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The Collective West Concept and Selected Western Actors (Germany, Norway, Estonia, NATO) in the Russian Media: Post-Crimea Dynamics

Ekaterina Chimiris

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Annotation- **The Post-Crimean period gave us a series of new concepts in international relations, and one of them is the Collective West Concept. Being invented in the academic sphere several years before the Crimean case, the concept intervened the Russian public and political discourse. In this article I argue that the Collective West concept has become an instrument of additional securitization of the West in the discourse of Russian media. To prove the hypothesis, I have used the discourse analysis and concept mining methodology. I have created a sample of Media messages and by means of concept mining soft have coded the sample. In this research project I was interested in finding correlations between the Collective West and separate Western countries and actors (NATO, Germany, Norway, Estonia). After creating a correlation model for these concepts, I have looked at the overall semantic and argumentation context of the concepts usage. The results of the research give me an opportunity to conclude, that the Collective West Concept is mostly used by Russian Media in negative context. Such big international actors as Germany is included in the Collective West Concept, when the context of speaking about it is also negative. At the same time NATO is depicted as an instrument for the Collective West anti-Russian strategy. Such small European countries as Norway and Estonia are not mentioned in correlation with the Collective West. The main trend in Russian Media towards the West is simplification and intense securitization.**

I. Introduction

During the post-Crimean period the image of the Western countries in the leading Russian Media sources is becoming more and more negative. At the same time, the Western think tanks consider this trend in Russian media to be a result of a special information politics of propaganda and disinformation.[1] We can find the same approach towards Western media in some Russian research institutes, when most of the argumentation about Russia and attitudes to Russian politics is perceived as propaganda.[2] Unfortunately, this kind of approach does not provide a comprehensive understanding of the situation. This research is developed in the frame of securitization theory, which assumes that the two political entities face each other as a threat and create a spiral of mutual confrontation.[3] That is why we look at Russian securitization discourse towards the Western actors as an integral part of the overall securitization process, being developed in post-Crimean period.

Moreover, we can notice an anxious trend toward "simplification" of the Western actor by emerging the concept of "collective West" in the official Russian discourse. Using the media sphere analysis, we make the deconstruction of current Russian discourse towards the selected Western actors (Germany, Norway, Estonia, and NATO). The cognitive mapping approach (in classical Axelrod's' methodology of text coding[4]) as well as concept mining methodology[5] gives us an opportunity to create a model of securitization Russian media sphere discourse towards the Western actors.

*The main **hypothesis** of this research is that the ongoing simplification of the Western actor in the Russian media strengthens the securitization effect. And on the contrary – the diversification of the opponent may lead to the de-escalation in the conflict situation.*

In this paper I would like to focus on the following tasks. First, to define to what degree the mention of NATO, Germany, Norway, and Estonia are correlated to the mention of collective West in Russian Media. Second, I am going to define at what connotation – negative of positive the term collective West is used. Third, I will look at the context of using the term and to find the differences. Finally, I will define at

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[1] For example: Sukhankin S. (2019) The Western Alliance in the Face of the Russian (Dis)Information Machine: Where Does Canada Stand? / Canadian Global Affairs Institute. Vol. 12:26.

[2] For example, see the RISS papers URL: https://en.riss.ru/

[3] Wilhelmsen J. (2020) Spiraling toward a New Cold War in the North? The Effect of Mutual and Multifaceted Securitization. *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 0(0), 1–19.; Bækken, H., & Enstad, J. D. (2020). Identity under Siege: Selective Securitization of History in Putin's Russia. *The Slavonic and East European Review*, *98*(2), 321–344. https://doi.org/10.5699/slaveasteurorev2.98.2.0321

[4] Axelrod R. (1976) The Analysis of Cognitive Maps. *Structure of Decision: The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites*, Princeton University Press.

[5] Shehata, S. (2009) Concept Mining: A Conceptual Understanding based Approach.

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what degree the usage of term influences the securitization process between Russia and Western countries, or what discursive methods are used by Russian Media to securitize the Collective West concept. In the first part of the paper, we will look at the concept of Collective West, how it emerged and developed through the scientific and political discourse. Second, I will look at the methodology, which was used in this research for the evidence on how the Collective West Concept is used in Russian Media. Third, as soon as we use the concept mining method, we will look at the main regularities of codes distribution and finally we will make the conclusions.

II. The Concept of the West – Western and Russian Interpretation

The concept appeared in the Russian political and media discourse not so long ago but has spread rather quickly. It is usually used when political actors or journalists would like to mention Western countries in general. On the one hand, it may seem rather convenient, as we can mention all the Western countries without naming each of them. On the other hand, such *simplification* and *generalization* lead to the misperception of the West. In this paper I suggest, that using this concept creates more intolerant atmosphere in Media and promotes further securitization and escalation in Russian – Western relations.

The West as a concept has never been as obvious, as one would like it to be. We use the concept to speak about the geography, geopolitics, culture, economy. The West concept is under discussion in the western scientific literature. M. Kimmage in his book "The Abandonment of the West" points out, that The West has several meanings: point of the Compass, "Zapad" (Falling)[6], sunset, Abendland (the Land of the Evening).[7] The Sun starts its movement in the East (the Orient) and finishes in Europe, in the West. According to Kimmage, the geopolitical meaning came slowly to the West. At the same time, The West – is a place, a value, and an idea.

Gradually formed several dichotomies such as Athens as the West vs. Persian East; Western Half of Roman Empire vs. the Eastern half; the Latin (Western) variant of Christianity vs. the Eastern Orthodox Church; the Christians in the whole vs. the Muslim World; Liberal Democratic Western World vs. Eastern Authoritarianism and Communism.

In 1914, the London Times pointed out that Russia is outside of the Western World. The first and the second World Wars as well as the Cold War were wars between the Western and Eastern Worlds. From the point of view of the Western political and scientific discourse, the collapse of the USSR in 1991 means the victory of the Western Model. And the main task for the Western countries was – to export the model around the World. This plan was successful until the moment, when Russian political establishment decided to develop their own geopolitical interest and ideas.

The Putin's Munich Speech in 2007 has started the radical turnout of Russian values from the Western variant towards the unique Russian standards and ideas. At the same time the NATO enlargement process was negatively perceived by the Russian political elite. Vladimir Putin pointed out: "I think it is obvious that the process of NATO enlargement has nothing to do with the modernization of the alliance itself or with ensuring security in Europe. On the contrary, it is a seriously provoking factor that reduces the level of mutual trust".[8] But what was the most remarkable in this speech – is that Putin commented negatively on the unipolar world: "separate norms, …, in fact, almost the entire system of law of one state, first of all, of course, of the United States, has stepped over its national borders in all spheres: in the economy, and in politics, and in the humanitarian sphere - and is imposed on other states"[9]. Since 2007 Russia, consider the messianic mission of the USA as the threat to international stability and security. That is why since 2007 we can speak about the securitization of the USA, and gradually of the West generally in Russian political discourse.

The West as "the other" is not a new idea for Russian public and political discourse. At the same time Russian affiliation with Europe and the West is still a ground for scientific and public discussions. As V. Baranovsky points out, "debates on Europe have been part of Russia's history throughout a last thousand years".[10] If till the 2007 and especially the 2014 Russia considered to be a part of the Western values and civilization, since the 2015 a period of competition between Russia and the USA and EU has started.[11] According to D. Trenin, Russia will not be the part of Europe, but "will remain essentially European".[12] The Economic Eurasian project replaced the European one and Russia makes all the efforts to carry the leading role on the post-Soviet space.[13] In these changing

[6] On the contrary "Vostok" as Rising.

[7] Kimmage M. (2000) *The Abandonment of the West*. Basic Books.

[8] Выступление и дискуссия на Мюнхенской конференции по вопросам политики безопасности. Мюнхен, 10.02.2007. URL: http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034

[9] Ibid.

[10] Baranovsky, V. (2000). Russia: A Part of Europe or Apart from Europe? *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, *76*(3), 443–458. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2625948

[11] Trenin, D. (2015). From Cooperation to Competition: Russia and the West. *Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, *2*, 82–93. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48573456

[12] Trenin, D. (2018). *EUROPEAN SECURITY: FROM MANAGING ADVERSITY TO A NEW EQUILIBRIUM*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep16976

[13] Silaev, N., & Sushentsov, A. (2017). Russia and the Geopolitics of Eurasia. *Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, *9*, 120–135. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48573712

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geopolitical conditions, the Russian political discourse needs a new concept to define the West in this new way of thinking. Important to note, that Russian official discourse did not come to the one term right away.

III. From "Historical West" to "Collective West" in Russian Public Political Discourse

Why the West concept was not enough for Russian public and political discourse to speak about the Western countries? The concept "collective West" was used before the Crimea case. For example, the Director of Carnegie Center Moscow Dmitry Trenin mentioned it in his monograph "Integration and Identity: Russia and "the new West"[14] in 2006. The concept was used to name the USA and EU, when experts spoke about their common politics or interests.

As the tension between Russia and Western countries escalated (after the Putin's speech in Munich Conference in 2007), the use of the term changed. In one of the Carnegies' books, we can find the term "collective West" in quotes.[15] Now this trend to use quotes remains in liberal Media as soon as collective West without quotes is used more and more widely.

The term "collective" has often been used by the Russian Ministry of Foreign affairs, but mostly with such terms as "security", "decision", "efforts", "political will", etc. The concept "historical West" appears in 2014: *"Recently, the contradiction between the objectively strengthening multipolarity and the desire of the United States and the historical West to preserve their usual dominant positions has become increasingly clear"*.[16] Apparently, Minister Lavrov was referring to the EU, but due to the fact that Russian relations with Western countries began to change for the worse, the public political Russian discourse needed a new term to designate a new status for the West. At the same time, it was an attempt to distinguish the USA and the EU from Russia, whereas the term West is quite vague and not fully defined. In the situation of international confrontation, it is crucially important to name the "other", the enemy and to distinguish it from others.

The term Collective West was incorporated by Maria Zakharova in 2016: "At the moment, after the statements of the Russian leadership, it is no longer about "how Russia does not get bogged down in Syria," but how the *collective West* does not get bogged down in the Middle East, as the United States once did in Vietnam".[17] Since then the term has been used sporadically, in quotations as well as without them. At the same time the term, "historical West" was still used by Minister Lavrov in 2017 and 2018. But since May 2018 Minister Lavrov also uses the concept Collective West: "But this "common sense" implies the ability of the leaders of the collective West to act responsibly and predictably, to strictly abide by international law, relying on the UN Charter. In recent years, we have been increasingly compelled to doubt this ability".[18]

President Putin started to use the concept of Collective West in 2021. In the last speech of President Putin for the Russian Federal Assembly on April 21, 2021, the term Collective West has been used once.[19] It's worth noting, that he also used the term with additional clarification – "so called". This means that the term is only acquiring its outlines in the Russian public discourse. It is used carefully and with reservations. Nevertheless, the fact of its usage in the speech of the Russian President tells us, that soon the concept will be used more widely.

When Putin mentioned the term Collective West for the first time, he spoke about the situation in Belarus. For the moment Belarus is the Russian ally in the Eastern Europe, frankly speaking, the last one. For the Russian President was very important to support the current political regime of Alexander Lukashenko and to draw this virtual line between Russia and its allies and the Collective West. *"But today this practice is degenerating into something much more dangerous - I mean the recently known facts of a direct attempt to organize a coup d'état in Belarus and the assassination of the President of this country. At the same time, it is a common place, that even such flagrant actions do not find condemnation of the so-called* ***collective West****. Nobody just seems to notice this. Everyone pretends that nothing is happening at all"*.

The West is depicted as untrustworthy actor that tries to influence the internal political process in Belarus. At the same time from the point of view of President Putin the Collective West use so called "double standards" when it pays no attention to the counter-state actions in Belarus. The conspiracy hints also take place in the Russian President speech: *"Apparently, it is not for nothing that Western colleagues stubbornly refuse*

[14] Trenin D. Integration and Identity: Russia As the 'New West'. Moscow, 2006. URL: http://www.carnegie.ru/ru/pubs/books (In Russian)

[15] Shevtsova L. (2010) The Lonely Power. Why Russia Has Not Become the West and Why the West Is Difficult for Russia. Moscow. URL: https://carnegieendowment.org/files/shevzova_power.pdf

[16] **Выступление Министра иностранных дел России С.В. Лаврова на встрече с членами Российского совета по международным делам, Москва**, 4 **июня** 2014 **года**. URL: https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/57150

[17] **Брифинг официального представителя МИД России М.В. Захаровой, Москва**, 17 **марта** 2016 **года**. URL: https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2157393

[18] **Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова итальянскому журналу «Панорама», Москва**, 3 **мая** 2018 **года** URL: https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/foreign_policy/international_safety/conflicts/-/asset_publisher/xIEMTQ3OvzcA/content/id/3206154

[19] **Послание Президента Федеральному Собранию. Москва**, 21.04.2021. URL: http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/messages/65418

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numerous Russian proposals to establish an international dialogue in the field of information and cyber security".

The Collective West is depicted as the actor, that has *"crossed all the borders".* What borders were meant? Now no geographical or territorial physical borders were crossed by the Western countries. Apparently, the Russian President meant some symbolic or transcendental borders. At the same time in the Russian language, the collocation «to cross the border" also has the following synonyms – "to go to extremes", "to go too far". So here, President Putin means not the real or symbolic borders, but the behavior of the Collective West, which does not follow any rules. The actor, that interfere in the affairs of other countries – *"The way no one thought about the fate of Ukraine when the coup was carried out in this country".*

Official Russian position towards the West is still rather radical: *"We really don't want to burn bridges. But if someone perceives our good intentions as indifference or weakness and himself intends to finally burn or even blow up these bridges, he should know that Russia's response will be* ***asymmetric****, quick and harsh".* Here I would like to point the reader's attention to the word *asymmetric*. This is not only a warning, but already a kind of a threat. President Putin attempted to pose the conditions, under which Russia will not use the hard power: *"But I hope that no one will think of crossing the so-called red line in relation to Russia. And where it will take place, we will determine in each specific case ourselves".* As we see for the Russian President, it is crucially important to show the power and strength of Russia.

IV. Research Methodology for Concept Analysis in Media Sources

The prerequisites for the development of the methodology originate in the research of the BRIC concept.[20] This approach is based on the perception, that the discourse by itself may influence the change of the real processes. The purpose of this research was to find out the context of the Collective West Concept usage in Russian Media sources. To manage the big amount of media recourses I had to decide whether to use the qualitive or quantitative methods. Since the task was to find the overall context of the concept usage in a vast amount of media resources and to describe and analyze the concept usage. That is why I decided to use the combination of qualitive and quantitative methods.

At the first stage I have created a sample of Media messages, where the concept Collective West was used at least once. By means of machine way I have received a sample of 900 messages from the period from April 2020 till April 2021. At the second stage I have loaded the sample for analysis to a special concept mining software (this time it was QDA Miner).[21] At the third stage of research, I have coded the sample, using the following system of codes (Tab 1). I would like to point out, that the research task was to check – how the Collective West concept is used in Russian Media. And specifically – how this concept is correlated with four Western actors (NATO, Germany, Norway, and Estonia), and with Russia. After coding the sample, I have made measurements and came to several conclusions.

V. The Collective West Concept in Conservative and Liberal Russian Media

Since we have an opportunity to count the mentions of the Code (Collective West) in media Sources it will be useful for our purposes to show the whole distribution of the Code through the sample. As we can see on the chart (Tab 2), the concept collective West is mostly used by conservative and anti-Western Media as *Russia Today, Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, *RIA Novosty* etc. Mostly these types of media cite or discuss the official speeches of Russian politicians, bureaucrats, and diplomats. More often the term Collective West is used by Maria Zakharova,

> *'Collective West is living in a fantasy land,' Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman tells RT amid new wave of anti-Moscow hysteria. (RT, 25.04.2021)*

At the same time liberal pro-Western Media, such as *Meduza, RBC, Dozhd',* use the term less.

> *Why did the collective West escalate with Russia? Is it just because Russophobes have not read Dostoevsky? Dozhd' (04.05.2021)*

It is important to mention, that the President Putin's' speech for the Federal Assembly took place in April 2021, so a vast sample of messages were devoted to this event. We can conclude that in the current Russian media sphere the leading meaning makers are the top political elite and especially the President. Since the President has mentioned the term Collective West to designate the EU and USA, the vast pull of Russian Media sources began to use it widely. At the same time for the so called "liberal" media the President's discourse is not the source of meaning, so we can observe that the term Collective West is used less intensive.

[20] Сергеев В.М. и др. (2010) БРИК - политическая реальность посткризисного мира? Новые возможности для России: Аналитический доклад. (2010) В.М. Сергеев, Е.С. Алексеенкова, К.Е. Коктыш, К.Е. Петров, Е.С. Чимирис, А.С. Орлова. М.: Институт международных исследований МГИМО (У) МИД России. Вып.1(24).

[21] Provalis Research. URL: https://provalisresearch.com/products/qualitative-data-analysis-software/

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VI. The Frequency of the Codes usage in the Sample

One of our research tasks was to find to what extent the Russian media sources are interested in specific issues, connected with separate countries – Germany, Estonia, Norway, and in NATO. As we see on the chart, the most used term is Russia (Tab 3) Collective West is used 1000 times in 878 cases, and Russia – 6 685 times in 758 cases. Germany is also rather popular in Russian Media – it was used 3514 times in 317 cases. NATO takes the middle position – 681 times in 196 cases. Estonia and Norway are the less interesting issues for Russian Media.

The second research task was to look at the correlations between codes (Fig 1). This stage brings us one step closer from classical content analysis to the cognitive mapping and more deep investigation. We have made a sample based on the mentions of the code in the same segment of the text.

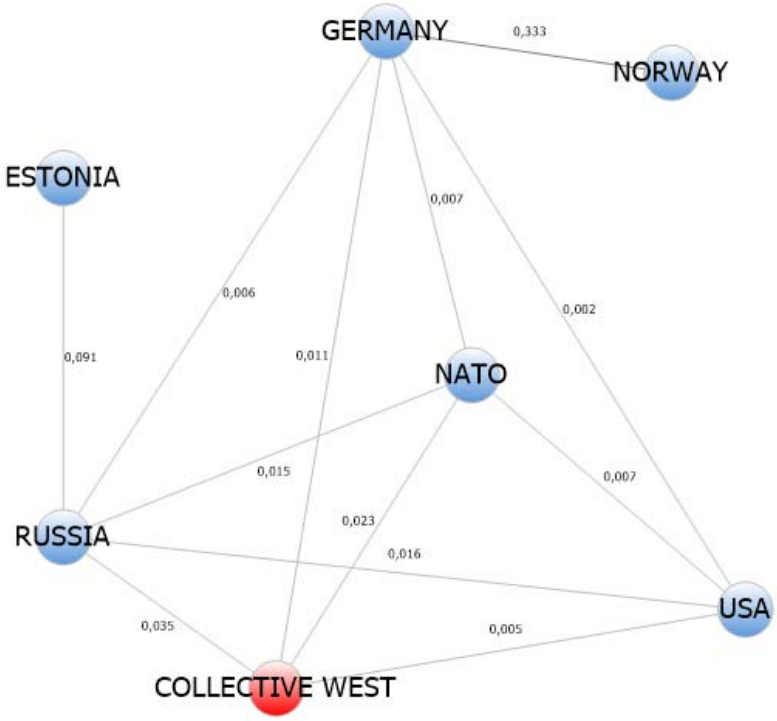


Figure 1

This approach gives us an opportunity to combine the qualitive and quantitative methods. First let's look at the distribution of correlations between codes in the given sample. Collective West is closer to Russia (0. 035), then goes NATO (0.023), Germany (0,011) and USA (0,005). Norway and Estonia have never been mentioned together with the Collective West concept within the given sample of texts. Now we propose to investigate the text itself to understand the context of the concept's usage.

VII. Collective West – Russia

The Collective West concept collects all the mainstream ideas about the West or Western Countries, which are widely spread in the Russian political discourse in the after Crimea period.

a) Traumatic experience of Russian-West negotiations

From the point of view of Russia Media the Collective West is an untrustworthy partner for Russia, whereas during the hard period of 90s of the XX century the West acted in its own interests and has used the weakness of Russia in its own interests. "Russia has already "paid a heavy price" when it trusted the "collective West" in the 1990s. However, now the words of Western countries are not perceived as a guide to action, and Russia is acting independently".[22] Now Russian political actors are proud of being independent from the Western will and interests. And the main problem for Russia in the Russian – Western relations now is the Western attempt to impose its model and system of values on the other countries. Such an attempt was also done towards Russia in the 90s, but as a vast political science literature point out, this attempt was unsuccessful.[23] Moreover the fast and radical

[22] В России заявили о готовности «дать Западу по зубам», 11.04.2021. URL: https://lenta.ru/news/2021/04/11/gdd/

[23] Biryukov N. (2018) Russian Politics in Transition: Institutional Conflict in a Nascent Democracy/Nikolai Biryukov, Victor Sergeyev. 2nd ed. Abingdon, Oxfordshire; New York: Routledge, 2018

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implementation of liberal rules in economy and democratic rules in political system resulted in the growth of "gray zones", mafia, unstable and corrupted political system, etc. That is why the Western programs now are perceived as "betrayal", but not the aid or anything else. "We have already heard a lot from the collective West or directly from each country, from the political leadership over the year, over the past years, even over decades," Zakharova said.[24]

b) Expansion of Western Values

Generally, the current western politics is depicted in Russian Media as the expansion of western way of life and institutions: "One group of countries after the end of the Cold War declared a claim to world leadership, and any attempt to challenge it is presented as a threat to world security. Now much that China, Russia, the SCO countries offer, is interpreted by the United States and the collective West in this way - a threat to the world order".[25]

And the leading role in this configuration is given to "Washington in the camp of the "collective West" and the emphasis on military force and barracks discipline inherent in the Americans ("everything is for our own, for the enemies - the law").[26] Some countries in European Union will argue, that the USA international politics does not reflect the position of the whole West. But from the point of view of Russian political officials and pro-power Media, USA and NATO are the core of the "collective West camp", so in this simplistic picture of the World everything is logic.

Moreover, the Collective West does not only promote its values and "invites Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova to unite in an alliance to counter Russia",[27] but also "aims to repeat the Ukrainian scenario in Russia. (…) The West, …, primarily pursues the goal of removing the President of Russia and his entourage".[28] "Another permanently unstable post-Soviet country, Kyrgyzstan, also reminded of itself. Can we talk about the growth of the "zone of disorder" in Central Asia? There is an opinion: if Russia loses its position in the region, competitors - the collective West and China - will enter it."[29] So from the point of view of the geopolitical situation Russia remains the only protection for the post-Soviet space against the expansion of the Collective West.

c) Russia as the Only Fighter against Western Expansion

At the same time, Russia is depicted as *"the only country in the world that categorically does not suit NATO centrism…* Russia is in Europe, we are at the forefront, and we objectively have much less freedom of maneuver than, for example, our partners in the BRICS or SCO".[30] Here we are moving towards the unique Russian or Eurasian world or identity, which oppose the expansion of the Collective West towards the East. "Russia itself, judging by the rhetoric of our politicians, political scientists and other *fighters of the information war with the "collective West",* is, as it were, not Europe, but a "special civilization".[31]

"Russia will remain "irrevocable, irreversible" "enemy forever" for the collective West"[32] At the same time there is an understanding, that Europe and USA, as well as separate European countries have different attitudes towards the Russia and international affairs. But for the internal political discourse this concept is rather convenient.

The Collective West concept is mostly effective for the internal politics, as it helps to create the besieged fortress regime inside Russia - "The next sanctions of the *collective West* against Russia will make our country only *stronger*".[33] As soon as the Collective West behave itself like this towards Russia, Russian politics towards the West will be symmetrical, or even asymmetrical (as we can see in Putin's speech) - "This is not only a call for the patriotic consolidation of Russian citizens and elites, but also a message for a foreign audience (primarily political and expert): Russia is putting forward a programmatic alternative to the trends that have captured the collective West, which do not find support from a significant part of the inhabitants of Europe and America".[34]

d) Collective West as Untrustworthy Partner

Describing the strategy of the Collective West towards Russia the Russian politicians and Media depict it as an actor that has broken all the rules: "*all these*

[24] **Захарова об угрозах Байдена: Чего мы только не слышали от США**, 18.03.2021. URL: https://ren.tv/news/politika/813522-zakharova-ob-ugrozakh-baidena-chego-my-tolko-ne-slyshali-ot-ssha

[25] **Косачев: в мире необходимо установить чёткие правила взаимодействия между государствами**, 15.06.2020. URL: https://www.pnp.ru/politics/kosachev-v-mire-neobkhodimo-ustanovit-chyotkie-pravila-vzaimodeystviya-mezhdu-gosudarstvami.html

[26] **Косачев призвал принуждать "коллективный Запад" к соблюдению устава ООН**. 01.04.2021. URL: https://ria.ru/20210401/ustav-1603770828.html

[27] **Альянс Украины, Грузии и Молдавии против РФ. Вечер с Владимиром Соловьевым**. 09.02.2021. URL: https://www.vesti.ru/video/2267294

[28] **Украинский сценарий для России. Вечер с Владимиром Соловьевым**, 02.02.2021. URL: https://www.vesti.ru/video/2264568

[29] **Почему вокруг границ России возникла дуга беспорядка**, 21.10.2020. URL: https://vz.ru/politics/2020/10/21/1060013.html

[30] **Косачев призвал принуждать "коллективный Запад" к соблюдению устава ООН** 01.04.2021. URL: https://ria.ru/20210401/ustav-1603770828.html

[31] **"В ссоре России с Евросоюзом виноваты обе стороны"**. 22.03.2021. URL: https://www.mk.ru/politics/2021/03/22/v-ssore-rossii-s-evrosoyuzom-vinovaty-obe-storony.html

[32] **Павловский назвал санкции действиями без конкретной цели**. 18.03.2021. URL: https://vz.ru/news/2021/3/18/1090050.html

[33] **Толстой: санкции Запада сделают Россию еще сильнее**. 02.03.2021. URL: https://www.vesti.ru/article/2530984

[34] **По осени считают**. 17.02.2021. URL: https://iz.ru/1126117/dmitrii-orlov/ne-ostavliaia-na-potom

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principles have already been destroyed by the collective West"[35]. In this information context Russia is a victim, but not the aggressor - "the collective West has been demonstrating a "hostile attitude towards Russia" for a thousand years, and many elites have changed during this time",[36] "various methods are used to contain Russia, including the imposition of sanctions, political pressure, disinformation campaigns and interference in internal affairs".[37]

At the same time Russia is depicted as an actor, that is open to the dialogue and negotiations. But "the European Union and the United States continue to talk about sanctions with maniacal persistence. This is how the press secretary of the Russian president Dmitry Peskov assessed the current relations of Russia with the collective West".[38]

e) Collective West does not Understand Russia

From the point of view of Russian politicians," the West does not understand our inner life, our grassroots life, not at the level of authorities, governments and so on, but at the level of ordinary people".[39] At the same time the European politics towards Russia is perceived in Russia as not very far-sighted - "What is important is that the collective West is in a hurry only to blame Russia for the danger and worries Moscow for the average person on the continent. This is necessary to "fork out" the country for security, but the Europeans frankly do not believe that Europe will be protected by the United States".[40]

f) Collective West Unite Against Russia

One of the most dangerous from the point of view of securitization process is the fact, that Russian Media percept the Collective West as a real unity, which mobilizes and integrates against the supposed Russia aggression - "The topic «Russia as a Common Enemy» is very convenient. And anti-Russian rhetoric will be used to strengthen this unity".[41] Another mainstream idea, is that the Collective West "insists on one thing: the "unconditional and proven" guilt of Russia".[42]

The Collective West is a kind of simulacra and creating of such is one of effective "weapons" in the Informational War. It is not quite clear, where the collective West is situated geographically, but its place is well defined in the information area. We have pro-Western Media (Meduza, Dozhd'), we have international (mostly pro-Western agents, among organizations, as well as among the individual persons), we have the pro-Western liberal discourse as a marker of so-called anti-Russian and anti-patriotic "propaganda". So, if geographically it will be difficult to define if any specific country belongs to the Collective West, on the level of information communication and Media such classification is done rather quickly and precisely.

VIII. Collective West – NATO

NATO is the most frequent correlation code together with the Collective West in the given sample. But here once more is the question – is NATO a part of the Collective West, or something else? The qualitive analysis of the correlations between the codes gives several contexts of NATO concept usage together with the Collective West.

a) NATO as a Part of Collective West

NATO is included in the Collective West concept, as well as the European Union: "This is a political action that should be viewed as a link in a chain, in a chain of everything that this very collective West is - both the European Union and NATO",[43] "the collective West - both NATO and the EU - must maintain unity and security".[44]

b) NATO as an Instrument of the Collective West

At the same time, NATO is also an instrument for Western expansion to the East: "Unfortunately, the collective West chose a different path - it chose the option of expanding NATO to the East,[45] "as experts note, after the collapse of the ATS, the promises of the collective West not to expand NATO were not fulfilled".[46]

[35] **Роскомнадзор допустил блокировку** Twitter **в России через месяц**. 16.03.2021. URL: https://iz.ru/1137838/2021-03-16/roskomnadzor-dopustil-blokirovku-twitter-v-rossii-cherez-mesiatc

[36] **Депутат от Севастополя Белик оценил условия признания Крыма российским на Западе**. 16.03.2021. URL: https://argumenti.ru/politics/2021/03/713803

[37] **Захарова: санкции – часть политики сдерживания России**. 04.03.2021. URL: https://www.vesti.ru/article/2531799

[38] **В Кремле все еще надеются на диалог с Западом, но готовы ко всему**. 16.02.2021. URL: https://www.rosbalt.ru/russia/2021/02/16/1887778.html

[39] **Запад неспособен понять простых россиян. Вечер с Владимиром Соловьевым**. 16.02.2021. URL: https://www.vesti.ru/video/2269236

[40] **Появление плана удара НАТО по РФ сочли попыткой "раскошелить" Европу**. 31.01.2021. URL: https://ren.tv/news/politika/797463-poiavlenie-plana-udara-nato-po-rf-sochli-popytkoi-raskoshelit-evropu

[41] **Политологи ожидают более агрессивного отношения США к РФ при Байдене**. 21.01.2021. URL: https://ren.tv/news/v-mire/794244-politologi-ozhidaiut-bolee-agressivnoe-otnoshenie-ssha-k-rf-pri-baidene

[42] **Была с Навальным в Томске и вылетела с ним в Берлин: Почему молчит скрывшаяся в Европе Мария Певчих**. 13.09.2020. URL: http://www.kp.ru/daily/217181.5/4286824/?from=twall

[43] **Захарова отметила, что США создали фейк, заявляя о дистанционном запросе на суд Навального**. 02.02.2021. URL: https://tass.ru/politika/10608497

[44] **В плену искусственной объективности. Запад должен руководствоваться хельсинкскими принципами, а не стокгольмским синдромом**. 15.05.2020. URL: https://theins.ru/opinions/219415

[45] **Посол РФ напомнил, что именно Москва открыла путь к объединению Германии**. 31.10.2020. URL: https://tass.ru/politika/9619381

[46] **«Дестабилизация мировой безопасности»: к чему привёл роспуск военных структур Организации Варшавского договора**. 31.03.2021. URL: https://russian.rt.com/world/article/847872-rospusk-voennye-struktury-organizaciya-varshavskogo-dogovora?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=RSS

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Here once more we can see the indication of untrustworthy West, which uses NATO as an instrument for the expansion to the East.

It will be also important to mention, that Russian Media sometimes use conspiracy theories: "Unexpectedly for the political elite of NATO countries, the development of events in relations between Moscow and the collective West since 2000 did not follow the scenario that was written for Russia even before the 90s of the last century".[47] It is interesting to mention, that the variety of conspiracy theories can still be found in the official and public political discourse in Russia.[48]

Of course Russian Media and public politicians don't aspire the open arm conflict with NATO, so it is important, that "Russia's relations with the collective West, continued in the diplomatic service, did not undergo any changes for the better, but overall, the tension in interaction with NATO was partly smoothed out, which became possible thanks to the introduction of a unilateral moratorium by the Russian Federation on the deployment of ground-based intermediate and shorter-range missiles in Europe".[49]

For Russian Media it is very important to underline the unity of the Western Countries and NATO. We can find the following explanation for this phenomenon in Russian Media - Western politicians are "in principle, forbidden to cooperate with Russia in the implementation of important projects". Several American politicians and experts perceive such cooperation as a betrayal of the interests of the collective West (which, of course, are determined only by the United States) and as a split in NATO".[50]

In preliminary conclusion for this analysis – NATO is included in the Collective West Concept when Russian media use both of these terms. But NATO is mostly perceived as an instrument by which the Collective West implements its plans, especially plans against Russia and Eastern expansion.

IX. Collective West – Germany

The main question, that arises when we analyze the mention of Germany in the sample, is what the relations between Germany and the Collective West are. In addition, what is the information context of speaking about Germany in the Russian Media in the period that is analyzed? To answer the first research question – yes, Germany is a part of Collective West: "Germany, the United States and other countries of the "collective West" are scaring Russia with sanctions over Navalny's verdict".[51]

Further, the main news occasion to speak about the Collective West and Germany was the Navalny Case. As soon as Navalny himself is depicted as an enemy of Russia, Germany also is depicted as a country, that is somehow in conflict with Russia: "Thus, it turns out that behind the back of a weak, *dependent person stands the collective West* in the person of Germany, the United States and a number of other countries, and this weak person, for some reason, begins to vilify everything that is sacred and dear to the citizens of Russia".[52] Moreover Navalny is depicted as "the agent of the Collective West" (once more we see the variant of a conspiracy theory).

The situation with Navalny is mostly called "an unreasonable irritant in interaction with Germany and a number of other countries of the collective West".[53] So after the incident is over Russian politicians are ready to return to more serious issues in Russian – West confrontation. So, the attitude of the German politicians regarding the Navalny case was surprising for Russia. It was an irrationally serious reaction from the German side, as the Russian media it has depicted: "After German Chancellor Angela Merkel publicly called the incident with blogger Alexei Navalny "poisoning", the collective West demands an explanation from Russia[54]. And from the official Russian position it was just a dramatization of poisoning by Navalny and his allies.

In this example of German presence in Russian Media, we can see that the Collective West concept is used, when the information context is negative. Germany becomes a part of the Collective West, when it is in confrontation with Russia: "They (the neo-Nazis) received freedom of action in many respects from their governments - when Russophobia merges with Nazism, the European authorities do not see it point-blank, since for the collective West Russia is an enemy that needs to be surrounded from all sides and imposed with sanctions. How similar it is to attempts to "pacify" Hitler on the eve of World War II!"[55] Interesting to mention, that

[47] **Кто лучше для России: Трамп или Байден?** 15.03.2021. URL: https://argumenti.ru/world/2021/03/713740

[48] LIVERS, K. A. (2020). *Conspiracy Culture: Post-Soviet Paranoia and the Russian Imagination*. University of Toronto Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/j.ctv179h1hx

[49] **МИД подвел итоги года**. 29.12.2020. URL: https://www.tvc.ru/news/show/id/200751

[50] **Соединённые Штаты будят Европу** 17.07.2020. URL: https://russian.rt.com/opinion/765198-mirzayan-ssha-sankcii-severnyi-potok-2?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=RSS

[51] **Слуцкий: угрозы Запада демонстрируют бенефициаров провокации с отравлением Навального**. 04.02.2021. URL: https://www.mk.ru/politics/2021/02/04/sluckiy-ugrozy-zapada-demonstriruyut-beneficiarov-provokacii-sotravleniem-navalnogo.html

[52] **«На фига козе баян?» Кургинян рассказал, чего хотят хозяева Навального**. 17.02.2021 URL: https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3192939.html

[53] **Слуцкий о высылке европейских дипломатов: «никто не позволит раздавать печеньки Госдепа на российских улицах»**. 05.02.2021. URL: https://argumenti.ru/politics/2021/02/708595

[54] SVT: **сложилось впечатление, что Путина перестало беспокоить мнение Запада**. 07.09.2020. URL: https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3055583.html

[55] **Историк сравнил потворство Европы неонацистам с "умиротворением" Гитлера**. 20.11.2020. URL: https://ria.ru/20201120/neonatsizm-1585461762.html

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there are no significant correlations between the Collective West Concept and Estonia and Norway. Of course, there are mentions of these countries in the sample, but it is not very significant in comparison to NATO and Germany.

X. Collective West – USA

Additionally, I have also looked at the correlation between the Collective West concept and the USA, which is depicted mostly as the leading country in the Collective West: "Under the Biden administration, the US and EU are consolidating on an anti-Russian basis. Sanctions are a way to show the ideological position and synchronization of actions with the EU, which is extremely important for the United States, to visually demonstrate the revival of the *collective West,* which weakened sharply during the presidency of Donald Trump, when the United States and the European Union acted asynchronously".[56] In the new circumstances after Donald Trump resignation the Collective West from the point of view of Russian Media experts will become more united and stronger. And their main task will be to struggle with Russia: "It is becoming increasingly clear that since the inauguration of the 46th US President Joseph Biden, the collective West has embarked on a course of confrontation with Moscow".[57]

Thus, new Biden administration will obviously increase the confrontation together with the European partners: "Moreover, motives dictated by the spirit of the times, when relations with the European Union and the United States do not raise doubts that the "collective West" is waging a serious propaganda campaign against Russia"[58] – that is how the situation is presented in Russian Media.

XI. The Collective West Concept as it is used in Russian Media

Some overall conclusions about the configuration of the Collective West Concept in Russian media. First, the concept is usually a way to name EU and USA together. But Collective West – is an active and powerful West. Not all the Western countries belong to the Collective West.

Second, the Collective West – as a group of Western countries, that are against Russia. If there are no evident conflict issues in relations with some Western country, the Collective West concept is dropped out from the media discourse.

Third, the Collective West has some negative characteristics such as: expansionism, untrustworthy, aggression, intervention into internal politics of other countries, double standards politics. All these features make the Collective West Concept rather suitable for securitization.

XII. The Collective West Securitization

As we see in the discourse and concept analysis above, the process of the Collective West securitization is grooving steadily. According to B. Buzan theory, securitization is a process where issues turn into matters of security[59]. According to the theory there are several steps towards securitization, and we can observe, how the Collective West become more and more securitized in the Russian public and political discourse.

1. *The rise of an issue on the agenda.* First the Collective Wets concept was used by the academics, and gradually it was noticed by politicians and was incorporated into their discourse.
2. *Act as deterrence.* As the Collective West is depicted in Russian Media and political discourse as a threat and untrustworthy international agent, there should be special acts of deterrence, such as the Crimea Case, or Donbass confrontation.
3. *Legitimize the past acts and reproduce existing securitizations.* As soon as the Collective West reproduce more and more "unfriendly" acts, the Crimean decision was and remain legitimate from the point of view of Russian political establishment.
4. *Acquire more control.* The current securitizing discourse near the Collective West concept create for Russia a room for maneuver in the future. It helps to legitimate the future possible decisions and activities.

So, the Collective West concept steadily becomes more and more securitized and effectively used to explain and legitimize the past and future political decisions. It is interesting that when separate countries such as Germany, Norway or Estonia are discussed, we can notice less radical negative effect.

Therefore, the simplification and generalization of an actor leads to the increasing securitization effect. The Collective West is becoming a solid concept with the negative connotation. At the same time, it is not always obvious what concrete countries are included into the concept. The Collective West is a system of anti-Russian values. It acquires the unified features, which may be not the case.

[56] **Эксперт объяснил ключевой смысл новых санкций США против России**. 02.03.2021. URL: https://vz.ru/news/2021/3/2/1087570.html

[57] **Чем заканчивается игра с фонариками**. 10.02.2021. URL: https://rg.ru/2021/02/10/komu-nuzhny-i-chem-zakanchivaiutsia-progulki-s-fonarikami.html

[58] **Без пафоса** 23.02.2021. URL: https://rg.ru/2021/02/23/shvydkoj-kulturnaia-deiatelnost-mozhet-byt-istolkovana-kak-prosvetitelskaia.html

[59] Albert, M. and Buzan, B. (2011). "Securitization, Sectors and Functional Differentiation". *Security Dialogue*. Volume 42, Issue 4. pp. 413-425.

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But at the same time there is also the West and separate Western countries, with which the dialogue is still possible. Moreover, is Russia being of course not the part of a Collective West; the conceptual dialogue is Russia a part of the West or not – is still on the public Russian agenda.

The Russian Mass Media played a crucial role in the securitization of the Collective West. As soon as B. Buzan argue – "the labeling of an issue as an existential threat for a specific referent object does not necessary constitute securitization. For the latter to happen, the audience must accept the security move, or at least tolerate it"[60]. As we can see in the case of Putin speech in 2021 and the speed of Collective West concept propagation through the Mass Media, the concept is tolerated and recognized as a threat.

XIII. Conclusion

In the result of the analysis presented above I have come to several conclusions. In this paper we have shown the growth of a selected concept from the analytical term towards the securitization instrument for internal political discourse. Moreover, in this example I have shown how simplification goes to escalation of securitization of discourse.

The Collective West Concept appeared in academic literature in 2006 as an attempt to find a suitable term for all the Western countries. In the beginning, there was no special emotional stress on it. Moreover, it has appeared before the Putin's Munich Speech and the start of Russian – West confrontation. After 2014 the escalation of confrontation was so strong, that Russian diplomats and politicians needed a special term to name the European countries and the USA. Since the USA and EU in some cases made similar decisions towards Russia, the last needed to somehow oppose itself. Therefore, Minister Lavrov started to use the concept of "historical West". And since 2018 he uses the Collective West concept in his speeches. In 2021 we were able to hear this term from the Russian President. In addition, since then the Collective West became popular in Russian Media. It is important to mention, that the Collective West concept is more used in so called conservative Media, and the Liberal ones use it less and even put in quotes.

The collective West concept is not very productive for real diplomatic work. If we really would like to discuss the current situation in relations between Russia and separate European countries and the USA, it will be of a little help. However, if the goal is to influence the public opinion and to create the atmosphere of Russian – Western confrontation, this concept appears to be rather useful. The Collective West is more of a kind of simulacra, which may be used for informational confrontation and internal politics. By means of this concept Russian politicians and some experts explain the situation in international politics, legitimize the past and future Russian decisions. If we look at the most important risks that are depicted in the Russian way of speaking and thinking about the Russian – West confrontation, they will be the following.

Russia is a Strong Country. Current Russian President and political elites are afraid to appear weak. What does it mean for Russia to show weakness? – from the discourse analysis we can conclude that it means to make concessions, "lose face" at the international level. What are the signs of weakness for Russia on the international arena? First – to lose some part of sovereignty, to allow other countries to behave themselves without respect to Russian interests.

Above we have discussed the Russian understanding of the term "to cross the border". It is important to mention, that Russia have some specific understanding of the problem of borders.

Vladimir Putin: Russia's border 'doesn't end anywhere'

Border problem. Due to the fact, that the topic of borders is still painful and unresolved for Russia at the existential level (there is no clear understanding of where these borders are, we live in a "matryoshka" situation*), Russia is building a defensive position and "red lines" to protect itself. The discourse reflects – "do not cross our boundaries, otherwise we will answer symmetrically/ asymmetrically".

It is important that there are several marginal concepts and projects of redefining boundaries from a historical perspective.

> *"I would like to remind you that what was called Novorossiya back in the tsarist days – Kharkov, Lugansk, Donetsk, Kherson, Nikolayev and Odessa – were not part of Ukraine back then…The center of that territory was Novorossiysk, so the region is called Novorossiya. Russia lost these territories for various reasons, but the people remained." (Vladimir Putin, 2014)*

**"Matryoshka" of Russian Borders* - Russian borders are movable. There are internationally recognized borders, the zone of Russian interests that is post-Soviet space, and the so-called Russia World borders on the map, there are borders of residence of the population with a Russian passport. Which of these borders will Russia protect, and will it have enough resources for this? At one point, the idea of sovereign autonomous development prevailed over cooperation and dialogue.

Perceptual errors. The transitional political regimes of the post-Soviet space hindered the effective development of the growth of the EU project and the American project of the worldwide triumph of democracy. At the same time, it is also necessary to consider the economic interests of the West. From this stems Russia's perception of assistance to the democratic development of the post-

[60] Buzan, B., Waever, O. and de Wilde, J. (1998). Security: A New Framework for Analysis. Lynne Rienner Press: Boulder, Colorado.

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Soviet states as interference in sovereignty and violation of the boundaries of Russia's interests.

Therefore, the Collective West is a very useful Concept for Russian Media discourse – it has special characteristics (aggression, untrustworthy, double standards, expansion, etc.) and due to them becomes a clear enemy for Russia in the issues described above. First, the Collective West threatens different Russian borders (from real ones by means of NATO enlargement, to symbolic ones by cultural expansion); second, it adheres to double standards, as the Collective West protect its own borders, but intervene in other countries internal and external politics; finally, the Collective West is untrustworthy partner, as it has betrayed Russia in the 90s of XX cent and wanted to make Russia weak and unstable.

Considering other countries, and I have tested the sample with Norway and Estonia and concluded, that in the overall massive of news their role is not depicted as something important. Due to the trend to simplification of the "enemy" Russian Media discourse avoid any complexity and depict the international relations as a simple confrontation between Russia and the Collective West, which is mostly presented by NATO, USA, and some powerful European countries, such as Germany.

So, the Collective West is a clear and simple Concept for further securitization of Russian Media discourse. And now the portrait of the West is more and more often reflected through the concept of collective West. Thus, we have the following trends, illustrated by the Collective West Concept usage in Russian Media.

1. If the counterparty is not clear, we do not trust. The spiral of mistrust is twisting, as we are increasingly broadcasting clichés and simplified verbal formulas, rather than a deeper analysis of the counterparty's motivation.
2. If we simplify it, we collapse to a certain collective image.
3. The stronger the escalation of the conflict, the stronger the control over public discourse within the country. There are fewer and fewer alternative discourses.

So, the complexity of Western actors moves on back side in Russian Media Discourse. They are more interested in discussing confrontation between Russia and Collective West. Local issues with separate European countries such as Norway or Estonia are not so interesting for Russian Media. Germany and NATO occupy a larger volume of information space, and they are more often associated with the concept Collective West (along with the USA). Therefore, the Collective West is a good instrument for securitization of Russian attitude towards West especially for internal political needs.

Table 1: The List of Codes for Analysis

Base Code	COLLECTIVE WEST
Codes	NATO
	GERMANY
	NORWAY
	RUSSIA
	ESTONIA

Table 2: Frequency distribution of all the cases in the Media Sample

Value	Frequency	Total Percent
Взгляд	203	22,70%
RT	53	5,90%
Российская газета	48	5,40%
Московский комсомолец	45	5,00%
РИА Новости	45	5,00%
Вести.ру	44	4,90%
ТАСС	44	4,90%
Правда.ру	43	4,80%
ИА Regnum	41	4,60%
Росбалт	37	4,10%
Парламентская газета	32	3,60%
Известия	30	3,30%
KP.RU	29	3,20%

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АН Онлайн	27	3,00%
«Life.ru»	22	2,50%
РЕН ТВ	21	2,30%
Аргументы и факты	14	1,60%
Новости ТВ Центр	13	1,50%
Lenta.ru	12	1,30%
Интерфакс	10	1,10%
ZNAK.com	9	1,00%
Петербург 5 канал Новости	8	0,90%
Газета.ru	8	0,90%
Новые Известия	7	0,80%
Звезда	7	0,80%
ФедералПресс	5	0,60%
Meduza.io	5	0,60%
РБК	5	0,60%
Коммерсантъ	5	0,60%
The New Times	5	0,60%
Yandex-zen THE INSIDER	4	0,40%
fontanka.ru	3	0,30%
Телеканал Дождь	3	0,30%
МБХ Новости	3	0,30%
Новости	2	0,20%
URA.RU	1	0,10%
Новая газета	1	0,10%
Дни.ру	1	0,10%
Медиазона	1	0,10%

Table 3: Frequency of selected codes

Code	Number of mentions	% of mentions	Number of cases
RUSSIA	6685	3190,0%	758
GERMANY	3514	1680,0%	317
COLLECTIVE WEST	1000	480,0%	878
NATO	681	320,0%	196
ESTONIA	18	10,0%	8
NORWAY	6	0,0%	6

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