RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER IN THE POST SOVIET SPACE

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER IN THE POST SOVIET SPACE

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M.Sc., Program in Eurasian Studies

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This thesis seeks to examine Russian foreign policy in the post-Soviet era and its evolution in terms of Russia's use of soft power in the post-Soviet space. Contrary to the views that consider Russia exclusively as a hard power, this thesis argues that Russia has started to develop its soft power capabilities and how to use its soft power effectively in the post-Soviet space, especially since the beginning of Vladimir Putin's second Presidential term in 2004. In this context, Russia pursues a proactive foreign policy particularly in the spheres of language and education, which are important elements of its soft power.

The thesis is composed of three main chapters in addition to the introduction and conclusion chapters. The first main chapter discusses the evolution of the soft power concept in Russian foreign policy by analyzing the period of 1992-2008. The second chapter seeks to analyze the position of Russian language in the CIS countries as lingua franca. The last chapter examines the Russian education system and the attraction of its higher education institutes for students from the CIS countries.

Keywords: Russia, Soft Power, Foreign Policy Analysis, Language, Education

ÖZ

SOVYET SONRASI COĞRAFYA'DA RUSYA'NIN YUMUŞAK GÜCÜ

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Bu tezin amacı Rusya'nın Sovyet sonrası coğrafyada izlediği dış politikayı ve Rusya'nın yumuşak gücü kullanma politikaları açısından Rus dış politikasının geçirmiş olduğu evrimi incelemektir. Rusya'yı sadece bir sert güç olarak gören genel görüşlerin aksine bu tezde, özellikle Vladimir Putin'in Devlet Başkanlığı'nın ikinci döneminden itibaren Rusya'nın Sovyet sonrası coğrafyada yumuşak güç unsurlarını etkin bir biçimde geliştirmeye başladığı öne sürülmektedir. Bu bağlamda Rusya önemli yumuşak güç unsurlarından olan eğitim ve dil politikaları alanlarında da aktif bir dış politika izlemektedir.

Tez giriş ve sonuç bölümlerine ek olarak üç ana bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölümde 1992-2008 dönemlerinde yumuşak güç kavramının Rus dış politikasında geçirmiş olduğu evrim tartışılırken, ikinci bölümde coğrafyanın *lingua francası* olarak tanımlanan Rus dilinin Sovyet sonrası dönemde BDT ülkelerindeki pozisyonu incelenmektedir. Son bölümde ise Rus eğitim sistemi ve Rus yüksek öğrenim kurumlarının BDT ülkelerindeki çekiciliği üzerinde durularak bu unsur da yumuşak güç kavramı çerçevesinde incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rusya, Yumuşak Güç, Dış Politika Analizi, Dil, Eğitim

To My Family

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ABBREVATIONS

CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States

CSTO: Collective Security Treaty Organization

EU: European Union

KGB: State Security Committee (Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti)

MFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

RCSC: Russian Centers of Science and Culture

RF: Russian Federation

SCO: Shanghai Cooperation Organization

SSR: Soviet Socialist Republic

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Scope of the Thesis

This thesis seeks to examine Russian foreign policy and its evolution in terms of soft power politics particularly in the post-Soviet era. At a time when the world, and the nature of the art of diplomacy, are evolving into a new phase, the question of "How Russian diplomats' foreign policy understanding should evolve?" is one the main questions to be answered for the future of Russian diplomacy. At the same time defining the new Russian land is also a problem for the Russian Federation. The borders of the Russian Empire may have changed, but it still wants to dominate in the post-Soviet geography. Describing the region, known as the post-Soviet space, as Near Abroad Russia has created a milder definition than the backyard politics of the US to indicate the priority of these countries in Russia's foreign policy agenda. However, controlling these newly emerged fourteen countries is harder than during the Soviet era, when the dynamics of the new world order are used as an indicator to foreign policy formulation process.

The attraction of the West and Western politics, together with the perceived weakness of Russia during the 1990s due to economic and political instability, has caused Russia to lose political ground incrementally in the post-Soviet space. Moreover, the tendency of the Western bloc's enlargement towards Russia, and efforts to integrate the post-Soviet geography, has been an ongoing process since the 1990s, which has resulted in the Russians becoming neighbors of two major entities: NATO and the EU. One of the main factors that facilitated NATO and EU expansion towards Russian borders, and the tendency of ex-Warsaw Pact countries or Post-Soviet countries to be

new members of the Western bloc, could be seen as the attraction of the winning side which in this context is the West and its values. Subsequently this brings different concepts other than real politics to Russian foreign policy conduct, known as attraction, co-optive power or soft power politics in an attempt to balance the Western expansion.

The balance of power changed during the 1990s, and the rules of the game became different from those applied during the 1960s or 1980s. The Western Alliance, and in particular the US, is seen to be the winner of the Cold War. The post-Soviet period can be described as a one-polar world, but it would seem clear that international relations is in a transformation process. Regional powers as well as economic agents are more dominant than before, but it is hard to claim that the nation-state has totally lost its importance. In this new period, relationships based on solely military interests are not sufficient to be able to control other countries, or build up alliances. Hard power measures and instruments are important for foreign policy conduct, but also gaining consensus and not acting unilaterally would seem to have been proved to be important factors within international relations in the new world order.

In this framework, there are new instruments that can be used in the new era, but these also contain new challenges for the nation state. In the 21st century transportation and communication tools have become so cheap and accessible, that benefits which would have once only accrued to a country or large corporations, have become available for all: from small enterprises to an Indian in Mumbai who has access to the internet from an internet café. In particular the incredible decrease in transaction costs, which is almost equal to zero thanks to electronic mail systems, has caused a weakening in the comparative advantages of the West while opening new horizons for the players of the game. Consequently, the major changes and developments in technology have direct

repercussions on economy, politics, and also on diplomacy. Thomas Friedman describes the new world order in a radical way as saying "the World is flat"[1].

Thus, being aware of this fact and conducting foreign policy not only based on certain instruments, but rather pursuing a more dynamic model that relies on a diversified set of tools, can help countries to be successful in the 21st century. In this sense Russia as the successor of the USSR is one of the strongest hard powers in the international arena, but as mentioned above this is not the only prerequisite to be successful in international affairs. Even though it had to experience an identity shock with the collapse of the USSR, almost two decades later Russia would seem to have started to develop new instruments within its foreign policy. In this study these new instruments will be analyzed in the framework of a soft power concept.

1.2. Literature Survey

International relations is a relatively young, dynamic discipline. Whilst critical approaches that aim to understand the system, or problem solving theories, are evolving or igniting new debates, the dynamism is transforming or modifying the discipline itself due to the non-static nature of international politics. It would seem difficult to identify a single concept that could be defined as the core theory of international relations. However, concepts such as anarchy, nation state, change and power form the foundations of existing debates and, it could be argued, shape the understanding of the system level analysis. It would seem that these concepts are not mutually exclusive, but are interactive and entwined one with another.

Having power or being powerful is like a holy grail that each actor, whether it is a state or a man, seeks to own to facilitate the capacity of ruling or being sovereign.

[1] Thomas Friedman, *World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, (New York: Farrar, Stratus and Giroux, 2005)

Likewise this nature of power makes it irresistible for students of international relations. However, any definition of power can change in terms of place and time, and it can be argued that there is a process of evolution of power and its definition within a conceptual framework. Accordingly, power is defined in many forms in the literature by different schools and scholars. These scholars also argue that power and politics are organically related to each other.

E. H. Carr states that "[p]olitics cannot be divorced from power."[2] As an approval, defining international politics as a struggle of power, Morgenthau does not disagree with Carr.[3] Yet, "[t]he concept of power is one of the most troublesome in the field of international relations and, more generally, in political science. Many weighty books have analyzed and elaborated the concept."[4] What makes it troublesome is the nature of power itself that can be measured with certain indicators, but still has ingredients that cannot be explained via nominal terms. This makes every explanation reasonable and explanatory as long as it is consistent. Parallel to these arguments, in his book *Power of Power Politics*, John Vasquez concludes that power is the most crucial concept in the discipline.[5]

The realist school places a special emphasis on power. One of the prominent members of this school, Morgenthau, defines state level relations in the framework of power politics as follows:

> It is sufficient to state that the struggle for power is universal in time and space and is an undeniable fact of experience. It cannot be denied that throughout historic time,

[2] Edward H. Carr, The Twenty Year Crisis, 1919 -1939, An Introduction to the study of International Relations, (New York: Perennial, 2001), p.97.

[3] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p.27.

[4] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.13.

[5] Oktay F. Tanrısever, "Güç" in Atilla Eralp (ed.), *Devlet ve Ötesi - Uluslararası İlişkilerde Temel Kavramlar*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007, 3rd Edition), p.53.

> regardless of social, economic, and political conditions, states have met each other in the contests of power.[6]

For Morgentahu, power, the potency of ruling or control, is the *immediate aim* of international politics, but it is also just one side of the coin. While it can be defined as the aim, it is also the way to reach your other targets such as security, prosperity, or freedom. Moreover, he underlines that "[m]any…activities are normally undertaken without consideration of power, nor do they normally affect the power of the nation undertaking them. Many legal, economic, humanitarian and cultural activities are of this kind."[7] Thus, a reductionist approach that limits power to a one dimensional force would be misleading in understanding international relations. Therefore, the questions of "What is power?", and "How is it defined in international relations theory?" become more crucial. Indeed, as stated above, it is difficult to identify a static or common definition that is accepted in the discipline. It is defined as "the capacity to influence other people or the course of events" in the Oxford Dictionary. Keohane and Nye[8] define power as "…the ability of an actor to get others to do something they otherwise would not do (and at an acceptable cost to the actor)" … or "… [the] control over outcomes." Waltz as the founder of *structural realism* defines power, "following Hobbes, as the capacity to produce intended effect."[9] All these are basic definitions that help to understand the concept of power and underline the existence of a certain agenda, actors and power as the concept that influences all. Morgenthau offers a definition, but details the concept of power as *political power* and *power* itself. He says that power is "…man's control over the minds and actions of other men. … Political power is a psychological relation between those who exercise it and those

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[6] Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, (New York: Knopf, 1965), p. 33, in Michael Sullivan, Theories of International Relations, Transition v.s. Persistence, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p.114.

[7] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 28.

[8] Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1989), p.11.

[9] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War – A Theoretical Analysis, (New York, Columbia Universtiy Press*, 1959), p.205.

over whom it is exercised." Thinking about political power, it would seem reasonable to define it as the action ofachieving an aim or result that is in the interest of a country or a person. Thus, it is the sum of all instruments, advantages and disadvantages that a country possesses.

The environment of the cold war period, together with the legacies of two world wars, influenced the process of shaping the realist school. In general high politics of security issues in a militaristic framework dominated the arena. Aron finds this approach reductionist and argues that the military in particular has a passive role, especially in times of peace:

> In wartime, actual force is close to military force (without entirely coinciding with it, since the course of operations is, in part, determined by non-military forms of conflict). In peacetime, actual force is not to be confused with military force, since divisions, fleets, and airplanes in being, but not utilized are only one of the instruments in the service of foreign policy.[10]

Partly accepting this argument, it should be noted that the nature of war also changed in the 20th century and wars are not fought only in the trenches or on battlefields.[11] During wartime it is not only war machines or soldiers that are claiming victories on the battlefield. Another big struggle is going on behind the trenches in a civilian sphere. Moreover, even if it is a small scale operation, legitimizations via media, international support and other factors have influence on the success of countries. Legitimization of your aims and implementations at an international level is a key factor, especially given the changing nature of threats in the global arena. In the 21st century methods of managing crises and politics in international relations have attained new levels of sophistication. Thus, defining power in a one dimensional understanding would be a reductionist approach for the sake of better understanding of the potential of a country. On the other hand, rivalry at an international level is not

[10] Raymond Aron, *Peace and War – A Theory of International Relations,* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003), p. 49.

[11] In this study the role of the army is not limited to its potential or success in the battlefield. Parallel with Nye's assumption, the army is an important factor within a country's image and attractiveness.

limited to wars, rather in peace time big wars are being fought in spheres of economics and culture. The duration of these wars is much longer than those conventional wars fought by armies. Leverages within the economic sphere are being created by political and economic agents, which are defined as *economic interdependency* in international relations. Keohane and Nye argues that "where there are reciprocal (although not necessarily symmetrical) costly effects of transactions, there is interdependence…It is asymmetries in dependence that are mostly likely to provide sources of influence for actors in their dealings with one another."[12] This approach mainly focused on economics and their influential role in politics, and the role of asymmetric interdependence is analyzed in terms of leverage within the bargaining process or policy formulation.

The critical school also places an emphasis on power by concentrating on its role of shaping ideologies and agenda creation. Foucault argues in a postmodernist perspective that "power and ideology are mutually supportive and they directly imply one another".[13] In fact, ideology is another important instrument of the power concept along with economic and military measures. It is crucial for creating a certain image of a country, an agenda for domestic and foreign policy, as well as maintaining the recreation and function of the existing system. In this way, it also recreates the power itself via these measures. Parallel to this Cox defines the structural characteristic of world orders as configurations of material power, ideas and institutions and there is a historical pattern that these shape and form the world order in a historical process.[14]

Having leverage over another party would seem to imply direct effects of influence and power. Ideologies and institutions are important factors in shaping world order

[12] Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, pp. 9-11.

[13] Richard Devetak, "Postmodernism", in Scott Burchill, Andrew Linklater, Richard Devetak, Jack Donelly, Matthew Paterson, Christian Reus-Smit and Jaqui True, *Theories of International Relations*¸ (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 162.

[14] Robert W. Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond the International Relations Theory", *Millenium – International Relations Theory*, Vol. 10 No. 2, 1981, p. 141.

and international relations. However, if the aim is to achieve the desired outcome, Nye talks about another factor: attraction, and calls this phenomenon 'soft power'. This would seem to be a somewhat eclectic concept that includes elements of the critical, realist and liberal schools. He argues that it is not only leveraging by coercive policies that can be used in foreign policy conduct to obtain the desired results, but policies of co-optive power would give similar results if implemented efficiently. He argues that co-optive power, popularly known as soft power rests "…on the attraction of one's ideas or on the ability to set the political agenda in a way that shapes the preferences that others express."[15] In a way this has some similarities with Kenneth Waltz's understanding of attraction[16] or Susan Strange's structural power concept which is "the power to shape and determine the structures of the global political economy within which other states, their political institutions, their economic enterprise and (not least their scientists and other professional people have to operate."[17] However, Nye whilst not denying the previous definition, states that soft power has a broader focus encompassing all elements of international relations.[18]

Power has many faces, and soft power differs from hard power with its element of attraction, and its impact on the shaping of ideas and policies. To be able to make this difference Nye states that:

> Hard power can rest on inducements ("carrots") or threats ("sticks"). But sometimes you can get the outcomes you want without tangible threats or payoffs. The indirect way to get what you want has sometimes called "the second face of power". A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries – admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness– want to follow it. In this sense, it is also important to set an agenda and

[15] Joseph S. Nye, "The Changing Nature of Power", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 105, No. 2, 1990, p. 181.

[16] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (New York: Random House, 1979), p. 166.

[17] Susan Strange, *States and Markets: An Introduction to International Political Economy*, (London: Pinter Publishers, 1988), pp. 24-25.

[18] Joseph S. Nye, "The Changing Nature of Power", p. 181.

> attract others in world politics, and not only to force them to change by threatening military force or economic sanctions.[19]

The main derivation of classical debates is that power is a relative concept and comparatively one may decide that a country is powerful. Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others.[20] It is also a relative concept that one system of values is more attractive than another.

Certainly, to be able to influence other countries and transfer the political values of a country to others' cultures, some instruments or tools should be used, which require an explanation for a better understanding of the concept. Even though the concept has a naïve or an abstract characteristic "…soft power of a country rests primarily on three sources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to other), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)[21]. Countries that are aware of their potential, and have the political will and resources to implement soft power policies, would certainly benefit from their usage in domestic and foreign policy. However, it is not easy to implement soft power policies in an efficient manner without having a strong foundation and a well developed framework. Political values, culture and foreign policy issues are defined in a tradition if they are sufficiently sophisticated with the potential of having influence over other countries. Moreover, the potential for influence can vary according to the actors involved, because identity is one of the main factors that shapes the attitudes of these actors. Constructivist theory would seem to furnish an apt explanation here that "people act toward objects, including other actors on the basis of meanings that the objects have for them. States act differently toward enemies than they do toward friends because enemies are

[19] Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), p. 5.

[20] Nye, p.5.

[21] Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, p. 11.

threatening and friends not."[22] Identities are not something given, but socially constructed by the environment that surrounds the actors, and there is continuous change in the system. Hence, it is hard to deny the historical pattern that makes certain values or policies more attractive than others.

In line with the argument above there are some critiques claiming that Nye's analysis is somewhat lacking within a historical context. Bilgin and Eliş say that "Nye remains silent on the historical process through which particular values have come to be considered as *universal* and *right* and others have been rendered parochial and less right."[23] Actually, whilst it would seem these criticisms have some validity, they do not refute the importance of the soft power concept in international politics, rather bringing a critical perspective that would help to strengthen the concept.

It would be wrong to claim that soft power is the main solution for all problems in the global arena. Indeed, essence of the solution would seem to be using both hard power and soft power elements as a mixture in foreign policy. Nye also does not advocate that soft power is enough itself to influence nations or people, and he does not claim that hard power is unnecessary in 21st century. He further states that effectual leadership requires the combination of these two, which can be called 'smart power'.[24]

Nye states that "[h]ard power and soft power are related because they are both approaches to achieving one's purpose by affecting the behavior of others."[25] Moreover, hard power can also be used as soft power if the image of a country is important. A strong army can be an asset for a country's image, as well as functioning as an operational army.

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[22] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics", *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 1992, pp. 396-397.

[23] Pınar Bilgin and Berivan Eliş, "Hard Power, Soft Power: Toward a More Realistic Analysis", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2008, p. 12.

[24] Joseph S. Nye, *The Powers to Lead*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. X

[25] Joseph S. Nye, *The Powers to Lead*, p. 39.

It would be naïve to claim power politics is ever static, and sources of hard power and soft power can change or evolve in time. Nuclear weapons and associated propaganda would seem to have been the main tools in Cold War era, but in the information age it is hard to expect propaganda policy to function as it did a couple of decades ago, given that the internet, satellite communication and ease of access to information now makes it impossible for disinformation to live long in the public sphere. In this era media's role is being redefined, while the dynamics of social, cultural and economic instruments are evolving, and as a result having direct or indirect impacts on foreign policy conduct. In other words, power sources are changing and it is becoming more crucial to employ soft power tools in tandem with hard power instruments to be able to succeed in the international arena.

Table I: Three Types of Power[26]

	Behaviours	Primary Currencies	Government Policies
Military Power	Coercion Deterrence Protection	Threats Force	Coercive Diplomacy War Alliance
Economic Power	Inducement Coercion	Payments Sanctions	Aid Bribes Sanctions
Soft Power	Attraction Agenda Setting	Values Culture Policies Institutions	Public Diplomacy Bilateral and Multilateral Diplomacy

[26] Jospeh Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, p. 31.

Soft power is a new concept around which debate is still taking place. As discussed above there are some criticisms regarding the nature of soft power that ignore the historical context. There is a similar problem regarding soft power and case studies based on this concept. In the case of Russia there are some recent studies produced by scholars, but it cannot really be said that these are either broad or include in-depth analysis that examines the development of soft power in the post-Soviet period. Indeed, Joseph Nye includes a short analysis of soft power within the Soviet Union, in his well known book *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, but does not go further. On the other hand, in the framework of Nye's soft power concept there are some introductory studies on this issue made by Fiona Hill, Nicu Popescu and Andrei Tsygankov,[27] which are not developed further with a broader analysis. Thus, in this thesis Russian soft power in the post-Soviet Space will be analyzed in a historical context for the period of 1992-2008.

1.3. Argument of the Thesis

Contrary to the view that defines Russia as exclusively hard power, this thesis argues that Russia has started to develop its soft power elements, and to use soft power policies effectively in the post-Soviet space especially since the beginning of Vladimir Putin's second term in the presidential office. Furthermore, the Russian Federation pursues a proactive foreign policy particularly in the spheres of language and education, which are important elements of soft power. However, policy making is a continuous process, soft power policies did not emerge fully formed and, as conditions

[27] Fiona Hill, "Moscow Discovers Soft Power", *Current History*, Vol. 105, No. 693, (2006), pp. 341 – 347; Andrei Tsygankov, "If not by Tanks, then by Banks? The Role of Soft Power in Putin's Foreign Policy", *Europe Asia Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 7, (November 2006), pp. 1079 – 1099; Nicu Popescu, "Russia's Soft Power Ambitions", *CEPS Policy Brief No. 115*, 2006.

become more favorable, the need for divergence of instruments and steps taken to satisfy this need was realized.

As discussed above one of the problems regarding Russian foreign policy analyses is that these are mainly focused on hard power politics or identity issues, but soft power elements within the country were not deeply examined, especially in the Post Cold War period. In this context, this thesis aims to examine Russian soft power and present a deeper analysis within the framework of Joseph Nye's soft power concept. It is argued that soft power analysis of the Russian Federation would contribute to understanding the efforts of Russia, and lead to new areas of debate within world politics.

Within this framework, this study will strive to complement Nye's analyses, and Russia's soft power and foreign policy will be critically analyzed. For the ease of purpose the area of focus is the post-Soviet space. Parallel to the critiques regarding the absence of historical context underpinning soft power instruments, in this study a historical analysis will be made in terms of Russian advantages in the CIS countries in the context of identity creation or cultural interaction via linguistic and educative instruments. It is argued that these instruments constitute channels of interaction and spheres of influence for Russian values or culture to be transferred or preserved in the post-Soviet geography. However, changing conditions in the Post Cold War period have also undermined the monopolistic nature of Russian high culture elements within the post-Soviet space.

1.4. Methodology

In this study both qualitative and quantitative methods are used for a better understanding of Russian soft power in the post-Soviet space. In terms of qualitative methods, during this study interviews were conducted with 12 diplomats working for

the embassies in Ankara of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. However, due to contact problems with the embassies or consulates of Belarus, Russia and Moldova, interviews could not be conducted. Moreover, due to diplomatic problems between Turkey and Armenia, both countries do not have diplomatic missions either in Armenia or in Turkey. Thus, no contact could be made during this study with Armenian diplomats. In addition to interviews, primary sources such as official statements, speeches and newspapers were examined, and secondary sources such as books and articles regarding Russia's relations with the post-Soviet space were surveyed.

For a better understanding of Russian soft power and the position of Russian language and education in the post-Soviet space statistics derived from World Bank, UNESCO, and other primary sources were processed, along with analysis of the results of recent surveys conducted in the region.

1.5. Organization of the Chapters

The thesis is composed of six chapters. After the introduction, the second chapter discusses the evolution of the soft power concept in Russian foreign policy in the period 1992-2008. This chapter is divided into three sections. Firstly, Russia and its power politics are analyzed to understand Russian power and its transformation in the Post Cold War period. The second and the third sections examine the evolution of Russian foreign policy and its soft power in the post-Soviet space. In this framework, Russia's soft power in the post-Soviet space in terms of the Russian image, and policies created in the context of soft power concept are examined in the eras of both Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin. This chapter claims that despite the challenges that Russia had to face in the Yeltsin period, both domestically and internationally, it succeeded in regaining its power during the Putin period, and also started to develop soft power instruments in cultural and diplomatic spheres.

The third chapter examines the position of the Russian language as a lingua franca in the post-Soviet geography. This chapter is divided into two sections. Firstly, the Russian language as an element of soft power is analyzed in a historical context. Then the Russian language in the post-Soviet space is examined on a country basis, to be able to see the regional and country-based differences in the post 1991 period. It is argued that there is no single trend regarding the position of the Russian language in these countries. Moreover, certain indicators such as geography, the ethnic structure and domestic politics play important roles in the context of the status of the Russian language. Yet, it is the lingua franca of the post-Soviet space and an important asset for Russia's soft power in the region.

The fourth chapter discusses the Russian education system and the attraction of its higher education institutes for students who go abroad for education from CIS countries. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first part discusses the role of Russian education as an element of soft power. The second part attempts to establish a framework for the Russian education system in the post-Soviet period. It considers reforms, changes and problems that Russia had to face after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. These elements are in turn analyzed to identify the challenges facing Russia maintaining its role as the major player within education in the post-Soviet space. Lastly, the position of the Russian education system will be analyzed as a destination for international education and its attraction in CIS countries. It is claimed that in the post 1991 period, a collapsing economy, budget constraints and corruption in the education sector had negative impacts on Russian education. However, starting with the Putin period, both at a rhetorical level and in practice, important steps have started to be taken by the Russian political elite. Moreover, in the post-Soviet space higher education institutes of the Russian Federation are still popular and this gives an advantageous position for Russia to pursue and expand its soft power policies in this context.

CHAPTER 2

SOFT POWER AND RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY

In this chapter, Russian foreign policy and the evolution of soft power policies will be examined in 1992-2008 period. In this framework, the chapter is divided into three sections: Power Politics and Russia; Foreign Policy under the Yeltsin administration; Foreign Policy under the Putin administration. The presidential terms of these leaders will be analyzed with regard to soft power policies within the CIS region. In this context, firstly Russian power and the changing international environment will be discussed. Secondly, the framework of the domestic and international environment will be defined during the presidential terms of Yeltsin and Putin. In terms of soft power, the image and potential of a country is as important as the soft power instruments or policies developed by the political elite. Thus, the main emphasis will be on the image of Russian Federation, and the factors that had impact on shaping this image. Factors such as stability, economic performance and rhetoric used by the political elite have power to shape perceptions at home and abroad. Thus, economic performance, efforts for stabilizing national and international balances, as well as the implemented policies and discourse in 1992 – 2008 period will be examined. Moreover, the instruments developed by the Russian Federation, especially during the Putin era, will be analyzed.

2.1. Russia and Its Power Politics

Russia has an image of a strong military power as the successor to the USSR, and the instruments it employs for the solution of problems, strengthen this image of hard power to be predominant when describing the Russian Federation. In fact, being a hard power did not help Russia to win the Cold War, but was one of the reasons that led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, since the economy was mainly predicated

on the industry of war, military expenditure dominated the system and this negatively affected the sustainability of the economy.

The dominance of military expenditure within the Russian economy can be seen from the figure of 15.8% of the Russian GDP which it accounted for in 1988. Immediately following the collapse of the USSR it decreased dramatically. In nominal terms the rival of the Soviet Union, the US, was spending more, but this only represented 5.7% of the US GDP for the same period. [28] Apart from having conventional weapons, nuclear weapons were also key elements of the dominance of these two blocs. The end of the Cold War changed this environment in a positive manner, in that the world witnessed a decade of decreasing military expenditure up until the new millennium, with decreasing Russian military expenditure clearly playing an important role in this trend.

The downward trend has changed since 1999 and now there is a global tendency to increase military expenditure, mainly due to increases in the military budgets of the US and Chinese governments.[29] In the case of Russia military expenditure is still far away from its glamorous days during the Cold War era, despite a slight increase in the military budget during Putin's term. Moreover, the changes in global balances undermined the Russian Army's position as a strong military power. In 2006, it ranked seventh country in terms of military spending with $35.4 billion.[30] Furthermore, the Russian army ranked the fifth largest country in the world with

[28] There was a difference of more than $250 billion between the military budgets of the US and Russia in real terms. The US military budget was $483,994 billion whereas the Russian military budget was 218,436 billion. "Military Expenditure of Russia", *SIPRI*, http://milexdata.sipri.org/result.php4.

[29] "Military Expenditure by Region in Constant US Dollars, 1988-2000", *SIPRI*, http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/resultoutput/worldreg.

[30] "The 15 major spending countries in 2007", *Military expenditure*: *SIPRI Yearbook 2008: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2008), Appendix 5A.

1,037,000 personnel[31], compared to just two decades ago when the size of armed forces in Russia was five million.[32]

Economic constraints, change in political understanding and more importantly the demise of the USSR were the main factors behind this decreasing trend of Russian military spending. Russia is no longer a superpower and, due to the problems inherent in the collapse of the economy after the dissolution of the Union together with the 1998 economic crisis, it had to face reality and revise its expenditure. There are some increases in military expenditure in nominal terms, and tendencies to reform within the Russian army, especially after the Russian – Georgian War in August 2008. Still, looking at the existing data it can be said that the current Russian Army is far removed from the Red Army's heyday. Russia had to experience degradation within its conventional forces, and the need for optimization in resources and serious reforms in the army would seem to have been commonly accepted by the Russian authorities.[33]

Although the Russian Army has had to face some problems in terms of conventional power, within the context of a nuclear arsenal Russia is still one of the main powers in the world. Natural Resources Defense Council reports that as of 2006 Russia has 16,000 nuclear weapons whereas the US has 10,104.[34] This means the Russian arsenal contains more nuclear warheads than the total of the US, Chinese, British and French, even though the majority of the Russian warheads were deployed prior to1990.[35]

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[31] Andre Buncombe, "'Out of Touch' Bush Wants to Boost Size of Army", *The Independent*, 21 December 2006.

[32] Ludmilla Selezneva, "Post Soviet Russian Foreign Policy: Between Doctrine and Pragmatism", in Rich Fawn (ed.), *Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy*, (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p.11.

[33] Roger N. McDermott, "Russia's 'Lessons' from Georgia War: Impact on Military Reform Plans", *CACI Analyst*, 11 December 2008.

[34] Robert S. Norris and Hans M. Kristensen, "Nuclear Notebook", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 62, No. 4, 2006, pp. 64-67

[35] In 2008, data show that both Russian and American nuclear weapons reduced 15%-50% respectively. As of 2008 the US holds 5400 warheads, while Russia has 14000 of which 5200 are stockpiled for operation and 8808 are in reserve or waiting for dismantlement.

Limitation efforts in the context of nuclear weapons have been on-going since the 1980s. The first concrete step was taken in 1991, when Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START – I) to limit the number of deployed warheads, which would expire in 2009. In the 1990s parties took other initiatives to instigate further steps but, due to conjectural problems, these did not come to fruition. Eventually, in July 2009, the parties agreed to "cut strategic warheads for each side between 1500 and 1675 down from the limit of 2200 slated to take effect in 2012 under the treaty of Moscow, which was signed in 2002 by the presidents at the time, George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin."[36]

In spite of the treaties, Russia and the US are important nuclear powers, which make them important global actors. Thus, it can be argued that Russia, as the successor of the USSR, succeeded in preserving its place as one of the main hard powers in the 21st century.

Having a strong army definitely contributes to the Russian image and its soft power. However, steps taken in terms of hard power politics negatively affect Russian soft power on a global scale. One recent example in this context was the Russian – Georgian War in August 2008. Western reactions to the Russian invasion of Georgia varied in tone. Europe's attitude towards Russia was milder, but the US Secretary of State's remarks caused the New Cold War debate to gain impetus once again in the public sphere. Condoleeza Rice on her visit to Tbilisi referred to the Red Army's invasion of Czechoslovakia and said that "This is no longer 1968 and the invasion of Czechoslovakia, when a great power invaded a small neighbor and overthrew its government."[37]

[36] Clifford J. Levy and Peter Baker, "Obama and Russian Leader Announce Nuclear Deal", *International Herald Tribune*, 06 July 2009.

[37] Andrew E. Kramer, Ellen Barry and Clifford Harry, "Diplomats Try to Hammer Out Compromises in Georgia", *International Herald Tribune*, 15 August 2009.

Apart from balance of power politics, for Joseph Nye, Czechoslovakia (1968) as well as Poland (1981) and Hungary (1956) belied "Soviet claims to leadership of progressive anti-imperial forces."[38] Moreover, looking at the Russian invasion of Georgia, Nye claims that Russia has seriously damaged its soft power.[39] On the other hand, while analyzing the soft power of the USSR, Nye claims that isolationist policies and not exporting its popular culture elements limited this bloc's soft power. In addition to these constraints, the heavy handed foreign policy of the Soviet Union was among the main reasons for this failure.[40] However, the issue of being the centre of attraction, or having problems in conducting a successful foreign policy on a global scale, does not necessarily lead to the existence of the same problems at a regional level. Russia as the successor of the USSR, has the upper hand, maybe with different overtones, in the post-Soviet geography. This does not mean that Russia should be defined as a regional power, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union it lost its position of superpower, and as a great power its sphere of influence has been significantly reduced.

The image of a country, or its power of attraction, can form a cycle of peaks and troughs. Thus, sustaining Russian popularity or dominance is directly related to implemented policies towards the region. However, foreign policy implementation is not independent from certain dynamics such as available resources, economy, domestic balances and the international environment.

Thus, in the next two sections the evolution of Russian foreign policy will be discussed within the framework of Russian soft power, by taking into consideration the domestic and international dynamics of the Federation. It is argued that during the Yeltsin era Russia experienced a phase of reconstruction and redefinition of Russian

[38] Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, p.75.

[39] Joseph Nye, "The Guns and Gold of August", *Project Syndicate*, October 2008; Retrieved on 28 October 2008 from; http://www.project-syndicate.org/series/28/description.

[40] Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, p.75.

identity and the Russian state. However, the consolidation would really seem to have started with the Putin era, when soft power policies started to be implemented in the post-Soviet space.

2.2. Russian Foreign Policy and Soft Power Under the Yeltsin Administration

The collapse of the USSR was so sudden and "unexpected for most Russians and most Soviet people at the time"[41] and most of the Sovietologists failed to foresee the collapse of the USSR, even after the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe.[42] Finding reasons for this collapse was a dominant factor in the literature during the first half of the 1990s.[43] In fact, Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika, a corrupted and outdated economy, the Afghan war, social dynamics and other factors, are shown as the main challenges within the USSR that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Within these debates, the reality was that fifteen new countries emerged from what had been the territory of the USSR. Russia was trying to resist new challenges of separation, together with a deep economic and political crisis. Yeltsin who was elected as the New President of the Russian Federation had to rebuild the country from its ashes, which were full of glory, disappointment and great expectations. Thus, in his eight years in office as the President of Russian Federation, Yeltsin mainly struggled with the state and nation building, as well as holding together the country against the desire for separation and independence.

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[41] Dmitiri Trenin, *The End of Eurasia: Russia on the Border between Geopolitics and Globalization*, (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 2002), p.78, Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), p.762.

[42] Stephen E. Hanson, "Sovietology, Post Sovietology, and the Study of Postcommunist Democratization", *Demokratizatsya*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2003, p.147.

[43] Peter Rutland, "Sovietology Who Got it Right and Who Got it Wrong? And Why?", in Michael Cox (ed.), *Rethinking the Soviet Collapse: Sovietology, the death of communism and the new Russia*, (London: Pinter, 1998). pp. 31-50.

When communism failed the history did not end, but liberal policies have now become greatly influential in Eurasia. Immediately after independence, almost all leaders repudiated communism and emphasized the rule of law, market economy, and democratic values - Russia was not an exception. In his speech to the US Congress, Yeltsin stated that communism was dead and "we shall not let it rise again in our land."[44] The President was decisive on making radical reforms in the economy and encouraging integration with the Western world. He became a symbol of democracy when he came to power, as the leader who prevented a military coup by climbing on the tanks without hesitation on 19 August 1991.[45] Actually, Yeltsin assured the support of the Western World with his stance. Bill Clinton, then the President of the US, emphasized American support at a summit in Vancouver as follows:

> "We are with Russian democracy. We are with Russian reforms. We are with Russian markets. We support freedom of conscience and speech and religion. We support respect for ethnic minorities. We actively support reform and reformers and you in Russia."[46]

Actually, this was a good example of soft power politics at an international level. Russia was not using any hard power measures to gain international support, nor was the US dictating for change in Russia. The US was supporting a Russia which had a moderate character, and was not posing a threat for the Western world. Yeltsin was well aware of this fact, and enjoyed the international aid and credits given to the Russian government. This support was not limited to the US, G7 countries also agreed an aid package for Russia amounting to $43.4 billion at the Tokyo Summit in 1993.[47] On the other hand, the US rhetoric was trying to shape Russian perception and to consolidate the Russian democracy by giving necessary financial and diplomatic

[44] "Highlights from Second day of Bush Yeltsin Summit", *St. Petersburg Times*, 18 June 1992.

[45] Tony Karon and James O. Jackson, "Boris Yeltsin: The Man Atop the Tank", *Time*, 23 April 2007.

[46] Serge Schememan, "Summit in Vancouver: The Overview; Yeltsin Leaves Talks with Firm Support and More Aid", *The New York Times,* 5 April 1993.

[47] Celestine Bohlen, "Russian Politicians Take Sides on Aid", *The New York Times*, 17 April 1993.

support at an international level. However, all these were not enough to transform the Russian society to a solid, liberal democracy. Indeed, the reforms somehow paved the way for an authoritarian regime based on corrupted relations between businessman and politicians.

In terms of reforms, Yeltsin chose the rapid but hard way. Known as shock therapy reforms, the political elite was enthusiastic about liberalizing the economy. Liberalization of imports, free market prices, a thoroughgoing change in the tax system and an ambitious privatization program were all on the agenda.[48] The aim of passing to a market economy from a command economy was a painful transition with the lack of successful public diplomacy, infrastructure and time for a smooth change.[49] Shock Therapy reforms started at the beginning of 1992, with great expectations and ended in the middle of the same year. Hyperinflation, corruption during privatizations and increasing unemployment were the outcomes of this implementation.[50]

This initiative was anything but a success. Shevtsova claim that "[p]art of the trouble came from the Marxist assumptions of the technocrats who formed the government. They supposed that introducing a capitalist economy would be enough, and they ignored the need for new institutions and the crucial importance of subordinating the state to the rule of law."[51] In fact, all these failures caused serious damage to both the society and the economy, which would have repercussions in Russian politics in the years ahead.

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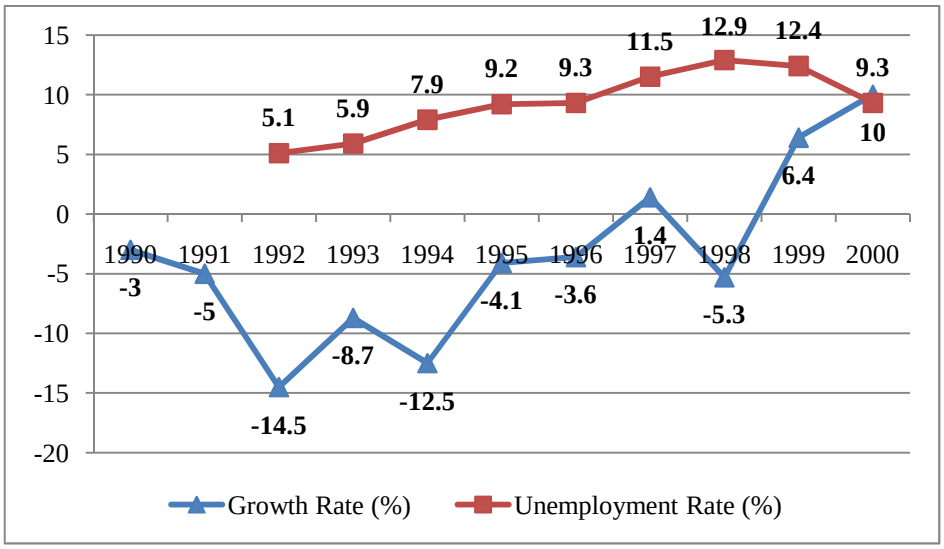
[48] Peter Murrell, "What is Shock Therapy? What did it do in Poland and Russia?", *Post Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1993, p. 134

[49] Padma Desai, "Beyond Shock Therapy", *Journal of Democracy*¸ Vol. 6, No. 2, 1995, p. 105.

[50] James Millar, "The End of Three Ideological Eras: What is Next for Russian Economy?", *Demokratizatsya*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2003, pp. 31 – 32.

[51] Lillia Shevtsova, *Lost in Transition: The Yeltsin and Putin Legacies*, (Washington D.C., Moscow, Beijing, Beirut, Brussels: Carnegie Endowment, 2007), p. 11.

Russian GDP growth was -15% and -9% in 1992 and 1993 respectively. In fact, the crisis in 1998 caused a collapse in the Russian economy once again, just after the crisis in Asian markets a year before, in spite of all the positive expectations of Western experts, the Russian economy was standing on a fragile foundation. Unfortunately, it was not until the Putin term that the economy would enter a stable growth trend once again. Secondly, the unemployment rate had reached double figures (**Graph I**), compared to the almost zero rate prevalent during the Communist era. Indicators were not positive and public opinion regarding the reforms was negative. Problematic privatization, increasing corruption and an economy based on an oligarchic domination were the legacies of these reforms.



Graph I: GDP Growth Rate of Russian Federation (1990 – 2000)

Source: World Bank, Russia in Figures, Current Statistical Survey[52]

[52] Data retrieved from *World Bank*, www.worldbank.org; *Russia in Figures*, http://udbstat.eastview.com.ezproxy.members.marshallcenter.org/catalog/edition.jsp?id=1805&uid=22; *Current Statistical Survey*, http://udbstat.eastview.com.ezproxy.members.marshallcenter.org/catalog/edition.jsp?id=1802&uid=22.

Problems in the economy, together with misconduct within policies, caused problems in other spheres of life. For instance, the situation in the health sector was so miserable that, due to lack of resources and shortage of medicines, illnesses such as typhoid and tuberculosis, long known as the diseases of poverty, were reappearing in the country.[53] During this period Russian society was impoverished, which led to decreasing support for the Westernizing policies of liberals, and the image of Russians was negatively affected by the results of the shock therapy reforms.

Naturally, the Russian Army was not immune to these developments in economics and politics. Officers, reduced from the elite caste of an empire to an impoverished, disunited and often homeless mass, have become less the guardians of, than a menace to, the sovereignty of Russia and its 14 new neighbours."[54] The withdrawal of Russian troops from the ex-Soviet Republics also contributed to these problems, such as being homeless and an increase in the numbers of depressed soldiers in the military. However, possibly the most serious problem was the sharp rise of corruption among army officers. Russian officers who were selling their weapons, fuel from army tankers, or the labour of their soldiers for personal profit like the members of a defeated army, became the characteristic of the Russian Army in that period.[55] These kinds of incidents also contributed to a loss of discipline in the army. And it was these soldiers that Yeltsin decided to use in 1994 in a war against Chechnya, to control the separatist movement on the southern borders of the Federation.

In 1990 the stance of Yeltsin was liberal in terms of the federal structure of Russia. When Sakhas declared their sovereignty under Russian SSR he did not hesitate to recognize this declaration, and he encouraged the federations' desire to gain

[53] Christa L. Walck, "Global Ideals, Local Realities: The Development Project and Missionary Management in Russia", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1995, p. 3.

[54] Serge Schmemann, "Russia's Military: A Shriveled and Volatile Legacy", *The New York Times*, 28 November 1993.

[55] Steven Enlanger, "Crisis in Moscow; Divided and Burdened, The Army Stays Neutral", *The New York Times*, 24 March 1993.

sovereignty by saying "Take as much sovereignty as you can swallow."[56] In those years, it was a pragmatic move to gain political support against Gorbachev. However, the limits of sovereignty were drawn in the sense that the federations could rule within their territory, but they were expected to still respect the ultimate sovereign power of Moscow. In this climate Chechnya declared its independence during the dissolution process in 1991. In December 1994, Yeltsin decided to overcome this problem by taking hard power, but the problem was that Russian Army was not fighting against another standing army, but had to fight with guerillas who were also located in cities with a large civilian population. The toll was really high; retired General Alexander Lebed, who negotiated the treaty ending the First Chechen War, claimed that 80,000 people died and the majority of the losses were civilians.[57]

The Chechen War (1994-1996) had two implications for the Russian image. Firstly, during the War Russia had to resist international reactions coming mainly from the Muslim world due to violation of human rights, albeit the Western reaction was weaker. In fact, the Clinton administration preferred to support Russian economic reforms by not linking economic aid to the country to Russian compliance with humanitarian rights in Chechnya.[58] CIS leaders were also criticizing Russia. In 1995, the CIS summit was expected to produce a binding agreement to be signed among member states, was a failure for Russia. At the end of the meeting Yeltsin did not attend the press conference, and left the summit looking pale as if he was ill. Ukrainian leader Kuchma's words emphasising Russian dominance and the non-functioning nature of the CIS, were enough to summarize the failure of the

[56] Michael Thumann, "Between Appeasement and Coercion: Russia's Center – Periphery Relations from Yeltsin to Putin", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2001, p. 195; Ann E. Robertson, "Yeltsin, Shaimiev and Dudaev: Negotiating Autonomy for Tatarstan and Chechnya", in Daniel R. Kempton and Terry D. Clark, *Center-Periphery Relations in the Former Soviet Union*, Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 2002), p. 104.

[57] Sarah Koenig, "All Disenchanted in the Chechen Front", *The New York Times*, 8 September 1996; Fred Weir, "Bombs and Death Squads in Russia's 'Forgotten' War", *The Independent*, 24 June 2003.

[58] Matthew Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2002), p. 147.

meeting.[59]The Eastern European and CIS states were alarmed to a much higher degree than other countries, over concerns on Russian expansionism.[60]

Secondly, the Russian Army continued to lose credit during the war. They could not control the rebellion, and there were rumors that Russian Army officers were selling weapons to Chechens, and thus supplying the necessary equipment to kill Russian soldiers. This was a significant negative strike against the army.[61] Developments such as these implied that Russian hard power had a strong image on paper, but was very problematic in practice.

The First Chechen War was not a success story for Russian foreign policy. In fact, Russia had to expend its limited energy on this issue a mere three years after the dissolution. However, this move was also necessary to show that Russia still maintained the power to control at least the problematic areas within its territory. The alternative being that the independence of Chechnya could cause a domino effect in the Federation. Secondly, Yeltsin succeeded in gaining public support as a result of terrorist attacks on civilians by Chechen groups, which helped to ensure his continued presence in the Kremlin.

Apart from domestic issues which had direct or indirect impacts on the Russian image and foreign policy, relations with CIS countries were slow to be established in the post-Soviet era. These countries were mainly seen as burdens that hindered the capacity of the Russian Federation. Moreover, the liberals, who were dominant in the government, were supporting a foreign policy that would enhance Russian relations with the West. Andrei Kozyrev, the then Foreign Minister, was advocating close ties

[59] Steven Erlanger, "War in Russia Clouds Pact by Former Soviet Republics", *The New York Times*, 11 February 1995.

[60] Svante E. Cornell, "International Reactions to Massive Human Rights Violations: The Case of Chechnya", *Europe Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 1, 1999, p. 94.

[61] Thomas De Waal, "Russians Selling Weapons to Their Chechen Enemies", *The Independent*, 17 February 1995.

with the US and Europe to have access to financial aid that would promote economic reforms and the democratization process.[62] Integration policies with CIS countries were in a way postponed in favor of the West. Yet, the Russian elite had some advantages in restarting relations with CIS countries.

The dissolution of the USSR was not something that happened as a result of a deep conflict, or a civil war within the Union. There were some independence movements in the Baltic States and the Caucasus during the late 1980s, but dissolution happened in terms of consent. Post-Soviet countries established an international platform known as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1992, and the main aim was to implement a civilized divorce process for the ex-Soviet countries. Later it was seen as a good platform for integration, especially by the Statist elite like Primakov. Trenin defines this situation when he states that "[i]ts historic role was shock absorber, which it accomplished brilliantly; the promise of integration was nothing but a great illusion…"[63]

The Russian interest had a lower profile towards the CIS countries. However, Russia still tried to preserve its area of influence immediately after the dissolution of the USSR, by establishing international mechanisms that would function in a loose manner, but would allow Russia to use these channels as strong instruments of Russian foreign policy.

In the *Foreign Policy Conception of the Russian Federation* (1993) policies to be implemented towards the CIS countries are the first element in the document. There are some statements in this document that can be examined in the framework of soft power and hard power policies. For instance the importance of "assisting in the

[62] David McDonald, "Domestic Conjunctures, the Russian State, and the World Outside, 1700-2006", in Robert Legvold (ed.), *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century & the Shadow of the Past*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 179.

[63] Dmitri Trenin, *The End of Eurasia – Russia on the Border Between Geopolitics and Globalization*, (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002), p. 90.

maintenance and enhancement of scientific and technological cooperation as well as cultural exchanges on a multilateral basis" was emphasized and one of the urgent tasks was defined as strengthening the common military-strategic sphere.[64] Thus, the Russian elite enlisted both soft power and hard power measures to preserve and enhance the links between Russia and CIS countries. However, the problem is that the Foreign Policy Conception of the Russian Federation1993 was prepared as if Russia were still one of the two hegemonic powers as in Cold War era. It is hard to claim that the balance between hard power and soft power policies was sustained in a document that it touches upon almost anything in a global sense. In contrast to the broadness of this document, certain practices and upcoming conceptions in 2000 and 2008 would be much shorter and to the point.

The reason for the lack of focus in Russian foreign policy, and its peaks and troughs, can be explained via the trauma of a collapsed empire and the problem of redefining its position, which was degraded from a super power. Until Primakov's appointment as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then as the Prime Minister, the interest in the post-Soviet space was mostly at a rhetorical level, but there was a certain level of awareness regarding the importance of CIS countries and this does not detract from the soft power discourse. In an official document issued in September 1995 Russian foreign policy towards the CIS was defined as:

> Russian television and radio broadcasting in the near abroad should be guaranteed, the dissemination of Russian press in the region should be supported, and Russia should train national cadres for CIS states.
>
> Special attention should be given to restoring Russia's position as the main educational center in the territory of the post Soviet space, bearing in mind the need to educate the young generation in the CIS states in a spirit of friendly relations with Russia.[65]

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[64] Foreign Policy Conception of the Russian Federation (1993) in Andrei Melville and Tatiana Shakleina (eds.), *Russian Foreign Policy in Transition Concepts and Realities*, (Budapest and New York: Central European University, 2005), pp. 34 -35.

[65] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard – American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*, (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p. 109.

As will be discussed in later chapters these aims were mainly satisfied. Russian media organs are being followed in the post-Soviet space via satellites, which is one of the elements of a changed dynamic in the 21st century. Secondly, Russia is still one of the main education centers for CIS countries. However, there are still some problems to be addressed in order to preserve the dominance of Russia in these spheres.

From the second half of the 1990s onwards, rhetorical policies towards the post-Soviet space have started to take a more solid shape in the region. Russia, with its military and diplomatic instruments, played an active role in the resolution of the Tajik Civil War and the stabilization of the Moldova conflict. This helped to create an image of Russia as the balancing power in the region. In a cultural context the Russian government promoted dual citizenship to be able to preserve the rights of ethnic Russians living in post-Soviet countries. However, this policy would only seem to have succeeded in Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. The Yeltsin administration then tried to convert the dual citizenship idea into CIS citizenship, but this policy also failed.[66]

In the 1990s, unlike the isolated nature of Eurasia during the Soviet period, it was hard to define Russia as the sole player in the region anymore. After the dissolution, a certain vacuum of power emerged, which other actors tried to fill, such as the EU and the US on the western flank; Turkey, Iran, China and the US in the eastern and southern flank, of the weakened giant. NATO expansion towards Russia and useless Russian opposition hardly contributed to its position.

With the Western Bloc's military wing expanding towards Russian borders, the EU as a political entity was following a similar path. The key slogans of these blocs were mainly dominated with democratization, human rights and economic integration, which can be interpreted as soft power politics. Moreover, the attraction of protection that would be provided by the western institutions for the ex-Iron Curtain members,

[66] Andrei Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher Inc., 2006), p. 117

and Soviet countries against Russia, was working in tandem with this rhetoric. The Baltic countries became new members of Russia in 2004, and the EU was continuously trying to develop its policy towards Eastern Europe countries and the Caucasus. This transformation process began to undermine the Russian monopoly by creating new links between the West and these countries, while transforming the legal and economic infrastructure.

NATO expansion is perceived more negatively in Moscow than the EU's policies towards these countries.[67] The concerns regarding NATO expansion can be examined realistically, since the meaning of the expansion concerns becoming neighbours and sharing borders with Russia's Cold War era enemy, not to mention losing ground in strategic positions such as the Crimea where the Russian fleet is based.[68]

Awareness of security problems created by the Western expansion and/or neo-imperialist tendencies, pushed Russia to pursue eager policies towards the post-Soviet space to keep the western flank under control. Parallel to this aim, integration efforts with Eastern Europe countries like Ukraine and Belarus, as well as with Kazakhstan, were underway even in the dawn of the dissolution. These efforts were mainly based upon security measures, and to a certain extent economic integration policies among CIS countries, which can be analyzed in the context of hard power politics. However, signed agreements in the framework of economic union (1993), free trade area (1994), and customs union with Kazakhstan, Belarus and Ukraine (1995) then renamed as a free trade zone did not result in a functioning regime.[69] The reasons for these failures can be explained as Russian weakness in economic terms regarding the provision of substitute commodities from the West, together with the geography and economic

[67] Oktay F. Tanrısever, "Sovyet Sonrası Dönemde Rusya'nın Karadeniz Politikası", *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol. 13, No.1, 2007, p. 181.

[68] Andrei Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, p. 114.

[69] Margot Light, "Foreign Policy", in Stephen White, Zvi Gitelman, and Richard Sakwa, *Developments in Russian Politics 6*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 230.

constraints in Russia and these countries which deepened the problems of transition to an open market economy system, further complicated by the lack of infrastructure in Russia and the post-Soviet states.

In the Yeltsin era Russian foreign policy was in a process of redefining itself and its objectives in the international arena. Even though in the beginning of the first term of Yeltsin, the West-oriented policies were dominant and the post-Soviet space was seen as a burden, this perception evolved into a situation where the near abroad became high on the agenda, initially in terms of rhetoric only, and then some steps were taken towards reestablishing Russian control in the region. However, the Russian elite was pursuing zero-sum politics especially in Russia–West relations, which indicated the dominance of realist understanding and the legacies of the Cold War era on foreign policy formulation. This also had repercussions regarding the formulation of a multidimensional Russian foreign policy. Even though there were some initiatives to redefine Russia within a more liberal framework, domestic dynamics, rebalancing the economic situation, and maintaining territorial integrity were high on the agenda of Yeltsin's administration. The lack of resources, problems of transition and understanding the new dynamics of the post-Soviet period paved the way for failures or disappointments. As Nye discusses "A country that suffers economic and military decline is likely to lose not only its hard power resources but also some of its ability to shape the international agenda and some of its attractiveness."[70] Thus, the structural problems limited Russia's energy to be able to reshape its foreign policy, but also caused problems in implementing consistent and sustainable policies towards the post-Soviet geography.

At the beginning, the main objective was integration with the West and the CIS region was ignored in this environment. From 1993 onwards the rhetoric of the Russian elite began to emphasize the importance of the post-Soviet geography, including some soft

[70] Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, p. 9.

power policies. However, these efforts started to be concretized primarily by Primakov and his team; yet again, they were not shaped in terms of soft power concerns. The threat of expansion of Western institutions again limited Russia's energy and implemented policies were hardly effective for successful integration, which was on the minds of the new Statist elite who took over from the Westernists in the second half of the 1990s. Certainly, Yeltsin's condition and his image of "a sick or a drunken" man was not helping Russia in this context.[71]

2.3. Russian Foreign Policy and Soft Power Under the Putin Administration

Putin was the sixth Prime Minister, when appointed in August 1999 by Yeltsin himself, and he was not the most popular candidate envisioned as a successor to Yeltsin. However, the President stood down in December 1999, and until the Presidential elections in June 2000, Putin would enhance his position and pave the way that would take him to the Kremlin.

In fact, the newly appointed Prime Minister was a safe exit strategy for Yeltsin who was surrounded by oligarchs looking for guarantees to their wealth and position in the economy with a new leader. Putin's position as an ex-KGB agent and his personal ties made it possible for him to rise to the office of Prime Minister.[72]

When Putin was appointed as Prime Minister the big picture was not that positive and there were challenges to face as the legacies of Yeltsin era in both domestic and foreign spheres. Russia, not being resistant to the Asian market collapse in 1997, experienced a deep economic crisis in 1998 and tried to heal its wounds while

[71] "Unsteady Yeltsin Rebuffed by CIS", *The Independent, 11 February 1995.*

[72] S. Mohsin Hashim, "Putin's Etatization Project and Limits to Democratic Reforms to Russia", *Communist and Post Communist Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1, 2005, pp. 31-32.

Chechnya continued to be an unsolved problem. Moreover, relations with the West were tense, due to the NATO operation in Kosovo and NATO expansion towards Russian borders, which started in 1999 with the membership of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. Relations with NATO, in Permanent Joint Council, were suspended due to the Kosovo operation, in spite of Russian opposition against a military solution to the problem.

After Yeltsin's resignation in December 1999, Putin became the de facto President of the Russian Federation until the Presidential elections in July 2000. Gaining presidential power, he mainly followed policies that would strengthen his position in the Kremlin, pursued aggressive policies in Chechnya, and took a pragmatist stance with the West. His policy implementations at home and abroad were aimed at reshaping the image of Russia as a strong and stable country internally, whilst a proactive and pragmatic profile was being built outside of the country.

The major domestic problems were the decentralized structure of the Federation (one of the legacies of Yeltsin, due to conjectural needs to be able to bring together the Federation after dissolution of the USSR) and economic instability because of unsuccessful transition policies. Putin did not wait for elections to undertake major reforms regarding centralization of the state. In May 2000, Putin adopted a decree that divides the country into "seven-super districts, each of which contained a dozen or more federal subjects, and he appointed a plenipotentiary representative to each new district", who would be appointed by the President himself.[73] This way he strengthened control of the Federation and gave the message of an authoritarian and strong administration. Secondly, in terms of Chechnya he used military measures to regain control of the chaos that had started to gain ground in the second half of 1999. Actually, he perceived the Chechen problem as a big threat to Russia's territorial integrity which, if it could not be brought under control, had the potential of creating a

[73] Cameron Ross, "Putin's Federal Reforms and the Consolidation of Federalism in Russia: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back!", *Communist and Post Communist Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 2003, pp. 34, 35.

domino effect in the region. Consequently the "[f]ear that the Chechen zone of insecurity would move up the Volga and spread to other republics and result in Yugoslavization of Russia provoked the second war."[74] Thus, "[u]nlike Yeltsin, he did not interfere with how generals fought the war and he drastically improved the armed forces' supply and equipment."[75]

The Second Chechen War was a significant challenge for Putin, but it would help him gain public support before the elections, as a leader exhibiting decisiveness and reviving the "strong Russian image" despite the fact that this would also mean a return to authoritarianism. Secondly, the support for Russian Army would help restore the damaged image from the First Chechen War, and give *esprit de corps* to the soldiers. Moreover, Russia would be capable of putting forward strong military statistics that it could use as an instrument for integration of CIS countries, using figures for both police and military.[76]

In the political sphere such steps helped Russia to gain strength domestically, but for sustainable policies what Russian needed was a solid financial basis that would help to resolve the negative impacts such as poverty, problems in education and health sector that deepened in the aftermath of the economic crises during 1990s. Moreover, to be able to pursue a proactive foreign policy and use soft power and hard power instruments, available and solid financial resources are sine qua non for the Russian administration. Thus Putin, while making reforms in fiscal policies, also tried to take oligarchs under control. In this context, he firstly decided to draw a line between the state and the oligarchs to be able prevent a complex relation between politics and the tycoons. In July 2000, he gathered the prominent oligarchs of the country and told

[74] Richard Sakwa, *Putin: Russia's Choice*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 228.

[75] Zoltan Barany, "Civil Military Relations and Institutional Decay: Explaining Russian Military Politics", *Europe Asia Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 4, 2008, p. 593.

[76] Stephen Blank, "Russia's Ulster: The Chechen War and Its Consequences", *Demokratizatsya*, Vol. 9, No.1, 2001, pp. 7-8.

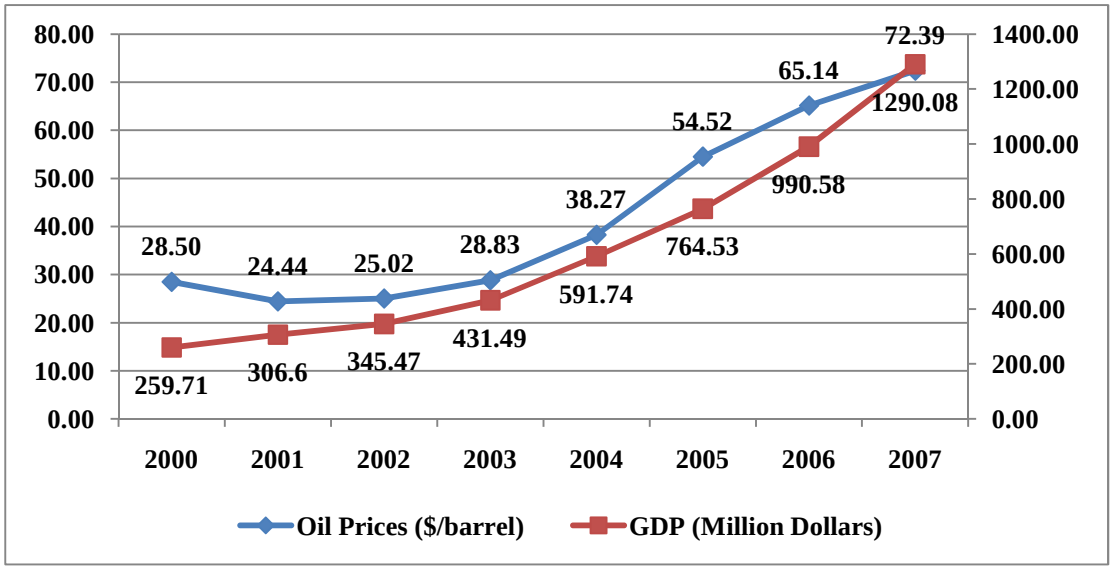
them that the relation between oligarchs and the state would be 'civilized and transparent'.[77] In a way he was giving the message that political manipulation would not be welcomed anymore, as it had been in the Yeltsin era.

In line with economic reforms another step was taken by the government to be able to foster economic development, increase the tax basis and limit the underground economy, which has the tendency to hide profits to avoid paying taxes to the government. In fact, this was the next phase of fiscal policy reforms that had started in 1999, aiming to simplify the system itself and decrease the tax ratios. According to the new amendments the corporate tax ratio was decreased from 35% to 24% and income tax, which could previously have been as high as 30% was reduced to 13% and a flat income tax ratio was introduced.[78] Consequently, decreasing tax rates functioned well and "…income tax revenues rose by 70% as people abandoned expensive tax avoidance schemes."[79]

[77] John Higley, Oksan Bayulgen and Julie George, "Political Elite Integration and Differentiation in Russia", in Anton Steen and Vladimir Gel'man (eds.), *Elites and Democratic Development in Russia*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 24.

[78] Pauline Jones Luong and Erika Weinthal, "Contra Coercion: Russian Tax Reform, Exogenous Shocks, and Negotiated Institutional Change", *American Political Science Review*, Vol.98, No. 1, 2004, p.142.

[79] Anders Aslund, "Russia", *Foreign Policy*, No. 125, 2001.



Graph II: Oil Prices and GDP of Russian Federation

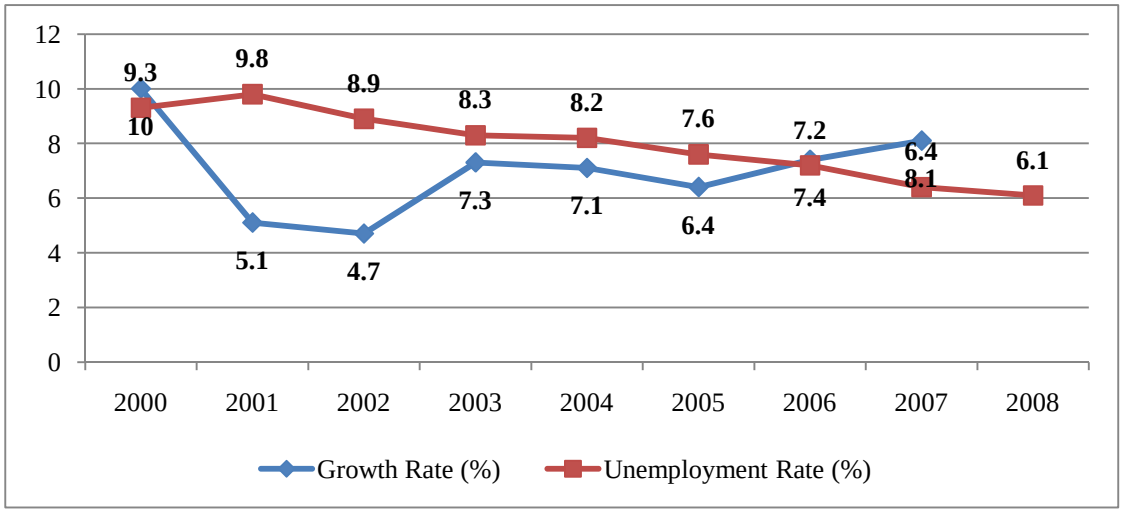
Source: World Bank and BP Statistical Review 2009[80]

During the Putin era the economy started to recover and grew on average 6.7% in the period of 2000 – 2007. As can be seen from the graph below this positively contributed to the solution of the unemployment problem, which was inherited from the Yeltsin era. Unemployment decreased from 9.3% to 6.4% during Putin's presidency. This reflected positively in socio-economic dynamics. While the unemployment level decreased, the number of people living below subsistence income level decreased from 42.3 million to 18.9 million (13.4% of the population).[81] Moreover, as the resources of the Putin administration expanded, the resources allocated for the military budget increased by 27% in 2005 and 22% in 2006.[82]

[80] Data retrieved from *World Bank*, www.worldbank.org; *BP Statistical Review 2009*, http://www.bp.com /productlanding. do?categoryId=6929&contentId=7044622.

[81] *Russia in Figures -2008*, Retrieved from http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b08_12/IssWWW.exe/stg/d01/07-01.htm, on 18 June 2009.

[82] Marshall I. Goldman, *Putin, Power, and the New Russia: Petrostate*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 97.



Graph III: GDP Growth Rate of Russian Federation (2000 – 2008)

Source: World Bank, Russia in Figures, Current Statistical Survey[83]

Positive developments in the Russian economy were not independent of global trends and balances. The favorable environment in financial markets, growth in the world economies and increasing consumption had been the main trend up to the financial crisis which broke out at the end of 2008. During this period oil prices increased significantly and, as an oil and gas exporter, the Russian Federation and Putin's administration benefited from this trend. As can be seen from **Graph II**, there is a correlation between increasing GDP and oil prices in 2000-2007 period.

His having taken decisive steps to overcome the problems of the previous term, and positive developments such as windfalls in oil markets, helped Putin to restore the damaged Russian image as the country grew richer and central government became stronger. These developments positively contributed to the Russian image, since as Huntington discusses "[i]ncreases in hard economic and military power produce enhanced self-confidence, arrogance, and belief in the superiority of one's own culture

[83] Data retrieved from *World Bank*, www.worldbank.org; *Russia in Figures*, http://udbstat.eastview.com.ezproxy.members.marshallcenter.org/catalog/edition.jsp?id=1805&uid=22; *Current Statistical Survey*, http://udbstat.eastview.com.ezproxy.members.marshallcenter.org/catalog/edition.jsp?id=1802&uid=22.

or soft power compared to those of other peoples and greatly increase its attractiveness to other people."[84]

As the country grew stronger domestically, this had some repercussions on Russian foreign policy. The Putin administration contributed to the modification and transformation of the foreign policy concept of the Federation, to gain a more pro-active and pragmatic image.

During the Yeltsin period foreign policy makers tried to create certain frameworks within the policy making process, which can be analyzed in terms of zero-sum politics. However, Putin took a rather pragmatic line within the conduct of his foreign policy. This change had some direct impacts on Russia's relations with the West, as well as the Russian image in general in an international arena. Instead of opposing the West, he preferred to conform with Western mechanisms, and to preserve Russian interests without opposing the West.

Parallel to building up a positive image of Russia, Putin opened a new page in Russia-West relations. Putin started in February 2000 by unfreezing relations with NATO, which had been suspended after NATO's Kosovo Operation in 1999, at a meeting with the NATO Secretary General Lord Roberston in Moscow. Moreover, in terms of rhetoric, he was following a compromising course, when compared with his predecessors. He even stated that he did not see why Russia would not join NATO, naturally under certain conditions.[85] This approach was a major opening in Russian politics and demonstrated Russia's wish to be within Western systems. In fact, this approach would consolidate Russia-US relations, and in turn would lead to a favorable environment for Russia, especially in Central Asia, to once again be perceived in the region as a strong and attractive actor.

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[84] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), p. 92.

[85] Roy Allison, "Russian Security Engagement with NATO", in Roy Allison, Margot Light and Stephen White (eds.), *Putin's Russia and the Enlarged Europe*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006) p. 99.

Instead of opposing the US, the Putin administration preferred to "act with" the US, especially in America's war against terrorism. Putin was the first leader who called President Bush and stated that Russia would support the US in their fight against terrorism by supplying the Afghan opposition with weapons and military equipment and by opening its air space for shipment of humanitarian aid.[86] The Russian stance was vital for the position of Central Asian Republics, who then allowed the US open access to supply equipment to its troops in Afghanistan.

This gesture not only eased the Russian position at an international level regarding its military actions in Chechnya[87], but would also pave the way for a strengthening of the Russian image in Central Asia, as the American image faded and became weaker and unpopular among Central Asian leaders and the people of the region. A potential Russian opposition at the beginning could have directly pushed some Central Asian leaders towards the US, and persuaded them to take a stance against Russia; but when they became disillusioned with the US presence in the region, and perceived it as a threat, as in Uzbek case, they turned to Russia as a balance against American power.

Russia's balanced relations with the West, made it easier for the Federation to focus on the post-Soviet geography. In the framework of policies of the Russian Federation towards the post-Soviet space, during the Putin period the importance of the CIS was maintained. However, a decade after the dissolution of the USSR, the projections of the political elite had already narrowed down. Baltic States were not in the Great Russian Empire projections and it was accepted that the Russian Empire would be reborn from its ashes in the CIS region. Thus, this led to a change in Russia's approach to the Baltics. Previously, Russian compatriots in Baltics were high on the Russian agenda, but as the Baltic States were becoming integrated with Western

[86] Ana Uzelac, "Putin Offers Support for US Airstrikes", *The Moscow Times*, 25 September 2001; Peter Baker, "Trying to Revive Bond with a Bolder Putin: Breakthroughs Unlikely, but Seaside Talks will Allow Bush to Dip a Toe in Détente", *The Washington Post*, 01 July 2007.

[87] Sharyl Cross, "Russia's Relations with the United States/NATO in the US Led Global Terrorism", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 2006, p. 178.

institutions, this started to change. NATO and the EU's expansion to the Russian borders resulted in a policy shift, which meant that Russia lost bases in the region after the collapse of the USSR, had to countenance NATO warplanes' air policing over the Baltics and effectively being a neighbor with Russia's old enemy NATO.[88]

During the Yeltsin era, compatriots were the Russians abroad whose rights were preserved with Russia as a guarantor, but in the Putin period the position of the Baltic states and ethnic Russians changed within Russian foreign policy due to the above reasons. The state policy shifted from guaranteeing Russian speakers' (Russophones) rights to encouraging them to migrate to Russia to offset the demographic crisis.[89] Three basic documents adopted in 2006 form the basis of the practical work with compatriots[90]. These are "The Program of Work with Compatriots Abroad 2006-2008", "The Russian Language Federal Target Program 2006- 2010", "National Assistant program for the Voluntary Resettlement to the Russian Federation of compatriots Living Abroad".

Assistance for the resettlements has become a state policy, but it would be a reductionist approach to limit the program to the demographic crisis within the Federation. Moreover, there is a certain trend of migration (**Table II**) of ethnic Russians, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and this policy also regulates the flow of these people to the country. Yet, it should be highlighted here that these policies would seem to have been created in tandem with Russia's set of

[88] "NATO Air Defense Begin in the Baltics", *RIA Novosti*, 14 July 2009.

[89] Viatcheslav Morozov, "Russia in the Baltic Sea Region: Desecuritization or Deregionalization?", *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association*, Vol. 39, No. 3, 2004, p. 323.

[90] *A Survey Russian Federation Foreign Policy – Unofficial Translation*, (Moscow: MFA of the Russian Federation, 2007), p.48.

goals for the country's demographic policy up to 2025. The policy aims to invest $19.3 billion in socio-economic programs just in the period of 2008-2010.[91]

Table II: People Fluent in Russian Language

	1989 Census	Post Soviet Period		Change (%)
	Thous.People	Thous. People	Census Year	
Russia	119865.9	115868.5	2002	-3.3
Ukraine	11356	8334	2001	-26.6
Kazakhstan	6228	4479.6	1999	-28.1
Uzbekistan	1653	1362	1999	-17.6
Belarus	1342	1141.7	Forecast	-14.9
Latvia	906	703.2	1999	-22.4
Kyrgyzstan	917	603.2	2000	-34.2
Estonia	475	351.2	1999	-26.1
Lithuania	344	219.8	2000	-36.1
Moldova	562	198.1	2000	-64.8
Turkmenistan	334	156.8	2004	-53.1
Azerbaijan	392	141.7	Forecast	-63.9
Tajikistan	388	68.2	1999	-82.4
Georgia	341	67.7	2000	-80.1
Armenia	52	15	2001	-71.2
Total	145155.9	133710.7		-7.9
Without Russia	25290	17842.2		-29.4
CIS	14340.9	132436.5		-7.7
Baltic States	1725	1274.2		-26.1

Source: Eurasian Heritage Foundation[92]

[91] "Putin Approves Demographic Policy Goals Through 2025-1", *RIA Novosti*, 11 October 2007.

Apart from those policies which are formulated in Kremlin, Russia has also started to create new mechanisms that deepen Russia's regional cooperation with the post-Soviet countries. These organizations are important for Russia to develop an area of influence in the region, since CIS failed as an organization in a way to satisfy this objective; rather it created a policy framework for Russia's policies towards the post-Soviet space.

The existing structural problems of the CIS paved the way for steps to be taken that would undermine the position of the organization. Russia downgraded the CIS ministry to a commission in 2001, and members of the CIS decided to reduce the size of its structures by one quarter.[93] Thus, in an environment like this Russia needed new mechanisms that could be substituted for the CIS, or minimize the vacuum of power in the region. In this context, two influential and functioning organizations can be identified that were established with a regional brief, as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). These mechanisms help Russia to control the political agenda in the region via consent and influence of the Russian Federation on other countries, as the major partner in these regional organizations.

CSTO was established in 2001. Its members are Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Armenia. These countries were the signatories of the Collective Security Treaty in 1992, within the framework of the CIS organization. As a military organization, Russia dominates this structure and tries to deepen the cooperation among its members. In this sense, the members of the Organization buy

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[92] *Russkiy Yazik v Novikh Nezavisimikh Gosudarstvakh*, (Moscow: Eurasian Heritage Foundation, 2008), p. 134..

[93] Ingmar Oldberg, "Foreign Policy Priorities Under Putin", in Jakob Hedenskog, Vilhelm Konnander, Bertil Nygren, Ingmar Oldberg and Christier Pursiainen (eds.), *Russia as a Great Power: Dimesions of Security Under Putin*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 39.

equipment from Russia and the Federation also subsidizes the costs of training officers from CSTO militaries.[94]

Similarly, SCO has a regional characteristic, but has created new areas of cooperation for Russia and its five other members. Although the main emphasis is on security issues, recently cooperation in economic (energy and trade), scientific and cultural realms have gained impetus among its members.[95] One of the recent developments in a cultural context is the creation of the SCO Humanities Universities Consortium. This way the members aim at integration of education systems in the region for the creation of a single educational space for the development of Eurasian dialogue. [96]In the framework of harmonization of education systems five countries (Russia, China, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan) agreed to create the SCO University to develop integration processes in the fields of science, technology, economics and education. Apart from harmonization or integration in education the newly developed program would assist an improvement in student mobility in Eurasia. "Students enrolled in the SCO University will be able to study, from the beginning of any semester, in another parent[sic] university offering the same kind of programme."[97] There are 40 universities that form a network for the SCO University. 16 universities belong to the Russian Federation and to date 10 universities have joined from China.[98]

The idea for the creation of the SCO University was recommended by President Putin in 2007 and the Ministry Science and Education of the Russian Federation, together with the Russian Academy of Sciences, were assigned to carry out feasibility studies

[94] Richard Weitz, "Averting a New Great Game in Central Asia", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2006, p. 163.

[95] Enrico Fels, *Assessing Eurasia's Powerhouse: An Inquiry into the nature of the Shanghai Cooperation*¸ (Bochum: Verlag Dr. Dieter Winkler, 2009), p. 15.

[96] Anna Zharkaya, "Integration of the SCO Humanities Universities", *InfoSCO*, 2 July 2009.

[97] Natalia Savitskaya, "Education, with a Collective Purpose", *Russia Beyond the Headlines*, 22 February 2009.

[98] "SCO University Prepares for Premiere", *InfoSCO*, 13 July 2009.

to develop a new concept of intergovernmental higher education.[99] In this initiative, Russia not only played a leading role in the design of the program, but also created a basis for long term cooperation in the context of education.

In addition to the organs and mechanisms within regional and international organizations, Russia has also started to develop or support governmental and non-governmental initiatives, that would help to rebuild a strong and attractive Russian image in the post-Soviet space. Moreover, the Russian elite also supported the improvement of existing mechanisms in this context.

Russian Centers of Science and Culture (Roszarubezhcentr-RCSC) can be seen as part of this movement. These centers operate under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Administration and they are the successors of the All-Russian Society for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries (1925-1958), and Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (1958-1992), which were established to promote Russian culture and language.[100] These centers were established in 1925 with the aim of promoting Russian language and culture in non-Soviet countries. They were functioning under the government during the Soviet era, but in the post-Soviet period have become one of the agencies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As of 2009 there are 49 centers and 26 agencies in total operating as RCSC in 67 countries. However, RCSCs are mainly located in third world countries or neighboring countries of the USSR. In CIS countries it has become a state policy to open new centers or agencies in the capitals. The reason for the previous non-existence of these agencies in CIS countries can be explained as these countries were the members of the same Union and there was no need to pursue similar propaganda policies as in foreign countries in these SSRs. However, with the Putin administration

[99] Maxim Krans, "Education without Borders and Bars", *InfSCO*, 29 May 2009.

[100] "Segodniya v Moskve Sostoyatsya Torzhestvennie Meropriyatiya Sluchayu Prazdnovaniya 80-Letnego Yubileya Rossiyskogo Tzentra Mezhdunarodnogo Nauchnogo i Kulturnogo Sotrudnichestva Pri MID Rossii", *Rossiskaya Gazeta*, 19 October 2005.

CIS and Baltic states have become the new priorities of this agency.[101] The Center in Astana was the only center in 2006, in the CIS region, but as of 2009 there are now three more centers in Ukraine, Armenia and Uzbekistan.

Their operations can be compared with the British Council or Cervantes Centers of Spain. They have a role of teaching the Russian language, but also RCSCs act as a soft power instrument of the Russian Federation. In the official documents it is stated that "Roszarubezhcentr used in its activities an ever wider set of ways and tools to exert positive influence on the foreign environment and implement a whole variety of international programs in the fields of education and culture, interaction with compatriots, information policy and techno-scientific and business cooperation. The work was conducted in the now-established system of international public diplomacy, in the milieu of civil society in other countries."[102]

Development of RCSCs is important when the situation of compatriots in CIS countries is considered. These are centers for teaching Russian culture and language, especially to the younger generation of Russian minorities in these countries. Moreover, cooperating with civil society, universities or intelligentsia these organizations help to create links with society that contribute to the Russian image, especially amongst the intellectuals in those countries.

Even though RCSCs had to deal with financial constraints in the last two decades it would seem this organization is regaining its power and there is a change in operational mentality as well. These centers are funding their own activities by their revenues from Russian education courses. Moreover, they are acting in coordination

[101] Marianna Belenkeyeva, "Russia's Overseas Cultural Ties Body Marks 80th Birthday: Interview with Eleonara Mtrofanova, the Head of Roszarubezhcentr". Retrieved from http://iran.mid.ru/news/rian013_e.html, on 22 March 2009.

[102] *The Results of the Activities of Roszarubezhcentr*, (Moscow: MFA of the Russian Federation, 2006), p. 1.

with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs thus enhancing their role in terms of soft power policies.

While Russia is taking advantage of existing mechanisms, Russian image creation efforts are not limited to organizations inherited from the Soviet period. Especially during Putin's second term, new initiatives were launched by the government. In 2005, the Department of Interregional and Cultural Relations at the Administration of the President of Russian Federation, was established to enhance the Russian image in the post-Soviet space.[103] Moreover, on 21 June 2007 with the Decree No 796, signed by President Putin, the Russkiy Mir Foundation was established. According to the Decree, the founders of the Foundation, on behalf of the Russian Federation, are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.[104]

The mission of the Russkiy Mir Foundation was stated as "to promote understanding and peace in the world by supporting, enhancing and encouraging the appreciation of Russian language, heritage, and culture."[105] To attain these objectives the Russkiy Mir Foundation started to develop Russian Centers in partnership with educational organizations.

In these centers education activities are undertaken to promote Russian language, and conferences and seminars are held to introduce Russian culture to the countries in which these centers are located. Moreover, the fund financially supports projects that aim to develop the Russian language and culture in the world in general.

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[103] Nerijus Maliukevicus, "Russia's Information Policy in Lithuania: The Spread of Soft Power or Information Politics?", *Baltic Security and Defence Review*, Vol. 9, 2007, p. 151.

[104] Decree of the President of the Russian Federation on the Establishment of the Russkiy Mir Foundation, Decree No 796, 21 June 2007; http://russkiymir.org/about/creation/decree/.

[105] Russkiy Mir Foundation, *Mission Statement*. Retrieved from http://russkiymir.org/en/about/mission_statement/ on 28 May 2009.

Particularly during Putin's second term in the presidential office, soft power policies have gained impetus within Russian foreign policy. These policies are mainly shaped in terms of agenda setting via regional or international organizations and creating instruments that would help to develop and preserve the Russian culture, heritage and language particularly in the post-Soviet space. However, it should be emphasized here that Russia also has started to develop soft power instruments on a global scale. These 'propaganda' or public relations instruments include establishing a television channel in English, known as 'Russia Today', the journal of Russia Profile and a cold war Veteran Voice of Russia.[106]

As can be seen Russian soft power instruments have gained dynamism especially during the Putin period when new initiatives were created. Russia has succeeded in regaining power due to increasing oil prices and the stability in the country. In terms of foreign policy, the country has started to act more aggressively, but is also strengthening regional cooperation, especially in Central Asia, via certain mechanisms like SCO or CSTO. Moreover, in practical and rhetorical terms the Russian elite has started to place more emphasis on soft power discourses. When a simple search is conducted on the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs webpage, it can be seen that Russian policy makers have been emphasizing the concept of soft power since 2006, and twelve documents in English originally created by high level bureaucrats are testimony to this development. This has also changed the attitude towards foreign policy of the political elite. In his speech to Russian ambassadors Putin stressed the importance of low politics:

> Effective international cooperation can and should facilitate the science-and-technology, education and cultural policy; it must promote humanitarian contacts and help to simplify mutual travel.[107]

[106] Valentina Feklyunina, "Battle for Perceptions: Projecting Russia in the West", *Europe Asia Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 4, 2008, p.606.

[107] Vladimir Putin, Speech at a Plenary Session of the Russian Federation Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives Meeting, 12 July 2004.

In conclusion it can be said that "as Putin's presidency progressed, and particularly during his second term, Russia emerged as a state with regional horizon, increasingly seeking to assert its influence in the former Soviet space."[108] Moreover, Russian soft power has become more concrete, in terms of Russia's image and soft power instruments, in this period. In Putin's first term at the presidential office the Federation succeeded, to a certain extent, in overcoming major domestic problems in the spheres of economics and politics. This helped Russia to regain power that would enable the country to follow a relatively more consistent and sustainable foreign policy both in the post-Soviet space and the world. Moreover, the Russian Federation started to develop new instruments to be able to preserve Russian interests, especially in the CIS region within the framework of hard power and soft power concerns.

[108] Andrew Monaghan, "An Enemy at the Gates or from Victory to Victory", pp.726-727.

CHAPTER 3

LANGUAGE

As discussed in the previous chapter, Russian foreign policy has been trying to redefine its objectives after the collapse of the USSR. The post-Soviet space, particularly the CIS region, is one of the priorities in the agenda and, unlike other countries trying to be dominant in the region, Russia has some advantages while implementing its policies. These advantages can be described as infrastructure linking each country to one another: specifically Russia's geographic position that shares borders with the post-Soviet space and language. Language is an important channel that allows Russians to make direct contacts with these countries, as well as one of the important factors that shape identity. In this sense, in this chapter the position of Russian language will be discussed within the post-Soviet geography. The chapter is composed of three sections. Firstly, the importance of Russian language in the context of soft power will be discussed. Secondly, in a historical context language policies of the USSR that have made Russian language the lingua franca of the region will be examined; and lastly the current situation in CIS countries will be described in terms of popularity of the language and policies that undermine the position of Russian language in favor of titular languages.

3.1. Russian Language as an Element of Soft Power

The Russian language belongs to the Indo-European language family where it lies within the group of Slavic languages. This group is divided into three: East, West and South Slavic languages. Polish, Czech, Slovak, Serbian, Slovene, Croatian, and other minority languages are in this group. "Russian, like Belorussian and Ukrainian, is an

East Slavic language."[109] These three languages have much in common. Apart from geographical factors, the shared history of these groups is important in this commonality.

The Russian language's roots are found in the Kievan Rus'. Historically the members of the East Slavic language group were not as different from each other then, and there were only dialectical differences in the area from Novgorod-Pskov to Kiev in the south.[110] However, Russian can be distinguished from Belorussian and Ukrainian following the foundation of the Muscovite Empire, and also Tatar and Mongol influences on Russian itself.

On the other hand, the alphabet of Eastern Slavic languages is Cyrillic, and the Byzantine Church played an important role in this choice of alphabet. When Prince Vladimir decided to adopt of Christianity as the state religion in 988[111], it was an orthodox sect of Christianity that was chosen, and with this sect Cyrillic was introduced as the alphabet, which would be one of the main characteristics of Russian as well as the peculiarities of its hinterland. To be able to read religious texts the clergy needed to learn the Cyrillic alphabet.

Throughout history, as the kingdom turned into an empire by expanding in an eastern direction, interaction between eastern civilizations and Islam have also influenced the Russian nation. Russia's efforts at westernization have likewise had impacts on the language. An early serious attempt at westernization took place in the 17th century. Even though the Cyrillic alphabet remained as one of the cornerstones of the language, Peter the Great made reforms in the alphabet and simplified it, in addition

[109] Dean S. Worth, "Language", in Nicholas Rzhevsky (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.19.

[110] Dean S. Worth, "Language", p.20.

[111] George L. Campbell, *Handbook of Scripts and Alphabets, (London: Routledge,* 1997), p.42.

Western words and phrases were borrowed or 'Russified' from German, Dutch, Italian, Latin, French, English and Swedish.[112]

In spite of modifications or transformations taking place within the language, the Russian language is one of the central features of Russian identity. Russians are in the main proud of their language, referring to Mikhail Lomonosov's quotation from Holy Roman Empire Carl V:

> "One should speak Spanish with God, French with one's friends, German with one's enemies, and Italian with the fair sex. But had he been skilled in Russian he would of course have added that it would be appropriate to speak with all of these in it, for he would have found in it the greatness of Spanish, the liveliness of French, the force of German, the tenderness of Italian, and in addition, the richness and strong terse descriptiveness of Greek and Latin." [113]

Language itself is an important feature of a national identity and belonging. Identity creation or evolution is a continuous process. Identity can be directly and indirectly influenced by a range of factors and dynamics within a society. As the world system is becoming more complex, identity structures grow ever more sophisticated, and new identities are also emerging. For a couple of centuries complete isolation from the influences of political, economic and social dynamics has almost become impossible. Known as globalization, this process is not limited to a certain age or time. Since the beginning of history, civilizations are interacting with each other, but owing to new developments in technology and transportation, this interaction has gained impetus and in the last century this interaction among cultures has become more obvious and challenging. This trend contributes to the process of new identity creation, and it can also result in existing identities becoming extinct or solidified. However, in social dynamics this does not happen suddenly and creating one identity does not necessarily

[112] James Cracraft, *The Revolution of Peter the Great*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 103-108; Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, p. 140.*

[113] Victor A. Pogadaev, "Motivational Factors in Learning Foreign Languages: The Case of Russian", *Jilid*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2007, pp. 154-155.

lead to the extinction of another. Yet, a new hybrid of an identity or group of identities can be created.

In a society, individuals have multiple identities in terms of their ethnicity, religion, ideology, culture, and others. Parallel to this, Eric Hobsbawm says that "[t]he concept of a single, exclusive, and unchanging ethnic or other identity is a dangerous piece of brainwashing."[114] National identity is just one of these possible identities and, despite its dominance, it is not the sole identity to define a person. As a simple example, Mr. Garcia Sanchez can be a Mexican in ethnic terms, but a citizen of the US so also an American, a catholic, a doctor in terms of employment, a father, a son, and a representative of both American and Latin culture during his visit to Europe. Mr. Sanchez would prefer to use any of these identities in different places and times. He may not prefer to use his Mexican identity in an international conference in Europe, but in his neighborhood among his Mexican friends he would act according to his cultural code of being a Latin American.

Both "[n]ational identity and nation are complex constructs composed of a number of interrelated components – ethnic, cultural, territorial, economic and legal-political."[115] Huntington describes national identity as a sub-group of civilizational identity and claims that increasing interaction among people of different civilizations strengthens civilizational identities.[116]

In the post-Soviet geography just three decades ago civilizational identity was belonging to the Communist bloc and in national terms being a Kazakh, Russian, Azeri, or a Kyrgyz. Soviet mentality and the isolationist policies of the bloc created an identity for its citizens. After the dissolution of the USSR, many concepts have been

[114] Eric Hobsbawm, "Language Culture and National Identity", Social Research, Vol. 63, No. 4, 1996, p.1067.

[115] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, (Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1991), p.15.

[116] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, p. 129.

created to define these states and the people living in these countries. These include: Post-Soviet States, Commonwealth of Independent States, Newly Independent States, the post-Soviet Geography, or Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and others. These concepts still have the traces of an era closed in 1991. However, the values, mentality, and dynamics of a society do not vanish, become transformed or modified overnight. In fact, diplomats interviewed during this research share a common idea that they do not feel as if they are among foreigners during international meetings, if there is a group of people present from the post-Soviet countries.

In social dynamics, even after a revolution, making great transformations takes time to be accepted or internalized by society. Yet, there is no guarantee that the implemented policies will be successful in this transformation. Here, the success can be defined as achieving given targets by leaders or policy makers. However, it is true that all these transformation policies and their implementation would cause changes in society, and times of crisis or revolutions act as catalysts or breaking points for this process to gain impetus. Apart from implemented policies, cultural interactions play an important role in the transformation process. In structures such as unions, federations, confederations, empires, cultural interaction is more dynamic than within a closed society. Nations living together will be influenced by each other's culture and life style. As the degree of mobilization of people, commodities and capital increases a more dynamic structure will be created.

In terms of cultural interaction, a foreign culture can be dominant on another one, due to geographic, economic, political, and social factors. Looking at history we can see the influence of colonial states on their colonies and different cultures' fingerprints in empires. In modern times developed countries' (especially Western Europe and the US) cultural products and values can be easily observed in another country. In the 21st century, this type of interaction can be seen in the EU project itself. Eastern Bloc countries, which were once the representatives of the other side of "the Wall", are changing their systems and the EU project is trying to create a harmonized system in

the European continent. However, it would be unfair to claim that these countries are just directly transformed, while they are not transforming the western side of the continent.

Creating identities or enhancing the existing ones needs several instruments. Language plays a key role in this sense. "Whilst language is a carrier of culture it is also a signifier of cultural belonging…Moreover, as a communication practice grounded in the everyday lives of people and institutions language is not only functional but also has potent political and economic currency, and as such it has exchange value."[117] People can express and understand the things that they can articulate. Thus, language is one of the channels within which ideas and cultural values are transformed and kept alive.

In hegemonic structures, a country's dominance in economics, politics and social dynamics is clearer to see. Cox argues that "A world hegemony is…in its beginnings an outward expansion of the internal (national) hegemony established by a dominant class. The economic and social institutions, the culture, the technology associated with this national hegemony become patterns of emulation abroad. Such an expansive hegemony impinges on the more peripheral countries as a passive revolution."[118]

Domination of a foreign culture has repercussions on language too. In the social sphere, this influence can be observed without difficulty. Terminologies, ideologies and values are mostly imported from the dominant culture. Moreover, the dominant culture influences the language spoken by the elite. This is also one of the ways new terminologies and ideologies are created. However, it is hard to claim that the relation between language, cultural interaction and the elite's role in shaping the political and social environment, is a one-way transaction in terms of learning motives. There are

[117] Naz Rasool, "Postmodernity, Cultural Pluralism and the Nation-State: Problems of Language Rights, Human Rights, Identity and Power", *Language Sciences*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1998, p. 89.

[118] Robert Cox, "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1983, p. 171.

social, economic, and cultural factors, and also the desire to feel closer to a culture can be another motive.[119] Language impact on knowledge and politics can be defined as the second phase, but this is also a part of the interactive process.

As people learn a foreign language or internalize a language, dominance or the impacts of a culture would deepen, and more people would opt for learning that language due to economic, political and cultural reasons. The elite's role should be analyzed carefully in the second phase. Smith discuses the role of the elite generating cultural nationalism and ideology[120], but the elite's choices in foreign language have direct or indirect effects on knowledge and the policy making process as well. Spoken language makes acquiring knowledge and culture easier, and this would inspire the elite. Inspiration, by definition, does not imply internalizing all norms and values of the other culture directly, some changes and modifications will be made, but this would definitely create a basis and a linkage between cultures. In this framework, language can be described as an important source of soft power. Its essence "is to spread social knowledge of one's values"[121], and this makes communication one of the pillars of soft power. Being proficient in a language can make a culture more attractive and ease the acquisition of knowledge, since language represents a basis for shaping ideas and politics.

Parallel to the above assumptions, similar reflections can be seen in the post-Soviet geography, but in varying strengths. Russian, apart from being a foreign language, has become the first or second language that is spoken at home, work, and in everyday life. The education system was dominated by the Russian language during the Soviet

[119] Victor A. Pogadaev, "Motivational Factors in Learning Foreign Languages: The Case of Russian", pp. 151 – 152.

[120] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, p. 94.

[121] Janice Bially Mattern, "Why Soft Power Isn't So Soft?: Representational Force and the Sociolinguistic Construction of Attraction in World Politics", *Millenium Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 2005, p. 589.

era, and it somehow retains its place in CIS countries. Svitlana Nesterova[122] says that in the Soviet era, to be able to take higher education, you had to be proficient in Russian, so parents were sending their children to schools where the language of education was Russian. Moreover, Soviets did not encourage the learning of foreign languages due to security concerns, except when learning a foreign language was favored in terms of security and ideological interests.[123] Or it can be said that structural constrains such as lack of access to native speakers, poorly qualified teachers, ideologically formatted curricula and, as Necibe Nesibova[124] states, the aim of making Russian the universal language, did not result in creating a constructive environment for learning foreign languages.

Education in the Russian language was not problematic, but foreign language education was not that successful in spite of its necessity for a power like the USSR.[125] To address this issue schools specializing in foreign language teaching were established from 1949 onwards. It was the same for higher education, and mostly high level party members were able to send their children to these schools, because of their appealing opportunities such as gaining access to the outer world or making a career in bureaucracy, but there was also another group who perceived learning a foreign language as an escape route from the oppressive regime.[126]

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[122] Svitlana Nesterova, Cultural Attaché of Ukrainian Embassy to Ankara. Interviewed on 07 May 2009.

[123] Aneta Pavlenko, "Language of the Enemy: Foreign Language Education and National Identity", *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, Vol. 6, No. 5, 2003, p. 322.

[124] Necibe Nesimova, Education Attaché of Azerbaijan Embassy to Ankara. Interviewed on 06 May 2009.

[125] Thinking about the native and Russian language policy of the USSR, the problems can be easier to grasp. For instance in Central Asia the literacy rate was so low in the first decades of the Soviet Union, and the isolated nature of the USSR was not allowing students learning Russian to practice with native speakers.

[126] Aneta Pavlenko, "Language of the Enemy: Foreign Language Education and National Identity", p. 325.

On the other hand, states are the ones who control foreign language education to limit interaction with the enemy. As an example, German speakers had to resist pressures in the US after World War I and foreign language education was legislated out of existence between the years 1917 and 1922. In fact, due to the same concerns we may see limited and ideologically shaped teaching of English in the USSR.[127] In fact, Ukrainian Diplomat Nestrova claims that learning a foreign language, and making extra efforts to reach this objective, resulted in attracting the attention of the Soviet authorities, and being questioned. This was especially true for those scientists who had the potential to spy against the state.

3.2. Russian Language in the Post-Soviet Period

Language policies regarding Russian go back to Tsarist era as discussed in the previous part of the chapter. However, the Soviet era can be defined as the period of Russian becoming a lingua franca in the Eurasian region, but creating a myth of Russian as the only language in the area would not be reflecting the truth. Apart from Russian, there were native languages which were used as the backbone of policies, especially in the period immediately after the Bolshevik Revolution. Early nationality policies of the USSR included the encouragement of cultural expression in non-Russian languages, which also made it possible for the development of literature.[128] Moreover, there was an effort to create educational opportunities in as many different languages as possible during the 1920s. This can even be seen within the constitution of the USSR. The official language was Russian throughout the USSR, but the

[127] Aneta Pavlenko, p. 318.

[128] David F. Marshall, "A politics of Language: Language as a Symbol in the Dissolution of the Soviet Union and its Aftermath", *International Journal of Sociology of Language*, Vol. 118, 1996, p. 8.

language of the titular nationality was defined as an official language alongside Russian in the 1938 constitutions of the republics.[129]

In terms of supporting titular languages, beginning with the era of Lenin we can discuss two factors. Firstly, the need of the Bolshevik Revolution, or communist ideology, to make people literate and thus give shape to a Soviet identity. And transferring ideology can be better done via native languages. Thus, Moscow pursued policies that would develop the position of titular languages. However, this also helped Russian language in practical terms, since the work of creating grammars for these languages, was mainly based on Russian, and this created a foundation for the influence of Russian language on other languages, as well as paving the way for the importation of new terms and words from Russian.[130] In addition to this impact, similarities between the grammar of the Russian language, and that of titular languages, would be an advantage for Russian language education in the new republics. Secondly, creating nations was just a part of a larger nation building program known as *korenizatsiia* (nativization or indeginization) in the USSR and the Soviets used language as an instrument in the nation building process. The idea behind these nationalist policies can be explained via Lenin's aim of creating a typology of Soviet man in a universalist approach. However, nationalism was just a phase to be experienced en route to achieving the ultimate aim.

As can be seen, language was seen as a vital instrument of soft power used to impose the values of the new system during the Soviet period. Several other factors paved the way for Russian to become the *lingua franca* of the Eurasian region. In this context, three main factors can be identified that promoted the position of the Russian language in the post-Soviet space. First of all, SSRs each had a mainly heterogeneous

[129] Roy Medvedev, "The Russian Language Throughout the Commonwealth of the Independent States: Toward a Statement of the Problem", *Russian Politics and Law*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 2007, p. 5.

[130] Aneta Pavlenko, "Multilingualism in Post-Soviet Countries: Language Revival, Language Removal, and Sociolinguistic Theory", *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, Vol. 11, No. 3, p. 280.

demography due to the multiethnic structure of this broad region, and to policies implemented by Moscow. Different ethnic groups were speaking different languages, but they need to speak one common language (lingua franca) and this was mainly Russian. Secondly, Russians represented the biggest ethnic group of the USSR. This fostered the position of Russian by emanation of the language by these people. Lastly, but not least, the Russian language was supported by Moscow, it was the official language of the USSR, whereas titular languages have this status only within the borders of fifteen republics.

The reason that the Russian language was supported by Moscow can be found in the difficulties of operating a bureaucracy in different languages for each and every minority, and consequently in the 1930s the administration "developed a new appreciation for Russian as a language of state consolidation, industrialization, and collectivization."[131] This did not mean that native languages were rejected. However, the promotion of Russian enhanced its position within the Soviet Republics.

Apart from legislative implementations, such as making Russian the official language of the USSR, in terms of education and language policies Moscow also pursued proactive measures. In 1938, it was decreed that Russian was also to be the obligatory second language in non-Russian schools. Moreover, the Cyrillic alphabet was introduced and substituted for the Latin alphabet in 1935.[132]

Being a *lingua franca* in this region, due to abovementioned factors, is surely important, and the Russification process from the 1930s onwards is also a crucial initiative in terms of understanding the dynamics in the region. On the eve of the collapse of the USSR, the effects of Russification could be seen amongst the people and bilingualism has become one of the specialties of this region. In 1989, 84% of

[131] Aneta Pavlenko, "Multilingualism in Post-Soviet Countries: Language Revival, Language Removal, and Sociolinguistic Theory", p. 280.

[132] Aneta Pavlenko, "Multilingualism in Post-Soviet Countries: Language Revival, Language Removal, and Sociolinguistic Theory", p.281.

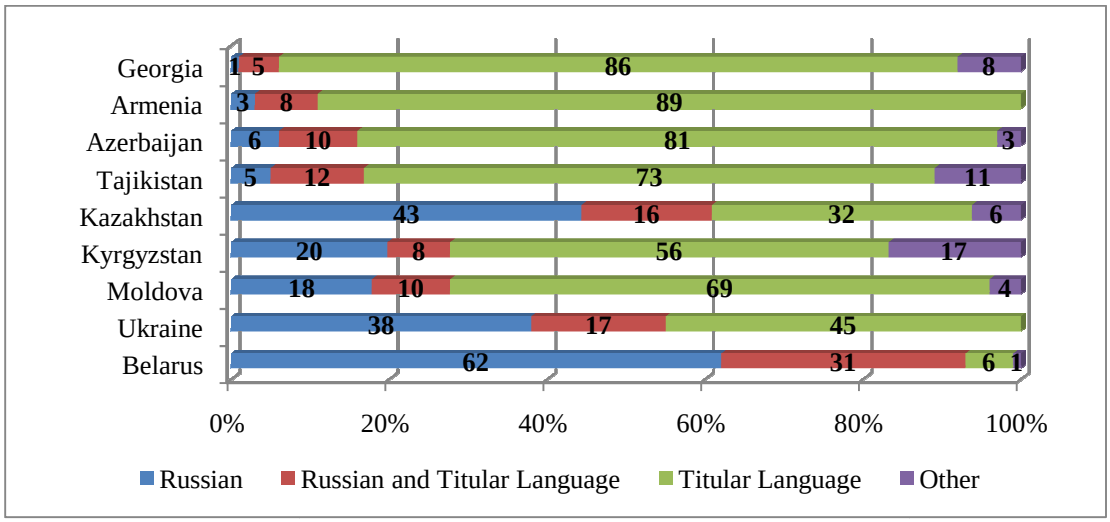
non-Russians in the region claimed their nationality language as native, 9.9% of non-Russians claimed Russian as their native language and failed to claim their nationality language as second. Nevertheless, regarding second languages, 48.1% claimed Russian, 2.2% another nationality's and 44.3% claimed no second language. However, the interesting fact is that 55.7% of non-Russians were bilingual with the majority claiming Russian and their native language.[133] Russians in the Soviet Union did not see it as a priority to learn a second language like other nations. In fact, this has caused some problems in the post-Soviet period. During the process of establishing the new states, Russian lost its status of state language within the Newly Independent States, except in Belarus. In Latvia and Estonia the problem that the Russian minority had to confront was more dramatic. They were not given citizenship, since the adopted resolutions in 1991 took peoples' nationality in 1940 as a basis for citizenship, and to be citizens of these countries these people had to prove their proficiency in Estonian or Latvian.[134] These can be seen as extreme examples in the Eurasian region and these countries do not lie within the scope of this study, since they are not among the CIS countries. The language policies implemented by these eleven countries do not reflect the same tendencies. In the next part the position of Russian in CIS countries will be examined in detail in terms of geographic sub groups as South Caucasia, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe.

The nation and state building process in the post-Soviet countries has been far from smooth, due to lack of resources, demographic structure, and infrastructural problems. Furthermore, in some countries such as those in Central Asia, independence was not

[133] Barbara A. Anderson and Brian D. Silver, "Some Factors in the Linguistic and Ethnic Russification of Soviet Nationalities: Is Everyone Becoming Russian?", in Hajda Lubomyr and Mark Beisinger (eds.) *the Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Society*, (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1990) cited in David F. Marshall, "A politics of Language: Language as a Symbol in the Dissolution of the Soviet Union and its Aftermath", Vol. 118, 1996, p. 9.

[134] For detailed information on language policies in Baltic States please refer to Uldis Ozolins, "Between Russian and European Hegemony: Current Language Policies in Baltic States", *Current Issues in Language and Society*, Vol. 6, No.1, 1999.

something they had demanded, but something that was given to these states. Thus, they were hardly prepared for the transformation process that awaited, but these factors could not prevent these countries becoming the latest links of nation-state system in the 20th century, along with Yugoslavia that was partitioned in the same decade.



Graph IV: Spoken Language at Home and in Family

Source: Eurasian Foundation[135]

Within these fifteen states there was no single leader profile. Political developments helped new leaders to emerge, or the existing ones to preserve their positions in these countries. They were mainly Communist Party leaders who became the new presidents of Central Asian Republics, but in the Southern Caucasus Popular Front leaders like Elchibey and Ter Petrosyan were the new leaders of these newly independent states. Thus, the transformation process in these states does not have a unique character, but with all its negative and positive factors, the reality was that the change process became the common issue in the post-Soviet region. Creating or

[135] Gavrilov Kirill, Elena Kozievskaya and Elena Yatsenko, "Status and Prospects of the Russian Language in the New Independent States", *Eurasian Home Analytical Resource*, 11 November 2008. Retrieved from http://www.eurasianhome.org/xml/t/expert.xml?lang?=en&nic=expert &pid=1803 on 14 May 2009.

restructuring new myths, resolution of border issues, transformation and modification of existing bureaucracy, new rhetoric in the political and economic sphere, and consequently rejection of the Soviet heritage, or a process of de-Russification, are among the main dynamics of this period. Language policies represent one of the main pillars of identity, and the process of nation creation, together with policies implemented, directly affected the position of Russians and the Russian language in these countries.

In the post-Soviet era, the nation and state building process within the CIS countries followed different patterns. Factors like geography, demographic structure, historical background and economics are important, but a crucial factor in this process was that there was no longer command politics emanating from Moscow's as in Soviet times. Especially just after the perestroika period, the vacuum of power in the region, and Russian policies mainly formulated towards the West in the early years of independence, created a favorable environment for these newly emerged states in their state and nation building processes.

Language as discussed above is one of the backbones of the nation building process. In this sense, the main trend in the CIS countries was accepting the titular language as the official language of the states. Unlike the Soviet era, speaking Russian is not the *sine qua non* for success in the system, but is an asset for any individual. In contrast, speaking the titular language is the key of success, especially in public service, in most of the countries and proficiency in the titular language has become policy in these states. Having a good command of Russian is an advantage, but is generally not necessary.

Bilingualism is one of the legacies of the USSR and in daily life Russian still preserves its importance. This can be easily seen in recent trends in the region. The

study conducted by Eurasian Foundation in 2005-2007[136] shows that Russian is still spoken at home and work by people. As can be seen in **Graph IV**, in Central Asia and Eastern Europe Russian is spoken by a majority, or people speak both Russian and a titular language. This creates a good basis Russian culture to preserve its position in the region, and for new trends from the Russian Federation to spread to these countries. A Eurobarameter survey shows that Russian media organs are among the most important information sources. In CIS countries, national radio is a source of information for 24% of CIS citizens, and Russian radio for 9%, but the popularity of Russian media organs are different in Kazakhstan, Belarus and Georgia.[137] Similarly it is hard to talk about a single pattern in terms of language policies and practices in the post-Soviet countries. Aneta Pavlenko draws a framework that is composed of five categories:

i) Dual language policy with Russian functioning de facto as the main language - Belarus
ii) Dual language policy with titular language as the state language and Russian as an official language or the language of interethnic communication - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan
iii) Single language policy with de facto bilingualism in the titular language and Russian - Ukraine
iv) Single language policy with Russian functioning de facto in some public contexts - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

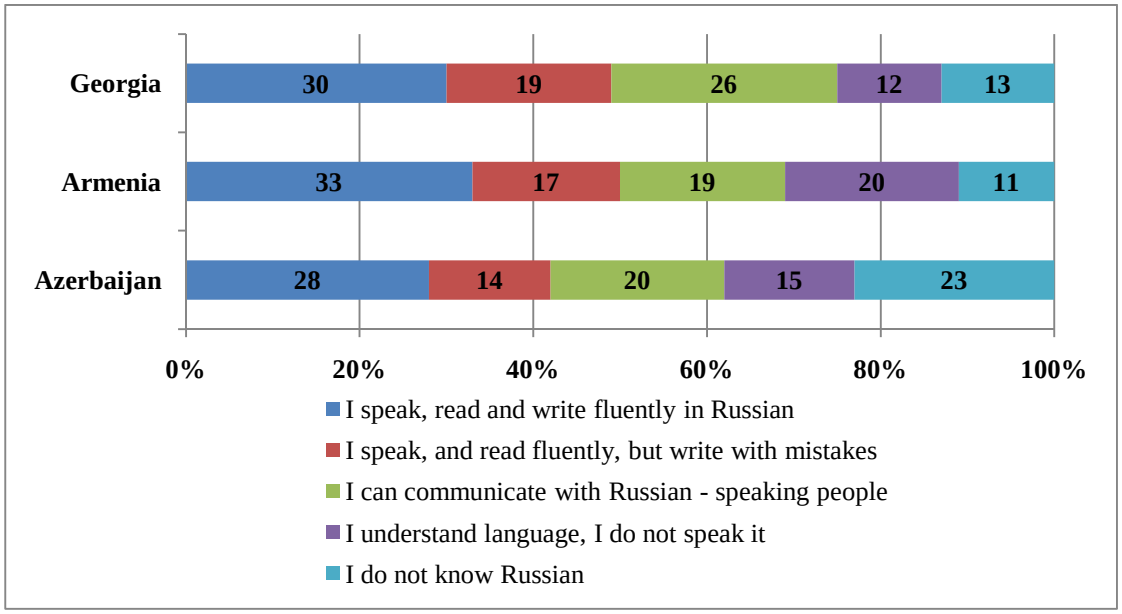
[136] Gavrilov Kirill, Elena Kozievskaya and Elena Yatsenko, "Status and Prospects of the Russian Language in the New Independent States", *Eurasian Home Analytical Resource*, 11 November 2008. Retrieved from http://www.eurasianhome.org/xml/t/expert.xml?lang?=en&nic=expert &pid=1803 on 14 May 2009. (In the following parts of the chapter the results of this survey will be used and also they will be supported with other studies)

[137] European Commission, *Central and Eastern Eurobarameter (CEEB) 6 1996*, 6 March 2009, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ceeb/ceeb6/ceeb6_en.htm#4.4Realisation of fieldwork.

v) Single language policy with the titular language as the main language both de jure and de facto - Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia. [138]

As can be seen from the analysis above a categorization is possible and countries followed different policies after independence due to political and social dynamics such as their relations with Russia and the West, the ethnic structure of the country and so on. Differences among these states will be discussed below in terms of geographic categorization, and the position of the Russian language in these countries will be examined in an attempt to be able to see the main trend in the post-Soviet space.

3.2.1. Russian Language in the Southern Caucasus



Graph V: The Southern Caucasus– Proficiency in Russian

Source: Eurasian Heritage Foundation[139]

[138] Aneta Pavlenko, "Russian As a Lingua Franca", *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 26, 2006, p. 84.

The de-Russification process in Azerbaijan did not just start in the post-Soviet era. With the introduction of perestroika and glasnost policies in the second half of the 1980s, the rise of nationalist movements and their activities took root particularly among people of the Baltic States and the Caucasian SSRs, and particularly in Azerbaijan.[140] Articles critical of Russian imperialism and oppression in these states were being published in many journals, and popular fronts were gaining power against the Communist Party. Moreover, unlike in other countries of the post-Soviet geography, Azerbaijan had to deal with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as well as the challenges of the transition process. This conflict which began in the late 1980s, has become one of the main conflicts in the region which has direct impact on regional balances. The conflict has played a catalyst role for identity creation in terms of the nation building process, which helped a solid Azerbaijani identity to be created. Moreover, the relatively homogenous structure of the country is also an important factor in this context. The population is composed of 74% Azeri, 11% Talish, 4% Lezghi, 3.2% Dagestani, and 2.5% Russian.[141] In spite of existence of ethnic groups like the Talish and Lezghi, a majority of the population is Muslim (93%) and speaks Azeri in daily life.

The de-Russification process had repercussions for the politics of Azerbaijan and similar tendencies parallel to the nationalist movements appeared in the sphere of language policies. Just after independence, the Cyrillic alphabet was replaced by the

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[139]Gavrilov Kirill, Elena Kozievskaya and Elena Yatsenko, "Status and Prospects of the Russian Language in the New Independent States", *Eurasian Home Analytical Resource*, 11 November 2008. Retrieved from http://www.eurasianhome.org/xml/t/expert.xml?lang?=en&nic=expert &pid=1803 on 14 May 2009.

[140] Güner Özkan, "Nagorno-Karabakh Problem: Claims, Counter Claims and Impasse", *Journal of Central Asian and Caucasian Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2006, pp. 123-124, and Peter Rutland, "Democracy and Nationalism in Armenia", *Europe Asia Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 5, 1994, p. 846.

[141] Anna Labedzka, "Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia)", in Steven Blockmans and Adam Lazowski (eds.), *European Union and Its Neigbours: A Legal Appraisal of the EU's Policies of Stabilization, Partnership and Integration*, (The Hague: TMC Asser Press, 2006), p. 580.

Latin alphabet on 25 December 1991.[142] And the 1995 Constitution included a clause stating that the official language of the state is the Azerbaijanian language and the Republic ensures the free use and development of other languages (Article 21). As of 2007, the lowest level of proficiency in Russian language among CIS countries is in Azerbaijan, where 24% of the population does not speak Russian. (**Graph V**) In fact a majority of Azeris was not fluent in Russian, but when compared with the 1989 census data there is a significant decrease from the 32.1% to 24%.[143] One of the main reasons would seem to be the decreasing level of proficiency in Russian within a new generation. Azerbaijan's Cultural Attaché, Necibe Nesibova, indicates that the level of proficiency in Russian is lower among younger members of the population, when compared to Soviet era. On the other hand, there is an increasing trend regarding proficiency in English. Cultural and educational exchange programmes with the US and the promotion of the English language in media and education institutes supports this trend among young people.[144]

Russian is now seen as a somewhat elitist language that is used in government offices and international platforms, and in the capital there is still widespread fluency in the Russia language.[145] However, compared to other foreign languages, Russian is perceived as a second language by the speakers. In this sense, for Russian soft power, it represents a good channel to reach the elitist class in the country.

Secondary education is offered in Russian, Azeri and Georgian and, unlike the situation in other post-Soviet countries, the number of Russian language schools did

[142] Muharrem Öçalan, "Kırgız Türkçesi – Türkiye Türkçesi Arasında Halk ve Çocuk Edebiyatı Alanında Karşılıklı Eser Aktarımlarının Önemi ve Moldo Kılıç'ın 'Buudayıktın Toyu'Eserinin Çevirisi", *Conference Paper* (Jalalabad: 3rd International Turkic World Social Sciences Congress, 7 July 2005), p. 10.

[143] Aneta Pavlenko, "Multilingualism in Post-Soviet Countries: Language Revival, Language Removal, and Sociolinguistic Theory", p. 289.

[144] Farideh Heyat, "Globalization and Changing Gender Norms in Azerbaijan", *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 2006, p. 401.

[145] Farideh Heyat, "Globalization and Changing Gender Norms in Azerbaijan", p. 404.

not reduce in the post-independence period. The presence of some 378 schools still teaching in Russian[146] is an important indicator for preserving the level of proficiency among the new generation.

Armenia has similar characteristics to Azerbaijan that shaped its nation building process after independence, such as the Nagorno Karabagh issue, and the high rate of ethnic Armenians in the country. According to 1989 data, 93.3% of the population was Armenian and 1.6% was Russian.[147] Just like Azerbaijan, Armenia has also experienced a sharp decrease in members of the population fluent in Russian. Prior to independence 41.6% of the population was fluent in Russian, but as of 2007 this has decreased to 33%. Moreover, the majority speaks the titular language at home (89%), whereas only 3% speak Russian. However, this number is even higher than the Russian minority in Armenia.

According to the Constitution of Armenia the official language of the country is Armenian (Article 12), and citizens belonging to national minorities are entitled to the preservation of their traditions and the development of their language and culture (Article 37). In terms of education there are some problems with students belonging to a minority group, since it takes several years for a student to comprehend the Armenian language, and some of these students prefer Russian-language education, but the books inherited from the Soviet era do not cover the new curriculum.[148]

[146] L. Kaftan (2004) cited in Aneta Pavlenko, "Russian in Post Soviet Countries", *Russian Linguistics*, Vol. 32, No.1, 2008, p. 68.

[147] Aneta Pavlenko, "Multilingualism in Post-Soviet Countries: Language Revival, Language Removal, and Sociolinguistic Theory", p. 289.

[148] Onnik Krikorian, "Educating Minority Children", *UNICEF*. Retrieved from http://www.unicef.org/armenia/reallives_2345.html on 29 May 2009.

The Armenian language has an archaic characteristic in that its roots date back to 4000-6000 AD and the alphabet to 406 AD.[149] During the Soviet era, they did not use the Cyrillic alphabet for Armenian, as was the case with native languages in Azerbaijan or Central Asian countries. However, as it was the official language during the Soviet period, Russian has its own legacies in Armenia. Moreover, close relations with the Russian Federation help Russian to preserve its position in the country. This can be seen in the education policies of Armenia. Russian is being taught as the obligatory foreign language with another second foreign language such as English, German, or French.[150] The status of Russian was enhanced by the treaty between Armenia and Russia on friendship, cooperation and mutual support which was signed in 1997. According to this treaty the Russian language would be taught in the Armenian education system, and the Armenian government agreed to implement this measure. Following this development the Armenian government issued Resolution No: 4 in 1999 and schools with appropriately qualified staff offer Armenian language courses 4-6 hours a week.[151]

In Georgia the debate around language was a major issue, even in the Soviet era. Initiatives of the Politburo to suspend the official status of other languages, but Russian, within the framework of rewriting constitutions in 1978, caused unrest in the society, ignited student protests in Tbilisi, and Moscow had to retreat.[152] This has contributed to the creation of a generation keen to preserve Georgian rather than use

[149] Lenore A. Grenoble, *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*, (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2006), p. 122; Razmik Panossian, "The Past as Nation: Three Dimensions of Armenian Identity", *Geopolitics*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2002, p. 141

[150] Aneta Pavlenko, "Multilingualism in Post-Soviet Countries: Language Revival, Language Removal, and Sociolinguistic Theory", p. 292.

[151] First Report of the Republic of Armenia According to Paragraph 1of Article 15 of European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages, (Yerevan: 2003). Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/local_and_regional_democracy/regional_or_minority_languages/2_monitoring/2.2_States_Reports/Armenia_report1.pdf on 25 April 2009.

[152] Roman Solchanyk, "Russian Language in Soviet Politics", *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 1982, p. 23.

the Russian language. Georgian Counselor Chitadze defines those years of student protests as the beginning of an era when students were answering in Georgian the questions posed in Russian.

The ancient characteristic of Georgian is of the main ways in which language plays an important role in identity policies. As for Armenian and Azeri, Georgian is one of the ancient languages of the Caucasus and has its own alphabet. During the Soviet era, the alphabet was not replaced with Cyrillic, which is an important factor in the context of the preservation of the Georgian identity. Zurab Batiashvili says that during perestroika the trend of de-Russification gained impetus and this had a direct impact on language policies. In the aftermath of independence, many books and resources were translated into Georgian, and new books brought from the West.[153]

According to the 1995 Constitution, the official language of the country is Georgian and in Abkhazia – also Abkhazian (Article 8). An individual not having a command of the state language, shall be provided with an interpreter in legal proceedings (Article 85/2). Furthermore, minorities have their own schools in their own language in the country, but subjects such as history and Georgian language are taught in Georgian. The state supports Georgian language education and provides teachers for these schools.

All these developments caused Russian to lose its foothold in the country. Even though 64% of people think that it is very important for Georgians study Russian, as of 2007 only 5% of pupils are actually studying Russian.[154] Georgian President Saakashvili explains this via the bilateral relations between Russia and Georgia:

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[153] Zurab Batiashvili, Counselor of the Embassy of Georgia to Ankara. Interviewed on 06 May 2009.

[154] Sergei Gradirovski and Neli Esipova, "Russia's Language could be Ticket in for Migrants", *Gallup Survey*, 28 November 2008, http://www.gallup.com/poll/112270/Russias-Language-Could-Ticket-Migrants.aspx; Gavrilov Kirill, Elena Kozievskaya and Elena Yatsenko, "Status and Prospects of the Russian Language in the New Independent States".

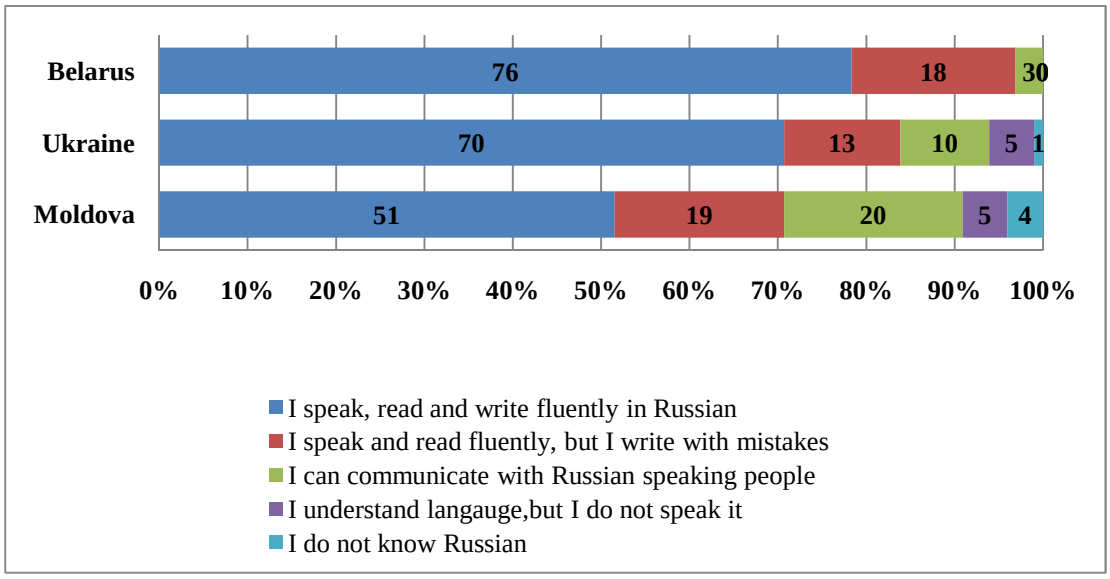
> Russian visas are not issued; trade with Russia is declining; we now have our own television and our people mostly watch it. Therefore, simply because of pragmatic reasons, if one wants to advance his career, it is not necessary to learn Russian. It is necessary to learn English, Turkish. In the past everyone traveled to Russia, but last year [2006], for example, a million Georgians crossed the Georgian – Turkish border. This is five times more than those who crossed the Russian-Georgian border.[155]

Hard power instruments or leverages implemented against Georgia have caused the Russian language to lose ground. However, it must be borne in mind that this process is also related to ethnic structure, conjectural balances and the country's nation building activities. A significant minority of the population is still proficient in Russian (33%), but at home people mostly prefer to speak Georgian (86%). However, Zurab Batiashvili argues that now politics are aimed at integration with the West, English is becoming the language of the elite, more popular than Russian among Georgian youth.[156]

[155]Interview with the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili of the Russian Radio 'Echo Moskvi', *President of Georgia*, 28 January 2007, http://www.president.gov.ge/?l=E&m=0&sm=7&st=0&id=2124.

[156] Zurab Batiashvili, Counselor of the Embassy of Georgia to Ankara. Interviewed on 06 May 2009.

3.2.2. Russian Language in Eastern Europe



Graph VI: Eastern Europe – Proficiency in Russian

Source: Eurasian Heritage Foundation[157]

Glasnost policies and nationalist tendencies influenced Belarus in the late 1980s and a law proclaiming Belarusian as the single state language was passed in 1990.[158] However, the transition period was not smooth, and Belarusians had to struggle with an economic downturn after independence, which caused some problems in the context of the creation of a national identity, and led to reduced support for the reforms.[159] These factors not only created a problematic environment for the transition

[157]Gavrilov Kirill, Elena Kozievskaya and Elena Yatsenko, "Status and Prospects of the Russian Language in the New Independent States", *Eurasian Home Analytical Resource*, 11 November 2008. Retrieved from http://www.eurasianhome.org/xml/t/expert.xml?lang?=en&nic=expert &pid=1803 on 14 May 2009.

[158] N. Anthony Brown, "Status Language Planning in Belarus: An Examination of Written Discourse in Public Spaces", *Language Policy*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2007, p. 286.

[159] Markus Giger and Marian Sloboda, "Language Management and Language Problems in Belarus: Education and Beyond", International *Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, Vol. 11, No. 3 & 4, 2008, p. 318.

process, but also corruption and economic problems paved the way for failure of the government. In 1994, Aleksandr Lukashenko, who had a charismatic personality and was the chairman of the corruption commission of the parliament, was elected the new President of Belarus. However, during his presidency, as the Belarusian identity lost ground, Russification gained impetus. This would have a direct impact on language policies as well.

After being elected as the President, one of the major steps taken by Lukashenko for the revival of Russian language was the referendum of 1995. The referendum was designed to give official status to the Russian language, and the majority of Belarusians (83%) voted in favor of granting Russian an equal status with Belarusian,[160] which was a backward step given the decision of 1990. This led to Russian continuing its dominance in the society, while Belarusian withered over time. As of 2007, only 6% of people in Belarus communicate in Belarusian at home, and Belarus has the highest rate of population that is proficient in the Russian language in the CIS countries, with 62% of population. The granting of official status to the Russian language in this country, paved the way for closure of schools delivering education in Belarusian. In Belarus, citizens have the right to education in Belarusian, Russian, Polish and Lithuanian, but 77% of students are taught in Russian, whilst only 23% is representing are being educated in Belarusian.[161]

The dominance of the Russian language is also clear from the media. Newspapers and journals are mostly in Russian.[162] Even today, "[o]fficial television and radio, and mass media circulation newspaper *Sovetskaya Belorussiya* are today all in Russian."[163]

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[160] Markus Giger and Marian Sloboda, "Language Management and Language Problems in Belarus: Education and Beyond", p.318.

[161] Markus Giger and Marian Sloboda, "Language Management and Language Problems in Belarus: Education and Beyond", p. 325.

[162] Roy Medvedev, "The Russian Language Throughout the Commonwealth of the Independent States: Toward a Statement of the Problem", p. 325.

In conclusion, it can be said that leader choice and lack of resistance regarding the preservation of Belarusian identity, resulted in the de-Russification process losing impetus in the country. As a result, the Russian language preserves its dominance in all spheres of life whilst Belarusian seems to have a lower profile.

In terms of creating a Moldovan identity, language and education policies played a major role in the country. One of the main factors would seem to be the demographic structure of the country, especially the Transnistria region where Ukrainians and Russians live. Almost 36% of the population is composed of minority groups and the enforcement of a language law after the independence led to debates on the preservation of languages within the country. [164]

The de-Russification process in Moldova dates back to 1989, when Moldovan was declared to be the only state language. However, this also caused unrest in the country, and clashes between the Transnistria region and the central government.[165] This situation was never clearly resolved, but could currently be deemed a frozen conflict. Policies implemented after independence caused the Russian language to lose ground, at least at state level. The state language status of Moldovan was approved within the 1994 Constitution and it has become obligatory to speak Moldovan to be a civil servant. As a result the students who only study in Russian are then hired by the private sector, or else migrate to Russia or the Ukraine to find employment.[166] "While the ruling Communist Part of Moldova has promoted the use of the Russian language

[163] David P. Marples, "Color Revolutions: The Belarus Case", *Communist and Post Communist Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3, 2006, p. 359.

[164] Iulia Trombitcaia, "Facing Linguistic Imbalances", *Peace Review*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1998, p. 568.

[165] Aneta Pavlenko, Russian in Post Soviet Countries, *Russian Linguistics*, Vol. 32, No.1, p. 62.

[166] Steven D. Roper, "The Politicization of Education: Identity Formation in Moldova and Transnistria", *Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 2005, p. 503.

in Moldovan integration within the CIS, opposition parties have promoted the use of the Moldovan language and Moldovan integration within European structures."[167]

According to data gathered in 2007 51% of the population said that they are proficient in Russian. The 1989 census data shows that 68% of the population claimed Russian as their native or second language, but the current statistics indicate that 69% of the population predominantly speaks Moldovan. In less than two decades, Russian lost its primary position in the society, but the majority of people can still communicate in Russian. Moreover, a survey shows that 83% of the population thinks that it is important for their children to learn the Russian language.[168]

Language is a sensitive topic of politics in Ukraine and mainly represents "[t]he choice between Ukrainian and Russian is often portrayed as shorthand for the choice between two polar political and cultural allegiances: with Russia…or the West."[169] In 2004, the election manifesto of Viktor Yanukovich, who was supported by Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, included a proposal to grant the Russian language official status, and another one permitting dual citizenship, unlike Yushchenko's stance that promotes integration policies with the Western institutions, yet promises to uphold the requirement of a qualification in Russian for local posts.[170] One of the main reasons for the political division is the ethnic structure in the country. Even though the majority is Ukrainian, the uneven distribution of ethnicities within the country creates an imbalance between the eastern

[167] Steven D. Roper, "The Politicization of Education: Identity Formation in Moldova and Transnistria", p. 503.

[168] Sergei Gradirovski and Neli Esipova, "Russia's Language could be Ticket in for Migrants", *Gallup Survey*, 28 November 2008.

[169] Laada Bilaniuk and Svitlana Melnyk, "A Tense and Shifting Balance: Bilingualism ad Education in Ukraine", *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2008, p. 340.

[170] Vicki L. Hesli, "The Orange Revolution: 2004 Presidential Election(s) in Ukraine", *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2006, p. 170.

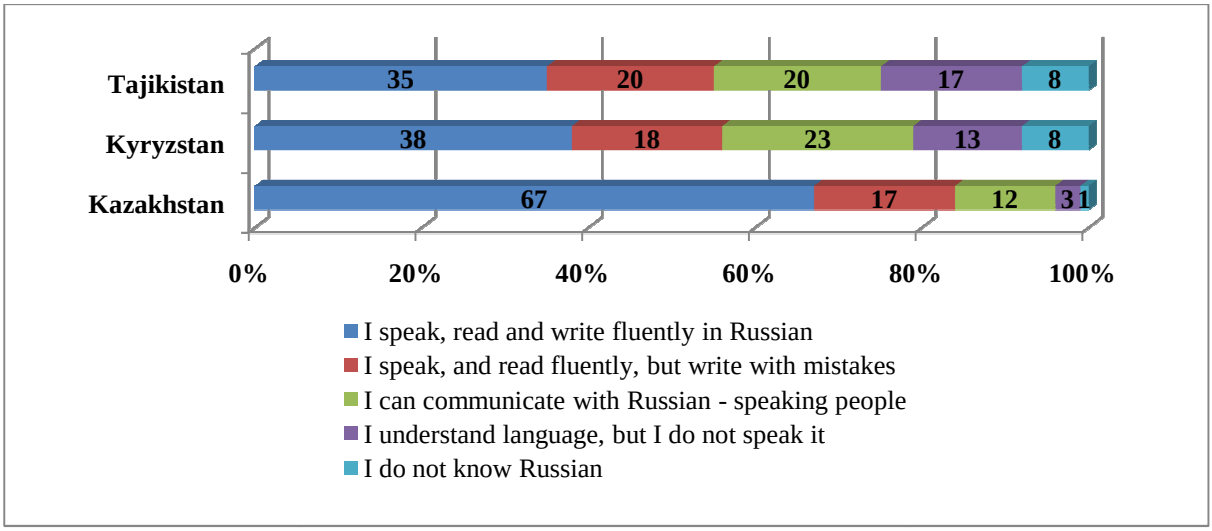
and western parts, and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea is another anomaly as the majority of its population is Russian.

The eastern part of the country was one of the industrial centers of the Soviet Union, and highly qualified Russians and people from other nations were coming to Donetsk for work. On the other hand the Crimea, which is of strategic importance as it includes the home ports of the Russian fleet, was transferred from the control of Russian SFSR to Ukrainian SSR in 1954, with autonomous status. Thus, in these two regions Russian is the first language of the people, just as Ukrainian is within other parts of the country. However, Russian still preserves its position in daily life, despite policies implemented to enhance the position of Ukrainian. As of 2007, 93% of the population speaks Russian, and 73% of people are proficient in Russian language. Although Russians actually comprise 17% of the population, 38% of Ukrainians speak Russian at home and 17% of people speak both Russian and Ukrainian at home (**Graph IV**).

After the dissolution, in line with Ukrainization policies, titular language has been promoted at an official level. The 1996 Constitution of Ukraine guarantees the use and protection of other languages, but according to Article 10 the official language is Ukrainian. In accordance with the law, citizens can receive primary and secondary education in the minority languages of Russian Moldovan, Polish and Crimean Tatar, but since independence the number of Russian-language schools has decreased.[171] Higher education is in Ukrainian, but in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea it is in Russian.

[171] Laada Bilaniuk and Svitlana Melnyk, "A Tense and Shifting Balance: Bilingualism ad Education in Ukraine", p. 352.

3.2.3. Russian Language in Central Asia



Graph VII: Central Asia – Proficiency in Russian

Source: Eurasian Heritage Foundation[172]

Kazakhstan is the home of more than 130 ethnic groups, with the majority of the population composed of Russians and Kazakhs. However, the Russian population is mainly located in the northern part of the country closer to the Russian Federation, whereas Kazakhs are in the south-eastern part of the country where the biggest city and ex-capital Almaty is located. Prior to independence the ethnic balance was almost equally divided between Kazakhs and Russians, but this has changed in favour of Kazakh population over time.[173] One of the main reasons for this trend is Russian

[172]Gavrilov Kirill, Elena Kozievskaya and Elena Yatsenko, "Status and Prospects of the Russian Language in the New Independent States", *Eurasian Home Analytical Resource*, 11 November 2008. Retrieved from http://www.eurasianhome.org/xml/t/expert.xml?lang?=en&nic=expert &pid=1803 on 5 14 May 2009. Statistics regarding Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were not provided in the survey conducted by Eurasian foundation, but the statistics provided in Valery Tishkov, "The Russian World – Changing Meanings and Strategies", *Carnegie Papers No: 95*, (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008) will be used while examining the Russian language's position in these countries.

[173] Kazakh population represents almost 55% of the country, whereas Russians represent around 30%. For the demographic trend aftermath of the independence please refer to William Fierman, "Language and Education in Post Soviet Kazakhstan: Kazakh Medium Instruction in Urban Schools", *The Russian Review*, Vol. 65, No. 1, p. 110.

migration to the fatherland, but Nishan Karateyeva says that recently Russians who migrated to Russia are returning to Kazakhstan due to the problems of adaptation.[174]

The ethnic structure and the existence of a large Russian population in the country have played a crucial role in the nation building process. Even though the state language is Kazakh, official status was also given to the Russian language in the 1995 Constitution (Article 7). Moreover, in line with civic nationalism policies, the state promotes conditions for the study and development of minority languages, and President Nazarbayev generally makes his public statements both in Russian and in the Kazakh language, one after the other.

In spite of policies that create a favourable environment for languages other than Kazakh, the state does also have certain policies to promote the titular language. The university entrance exam is available in Kazakh, and students wanting to continue their higher education should know the titular language. In addition to this the share of Kazakh-language schools increased after independence. In 1991, the share of Kazakh-language schools was 32.4%, but in 2004 this had reached 56%.[175] However, it would be wrong to conclude that ethnic nationalist policies are being implemented in the country; on the contrary, Nazarbayev is trying to create a Kazakhstani identity due to ethnically fragile structure of the country. Under these circumstances it is hard to say that Russian is losing ground in the country. Even Kazakh diplomats speak in Russian amongst themselves and Russian radio and television programmes are popular in the country. As can be seen from the Graph VII, 67% of the population is proficient in the Russian language and only around 1% of the population do not know the language. Moreover, people mostly prefer to speak in Russian (43%) at home rather than Kazakh (32%).

[174] Nishan Karateyeva, Cultural Attaché of Kazakhstan. Interviewed on 28 April 2009.

[175] William Fierman, "Language and Education in Post Soviet Kazakhstan: Kazakh Medium Instruction in Urban Schools", p. 106.

Russia gives the utmost importance to its bilateral relations with Kazakhstan. 2003 was the 'Year of Kazakhstan' in Russia, and 2004 was the year of 'Russian Culture in Kazakhstan'. Within this framework many cultural and scientific events were held in Kazakhstan in 2004, which contributed to the development of Russian culture in the country.[176] Moreover, Russian media organs are popular and active in Kazakhstan such as radio and television channels like ORT, NTV, Ruskoye Radiyo, Nashe Radiyo, Evropa Plus and Russian newspapers such as Izvestiya, Trud, Komsomolskaya Pravda and Moskovskiye Novosti.[177]

The existence of high rate of Russian population and Russophones in the country creates a good basis for the Russian language. Furthermore close relations with Russia at a political and economic level make Russian a commercial and strategic language for Kazakhstan.

Kyrgyzstan has a multiethnic structure like Kazakhstan, and the population is mainly composed of Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Russian and other ethnic minorities. The Kyrgyz people represent 64.9% of the population while, as the second biggest minority group after Uzbeks (13.8%), the Russians comprise 12.5%.[178] Parallel trends, especially in language policies, in Kyrgyzstan and the other post-Soviet countries have been experienced in the nation building process. Kyrgyz, the titular language, was proclaimed as the sole state language in 1989, and this was written into the Kyrgyz Constitution in 1993, but the government guaranteed the equal development and functioning of Russian and other languages that are spoken in the society (Article 5). After a transitional period scheduled to end in 1998, the Kyrgyz language would

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[176] Asem Nauşabay Hekimoğlu, *ABD, AB, Çin, Hindistan, Orta Asya – Rusya'nın Dış Politikası I, (Ankara: Vadi Yayınları, 2007), p.152.*

[177] B. K. Sultanov, L. M. Muzapparova (2002) cited in Asem Nauşabay Hekimoğlu, *ABD, AB, Çin, Hindistan, Orta Asya – Rusya'nın Dış Politikası I*, p.152.

[178] Abdykadyr Orusbayev, Arto Mustajoki, and Ekaterina Protassova, "Multilingualism, Russian Language and Education in Kyrgyzstan", *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, Vol.11, No. 1, 2008, p. 480.

become the sole state language, but in ten years time the use of Russian did not diminish.[179]

After the 1990s, the Russian population, which is well educated and important for the survival of the Kyrgyz economy, was shrinking and one of the main reasons was language policies implemented by the state. Under the circumstances, as the use of Kyrgyz could not be expanded as desired coupled with the decreasing Russian population, the Parliament unanimously voted for Russian to become the official language of the country on 26 May 2000. President Askar Akayev signed the appropriate legislation, but the Kyrgyz language retained its status as the state language.[180]

In this country, Russian preserves its position as a means of official, interethnic and worldwide communication. [181] Despite the fact that the Russian population is only 12.5% of the total, the majority of Kyrgyz speak or understand Russian, and 38% of the population is proficient in the Russian language. In social life and at home a majority of people prefer to speak the titular language (56%), but Russian has a significant number of speakers among the elite. There is an increasing tendency towards the use of English and Turkish among the high classes, but Russian preserves its position at the first place.[182] Moreover, unlike English or Turkish, Russian is not perceived as a foreign language. Aijan Tabaldieva says that speaking Russian amongst diplomats, both in the mission or abroad, is not something intentional, but comes

[179] Matteo Fumagalli, "Informal Ethnopolitics and Local Auhority Figures in Osh, Kyrgysztan", *Ethnopolitics*¸ Vol. 6, No. 2, 2007, p. 219.

[180] Maria Utyaganova, "Kyrgyzstan Adopts Russian as Official Language", *CACI Analyst*, 7 June 2009, http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/519.

[181] Abdykadyr Orusbayev, Arto Mustajoki, and Ekaterina Protassova, "Multilingualism, Russian Language and Education in Kyrgyzstan", p. 495.

[182] Abdykadyr Orusbayev, et.al., "Multilingualism, Russian Language and Education in Kyrgyzstan", p.495.

naturally.[183] Thus, it can be said that Russian preserves its position in Kyrgyzstan and has regained its loss of status after independence. This creates a favourable environment for Russian culture to be transferred via media, education and diplomatic channels.

The state language in Tajikistan is Tajik, but Russian is the language of interethnic communication (Article 2). Moreover, being fluent in Tajik is *sine qua non* for being nominated as the President of Tajikistan (Article 65). Unlike other Turkic countries in Central Asia, Tajik is not in the same linguistic group with Turkic languages, but has similarities with Persian.

After independence, the demographic structure of the country changed markedly in favour of the titular nation. Tajik people constituted 62.3% of the population in 1989, and in a decade the share of Tajiks reached almost 80%, while the Russian population decreased from 7.6% to 1.1%.[184] The dramatic percentage change in population can be explained by the low population numbers in Tajikistan, which reflects any change in demographic structure, and the civil war that created an unstable environment between the years 1994-1997. Despite the decrease in the Russian population, the Russian language seems to be preserving its importance in the country. 35% of the population fluently speaks Russian, and the rate of Tajiks who do not understand the Russian language is approximately 8%. However, this is mostly related to the population who were educated during the Soviet period, which has had some repercussions on the perceptions of these people. A Gallup Survey shows that 78% of the parents think that it is very important for their children to learn Russian language.[185] However, at home and in social life people prefer to speak mainly in their titular language (73%), and

[183] Aijan Tabladieva, Cultural Attaché of Kyrgyz Embassy to Ankara. Interviewed on 13 May 2009.

[184] Mehrinisso Nagzibekova, "Language and Education Policies in Tajikistan", *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2008, p. 503.

[185] Sergei Gradirovski and Neli Esipova, "Russia's Language could be Ticket in for Migrants", *Gallup Survey*, 28 November 2008.

only 18% of the population younger than 18 years of age is fluent in Russian. This is still important for the preservation of the Russian language in the country. Being geographically closer to Russia, and the attraction of Russian popular culture, can contribute to this process. Close relations in academic circles and labor force migration to Russia (93% of labor force) are important factors that promote Russian language education. Moreover, a law was passed by the President of Tajikistan in 2003 to improve Russian language learning and, according to this law, Russian will be taught at all stages of education starting from pre-school.[186]

Finally, it can be said that there is an increasing tendency for learning and teaching Russian language in Tajikistan, but due to domestic problems in the 1990s, such as the civil war, the younger generation is not as proficient with Russian as is the older Tajik generation. Thus, it is hard to claim that the tendency or the need for learning Russian overlaps with the reality. Recently, policies that aim to promote Tajik language have also gained ground in the country. Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov proposed banning the use of the Russian language in public institutions and official documents.[187] However, the Russian language is still dominant in Tajik science, government, and industry.[188]

Turkmenistan occupies a large territory in comparison to its population (around 5 million) of whom the majority is Turkmen, with approximately 150,000 Russians. However, recent studies indicate that only 100,000 of the population are fluent in the Russian language, with a further 3.8 million speaking or understanding Russian but not deemed proficient.[189] The 1992 Constitution adopted the Turkmen language as the state language, and no other minority languages, or interethnic languages, were

[186] Mehrinisso Nagzibekova, "Language and Education Policies in Tajikistan", p. 506.

[187] "Tajik Leader Proposed Banning Russian Language for Official Use", *RIA Novosti*, 23 July 2009.

[188] Peter Fedensky, "Tajikistan Considers Russian Language Ban", *VOA News*, 28 July 2009.

[189] Valery Tishkov, "The Russian World – Changing Meanings and Strategies", p. 28.

mentioned in terms of use guaranteed by the state. It would seem that Turkmenistan is following ethnically based nationalist policies, and knowledge of the state language is perceived as mandatory. The demographic structure of the country represents a favourable environment for this, but still the status of Russian as an interethnic language was included in the Law on Language that was passed in 1990.[190] During the Niyazov era, known as Turkmenbashi, the myths of Turkmenistan were mainly created by the President himself. His poetry written in Turkmen, and his epic Rukhname were read by students at Turkmen schools.

In the framework of the de-Russification process Turkmenistan adopted the Latin alphabet instead of the Cyrillic alphabet in 1993. Niyazov aimed to "...enhance Turkmenistan's cultural revival, increase its ability to communicate with other countries, and expand citizen's access to information technology and computers" [191], the latter being mainly dominated by Western technology. Moreover, this change in the alphabet, and similarities between Turkish and the Turkmen language, paved the way for literature and other media in Turkish to enter the country. Books produced by the Turkish government for education are also being used in Turkmenistan, and Turkish television channels are being followed via satellites in the country.[192]

Russian is the language of the elite, and the language of instruction in higher education institutions of technological sciences and international relations. In this way the Russian language has a more realistic sphere of use, rather than being seen as a second or even a native language in the country.[193]

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[190] Aneta Pavlenko, "Russian As a Lingua Franca", p. 87.

[191] Victoria Clement, "Alphabet Changes in Turkmenistan, 1904-2004", in Jeff Shadeo and Russel Zanca (eds.), *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), p. 276.

[192] Turkmen diplomat name withheld. Interviewed on 07 May 2009.

[193] Jacob M. Landau and Barbara Kellner – Heinkele, *Politics of Language in the Ex-Soviet Muslim States*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001), p.193.

Uzbekistan has the biggest population in Central Asia with 27 million people, and cities like Bukhara and Samarkand which have been centers of Muslim civilization for more than a millennium. Uzbekistan has a multiethnic population. As of 2008, Uzbeks constitute the majority (81%), and Tajiks (5%), Russians (3.4%) and Kazakhs (3.2%) are the biggest minorities.[194]

In the Constitution, it is stated that Uzbek is the state language of Uzbekistan, but the Republic ensures a respectful attitude toward the languages, customs and traditions of all nationalities and ethnic groups, and aims to create the necessary conditions for their development (Article 4). Moreover, all legal proceedings are to be conducted in Uzbek, Karakalpak or in the language spoken by the majority of the people in the locality (Article 115). There is no direct reference to the Russian language in the Constitution, but it is the language of interethnic communication. Almost 1.2 million of the population are fluent in the Russian language, with a further 5 million people understanding or speaking the language.[195]

After independence the de-Russification process gained impetus in the country, and this is also visible in language policies, which are politically sensitive. In the framework of language reforms, Uzbekistan has changed the Cyrillic alphabet to the Latin in 1993.[196] 2005 was the deadline set for all materials to be available in the Latin alphabet, but due to bureaucratic problems and insufficient resources that caused delay in converting documents and books to the Latin alphabet from Cyrillic, the deadline has now been postponed to 2014.[197] Regulations against the Russian language can be seen in the country, but their efficiency is another question, given the existence of

[194] Data provided by Uzbekistan Embassy to Ankara, May 2009.

[195] Valery Tishkov, "The Russian World – Changing Meanings and Strategies", p. 28.

[196] Feridun Tekin, "Özbek Türkçesinin Latin Alfabesi Esasındaki İmlası Üzerine", *Turkish Studies: International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 2008.

[197] Nigora K. Mirzaeva, Second Secretary of the Embassy of Uzbekistan to Ankara. Interviewed on 7 May 2009.

communication satellites and the internet. Access to Russian television channels and newspapers was limited by the government in line with these policies[198], but Russian television and media is popular and being followed via satellites. Recently Turkish programmes and actors, as well as Indian cinema, have become more popular than their Russian equivalents, especially among the young generation.[199] In the context of information, there are more than 1000 newspapers and journals being circulated in the country, but only 2-3 of them are in Russian, with *Izvestiya* and *Argumenti Fakti* being the most popular.[200]

Contrary to the government policies to promote Uzbek language, the desire of Uzbeks to learn Russian remained strong, especially among the residents of the country's larger cities such as Samarkand, Namangan and Tashkent.[201] A Gallup survey shows that 75% of parents participating in the research felt that it is very important for their children to learn the Russian language.[202] Moreover, government policies also promote multilingualism in the context of education. Russian is being taught at schools as an obligatory course, with another foreign language such as French, German or English as selective courses. The Uzbekistan government supports education in the native languages of citizens, and at 1048 schools nationwide, the language of instruction is variously Karakalpak (382), Russian (785), Kazakh (549), Tajik (334), Kyrgyz (88) and Turkmen (49).[203]

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[198] Aneta Pavlenko, "Russian As a Lingua Franca", p. 88.

[199] Nigora K. Mirzaeva, Second Secretary of the Embassy of Uzbekistan to Ankara.

[200] Fakhriddin R. Parpiev, First Secretary of the Embassy of Uzbekistan to Ankara. Interviewed on 7 May 2009.

[201] Yunus Khalikov, "Uzbekistan's Russian Language Conundrum", *Eurasia Insight,* 19 September 2006, http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav091906.shtml.

[202] Sergei Gradirovski and Neli Esipova, "Russia's Language could be Ticket in for Migrants".

[203] "Regional Conference Dedicated to the System of 'Education of National Minorities in Multinational Central Asia'", *Press Release by the Embassy of Uzbekistan to the United States,* 06 April 2009, http://www.uzbekistan.org/news/archive/562/.

Table III: People Fluent in Russian Language

	Percentage of Adult Population Speaks Russian	Percentage of Population Younger than 18 Years Old and Speaks Russian	Percentage of Population Younger than 18 Years Old	Percentage of Population that Speaks Russian
Belarus	78	73	18	77
Ukraine	70	41	16	65
Kazakhstan	67	51	26	63
Latvia	59	35	18	55
Moldova	51	45	19	50
Kyrgyzstan	38	39	31	38
Estonia	39	23	23	35
Armenia	33	19	23	30
Tajikistan	35	18	40	28
Georgia	30	17	24	27
Azerbaijan	28	23	26	26
Lithuania	24	6	21	20

Source: Eurasian Heritage Foundation[204]

Within society "with the influence of education and custom, Russian may have been nativized into a local language that is very comfortable and practical to use"[205] and it is the first foreign language of the Uzbek elite, or the second language just after Uzbek.[206] In the social context there have been some regulations implemented by the

[204] *Russkiy Yazik v Novikh Nezavisimikh Gosudarstvakh*, (Moscow: Eurasian Heritage Foundation, 2008), p.151.

[205] Carolyn Y. Wei and Beth E. Kolko, "Resistance to Globalization: Language and Internet Diffusion Patterns in Uzbekistan", *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2005, p. 218.

[206] Fakhriddin R. Parpiev.

government, but in education the policies of the government help the Russian language to develop in the society. Furthermore, close political and economic relations, especially after Andijon incidents, created with the Russian Federation have positively contributed to the popularity of the language.

In conclusion, language represents a good channel for cultural interaction, value transfer and identity creation. It also promotes political and economic relations. In this sense Russia has an advantage in the CIS region in linguistic terms, which positively contributes to its soft power potential. However, the interviews conducted during this study with diplomats of CIS countries, together with recent surveys, indicate that in general the titular languages are gaining strength in these countries, especially amongst the younger generation. (**Table III**). On the other hand, Russian is still preserving its place as the lingua franca in the region particularly among elites. Nevertheless there is a threat that the population of Russian speakers could dramatically decrease in the coming decades. Currently, there are 163.8 million native speakers of Russian language and it is the second language of 114 million people.[207] However, estimates show that by 2050 the young population speaking Russian will decrease by 30%.[208] There are some regional factors that undermine the position of the Russian language: the nation building process and the influence of other languages such as English, Turkish, or French in the post-Soviet countries, as well as some structural factors such as population issues within any one country. On the other hand, over the region as a whole, there is a negative trend in terms of Russian population in the post-Soviet countries, due to the emigration of the Russian minority from the post-Soviet states to fatherland Russia. One of the main reasons for this trend

[207] Aleksandr Arefyev, "Kak Eto Budet Po-Russkiy?", *Ekspert*, Vol 14, No: 9, 2006.

[208] The study shows that the Russian speaking population aged 15-24 will decrease from 22.5 million people to 14.8 million. David Graddol, *The Future of English: A Guide to Forecasting the Popularity of the English Language in the 21st Century, (London: The British Council, 1998), p. 49.*

is the ethnicization of public administration, perceived negatively by the Russian minority who benefited from the advantages of the system during the Soviet period[209].

The Russian elite is trying to formulate new policies to prevent such a negative development via creating new instruments or mechanisms as discussed in the previous chapter. However, to be able to make the Russian language attractive once again, measures need to be put in place to make learning Russian language intellectually or economically advantageous. Such measures could include economic development or making higher education competitive in a global context. Thus, in the next chapter, education and Russian soft power will be examined in the post-Soviet space to clarify the potential of the country in this sector.

[209] M. Laurelle and Sebastien Peyrouse, *Asie Centrale, la Dérive Autoritaire*, (Paris: Autrement-CERI, 2006), pp. 81-87 quoted in Sebastien Peyrouse, *The Russian Minority in Central Asia: Migration Politics, and Language,Occasional Paper # 297*, (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2008), p.6.

CHAPTER 4

EDUCATION

Education, just like language, is a significant channel for identity creation and building links between nations. In this sense, it plays a role that can be examined in the context of soft power policies. Thus, this chapter aims to analyze the Russian education system and its position in the CIS region in the framework of soft power policies. The chapter is composed of three sections. Firstly the importance of education for Russian soft power will be discussed. Secondly, the Russian education system will be examined. The focus will be on higher education, taking into consideration the reforms made in the post-Soviet period. Moreover, problems that could undermine Russian soft power in the context of education will also be addressed. In the third and final section of the chapter, to highlight the different practices of each country, students coming from CIS countries will be analyzed for each country, and Russian tertiary schools abroad will also be examined.

4.1. Russian Education as an Element of Soft Power

Education is invariably debated when it comes to the solution of problems in a country. From a modernist perspective well educated people from European Union countries, or countries like Japan and South Korea, are among the main reasons behind the economic success of these countries. Barro discusses that "…education stimulates economic growth and improves people's lives through many channels: by increasing labor force, by fostering democracy…"[210] A qualified labor force and human resource leads to efficiency in economic productivity and is one of the key

[210] Robert J. Barro, *The Determinants of Economic Growth*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997) quoted in Thorvaldur Gylfason, "Natural Resources, Education, and Economic Development", *European Economic Review*, Vol. 45 No. 4-6, 2001, p. 851.

elements for good administration as well as the overall welfare of a society.[211] On the other hand, education is one of the main channels for building a nation and national identity. Durkheim advocates that "society can only exist if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity. Education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing the child from the beginning, the essential similarities that collective life demands."[212] Whilst the sufficiency level necessary for homogeneity may show some differences from state to state, it has to be agreed that the level of shared values and memories in a society is important for the existence of that society. In this context, the instrumental role of education in shaping the ideology and value system of a society, as well as creating a common memory, is of vital importance.

The state is the main actor with potential to control and shape the education system and also decides on a nationwide education policy. In fact, there are several reasons for the state to play this dominant role. First of all for the public good, it is the state's duty to provide an education service. If the state succeeds in this context, entrepreneurs may enter and create a private sector of education, but the state is still involved since it also has a role as a regulatory body in the sector, controlling the institutions and establishing a framework for their activities.[213]

Education is not limited to a certain period within any individual's lifetime. One of the main mottos of the modern era is 'lifelong education[214] and training', which aims to develop the capacity and qualifications of human capital via in-service training, courses and seminars. Apart from the state, the private sector also delivers such forms

[211] Nicholas Barr, "Higher Education Funding", *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 2004, p. 264.

[212] Emile Durkheim (1956) quoted in Andy Green and John Preston, "Education and Social Cohesion: Recentering the Debate", *Peabody Journal of Education*, Vol. 74, No. 3-4, 2001, p. 251.

[213] Recent studies indicate that central planning in higher education is not something desired, but this does not marginalize the role of the state in education. For more details please refer to Nicholas Barr, "Higher Education Funding", *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 2004.

[214] For detailed information regarding lifelong education please refer to John Field, "Lifelong Education", *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol. 20, No. 1- 2, 2001.

of education and training. It is in their own interest to do so to be able to improve the efficiency of human capital, as well as to support the institutional spirit.

Apart from its political and economic dimensions, education is also an important foreign policy instrument.[215] While discussing American soft power, Nye emphasizes the US as being the first destination of foreigners in terms of higher education.[216] In this context Nye states that "International students usually return home with a greater appreciation of American values and institutions … [m]any of these former students eventually wind up in positions where they can affect policy outcomes that are important to Americans."[217]

What makes education special or gives it the role of being an important instrument of foreign policy? In fact, it is a long term policy instrument whose contributions cannot be seen overnight as in hard power instruments. Education functions as an instrument to create channels to transfer values and ideologies. As previously discussed, the essence of soft power is based on three pillars: culture, foreign policy and political values. Education plays a prominent role in all of these factors, but also has a characteristic that can be categorized under the high culture elements of soft power policies, since it is one of the main instruments of elite formation.

In terms of cultural interaction the education process abroad has a two level mechanism. Firstly, people who are educated abroad are representatives of their country, and their behavior will form positive or negative images of their country of origin, within the society in which they are being educated. Thus, sending people with a strong background will help create positive images abroad. The second phase

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[215] Nigel M. Healey, "Is Higher Education in Really 'Internationalizing'?", *Higher* Education, Vol. 55, No.3, p. 344; Jane Knight (1997) quoted in Ji-Yeung Jang, *Analysis of the Relationship between the Internationalization and the Quality of Higher Education*, Unpublished Dissertation, (Minnesota: Faculty of the Graduate School of Minnesota, 2009), p. 11.

[216] Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, p. 33.

[217] Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, p. 124.

begins when these people return home. They become the representatives of the countries in which they were educated. The countries, which are aware of this fact, offer financial support or specific programs for military personnel, academicians and foreign students to be able to take part in education and training, or conduct research, at their educational institutions or universities. Scholarship programs of the US or the UK like Chevening and Fulbright, and seminar programs given by these countries to promising or high level officers are all examples in this context. Such policies facilitate cultural interaction, as well as knowledge and value transfers, as people spend time in the country and are taught by US or UK personnel. When these people return to their country of originated, their methodology, policy implementations and even their rhetoric will be influenced by the education or training they have undergone. Furthermore, this is one of the instruments for creating interdependency and a homogenous structure in terms of institutions and doctrines. Secondly, these programs help create networks between the officials, bureaucrats or academics of the countries concerned. Such networks can then form the basis for valid communication between the two countries.

As mentioned above, well-educated human capital also contributes to the economic development of a country, which means prosperity and a strong image in international terms. This would be sustained by well educated human capital with the capability for good administration, together with a comprehensive knowledge of the latest developments in science and technology.

In the Russian case education is an important instrument in terms of soft power, but unlike the US, Russia does not stand in the top three higher education destinations in the world. However, its position in the CIS region presents a different story, since it has preserved its role as the main destination for students going abroad for higher education. Russia’s advantage in this context can be summarized under five main headings. First of all, institutions of education in CIS countries were mainly inherited from the Soviet period, but human resources have been mainly developed by the

existing ideology. The unification of the education system, and accordingly the dominance of Russian culture, was established in 1953 and as a result, in all of the SSRs, all schools looked alike, all text books were the same and all teachers followed the same lesson plans."[218] Thus, the Russian higher education system has some similarities in systemic level with higher education institutions in CIS.

Secondly, Russian universities are still popular in CIS countries and students would seem to prefer Russia as an education destination than Western institutions. Thirdly, there are Russian schools operating in CIS countries. There are Russian higher education institutions in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine, with 25,000 thousand people studying in these institutions as of 2008.[219] Fourthly, Russia follows up a proactive foreign policy towards this region and education has a great potential to provide a favorable environment for Russia. In a survey published in 2007, one of the recommendations regarding humanitarian aspects of foreign policy was "actively facilitating, at the level of federal bodies and cooperation with city authorities, strengthening the potential of Moscow and St. Petersburg as cultural/educational centers of the CIS, Europe and the world."[220] Fifthly, Russian minorities living in the post-Soviet region are sending their children to Russia for education.[221]

However, being able to use all these advantages requires awareness, political will and enough resources to be able to preserve or develop Russia's position as the main destination of higher education in the post-Soviet space, as well as on a global scale.

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[218] Ben Eklof, "Introduction", in Ben Eklof, Larry E. Holmes, and Vera Kaplan, *Educational Reform in Post Soviet Russia: Legacies and Prospects*, (New York: Frank Cass, 2005), p. 5.

[219] Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, 12 November 2008, http://eng.mon.gov.ru/press/news/4139.

[220] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, *A Survey of Russian Federation Foreign Policy*, 10 May 2007. Retrieved from http://www.mid.ru/Brp_4.nsf/arh/89A30B3A6 B 65 B4 F2C 32 572D700292F74?OpenDocument on 15 February 2007.

[221] Sebastien, *The Russian Minority in Central Asia: Migration Politics, and Language,* (Washington D.C.: Kennan Institute Occasional Paper No: 297,), 2008, p. 10.

4.2. The Russian Education System in the Post-Soviet Period

During the transition process, education was one of the top 'priorities' of the Russian Federation. As in the CIS countries, one of the main challenges was to prepare a new curriculum, which did not encompass the ideological basis of the Communist era. Establishing the new system to fit with the needs of new period was important, but due to problems like economic crises the situation deteriorated, problems started to deepen and corruption has become the reality of daily life in terms of education. It is claimed that Russians pay annually up to a total of $520 million in bribes, just for acceptance into one of the universities across the country.[222] The main reasons behind this corruption would seem to be low salaries, low prospects after retirement, the legacy of a Soviet type higher education system substituting for state funding and mentality.[223] However, it would not be fair to blame the problems in the education system purely on the Post-Soviet period elite. Frankly speaking, as early as the middle of the 1980s the Soviet education system, and its research wing, was noticeably weakened.[224]

Even though "Yeltsin's Decree No. 1 proclaimed education as the top priority", the initiative of the government "… proved to be empty verbiage often cited in later years as an egregious pious rhetoric of a government unable to backup its proclamations."[225] In other words, implemented reforms did not produce any appreciable results in the

[222] Boris Kamchev, "Higher Education Fastest Growing Area of Bribery", *The St. Petersburg Times*, 8 July 2008.

[223] For further details please refer to Paul Temple and Gregory Petrov, "Corruption in Higher Education: Some Findings from the States of the Former Soviet Union", *Higher Education Management and Society*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2004.

[224] Marina Larinova (ed.), *OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education: Country Background Report for the Russian Federation*, February 2007. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/22/10/40111027.pdf on 16 July 2009.

[225] Ben Eklof, "Introduction", p. 7.

period 1993 – 2000.[226] This also had repercussions on the social and intellectual life of Russians. Walck summarized the situation in the middle of 1990s as:

> I hear constantly the gnashing of teeth about the loss of 'intellectual potential' and the impoverishment of the Russian intelligentsia. University students cannot afford to attend school, scientific and technical elites have no jobs or jobs with wages ravaged by inflation, artists have no work. In a stunning reversal, high prestige, well paying university jobs have become low prestige, low paying jobs.[227]

On an anecdotal level the Russian elite is aware of this fact. In one of his speeches to the Assembly Putin underlines the importance of education as:

> Russia needs a competitive education system otherwise we will end up facing the real threat of having our quality of education not measure up to modern demands. Above all, we need to support the higher education establishments that are carrying out innovative programmes, including by buying the latest Russian and foreign-made equipment and technology.[228]

Parallel to this discourse the expenditure on education has gradually increased during the Putin era. As can be seen from the Graph VIII, the share of expenditure on education was 3.5% in 1990 (compared to 7% in 1970[229], in other words it halved in 20 years), but declined to 2.9% in the year 2000. However, in 2005 the share of education within the Federal Budget rose to 12.9%, which is equivalent to 3.8% of GDP.[230] Yet, these numbers are well below the OECD average of 4.8% in 2005.[231] Economic problems, corruption and other problems of transition have direct impacts on the quality of education. In one of the university ranking lists prepared by the

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[226] V. Senashenko, "Higher Education and the Bologna Transformations", *Russian Education and Society*, Vol. 48, No. 10, 2006, p. 6.

[227] Christa L. Walck, "Global Ideals, Local Realities: The Development Project and Missionary Management in Russia", p. 73.

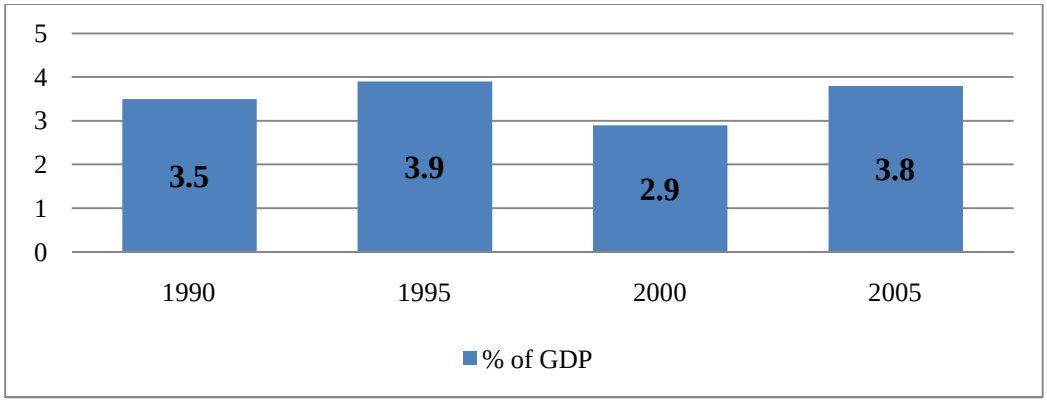
[228] Vladimir Putin's Annual Adress to the Assembly, (Moscow: 10 May 2006), Retrieved from: http://www.ln.mid.ru/Brp_4.nsf/arh/D955326AFF6FC4EFC325716B00345747?OpenDocument, on 21 April 2009.

[229] "Russian Education System Declines in Comparison with Soviet Era", *Pravda*, 21 October 2004.

[230] Share of education expenditure rose to 12% in Consolidated Budget of 2007, equals 4.1% of GDP.

[231] OECD, *Public Spending on Education*, 18 December 2008. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/45/48/37864432.pdf on 14 April 2009.

Times Higher Education magazine only Lomonosov Moscow State University succeeded in entering the list of The Top 200 Universities in the World in 2008.[232]



Graph VIII: Russian Federation's Expenditure on Education

Source: UNESCO[233]

Even though the focus of this chapter is on higher education, it should be noted here that apart from practicalities and quality concerns of education, the Russian political elite perceives education as an important asset of "Strategy for the State's Youth Policy in the Russian Federation from 2006–2016", which was developed as a response to the role of youth in Colored Revolutions.[234] In this regard, education plays the role of shaping Russian nationality and identity against the manipulative impacts coming from abroad. Although the Russian education system has gained a more nationalist character step by step, this is not something exclusive to a certain sphere in Russian politics. Some symbols of the Soviet era have been reappraised in line with Putin's policies, a Soviet nostalgia revival is being fostered with the reintroduction of

[232]World University Rankings 2008, *Times Higher Education*, 9 October 2008. Retrieved from http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/hybrid.asp?typeCode=243&pubCode=1&navcode=137 on 12 March 2009.

[233] UNESCO, data series retrieved from http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx?IF_Act ivePath=P,50&IF_Language=eng on 28 May 2009.

[234] Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine is not Russia: Comparing Youth Political Activisim", *SAIS Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 2006, p. 77.

Soviet military insignia, such as the Red Star, and the Soviet anthem (albeit with new lyrics).[235]

The domestic role of education policies in the state and nation building process of the Russian Federation is crucial, and in the second phase it is the main channel to develop or transfer the state ideology. Nevertheless, as stated before, it has another dimension as a foreign policy instrument. The majority of students within CIS countries prefer Russian higher education institutions as their first or second destination. If Russia can succeed in building up an efficient and competitive education sector, this would give Russia a stronger hand in its foreign policy towards these countries. As discussed in the literature, these students would be an asset for Russia when they return to their countries of origin or, if they choose to stay in Russia, then they can contribute to Russian human capital.

There are many reasons why students coming from the CIS countries prefer Russia. One of the main reasons being the similarities of education systems in these countries, with the Russian system. Degrees received from Russian universities are more acceptable than the equivalent from Western institutions.[236] The higher education degrees in Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are similar to those of Russia, which is an advantage for the validity of any degree completed in Russia, and then utilized in these post-Soviet countries.[237]

The education system in Russia is respected in the CIS countries. During the interviews, diplomats underlined the fact that being educated in a Russian university, especially in Moscow or St. Petersburg, is an asset for the future career of a student.

[235] Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine is not Russia: Comparing Youth Political Activisim", p. 78.

[236] Dr. Askhat Kessikbayev, Diplomatic Attaché of Republic of Kazakhstan. Interviewed on April 2009.

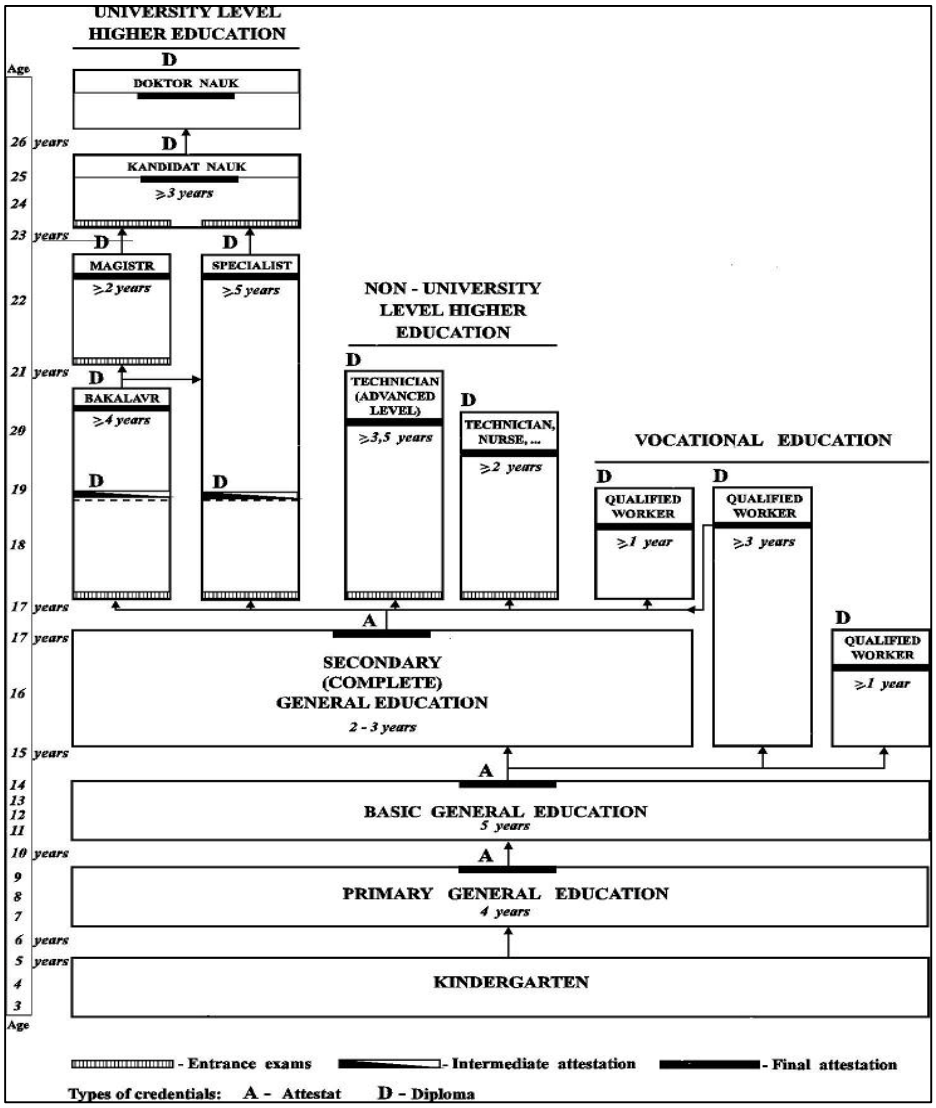
[237] For detailed information please refer to International Association of Databases http://www.unesco.org/iau/onlinedatabases/index.html.

Despite the fact that the rivals of Russian universities have diversified after the dissolution, and the system has entered a chaotic environment, still the Russian education system is really popular amongst citizens of the CIS countries.

The education system in Russia is not that different from other countries in Europe, except that compulsory education was only nine years in duration until 2007, when it was extended to eleven years.[238] As can be seen from **Graph IX**, compulsory education starts at the age of 6 and the age of exit is 17 following the 2005 amendment. The principal language of instruction is Russian, but the citizens of the Federation have the right to receive their basic education in their native languages. After completing their compulsory education Russian citizens can continue non-university level higher education, or university level higher education.[239] Students of non-university level higher education are enrolled in the programmes at a *kolledž* (College), *Technikum*, or *uchilische* (technical institution). After a minimum two years of study, students receive a Diploma degree from these institutions and become specialists at a technical level such as technicians or nurses.

[238] "Students to Spend Additional Year in School", *Moscow News*, 26 July 2007.

[239] For detailed information please refer to Ministry of Education and Science of Russian Federation, *Higher Education*, http://en.russia.edu.ru/edu/description/sysobr/923/.



Graph IX: Scheme of the Education System of the Russian Federation

Source: Ministry of Education and Science of Russian Federation[240]

On the other hand, students of university level higher education are enrolled on programmes at a university, an academy or an institute. There are three levels of

[240] Ministry of Education and Science of Russian Federation, *Overview of the Educational System*, Retrieved from http://en.russia.edu.ru/edu/description/sysobr/902/ on 20 March 2009.

higher education: incomplete higher education (at least two years), four-year programs leading to a Bachelor's (*Bakalvar's*) degree, and postgraduate studies with a duration of one to two years to receive a Specialist Diploma or the *Magistr* Degree. Then, students may continue to their higher education studies by registering on an *aspirantura* programme, which is equivalent to PhD studies in Western institutions. The required period of study is three years and, after passing qualifying examinations and defending a dissertation, they are awarded the *Kandidat Nauk* degree. After receiving this degree, if they write and defend another dissertation, the students obtain the title of *Doktor Nauk* in Russia.

Basic compulsory education is provided to every citizen of the Russian Federation by the state, but in higher education the government follows a different policy. The government allocates funding to pay the tuition fees within an established quota, but over half of the students in Russia attend higher education by paying for their tuition.[241] The same policy is valid for foreign students, who may receive a government scholarship or they may pay for their Russian higher education with tuition fees around $300 per month, which is significantly lower than the tuition fee demanded by the UK or US universities.[242]

In Russia there are 590 state higher education institutions which can be broken down into: 91 classical universities, 156 pedagogical institutes including 91 pedagogical universities, 47 medical institutions, 59 agricultural institutions, 56 economics institutions, 48 fine arts institutions, 45 engineering institutions, 21 civil engineering institutions, 7 law institutions, and 12 physical culture and sports institutions.[243] Universities only represent one part of the Russian higher education system, with the

[241] Iu. S. Davydov, "The Bologna Process and the New Reforms of Russian Federation", *Russia Education and Society*, Vol. 48, No.7, 2006, p. 23.

[242] Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, *Tuition Fees*, http://en.russia.edu.ru/edu/description/994/.

[243] Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, *Higher Education*, http://en.russia.edu.ru/edu/description/sysobr/923/.

larger part being presented in the form of academies and institutes. This composition is one of the legacies of the USSR, and also facilitates specialization in specific areas and on particular topics.

After the dissolution, the education system experienced dramatic change and from 1993 onwards new actors started to appear in the system, when private institutions were allowed for the first time. As of the 2004-2005 academic year there were 409 private higher education institutions and 1.024 million students were enrolled in these institutions.[244]

Reforms and problems were the main characteristic of the Russian education sector in the post-1991 period, and Russia is now preparing for another challenge in the near future, since it will enter another crucial cycle of transformation with the Bologna process. Russia joined this EU project after the Minister of Education, Vladimir Filipov, signed an agreement on 19 September 2003, which makes Russia a party to the movement for a unified education system in Europe.[245] In the framework of this agreement Russia would face structural changes in its higher education which would introduce three years for bachelor's degree, following which students may continue to work for a Master's degree for two more years, and finally there would be three-year PhD programs. On the other hand, the Bologna process brings with it the adoption and transfer of credit system within higher education, and practical implementation of mobility for students, instructors, researchers, and administrators.[246] Thus, the Russian system has to enter a challenging transformation system within the harmonization process to European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and reforms have already been started in this context. In 2007, Vladimir Putin signed a federal law that would be

[244] Anthony W. Morgan and Nadezhna V. Kulikova, "Reform and Adaptation in Russian Higher Education", *European Education*, Vol. 48, No. 3, 2007, p. 42.

[245] G. A. Prazdnikov, "Bologna Process and Its Relevance to Present Day Education", *Russian Education and Society*, Vol. 48, No. 7, 2006, p. 5.

[246] G. A. Prazdnikov, "Bologna Process and Its Relevance to Present Day Education", p. 6.

enacted in 2009, which introduced a two-tier (four plus two) system within Russian higher education.[247] Thus, an important step has been taken in terms of harmonization with EHEA.

Experts have some concerns about the transformation that is being carried on, within the framework of the Bologna process, regarding the quality of education and the 'brain drain' from Russia. Experts criticizing this change claim that successful Russian specialists, academicians and other graduates are currently working in other countries where their graduation certificates have no problems with recognition. Thus, the Bologna process would not bring a major change in terms of recognition of diplomas or graduation certificates. However, this would cause people with Bachelor or Master Degrees to be "increasingly tempted to go to other countries"… and to put it simply Russia would be investing to these countries' economy with every ruble spent for higher education.[248] In fact, it would seem that the 'brain drain' argument that is based on the Bologna process is unfounded. The reality is that the number of outgoing Russian students leaving for education abroad was increasing before the reforms. This figure was 34,473 in 2004, and 42,881 went abroad for higher education in 2007. However, looking at the current problems of the education sector, concerns regarding the quality of education and the probability of increasing corruption in the system do not seem baseless.

On the other hand, it is also "…seen by national academic and expert community as the basis for partnership in the field of tertiary education with the countries of the Post Soviet area."[249] Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia became full members of this initiative in 2005. Moreover, in parallel to increasing numbers of

[247] Anna Arutunyan, "Putin Signs Law on Western-Style Education System", *Moscow News*, 01 November 2007.

[248] A. Zapesotskii, "The Bologna Process is A Game of Chance: At Stake Is the Future of Russia", *Russian Education and Society*, Vol. 48, No. 10, 2006, p. 54.

[249] Marina Larinova (ed.), *OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education: Country Background Report for the Russian Federation*, p. 25

private institutions in the system, many are interested in large measure in terms of economic concerns. This group hopes that the Russian education sector would be able to attract greater numbers of fee-paying foreign students. In the current system, students, who are looking for high level technical education at a low cost are coming to Russia from the Middle East, Asia, and definitely from the newly independent post-Soviet region.[250]

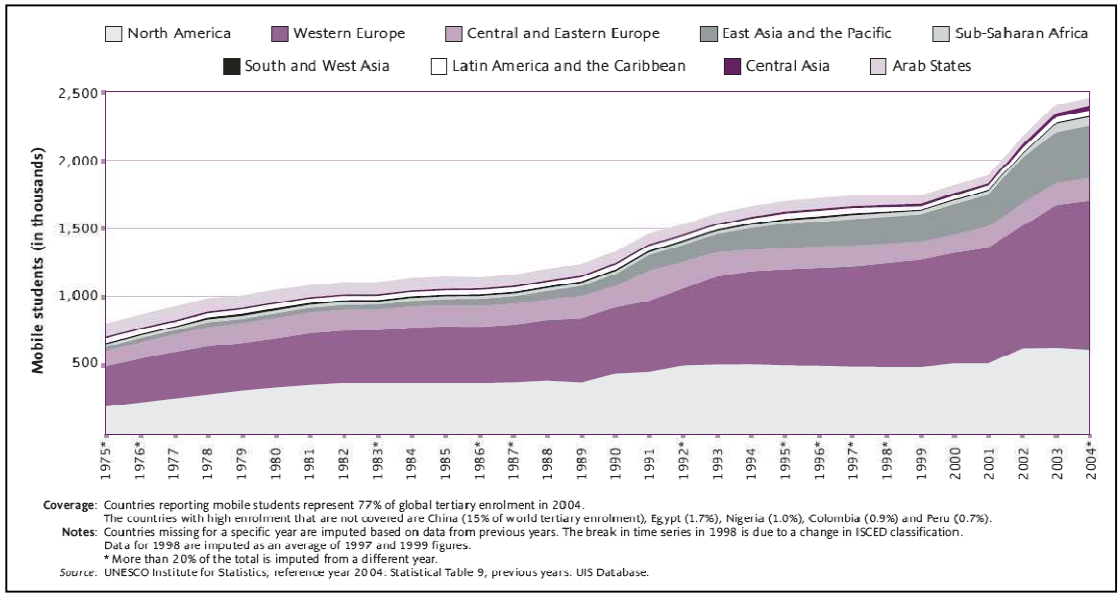
It can be argued that the Russian system, which was mainly established during the Soviet era, without undergoing a serious set of reforms, would certainly fail in the medium or long term. The general tendency reflects that the elite is ready to face this challenge and has already made dramatic changes in the system itself. It should be emphasized here that Russia is not the monopoly in a isolated territory anymore, and with current infrastructure it is hard to compete with the West in the sphere of education. Thus, these reforms should be conducted carefully in the context of both domestic concerns and foreign policy formulation, since the changes in Russia would certainly have implications in the post-Soviet space. However, there is a risk of losing the initiative if the Russian elite insists on preserving the status quo. As debated in the chapter on foreign policy, Russia is trying to create a network of universities within the framework of SCO and these reforms and integration with the West can lead to new horizons for Russia, its soft power and for balance globally.

Russia has to compete with other countries in terms of attracting international students from CIS countries, who have the potential to be important assets for Russian foreign policy. A certain pattern has been created after the collapse of the Soviet Union regarding the tendencies of these students. Below the dynamics of Russian higher education will be analyzed in terms of international education, and its position of being the destination for students going abroad from CIS countries will be examined to give a complete scenario.

[250] Anthony W. Morgan and Nadezhna V. Kulikova, "Reform and Adaptation in Russian Higher Education", p. 55.

4.3. The Russian Education System and the CIS Countries

Nominally there is an increasing trend in mobility of international students on a global scale. As can be seen from the graph below the number of mobile students has almost increased threefold in the last thirty years. Actually this is a part of the globalization phenomenon and part of the increasing mobility of humankind, capital and commodities due to developments in the transportation sector and communication technologies, as well as the increasing population of the globe. Moreover, the increase in the number of international mobile students was 41% in the period of 1999-2004, which is mainly due to the expansion in tertiary education that grew globally from 92 million to 132 million.[251]



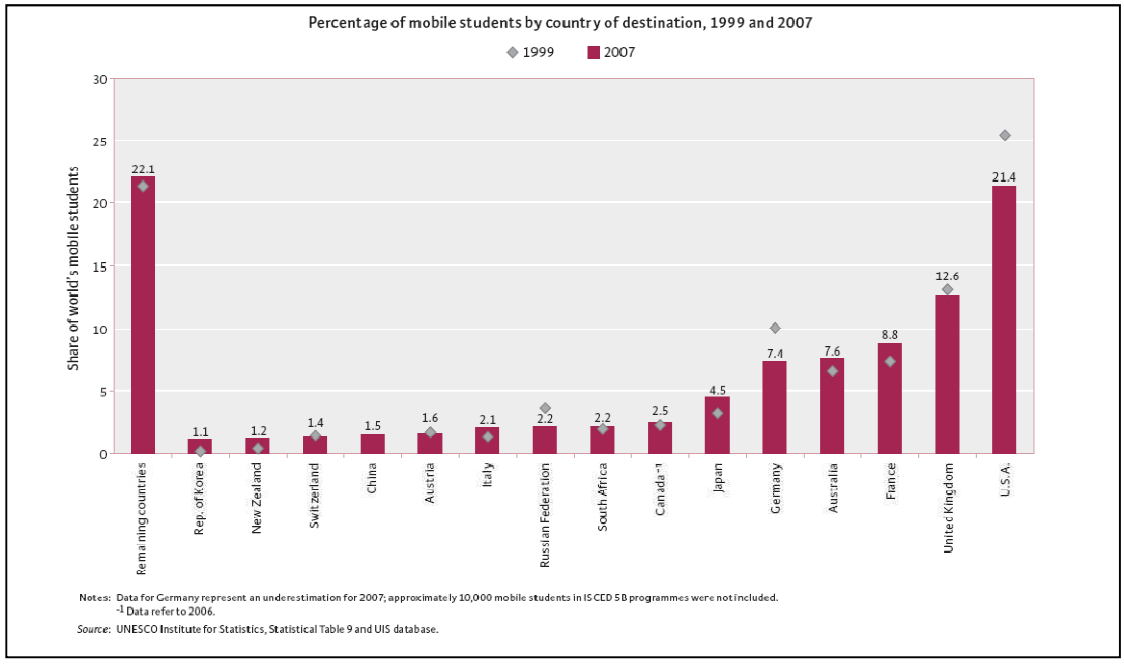
Graph X: International Mobile Students in Tertiary Enrolment by Region of Study 1975-2004

Source: Global Education Digest 2006[252]

[251] UNESCO, *Global Education Digest 2006*, (Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2006), p. 36.

[252] UNESCO, *Global Education Digest 2006*, p. 34.

The top three countries attracting foreign students are the United States, United Kingdom and Germany. In total terms, 46.1% of the students who go abroad for higher education, prefer these three countries. Russia is ninth with a 2.2% share of the market in 2007. As the number of students wishing to study abroad increased, the share of Russia in the international education sector decreased from 4.5% to 3% between 1994 and 1999, but partly regained this loss in the following years. [253] However, in the last analysis the decrease continues and it is currently well below the level of 1994.



Graph XI: Where do Mobile Students Go?

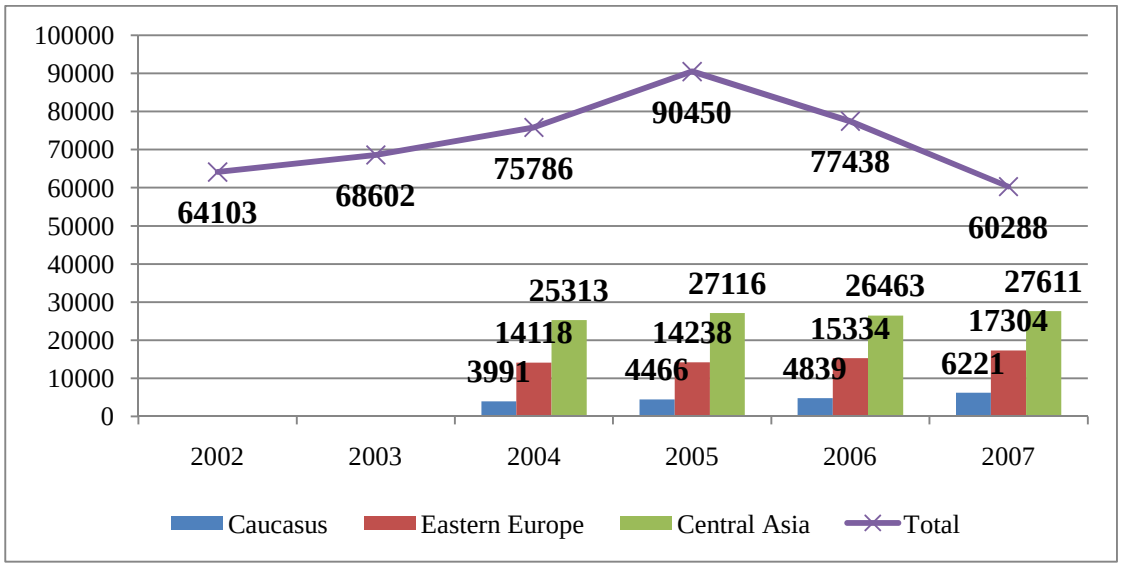
Source: Global Education Digest 2009[254]

As the share of the Russian Federation decreased in international students, the country also experienced a decline in the number of incoming foreign students in the post-Soviet period. There were 126,500 foreign students studying in Russian universities in

[253] UNESCO, *Global Educaiton Digest 2006*, p.47.

[254] UNESCO, *Global Education Digest 2009*, (Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009), p. 43.

1990, but this figure declined to 23,000 in 1994. [255] The reason for the high rate of foreign students in 1990 was the heavily subsidized students coming from developing countries.[256] In the post-Soviet period, this figure reached 90,000 in 2005, but this level could not be sustained. The decline has not stopped and as can be seen from **Graph XII** in nominal terms the number of foreign students coming to Russia decreased by 30,162 when compared to 2005.



Graph XII: Number of Students Coming to Russia for Higher Education

Source: UNESCO – Global Education Digest

Even though in nominal terms global figures decrease, the share of foreign students coming from CIS countries to Russia is increasing. In 2004, the number of students coming from these countries was 45,426 which represented 60% of all foreign students enrolled in higher education and the figure reached 53,143 in 2007 which was 88% of all foreign students in the country. There are two different groups of foreign students coming to Russia, those who are paying their own costs, and students whose

[255] I. Zornikov quoted in Anthony W. Morgan and Nadezhna V. Kulikova, "Reform and Adaptation in Russian Higher Education", p. 55.

[256] Anthony W. Morgan and Nadezhna V. Kulikova, "Reform and Adaptation in Russian Higher Education", p. 55.

expenses are covered by the federal budget. In 2008, 17,695 foreign students from 150 countries were in the latter group whose education was funded by the federal budget. 75% of them came from CIS countries and 70 students hailed from the Autonomous Republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[257]

It can be said that Russia has started to lose its advantageous position in global terms, due to economic problems, new policies like cutting subsidies on education and the highly competitive environment of the education sector in the world as a whole. There is a shift in destinations globally, and this has direct impacts on Russia. Increasing mobility opportunities in Europe, countries emerging as new destinations like China, Republic of Korea or New Zealand, and those countries that are enhancing their position such as Italy, Canada, France and Japan can be given as the main reasons for this shift in destination.[258] On the other hand, as will be discussed below, in a regional context new destinations are also emerging in CIS countries like Kyrgyzstan. All these developments have negative impacts on Russian soft power, due to its decreasing influence in education in global terms.

The picture seems positive in terms of the Russian position in CIS countries. Despite a sharp decrease in the number of foreign students coming to Russia, it seems that the main loss is not directly related to the preferences of students coming from this region. However, the picture can be deceptive when these developments are only examined from the Russian side. Thus, the regional dynamics should be analyzed in a more specific fashion, to be able to see the Russian influence in education within these countries. These trends will be analyzed according to regions: the Southern Caucasus, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

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[257] Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, 12 November 2008, http://eng.mon.gov.ru/press/news/4139.

[258] UNESCO, *Global Education Digest 2009*, p. 43.

4.3.1. The Southern Caucasus

Table IV: Number of Students Studying Abroad and Their Destination - CIS Countries Caucasus

	2007		2006		2005		2004	
South Caucasus	**Destination**	**Number of Students**	**Destination**	**Number of Students**	**Destination**	**Number of Students**	**Destination**	**Number of Students**
Armenia	**All**	3910	**All**	3746	**All**	3486	**All**	2768
	i- RF	2174	*i- RF*	1709	*i- RF*	1582	*i- RF*	1239
	ii- USA	436	*ii- France*	717	*ii- USA*	428	*ii- USA*	412
Azerbaijan	**All**	4743	**All**	4463	**All**	4013	**All**	4202
	i - Turkey	1732	*i- RF*	1600	*i- Turkey*	1503	*i- Turkey*	1395
	ii- RF	1607	*ii- Turkey*	1586	*ii- RF*	1258	*ii- RF*	1207
Georgia	**All**	8233	**All**	7538	**All**	7129	**All**	6679
	i- Germany	2895	*i- Germany*	3135	i- Germany	3269	*i- Germany*	3000
	ii- RF	2440	*ii- RF*	1530	ii- RF	1381	*ii- RF*	1357
Total	**16886**		**15747**		**14628**		**13649**	
Total - RF	**6221**		**4839**		**4466**		**3991**	

Source: UNESCO – Global Education Digest

In terms of attracting foreign students from the Southern Caucasus, Russia's greatest success is in Armenia. However, in Azerbaijan and Georgia, Russia has rivals such as Germany and Turkey. The main subject choice of students coming from the Southern Caucasus is medicine.[259] In 2007, 36% of students from the Caucasus, who went abroad, preferred Russia, whereas this figure was 29.2% in 2004. Most of the increase was derived from Georgia and Armenia, but Giorgi Chitadze[260] claims that the figure

[259] A. L. Aref'ev, "Foreign Students in the Higher Educational Institutions of Russia", *Russian Education and Society*, Vol. 47, No. 9, 2006, p.41.

[260] Giorgi Chitadze, First Secretary of Embassy of Georgia to Ankara. Interviewed on 30 April 2009.

for Georgian students could decrease in years to come since the deportation of Georgians in 2006 had negative impacts on bilateral relations. Georgian students in Russian universities were arrested during lectures and detained, and then taken to police stations, after the spy crisis between Georgia and Russia in 2006.[261] In fact, according to Russian statistics (**Table IV**) there is a sharp decrease in the number of Georgian students enrolled in higher education for the academic year of 2007/2008 compared to statistics for the previous year.

Russia's position in Azerbaijan and Armenia can be explained via its relations with these countries. There are 2 million Azeris in Russia,[262] and since the collapse of the Soviet Union Russia is trying to rebuild its image via diplomatic channels after the problematic start with the Karabagh issue. On the other hand, Azerbaijan's Cultural Attaché in Ankara Necibe Nesibova claims that Russian universities in Moscow and St. Petersburg are prestigious and they are good starts for a career in Azerbaijan. Additionally, students who take primary and secondary education in Russian may prefer Russia, due to the language advantage. Moreover, Russian universities have branches in the country in law and humanitarian sciences.[263] Russia supports these universities as policy since they are important for the Russian image in Azerbaijan. On the other hand, Turkey's position is also important in the country. It succeeded in building good relations with Azerbaijan after the collapse of the USSR, and seems to balance the Russian position in the context of education. Azerbaijani students prefer Turkey for education. Scholarships given by the Turkish government to Azerbaijan,

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[261] Tom Parfitt, "Georgians in Russia Live in a Fear After Crackdown, Says Envoy", *The Guardian*, 12 October 2006; Georgian Parliament, "Actions Carried Out by the Russian Federation Against Georgia September 30 – October 7, 2006: Facts of Bigotry and Xenephobia", 10 October 2006. Retrieved from http://www.parliament.ge/print.php?gg=1&sec_id=98&info_id=13401&lang_id=GEO, on 26 June 2009.

[262] Alireza Asgharzadeh, "In Search of a Global Soul: Azerbaijan and the Challenge of Multiple Identities", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 2007, p. 7.

[263] For further information please refer to Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, *List of Branches of Russian Higher Educational Institutions Located in CIS Countries, Including Licenses*, http://en.russia.edu.ru/zvuz/1066/.

linguistic and cultural factors, are important influences on Azerbaijani preferences. In the period of 1992-2002, 2,884 Azerbaijani students benefited from Turkish scholarships.[264] For the year 2008, the statistics indicate that 592 Azerbaijani students were enrolled on a higher education program in Turkey.[265]

Armenian students have three main destinations: Russia, France, and the USA. The existence of the Armenian diaspora in those countries is the common factor.[266] However, 55% of Armenian students who went abroad to study in 2007 chose Russia. In terms of the domestic presence of Russian institutions in Armenia, it can be noted that there is a Slavic University in Yerevan in addition to branches of Moscow State University of Service, and Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Information Technologies.

The Georgian case differs from Azerbaijan and Armenia. Georgian students mainly prefer three destinations. These are Germany, Russia and Armenia, which accounted for 78% of Georgian students studying abroad in 2007. However, compared to Azerbaijan and Armenia, Georgia provided the lowest number of students who chose to go to Russian higher education with 29.7% in 2007. Unlike Azerbaijan and Armenia, there are no Russian higher education institutions in Georgia.

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[264] Ministry of National Education of Turkish Republic, *Milli Eğitim Sayısal Veriler 2002*-2003, http://www.meb.gov.tr/stats/apk2003/icindekilersayisalveriler2003.pdf.

[265] Ministry of National Education of Turkish Republic, *Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri: Örgün Eğitim*, http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/istatistik/meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2008_2009.pdf.

[266] It is claimed that the largest Armenian Diaspora lives in Russia. The estimated numbers are 2.5 – 3 million people; Armenian Diaspora, *World Armenian Organization Founding Congress Being Held in Moscow*, http://www.armeniadiaspora.com/js/031007WAO_congress.html.

4.3.2. Central Asia

Table V: Number of Students Studying Abroad and Their Destination - CIS Countries in Central Asia

	2007		2006		2005		2004	
Central Asia	**Destination**	**Number of Students**	**Destination**	**Number of Students**	**Destination**	**Number of Students**	**Destination**	**Number of Students**
Kazakhstan	**All**	30052	**All**	27858	**All**	29071	**All**	27356
	i- RF	19627	*i- RF*	18787	*i- RF*	20780	*i- RF*	20098
	ii- Kyrgyzstan	4298	*ii- Kyrgyzstan*	4298	*ii- Kyrgyzstan*	4436	*ii- Kyrgyzstan*	3635
Kyrgyzstan	**All**	3969	**All**	3512	**All**	2906	**All**	3072
	i- RF	765	*i- RF*	870	*i- RF*	838	*i- Turkey*	784
	ii- Turkey	643	*ii- Turkey*	698	*ii- Turkey*	718	*ii- RF*	715
Tajikistan	**All**	2909	**All**	2667	**All**	2778	**All**	2233
	i- RF	1283	*i- RF*	1302	*i- RF*	1160	*i- RF*	708
	ii- Kyrgyzstan	784	*ii- Kyrgyzstan*	784	*ii- Kyrgyzstan*	810	*ii- Kyrgyzstan*	641
Turkmenistan	**All**	5075	**All**	4980	**All**	6293	**All**	4530
	i- Turkey	1373	*i- Turkey*	1209	*i- Azerbaijan*	1541	*i- RF*	1385
	ii- RF	1060	*ii- RF*	1113	*ii- RF*	1148	*ii- Turkey*	1293
Uzbekistan	**All**	31889	**All**	30561	**All**	23170	**All**	17163
	i- Kyrgyzstan	18909	*i- Kyrgyzstan*	18909	*i- Kyrgyzstan*	15955	*i- Kyrgyzstan*	9856
	ii- RF	5566	*ii- RF*	4391	*ii- RF*	3190	*ii- RF*	2430
Total	**73894**		**69578**		**64218**		**54354**	
Total - RF	**27611**		**26463**		**27116**		**25313**	

Source: UNESCO – Global Education Digest

The above figures show that Russia is losing its position in Central Asia as a destination for higher education. In 2004 almost 46.5% of the students who went abroad for education chose Russian higher education institutions, but this figure dramatically decreased to 37.4% by 2007. In three out of five countries Russia is still the first destination for higher education. However, there are two other main destinations preferred by the students of Central Asian countries for higher education: Turkey and Kyrgyzstan. Turkey's position is different from that of the Kyrgyz Republic. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey formulated an annual policy of education scholarships for students coming from the Turkic Republics. On the other hand, Kyrgyzstan has become a center of education in the post-Soviet period thanks to geographic, political and economic factors. Moreover, one of the main factors that support this trend is the existence of international universities in the country.

There are 20 universities in the country, but five of them were established by the US, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Russia. Moreover, there are branches of six Russian higher education institutions in Bishkek, Osh, Manas, and Karakol and there is an education academy in Bishkek. These institutions have made the country the center of attraction, especially for Kazakh and Uzbek students. Altynbek Joldoshov says that apart from these institutes the medical schools are also popular in the region, and not only from Central Asia, but also from the wider sub-continent, there are students who come to Kyrgyzstan to qualify as a medical doctor.[267] This inflow of foreign students positively contributes to the Kyrgyz economy, which is hardly thriving in the context of the region as a whole.

Even though Russia is losing its dominance in international education from a Central Asia perspective, it is still the first or the second destination for the students who go abroad for education from the Central Asian Republics. One of the main reasons behind this is the compatriots in the region, particularly in Kazakhstan. The

[267] Altynbek Joldoshov, Education Attaché of the Embassy of Kyrgyzstan to Ankara. Interviewed on 13 May 2009.

degradation of the education system and the presence of a structure of ethnic preferences in employment, have created incentives for Russians in Central Asia to send their children abroad, mainly to Russia, for school.[268]

The biggest shares of the market for students who prefer Russia for higher education from the region belong to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. These two represent 91.2% of the figure. Population plays a crucial role in this sense, since the total population of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan is almost three times bigger than the total population of Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan taken together. Moreover, language is an important factor since, as seen in the previous chapter, Russian is the lingua franca and is mostly the second language of people living in the post-Soviet space. Apart from these factors, studying at Russian universities is a good asset for students who intend to work in the public sector, or to have a good, well-paid job in the private sector.

The Russian Federation gives a high profile to integration policies in the sphere of education. This process was started to create SCO Universities by the five members of SCO (not including Uzbekistan) is one of the factors underpinning these policies, and was considered in the foreign policy chapter. Another factor in this context can be stated as the existence of Russian universities, or their branches, in the region. Excluding Turkmenistan, there are higher education institutes of the Russian Federation in all of the Central Asian Republics.

Thus, it can be argued that existence of these institutions can overcome the problem of a relatively negative trend in terms of students those prefer Russian higher education institutions. Moreover, the environment of mobility that would be created among SCO members can contribute to the solution of the problem. However, the main solution would be making reforms and creating a solid education system that would be attractive for students who go abroad for higher education.

[268] Sebastien Peyrouse, *The Russian Minority in Central Asia: Migration Politics, and Language*, p. 10.

4.3.3. Eastern Europe

Table VI: Number of Students Studying Abroad and Their Destination - CIS Countries in Eastern Europe

	2007		2006		2005		2004	
CIS Countries in Eastern Europe	**Destination**	**Number of Students**	**Destination**	**Number of Students**	**Destination**	**Number of Students**	**Destination**	**Number of Students**
Belarus	**All**	14802	**All**	12325		11276	**All**	10490
	i- RF	8405	*i- RF*	6863	*i- RF*	5988	*i- RF*	6010
	ii- Germany	1896	*ii- Germany*	1823	*ii- Germany*	2001	*ii- Germany*	1737
R. Of Moldova	**All**	10073	**All**	9436		4834	**All**	7784
	i- Romania	4029	*i- Romania*	3668	*i- Romania*	4834	*i- Romania*	4111
	ii- RF	1443	*ii- RF*	1669	*ii- RF*	1328	*ii- RF*	1267
Ukraine	**All**	26720	**All**	25866	**All**	26879	**All**	25188
	i- RF	7186	*i- Germany*	6889	*i- Germany*	8455	*i- Germany*	7618
	ii- Germany	6870	*ii- RF*	6802	*ii- RF*	6922	*ii- RF*	6841
Total	**51595**		**47627**		**42989**		**43462**	
Total - RF	**17304**		**15334**		**14238**		**14118**	

Source: UNESCO – Global Education Digest

During the dissolution period, Russia tried to establish at least a loose union with Belarus and Ukraine and these efforts continued after the dissolution of the USSR, especially with Belarus, but the desired union or federation could not be established. Since then Russia follows a proactive policy towards these countries, especially due to strategic concerns regarding Russia's western flank security. On the other hand, Russian foreign policy regarding Moldova has a lower profile compared to its

relations with these two countries. Yet, one of the main factors that affect bilateral relations between Moldova and Russia is Transnistria, where an ethnic conflict with central government of Moldova has been in existence since the 1990s.

Similar patterns with foreign policy and education can be seen in the bilateral relations of these countries with Russia. According to 2007 data Russia was the first destination of Ukrainian and Belarusian students, whereas Russia was the second choice of Moldovans in that same year. 40% of Moldovan students, who went abroad for education in 2007, preferred Romania and Russia stands at the second place with 14.3%. One of the main reasons Moldovan students choose Romania is cultural affinities with this country as well as the language advantage. The language of instruction in the country is predominantly (79.5%) Moldovan, which is similar to Romanian, and only 20.3% of students opt for education in Russian.[269] Ethnic origin also plays a key role, two major minority groups in the country are Russians and Ukrainians, and in line with this the third choice of Moldovan students is Ukraine. 1,111 students went to Ukraine for higher education in 2007. Even though the number of mobile students in Moldova has increased since 2004, the number of students preferring Russia lagged behind. In total terms, the increase in mobility of Moldovan students was 29% in 2004-2007, but the figure for students who preferred Russia has only increased by 13.8%. This would seem to support the case for ethnicity and language playing a crucial role in destinations for education of Moldovan students. On the other hand, there are two branches of Russian universities (Moscow Business and Law Institute and Moscow Academy of Economic and Law) in the capital of Autonomous Republic of Transnistria, Tiraspol.[270]

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[269] Matthew H. Ciscel, "Uneasy Compromise: Language and Education in Moldova", *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, Vol. 11, No. 3 & 4, 2008, p. 383.

[270] Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, *List of Branches of Russian Higher Educational Institutions Located in CIS Countries, Including Licenses*, http://en.russia.edu.ru/zvuz/1066/.

In the Belarusian case there is an obvious dominance of Russia in international education. 57% of the students preferred to go to Russian Federation in 2007, whereas the second destination Ukraine attracted only 12.8% of the Belarusian students who went abroad for education. However, in these two countries there is also a language advantage for Belarusian students as well as a geographic advantage. Russia and Ukraine are neighboring countries of Belarus, and Russian is widely spoken in Ukraine. Belarus is also a special case in Eastern Europe. There is a major increase (almost 41%) in the number of students who went abroad in the period of 2004-2007 and this is directly reflected in the number of students who went to Russia for education.

In Belarus there is one university level higher education institution of the Russian Federation and two branches of Russian universities. These are Belarusian-Russian University, Minsk Branch of Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Information Technology and Minsk Branch of Russian State Social University.[271]

Ukraine on the other hand has the biggest population in Eastern Europe and this is directly reflected in the number of mobile students of the country. However, compared to Moldova and Belarus, the tendency of students to go abroad for education has a steady character. The number of students who went abroad in the period 2004-2007 increased only 6.1%. In 2007, Russia became the first destination for Ukrainian students. However, compared to the 8.3 millions of ethnic Russian students, 7186 students from Ukraine who went to Russia in 2007 is a humble figure. However, it is also directly related to the outbound mobility ratio of the country, which was only 0.9% in 2007 and represented the lowest level in Eastern Europe.[272] The majority of Ukrainian students wishing to study abroad choose western destinations, and the top

[271] Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, *Branches of Russian Higher Educational Institutions Located in the CIS Countries*, http://en.russia.edu.ru/zvuz/1066/.

[272] UNESCO, *Global Education Digest 2009*, (Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009), p.143.

five countries in international education for Ukraine, other than Russia, are Germany, Poland, USA, and Hungary.

Russia also has branches of higher education institutions in Ukraine. However, these are mainly located in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, where the majority of the population is Russian. All these institutions are in Sevastopol and they are the branches of Moscow State University, Saratov State Social and Economics University, St. Petersburg Humanitarian University of Trade Unions, Novorossiysk State Maritime Academy and the Academy of Labor and Social Relations.[273]

In conclusion, Russia has slightly strengthened its position in the context of international education in Eastern Europe. In 2004, a cumulative rate of 32.4% of students from Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova chose Russia; in 2007 this figure had reached 33.5%. The main contribution to this trend comes from Belarus, as the increase in the number of students who chose Russia from Ukraine and Moldova in the period of 2004-2007 was low, and even smaller than the cumulative increase in the number of mobile students of these countries.

The results of education both in domestic and foreign policy can only be derived in the long term. It is an important soft power instrument to create doctrines, values, ideology and links among nations. In this framework, the Russian education system is one of the main destinations of students from the CIS countries, and if the system succeeds in working efficiently, it can only prove advantageous for Russian interests in the longer term.

In global terms, Russia has been losing its position as a destination for higher education. One of the main reasons for this trend is the economic constraints that Russia had to face after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Consequently, Russia could not subsidize students coming from abroad as it had done during the Soviet period.

[273] Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, *Branches of Russian Higher Educational Institutions Located in the CIS Countries*, http://en.russia.edu.ru/zvuz/1066/.

However, Russian higher education institutions are still popular in the post-Soviet space as the first or second destination for students who go abroad for education. Among other international students who come to Russia for education, students from CIS countries have the biggest share in the Russian education system. However, looking at the main trend it is seen that in Central Asia, Russia is losing its dominance as students prefer to go to Western institutes, but in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus Russia still preserves its position and there has even been a slight increase in the number of students who prefer Russia for higher education. Moreover, it should be noted here, that in spite of having taken positive steps in terms of resources allocated to education from the federal budget and some important reforms, Russia is still struggling with corruption and quality problems in education that create a negative image of the system both domestically and internationally. It is hard to envisage a time when Russian universities would feature in the world ranking of top 500 universities as much as British or American universities. However, as debated above results of reforms and policies that promote education can only be seen in the long term in the context of education. Subsequently, Russia with comparative advantages in terms of language and transportation issues, could become the main destination for education in the post-Soviet space.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Russia lost its super power status in the Post Cold War period and consequently, in the foreign policy making process, struggled to redefine its position during the 1990s. It faced the problem of creating new instruments and policies in line with the requisites of the new era, which has a more dynamic and chaotic structure than that which pertained during the Cold War period. While Russia was trying to redefine itself as a great power, it also had some advantages in this period which helped to preserve its interests. However, the legacies of the Cold War and these advantages of Russia also had implications for the perceptions of experts, which paved the way for studies to be based on hard power analysis and identity studies. Actually, existing nuclear weapons and the strong image of the Red Army, are important factors in the shaping of the general perception that defines Russia as a hard power. Moreover, policies implemented in line with hard power politics, such as using energy as leverage and the Chechen war, strengthened Russia's hard power image.

Contrary to the dominant perception that defines Russia as a hard power, in this study it is argued that, starting from the Putin period, Russia began to restructure its international image as a powerful actor and, while pursuing policies to maximize its interests in the post-Soviet space, it has also started to develop soft power instruments with their attendant policies. Moreover, it is argued that in the post-Soviet space Russia has the capability to strengthen its position in a political sense within the framework of soft power politics. This capability is based on two important instruments: language and education which function as important information and cultural channels, and play crucial roles in identity creation, ideology and value system transfers from one country to another. In terms of soft power two important indicators were examined in the study: Russia's image and instruments created in terms of soft power politics.

The argument above was examined in the three chapters of the study. In the first chapter the evolution of Russian foreign policy in the post-Soviet period was analyzed. In this chapter it is argued that in the period of 1992-2000 Russia had to struggle with mainly domestic problems, but also tried to redefine its position in the international arena. The Yeltsin administration succeeded in maintaining the territorial integrity of the country, while not allowing problematic relations with the post-Soviet countries to develop. However, policies that were mainly focused on Russia's relations with the West caused Russia to be isolated from the post-Soviet space. Even though Russia tried to refocus on the post-Soviet space, existing dynamics that hamper Russian power and image did not allow the Russian elite to pursue sustainable policies towards the region. While trying to balance its relations with the West and preserve its interests, it is hard to claim that the Yeltsin administration implemented soft power policies during this period. Rather, legacies of the Cold War were still alive and real politics were dominating the picture.

During Vladimir Putin's first term as president steps were taken to stabilize the country and enhance central government which helped the Russian elite to overcome major domestic problems to a certain extent in the sphere of economics and politics. The ensuing sustained stability in domestic terms, helped Russia regain its power that would enable the country to follow relatively more consistent and sustainable foreign policy both in the post-Soviet space and the world. This helped the Russian Federation to regain its self confidence and improve its damaged image in the aftermath of the dissolution of the USSR. Moreover, Russia started to develop multilateral and bilateral terms, in a proactive manner, with the countries in the post-Soviet space and this also had implications on the foreign policy conduct of the elite. The Russian Federation started to develop new instruments to be able to preserve Russian interests, especially in the CIS region, within the framework of both hard power and soft power politics. These instruments include cultural centers, cooperation in education, shuttle diplomacy and agenda setting measures via regional and international organizations.

Thus, during Putin's second term as president soft power policies have become more concrete, both in rhetorical and practical terms.

In regional terms, Russia has some comparative advantages when compared with the other actors in the post-Soviet space. These advantages can be examined in terms of Russian soft power in the region and the legacies of the Soviet period. These can be stated as Russian language and education, which were examined respectively in the following two chapters of the thesis.

The existing data shows that the Russian language, which was the lingua franca in the region, still preserves its importance in the post-Soviet space even after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This is also advantageous for the Russian Federation in terms of creating propaganda channels such as the Russian media, which is popular in the post Soviet countries, and of being influential in the spheres of education, science and culture. Moreover, the Russian language has another advantage when compared with other foreign languages, since it is not seen as a foreign language by the people, rather as a language frequently spoken in the daily life of society. However, the de-Russification process, together with the migration of a Russian minority to the motherland and nation building policies, have undermined the position of Russian language, especially amongst the younger generation. Yet, it is hard to talk about any one particular trend that would be applicable to all of the countries in the post-Soviet space. The position of the Russian language is relatively stronger in Central Asia and Eastern Europe, than it is in the Southern Caucasus and the Baltics.

In global terms, Russia has been losing its position as a destination for higher education, but it is still popular in the post-Soviet space as the first or second destination of students wishing to attend a university abroad. Among other international students who come to Russia for education, students from CIS countries have the biggest share in the Russian education system. However, looking at the main trend it is seen that in Central Asia Russia has relatively lost its dominance as students

now prefer to go to Western institutes, but in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus Russia still preserves its position. Furthermore, in spite of positive steps having been taken in terms of resources allocated from federal budget for education and significant reforms, Russia has to struggle with corruption and quality problems in education that create a negative image of the system. However, as stated above, the results of comparatively recent implementations within education can only be seen in the long term and Russia, with its language and transportation advantages, could still become the main destination for education in the post-Soviet space.

The results of education both in domestic policies and foreign policy can only be identified in the long term. It is an important soft power instrument to create doctrines, values, ideology and links among nations. In this framework, the Russian education system is one of the main destinations of CIS countries and, if it can succeed and be used efficiently, it could prove to be advantageous for Russian interests in the long term.

Improvement in Russian foreign policy, when compared with the first half of 1990s, is obvious. Sustained stability, the emerging economy and newly developed instruments have all contributed to this process. Yet, it is hard to claim a perfect structure of Russian foreign policy, in spite of important steps taken since 1991. Russia is developing its soft power potential, but it has many problem still to overcome before it can be seen as a strong soft power in the region. Policies implemented in terms of hard power, such as using military measures or economic leverages to control CIS countries, can create structural problems between Russia and the states in the region. It is difficult to claim direct results can be derived via soft power measures; equally for agenda setting and becoming attractive, it would seem that hard power policies do not contribute positively to the Russian image. Both soft power and hard power policies should be implemented in tandem for the creation of a favorable environment for the Russian Federation in the post-Soviet geography.

Apart from this, it should be emphasized here that Russia failed to develop a universal set of political values that would be complementary to the policies formulated for the post-Soviet space. [274] In the Cold War era, "[t]he utopian promise of Communism appealed to many people in various parts of the world, and Moscow used local Communist parties to serve its interests."[275] Thus, Moscow had a universal set of ideas in the pre-1991 period. However, this was replaced with Western values and ideologies which were arguably tainted. Accordingly, one of the next challenges of the Russian Federation should be creating a set of values or a political ideology to enhance its position in the post-Soviet space. Once it succeeds in creating its ideology, there are existing channels that would easily transfer Russian ideology or culture to the post-Soviet space.

These channels can be defined as the Russian language and Russian higher education institutions in the region. However, it should be emphasized here that these channels cannot be taken for granted. There are now more competitors in the region and the geography is no longer isolated as it was in the Soviet era. Moreover, as the transition process takes longer in Russia, the Russian Federation is losing ground in these spheres since Russian language and Russian education institutions are losing their attractiveness, as Russia does not seem able to make them more competitive and prestigious for the new generation.

[274] For similar debates please refer to S. Neil MacFarlane, "The 'R' in BRICs: Is Russia an Emerging Power?", *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 1, 2006; Andrew Monaghan, "An Enemy at the Gates or from Victory to Victory", *International Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 4, 2008;

[275] Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, p. 73.

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