularly in his first term and at some occasions in the second “Putin has used Orthodoxy as a platform for unifying the Russian state – as opposed to the nation” (Admiral, 2009, p. 205). As well as the other soviet symbols, -such as the Soviet anthem and the Soviet flag-, Putin used orthodoxy more than Yeltsin (March, 2007, p. 46). The Church has become a subordinate power which supports the state and its institutions. The patriarch has not only become an important figure who supports all state policies, he also strengthens the power of embedded ideas within the institutions. Thus, the patriarch would not only celebrate the foreign ministry for their support on foreign policy (Voice of Russia, 2014), but would also express his concern with the recent crisis with Ukraine (New York Times, 2014).

Astrasheuskaya and Gutterman argue that Putin wanted to balance ethnic Russians (represented by the Orthodox Church) with other religions by promoting the church in Russia (2012). Thus, the church not only has a unifying character for all orthodox Christians in the post-soviet space, but also mediates between different religions in Russia as well. Antoine Arjakovsky, director of research at the College des Bernardins in Paris and founder of the Institute of Ecumenical Studies in Lviv said: “For them (referring to Putin and the Patriarch), democracy is a danger. They invented a new mythology, the new ideology of “Russkymir,” of the Russian idea, which would invent a kind of new theology of politics” (cited in Kishkovsky, 2014).

The patriarch often praises the president and state power. He once declared Putin’s era as the “Miracle of God” in 2012 (Foust, 2012) and criticised his opponents (Bryanski, 2012). He is also supported by the Russian elites and ministers as well: “It is impossible to overestimate the contribution of the Primate of the Church to strengthening the positions of our Fatherland in the world and enhancing the international prestige of Russia. His firm stand for the preservation of moral principles in politics and for the promotion of understanding between peoples and civilizations is, undoubtedly, an important part of his legacy” (Lavrov, 2008,). The patriarch

presented high church awards to some of the bureaucrats in the presidential administration (The Russian Church, 2013).

The Russian church is seen as representing the authority of the state. Any challenge to the church is seen as a threat to the Russian authority as well. This was mostly visible in the protest of Pussy Riot in the Russian saviour church.

Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia also asked Alexi Miller, chairman of the board of Gazprom, for Gazprom's help and assistance with the Church (Interfax, 2009). The patriarch's role in foreign policy is also to increase the importance of this institution as an informal structure. For instance in 2010 the church wrote a letter to Gazprom chairman Viktor Zubkov asking Gazprom to lower the price they charge Ukrainian chemical companies because of the support of the Ukrainian chemical industry to the Ukrainian Orthodox church under the Moscow Patriarchate (The Moscow Times, 2010). As Paliy, a historian at the Institute of Foreign Policy at the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Diplomatic Academy, argues we observe the patriarch more as a state official rather than a religious figure (cited in Marson, 2009). This was more visible in the last Ukrainian Euromaidan crisis when he urged that they will "divide the nation. Russian Orthodox Church leaders have strongly opposed any integration of either Russia or Ukraine with Europe, insisting that their unique character and history means they should stand apart" (Paraszczyk, 2014).

4.3 Media

We have a clearly-defined editorial position – we don't write anything bad about the president, prime minister or patriarch. That is what affects the wellbeing of the country (Bykhovskaya, 2011).

Media is another important institution in Russia which mobilises the society. As well as a privatised economy in the 1990s, the important channels and newspapers were owned by the business elites. One of the most seen channels which estimated its audience to be around 102

million at that time, NTV, was accused of favourable coverage of president Yeltsin's re-election campaign (CNN, 2001). NTV was founded in 1993 by Vladimir Gusinsky and quickly became influential in Russia. The channel has been very critical of the government on the war in Chechnya. For the re-election of Yeltsin in the 1996 election (see Chapter 4) Berezovsky, Gusinsky and other oligarchs helped Yeltsin to be re-elected utilising their media power (Coalson, 2011). However, after the political satire, called *Kukly*, mocked Putin in 2001, who has been accused of tax fraud, he agreed to sell NTV to Gazprom (Huffpost, 2011). VKontakte (Russia's Facebook) also came under the control of pro-Putin oligarch Ivan Tavrin (Kononov, 2014).

While all media organs were utilised during the 1990s for gaining political power for president Yeltsin, in the 2000s the objective changed slightly. The main aim was to restore the state's power and importance and promote patriotic ideas in society. The media not only became important for domestic issues but also in Russia's relations with the CIS. Particularly in the last Ukrainian crisis, we have seen how the Russian media cover the Ukrainian pro-EU crisis. Troitsky recalled the "notion of patriotism, carefully honed across state media, which tapped into a swelling of national pride over the Sochi Olympics and kept its momentum through Russia's annexation of Crimea" (Magnay, 2014). In another example, liberal TV channel Dozhd had been accused of having lacked patriotism after asking in a poll whether Leningrad should have been given to the Nazis to save the city (CNN, 2014; Moscow news, 2014; Ria Novosti, 2014). For instance, particularly in the last crisis all state-controlled TV channels presented Ukraine as a country run by "Neo-Nazis" (Ennis, 2014). Russian neighbours also complained that national TV channels were broadcasting propaganda for instance Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine (BBC, 2014b).

Table 9: The main TV channels in Russia according to ownership

Tv channels	Owned by
Rossiya 1	VGTRK (state)
TNT	Gazprom media
Rossiya 24	VGTRK (state)
Channel one	Russian gov
NTV	Gazprom media
Russia today	State

According to one article Russian TV channels are more dependent than Russian newspapers. In a Freedom House report in 2013: “The government maintained its grip on key television outlets and tightened controls over the internet during the year, and most state- and privately-owned mass media engaged in blatant propaganda that glorified the country’s national leaders and fostered an image of political pluralism — especially in the months ahead of Putin’s victory in the March presidential election” (2013).

In another case, Putin accused liberal radio channel EkhoMoskvy of “pouring diarrhoea” on him. After this accusation the owner of the radio station – Gazprom media – removed two members from the board of directors; in response to this its editor Aleksey Venediktov resigned from the board (Schwartz, 2012; Freedom House, 2013). According to another Freedom House report: “The websites of prominent independent media including the newspapers Novaya Gazeta and Kommersant, EkhoMoskvy, the internet based television station Dozhd, and the news aggregator Slon.ru all experienced denial of-service attacks in 2012, especially surrounding the presidential election and anti –Putin protests in Moscow in June. The Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Interior Minis try engage in widespread surveillance of e-mail, blogs, online bulletin boards, and websites” (Freedom House, 2013).

Polina Bykhovskaya from open democracy interviewed journalists from NTV and other channels. This report demonstrates how the media are highly censored by the Russian authorities. Journalists from Zvezda, Rossiskayagazeta, Russia Today, Life News, RiaNovosti all agree that all opposition to the Kremlin's political narrative would be either censored or they would not allow any criticism in the first place. According to this report one journalist says: "There are certain subjects we steer clear of completely. We can't touch anything connected with Chechnya, or controversial stories about Rosmolodyozh (the Federal Youth Agency - trans) and its head Vasily Yakemenko. And of course any minister can phone Putin and a story will be dropped immediately" (Bykhovskaya, 2011).

5. Energy relations with the CIS

After the economic recovery in Russia, the Russian state started to follow a more pragmatic foreign policy, close ties with the CIS, but "equal partners" with the West and the US. In 2006 in his famous Munich Speech, Putin criticised the unipolarity of the world after the Cold War and the power of the US. He also talked about democracy in Russia as well: "Incidentally, Russia – we are – constantly being taught about democracy. But for some reason those who teach us do not want to learn themselves" (Putin, 2007). This was perhaps Russia's revival in the new system where they can also make rules in the international economy.

The new form of foreign policy towards the CIS has also changed after 2004 due to the victory of pragmatic/patriotic ideas in the Russian state. After the mobilisation of the elites by Putin, a new form of foreign policy was also formed based on the ideas of patriotism/pragmatism and the uniqueness of Russian civilisation. This is why not only were the relations with the West reconstructed but also these with the CIS. They were reconstructed with a more statist policy in domestic politics and relations with the CIS were more civilisational and inclusionary within wider Russian culture:

After all, what is important to us is not religion, skin colour or other ethnic factors, but the fact that practically all these people speak Russian and know Russian culture. They have no problem adapting to Russian life. This is a huge advantage for us, an advantage that other countries do not have. Take Western Europe, where there is a flow of immigrants from other regions, from North Africa and Latin America, for example. It is a complicated situation there because these immigrants take decades to adapt to life in European countries. Only the second and third generation really manages to adapt. We don't have this problem and we should make use of this advantage (Putin, 2005b).

Since 1991 the CIS has been the main priority for the country. For instance in the foreign policy concept, "Russia sees as a priority the task of establishing the Eurasian Economic Union aiming not only to make the best use of mutually beneficial economic ties in the CIS space but also to become a model of association open to other states" (Foreign Policy Concept, 2013). Nevertheless, tension between Russia and the CIS since independence and Russia's soft power diplomacy with these countries is still a question of: Is Russia's new foreign policy a continuation of the country's new imperialism? For instance, in response to one of Putin's articles on creating the Eurasian Union, the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared that "there is a move to re-Sovietise the region" (FT, 6 December, 2012). Referring to the Eurasian Union Putin said: "It is strange for me to hear some of our colleagues abroad say that we are moving down the path of integration and that is the revival of Russia's ambitions as the former Soviet Union" (Putin cited in JRL, 2013,).

The most important foreign policy (as well as natural gas policy) objective of Putin was to promote economic interests rather than to counterbalance US power as in the old Cold War days (Shevtsova, 2006 p. 199). The most important economic instrument has been perhaps the management of natural resources and oil and gas companies as well. This is perhaps because natural gas is the most important element for economic recovery and prosperity. For economic prosperity and development of the country, this has been a rational stage. However, rather than structuring a reliable gas producer company, Gazprom became less transparent. Because "the lawyers spun off Gazprom's financial subsidiaries for their own, and Putin's, personal benefit" (Kroutikhin, 2008, p. 26), energy policy became more problematic.

Along with the economic recovery which has also been seen as a foreign policy objective, the recovery of the country's prestige in the international system was also one of the goals for the Russian leaders. This is why Putin aimed to create a strong and stable country which could negotiate with the West "on equal terms". As seen in his policies, there are different policies towards different countries: the nine year Chechen war, many gas crises with the transit countries, supporting the US for the "fight against terrorism" after 9/11. I do not claim that these policies contradict each other, since Putin's domestic but particularly foreign policy has been highly driven by his pragmatic/patriotic ideas and revival of national pride. In most of his speeches he emphasises how much a citizen should be proud of his country.

We should remember that there are qualities more important than one's political affiliation: patriotism and the sacred duty of defending one's motherland (Putin cited in Winning 2013a).

According to Valery Korovin, the director of the centre for geopolitical studies "Putin is willing to make various ideological concessions – either in favour of liberalism or conservatism – in order to strengthen the Russian state and achieve immediate results. This is what guides his current emphasis on patriotism" (the Moscow times, 2013). In an article published in Nezavisimaya Gazeta in response to an "officially sanctioned smear campaign against Kremlin opponents", Vladimir Kara-Murza argues that: "it is as if the Kremlin and United Russia party have a monopoly on all external contacts on behalf of Russia, and anyone who dares to contradict the party line and refuses to praise Putin in international audiences is a 'traitor'". Instead of 'criticism of the government', the accusers are talking about 'complaining about the country'" (Kara -Murza, 2013). This is how it is an ideology articulated in foreign policy.

By the centralisation of the power and the re-nationalisation of the oil and gas companies, he followed a more balanced foreign policy with the West in the first years of his presidency. The main reason for this was perhaps appointing his inner circle to important positions which can also be called informal networking. Because of his more centralised policies, the conflict

between the legislature and executive has been solved (Light, 2010, p. 227). This kind of conflict has been also discussed by Sakwa as defining this conflict as dual state (Sakwa, 2011).

5.1 Conclusion

Natural gas policy has always been an important part of Russia's foreign policy objectives. Because Russia is highly dependent on natural gas revenues, control over the resources had been constructed through several ideas and political interests. If we look through the natural gas policy after the Cold War period, the 1990s and 2000s follow two different foreign policy objectives. During the 1990s liberalisation of the centralised government was seen as integration into the free market economy; this is why most of the government assets have been privatised. However, it is worth noting that no matter the extent to which these companies were privatised, even during these years, natural gas was an important driving force for the economy (Anon. 4, interview, 2012). Despite all these liberal ideas in the country, the ownership of some of the companies has been held by a small number of people. These business elites were quite powerful during the 1990s; they even wanted to have some government positions, however failed and were expelled from politics as in the case of Khodorkovsky.

This climate of liberalisation and privatisation changed during the 2000s for several reasons. The Russian economy had a financial crisis in 1998, and so many people suffered from these economic conditions. The regime change in 1991 and the transition period did not help the country's economy recovery and most of the privatised companies were under the ownership of small businessmen. When Putin became the President, he easily utilised the negative side of these liberalisation movements and suggested a new Russian idea based on statism and patriotism in domestic and foreign policies. He suggested that Russia did not need any Western aid (whereas Yeltsin's reforms were highly supported by the West) and the country could gain

its “great power status” by having its natural gas resources. This was perhaps a challenge to the Western ideas of liberal economy and Yeltsin’s reforms.

The presidency is the most important institution in determining Russia’s foreign natural gas policy. When Putin became the president in 2000, pragmatic and nationalist ideas were institutionalised in formal and informal structures in Russia. The control over natural monopolies, centralising the state power and the vertical power from top down had impacts on foreign and foreign natural gas accordingly.

The new Russian idea has been articulated in the natural gas policy through formal and informal structures. In the first couple of years, Putin tried to recover the economy by centralising the state power in the energy sector. The centralisation of state power as well as national companies like Gazprom strengthened the role of formal institutions. The foreign policy ideas have been institutionalised through several practices. These practices, as discussed in this chapter, have been named informal institutions. Not only the bureaucratic power of Gazprom, but also the support from the Russian Church further strengthened state power. As well as the church, the media was also owned by the Russian state and this also played a part in the institutionalisation process.

Chapter 6: Russia's Foreign Natural Gas Policy towards Ukraine

This chapter seeks to analyse how domestic policy has been articulated in Russia's foreign gas policy towards Ukraine. In the domestic context, the education system, film industry (Crews, 2013; Ferris-Rotman and Peter (2008), youth groups (like Nashi) were reconstructed with patriotic ideas for promoting "national pride" in the country. I suggest that foreign policy as well as gas policy can/must be seen in the context of this renewed patriotism. Thus, gas policy is not only a conduit for economic interests but also for nationalist ones. These patriotic ideas became more important in the 2000s when Putin became president and Gazprom became a crucial institution in Russia's foreign policy through which nationalist ideas were articulated. The institutional change and embedded ideas during the Putin administration in the 2000s within these formal and informal institutions achieved continuity when Medvedev became president in 2008. In other words, Putin has institutionalised (Chapter 5) the "Russian idea" (Chapter 4) which can be analysed by understanding natural gas policy towards Ukraine. The last two gas crises (2006 and 2009) showed us how Russia responded to its "Little brother". The Orange Revolution and Ukraine's pro-European policies have been perceived as a "betrayal" of the country in international politics. I want to argue how patriotic ideas and the institutions have been utilised to revive Russia's power and "unique civilisation" through natural gas policy.

Chapter 4 has discussed new foreign policy thinking which has dominated the foreign natural gas policy since 2000. This new foreign policy thinking was called the "new Russian idea" which was addressed by Putin in his Millennium speech. On the other hand, Chapter 5 discussed how this "Russian idea" has been structured in formal and informal institutions in Russia. It was argued that the institutional change under Putin has configured a "power vertical" in state institutions and centralization of power aimed at building patriotic ideas in foreign policy-making. The presidency, as the strongest institution, has played a key role in mobilizing not only

formal structures but also informal channels (like youth groups, NGOs, the church) in foreign policy-making.

This chapter seeks to understand the implications of Russia's gas policy towards Ukraine through a top down power vertical. Since Soviet times, Ukraine has been one of the two key transit routes for transporting natural gas to Europe. For this analysis this chapter aims to investigate this policy through two gas crises in 2006 and 2009. The two gas crises are vital for understanding the policy behaviour of the main institutions in Russia because the gas policies are based on intergovernmental agreements. For this reason, gas policy can be understood in the wider foreign policy of Russia towards this country.

As the main theoretical framework of this study, historical institutionalism helps to understand the policy changes in Russian foreign policy towards Ukraine. This study seeks to answer mainly one broad question: "how do preferences / ideas / institutions have an impact on Russia's foreign gas policy towards Ukraine?" Following this theory, this chapter deploys two methods to interpret Russia's policy towards Ukraine. Document analysis and the speeches of Russian leaders will provide an understanding about foreign policy ideas. As well as documents, interviews will be addressed which were conducted in Moscow in 2012.

In the current literature, scholars from the institutionalist perspective (they are mostly political economists) and scholars from the political science perspective (constructivist) draw strict lines between these two aspects by emphasising only one of them (see Chapter 1). From the political economy perspective the gas crises have been analysed through the commercial interests of the two governments. The Russian government and Gazprom claim that commercial interests are more important since Gazprom is a commercial company. Moreover, the existence of weak institutions, a strong state, close ties between the company and the Russian state, lack of transparency in the company, and informal networks and different factions within the formal institutions affect Gazprom's credibility as a commercial actor. Moreover, a different pricing system for domestic and international markets makes the situation even more complicated.

From the political science perspective, the Russian government and Gazprom are inseparable when it comes to Russian foreign policy. The constructivist literature understands Russian foreign policy as part of an “identity” crisis. Some authors explore Russia's great power status and its impact on the country's gas crises (Baev, 2008, p. 128) but they do not analyse these ideas and institutions in which these ideas are embedded.

On the contrary, the main contribution of this chapter will be the impact of nationalism (ideas) and the greatness of Russia in natural gas policy-making (through institutions) towards Ukraine. This is why this chapter investigates the formal and informal institutions in the gas sector and the roles of the Russian state and Gazprom in the making of gas policy. This chapter suggests that the rise of nationalism (which is called “patriotism” in Putin’s discourse) both in domestic and foreign policy is important for understanding policy-making. Since the 2000s, patriotism has become the main language of the current government against any dissidents in and outside of the country. In foreign policy, countries which do not cooperate with Russia are seen as “traitors” to Russia and Russian culture. This depicts Gazprom as a weak institution, the Russian president as a strong executive and rising nationalist ideas in foreign policy determine gas policy towards Ukraine.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the brief history of the crises. The second section discusses the importance of Ukraine for Russia and the way in which Russia views Ukraine as part of its domestic space. In the third part, I investigate the breakdown in political relations. This section discusses the political changes in Ukraine in 2004 and 2010 and how these affected Russia’s gas policy towards the country. The fourth section of this chapter gives an overview of the collapse of the Soviet institutions in the gas sphere. This is to explain what happened with these gas crises and the importance of Ukraine as a transporter of Russian gas. I try to analyse gas companies and intermediaries in the gas sector, arguing that inefficiencies in the institutions and problems with the gas payments played a role in the gas crises. In the last section, I discuss

the gas crises through a Historical Institutional perspective and discuss the nationalist ideas embedded in the institutions played a role towards Ukraine.

1. The history of the gas crisis

The natural gas crises (2006 and 2009) refer to gas disputes between Russian gas export Gazprom and Naftogaz Ukrainy over gas prices. It is argued that nationalist/pragmatists ideas which are embedded in formal and informal structures would give us a better understanding to analyse the gas disputes between two countries. This is to propose that the myth of Russia's great power and imperial claims in the post-Soviet space provide us some analysis on how Russia perceives Ukraine as a state and how then Russia reacts the country's pro-western policies through wider foreign policy. Different than the existing literature, this thesis argues that new foreign policy ideas in 2000 affected the formation of the new institutions and these institutions had an impact on the foreign policy outcomes, particularly in the gas crises.

The natural gas crises (2006 and 2009) refer to gas disputes between Russian gas export Gazprom and Naftogaz Ukrainy over gas prices. The importance of Ukraine as a transit country to the EU had an impact on the importance of these pipelines in the international economic system. The first gas crisis started in March 2005 between two countries. The dispute began over the disagreement of the gas prices and the cost of the transit. Russia blamed Ukraine of not paying the gas and stealing EU supplies (BBC, 2006). On 1st January 2006 Russia cut off natural gas to Ukraine after the talks fail. Gazprom blames Ukraine of stealing some of the gas (BBC, 2009). On January 4th agreement achieved and Russia began to transport to Ukraine and to Europe again.

In 2008 there was another disagreement between two countries. In October 2007, Gazprom warned that it would reduce gas supply if Ukraine fail to pay its debt (\$US 1 BLN) (Russia today, 2007). In January 2009 another dispute has begun resulting in gas disruptions because of

unpaid debt (Russia Today, 2009). These crises began in the wake of political changes in Ukraine. This section aims to discuss political implications of these crises and change and continuity of Russian foreign policy ideas and the impact of this institutional change over these disputes. For the analysis on gas crises, the next section will discuss the importance of Ukraine for Russia.

2. The importance of Ukraine for Russia: A domestic space?

Ukraine has had distinct importance for Russia both during the Soviet period and currently as part of the CIS. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the CIS has been vital for Russia's foreign policy interests both domestically and internationally. Among the other states of the region, Ukraine is more important for several reasons. First, it is the birth place of the Russian state (Donaldson and Noguee, 1998, p. 156). KievanRus is the medieval state of Eastern Slavs and predecessor of modern Ukraine, Russia and Belarus between the 9th and 12th centuries. It is based in the capital of today's Ukraine (Plokhy, 2010). The importance of KievanRus has been mentioned many times by the presidents of Russia (Putin, 2013). Moreover, in 2013, Putin and Yanukovich celebrated the 1,025th anniversary of the conversion to Christianity of KievanRus (Rferl, 2013).

Secondly, the geopolitical importance of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Crimea became the centre of the negotiations between the two countries several times. Although it was important to Ukraine in the last two gas crises, Crimea was annexed to Russia after the recent crisis in Ukraine to defend the rights of "Russians" there. It is important to note that the extension of the Black sea lease has given Ukraine gas discounts many times since the crises.

Thirdly, Ukraine is important because of its large Russian speaking population. According to the 2001 Ukrainian census, there are 8,334,100 Russians in Ukraine, the second largest ethnic group after Ukrainians (ukrcensus, 2001). This issue became particularly important between

the two countries during Medvedev's presidency in 2010 (this will be discussed later). The last reason is that the country is one of the main transit routes of natural gas (as well as Belarus) to the European Union countries. Although there are some other natural gas reserves in the former Soviet Union countries, the existing pipelines built during the time of the Soviet Union cut through Ukraine's territory (Belarus as well). This is the reason that Ukraine has played a crucial role in the gas industry since Soviet times (Pirani, 2007, p.17 -18). This is why the policy towards Ukraine becomes a bit more complicated and problematic. For this reason, this chapter also explores economic relations of these two countries to understand the wider foreign policy.

Throughout history, relations between Russia and Ukraine have changed as a result of political and economic developments in both countries. This is why Russia's policy towards the country has so many dimensions. Particularly in foreign policy, Russia perceives Ukraine as part of its domestic space rather than as a separate international actor. Bogomolov and Lytvynenko argue that for Russia, Ukraine is "more than a foreign policy priority; it is an existential imperative" (2012). Moreover, to many elites, the country is seen as "part of their country's own identity" (2012) rather than being a "foreign space". This was more evident in the political discourse of the presidents during the second gas crisis (2009) between the two countries. The natural gas crises between the two countries in 2006 and 2009 highlighted the importance of Ukraine as a transit country. On the other hand, there was the other element of being "Slavic" or brothers as Putin and Medvedev repeated many times. In particularly Ukraine's pro-western governments and the lack of cooperation with Russia on Russian terms worsened relations.

Shnirelman argues that part of the Russian myth is being the "elderly brother". This myth considers Russian as civilisers "who were obliged to share their material and intellectual resources generously with all non-Russians, who were treated as relatively backward" (Shnirelman, 2009, p. 137). It should be noted that the perception towards Ukrainians as a Little Brother within Greater Russia and the importance of Kievan Rus have been emphasised by Russian leaders many times and this kind of understanding has an impact on Russian foreign

policy. For instance in 2009, Putin, then Prime Minister, visited Anton Denikin's grave in Moscow and told journalists to read his diaries (Bridge, 2009; Marson, 2009; Palmer, 2009). The important point about this speech was his reference to Ukraine as "Little Russia". Putin said: "He (Denikin) has a discussion there about Big Russia and Little Russia — Ukraine. He says that no one should be allowed to interfere in relations between us; they have always been the business of Russia itself "(Putin cited in Marson, 2009).

This is why Ukraine (which is culturally, politically and historically bonded with Russia) is not seen as a different space in Russian society and not mentioned as a foreign space in the political discourse of the Russian presidents and elites. For instance, Putin gave an interview to Channel One and the Associated Press on September 7th. In this interview he stated that: "You know, no matter what happens, and wherever Ukraine goes, anyway we shall meet sometime and somewhere. Why? Because we are one nation...As far as this part of Ukraine is concerned, it is a territory and we understand and remember that we were born, as I said, from the unified Ukrainian Dnieper baptistery, Russia was born there and we all come from there". In his article "Deconstructing Putin on Ukraine" Motyl analyses Putin's speech and how he referred to Ukraine as a land not a territory. He argues that "Putin comes across believing that Ukraine is just a place, populated by people who resemble Russians and not an independent state with a national identity of its own" (Motyl, 2013). This perception is part of Russia's understanding towards Ukraine.

There is little attention paid in the literature to the importance of ideas but it is the main argument in this research that ideas have driven foreign policy since Putin came to power. This is why the most important factor in Russia's politics, economics and social life is the institutional change and continuity in the country. The most important formal institution of the country is the Presidency of Russia. The importance of this institution is that the president has the constitutional power to drive foreign policy (Russian constitution). As seen in the history of

Russia, Yeltsin and Putin played key roles in transferring the country into a market economy, only on different terms.

In the gas sphere, Russia's policy towards Ukraine changed in the 2000s with Putin's administration. With the constitutional powers that he has (discussed in Chapter 5), Putin followed a more pragmatic/nationalist foreign policy. The most important reason for the policy change is "national pride" and the rise of nationalism in Russia. In Putin's view Russia is not a nationalist, but a patriotic country. According to him every citizen should be proud to be Russian. In 2001 the government initiated "Patriotic Education of the Citizens of the Russian Federation for 2001 -2005" and this was published in the official *Rossiskaya Gazeta*. The main purpose was "a high patriotic consciousness and feeling of loyalty to the Fatherland" (The Moscow Times, 2001).

For this purpose Putin initiated patriotism in the education system (Golunov, 2011; Blum, 2006) and a law was passed for patriotism (Youtube). The project which was called "Patriotic Education System" fostered key issues like national identity, social order, state strength and patriotism was seen as an important part of the emerging self-confident Russia (Blum, 2006). Moreover, in 2013, the Russian government declared that it produces "patriotic video games" and ban foreign games which "distort history". Arseney Mironov, an aide to Russia's Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky said: "A video game has to have not only an entertainment value, but it also has to teach and be conducive to patriotic education" (Kozlov, 2013). Thus, nationalism and the myth of Russia's greatness were promoted in all spheres in domestic politics. This tells us how this kind of idea has become a nationalist project both in domestic and foreign policies.

A youth group called Nashi was formed. The main objective was the implementation of patriotism in societal life in Russia. The party formation and mobilisation of the youths under a "pragmatic youth movement" (Nashi) aimed to create a pragmatic young people who did not

know much about the old system and history. The system did not consider old people who already know much about their own history (Nashi, 2007).

In foreign policy this kind of patriotism has also driven policy-making. According to some, Russia has never fully recognised the independence of Ukraine, which has affected its foreign policy towards the country (Bukkvall cited in Yafimava, 2011 p. 142). Especially among Russian communists and radical nationalists, Ukrainian independence has been perceived as a temporary development (Bukkvall, 2001, p. 1142). Perhaps for Russia, Ukrainians have always been 'brothers' of Russians. However, when the gas crises happened in 2006 and 2009, Russia's reaction to Ukraine's desire to join NATO was perceived as a 'betrayal' by that country. It was seen as a threat to Russian pride. This is where this kind of patriotism has almost become Putin's ideology (Barry, 2012) articulated in the foreign policy. And this can be implemented only through formal/informal institutions in Russia.

In particular the natural gas crises which I focus on in this chapter happened during Putin's and Medvedev's administrations. Putin's foreign policy is not only important because of his constitutional powers, but also his mobilisation of the elites with patriotic/nationalistic ideas. As Historical Institutionalism sheds light on Putin's institutional change in 2000, this approach also helps to understand the institutional continuity with Medvedev's administration. There are many reasons which make Ukraine an important power for Russia's national and international interests in international politics. Arguably the most important one is Ukraine's geopolitical position which makes the country a bridge between Russia and the EU. In the previous chapter the importance of natural gas was discussed for Russia's economy and Russia's position in the world. Natural gas is the primary source of Russia's economic revival and restoring "national pride". This is why I argue that natural gas policy has become politicised through nationalism in Putin's second term (2004) through the formal institutions of the country. It was in this year that institutional design was restructured by a strong president. This was only possible by achieving institutional building which was constructed in 2004 (Putin's second term). In the

first term, he was occupied with assigning his elites and fighting against the Oligarchs who had become a class of their own. However, in his second term he was in control of the formal institutions and elites, so restructured Russia's position in the world. After explaining the importance of Ukraine for Russia, the next section will turn to formal institutions and governing style in Russia. This will help to understand Russia's natural gas policy towards Ukraine.

3. The breakdown in political relations

The last section discussed the nationalisation of Gazprom and the relations of the company with the Russian state. This section will explore political changes in Ukraine, and how these changes have affected the relationship between Russia and Ukraine. The section splits into three: in the first part, the Orange Revolution which was mainly a pro European movement will be discussed. In the second part, Medvedev's disagreement with Yuschenko and accusing the president of being "anti-Russian" will be the main focus. In the last, the Maidan crises will be investigated. Although this is not within the time frame of this study, this recent crisis is important to contextualise the nationalist sentiments of the Russian government.

3.1. Political changes in Ukraine: The Orange Revolution

Although this chapter is not focusing on Russian-Ukrainian relations, rather Russia's policy towards the country, it is still important to give an overview of the political/economic changes in Ukraine. This aims to provide background information for the natural gas crises in 2006 and 2009 and hopefully enhance the interpretation of how/why the changes in Ukraine might have affected Russia's policy towards this country. As already discussed, Russia and Ukraine have had political/economic relations since Soviet times. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, the relationship between Russia and the CIS was not close. This was due to the deficiency of institutions as a result of centralisation under Soviet control and also close relations with the US

and the West. Russia's foreign policy towards former Soviet Union countries differs with each country. Although Russia's policy towards the countries of the CIS differs, it is not within the scope of this chapter to analyse all these countries; this chapter is limited to the policy towards Ukraine through the gas trade.

In the first decade, Russia-Ukraine had a good foreign policy relationship. The second president of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma (1994-2005), had close ties with Russian President, Yeltsin. Kuchma was a pro-Kremlin leader who did not challenge Yeltsin's foreign policy objective to any significant degree (Andre Hartel, 2010, p. 2). During this time, not only Ukraine and Belarus, but also the other former Soviet Union countries were trying to develop their own institutions. In the new presidential elections in 2004, Kuchma had declared Prime Minister Yanukovich as his candidate. The Kuchma government had been accused of corruption in so many cases. This is why, in the political race, the other strong candidate Yushchenko wanted to challenge the corruption in the country. It is well known that the Kremlin supported Yanukovich's campaign and provided organizational and financial assistance. This is why the Orange Revolution was unexpected for the Russian political elite (Grätz, 2010, p. 14). With the massive protests in Ukraine in 2004 -2005 (which lasted two months) the Orange Revolution had been achieved, with Yushchenko as the winner.

During the four years of Yushchenko's presidency, relations between Russia and Ukraine soured. This is also when two gas crises occurred. However, it is worth noting that these crises were even more politicised (through nationalism) by gaining international attention. It is argued in the current literature that natural gas is an instrument of foreign policy in Russia; on the contrary I argue that it has always been an instrument, but it has just become more politicised during this time. Nationalist policies have three dimensions in power politics. First, the EU politicised Russia's foreign policy by accusing the country of asserting "soft power" towards the CIS. It is well known that the EU and the West were supporting the Yushchenko government. Unlike the 1990s (the first natural gas crisis), this time the presidency was a strong institution

in Russia which regulated and controlled the gas sector both for domestic use and export. The CIS politicised Russia's foreign policy by having close ties with the West and it soon became a "border security" for Russia. Among these perhaps the most important process of politicisation is within the country itself. The rise of pragmatic and nationalist ideas in Russia has been promoted by the institutions, the presidents, the state companies and think tanks.

The reaction of the Russian elite was as decisive and clear as this threat had been: To create pre-emptive, Soviet-style "counter-revolutionary" youth organizations like Nashi and Molodaya Gvardiya for spreading "patriotic ideas" among the teenage population (Gratz, 2010, p. 14). Thus the Orange revolution was not only a threat to Russia's stability in domestic politics, but also a threat to its foreign policy as well. With Putin's nationalist policies, it was obvious that former Soviet Union countries were not granted any right to choose their own future (Clark, 2006). This is why when the first crisis happened, the Kremlin's foreign policy and Gazprom's commercial interests were related and both were punishing the opponents of the system (Kramer, 2008).

3.2. "Anti-Russian policies" and the 2009 crisis

In the time from the 2004 elections to the next presidential elections in 2010, relations had not recovered between the two countries. Russia's policy towards Ukraine had been shaped by several factors: firstly, Ukraine's intention to join NATO; secondly, the Russian language speaking community in Ukraine; thirdly, Russia's claim that Ukraine was following "anti-Russian politics".

Ukraine stated its intention to be part of NATO after the presidential elections in 2004. After the parliamentary elections in Ukraine in 2007, relations worsened. In 2008 the State Duma declared that Russia should withdraw from the friendship treaty with Ukraine (Rferl, 2008) in response to the membership Action Plan of NATO. Following this proposal former Moscow

Mayor Yuri Luzhkov discussed returning Crimea and Sevastopol to Russia: “We should terminate the friendship treaty in any case, regardless of whether Ukraine will enter NATO or not” (Unian, 2008b).

Russian perceptions towards Ukraine became more obvious after the NATO-Russia Summit in Bucharest in April 2008, as the cable noted the conversation between Bush and Putin. The cable recorded: “You don’t understand George that Ukraine is not even a state” (Marson, 2009; Cohen, 2014) “What is Ukraine? Part of its territories is Eastern Europe, but the greater part is a gift from us” Putin told Bush who supports Ukraine’s membership to NATO (Marson, 2009). The perception of not seeing Ukraine as a sovereign country or as a country that has been given by Russia had an effect on the natural gas policy when the two countries disagreed on the prices of natural gas. At the same meeting Putin further stated that “the Crimea was simply given to Ukraine by a decision of the Politburo of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee. There haven’t even been any state procedures regarding the transfer of the territory, since we take a very calm and responsible approach to the problem” (Putin cited in Kyiv post, 2010a). As seen in the last crisis between Ukraine and Russia and annexation of Crimea, Putin played the “ethnic nationalist” card to “claim Crimea back” from Ukraine.

The perception of Russia towards Ukraine not only changed after the country’s desire to be part of NATO but Russia also blamed Ukraine for not protecting the Russian language in Ukraine. It has been claimed many times that Ukraine has banned Russian in its schools and the Russian population cannot speak their own language in the country anymore. These claims were also supported by the myth of “Ukraine’s anti-Russian politics” towards Russia. In a blog video in 2009 Medvedev accused Ukraine of being anti-Russian. In 2009, Medvedev wrote a letter to Yushchenko accusing the leader of being “anti -Russian”. In his letter, he says that Ukraine is “to sever existing economic ties with Russia, primarily in the field of energy” and “further efforts are being made to remove the Russian language from public life, science, education, culture, mass media and courts”(Kremlin.ru, 2009; BBC, 2009; Pravda, 2009; Russia Today, 2009).

This tension also affected gas relations between the two countries. For instance, Gazprom rejected Ukraine's president Yushchenko's statement that there was an agreement between Ukraine and Russia over the gas dispute (Upstreamonline, 2008a). Moreover, the next day Gazprom announced that they would cut supplies to Ukraine if the country did not pay its \$1.67 billion debt for gas supplies (Upstreamonline, 2008b).

The gas cut offs came after warnings from Russia. Russia accused Ukraine of stealing Russian gas. In a conversation with Gazprom chairman Aleksei Miller, Medvedev said "Our country, and one of its leading companies [Gazprom], cannot afford to lose this kind of money at such a time. The time for gifts is over. Compensation will have to be sought from the respondent, that is to say from those responsible for all of this lost money, all of these lost earnings. Another matter that is particularly serious right now is that Ukraine's irresponsible and illegal, to put it frankly, actions have left a number of European consumers in a very difficult situation" (Pravda, 2009). Based on the interviews in Moscow in 2012, some respondents argued that Ukraine was stealing Russian gas. However, the wider discourse about the crisis became even more nationalist than the last crisis. In particular Putin's nationalist policies in foreign policy not only towards the CIS but also the EU and the US affected the relations with Ukraine. Ukraine has not only been seen as part of Russian territory but also wider Russian culture.

3.3. The 2014 Maidan crisis

The last crisis between Russia and Ukraine reveals to us how nationalist discourse has been utilised in foreign policy for the annexation of Crimea. Before the annexation, the crisis had started when then president Yanukovich cancelled talks with the EU countries and signed another agreement with Russia. That is how the Maidan crisis arose in Ukraine as a protest against the government. After two and a half months of unrest and protests in the country, Yanukovich was impeached by an interim government. However Russia did not recognise the new government and called the protesters extreme nationalists. Following the crisis,

Yanukovich fled to Russia and declared himself as still the legitimate president of the country. Although the protest stalled in Kiev, there was still unrest in the southern and eastern part of the country where the population was mostly ethnic Russians. This was the time when the Russian state-backed referendum in Crimea was first talked about. The fascinating thing after the referendum was Putin's address to the Federal Assembly on March 18, for the first time he referred to Russians as ethnic Russians rather than Russian citizens. Thus Putin not only claimed to defend the rights of ethnic Russians abroad, but also changed his term Russianness from Russian citizens to include ethnic Russians (Aridici, 2014). This had further implications for the gas relations between the two countries.

4. The breakdown in economic relations and institutions in the gas sphere

The last section demonstrated how political changes in Ukraine affected Russia's foreign policy towards Ukraine. The aim of this section is not only to investigate the official discourse of the Russian state behind the crisis, but also to demonstrate how inefficient the institutions are in the gas sphere. Although many scholars have argued that cash payment and common Soviet institutions have caused problems in the gas crises, I argue that even during these institutional inefficiencies, gas transportation has become a bargaining instrument between the two countries several times.

The economic breakdown of the 1990s gave little choice to former Soviet Union countries to do anything other than cooperate with Russia because of the centralised character of the Union. The bilateral trade relations in the gas sector date back to Soviet times when the Union was producing and transporting gas to Europe through Ukraine and Belarus. The management of natural gas was not a problem before 1991 since it was centralised from Moscow. It was only after the breakup of the Soviet Union that centralised government had to re-regulate gas transportation.

After independence in the 1990s, the interdependency of Russia and CIS countries continued via inter-state gas agreements even if they were loss-making exports for Russia (Pirani, 2007, p. 8). The main transport deliveries have been through the Brotherhood pipeline which started in 1967 carrying gas from Russia to Ukraine. It runs through Slovakia and separates into two: bringing gas to the Czech Republic, Germany, France and Switzerland, and to Austria, Italy, Hungary and several countries of former Yugoslavia (gazpromexport, 2015).

During the 1990s, Russia sold cheap gas to the CIS countries and this was seen as a bargaining chip for the Russian government in its intergovernmental relations with Ukraine and Belarus (Pirani, 2007, p. 8). In the first decade of independence almost all CIS countries arranged gas transactions through the barter system and cheap gas was utilised with the aim of helping the economic depression in post-Soviet countries (Mitrova, interview, 2012). On the other hand, gas exports (even cheap gas to the CIS countries and payment problems) were essential for the Russian economy and the survival of Gazprom. However, during the 1990s the barter trade and non-payment began to arise as a problem in the gas sector and gas debts became a big problem both in domestic and inter-state trade (VonHirschhausen and Engerer, 1998).

The first gas crisis between Russia and Ukraine was in 2006. According to the Russian state and Gazprom it was due to the payment problems and debts from Ukraine. From a Western perspective this was new Russian imperialism in the region and control over these new independent states. The second gas crisis happened in 2009. Russia cut off gas to Ukraine and the EU by claiming that Ukraine was stealing Russian gas.

Some experts also argue that the economic relations were based on the lack of regulation in the gas market and in the relations between the two countries. This is why the next section will focus on the importance of the gas companies, the payment method between the two countries and the nationalisation of Russia's policy in the economic sphere. The first part of the section will analyse the gas companies and payment problems as well as cash payments.

The main goal of this part is to give an overview of the official discourse behind the crisis and the institutions that have played an important role in the gas relations. In the second part on the other hand, I will argue that increase of nationalist ideas in foreign policy played an important role, especially in the first gas crisis.

4.1. Gas companies / private companies / intermediaries

The economic and political history of Russian-Ukrainian relations has been bound together with Soviet institutions, infrastructure and management, especially in the gas sector (Pirani, 2009). After the collapse of the USSR, all the gas negotiations, as well as the prices of gas and transit fees, were set on the basis of intergovernmental agreements.

It is important to note that gas is different to oil; oil has market prices, but gas prices are negotiated on the basis of the intergovernmental agreements. This is where the economy and politics are interconnected. These agreements cannot be separated from the foreign policy interests and objectives of each other. This is how the politicisation of the economy and the economisation of politics interpenetrate. The energy debts of Ukraine particularly between 1992/1994 and the lack of institutions to regulate an effective energy policy deepened the disagreements. It is important to note how politics and economics coincide here as Ukraine has fallen into 'paying for its debt with concessions' on the Black Sea Fleet and other areas, as the asymmetrical dependency of Ukraine to Russia in trade makes the country unable to take firmer action in bilateral relations (Balmaceda, 1998).

Since independence, bilateral agreements between Russia and Ukraine have been regulated by two state-owned companies: Gazprom and Naftogaz Ukrainy. Naftogaz Ukrainy is a state-owned national oil and gas company under the Ministry of Fuel and Energy in Ukraine. Gazprom is a state owned company which is the only exporter of Russian gas to Europe through the federal law on gas export (federal law).

After 1995 Itera became the most important Russian gas company which produced and sold gas from Central Asia to Ukraine. The company was replaced by Eural Trans Gas(ETG) as a shipper of Turkmen gas to Ukraine in January 2003 (Pirani, 2007, p. 22). RusUkrenergo replaced Eural Trans Gas intermediary between 2002 -2004 (Kyiv Post, 2011) and the company established in 2004 between Gazprom and Naftogaz and was the main intermediary company which imported gas from Gazprom before being resold to Naftogaz Ukrainy in 2008 (Unian, 2008a). Until 2005, Ukraine and Russia had a barter system for transit services for gas supplies; however even this system did not solve the debt problems (Balmaceda, 2009). From 2000 to 2005, Ukraine had bought Russian gas for a preferential price of \$50 per 1 ,000 cu m. However from 2005 Russia wanted Ukraine to pay the market price which is \$220 -\$230 per 1,000 cu m (RiaNovosti, 2005). However, since the gas crisis in 2006 transparency has not been achieved. Balmaceda argues that this is because of the strengthening roles of intermediary companies. For instance, while until 2005, Itera and EuralTrans Gas were the transporters of gas, after 2006 with the new regulations RusUkrenergo became the transporter as well as the operator of all Ukrainian imports. Thus, the companies had greater power after this year (Balmaceda, 2009). This is when economisation of natural gas became more important.

In a press release from Gazprom in 2005, Alexei Miller said “We’re backing the Ukraine’s proposal to shift over to settling gas transit via the Ukraine services in cash and to increasing the gas transmission tariff rate to the level adopted in Europe” (Gazprom, 2005). However, after two days Naftogaz denied making this proposal and that the shift to gas payment was Gazprom’s own initiative (Yafimava, 2011, p. 149). In 2006, Russian Gazprom and Ukrainian Naftogaz agreed on shifting over to market rates for gas supply and transit and Gazprom would sell gas to RosUkrEnergo at a fixed price. The gas supply and transit would be paid in cash (Gazprom, 2006).

However, in 2008 Gazprom and Naftogaz signed a long-term contract for direct gas deliveries without any intermediaries (Unian, 2008b). It has been criticised “because of its opacity and the

resulting scope for corruption, and because of favouritism shown by Gazprom to the intermediaries' owners" (Pirani, 2009). In 2008, the former Ukrainian prime minister wanted Ukraine to make gas payment directly to Gazprom, rather than to the intermediary company – RusUkrEnergo (BBC, 2008).

In 2009, Gazprom and NaftogazUkrainy signed another contract for ten years for the supply of gas to Ukraine and this contract eliminates all the intermediary companies (Gazprom, 2009a). This is why the 2009 gas war resulted in the elimination of RusUkrEnergo in the gas trade between Russia and Ukraine (Malygina. 2010, p. 5).

Gazprom announced that from January 1 2010 gas would be transported through transit countries based on the market-based tariffs (Gazprom, 2009b). During all the crises between Russia and Ukraine, Russia has insisted that this was not a political decision or part of foreign policy and that all the cuts offs were because of debt problems. Sergei Kupriyanov, a Gazprom spokesperson, said: "It should not be forgotten that Gazprom is a commercial company working with Naftogaz Ukrainy on the basis of commercial agreements and therefore has every reason to act in accordance with these agreements. This means if the Ukrainians are unable to pay for the supplied gas, Gazprom may automatically implement a 100% advance payment requirement in the future" (Gazprom, 2009).

Unlike oil, natural gas does not have world market prices; price is regulated on the basis of the long-term contracts which are signed between the seller and the buyer (Mankoff, 2009) or as it happened in 2005 due to oil prices (Anon.7, interview, 2012). Gazprom sells gas to CIS countries and the EU through long-term gas contracts (up to 25 years) on the basis of intergovernmental agreements (gazprom.ru). In 2000 "On State Regulation of Gas Prices and Tariffs for Transportation" was published as a supplement to the Gas Supply Law, "giving the Russian state (in the form of the Federal Tariff Service, or FTS) the right to set regulated gas prices, as opposed to linking them to inflation, until such time as tariffs had been fully liberalised" (Henderson, 2011, p. 7). Because IGPs were not bounded by regulated gas prices,

they could charge a tariff which would equate to the market prices. However, Henderson argues this created a “two -tier system”. With the pressure from the EU, the Russian government declared a new price regulation in 2006 to increase domestic prices towards the global level (Henderson, 2011, p. 9).

The lack of transparency in the gas sector, corruption in Gazprom and state intervention in the gas sector damages the credibility of the company as a commercial actor. The confusion is over two issues: the control over the Black Sea Fleet and gas disputes between the two countries. After over viewing the gas arrangements and cash payment I will now turn to gas disputes which have not only affected Ukraine but also the EU.

4.2. Gas disputes

According to the political discourse the starting point of the two crises was mainly gas payment problems between Russia and transit countries. In Russia, domestic gas prices have been regulated since Soviet times, but in the Russian Federation regulated prices are only applied to Gazprom (at least until 2015), not to independent gas producers(Henderson, 2011, p. 4, Burgansky, 2011, p. 127).

Although some scholars argue that “shipments to solvent European consumers permitted Gazprom to subsidize its loss-making gas deliveries within Russia and to the former Soviet republics, the latter for political reasons” (Poussenkova, 2010), some experts believe that “loss-making gas deliveries” were political rather than commercial(Anon. 7, interview, 2012).That was also the security of Gazprom’s revenues due to low gas prices in the CIS (Belarus and Ukraine particularly) and this was a government subsidy. Some experts even believed that this was why it was political (Grigoriev, p. 28). On the contrary, I would argue that nationalist policies were very influential in foreign policy making.

Although the gas cut offs to Ukraine have been criticised by scholars and some governments, these were not the first time in intergovernmental relations. The first cut off was (due to payment problems) in February 1993 and in return Ukraine threatened to block the export pipeline (Russian gas) to Europe (Mitrova, interview, 2012). After the independence of Ukraine, its dependence on cheap Russian gas and Russian dependence on exportation of gas to Europe via Ukraine caused some disturbances in their intergovernmental relations (Fredholm, 2008, p. 5). One of the most important examples of asymmetrical dependency between Russia and Ukraine is the Massandra Summit in 1993 between Yeltsin and Kravchuk. It was proposed that Ukrainian debts would be erased if Russia could have full control of the Black Sea Fleet (D'Anieri, p. 77). Because of the massive opposition from the Ukrainian elites, the proposal was never approved. This is why Yeltsin and Putin had different policy ideas in terms of the privatisation and centralisation of the energy companies. However, between 1991 and 1999, the relations between Yeltsin and Kuchma were very close.

The selling of cheap gas as part of the economic recovery and barter system lasted until 2004-2005 when the Putin administration brought a new regulation for payment discipline, and this was the transition from the barter system to cash payment (Pirani, 2007, p. 8). Mankoff argues that there are two main reasons behind the disputes: the price that Ukraine pays for Russian gas and the debts that Ukraine is due to pay to Russia (Mankoff, 2012). However, as seen in 2010, Russia and Ukraine had an agreement "to extend the lease allowing Russia's Black Sea Fleet to be stationed in Ukraine for 25 years in return for cheaper gas. In return, Russia agreed to grant Ukraine a discount on imports of Russian gas" (BBC, 2010b). What makes the commercial agreement political (even ideological) is reducing the price for gas in return for an extension of the fleet lease (Pirani et al, 2010, p. 18). As Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov has told Ukraine's ICTV channel "Actually, the gas price issue is not just an economic issue, and maybe even not so much an economic issue as a social one, a political one, an issue of long-term perspective. That is why I am very glad that we have finally reached a compromise with Russia" (Azarov, 2010). However, Medvedev explained this as "The discount will be applied against

Russia's rent for the deployment of its Black Sea Fleet and the naval base in Sevastopol. This is a technical, rather than political link, and involves a financial transaction only," (Medvedev, 2010). The important detail here is it was not Gazprom who gave the discount to Ukraine, but it was the Russian government (Simonov, 2010).

It is worth noting that Putin was not the first leader to have these crises with former soviet countries. What distinguishes Yeltsin from Putin era policies is a more 'centralised' and a more "institutionalised" state. In Putin's first term the main objective was to construct a domestic structure in the country. Foreign policy, the role of Russia in the world and the gas market were secondary policies. This was how the rise of the gas prices came about in his second term when he could negotiate with Ukraine and the EU "on equal terms".

On the political side of the price changes Russia has been accused of blocking Ukraine's integration with Euro-Atlantic institutions, including NATO (Mankoff, 2009). Since the prices were changed in 2004, Ukraine has been receiving gas at a subsidized price. Many scholars argue that 'European prices' rather than 'subsidized prices' is due to the Orange Revolution in some of the CIS countries (Poussenkova, 2008). The main deficiency here is that Russian foreign policy had a different objective only with the recovery in the country through the institutional implementation. Putin's ideas on "patriotism" and the "uniqueness" of Russian civilisation only became employed in foreign policy after his second term; this is when the prices to Ukraine changed as well.

5. Ideas and Institutional change in Russia and its implications for 2006 crisis

The 2006 gas crises occurred in the wake of institutional changes in Russia in 2000s. With the institutional change in Russia, the country has gone through some important changes in ideas in 2000. The new government had more nationalist/pragmatist views over the relations of Russia with the EU and the CIS. The new "Russian idea" which was addressed in Putin's Millennium

Speech has become the main ideology of the Russian government. As discussed in Chapter 4, Russian state was following a more pragmatist foreign policy with the US and the EU where Russia was believed to be great power in the international system. These ideas were embedded and structured in formal and informal institutions and have provided a “political infrastructure” or a “political strategy” for the new regime.

As discussed in chapter 4, liberal ideas were dominant both in domestic and foreign policies during 1990s. President Yeltsin and foreign minister Kozyrev had rather closer relations with the West, rather than with the CIS. In the foreign policy, the main goal of the Russian state was ensuring the “equal partnership” with the West. The intellectuals in the country were discussing whether Russia belongs to the western civilisation or it has own unique civilisation (Stankevich, 1992; Karaganov and Vladislavlev, 1992). The Yeltsin’s government not only followed a more liberal foreign policy, but also a liberal domestic policy in the country. The oligarchy was created as a class for ensuring the continuity of the liberal ideas and the power of the Yeltsin’s government. This class also held political power over the media, trade unions and state officials (Kryshtanovskaya and White, 2005, p. 299) which ensured Yeltsin’s political power in the country. During Yeltsin’s presidency, the relations with Ukraine were stable and gas prices were regulated on the basis of the bilateral agreements.

With the institutional change (re-nationalisation of the companies, strengthening the state power and centralisation) in 1999, Vladimir Putin became the president of Russia where liberal ideas has changed towards pragmatic/nationalist ideas. This is the core of this thesis’s argument where these nationalist ideas played an important role over gas policy towards Ukraine. As the Historical Institutionalism sheds a light on our understanding of Russia’s foreign policy, gas policy can also be understood through embedded ideas in formal and informal structures. As the theory chapter (Chapter 3) argued ideas are the key force of driving the foreign policy (Chapter 3). As ideas changed with president Putin, institutions were re-structured by restoring state power over some important sectors. Institutional change not only

affected domestic political/economic structure but also foreign policy of Russia as well. All the private companies were re-nationalised by Putin to assert Russia's international status in the world. As stated in Putin's millennium speech national monopolies have been seen as an important asset for economic development (Putin 2000). After he became the president Putin has formed a new foreign policy where the relations with the CIS improved again. It was stated in the foreign policy document that: "A priority area in Russia's foreign policy is ensuring conformity of multilateral and bilateral cooperation with the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to national security tasks of the country" (FPC, 2000). Foreign policy of Russia has shifted from western-centred policies to Eurasian centred policies. It is worth noting that the cooperation between two countries until 2004 have provided some gas discounts for Ukraine (D'Anieri, p. 77).

As Putin stated in his millennium speech, national monopolies became more important for the Putin administration (Putin, 2000). This is why some private companies, most importantly Gazprom were re-nationalised. As the main goal of Putin was to assure stability in the country, he strengthened state control over companies. The main goal of the regime was to re-gain Russia's great power status. As he criticised privatisation as the main enemy of the 1990s nationalisation was a necessity during his administration. During his first term (2000-2004), the main goal of Putin's administration was re-structuring the institutions and employing some "loyal" people for the new foreign policy in the country. In the domestic context Beslan school crisis⁸, and in the international context Chechnyan war, war on terror with the US these were all tools to reassure Russia's great power status in the international system.

As Putin stated that stability was the most important goal for Russia: "the country's social stability is directly dependent on its energy stability" (Putin, 2000), institutional change has to be formed with the support of the elite class. Historically elites are important for institutional

⁸ Beslan school crisis started in 2004 capturing 1,100 hostages, ended with the death of 385 people. In a report, an independent MP Vladimir Ryzhkov blamed of federal ministries: "is an attempt to put the blame on regional and local law enforcers and not on the leaders of federal ministries, who in my view bear responsibility for what happened," (Finn, 2005).

change in the country. Both during the Soviet Union and during 1990s, major changes were driven by the elite class in the country. The oligarchs had enormous power during Yeltsin's administration. They even helped Yeltsin to be re-elected in 1996 elections through their media power (Sakwa, 2011, p. 7). The historical importance of elites had a continuation when Putin wanted to configure his own elites in 2000s. As Olcott argued (Olcott, 2004, p. 4) Putin transformed his elites in 2004 only after his second term. He abolished the oligarchy as a class and transformed a more assertive foreign policy towards the CIS and the EU.

In the foreign policy, an equal partnership with the West and the US implemented and the CIS has become one of the most important foreign policy goals. In the gas policy, Gazprom has become one of the most important companies to restore country's prestige. This is why in 2003 in a secret memorandum Russian foreign policy and energy experts discussed to keep Gazprom as a single unit (Kupchinsky, 2009; Sakwa, 2011, p. 98). Arguably after nationalisation of the company and keeping that as a single unit, Gazprom became stronger in the international market as well. Although the Russian state holds the majority of the company, Gazprom claimed to seek commercial interests rather than political ones. However, controversial status of the company and its close relations with the Russian state, its reliability (WikiLeaks document).

It was after Putin's first term where gas policy has changed according to the new ideas in Russia. With the self-perception of Russia's great power status and perceives Ukraine as part of Russia's domestic space, pro-western government in Ukraine perceived as a threat towards this new Russian state and power in the post-Soviet space. The new Ukrainian government not only challenged the power of the Russian state but also the civilizational superiority of it and its culture. The crisis happened in the second term of president Putin (2004-2008) when all the institutions were structured with pragmatist/nationalist foreign policy aims. In his first term, Putin was still dealing with forming his elites around his new government. Particularly with the CIS, it was believed that Russia is the successor of the USSR. However, with the Ukrainian state's desire to be part of the EU and NATO, the state's policy has changed towards Ukraine (through

some formal and informal institutions) for the benefit of the country. Natural gas has been arguably the most important tool for the use of the state power over Ukraine's dependency on natural gas. Throughout this pressure, the Russian state not only desired to prove its superior position over Ukraine but implemented its "great power" position both in the post-soviet region and in the international system.

Russia raised the price of gas in 2005 as a reaction to pro-western government in Ukraine. Although Russian state claims that gas cut off is a commercially driven, Putin's order on the state TV to Gazprom to cut off gas to Ukraine raised criticism against natural monopoly (The Washington post, 2009).

Unlike oil, gas prices were arranged which was based on the bilateral agreements between Russia and Ukraine. In summer 2004 Russia lowered the price of gas \$50 per thousand cubic meters to Ukraine in support of Ukraine's presidential elections in favour of Victor Yanukovch (Motyl, 2006). However, the relations between Russia and Ukraine have changed in 2004 when Ukraine had its presidential elections. After Yanukovch's defeat of the elections, Gazprom wanted to renegotiate the prices which were given to Ukraine before the elections (Motyl, 2006). Russian then defense minister, Sergey Ivanov stated that: "National security is a crucial task for Russia, a country so greatly endowed with territory and natural resources" (Wall Street Journal, Ivanov, 2006).

Russia wanted to charge Ukraine \$160 per 1,000 cubic meters in mid 2005 (Nichol et al. 2006) but then requested a rise in late 2005 to \$220-\$230 of natural gas (up from \$50) (Kramer, 2006). Moreover, the price had to be paid in cash. As well as to Ukraine, Russia charged high prices for other countries (Georgia from \$63 to \$110, Moldova from \$80 to \$160, and the Baltic states from \$80 to \$120-125. Only the price for Belarus was the same (\$47) (Sokov, 2006). After Russia's statement that a rise in the natural gas prices, Russia offered a loan to Ukraine for the new gas price. After the cut off, Ukraine compensated some of the gas which has been saved for European customers (Nichol et al. 2006). At the end of this dispute, two countries signed an

agreement on January 4th and it has been agreed that Ukraine would buy gas through an intermediary company – RosUkrEnergo.

The 2006 crises can be called as politically driven because of several reasons. First, all commercial agreements between CIS has to be signed by either presidents or the prime ministers (Stern, 2006, p. 13). This also indicates that both states are more important as institutions than the gas companies. Second, Russian government has given gas discounts before 2004 election but changed the prices after Ukraine's decision because of the closer relations with Europe.

The wider Russian foreign policy has shifted to another important phase in 2007 in the relations with the US and Russia. At the Munich Conference on security policy, Putin gave a speech to world leaders and targeted the hegemony of US and its accusations towards Russia. This conference was important in terms of the power dynamics between Russia and the west. Putin said: "Incidentally, Russia – we – are constantly being taught about democracy. But for some reason those who teach us do not want to learn themselves", also said: "Today we are witnessing an almost uncontained hyper use of force – military force – in international relations, force that is plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts. As a result we do not have sufficient strength to find a comprehensive solution to any one of these conflicts. Finding a political settlement also becomes impossible" (Putin, 2007). The main target of this speech was against the US power and the criticisms from the EU over gas disputes. It is important to understand the power dynamics for Russia both in the international system and in the post-soviet space.

5.1. Ideas, institutional continuation and the implications for 2009 crisis

In 2010 Russia and Ukraine had an agreement "to extend the lease allowing Russia's Black Sea Fleet to be stationed in Ukraine for 25 years in return for cheaper gas. In return, Russia agreed

to grant Ukraine a discount on imports of Russian gas" (BBC, 2010). What makes the commercial agreement political is reducing the price for gas in return for an extension of the fleet lease (Pirani et al, 2010, p. 18). As Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov told Ukraine's ICTV channel "Actually, the gas price issue is not just an economic issue, and maybe even not so much an economic issue as a social one, apolitical one, an issue of long-term perspective. That is why I am very glad that we have finally reached a compromise with Russia" (Azarov, 2010). However Medvedev explained this as "The discount will be applied against Russia's rent for the deployment of its Black Sea Fleet and the naval base in Sevastopol. This is a technical, rather than political link, and involves a financial transaction only,"(Medvedev, 2010). The important detail here is it was not Gazprom who gave the discount to Ukraine, but it was the Russian government (Simonov, 2010).

The second gas crisis (2009) happened during Medvedev's presidency (2008-2012) and in the wake of Ukrainian presidential elections in 2010. It is worth noting that during Medvedev's administration there was a continuation in foreign policy ideas. Gazprom declared that the company would cut gas to Ukraine, if Kiev does not pay \$1.67 billion debt for gas supplies and \$450 million in fines (Upstream online, 2008). As well as the first crisis, this second crisis was also seen as blackmailing by Russia. In a televised press conference Yushchenko said: "Each person living in Ukraine should understand that what has happened between 1 January and now is not the blackmail of our state, it is the blackmail of each of you."(BBC, 2009b).The other controversy about the gas reduction was the order from the Russian PM Putin to Gazprom to reduce gas supplies to Ukraine (BBC, 2009c). This was arguably another time when the Russian state was involved in the decision making of the company. As well as the PM of Russia, in august 2009 the Russian president Medvedev sent an open letter to the successor of the Orange revolution, Ukrainian president Yushchenko, blamed his counterpart as being anti-Russian: "Under the present conditions of an anti-Russian course, I have made the decision to put off our new ambassador's arrival in Ukraine. A concrete date will be set later with due account taken of... Russian-Ukrainian relations" (Russia Today, 2009; the telegraph, 2009).

The discourse for Ukrainian “anti-Russian” policies was used by other state institutions as well. State Duma Speaker Valery Yazev stated: “Our relations in the gas and... economic sector, the Ukrainian leadership’s stance on the Black Sea fleet, arms sales to Georgia, glorification of Nazi criminals, attempts to rewrite our common history – the list of plainly anti-Russian manifestations is long. This brings no benefit to the people of our countries” (Russia Today, 2009). This anti-Russianness was arguably being against of the Russian state and its power in the international politics. As discussed in Chapter 4, Russian self-identification of superiority of its own culture and perception towards Ukraine as a “little brother” has not tolerated any sort of independent policies.

As the core argument of this thesis, Russian state has not only utilised formal institutions to restore its power but also informal institutions to emphasise the “betrayal” of Ukrainian state. In the same letter, Medvedev would condemn the timing of the expulsion of two Russian diplomats. To him, the time that Ukraine expulsion of two diplomats at the same time as on the eve of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia’s visit to Ukraine is “unprecedented provocation”: “The pernicious practice of intervention of the Ukrainian state authorities in affairs of the Orthodox Church is seen clearly in this context,” Medvedev said. “The conditions artificially created in the run up to and during the visit of Patriarch Kirill... can hardly be described as favourable.”(Russia Today, 2009a).The emphasis on being anti-Russianness through Ukrainians state’s “disrespect” over the Patriarch has given us important understandings about how Russia perceives itself not only as a superior economic power over Ukraine but also a cultural one. Medvedev also mentioned “Further efforts are being made to remove the Russian language from public life, science, education, culture, mass media and courts,” (Russia Today, 2009b). In the wake of all these political exchanges, Russia and Ukraine reached an agreement for the gas crisis in 2010. Russian president Medvedev and Ukrainian president Yanukovich signed an agreement with a 30 percent discount in the price of gas sold to Ukraine. Russia agreed on a gas drop in exchange for Russia’s lease to use Black Sea naval base in the Black Sea for 25 years (Medetsky, A. 2010; Watson and Tkachenko, 2010). As well as

these two crises, the last dispute between Russia and Ukraine occurred after the annexation of Crimea to Russia.

6. Conclusion

Since the 2000s Russia's foreign policy has been driven by pragmatist and nationalist policies. Russia had different foreign policy objectives toward the former Soviet Union countries. Ukraine is important among these countries for several reasons: first both countries are Slavic nations. The importance of the origins of the Slavic state, and especially Kiev for Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians became an increasingly important principle guiding foreign policy. The second is the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea, important for Russia's foreign policy security issue in the last two crises and recently annexed to Russia's territory. The third one is, Ukraine is the main transit route of natural gas to the EU countries. Thus, Russia also had to deal with the EU (because of the natural gas dependency of the European countries) through Ukraine.

This is why this chapter argued that the two natural gas crises between Russia and Ukraine became more politicised through the rise of nationalism under Putin's presidency. After Putin first became president, he introduced a new form of ideology based on patriotism and statism. These ideas have become institutionalised through certain practices during Putin's presidency. Particularly the efforts to revive Russian pride among younger generations has played an important role in domestic politics and given legitimacy for further policies of the Russian state.

The church, Russian cinema, media and youth groups were utilised to revive this form of nationalism. However, as this chapter has demonstrated in the case of foreign policy Gazprom, as the main exporter of natural gas, was also driven by these new domestic ideas. Because of the importance of Ukraine politically, economically and culturally, Russia's historical control of the country became even more visible with the gas crises. Although the foreign policy of Russia is implemented by several institutions, according to the constitution of Russia, the president is still

the most powerful actor in the country. This is perhaps why Russia has been criticised for several reasons: first, although Putin has his constitutional powers to conduct foreign policy in Russia, informal networks damage his credibility in international politics. The second is, when dealing with the gas crises of Russia and Ukraine, the division of responsibilities between the Russian state and Gazprom is not very clear. On the one hand the company claims that it is a commercial actor; on the other hand, the state owns the majority of the shares. The third is the corruption in the company. Another is the historical background of the relations between Russia and the CIS through the 1990s and 2000s. All these reasons indicate that Ukraine is important for Russia not only economically but politically and culturally. Both Putin and Medvedev accused Ukraine of having anti-Russian policies and not cooperating with Russia.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The primary goal of this thesis was to examine the Russian foreign natural gas policy, where the policy came from, the ideas behind it, and how they were institutionalised towards Ukraine. This thesis had one broad research question: *How do preferences/ideas/institutions have an impact on Russia's foreign natural gas policy over time towards Ukraine?* The answer to this question presents the key finding of this study. To explore this question, the thesis was divided into three main empirical chapters. In the first empirical chapter, this study argued how the “Russian idea” has shaped foreign policy ideas in 2000s. In the second chapter, the concern was to trace the institutionalisation of the Russian idea in formal and informal structures. In the last empirical chapter, the main focus was on Ukraine and to investigate foreign natural gas policy towards this country.

The recent crisis between Russia and Ukraine (2014) and the annexation of Crimea have shown us how Russian nationalism and their perception towards Ukraine have affected foreign policy outcomes. This study argued that Russia's foreign (natural gas) policy is an outcome of a renewed “Russian idea” which is based on patriotism, greatness of Russia and statism. This is why this thesis focused not only on ideas but also how these ideas were institutionalised in the formal and informal structures for foreign policy making.

My research started after the two main natural gas crises between Russia and Ukraine in 2006 and 2009. Thus, this thesis looks at the period between 2000 and 2010 but also reflects back to the 1990s to understand the foreign policy in a historical context. Both of the crises happened after the political changes in Ukraine and disagreements with Russia. The literature mainly emphasises national interests as the reason for the crises, however this approach takes interests as “given”. This position is problematic because it ignores the ideational factors in policy-making. Instead, this these has asked how did the new Russian idea become important in the 2000s? How did the liberal idea change to pragmatic/nationalist ideas? I argue that the foreign

policy of Russia can be best understood in its historical context if we look at the foreign policy ideas of leaders and the elites. To investigate the wider foreign policy making of Russia, I have explored policy-making processes, the important ideas and how new ideas were institutionalised during the 2000s. One of the main findings of this thesis was the impact of renewed nationalism (which is part of the “Russian idea”) over the outcomes on foreign policy and gas crises. This nationalism was not only lays claim to a certain vision of Russian civilisation and culture both also underpins a new form of statism.

By focusing on nationalism, this study has found that foreign policy is driven by two different nationalisms: statist and civilisational/cultural. In relation to Ukraine, the discourse of the political elites and using nationalism as a card against Ukraine has a deep impact on their relations. Cultural nationalism was used as a form of defending Russian culture and the rights of Russians in Ukraine by imposing the superiority of Russian culture over Ukrainian. On the other hand, statist nationalism was used to discipline not only Ukraine but also the other former Soviet Union countries, as well as the EU.

1. The core contributions of this thesis:

This thesis has made a number of contributions. First, in the current literature, Russian foreign gas policy has been analysed mainly through power maximization, where interests were treated as “fixed” and “given”. Particularly in its natural gas policy, Russia was perceived as an imperial power that wants to control its borders in the post-Soviet space. In contrast, this thesis specifically worked on the formulation of policy making, which ideas had an impact on this policy and how these ideas were institutionalised in formal and informal structures through a new form of ideology. This suggests that not only ideas but also interests are constructed over time.

The second contribution is unpacking the institutionalisation of the “Russian idea” in the foreign policy making process. This has meant investigating how, through the interaction of formal and informal structures, certain ideas become institutionalised in foreign natural gas policy. Russia’s policy towards Ukraine traditionally been seen as a narrow form of the imperialism reflecting the continuous ambitions of the Russian state. Exploring how the “the Russian idea” emerged as a particular form of nationalist politics under Putin’s regime, gives a wider analysis and explains the changing imperialist views taking place in the country at large. In order to examine the institutionalisation process, this study mainly focused on the interactions of domestic arrangements both formal (the presidency and foreign ministry) and informal (Gazprom, the Russian church, media) structures.

Third, the existing literature has analysed Russia’s natural gas policy only by its outcomes. The authors only discussed what happened between the two countries in their gas relations, without exploring policy changes and ideational factors. By contrast, this study has taken an ideational standpoint and has investigated the sources of gas policy through the institutionalisation of historical and changing ideas. Taking ideational factors seriously has given this study a more in-depth analysis of the origins of contemporary Russia/Ukraine relations and historical changes in foreign policy.

This chapter is divided into several sections. The aim of these sections is to summarize and to interconnect the three empirical chapters (Chapter 4, 5 and 6). In the first section, this study will summarize the importance of ideology in Russian foreign natural gas policy. In the second part, ideas of “special path” and “sovereign democracy” will be overviewed. In the third part, the summary will be on the institutionalisation of these ideas in natural gas policy. In the fourth part, statism, power vertical and strong executive will be viewed with a link to institutionalisation. The last part will conclude this by over viewing patriotism and foreign policy towards Ukraine.

1.1 Ideas in Russia's foreign (natural gas) policy

As this thesis has shown, Russia's foreign policy had different phases after 1991. In the first decade after independence liberal ideas drove the foreign policy of the country. However, the identity question and Russia's position in the world were discussed among the intellectuals as well. With Putin's speech in 1999, liberal ideas changed towards a new form of understanding in the country's foreign and domestic politics. This chapter will reflect the main findings of the Russian idea and the way it was structured in formal and informal institutions.

The current literature explains the foreign policy of Russia as an outcome of power maximization. This thesis mainly focuses on ideas which shape the foreign policy decision and how actors behave in domestic and foreign policy. Chapter 4 mainly dealt with the idea-driven nature of foreign policy, rather than its interest-driven character. As this study suggests that "foreign policy behaviour is often determined by domestic politics" (Wendt cited in Hill, p. 220), ideas and interests are endogenous to political changes.

This study argued that changing ideas in Russia's domestic policy have an impact on its foreign policy. However, this study does not claim that there is an official state ideology (ideology here is defined as idea or belief of the Russian elites) in Russia. Most realists believe that Russia's foreign policy is an outcome of power maximization but do not discuss how power is understood in Russian politics. I agree that power is perceived as an important element for the future of the country. However, this power is mostly defined by cultural, political and economic superiority over other nations. For political superiority, the Russian state, especially the president, is the representative of this "great power" but only with a combination of cultural and economic aspects of it. In the economic sphere, Russia wants to be stronger and follow a pragmatic policy for political as well as cultural reasons. In the cultural aspect, the president often defines Russia as a superior civilisation. All these ideas in political, economic and cultural terms were combined by Putin into the "new Russian idea". This was presented as an ideology in 1999 by Putin.

Chapter 4 discussed the “Russian idea” and Chapter 5 analysed how these ideas were structured in domestic and foreign policies through different tools and practices. These practices were mostly achieved through mobilisation of the elites until 2004. Elites in the 1990s had different views on foreign policy and national resources. President Yeltsin, foreign minister Kozyrev and the business elites (the Oligarchs) were all supporting the privatisation process and liberal ideas which would include cooperation with the West. During this time, the most important elite group was called the Family (Yeltsin’s family).

With the cooperation of the oligarchs, Yeltsin’s family suggested Putin as the president of Russia in 1999 and asked him to approve “Yeltsin’s immunity” with a presidential decree. Because of Putin’s KGB background, close ties with the Family and his fight with the oligarchs, the Russian state was not transformed fully until 2004. During his second term (2004-2008), as Chapter 4 discussed, this transformation was completed and the Russian state had a new direction in foreign policy where pragmatic and statist ideas were more important. Chapter 5 is important for demonstrating the ways these ideas were institutionalised. Most importantly, we can explore two ways of structuring these ideas: sovereign democracy and power vertical.

1.2 The idea of Russia’s “special path” and “sovereign democracy”

There is ongoing debate on Russia’s national identity and its position in Russia since the 19th century. These debates among intellectuals and elites have important implications for determining Russia’s foreign policy. This was called the Russian idea. There were mainly two schools of thought in the 19th century: Slavophiles and Westernisers. Slavophiles viewed Russia as unique and believed in Russia’s unique way of development. On the other hand, Westernisers believed in following western civilisation for cultural and political development. The Russian idea played an important role especially after Putin came to power in 1999. This new form of ideology was introduced for the re-formation of the state power and social solidarity in society. It not only aimed to re-construct a strong centralised state but also strong institutions

controlled by the Kremlin. This idea was only institutionalised through strengthening the control of the state over other structures. On many occasions, Putin emphasised Russia's unique position in the world. With this belief that Russia has a special path and a unique civilisation, in 2006 the Kremlin's key aide, Surkov developed the idea of "sovereign democracy". According to this idea Russia is not another version of a civilisation. It is still part of European civilisation but only in a Russian way. Moreover, in many of his speeches, he mentioned that Russia has its own way of democracy, which he called "sovereign democracy".

This kind of special path not only fits the civilisational nationalism of Russia, but also had some outcomes for foreign policy. In an article in *Izvestiya* Putin stated: "Russia can and must play a deserving role, dictated by its civilisational model, great history, geography, and its cultural genome, which seamlessly combines the fundamentals of European civilization and the centuries-old experience of cooperation with the East, where new centres of economic power and political influence are currently rapidly developing" (Putin, 2012). This kind of reference to "developing Russian civilisation" has also been seen as his "new ideology" by other scholars (Panarin, 2012).

Chapter 5 discussed this idea that sovereign democracy has many implications for Russia's domestic and foreign policies. It has not only glorified Russian culture and language, but has also given an opportunity to the elites to construct a more nationalist discourse. The myth of the uniqueness of Russian culture was highly emphasised at home and in relations with the other former Soviet Union countries. According to Kremlin ideologist Surkov, sovereign democracy justifies centralisation and corresponds to the foundations of the Russian culture. In terms of Russia's policy towards Ukraine, Russia still views Ukraine within this broad Russian civilisation, however not a leading role but rather as part of it.

Table 10: Ideas and institutions in Russia

Ideas	Formal institutions	Informal institutions
Russian idea	The president	The church
Statism	Gazprom	The youth groups
Patriotism/nationalism	The MFA	Media
Greatness of Russia	Security services	

Table 10 demonstrates the main ideas in the 2000s and the formal/informal institutions that these ideas are embedded in. In the “ideas” column, the table states the main ideas during the 2000s. This idea is based on the Russian idea and consists of statism, patriotism/nationalism and greatness of Russia. This was discussed in detail in Chapter 4. The second and the third column demonstrate the formal and informal structures in the institutionalisation process of this Russian idea. As formal and institutions the president, Gazprom, the MFA, the Church, media were discussed in Chapter 5 in detail. The section below will reflect upon this institutionalisation through the findings of chapters 4, 5 and 6.

2. Institutionalisation of ideas in the foreign natural gas policy

Institutions in this thesis are defined as formal and informal structures. This thesis explored, in Chapter 5, the presidency and the MFA as formal institutions; and the church, media and Gazprom as informal institutions. These formal and informal structures were institutionalised the Russian idea presented by Putin in 1999. This kind of governance not only legitimised the power of formal and informal institutions but also gave them the power to re-emphasise the importance of the ideas. As Table 1 1 demonstrates below, in the formal institutions, there were two ways of structuring these ideas: through statism (centralisation) and power vertical.

Table 11: The institutionalisation of ideas



Statism		The president Power vertical (Gazprom) The church Youth groups Putin as a celebrity icon
Nationalism (political, economic, political, civilisational)	Institutionalisation process through these structures and practices 	Youth groups (cultural) The church (civilizational) The president (all) Gazprom (economic and political) Media (political)
Greatness of Russia (nationalist, civilizational)		Discourse of the leaders Sovereign democracy

Table 11 demonstrates that the ideas in chapter 4 were institutionalised through formal/informal structures and some practices. For instance, statism was institutionalised through power vertical in some structures such as: the presidency, the church, youth groups and Putin’s public image. On the other hand, nationalism was used in different forms: political, economic and civilisational. All the institutions mentioned above served this kind of nationalism in different ways.

3. Statism, “power vertical” and a strong executive in foreign policy making

As chapter 4 discussed, in the Millennium speech (1999) and then afterwards in many speeches, Putin emphasised the importance of the state and the idea of statism. According to him, the liberal ideas in the 1990s and the lack of state power were a threat to Russia’s stability. He even claimed that Russian people were at risk with the weakening of state power:

Russians are alarmed by the obvious weakening of state power. The public looks forward to a certain restoration of the guiding and regulating role of the state, proceeding from Russia’s traditions as well as current state of the country (Putin, 2000).

For structuring the idea of statism and state power, from 2000 to 2004 he appointed his own elites from St. Petersburg to the important positions in the government, including Gazprom. His cooperation with the security services in Russia has given him enormous power to settle the centralisation of the state and the fight with the oligarchs. Chapter 5 discussed his centralisation and this was structured in several ways:

1) Appointing his bureaucrats to the important positions in the government which is called the “power vertical”. This helped to centralise state power and gave the state control over important assets. Chapter 5 argued that centralisation of state power with new powerful elites brought national monopolies under their control. Not only the important state institutions, but also Gazprom were nationalised under state control. It was discussed in Chapter 6 how the nationalisation of Gazprom and indistinguishable relations between the Russian state and the company damaged the company’s credibility in the international market. However, as stated in chapter 5, in a private meeting in 2003 it was discussed that “Gazprom should stay as a single organism” and would remain a state owned company for the country’s interests (Kupchinsky, 2008). One of the key findings is that the outcomes of this kind of statist idea for the future of Gazprom (Chapter 5) and marketing it as a “national treasure” (Chapter 6) have many

implications for Russia's policy towards Ukraine. As it is mainly owned by the government, as seen in the gas crises, the role of the company is not always very clear. According to official discourse, the company is only a commercial company with a will to maximize its own commercial interest. However, the role of the Russian state and the company can sometimes be indistinguishable. For instance, as discussed in Chapter 6, the Russian state offered a discount to Russian gas which was transited to Ukraine in return for control of the Ukrainian gas market. This offer was rejected by Ukraine and in 2006 Russia declared that they would charge Ukraine "European prices". As well as price discount, Ukraine was offered cheaper prices by extending the lease of the Black Sea Fleet which was then in Ukraine. Thus the idea of statism (chapter 4) was more institutionalised in the foreign gas policy through centralisation of natural monopolies and appointing some "loyal people" (power vertical) at the top of Gazprom's management. Thus, economic nationalism by keeping it a state company, political nationalism by mocking the company for its dependency on Russian gas, cultural nationalism by blaming the country for being anti-Russian and civilisational nationalism by calling the country "little Russians" were all discussed in chapter 6.

2) Strengthening the role of the church: this has given the state more power to strengthen its power and legitimise the values the state is protecting. For instance, on many occasions the patriarch Kirill rewarded the members of the executive committee. Moreover, the church also helped the executive authority to be stronger, once the patriarch stated that Putin was a 'miracle from god' (Bennetts, 2012; Bryanski, 2012; Cohen 2012). Moreover, he also rewarded Gazprom's chairman of the board Alexi Miller for his help with the church (Bryanski, 2012).

3) Putin's image was created as being a "tough guy" in domestic politics, to give an impression that he is strong enough to face any challenge in the public sphere. This has given him legitimacy in foreign policy outcomes as well. As a "superhero", he not only acted in Georgia, but also in Chechnya and recently as the protector of ethnic Russians in Crimea. Thus, his public image and media campaign with the help of the Russian church have given him all the tools to

strengthen his legitimacy. This image was not only strengthened by the church and Putin himself, but also from his elites as well. A Kremlin aide stated that he was even sent by god as a gift to Russian people:

I honestly believe that Putin is a person who was sent to Russia by fate and by the Lord at a difficult time for Russia (Surkov 2011).

4) As well as these informal structures, youth groups have played an important role in creating this image of a strong leader or the saviour of the country. They even celebrated Putin's birthday before the presidential elections, which looked like more of a rally.

4. Patriotism and foreign policy towards Ukraine

Another idea which was discussed in chapter 4 was patriotism. According to Putin, it is love of one's country and people should be proud of their country, no matter what their background is. In his official speeches, he often declared patriotism in civic terms. However, in his foreign policy towards Ukraine in 2005 and 2009, and later on with the Crimean crisis, he utilised ethnic Russian nationalism.

Chapter 4 discussed five categories of nationalism among the intellectuals in the 1990s (Tolz, 2001, p. 272), which were imperial, Slavic/cultural, a community of Russian speakers, ethnic and civic nationalism. It is possible to see the outcomes of Russian politics according to these five categories.

While Russian leaders emphasise the importance of civic nationalism in their official speeches, they also address cultural and statist nationalism in reaction to political changes in the CIS. For instance in 2009, Medvedev warned Ukraine about their "anti - Russian politics" (Chapter 6). He meant culture and linguistic ties. As well as that this was a warning from a statist nationalist, warning Ukraine not to cooperate with Ukraine in the gas sphere.

On the other hand, as we have seen in the last Ukrainian crisis and the annexation of Crimea, Russian president Putin acted as the protector of ethnic Russians in Crimea. While he has been emphasising Russian patriotism domestically, he mentioned many times, that no matter what ethnic groups people are from they should be proud of their country and culture.

As well as culture, there was much focus on Russian civilisation. However, although enshrined in 1993, constitutional civic nationalism has the weakest roots in intellectual and historical Russia (March, 2007, 39). Additionally,, the intellectuals and elites of ethnic republics criticised civic nationalism for its attempt to assimilate other nations (Tolz, p. 280). In comparison with Yeltsin, Putin is less moderate with the nationalist language. For instance, he addressed Russkii patriotism at a victory day parade in May 2000 (March, 2007, p. 46). As well as the nationalist language, he has used post-soviet symbols such as the national anthem and red military.

5. Theoretical framework

The main theoretical framework of this study was historical institutionalism. There are four main principles of the institutional framework: firstly, preferences, beliefs, identities are not exogenous, but endogenous to political history. This suggests that preferences and beliefs are not given but develop within embedded institutions over time. Political actors act on the basis of their identities which are shaped within history.

Secondly, actors act appropriately to fulfil their identity within the political system. This is a challenge to the approaches which perceive human behaviour as rational and self interested. Thirdly, histories and meanings are socially constructed. If we contextualize human actions as we interpret them through our ideas and world views, the meanings of these actions, accordingly, would be the outcome of our interpretations. Thus, this can only be understood in history which is also constructed. Lastly, politics adapts to changing environments (March and Olsen, 1996, p. 259).

Historical institutionalism was not deployed to this study from the very beginning. Initially, I had planned to use a Constructivist approach. However, after exploring other theories and doing some empirical research on Russia, historical institutionalism was utilised for two main reasons:

1) It is the best approach to explain change and continuity in Russian foreign policy. As mentioned above, the main focus of the institutionalist approach is its emphasis on ideas and institutions. Within this focus, it analyses why and how institutions change over time and how would continuity happen in existing institutions.

2) This study was mainly concerned with the importance of institutions and embedded ideas within them. It argued that Russia's foreign natural gas policy can be best understood from the change in these ideas, driven by the foreign policy. The study suggests that this approach gives a better outlook for ideas and institutions and their impact on the policy making process.

Reflecting Historical Institutionalism on Russian natural gas policy, the theory helped to understand the origins of foreign policy thinking in Russia. This study traced the origins of the Russian idea and the importance of it during 1990s and came to a conclusion that there is a historical continuity of these ideas within Russian political and intellectual history. One of the other findings that historical institutionalism helped with was the institutionalisation of these ideas in state and non-state structures. With the great attention given to institutions in this theory, it has given an analytical insight to this study to understand the motivations and behaviours of individuals and institutions. For instance, during both gas crises in 2006 and 2009, we have seen an emphasis on the Russian idea and this was truly justified through some formal and informal structures.

6. Concluding remarks

This thesis applied historical institutionalism in order to understand Russia's foreign natural gas policy towards Ukraine. Ideas (as world views and beliefs) and institutions (as formal/informal structures) were the core of this thesis to analyse the foreign policy towards this country. The main finding was that the "new Russian idea" which was presented in 1999 by Putin allows a better understanding of Russia's foreign and gas policy. While limited to a specific time period and case study, this thesis has shown that historical institutionalism can be an alternative approach to understanding foreign policy, and that the study of how ideas are institutionalised has much to offer the scholars of Foreign Policy Analysis.

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Appendix

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Feigin, V. (2012) Energy Strategy Institute, Moscow.

Mitrova, T. (2012) Energy Centre SKOLKOVO

Kroutikhin, M. (2012) Rus Energy

Anonymous 1 (2012) Gas company

Anonymous 2 (2012) Oil and gas company

Anonymous 3 (2012) University Professor

Anonymous 4 (2012) Energy Centre

Anonymous 5 (2012) Energy Centre

Anonymous 6 (2012) Head of Department, Institute of Energy Strategy

Anonymous 7 (2012) Dean of Management of International University, and President,

Institute for Energy and Finance