The cold peace

A study on the development of the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia

Carlijn van Leeuwen

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Prologue

I proudly present my master thesis for the master Human Geography: Conflict, Territories and Identities at the Radboud University in Nijmegen. It is a thesis that combines a couple of my personal interests and amazements about geopolitics, the European Union and Russia. Ever since my study trip as a first year bachelor student Human Geography and Spatial Planning to the Baltic States, the interest in this particular part of the EU and Russia had been raised. Until this day I remember how I stood along the Narva river and saw the country Russia and its military for the first time. It was at this specific moment I really realised the fact that the EU and Russia are, in fact, neighbours. An incident at a university in Vilnius, Lithuania, where a professor expressed her concerns about Russia and emphasised the threats they feel, stuck with me. It influenced the choices I made during my bachelor, in which I tried to understand the EU, its challenges and how this institution works and it resulted in the choice to start with learning the Russian language.

It also resulted in this particular thesis, I have been trying to understand Russia as a geopolitical actor but also Putin as a political leader. I think I still have a lot to discover about Russia, Putin, the EU and their relation in general, but this thesis is a great start in satisfying my need to answer my personal question: why do European member states, bordering Russia, feel threatened by Russia? Moreover, it also raised the question: how come that these member states experience these levels of fear and do not feel protected? Since I, as a Dutch student, did not realise that 'fearing' Russia was such a prominent issue.

This thesis in front of you is different from the thesis I started in 2019, in which I wanted to mainly focus on this concept of fear, so-called Russophobia, in member states of the EU that are neighbouring Russia. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that changed the world last year, my field work could not take place and the approach of my thesis had to be adapted. I am happy I managed to stay close to my interests that initially influenced my choice of this topic. Changing my research design has been one of the biggest and most challenging decisions I had to make last year. Luckily, with great support of my supervisor Henk van Houtum, I was able to push through and write this thesis. Without the help, supporting messages, feedback and listening ear, I would not have been able to make this change in topic and stay motivated. I also want to thank my family and friends who have been supportive of me throughout this process. They were there for me when I had to cope with the setback I endured almost a year ago and they encouraged me when I got back on track writing this thesis.

For now, I hope you enjoy reading this thesis.

Carlijn van Leeuwen

Utrecht, March 2021

Abstract

Ever since the annexation of the Crimea Peninsula by Russia the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia seem to become more tense. Based on the established international legal order and level of European security on the European continent the EU did not expect that Russia would challenge this through the expression of aggressive military behaviour (van der Togt, 2019). In the years after the annexation, the tension between the two entities is still present. European and other Western states have expressed their concern that Russia makes no effort in returning to the established international legal order and levels of security that had been established after the Cold War.

The aim of this research is to gain an understanding how the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia has developed since the end of the Cold War in 1989 and find out which changes in policy, territory or geopolitical behaviour has led to a change in geopolitical relationship. On the basis of the changes in geopolitical strategies, the development of the geopolitical relationship has been analysed, answering the question: *"How did the changes in geopolitical strategies of the EU and Russia influence the geopolitical relationship between the two entities since the end of the Cold War until 2019?"*. The insights contribute to the existing knowledge on different geopolitical strategies and behaviour and the categorisation of geopolitical relationships. Additionally, the analysis adds to the existing knowledge about Russophobia and Putinism and how these phenomena affect the geopolitical strategy of the EU and Russia and the geopolitical relationship between them.

To find an answer to the main question of this research, a thick description analysis has been conducted. The secondary data that has been used, covers events ranging from 1989 up until 2019, that have occurred in the geographical sphere of the EU and Russia, or has affected both entities. The results of this analysis point out that the geopolitical behaviour in the period 2004 to 2007 and 2015 to 2019 has put the biggest pressure on the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia. A relationship that started out as 'friendly' after the end of the Cold War, but had turned more and more 'hostile' through the years. Based on this conclusion, one could state that the current relationship between the EU and Russia is highly influenced by Western/European mistrust in Russia and Russia's focus on weakening Western/European states, institutions and organisations.

Additionally, this study emphasised the challenges that are present in the current field of geopolitics when identifying geopolitical behaviour and defining a geopolitical relationship as either 'friendly' or 'hostile'. Since it appears that certain geopolitical relationships that exist are too complex and cannot be identified as exclusively 'friendly' or 'hostile'. Which is a classification that is commonly thought to young scholars in the field of geopolitics. In order to provide an all-encompassing classification of geopolitical relationships, more and different labels have to be defined.

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Introduction

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the Soviet Union fell as well. The Western part of Europe was no longer separated from her Eastern part and the geopolitical relationships between European countries, the United States and Russia started to change for the better (WRR, 1995; Westad, 2018 & Crump, 2019). This moment in 1989 came to be known as the end of the Cold War between the West and the East (Crump, 2019). A new world started to develop, a world in which countries were not separated because of a (possible) confrontation between different political powers and its ideologies (WRR, 1995). The end of the Cold War meant a different geopolitical order that influenced the international relations as well (WRR, 1995). It created a new international legal order, reformations in Europe started to take place leading towards a European security regulation and a new role for NATO emerged (MinBuza, 2019 & Crump, 2019). In general, the world seemed to become a better and more peaceful place since the fall of the Berlin Wall, because no actual war in Europe had to be feared any longer (Margaret Thatcher Foundation, 1992). With prospects of a stable European defence strategy and improved relationships throughout Europe, not many would have imagined that the tensions between Europe and Russia could revive again.

It has been more than thirty years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Soviet Union and most of all, the end of the Cold War. However, in those thirty years, a lot has changed the dynamics between the 'Western world' and Russia. There is one major event leading to a climax that changed the Western/European attitude towards Russia: the annexation of Crimea Peninsula by Russia on March 18 2014. An illegal Russian claim to Ukrainian land, according to the established international legal order (de Volkskrant, 2014). This annexation has been condemned by the international community, including the European Union (EU). It seems to be safe to say that the EU was not prepared for its relationship with Russia to be challenged like this. The EU did not expect Russia to have enough military means to challenge the international geopolitical order and most of all, the EU did not expect Russia to use this military power to challenge the international legal order and threaten European security (van der Togt, 2019).

The political actions by Russia towards Europe and vice versa during the past few years have changed the geopolitical relationship between Europe and Russia once again. In order to protect EU's values and hopefully change Russia's geopolitical agenda, the EU has imposed several measures towards Russia, such as economic sanctions and sanctions against persons (European Council, 2020b). However, will this be enough to restore the relationship with Russia? Could Russia power over Europe through the gas supply and its claim of historical legacy be enough to hold their grip on the European continent? Could the relationship with Russia even be restored? And what would happen if the sanctions are not enough, or the dependency on Russian gas will reduce? According to the Dutch government, the measures imposed since 2015 towards Russia have not helped and meetings between

the EU and Russia's officials did not improve the current geopolitical relationship between the neighbours. In a letter to the Dutch parliament, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs stated the following:

"The developments since 2015 give no reason to think that Russia will take concrete steps in the coming years to return to the respect for the international legal order and the European security regulation that we have jointly built up after the Cold War." - (MinBuza, 2019)

This is worrying. Not only does it seem like Russia is unreachable and inaccessible for the EU, which makes it harder for the EU to protect her member states from Russian threats. It also seems as if European states have no clue what to do when it comes to its relationship with Russia. These developments have led to the EU distrusting Russia in many different ways as a partner. Consequently, this contributed to an increased fear for Russia, especially European countries bordering Russia have a fear to be the "next" country that will be annexed by Russia (Robinson, 2016 & Rubin, 2019). With Russia as the EU's biggest neighbour, it is important that the relationship is restored and rebuild. It will protect the EU member states from this power, and international legal order can be restored. To understand how this relationship could be rebuilt, it is important to look at what has happened in the years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Understanding the development of the relationship helps to understand what caused Russia and the EU to drift apart and for Russia to challenge the international legal order and European security.

Research objectives

This research in the field of geopolitics, maps the development of the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia in the period 1989-2019. The reasoning for this time period is provided in Chapter 1: 'Methods'. Mapping this development is done through an thick description analysis of different events that occurred in this time period, using secondary data. This method is most suitable for gaining an historic overview and can no longer be influenced by the creators because the text is already fixed (Baarda, et al., 2013). Throughout three chapters the needed insights on the development, changes and responses of the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia will be described and this will contribute to finding an answer to the central question of this research:

"How did the changes in geopolitical strategies of the EU and Russia influence the geopolitical relationship between the two entities since the end of the Cold War until 2019?"

The main focus is on territorial changes and changes in the political agendas of both entities through the years since the end of the Cold War. An historic overview is spread out over three different chapters, each chapter elaborating on different phases in the geopolitical relationship between the two entities. In these chapters, both the analysis of events and the theoretical explanations are included. A total of four sub questions has been formulated:

1. How can the geopolitical relationship between the European Union and Russia after the cold war be described?

2. What changes on each entity's political level have occurred regarding its territory or foreign and security policy?

3. How could the geopolitical strategies and behaviours expressed through the years by the European Union and Russia be described?

4. How could the current geopolitical relationship between the European Union and Russia be described?

The first sub question is the focus of the first chapter of the analysis, sub question two and three are discussed in the second chapter and the last sub question in the last chapter of this research.

Societal relevance

Conducting this research is of societal relevance for the entire European and Russian society. Firstly, the outcomes of this research help in understanding the current geopolitical relationship between Europe and Russia. Most importantly, it helps to understand how this relationship came about. When it is clear where the relationship between the two neighbours started to deteriorate, it provides insights on what should be restored in order to improve the relationship between the two. As stated before, a good relationship with EU's neighbour Russia is important for all European countries on the European continent; EU member states and EU's Eastern neighbouring states. Especially since a threat outside of EU and its partner states could lead to divisions and challenges within the EU. Since different opinions on how to deal with the issue among European countries could lead to internal disagreements, which could affect relationship in other policy area's and dimensions of cooperation as well.

Secondly, the outcomes of this research are of great importance to the functioning of the EU as an international institution, since 'being solidary' towards other member states is one of the EU's most important features (Cohen & Sabel, 2017). This solidarity towards one another suggests that there is an understanding of common belonging between all the citizens within the EU (Cohen & Sabel, 2017). Especially in this era of time, where not all is fine within the EU because of Brexit, rising populism in states like Hungary and Poland and discussions about EU's democratic accountability. It is important to support states that are part of the EU and desire to be a part of the EU for longer period of time. It

will improve EU cooperation and levels of trust among its member states. If this is not done properly, it could eventually lead to more division and challenges within the EU. This research leads to insights on how to improve EU's relationship with Russia, which leads to increased levels of security for EU member states along the Russian border who fear to be "next" (Rubin, 2019). Since a reconsideration of the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia, which takes the fears of all member states seriously, a will contribute positively to the level of solidarity among EU member states.

Thirdly, not only are the insights on the relationship between Europe and Russia beneficial for the solidarity among EU member states and Europe's overall security, they will also benefit the economic relations between the neighbours. The ties have been of great importance to both entities for a long time and therefore provides benefits for both entities. EU member states are the biggest trade partners and investors in Russia. Vice versa is Russia of great importance for the European energy supply and foreign trade as well (MinBuza, 2019). Due to the European sanctions towards Russia since the annexation of the Crimea Peninsula, these ties are being jeopardised. Understanding how the geopolitical relationship could be improved, also influences the strength of these ties, because sanctions could be relaxed or even lifted. Besides the benefits for the European society, the gained insights could be beneficial to the Russian society as well.

Scientific relevance

This research contributes insights and knowledge to the existing theories about geopolitical relationships, strategies and behaviour and the concepts of Russophobia and Putinism. Based on the theory of Flint (2012), it is believed that geopolitical relationships could be classified as either 'friendly' or 'hostile'. At least this is what is commonly thought to young scholars who are new to the field of geopolitics. Insights of this thesis show that in the case of the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia, this is not 'black' and 'white'. The relationship between the two entities is way too complex in order to classify the relationship as 'friendly' or 'hostile', especially within the current context. Therefore, this research states that the theory of Flint (2012) is too simplistic for defining a geopolitical relationship. It points out that there is a need to find new ways to define geopolitical relationships that is more complete and able to define all existing geopolitical relationships.

Additionally, this research provides useful examples of different geopolitical behaviour that could be expressed through different geopolitical strategies by entities. Atkinson and Dodds (2000) provide three ways to explain the geopolitical behaviour: 'expansionist', 'protective' or 'paranoid'. The examples of events that are addressed in the analysis of this thesis provides concrete examples of how the three different types of behaviour could be expressed and therefore contributes to a better understanding of these basic theoretical concepts. The analysis also accentuates the challenge of labelling geopolitical strategies as 'paranoid' and provides proof why geopolitical behaviour, labelled

as 'paranoid' could be hidden behind well formulated policies that occur as geopolitical 'protectionist' behaviour.

Lastly, this research adds to the existing knowledge about Russophobia and Putinism. The concept of Russophobia has been claimed to be present in Western and European imaginaries about Russia since the 19th century (Hill, 1952). The analysis of different events in the period 2015-2019 will help in understanding how the concept of Russophobia is still present in Western and European imaginaries about Russia and how this current form of Russophobia is expressed nowadays. The same applies to the concept of Putinsim, which has been used to describe the Russian's president Putin's reign ever since his first election in 2000 (Khapaeva, 2016). The analysis of the period 2015-2019 provides insights in the way the concept of Putinism is expressed nowadays and how this geopolitical strategy has changed over the years. It will contribute to the knowledge of current expressions of both of these two concepts that seem to have a significant influence on the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia.

Outline of the research

This introduction is followed by a chapter on the methods that have been used in order to find an answer to the main question of this research: "*"How did the changes in geopolitical strategies of the EU and Russia influence the geopolitical relationship between the two entities since the end of the Cold War until 2019?""*. The second chapter "Point zero", will focus on the geopolitical relationship that was established after the end of the Cold War. This chapter will answer the first sub question of this research: "*How can the geopolitical relationship between the European Union and Russia after the cold war be described?"*. The answer to this question will help to define the 'point zero' of this research, to understand what this 'international legal order and the European security regulation that was jointly built up after the Cold War', as described by the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, entails.

The third chapter "Road to cold peace" provides an answer to two sub questions: "*What changes on each entity's political level have occurred regarding its territory or foreign and security policy?"* and "*How could the geopolitical strategies and behaviours expressed through the years by the European Union and Russia be described?"*. This chapter will map the territorial, policy, strategic and behavioural changes that have occurred in the EU, Russia or in both entities. The chapter will contribute to gaining an understanding of how the geopolitical relationship changed from the end of the Cold War until 2015. The last sub question: "*How could the current geopolitical relationship between the European Union and Russia be described?"* will be answered in the fourth chapter: "Current temperature". By defining the current relationship in the fourth chapter, it is possible to answer the main question of this research and provide recommendations for future research on this topic and a discussion about the results of the analysis in the conclusion.

1. Methods

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that started in the beginning of 2020, the methodological approach of this research has been changed multiple times. Since it was not possible for a long time to travel abroad, meet people face-to-face or get in touch with people in general in these chaotic times, the decision has been made to conduct this research though a desk-research. This chapter will provide an overview of how this approach has been used in order to find an answer to the question: "*How did the changes in geopolitical strategies of the EU and Russia influence the geopolitical relationship between the two entities since the end of the Cold War until 2019?".* The first paragraph of this chapter deals with the general explanation about conducting desk-research.

The final paragraph provides an explanation on the analysis that was conducted for this research, including the identification of the time and geographical scope, and the event selection. Additionally, the final paragraph provides the reasoning for the choices that have been made in selecting the data and the scope of the research in finding the answers to the sub questions: "*How can the geopolitical relationship between the European Union and Russia after the cold war be described?",* "*What changes on each entity's political level have occurred regarding its territory or foreign and security policy?", "How could the geopolitical strategies and behaviours expressed through the years by the European Union and Russia be described?"* and *"How could the current geopolitical relationship between the European Union and Russia be described?".*

1.1 Desk-research

The approach that has been used in conducting this research is 'desk-research'. With this approach, secondary sources about the research objectives were collected and analysed (Baarda, et al., 2013). Desk-research is known as an iterative and cyclic process of doing research (Bowen, 2009 ; van Staa & Evers, 2010), meaning that data is collected while other data has already been analysed. Data has been selected and analysed until the point of saturation was reached (van Staa & Evers, 2010). At this point no new information was found and the answer to the questions of the research were found. The collected data for this research was secondary data. This made the researcher highly dependent on its own interpretation of the data, since it was hard to ask for a clarification about uncertainties of the data (Baarda, et al., 2013). Moreover, the data that was found could be incomplete or even prejudiced by the creators of the data (Bowen, 2009 ; Baarda, et al., 2013). It was the researchers' task to weigh different opinions and unravel the core message of the data.

The biggest advantage was the fact that this approach does not require any face-to-face contact, given the uncertain situation in de world due to COVID-19. Secondly, since the analysis concerned moments in history, it is difficult to collect data. Collecting new data through interviews or surveys on historical moments is hard, since memories can change over time (Baarda, et al., 2013).

Through the selection of secondary data, the description and presentation of the data was more accurate. With the use of this method, the outcome of the research will not be influenced by opinions of respondents (Baarda, et al., 2013). This made it possible to provide an overview of the change in geopolitical relationship between Europe and Russia as objective as possible.

1.2 Thick description analysis

With the collection of a wide range of data, including different type of sources and different origins of sources, a thorough and 'thick' analysis was executed. This specific analysis is described as 'thick description', which is a qualitative approach originating from the field of anthropology. With a tick description, a rich and contextualised description of an event or phenomenon is provided (Freeman, 2014). Through conducting a thick description analysis, the reader of the research is able to gain a better understanding of the author's interpretations and the context in which these interpretations are made (Ponterotto, 2006). The method of thick description is used to understand social events, behaviours, institutions, or processes, generally in the context of culture (Geertz, 1973).

The aim of thick description analysis is to provide context, the web of different relations, detail, and to some extent the emotions underlying the researched events, which makes it possible to translate the results into abstract and general patterns (Ponterotto, 2006). For this research the method 'thick description' was used within a large context unit, a unit that includes different communities, cultures and places. Geertz (1973) describes issues of other scientific fields, besides the field of anthropology, dealing with of power, change, oppression, authority and violence as human constancies as well. Since these human constancies affect a wider context in which events take place. Since these type of human constancies were present in this research, 'thick description' analysis was an appropriate method to find an answer to the research question. For the thick description analysis of this research the following steps were followed:

1. The identification of the issue: '*tensions between EU and Russia affecting the geopolitical relationship*'
2. The identification of the geographical and time scope (explanation provided in paragraphs 1.2.1 'time scope of the analysis' and 1.2.2 'geographical scope of the analysis')
3. Selection of events that define the identified issue (explanation for the event selection provided in paragraph 1.2.3 'event selection')
4. Provide needed context of the event.
5. Provide an overview of the different (political) relations affecting the event or changes due to the event.
6. Explain the nature and origins of the emotions of the actors involved, when these affect the progress of the phenomenon.

1.2.1 Time scope of the analysis

For this research, the choice was made to include only events that have occurred in the period 1989-2019. The choice for starting the time scope of the event selection in 1989, was because in the year 1989, the Berlin wall fell, which marked the end of the Cold War (Westad, 2018). Choosing the year 2019 as the end of the time scope for the event selection for this research was based on, firstly, the fact that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs published their Letter to the Parliament in 2019, in which they stated that Russia *"[…] since 2015 give no reason to think that Russia will take concrete steps in the coming years to return to the respect for the international legal order […]"* (MinBuza, 2019). This statement assumes that in the period 2015-2019 situations have occurred that have had significant influence on the geopolitical relationship between the EU and EU member states and Russia. Therefore, including the years 2015-2019 would provide useful insights on the geopolitical relationship between the two entities. Additionally, the year 2019 was chosen as the end of the time scope, because after 2019 would have made it hard to decide when the selection of events would stop. The execution of this research started in 2020, using 2020 as the end of the time scope would have made it hard to decide when the analysis was considered to be complete.

1.2.2 Geographical scope of the analysis

The geographical scope of this research was 'Europe'. All events that were included in the analysis took place in or involved European states, EU member states and non-EU member states, or Russia. The reasoning for including non-EU member states in the geographical scope as well, is due to the fact that these countries could endure the effects of EU's or Russia's geopolitical behaviour. Moreover, while non-EU member states are not in the EU, many of them have partnerships with the EU (Kenealy, Peterson & Corbett, 2015). Either through political or economic ties, or both, and therefore one could state that these countries are of importance to the EU and affected by EU's geopolitical agenda.

Figure 1 "Europe" of the Encyclopaedia Britannia, on the next page, provides a visual representation of Europe. For a clarification on what is considered to be Europe, the following definition was used:

"Europe. It is bordered on the north by the Arctic Ocean, on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, and on the south (west to east) by the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the Kuma-Manych Depression, and the Caspian Sea. The continent's eastern boundary (north to south) runs along the Ural Mountains and then roughly southwest along the Emba (Zhem) River, terminating at the northern Caspian coast."

(Windley, East, Berentsen & Poulsen, 2020)

Figure 1: Europe (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.)

1.2.3 Event selection

For the selection of the events that were included in the secondary data analysis, three requirements were been formulated. Only events or political circumstances that meet these requirements were included in the analysis. Due to the fact the research was conducted with use of an inductive approach, not all events had been selected at the start of the analysis. While analysing the events, other events were added to the analysis.

In order to limit the amount events included in the analysis, the choice was made to only include historical event that have had either the EU, a European member state or Russia as the instigator for the occurrence of the event. This requirement eliminated any event in the period 1989-2019 that had another cause for occurrence. Without this requirement a vast amount of events could have been included in this analysis, while they might not be significant to the geopolitical relationship between Europe and Russia. This would not have been beneficial when analysing such an already complex issue.

The second requirement, based on Flint's (2012) reasoning that geopolitical relations are expressed through territorial strategies and Elden's (2010) statement that territory is a political technology, is that the selected event should affect the territory of or the entire geographical area of Europe/EU and Russia. This could be EU member states, other non-EU states in Europe or Russia. Sub-

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paragraph 1.2.2 'Geographical scope of the analysis' elaborated on the definition of 'Europe' and the geographical scope of the research.

Thirdly, continuing on the reasoning provided by Flint (2012) and Elden (2010), the selected event should have created a new border, alter the 'thickness' or challenge the existing borders or territory of the entities due to the political choices that were made. Since this changes the territory of the entities and therefore are considered to be political technologies and an expressions of geopolitics. Through this requirement, it was possible to provide visualisations with maps about the geopolitical relationship between Europe and Russia for some of the events in this analysis. Which has helped in visualising the geographical effects of the geopolitical choices and changes that have occurred.

2. Point zero

The aim of this chapter is to define the 'point zero' of this research. The outcomes of this chapter will help to understand what could be defined as the starting point of the relationship between the EU and Russia in the context of this research. This chapter will elaborate on two different types of 'point zero'. The paragraph following this short introduction will provide the theoretical starting point of this research, it will elaborate on the theoretical foundation of this research and discusses theories that are needed in order to understand the one of the main concepts 'geopolitical relations'. Having a clear description of what is to be understood as 'geopolitical relations' will be helpful in the analysis of this research. Since it will help in understanding what is to be understood as a geopolitical relationship and therefore, what type of interaction and actions could be included in the analysis in order to find an answer to the main question of this research: "*How did the changes in geopolitical strategies of the EU and Russia influence the geopolitical relationship between the two entities since the end of the Cold War until 2019?*".

The other 'point zero' entails the historical point zero of the relationship between the EU and Russia. This paragraph will provide the needed insights to answer the question: "*How can the geopolitical relationship between the European Union and Russia after the cold war be described?*". The 'point zero' of the historical overview starts in 1989, and the end of the Cold War. Paragraph 1.2.1 'Time scope of the analysis' in the previous chapter, provides the reasoning for this starting point. The last paragraph of this chapter 'Defining point zero' will provide the answer to the first sub question of this research. In this paragraph the connection between the two types of 'point zero' will be made.

2.1 Theoretical concepts
2.1.1 Geopolitical relationships

A geopolitical relationship is a complex concept, both in theory and in practice. Before it is possible to describe the diversity of different geopolitical relationships between entities, it is important to understand the concept of "geopolitics". Understanding what has been described as geopolitics will help in understanding how the mechanisms of geopolitics have had the influence on the relationship between the EU and Russia is. Moreover, taking a closer look how geopolitics can be understood, will help in understanding the relationship between the two entities at a certain moment in time. Newman (1998, p.3) stresses that geopolitics is a multi-disciplinary way of addressing politics, since it does not only focus on spatial changes but also includes the changing role of the state and the nature of the relationships between states at different levels. This suggests that geopolitics is not only expressed within a state, within its own boundaries, but outside the states, outside its boundaries in relation to other states as well. More abstractly formulated: *'Geopolitics entails the reconceptualization of relationships between territory, sovereignty, identity and global hegemonies'* (Newman, 1998, p.3).

Scott (2009, p.235) takes Newman's definition of geopolitics a step further, stating that geopolitics could be understood as a process of bordering through the construction of borders through ideology, discourses, political institutions, attitudes and agency. Therefore, geopolitics could be understood as 1) the politics of identity, 2) the definition of differences between friend or rivals and 3) the politics of interests (Scott, 2009). These definitions of geopolitics mainly focus on the relationships between entities and what make up these expressions of geopolitics. Paasi (2000) also emphasises on the importance of borders and the bordering of a territory within the framework of geopolitics. Stating that boundaries can be used to communicate with insiders and outsiders of the territory, emphasising on the importance of this practice and the process of the integration of a social community that is established through this practice (Newman & Paasi, 1998 ; Paasi, 2000).

Through acknowledging that boundaries and a bordered territory creates, so called, insiders and outsiders, one should acknowledge that this practice creates and defines different power relations between entities as well (Paasi, 2000). In the process of defining one's territory using borders, the processes of ordering and othering come into play (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2002). These two processes are closely related. By acknowledging, changing or strengthening of a border of an entity, the (new) border communicates not only who is considered to be insiders or outsides, as stated by Paasi (2000). According to Van Houtum and Van Naerssen (2002) the existing border also affects the 'mobility' of others outside the existing border. This results in differences in who can and who cannot cross the border or have access to the territory. Those who are more mobile and have less restrictions when it comes to crossing another's entity's' borders, have a different position in the 'order' than those who have less opportunities to cross the border. Therefore, through the process of creating and defining borders a certain order in who can cross the excising borders and a group of 'others' who face limitations when it comes to crossing a certain border is created (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2002). Through this process of ordering and othering, borders are considered to be an important spatial strategy for entities (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2002). This suggests that a change of borders or a change of a bordered territory, also implies a shift in power dynamics between entities. This fits with Newman and Paasi (1998) description of borders as 'manifestations of power relations'.

Flint (2012) divides the concept of geopolitics into three different categories, claiming that geopolitics is a practice and representation of territorial strategies (p. 31), geopolitics is a way of seeing the world (p. 33) and geopolitics and its competition for territory is broader than state practices (p. 34). Flint, Scott and Paasi, all emphasise the importance of the spatial element of a relationship between entities, mainly through its extension beyond state borders, focussing of the spatial aspect of politics. This approach is usually excluded in the field of international relations (Newman, 1998).

Flint (2012) states that a geopolitical relationship is two-sided: a geopolitical relationship between entities could be either friendly or hostile. This implies the parties involved could be either allies or enemies. Who is considered to be an ally or an enemy, will influence the geopolitical relationship between entities. Moreover, understanding who is considered to be an 'ally' and who is an 'enemy' for a specific country, helps in understanding a country's orientation toward the world (Flint, 2012). Therefore, a change in the geopolitical strategies, will result in a change in geopolitical relationships: who is considered to be an ally or an enemy for a specific entity (Flint, Adduci, Chen & Chi, 2009). A change resulting in a friendly or hostile geopolitical relationship will not only affect the relationship between the two entities but will extent the change in political power beyond its borders (Taylor, 1993).

The classification as described by Flint (2012) of geopolitical relations makes it possible to identify the nature of a geopolitical relationship between entities. Moreover, the geopolitical strategies that result from the identification of allies and enemies have significant influence on the broader global geopolitical context according to Flint (2012). They influence the nature of the interaction between different entities and can shift dynamics between states when the nature of the relationship, and the behaviour that comes with this, changes. Flint (2012) describes that one entity could maintain their allies through different geopolitical strategies, which could either focus on maintaining economic ties, cultural and educational exchange or through establishing military connections and trading military equipment. A geopolitical strategy towards 'enemies', could be expressed through military action against the enemy or through non-military means such as sanctions or boycotts (Flint, 2012).

Flint's (2012) categorisation in identifying the nature of the geopolitical relationship between entities could be adapted to the development of the relationship the EU and Russia at different moments in history. For each type of political attitude expressed through a geopolitical strategy three main characteristics could be identified: 1) the politics of identity, which defines who belongs to or is 'in' the constructed group and who is 'out', 2) the definitions of who is considered to be a friend, neighbour, partner or rival of the discussed entity, 3) the political interests of the entity that could influence its geopolitical agenda (Flint, 2012). This could be based on economic self-interest, political stability or security issues (Newman, 1998). Additionally, the territorial strategies practised by states, such as the entity's way of seeing the world and geopolitical practices broader than state practices could be identified (Flint, 2012).

Browning and Joenniemi (2008) state: "*Geopolitical strategies can be seen as sets of competing and overlapping discourses concerned with how to organize territory and space at the border, and how to relate to the otherness beyond.*". This statement reflects Van Houtum and Van Naerssen's (2002) statement of the creation of 'an order' and 'others' through the process of defining and creating

borders. Which could be translated to Flint's (2012) labels of friendly and hostile geopolitical relationship to some extent. Since those who are 'lower' in the order or are considered to be 'others' could be identifies as less friendly geopolitical partners, than those who uphold 'better' freedoms when it comes to the possibility to cross borders. This reflects the importance of borders when doing research in the field of geopolitics, since the existence and the policies surrounding borders are affected by or have effect on different geopolitical strategies and therefore are of importance to geopolitical relationships.

2.1.2 Geopolitics as a social construct

It is important to acknowledge that geopolitics and geopolitical views are representations of situated knowledge that construct images based on world views (Flint, 2012). This implies that geopolitics is a social construct (Reuber, 2009). According to Wendt (1992, p. 397) the term social construct means that "*people act towards objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them*". One of the objects that can be seen as social constructs are territories (Murphy, 1991). Additionally, Murphy (1991, p.29) stresses that social constructs are also "*defined by political and social ideologies that dominate the process of territorial formation and subsequent governance*". Moreover, since borders are considered to be an instrument of communication of an entity and not static but socially and politically constructs, borders are considered to be social constructs as well (Newman and Paasi, 1998). Especially since border 'symbolise' a social practise of spatial differentiation (Van Houtum & Naerssen, 2002, p. 126). This implies that a change in the political and social ideologies, will result in a change in territories and how they are communicated through borders. Since two spatial defined entities are central within the present study, it is important to understand the meaning of territories and the political environment within that territory as social constructs.

In paragraph 2.1.1 'Geopolitical relations', the importance of borders and territories has been discussed. Emphasising how the creation and definition of borders and territories affect geopolitical relationships. Therefore, one could state that geopolitical relations between entities can be seen as the relationship between two social constructs with two different territorial definitions and world views (Reuber, 2009). In this research the EU and Russia are considered to be two separate geopolitical, territorial defined, social constructs. Possible (territorial) boundaries, identities and the presence of a society, reflects the effects of geopolitical practices (Reuber, 2009). Moreover, this represents the embeddedness of the social constructs. This means for this research, that in order to understand the relationship between the EU and Russia, a clear image about the two entities, its boundaries, identities and society, has to be created.

By stating that geopolitics and geopolitical relations are social constructs, one should acknowledge that these constructs could change as well (Huliaras & Tsardanidis, 2006). It is this change

in the social constructs that is reflected in the geopolitical strategies that is the core of this research. Elements that influence the geopolitical constructs of entities and therefore influence the geopolitical relationship between entities are social, economic and political structures (Flint, 2012). These three structures contribute to the geopolitical frame of a country (Reuber, 2009). This implies that a change in one of these structures, could result in a change in geopolitical strategy of a country and therefore change the geopolitical relations between countries.

2.2 Historical overview

In order to understand the historical point zero of the relationship between the EU and Russia three historical events have been selected. Firstly, the end of the Cold War in 1989 and the different key factors that contributed to the end of the Cold War will be discussed. This helps to understand the circumstances in which the geopolitical relationship between the two entities arose. In this paragraph two other historical events have been included: the dissolution of the USSR in 1991 and the creation of the European Union in 1992. These are two important events since these historical events led to the creation of the two entities that are central in this research. Therefore, it is important to understand how these entities came about. Based on the theoretical concepts and insights provided in paragraph 2.1 'theoretical concepts', main focus of the analysis of the events will be on the effects of spatial changes, border and territorial changes on the researched entities. Different social and political changes that contributed to the construction of the territory and borders, will be discussed and the 'point zero' of the geopolitical relation between the EU and Russia will become clear.

2.2.1 1989: The end of the Cold War

The historical overview starts with the end of the Cold War. According to Bunce (1991), the Soviet Union faced many different crises towards the end of the Cold War, which eventually led to the end of the Cold War. The first part of the historical overview will focus on events that are considered to be key factors for the end of the Cold War. Figure 2, on the next page, shows a summary of all these events. This figure is leading in this section of the historical overview, since it provides a basis for a clear explanation of the historical events and developments leading to the end of the Cold War. The key factors presented in figure 1 are: 1) defeat of Soviet Union in Afghanistan, 2) failure of communism in Eastern Europe, 3) Soviet economic weakness, 4) role of Gorbachev and 5) role of Reagan.
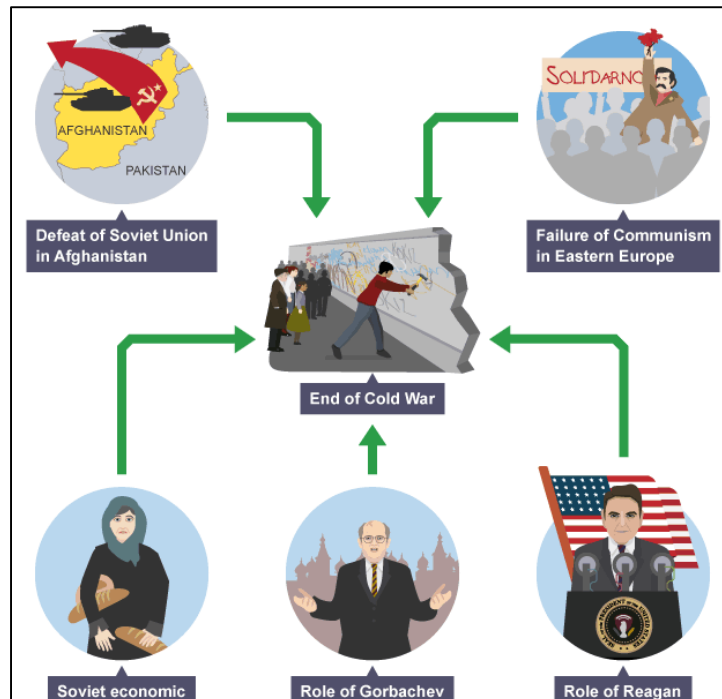
Figure 2: Key factors that lead to the end of the cold war (BBC, n.d.)

Defeat of Soviet Union in Afghanistan

The first key factor that led to the end of the Cold War is the 'Defeat of Soviet Union in Afghanistan'. Since January 1980 the Soviets installed and supported a pro-Soviet government in Afghanistan after an invasion in 1979 (BBC, n.d.). It was believed, by US foreign policy makers, that this Soviet invasion was Soviets' first attempt of more to follow for embarking their mission of gaining control over oil in the Persian Gulf and access to warm water ports (Hartman, 2002). As a response to this believe, the US started to finance and arm groups of Muslims in Afghanistan, supporting those who could cause problems and casualties to the by the Soviets installed pro-communist government (Reuveny & Prakash, 1999 & Hartman, 2002). The decline of control by the communist regime in Afghanistan, economic sanctions against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) by the US and the resistance of Soviet veterans (non-Russian) against the war in Afghanistan, are considered to be the main reasons for Gorbachev's decision to withdraw the Soviet's military forces from Afghanistan and sign a peace treaty in 1988 (Reuveny & Prakash, 1999 & BBC, n.d.). With the result that the USSR lost a 'battle' to their enemy: the US, leaving a large group of Soviet War veterans feeling betrayed and therefore challenging the USSR (Reuveny & Prakash, 1999).

Failure of communism in Eastern Europe

A second key factor that has had its influence on the end of the Cold War was the 'Failure of communism in Eastern Europe'. The countries that were part of the USSR's sphere of influence after the Second World War did not all manage go through a so-called 'Soviet-revolution' (Schöpflin, 1990). Hungary and Poland were the two biggest examples where communism failed, and to a certain extend

communism failed in Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia as well (Schöpflin, 1990; Bunce, 1991; Glenn, 2003 & BBC, n.d.). In short term, the transition towards the communist ideology was considered to be a prosperous future. However, when the shift towards communism was initiated, the rulers of some Eastern European countries realized this development was against the wishes of the majority of their citizens (Schöpflin, 1990). As a result, these Eastern European countries developed their own roads to modernity with the recognition of a market, more in line with the democratic examples in the West at that time. Causing these countries to drift away from the communist ideology that was supposed to keep them united in the USSR's sphere of influence.

Soviet economic weakness

Towards the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union was facing multiple economic challenges, causing serious trouble to the economic system (Bunce, 1991; Åslund, 2011 & BBC, n.d.). It is this economic weakness of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s, that is considered to be the fourth key factor that contributed to the end of the Cold War. This involved not only an economic decline, but also disturbing trends in key indicators for the economic system, such as decline in capital and labour productivity, fall in economic and social infrastructure, misalignments between the level of and demand of public consumption and the economic growth of and technological gap with the West (Bunce, 1991 & Åslund, 2011). Moreover, there was a growing concern that the state was not able to solve these economic challenges and hold power in the USSR. This economic stagnation or even decline was responsible for a decline in domestic political legitimacy, a decline in ideological appeal and constraints on foreign policy resources (Deudney & Ikenberry, 1991). Resulting in Eastern European states drafting away from the Soviet influence and the USSR not having the needed financial means to keep the economic system running. This made the USSR highly sensitive for economic shocks on the world market (Åslund, 2011).

Role of Gorbachev

The fourth key factor that has been of great significance to the end of the Cold War was the role of Gorbachev, the president of the USSR since 1985 (Deudney & Ikenberry, 1991 & Åslund, 2011). According to Åslund (2011), was Gorbachev well aware of the shortcomings of the Soviet system. With new reforms he tried to improve the severe economic situation in the Soviet state and improve its relation with 'the West' (Åslund, 2011; Westad, 2018 & BBC, n.d.). This was the first try to have a more open attitude towards 'the West' and an attempt to rebuild the Soviet economic system (Åslund, 2011; Westad, 2018 & BBC, n.d.). However, Gorbachev's power was challenged by Boris Yeltsin, who promised that he could bring improved services and a better economy, something that Gorbachev struggled to realize (Westad, 2018). Some claim that Gorbachev's policies should have been more

focused on the economic improvement of the USSR instead of improving the relationship with 'the West' (Åslund, 2011). Gorbachev's failed attempts to reform and improve the USSR, caused him to lose significant political support. The rise of Yeltsin lead to the resignation of Gorbachev in 1990 (Deudney & Ikenberry, 1991; Åslund, 2011 & Westad, 2018).

Role of Reagan

Role of Reagan, the US president from 1981 to 1989, is considered to be the last key factor that led to the end of the Cold War (BBC, n.d.). It was the so-called 'Reagan doctrine' that represented the role of Reagan in ending of the Cold War. The Reagan doctrine evolved around the idea that anti-communist resistance movements deserved U.S. support (Pach, 2006). This resulted in policies aimed at reducing Soviet arms by funding foreign anti-communist parties and high technological developments which highlighted the Soviet's technological backwardness (Deudney & Ikenberry, 1991; Pach, 2006; Åslund, 2011 & BBC, n.d.). The U.S. policy caused the USSR to be defeated in Afghanistan, resulting in internal challenges in the USSR (Reuveny & Prakash, 1999). Highlighting the technological backwardness of the Soviet Union and simultaneously pointed towards the economic weaknesses of the Soviet Union (Åslund, 2011).

Fall of the Berlin Wall

All the previously discussed key factors contributed to the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 (BBC, n. d.). This event marked the beginning of the end of the Cold War between the 'capitalist West' and the 'communist East'. Early in 1989 it was the president of the USSR, Gorbachev who already stated that the Cold War was over, according to him (Westad, 2018). Gorbachev's statement led to many small disturbances in states under the influence of the Soviet Union, the satellite states. Eventually, this resulted in the opening of the Iron Curtain in Berlin on November 9th in 1989. In December 1989 the division between 'East' and 'West' was officially 'over' (Westad, 2018).

Flint (2012), Scott (2009) and Paasi (2000) pointed out the importance of the spatial element through the definition of borders and territories, of a relationship between entities. Therefore, one could expect that the change in the Soviet territory as a result of the fall of the Berlin wall will represents an important first step in a change in the once 'hostile' geopolitical relationship between the 'Western' states and the Soviet Union in the 'East'.

2.2.2 1991: Dissolution of the Soviet Union

An important change since the end of the Cold War was the territorial change in Europe as a result of the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. As a result of the end of the Cold War and the factors leading to the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union lost its grip over its satellite states located in Eastern and Central Europe (Webber, 1992; Tir, Schafer, Diehl, & Goertz, 1998 & Westad, 2018). This resulted in the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the creation of new independent states (Tir, et al., 1998). Figure 3, shows the territorial borders of the USSR and its satellite states before the dissolution in 1991. Figure 4 shows the new borders of the independent states in Eastern Europe after the dissolution in 1991.

Figure 3: Borders before 1991 (BBC News, n.d.-a)

Figure 4: Borders after 1991 (BBC News, n.d.-b)

The dissolution of the USSR led to the independence of fifteen states: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan (Britannica, 2020). Not only did the dissolution of the USSR create new independent states, it also resulted in freedom from Soviet influence in the former USSR satellite states, which is visible in figure 4: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and a unified Germany. Most of the new independent states created a new association for cooperation on economic issues, foreign relations, defence, immigration, environmental issues and law enforcement (Britannica, 2018). This new association was named: The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), only Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania decided not to join the CIS (Britannica, 2018).

The establishment of these new independent states, redefined the borders and territories of Europe affecting European states and the former Soviet states. This change in territory also changed the social and political dynamics between the affected states and its relationship with the 'Western' states, resulting in a shift in geopolitical agenda and attitude towards one another. The shift in attitude from Russia towards European and other 'Western' states is presented in the following section of this paragraph.

Besides the dissolution in 1991, the year of 1991 was also the year that Boris Yeltsin was officially installed as the first, democratically elected president of the new Russian state (Glinski & Reddaway, 1998). In January 1992, Yeltsin addressed the political division that was present during the Cold War at the UN Security Council. Mainly addressing the relationship between Russia and the United States and the rest of the Western World, in this speech on January 31th he stated:

"All of us carry a huge burden of mutual mistrust. It is no secret that a most profound abyss has separated the two states, which until recently were referred to as the superpowers. This abyss must be bridged. That is the wish of our nations and the will of the presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation. The new political situation in the world makes it possible not only to advance new original ideas but also to make even the most ambitious of them practicable."

"Russia considers the United States and the West not as mere partners but rather as allies. It is a basic prerequisite for, I would say, a revolution in peaceful cooperation among civilized nations. We reject any subordination of foreign policy to pure ideology or ideological doctrines. Our principles are clear and simple: supremacy of democracy, human rights and freedoms, legal and moral standards. I hope this is something that our partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States also hold dear. We support their earliest admission to the United Nations and believe that this will have a beneficial impact on the evolution of the Commonwealth itself."

"We welcome the U.N.'s increased efforts to strengthen global and regional stability and build a new democratic world order based on the equality of all states, big or small. Russia is prepared to continue partnership among the permanent members of the Security Council. The current climate in the activities of this body is conducive to cooperative and constructive work."
*(*APNews, 1992)

After his instalment as president in July 1991, a political construction was created were Yeltsin would share the responsibility of ruling Russia with two separate institutions in order to prevent the country from becoming a state ruled by one man. The institutions that were created when Yeltsin became Russia's first democratically elected president were: Russia's Congress of People's Deputies and Supreme Soviet. However, in November 1991, Yeltsin managed to pull most of the constitutional powers towards himself, as a result of a coup by opponents of Yeltsin in August (Glinski & Reddaway, 1998 & Westad, 2018). This change in power distribution was meant to be temporarily, but it turned out to be permanent. Yeltsin's state-building program was aimed at setting up a rigid, top-down executive chain of command, closely tied to the authoritarian rule of the president (Glinski &

Reddaway, 1998). In order to protect its political agenda, Yeltsin managed to create a privileged class of committed supporters of the regime through the distribution of national resources at the expense of the majority of the Russians and the state treasury (Glinski & Reddaway, 1998).

2.2.3 1992: Creation of the European Union

The year 1992 was an important year on the European side of this historical overview. In this year the European Union (EU) was officially created through the Maastricht Treaty (Kenealy, Peterson & Corbett, 2015). The EU included of all the former agreements of the European Economic Community and two additional 'pillars' of cooperation, namely; common and foreign policy, and justice and home affairs (Kenealy, Peterson & Corbett, 2015 & Europese Unie, 2020). With these new forms of cooperation, the EU made its first movements towards a political union, besides an economic union, making the EU a more prominent actor in world politics (Wincott, 1996 & Europese Unie, 2020). In practice, this meant that the European States that used to be in the EEC decided to intensify their relationship and created the EU. Figure 5 shows all the members of the EU in 1992: Belgium, England, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

Figure 5: EU member states 1992 (Allerd, 2016)

Since the EU consists of several states, all with their own heads of states, the EU never had one clear leader that carries out 'the political agenda' of the whole Union. Therefore, when looking at political statements carried out in name of the EU, one could look at statements made by a head of a member state at assemblies and meetings of the EU member states. When the EU was created in 1992, Margaret Thatcher, former Prime-Minister of the United Kingdom, held a speech in which she addressed the consequences of the changes in the international politics, caused by the dissolution of

the USSR, the unification of Germany and the creation of the EU. This speech reflects the new political order in the world and the new attitude towards Russia since the end of the Cold War. On May 15th 1992 she stated:

"Now that the forces of Communism have retreated and the threat which Soviet tanks and missiles levelled at the heart of Europe has gone, there is a risk that the old tendency towards de-coupling Europe from the United States may again emerge. This is something against which Europeans themselves must guard — and of which the United States must be aware."

"Communism may have been vanquished. But all too often the Communists themselves have not."

"But, Mr Chairman, most of the threats to Europe's and the West's interests no longer come from this Continent. […] It is impossible to know where the danger may next come."

(Margaret Thatcher Foundation, 1992)

2.3 Defining point zero

The Russian geopolitical agenda could be described as a political attitude in which the Russian identity and its representation of 'Russians' are not the main priorities. Their political attitude seems to be more outward focused, establishing positive relationships with other states and organisations after years of hostile behaviour during the Cold War. This attitude is also reflected in the way Yeltsin addressed the United States and the West as allies and not just partners and described the CIS as partners Russia holds dear (APNews, 1992). Russia's geopolitical attitude that has been expressed by Yeltsin, has been with the aspect of international security at its core. This is also due to the fact that the most suitable and available speeches were in an international setting, therefore this emphasis on security might have been overly present in Yeltsin's words. However, is does not take away the fact Russia did express the wish for defence cooperation and higher levels of international security. This way of cooperation has been expressed by Flint (2012) as a way how entities maintain and create allies. Therefore, one could state that the change in geopolitical relationship as a result of de dissolution of the Soviet Union, resulted in a friendlier or even 'friendly' relationship between the EU and Russia.

EU's geopolitical agenda is harder to identify, since the EU consists of more states, politics concerning 'EU's identity' is difficult to recognise. Looking at the identification of allies and enemies, it seems like the EU has had clearly defined 'enemies' after the end of the Cold War. As expressed by Margaret Thatcher, the EU kept an attentive attitude towards communism in the region of Eastern Europe. Additionally, it was stated that the EU's main danger was no longer on the European continent, but elsewhere outside the continent of Europe. This implies that the EU did not consider Russia to be one of EU's enemies, since Russia is part of the European continent. However, it was not explicitly

mentioned that Russia was considered to be EU's friend or ally. The political attitude of the EU shows a main focus on economic interests, most policies and legislation are initiated to benefit the economic cooperation within the EU, which is logical since economic cooperation has been the core focus since the first European cooperation.

Based on Yeltsin's attitude towards European and 'Western' states as presented in paragraph 2.2.2 'Dissolution of the Soviet Union' and Thatcher's claim that the dangers for the EU are no longer on its own continent, the geopolitical relationship between Russia and the EU could be described as 'friendly'. However, one should acknowledge that this classification is more based on the political attitude that has been carried out by the Russian president Yeltsin. The Russian president explicitly described *the United States and the West not as mere partners but rather as allies"* (APNews, 1992). These type of words were not used in the European context of the relationship. This implies that at the 'point zero' of the relationship between the two entities, Russia made more efforts to establish 'warm' ties with the EU, after years of cold ties during the Cold War. Whereas the EU seems to have a more reluctant attitude towards Russia and not acknowledging Russia as a full-fledged ally openly.

3. Road to cold peace

In this chapter the answers to the sub questions "*What changes on each entity's political level have occurred regarding its territory or foreign and security policy?*" and "*How could the geopolitical strategies and behaviours expressed through the years by the European Union and Russia be described?*" will be provided. The historical events presented in this chapter are mainly events that entail political changes that affected the political behaviour, in one of the entities or towards one of the entities, and geographical changes. For the visualisation of the territorial changes in the research area, several maps are presented. Before discussing the historical events that have occurred from the end of the Cold War onwards, this chapter will discuss the theoretical concepts that are needed in order to understand and explain the political changes of either the EU or Russia or both the EU and Russia.

These theoretical concepts will build on the theoretical concepts that have been introduced in the previous chapter. Based on the theories on geopolitical relationship and how this is reflected in geopolitical agenda's and attitudes, the theoretical concepts in this chapter will provide an elaboration on the dominant geopolitical strategies, attitudes and agendas of the EU and Russia. Mainly due to the fact that these entity specific geopolitical strategies are important and more prominently present in the analysis of the events in this chapter than in the previous chapter. Understanding the trends in geopolitical, strategies, agendas and attitudes that have been discussed by several scholars, will help in understanding the development of the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia. The last paragraph of this chapter will provide an overview that provides the answers to the sub questions.

3.1 Theoretical concepts

The theoretical aspect of the previous chapter provides an elaboration of the concepts of geopolitics, geopolitical attitudes and how this could translate in a specific geopolitical strategy. In chapter two the insights of Newman (1998) and Flint (2012) on geopolitical attitudes and strategies were the core of the chapter. Emphasising how a geopolitical stretegies and relationship could be identified. This theoretical section of the chapter will add to this knowledge through discussing different geopolitical attitudes, in either the EU's or Russia's political behaviour, that have been identified by scholars in the past. Understanding which trends in geopolitical behaviour have been detected in the past, will help to understand and link these concepts with the presented historical events in this chapter. Additionally, the insights gathered in this theoretical section will help to better understand what could be the driving force behind the geopolitical behaviour of the researched entities that are influencing the relationship between the two.

Taking a closer look at the 'types' of geopolitical behaviour, one could categorise or label the behaviour through geopolitical agendas and strategies as 'expansionist', 'protective' or even 'paranoid'

behaviour according to Toal, Tuathail, Dalby and Routledge (1998) and Atkinson and Dodds (2000). This categorisation of different geopolitical behaviour through geopolitical strategies helps in understanding how geopolitics and thinking about geopolitics has been understood and used in different contexts (Atkinson & Dodds, 2000). Both works took a similar approach. By analysing different geopolitical strategies propagated by different entities and its political leaders expressed during, mainly, the Cold War, different behaviours concerning geopolitical strategies were identified by both Toal et al. (1998) and Atkinson & Dodds (2000). These behaviours resulted in strategies that were either focussing on increasing the sphere of influence (expansionist), protecting the established world system (protectionist) or focussed on possible dangers in the present or near future (paranoid) (Toal, et al., 1998 & Atkinson & Dodds, 2000).

The first label, geopolitical expansionist behaviour has been expressed through different areas of interests, these interests could be expressed through either material or non-material expansionism (Kaukas, 2015). Material expansionist behaviour includes political actions that result in expanding the state's influence in other territories through for example the occupation or annexation of space. Non-material expansionist behaviour is described as political behaviour that expands its influence towards other territories, this could be done using hard power like the demonstration of military capabilities or using soft power like cultural, political and social instruments. One could also translate the material and non-material behaviour to expressions of soft and hard geopolitical power. The first one focussing on cooperation and exchange between entities, while the latter focusses on more coercive measures (Wusten & Mamadouh, 2015).

The second category 'protective' geopolitical behaviour has mostly been described as a way for states to limit the disruptive effects of increasing global integration (Atkinson & Dodds, 2000). In other words, protectionist policies are mostly visible through security policies in which an entity attempts to protect its territory from external forces. This protective geopolitical behaviour entails in many cases security policies that should provide protection. One should be aware that in strategies that involve 'security', an entity cannot be studied without focussing on the entity's borders (Browning & Joenniemi, 2008). Since security of an entity is mostly focussed on security and protecting the territory and the borders of a territory. Therefore, the approach taken in this research, focussing on territorial changes and how this affects the geopolitical relationship between Russia and the EU is fitting when identifying these changes in geopolitical behaviour expressed through different attitudes and strategies.

Geopolitical behaviour based on the category 'paranoid', goes beyond the need to provide security. Paranoid geopolitical behaviour seems heavily influenced by the concept of 'fear'. Pain (2009, p. 467) states that "*fear is an emotional reaction to a perceived threat that always has social meaning*". These perceived threats are fed by the fear that is present in society which could have either negative

or positive effects on relations between the parties involved (Pain, 2009). It is important to realise that geopolitical strategies based on a paranoid behaviour, are based on assumptions and mostly without any proof of the origin, degree or type of the threat. Whereas, with protectionism, the issues about 'the threat' is in many cases identified and addressed through policy. It is therefore of great importance to consider the origins on which a certain geopolitical strategy is based (Atkinson & Dodds, 2000). However, there is a fine line between the two. Since with the right wording and reasoning, paranoid behaviour could come through as protective geopolitical behaviour, while solid prove for the need for protection is in fact absent. One should therefore stay conscious in describing geopolitical strategies as either protectionist or paranoid.

3.1.1 European geopolitical behaviour

Previous studies have discussed the geopolitical behaviour of the EU before, and even Europe in general. When addressing the geopolitical strategies of the EU, one could focus on internal geopolitical strategies focused on establishing, realising and maintaining EU basic principles, such as the free movement of people, but one could also look at EU's external geopolitical strategies (Browning & Joenniemi, 2008). In this section the focus will be on the external geopolitical strategies that could be expressed by the EU. Looking into these studies will be helpful in order to understand how the EU could express their geopolitical strategy towards other entities, considering either 'expansionist', 'protectionist' or 'paranoid' geopolitical behaviour. Since understanding what is considered to be EU's geopolitical strategy and what type of policies it entails will help in categorise them into one of the three geopolitical behaviours that have been identified by Toal et al. (1998) and Atkinson and Dodds (2000). Through this classification of EU's geopolitical strategic behaviour through time, changes in their attitude towards other entities, in this research Russia, can be identified. In paragraph 3.1.2 'Russian geopolitical behaviour', Russia's main trends in geopolitical strategies identified by scholar will be discussed.

The behaviour of expansionism has been related to the concepts of 'eurocentrism' and 'Europeanisation' in the academic world. Eurocentrism could be described as a way of looking at the world, a world where the idea 'Europe' is considered to be superior and the driver of history and development in the world (Sundberg, 2009). This European narrative of looking at the world could reflect expansionist behaviour in a material way, using geopolitical hard power, when this Eurocentric world view results in an enlargement of the 'European world' and economic sanctions against 'opponents'. Non-material behaviour, expressed with geopolitical soft power, from the expansionist geopolitical strategy would include cooperation an exchange of knowledge and goods in different kinds of field and sectors. This Eurocentric perspective of expansionist behaviour would have the idea that 'Europe' will bring development to less developed regions at the core of its motives and therefore

justify the geopolitical behaviour that is expressed. The concept of 'Europeanisation' reflects on expansionist geopolitical behaviour that has been propagated by specifically the EU or institutions that could be linked to the European states that aspire Europe wide cooperation, like the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe or the Council of Europe (Vink, 2003). Vink (2003) also acknowledges that Europeanisation entails more than just integrating states into the EU, expanding and project the border of the EU outwards (Browning & Joenniemi, 2008), which is an example of material expansionist behaviour. Europeanisation also includes expanding the sphere of the influence of EU institutions through non-material behaviour such as agreements for cooperation and exchange with states who are not EU member states, through for example border crossing networks (Browning & Joenniemi, 2008).

However, while it has been acknowledged by scholars that this way of thinking could be the motive of certain geopolitical strategies in practice, it has not been acknowledged that this perspective is indeed correct or even just. In fact, through this way of thinking about the role of Europe, Eurocentric behaviour and behaviour of Europeanisation overemphasises the role of Europe in world history and it does not consider alternatives (Brohman, 1995).

European protective geopolitical behaviour would mostly entail policies and agreements to protect EU's borders and provide security for the whole Union (Browning & Joenniemi, 2008). Browning and Joenniemi (2008) explain how protectionist geopolitical strategies by the EU could look like. Protectionist strategies to protect and provide security for the EU could be achieved through establishing agreements with neighbouring entities that will function as a 'protective border zone or belt' from the expected threat. Additionally, agreements with neighbouring entities could also contribute to the spread of European values and welfare, which would establish increased stability and security along EU's borders.

However, as stated before what is considered to be 'a threat' is highly depended on interpretation and emotions. Since what is considered to be a 'threat' is also depended on the emotional interpretation of a certain danger (Pain, 2009). The interpretations of possible dangers of threats could be, to some extent, baseless. Meaning that the perceived threat is imagined and not a threat in reality, causing for a misinterpretation of a certain phenomenon, resulting in unnecessary geopolitical strategies. Therefore, specific policies that are implemented to protect the EU could be identified as a paranoid geopolitical strategy despite appearing as protectionist or even expansionist, since the perceived threat could be an imagined issue and lack a solid reasoning.

3.1.2 Russian geopolitical behaviour
Main trends in the Russian geopolitical strategy that has been identifies could be explained through the desire to establish "Русский Мир", which translates to "the Russian World" (Applebaum, 2013 ;

Kaukas, 2015 & Khapaeva, 2016). This desire is reflected into the strategy which aim is to ensure regional dominance in the territory of the 'Russian World' (Kaukas, 2015). The Russian world involves most former states of the Soviet Union, excluding the Baltic states. This geopolitical agenda came to a rise under Putin's reign and has been known as Putinism (Khapaeva, 2016). Putinism is according to Applebaum (2013, p.3) a *'carefully worked out system, with carefully designed institutions'*. This has been described to some extend as an ideology that has been introduced since Putin became Russia's leading politician in 2000 (Applebaum, 2013). Putinism is considered to be an ideology since it is a way of thinking that: *'has been deliberately taught to Russian children, promulgated to the voting public and propagated in the media. It forms the bases for Russian foreign policy, and it come complete with an interpretation of the past and prediction for the future'* (Applebaum, 2013, p.4). The centralised system, rejection of Western liberalism, Russian nationalism and messianic role of Russian people are all characteristics of Putinism (Khapaeva, 2016). These characteristic are not based on 'fear' for Western military attacks and interference against Russia, but on the 'fear' of discontent, public discontent on personal wealth and criticism against the political regime in Russia of the Russians influenced by Western liberalism and norms (Applebaum, 2013).

Putinism and its geopolitical strategy to establish "Русский Мир" could be seen both as expansionism and protectionism. Expansionism, since its main goal is to influence beyond the Russian territory or even expand the Russian territory or influence through foreign policy and investments. This geopolitical expansionist strategy could be reflected by the implemented policies and practices that are establish the idea of "Русский Мир". Since these policies reflect the actions that carry out the Russian geopolitical strategy. As stated before in the beginning of this paragraph, geopolitical strategy can be carried out through different types of measures, material or non-material measures through using geopolitical hard or soft power (Wusten & Mamadouh, 2015). Typical examples of hard power to realise the geopolitical strategy are military interventions or economic sanctions (Kaukas, 2015). These 'harsh' measures are also considered to be coercive measures in geopolitical relations (Wusten & Mamadouh, 2015). Examples of geopolitical soft power are social, cultural or economics cooperation or exchange (Kaukas, 2015). These soft powers mainly focus on improving and strengthening existing geopolitical relations in order to establish a geopolitical strategy (Wusten & Mamdouh, 2015). This means that the expansionist behaviour could be identified through different tools that are used and implemented by Russia in order to accomplish their goal.

While the desire of "Русский Мир" and policies and actions that could be established in order to achieve this could be identified as geopolitical expansionist behaviour, this geopolitical strategy could also be seen as protectionist geopolitical strategy. Instead of considering this geopolitical strategy to reflect the expansionist desire to re-establish 'the Russian World', this protectionist perspective could also reflect the desire to protect 'the Russian World' from other influences.

However, instead of using hard military power and 'aggressive' policies, protectionist behaviour could be translated in policies securing the established status-quo in the region and protecting the Russian World from outside influences, threats and intrusion (Atkinson & Dodds, 2000). The rejection of sources of instability or transformation that threaten the Russian status-quo has been one of the priorities of Putinism (Fish, 2017).

However, as pointed out by Pain (2009), the idea of threats is a strong imaginary perspective and emotion, therefore the paranoid geopolitical behaviour could be mistaken for protectionist behaviour. For that reason, the policies and practices that have been implemented to establish "Русский Мир", could also be considered to be a paranoid geopolitical behaviour, in addition to expansionist and protectionist behaviour. However, this is depended on the 'realness' of the threats that have been identified by Russia.

3.2 Historical overview

1994: First Chechen war

States declaring their independence after the dissolution of the USSR was common in the 1990s (Morrissette, 2010). In 1991 the Chechen leader Dudayev declared Chechnya's independence from Russia (Morrissette, 2010). This resulted in Yeltsin's declaration of a state of emergency in Chechnya, an actual invasion to suppress Chechen separatism with military force took place in 1994 (Pain, 2001). Justifying the invasion by stating that Dudayev's regime was totalitarian which posed as a threat to the security and territorial integrity of Russia (Morrissette, 2010 & Higgins, 2019). However, the Russian invasion was slow and uncoordinated, causing more Chechens to unite against Russia and eventually leading to a massive, brutal and lengthy war, weakening Yeltsin's political support among Russians and internationally (Pain, 2001 & Morrissette, 2010). After the death of Dudayev in May 1996 a peace settlement, stalemate, was negotiated in August 1996, causing Chechnya to become a sovereign state (Morrissette, 2010; Tsatsos, 2014 & Higgins, 2019). However, this war weakened the Chechen institutions and the new leaders in power seemed to have no interest in establishing a stable state (Tsatsos, 2014).

1995: Integration of Austria, Sweden and Finland in EU

The first enlargement of the EU in 1995 has not only been a change within the EU it also created some changes on the outer borders of the EU. Figure 6 (next page) shows the member states of the EU after the integration of Austria, Sweden and Finland in 1995. Before the integration of 1995 the proximity between the EU and Russia was rather big, due to presence of Eastern European countries between the two. However, with the integration of Austria, Sweden and Finland, the EU and Russia became neighbours through the shared border of Finland with Russia. This 1340 km long border between

Finland and Russia, made Finland responsible for governing this border and dealing with EU's risks with its new neighbour Russia, through border management and cooperation (Prokkola, 2013a).

It is important to acknowledge that with the integration of Finland in the EU, Finland gained the prospect of becoming a member of the Schengen area. It is one of the important characteristics of the EU, which guarantees 'free movement of people and goods' within the area of the EU (Kenealy, Peterson & Corbett, 2015). However, in order to become a member of the Schengen area Finland had to meet the requirement of controlling the Finnish-Russian 1340 km long border in accordance with the control procedures of the EU and Schengen border control systems (Prokkola, 2013a). Resulting in the establishment of an active Finnish Border Guard (Prokkola, 2013a).

Figure 6: EU member states 1995 (BBC News, 2014a)

1999: Start second Chechen war, enlargement of NATO and West-Balkan agreements
The defeat suffered by Russia in the first Chechen war left the Russian society tired of economic, political and military failures (Pain, 2001). The people of Russia believed that Russian victories, especially in the case of Chechnya, could be solved with the rule of an "Iron Hand", something that Yeltsin was no longer able to do (Pain, 2001 & Heggins, 2019). This led to the rise of Vladimir Putin as the new Prime Minister of Russia (Pain & Love, 2000; Pain, 2001 & Higgins, 2019). After the first Chechen war, Chechnya was considered to be failed state, with weak institutions and leaders supporting violence who had no interest in establishing a stable state (Tsatsos, 2014).

In September 1999 Chechens were held responsible for bombings in Moscow (Tsatsos, 2014). As a response imposed the Russian authorities in October 1999 the new actions against Chechnya formally called "operations to suppress terrorism", but generally known as the "second Chechen war" (Pain & Love, 2000). With this terminology, focusing on suppressing terrorism in Chechnya, the Russian public opinion shifted towards supporting the Russian military actions in 1999 (Pain & Love, 2000 & Pain, 2001). Russia's military intervention in Chechen, this time, has been described as a full-scale

interstate war with military intervention with of heavy and unrestricted expression air and fire forces (Lyall, 2010 & Tsatsos, 2014).

In the year 1999 was also the first post-Cold War enlargement of NATO (Hopkinson, 2001 & NATO, n.d.). Three Eastern-European countries, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, became part of the Treaty which main goal is maintain security and stability in the entire Euro-Atlantic area (Rupp, 2000; Hopkinson, 2001 & NATO, n.d.). It is stated by NATO (n.d.) that *"NATO's door remains open to any European country in a position to undertake the commitments and obligations of membership, and, contribute to security in the Euro-Atlantic area."*, suggesting that more enlargements of NATO could and will take place as long as it benefits the security and stability of Euro-Atlantic area.

However, it is therefore remarkable that Russia is not named as a potential member of NATO (Rupp, 2000 & Hopkinson, 2001). Especially since due to the end of the Cold War, the 'security threat' that NATO was to protect the 'Western' world form, the Soviet Union, was gone (Rupp, 2000). The Russian policymakers described the accession of the three Eastern European as: '*most serious military threat to our country since 1945'* (Rupp, 2000, p.169), and even suggested that Russia would take military initiatives to counter NATO's expansion Eastwards (Rupp, 2000). However, one could ask if NATO could be considered as a threat for Russia, since all NATO aspires is security and stability within the Euro-Atlantic area, which would be beneficial to Russia as well (Rupp, 2000).

In 1999 the European Union created the 'West-Balkan agreements', officially known as 'Stabilization and Association Process (SAP)' with the countries Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, in the Western Balkan area (Belloni, 2009). The SAP was already launched in 1999 as a response to the war in Kosovo and it stated the possibility for EU membership for the West-Balkan countries, this promise of association and eventually membership provided the EU the opportunity to design conditions for political, economic and legal reforms (Pippan, 2004; Belloni, 2009 & European Commission, 2016). The prospect of integrating the Western Balkan into the EU could be considered as EU's strategy to expand the EU south-eastwards (Pippan, 2004). SAP has been strengthened in 2003, focusing more on elements of the accession process of the countries of the Western Balkan (European Commission, 2016).

2000: Putin becomes president of Russia
In the year prior to the elections in 2000, president Yeltsin already transferred his presidential reins to Vladimir Putin until the election of a new president (Clem & Craumer, 2000 & Dyson, 2001). Therefore, it was, for those who keep a closer look at Russian politics, not a big surprise when Putin won the elections, with more than fifty percent of the votes, and became the President of Russia (Clem & Craumer, 2000 & Galeotti, 2019). According to Galeotti (2019) was Putin not an admirer of the Western democratic societies but Putin did believe that a positive relation with 'Western' countries was needed

for a better and brighter future for Russia. In his inauguration speech on may 7th 2000, Putin expresses his vision for Russia's future, promising and focusing on developing Russia and increase prosperity throughout Russia:

"The main objective of the coming four years is now to transform the potential we have built up into a new development energy and to use it to bring about a fundamentally new quality of life for our people and a real, tangible increase in their prosperity." (Kremlin, 2004).

Putin also translated his vision for the future of Russia in a strategy '*The strategy of development of the Russian Federation to 2010*' in which he formulated his main goals for Russia in the coming years; this included the improvement of the quality of life in Russia, the continuation of Russian independence and cultural values, and the validation of Russia's economic and political role in international affairs (Kuchins, Beavin, & Bryndza, 2008 & Monaghan, 2013).

2001: Finland enters Schengen

As a consequence, to the integration of Finland in the EU, Finland joins Schengen area in 2001 (Prokkola, 2013a). While Finland's borders within the EU have become more pervasive, Finland's border with Russia has become more tightened (Prokkola, 2013a). Due to the freedom of travel for all citizens of the Schengen area, strict rules and protocols have been set up in order to protect the outer borders of the Schengen area (Popa, 2016 & Hokovský, 2016). It is important to acknowledge that the border between Finland and Russia is strategically one of the most important borders of the Schengen area, since it is the longest 'external' land border of the Schengen area and the EU (Prokkola, 2013b). Border security along the Finnish-Russian border control has therefore become an important practice in order to protect all the freedoms of the entire community within the Schengen area (Prokkola, 2013b). The task of controlling the physical border between Finland and Russia is mainly the task of the Finnish national guard (Hokovský, 2016).

2004: EU enlargement, NATO enlargement and re-election of Putin

With the integration of Slovenia, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Cyprus and Malta in 2004 the EU consisted of 25 member states (Kenealy, Peterson & Corbett, 2015). Figure 7 shows the map of all the EU member states after the enlargement in 2004. The border between Russia and the EU was no longer limited to the Eastern border of Finland. With the integration of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, four additional Member States were sharing a border with Russia as well, which is visible in figure 7 (next page). Besides the geographical change in the space between the EU and Russia, the integration of these ten countries also increased EU's influence in

Eastern Europe (Greene, 2012). Which was, to some extent, at the expense of Russian influence in the region and at the same time challenging and changing Russia's economic interests and relations with former satellites (Greene, 2012). In 2001 Hopkinson already stated that a possible integration of any of the Baltic states could be considered to be provocative towards Russia.

Figure 7: EU member states 2004 (BBC News, 2014b)

Additional to the integration of these countries into the European Union, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia joined NATO (NATO, 2004). Resulting in not only in more EU states bordering Russia, but for the first time, NATO bordering Russia as well. Before 2004 none of the NATO members were bordering Russia. This enlargement could result in an isolation of Russia and more empowerment of former Soviet states towards Russia, resulting in a decrease in geostrategic leverage in the Russian traditional sphere of influence (Greene, 2012 & Mankoff, 2014). Russia was against the expansion of the military cooperation and exercises in the newly integrated NATO states, former USSR territories, stating that these could destabilize the military balance in the region (Hopkinson, 2001 & Greene, 2012).

In the Russian elections of 2004 Putin won seventy percent of the votes, resulting in his second term as president of Russia (Sakwa, 2005 & White & McAllister, 2008). The re-election of Putin was not a big surprise for those who followed Russian developments during his first term closely (Sakwa, 2005). During his first term Putin was able to improve the economic circumstances, achieving thirty percent of growth of the Russian economy and improving Russian living standards with forty percent (Sawka, 2005 & Greene 2012). Not only did he accomplish economic improvements in the country, it was his incredible popularity as a person among the Russian population that led to his re-election as

well (White & McAllister, 2008). White and McAllister (2008) describe this 'Putin phenomenon' as a leadership of a cult, which clearly expresses his popularity in Russia.

2007: EU Enlargement, Treaty of Lisbon and statement of Putin
With the integration of Bulgaria and Romania in the EU in 2007, again former Soviet states, two Eastern European countries, were part of the influence of the EU. The integration of these two countries meant, geographically (see figure 8, that the Balkan was now surrounded by EU member states and that the EU was not only bordering Russia by land, but through the Black Sea, by water as well. Meaning that EU is not only Russia's neighbour in the north, but indirectly in the south as well. Breuss (2010) states that the EU enlargement of 2007 was more a politically driven than an economically driven, due the fact that the other EU member states did not gain any benefits of this enlargement. The main reason for the integration of Bulgaria and Romania stems from the EU perspective to secure sustainable political stability in Europe, the integration of Bulgaria and Romania meant to end political separation in Europe (Breuss, 2010).
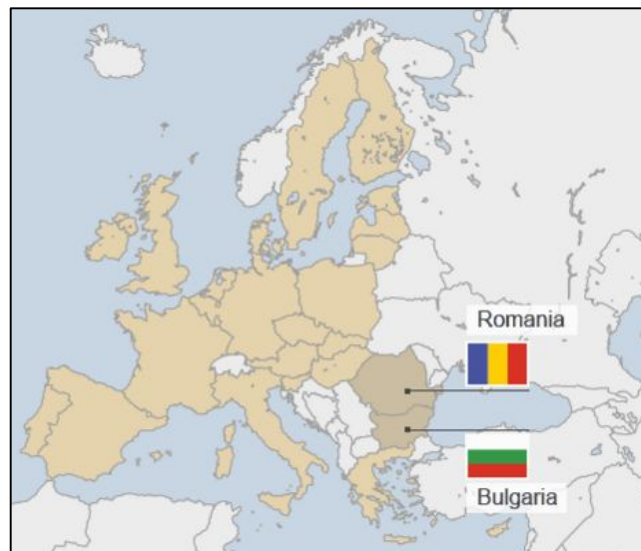

Figure 8: EU member states 2007 (BBC News, 2014c)

In 2007 the EU member states signed the Treaty of Lisbon, with this Treaty institutional reforms within the EU were implemented (Kenealy, Peterson & Corbett, 2015). Due to the reforms made through the Treaty of Lisbon issues like voting and decision-making by member states became more consolidated and streamlined, which made these processes in the future, with potentially more member states, easier (Whitman, 2008; Laursen, 2010 & Kenealy, Peterson & Corbett, 2015). Thereby favouring the continuity of states integrating in the EU. Another important result of these reforms is that the new provisions were implemented to make both EU's internal and external security policy more coherent and effective, reasserting the EU as an 'area of freedom, security and justice' as one of the fundamental goals of the EU (Whitman, 2008; Laursen, 2010 & Kenealy, Peterson & Corbett, 2015). The Treaty of

Lisbon includes chapters on 'External Action' in including EU external action and external aspects of policy areas, this renewed Common/European Security and Defence Policy is also strongly committed to the principle of 'collective defence' of NATO; *If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power* (Whitman, 2008, p.7 & Laursen, 2010, p.18). The treaty was eventually enforced in 2009 (Whitman, 2008 & Kenealy, Peterson & Corbett, 2015).

In 2007, during a conference in Munich, Putin made an important statement regarding the world's unipolar system, in which 'western/European' states and organisations determine the 'rules' of this system (Kremlin, 2007 & Kaukas, 2015). Especially the role these institutions play when it comes to the global security, who determines when and what forces can be used and which rules should apply for arms and weapons (Kremlin, 2007). Additionally, in that same speech Putin states:

"It turns out that NATO has put its frontline forces on our borders … I think it is obvious that NATO expansion does not have any relation with the modernisation of the Alliance itself or with ensuring security in Europe. On the contrary, it represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust".

(Kremlin, 2007)

With this statement he questions NATO's intentions for making this move and not stick the agreement, as he claims Russia does. Additionally, in this quote Putin hints toward the negative effects of these actions by NATO on the level of trust between NATO and Russia. NATO was originally founded to protect Western states from Soviet and communist influence in the time of the Cold War. After the Cold War, NATO no longer needed to protect the states from this 'threat', since it was no longer present. By still expanding the NATO territory years after the end of the Cold War, up to the borders with Russia, Putin could interpret these actions by NATO as a threat to the established 'peace' in Europe after the Cold War. Putin could interpret NATO's actions as a Western distrust in Russia and that 'the West' does not consider Russia to be an equal partner in the global political arena (Sawka, 2015). Which clashes with Putin's goals for Russia. While this speech is not directly linked to a political change, such as enlargements or policy changes, the statement does entail a strong message, that could influence political changes in the future.

2008: Medvedev third president of Russia and the Russo-Georgian war

In 2008 the second presidency of Putin came to an end, Dimitri Medvedev was elected as the new president of Russia and Putin was installed as the Prime Minister of Russia in his government (Hahn, 2010; Oldberg, 2010 & Ihanus, 2011). Medvedev continued Putin's visions for Russia in the shape of

'Strategy 2010', focusing on increasing Russia's economic and political power and kept working close with Putin in his years as president of Russia (Oldburg, 2010 & Monaghan, 2013). Therefore, despite the fact that Putin was not the president of Russia, he still stayed involved in Russia's (international) political agenda (Hahn, 2010 & Oldberg, 2010).

In 2008 the conflict between Russia and Georgia came to a climax, with Russia sending more troops into the conflict and the international organizations NATO, UN and EU interfering in the conflict (European Court of Human Rights, 2009 & CNN, 2020). Central to the Russo-Georgian conflict are the Georgian regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia, two provinces within Georgia with their own, unrecognized, governments. Russia supported the two regions in their battle for independence from Georgia, providing peacekeepers (CNN, 2020). However, this changed when Russia was accused of sending missiles and preparing for military intervention, resulting in Russian and Georgian military hostilities in the area (CNN, 2020). In August 2008 Medvedev signed a cease fire agreement, withdrawing Russian troops from Georgia and recognizing the independence of South Ossetia, but this was not supported by the international community (European Court of Human Rights, 2009 & CNN, 2020).

2009: End of the second Chechen war

The first years of the second Chechen war, 1999-2004, were characterized by intense military conflict with large scale operations, from 2004 onwards the intensity conflict began to weaken and eventually lost most of its intensity in 2006 (Tsatsos, 2014). The more Russia became politically stronger, the more Putin was able to cope with the Chechens and peace became closer (Tsatsos, 2014). In 2009 Putin, as the prime minister of Russia, declared that the Russian war with Chechnya was over (Lyall, 2010 & Tsatsos, 2014).

2012: Putin re-elected as president of Russia

In 2012 Vladimir Putin was re-elected as president of Russia, this presidential term would be his third term as president of Russia (Monaghan, 2013 & Galeotti, 2019). The *'Strategy 2010'* ended during Medvedev's presidency, therefore a new vision for the future of Russia was created *'Strategy 2020'* (Monaghan, 2013). This strategy also included goals focusing on the socio-economic development of Russia (Monaghan, 2013). However, additional to these goals on the socio-economic development of Russia, an additional strategy was created, focusing on Russia's Foreign Policy; '*the National Security Strategy to* 2020'. As a result of this *'Strategy 2020'* an increased role was assigned to the Russian Security Council, chaired by president Putin and a new Military Doctrine was created (Monaghan, 2013).

In this Military Doctrine different military threats and dangers to Russia were presented. One military danger according to Russia, one that included countries of the European continent as well, was the movement of military infrastructure of NATO towards NATO member states along Russia's borders and NATO's development of strategic missile defence systems (Sinovets, & Renz, 2015). As he also stated five years earlier at a conference in Munich. In the Military Doctrine also underlines regime changes or military mobilization of Russia's neighbouring countries as a danger or even threat to Russia's stability and sphere of influence (Sinovets & Renz, 2015).

2013: Croatia joins EU

Figure 9 shows the most recent enlargement of the EU, the integration of Croats in 2013 (Kenealy, Peterson, & Corbett, 2015). Croatia was the first country of the Western Balkan area to be able to integrate in the EU, since it was the first country to meet the conditions of the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) (European Commission, 2013). Since this enlargements four countries are still in the process of becoming a member state of the EU, the candidate member states of the EU: Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey (European Commission, 2013). Iceland used to be a candidate member state as well. However, in 2015 Iceland stated that they did not longer want to be regarded as a candidate member state for the EU (European Commission, 2020a). In 2013, the remaining countries of the Western Balkan still have to implement the needed changes in order to meet the SAP conditions. Therefore, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are candidates to become candidate member states (European Commission, 2013). Albania's status changed in 2014 to official candidate member state as well (European Commission, 2020b).

Figure 9: EU member states 2013 (BBC News, 2014d)

2014: Annexation of the Crimea, Association agreement Ukraine and EU, EU measures towards Russia and War in Donbass area

The Russian annexation of the Crimea in 2014 is considered to be the most serious breach of European borders since the end of World War II (Warsaw Institute, 2019). This annexation is the first time force

by a member of the Security Council was used against a member of the United Nations (Grant, 2015). One of the main reasons for Russia to take action in the Crimea, was the change in attitude towards the EU by the Ukrainian government. In 2013 the former Ukrainian president stated that Ukraine would not sign the association agreement with the EU, which led to many protests in Ukraine known as the Euromaidan (Biersack & O'Lear, 2014). As a result of these protests, the Ukrainian president fled the country and a new government was installed, which was willing to sign the association agreement with the EU. Signing this agreement would mean that Ukraine would have to implement changes in accordance with EU's norms and values, like the Western Balkans had to do in order to become a candidate member state for the EU. Meaning that Ukraine would have to move 'West' towards the EU instead of being under the 'Eastern' influence of Russia (Biersack & O'Lear, 2014).

Due to the fact that the Russian government considered this change in Ukrainian political as a threat to Russia and a threat to the survival of Russian culture in the Crimea Peninsula, they felt the need to intervene in this area. Russian military action in the area has been denied by the Russian government, while others claim that this form of Russian action did take place in the Crimea Peninsula (Biersack & O'Lear, 2014). However, an undeniable Russian action in the Crimea Peninsula was the referendum among the citizens in the area, the result of the votes in the area was: 96,77% of the voters in favour of a reunification of the Crimea Peninsula with Russia (Biersack & O'Lear, 2014 & Grant, 2015). Paradoxically, Mankoff (2014) stated that while Russian's actions to prevent Ukraine from 'moving' Westward, it might just have pushed the vast majority of Ukraine, and possible other former Soviet states, towards the 'West'. Mainly due to a possible threat of Russian intervention in other parts of Ukraine and former Soviet States.

The Russian justification of the annexation of the Crimea was based on three main arguments. Firstly, there has been stated that the Crimea Peninsula had always been a part of Russia and was, actually, annexed by the Ukrainians from Russia in 1991 (Biersack & O'Lear, 2014). Secondly, it was believed that the unification of the Crimea Peninsula with Russia was needed in order to save the people from the new, EU focused, government (Biersack & O'Lear, 2014 & Grant, 2015). Thirdly, the unification of Crimea with Russia would reunite the people of the Crimea Peninsula with the cultural norms of the 'Russian world' (Biersack & O'Lear, 2014 & Mankoff, 2014). It is also stated that the annexation of the Crimea would be beneficial to Russia from a strategic point of view. Through this annexation Russia would gain 36,000 km territory (figure 10), land and sea combined, and Russia would get access to oil and gas sources under the Black Sea. This could increase Ukraine's dependence on Russia in the (near) future (Biersack & O'Lear, 2014).

Figure 10: Crimea and Black Sea boundaries after annexation (Biersack & O'Lear, 2014)

While the unification of the Crimea Peninsula with Russia was seen as 'just' in the Russian perspective, the opinion of the international community, led by Western states, on this annexation differs greatly. Claiming that the annexation, through the referendum, is not in line with the international law and human rights and that therefore the annexation by Russia is illegal, violating Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity (Grant, 2015; Warsaw Institute, 2019; NATO, 2019; United Nations, 2020 & European Union, 2020). Therefore, a vast amount of dominant Western and European political and non-political actors did not recognize the outcome of the referendum and the annexation that was a consequence of this outcome, using the non-recognition of the annexation as a legal weapon against the breaches of the international law by Russia (Grant, 2015). As stated by NATO (2019), this annexation would also challenge the presence of Euro-Atlantic security. Responses to the annexation of the Crimea Peninsula were different measures like economic sections and international condemnations from various international and western actors towards Russia (Biersack & O'Lear, 2014; Grant, 2015; van der Togt, 2019; Warsaw Institute, 2019 & European Union, 2020). However, some of these measures are considered to be 'soft' and do not have the desired effects on Russia (Warsaw Institute, 2019).

Additional to Russian's annexation of the Crimea peninsula, Russia is involved in another conflict in Ukraine; the conflict in the Donbass region. The war in the Donbass region is between Ukrainian, pro-Russian, separatists that aspire independence from Ukraine and unification with Russia, and the Ukrainian army (Mitrokhin, 2015). In that region, neighbouring Russia, a significant part of the population is an ethnic Russian. On the one hand Russia has supported the separatists in the Donbass region with weaponry and manpower, on the other hand Putin has expressed to be in favour of peace negotiations between the involved parties (Robinson, 2016). The reasons for the Russian involvement in the conflict for independence in the Donbass region, are therefore also not clear. Some state that the Russian involvement is due to Russia's desire to maintain peace and stability in the region, others

fear that the involvement is an expression of its wants to reconsider the existing international system and possibly annex this area as well (Robinson, 2016). Due to the fact that Russia is involved in two territorial conflicts in Ukraine, many fear Russia's intentions regarding European security (Robinson, 2016). However, the reactions from the international community have been inconsistent and slow, which could be one of the reasons for Russia's presence and involvement in this conflict (Mitrokhin, 2015).

3.3 The road to cold peace

Regarding the second sub question of this research, numerous political changes concerning foreign and security policy have taken place. Some affecting the foreign policies of one of the entities, other even causing territorial changes of the territories of either the EU or Russia. Table 1 ' Changes in the EU and Russia' provides an overview of all the different changes that have occurred since the emergence of Russia in 1991 and the creation of the EU in 1992. The table shows three different groups of political changes; 'territorial changes', 'policy/governmental changes' and 'other'. These type of changes also help to answer sub question three, since the overview in the table makes it easier to identify the geopolitical strategies that motivated the political changes.

EU/EU member states		Russia	
1992	Creation of the European Union	1991	Formation of Russia
Territorial changes		*Territorial changes*	
1995	EU enlargement	2014	Annexation of Crimea peninsula
1999	NATO Enlargement		
2001	Finland joins the Schengen area		
2004	EU Enlargement		
2004	NATO Enlargement		
2007	EU Enlargement		
2013	EU Enlargement		
Policy/governmental changes		*Policy/governmental changes*	
1999	Western Balkan Agreements	2000	Putin elected as president
2007	Treaty of Lisbon	2004	Putin re-elected as president
2014	Association agreements with Ukraine	2008	Medvedev as president
2014	Measures towards Russia	2012	Putin re-elected as president
		Other	
		1994	First Chechen war
		1999	Second Chechen war
		2008	Russian-Georgian war
		2009	End of second Chechen war
		2014	War in Donbass area

Table 1: Changes in the EU and Russia

Based on the findings presented in table 1, one could state that since the 'point zero' of the timeline of this research, the EU and its member states have been showing expansionist geopolitical behaviour through the different enlargements of either the EU, NATO or related institutions, more than compared to Russia. Since through expanding the sphere of influence through soft power, that has been the motivation of the EU enlargements, social, cultural and economic cooperation and exchange has been increased and improved on the European continent at the benefit of the EU. As described in the theoretical part of this chapter, this is a way to express expansionist behaviour.

From 2007 onwards, the EU and its member states have been showing more protective geopolitical behaviour through implementing policies focussing on the security and defence of the outer borders of the EU. As described by Atkinson and Dodds (2000) the motivation for more and better security of a territory is considered to be a valid and common reasoning to express protectionist geopolitical behaviour. However, some political changes could be categorised as both expansionist and protective, depending on the dominant narrative and reasoning for the changes that have occurred. An example for this type of change are association agreements with Ukraine. One could interpret this as expansionist behaviour because the EU is expanding its influence using non-material expansionist behaviour. However, one could also interpret this as protective behaviour since the agreement with Ukraine adds Ukraine to the 'ring of friends' along EU's border, creating a secure border zone between the EU and its 'threat to EU security' Russia (Browning & Joenniemi, 2008).

Since the 'point zero' of the timeline until the period of 2004 to 2007, Russia's political changes have been focussed on protecting and securing 'the Russian World'. Most political changes were motivated by the protection of Russia from unstable and insecure states neighbouring Russia or protecting the Russian norms and values. Since the motivation of security has been acknowledged as solid motivation for protectionist geopolitical behaviour, one could state that the Russia's geopolitical behaviour was predominantly protective until the period of 2004 to 2007 (Atkinson & Dodds, 2000). In the period 2004 to 2007, the material expansionist behaviour with geopolitical hard power seemed to have become more present in Russia's geopolitical behaviour. More aggressive foreign policy and hard geopolitical power such as military actions towards countries in the region, were clear characteristics of the Russian expansionist behaviour in establishing "Русский Мир" (Kaukas, 2015). With the increased economic cooperation with the countries of the 'near abroad', the countries of the former Soviet-Union, reflects the non-material geopolitical behaviour, through soft power, of Russia.

However, for some Russian political changes, mainly involving military interventions, the categorisation as being either protective or expansionist is difficult since it highly depends on the dominant perspective and the reasoning behind these actions. Both wars in Georgia and the Donbass region could be seen as expansionist behaviour, since some interpret the Russian involvement as a

Russian attempt to annex these regions. Whereas these wars have been described by others as a way to protect Russia from their unstable neighbours, focusing more on the security and protection of Russia's outer borders. The same could be said for the annexation of the Crimea. However, since the Russian interference resulted in an actual increase of Russian territory, it is generally labelled as expansionist behaviour.

In short, based on the different political and territorial changes that have occurred in the timeframe of this chapter, visible in table 1 'Changes in the EU and Russia', one could describe the change in the geopolitical strategy expressed by the EU and its member states as starting off as mainly an expansionist geopolitical strategy. Since it mainly focussed on expanding the territory of the EU, increasing their sphere of influence and spreading EU's norms and values through these enlargements and agreements. However, since 2007 the EU and its member states have shown predominantly protectionist geopolitical strategies. Mainly focussing on protecting and securing EU's borders and its values through new defence policies and agreements with neighbouring states.

Looking at the changes that have occurred on the Russian side of the analysis, their change in geopolitical strategy has developed, predominantly, from protective geopolitical strategies towards more expansionist strategies. At the start of the analysis in this chapter the actions undertaken by Russia were mainly focussed on protecting Russia from instable neighbours, establishing preventive measures to prevent Russia from becoming instable as well. The more expansionist behaviour by Russia was mainly expressed towards the end of the analysis in this chapter. After the period of 2004 to 2007 Russia was showing more expansionist behaviour through using geopolitical hard power, which resulted in expansions of the Russian sphere of influence outside the Russian territory.

Looking at the timeline of the political changes, in table 1 'Changes in the EU and Russia', the period of 2004 to 2007 could be identified as important years for the geopolitical strategies of both entities. From this moment onwards, both entities started to show changes in their geopolitical strategy. EU's becoming more protective and Russia more expansionist.

4. Current temperature

All the events presented in the previous chapters "Point Zero" and "Road to Cold Peace" showed that not only the geographical space of Europe and Russia have experienced many changes since the Cold War, the geopolitical strategies of the two entities have changes over the years as well. The European side of history shows several geographical changes through the enlargement of the European Union, mostly east wards, integrating Central and Eastern European Countries into the EU. Sometimes at the expense of Russia's former sphere of influence. On the Russian side of history, a geopolitical strategy of Russian protectionism regarding the 'Russian culture' was identified, especially looking at their (military) actions and involvement in neighbouring countries. However, as stated in the previous chapter this could be labelled as expansionist behaviour as well. The previous chapters provided insights on changes in the geopolitical behaviours and their agendas of both entities. With the EU strengthening its influence through enlargements and agreements with (potential) candidate member states and redrafting foreign and security policy. While Russian politics seems to reject these developments that result in the increased influence of EU and NATO.

In this chapter an answer to the last sub question will be provided; "*How could the current geopolitical relationship between the European Union and Russia be described?*". This chapter will continue to elaborate on the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia from 2015 up to 2019. The events in this period are discussed separately from the previous historical events, due to the statement:

"The developments since 2015 give no reason the think that Russia will take concrete steps in the coming years to return to the respect for the international legal order and the European security regulation that we have jointly built up after the Cold War." - (MinBuza, 2019)

This statement suggests that events that have occurred in 2015-2019 are vital in stating that Russia will not return to the established geopolitical order that was built up after the Cold War, which was one of the main motives to conduct this research. Talking a closer look at different occurrences and developments in the period 2015-2019 will help in understanding how the current geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia could be described. Since the timeframe in this chapter is rather short and the events are strongly connected, the events will not be discussed based on chronological order, but based on the topic. Each topic will elaborate on the Russian and EU's attitude in the discussed matter. Moreover, theoretically, this chapter will build further on the theoretical concepts that have been discussed in the previous two chapters. In this chapter the theoretical focus will be on recent geopolitical behaviour of the EU and Russia. Mainly focussing on underlying concepts that could help in understanding the current geopolitical relationships between the EU and Russia

nowadays. This will help in understanding the current geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia, within the current time frame. Since it will help in finding explanations for the geopolitical strategies that have been expressed by both entities in the recent history.

4.1 Theoretical concepts
4.1.1 Development in EU's behaviour

The previous chapter has shown the change in geopolitical behaviour of the EU. The analysis has shown a development in EU's agreements and practices that changes from predominantly expansionist behaviour, through the integration of and cooperation with Central and Eastern European states into the EU, towards a geopolitical strategy that has been showing more and more characteristics of protective behaviour about EU's borders and neighbours. The Western history, and therefore European, is not unfamiliar with changes in the geopolitical strategies towards Russia. Including mainly changes that have been based on a certain dominant image about Russia. Luostarinen (1989) states that in the case of the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia especially the 'enemy image' is seen as a powerful tool, for justifying political choices though history. Through the creation or the presence of an 'enemy image', the belief is raised that 'an outside group seriously threatens the security and basic values of a certain group' (Luostarinen, 1989). Therefore, the created image could be useful for the justification of political choices and aggression, or for driving the attention away from other, possibly bigger problems (Luostrarinen, 1989).

One enemy image that has been used in academia to describe Europe's or the Western image about Russia is 'Russophobia'. The concept of Russophobia, also known as anti-Russian sentiment, entails negative prejudices, dislikes or fears of Russia, Russians, or Russian culture (Taras, 2014 & Mészáros, 2016). Lieven (2000) goes beyond the description of 'dislike' and describes Russophobia as '*inherited hatred, blind, dogmatic hostility towards Russia*'. The Russophobic image that has been present in the Western/European society, presented Russia through specific stereotypical lenses for many years (Mészáros, 2016). In the 19th century Russophobia was strongly present in English politics. The English Russophobia arose naturally from the possible Russian expansion towards the Balkan or East Asia, which could have led to contradictions to the English perception and influence on the world market (Hill, 1952). In the 20th century the concept of Russophobia reflected by political attitudes during the Cold War (Tsygankov, 2013). The common perception emphasised the Russian threat towards US' values and interests, which were Europe's values and interests as well, due to the US' influence in Europe after the WWII. However, even after the ending of the Cold War, the anti-Russian sentiment and mistrust between Russia and Western countries did not disappear completely (Tsygankov, 2013).

Mészáros (2016, p.5) states that at the end of the Cold War, "*the Russian Federation appeared especially in the Western eyes as the Wild East, an unstable chaotic region, generator of risks and threats to its neighbours*". Many scholars emphasise that this enemy image has not changed nowadays. Claiming that the Western world is still observing Russia through the lens of stereotypes. The origin of this stereotypical projection of Russia could, according to Lieven (2000), be traced back to four 'roots': 1) the lack of flexibility of residual elites to adapts to the new established reality after the Cold War, 2) those who advocated expansion of the Western influence at the expense of Russia, 3) ethnic lobbies whose members hate and distrust Russia, and 4) those who just need a great enemy for either collective or personal interests or need.

One big difference with Russophobia today, compared to Russophobia during the 20th century, is that Russophobia today is not rooted in ideological differences but on nation hatred facts about Russia (Lieven, 2000). It is also important to acknowledge that Russia has not been an innocent bystander when it comes to the emergence and development of Russophobia in Western countries. Taras (2014) states that the election campaign that re-elected Putin in 2012 accelerated the anti-Russian sentiment in Western countries. Therefore, emphasising also Russia's own role in maintaining the Westerns' enemy image of Russia that feeds the negative prejudices, dislikes or fears of Russia, Russians, or Russian culture in Western society.

4.1.2 Development in Russian behaviour

Ever since the rise of Putin, the Russian geopolitical strategy has been characterised by maintaining the Russian status-quo and rejecting sources of instability and transformation (Fish, 2017). At the start of the 'Putin era' the Russian geopolitical attitude was focused on being complemental to the Western fundamentals within the established international order (Sakwa, 2015). An important aspect in this new established international order, in the Russian perspective, was that Russia and other rising powers after the Cold War would be treated as equals in the international system by its western partners (Sakwa, 2015). Prioritising the need for mutual respect and status recognition in order to maintain the established geopolitical relationship after the Cold War. However, as emphasised by several scholars, the EU failed to deliver these aspects and ensure a relationship based on equality and mutual respect (Forsberg, 2014 & Sakwa, 2015).

The beginning of Putin's reign was acknowledged to be optimistic towards the West and the EU (Haukkala, 2015). However, the enlargements of the EU failed to include Russia in the zone of peace, stability and prosperity that characterised the EU (Sakwa, 2015 & Haukkala, 2015). This contributed to an increased discontent in Russia, which resulted in Russian actions that forces the West and the EU to take Russia into consideration as an equal partner, demanding the expected respect (Forsberg, 2014). It is safe to say that this situation has not improved the levels of trust among the two.

Over the years, the differences in worldview, incompatible interests and the increased EU influence through enlargements and agreements in Central and Eastern Europe, contributed to the deterioration of the relationship (Haukkala, 2015 & Schmidt-Felzmann, 2016). When Putin was re-elected in 2012, Putin was the leader of a Russia that was much stronger and more ready to engage in the world politics (Sakwa, 2015). This made it possible for Putin to take a stronger stance in demanding the recognition of Russia's claim to be considered as an equal in the international power system and legitimate partner in the participation in world affairs (Sakwa, 2015).

The different attitude, as a direct result of a stronger Russia, and the growing distance between Russia and the EU evolved into a confrontation between the two entities. With the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 as the absolute climax of the growing tension between the two (Sakwa, 2015 ; Haukkala, 2015 & Schmidt-Felzmann, 2016). This changed EU's view on Putin's predictability and the level of stability he provided for the region (Sakwa, 2015 ; Khapaeva, 2016 & Schmidt-Felzmann, 2016). However, while the change in Russian's attitude regarding the West and Europe has been claimed to be a result of Europe's lack of respect for Russia and insensitivity of EU's consideration of Russian interests, Russia had an important role in this development as well. According to Schmidt-Felzmann (2016) had the Russian leaders failed to understand and respect EU's interests in political and economic cooperation in the region that would ensure stability, prosperity and security in the region, which included neighbouring states the EU and Russia shared. Understanding and respecting EU's intentions could have resulted in a different levels of trust among the two entities. However, this did not happen and the confrontation in Ukraine, including the shooting of MH17 forced the EU to take a tougher stand towards Russia (Haukkala, 2015).

At the same time, the confrontation led to a stronger expression of 'Putinism' on the Russian side of the relationship, with increased measures by Putin to 'liberate' Europeans from the US controlled NATO and weaken the EU (McFaul, 2020). This new, stronger version of Putinism, tries to find allies and enemies among states, but also within states as well (McFaul, 2020). Focussing on destabilising Western and European domestic political affairs and international organisations. Since it is one of Putin's core idea that policies focussing on destabilising 'Western' politics, would weaken their leaders and therefore, would result in less political power for Western and European parties on global scale and possibly more geopolitical power for Russia (McFaul, 2020). This would in the end contribute positively to Putin's goal to gain more respect for Russia as an equal political power and partner within the international power system and world affairs (Sakwa, 2015).

4.2 2015-2019 developments

4.2.1 Aftermath of Ukrainian crisis

Ever since the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, the EU has been taken measures against Russia, as described in chapter 3. The timeline of the European Council shows an extensive list of different measures against Russia that have been taken by the European Council as a response the crisis in Ukraine. Throughout the period 2015-2019, in each year the measures and sanctions against Russia and the annexed area has been extended, either and extension in time or an extension in geography (European Council, 2020a). The sanctions include diplomatic measures, individual restrictive measures (asset freeze and travel restrictions), restrictions on economic relations with Crimea and Sevastopol, economic sanctions and restrictions on economic cooperation (European Council, 2020b). The European Council describes the economic sanctions as: "*These sanctions were introduced in response to Russia's destabilising role in Eastern Ukraine. They target certain exchanges with Russia in the financial, energy and defence sectors and dual-use goods.*". The description point towards EU's perception that the Russian annexation has a negative effect on the stability and security in the region. This accentuates the perceived threat to the established peace in Europe, some even stating that this incident is the biggest threat to EU's peace, stability and security since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War (Schmidt-Felzmann, 2016).

Whether the sanctions have the desired effects is hard to tell, while the Russian economy has been experiencing some negative effects due to the sanctions, Putin's popularity is not suffering (Amadeo, 2020). Therefore, the desired changes for in the Russian geopolitical behaviour are small. The continuation of these measures against Russia and the Crimea Peninsula accentuates the tense relationship between the two entities that accompanies the lack of trust and difference in views that has been build up through the years since 2014. Chapter 3 already provided a more elaborate explanation on the Russian perspective of the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula: Putin's desire to unite all Russians in a Russian World is reflected in his actions in during the aftermath of the Ukrainian crisis, by continuing the claim on the territory. Amadeo (2020) claims that Putin will try to hold on to the Crimean territory, due to its promise to protect all Russians, which upholds his popularity in Russia and in Russian speaking area's outside of Russia.

4.2.2 Western/European politics

One of aims of Putinism is the destabilisation of Europe (Polyakova, 2016 & McFaul, 2020). One of the ways to realise this destabilisation is through the establishment of relationships with political parties within Western and European states (Polyakova, 2016 & McFaul, 2020). Polyakova (2016, p.1) describes this strategy as one that can "*serve to fracture political coalitions, even with low levels of electoral or public support*". Two reasons why this strategy could be considered as effective is because

1) Eurosceptic and anti-Western sentiments that are being fuelled in this process and 2) growing popularity of these type of parties into the mainstream of national politics, could both have negative consequences for the future of the EU (Polyakova, 2016). A rise of more Eurosceptic governments or governments that have a lack of support for cooperation on the level of the EU, would lead to less power and lower levels of integration, or it could even lead to fractures within the EU. A fractured EU, geographically but also on a policy level could weaken the EU as an institution internally and externally. This could be considered to be beneficial to Putin's geopolitical strategy. Since a weakened EU, would provide more opportunities for Russia to reclaim power and regain the international political respect it desires. According to McFaul (2020), Putin found some 'friends' who supported similar ideology in the European politicians such as Orban, Le Pen, Farage and Baudet. Through strengthening these ties with European politicians, Putin was able to actively contribute to the process of fracturing and weakening the EU from within.

Putin's involvement in domestic political affairs has not been limited to the European states. During the US' presidential campaign in 2016, Russian involvement was directed at the distortion of the US democratic system (McFaul, 2020). Through the theft and publication of electronic property, the broadcast, printed and social media campaigns, and support of the Pro-Trump campaign, Russia was able to cause polarisation in the American society and probe the US' electoral system. Main reasons for Putin to support Trump was because 1) Trump pledged to recognise Crimea as a part of Russia, 2) Trump pledged to lift sanctions on Russia, 3) Trump criticised NATO, 4) Trump did not have a focus on democracy and human rights and 5) Trump openly praised Putin (McFaul, 2020). This made Trump a more suited partner than Clinton, in Putin's mission to carry out its geopolitical strategy.

Since the Russian connection to the US presidential campaign in 2016 became clear, worries for Putin's interference in different European elections became more prominent. Especially the concepts of 'disinformation' and 'fake news' with a Russian source became more and more dominant in European day-to-day media. Either with articles claiming to find a link between misinformation and a Russian source, or the speculation of Russian influences on elections through social media channels (Apuzzo & Satariano, 2019). In 2019 Silva, for the BBC, points out several incidents in which Russian involvement was allegedly present, for example the support of German right-wing nationalist in the 2017 elections for German Parliament and the hacking of emails of Macron's campaign in 2017. Others state that Putin's arsenal not only includes the distribution of disinformation and the support of certain political groups, but that it also includes cyberattacks and even military invasions and the weaponisation of energy resources, organised crime and corruption (Taylor, 2020).

Additionally, besides the effects of this growing fear for Russian involvement in domestic politics, the months leading to the elections for the European Parliament expressed the fear for Russian interference on an EU wide level as well. A special task-force was established which would

focus on Russian media outlets (Silva, 2019). Through this, the EU tries to keep the amount of Russian disinformation as low as possible. All these accusations have been denied by Putin and its colleagues (Apuzzo & Satariano, 2019). All these incidents show that in the period 2015-2019 the distrust in Putin and its political agenda and even fear for Russia within the EU has been growing. Despite it is unknown whether the accusations of the Russian involvement in Western/European elections are true or not, the presence of this image has been repeatedly reflected in social and news media and on different political levels as well. Which contributes to the maintaining of the image of Russia as 'unreliability' and 'dangerous'.

4.3 Defining the current geopolitical relationship

Based on the elaboration provided in this chapter on the geopolitical developments from 2015 to 2019 one could state that the Russian annexation of the Crimea Peninsula in 2014 brought out major changes in the geopolitical behaviour between Russia and the EU. The lack of respect and acknowledgement of Russia by the West and the EU as an equal partner in world affairs reached its climax with the annexation of the Crimea Peninsula and set the trend for Russia's demanding presence in world politics. What became clear in chapter 4 is that Russia's resistance towards the West and the EU in the period of 2015 to 2019 seemed to be an unstoppable trend. Russia's attempts to disturb the Western/European domination in world politics through a wide variety of tools (disinformation, cyberattacks, relationships with political parties throughout Europe, etc.) are examples of the persistent resistance (Polyakova, 2016 & McFaul, 2020). One could still trance this back to the initial wish for recognition and mutual respect, which the EU failed to deliver in the years after the end of the Cold War. Whether these actions have reached its goal is debatable. Russia's political behaviour has been watched more closely by 'Western' or 'European' counterparts, through specialised task-forces (Silva, 2019). However, it is hard to tell if the Western states and organisations consider Russia to be an equal partner after all the events that have occurred in the past few years.

The trends visible in the Western and European political arenas in the period of 2015 to 2019 could be characterised by the increased presence in and focus on the danger and unreliability of Russia in both media and politics. The perceived Russian influence and interference has been addressed multiple times, in addition to the justification for the needed sanctions toward Russia as a reaction to the unchanging attitude of Putin's Russia on the matter. Additionally, the threat to the peace and stability in Europe as a consequence of Russian actions has been accentuated (MinBuza, 2019). These dominant narratives and messages in politics and media emphasises and nourishes the growing fear and distrust in Russia throughout the EU and its member states.

The trends that have been visible in the past few years, had its effects on the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia as well. Based on the information provided in chapter 4, one

could state that the geopolitical relationship between the two cannot be described as 'friendly', using Flint's (2012) classification for geopolitical relationships. The Russian dissatisfaction with how they have been treated in the past and its active involvement in Western and European domestic politics on the one hand. On the other hand, the growing fear and distrust in Russia on the European side of the relationship influenced by the growing presence of Russophobia (Lieven, 2000), and sanctions against Russia because of their geopolitical behaviour. This indicates that the relationship between the two has become more 'hostile'. However, the term 'hostile' might not be the most accurate way to label the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia. Despite the change in attitude towards each other which has become less friendly, the two entities could not be labelled not 'archenemies'. While the two entities strongly disagree and clash on several matters, the two entities still need to cooperate for the sake of their shared security against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (Casier, et al., 2016). Moreover, while the economic sanctions are still active, the EU and Russia are still big trading partners, which has been the backbone for the relationship between the EU and Russia for many years (Schmidt-Felzmann, 2016).

Therefore, stating that the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia is 'hostile' would be inaccurate and too simplistic. It seems to be true that the EU and Russia cannot be labelled as 'allies' nowadays, the two seem to disagree on many matters, the levels of trust have been damaged by the events that have occurred and negative images of each other seem to influence the attitude towards each other. The two have issues that need to be solved in order to have a 'friendly' geopolitical relationship. However, at the same time the two entities still depend on and cooperate with each other in areas outside the issues, which would not justify an indication of the geopolitical relationship as 'hostile'. Flint (2012) stated that maintaining a hostile geopolitical relationship is characterised by military action against the 'opponent' and/or though non-military actions such as sanctions or boycotts. The events that have been analysed in this chapter since the annexation of the Crimea peninsula have shown no military action between the EU or Russia, and while sanctions have been implemented as a result of the annexation, the two entities still cooperate in several policy areas (Casier, et al., 2016 & Schmidt-Felzmann, 2016).

In this case the geopolitical relationship status could be described best as: 'complicated'. In some matters the two highly disagree and even express hostile attitudes towards one another, while in other policy area's the two still find ways to work together and find solutions to common issues and threats from outside the continent (Casier, et al., 2016). Therefore, the geopolitical relationship is to some extent 'friendly', while also 'hostile. Therefore, the description of 'complicated', when describing the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia, seems to fit better.

Conclusion

This research provided an overview of the development of the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia from 1989 until 2019 in order to find an answer the following research question: *"How did the changes in geopolitical strategies of the EU and Russia influence the geopolitical relationship between the two entities since the end of the Cold War until 2019?".* The analysis of the relationship has been divided into three chapters, which provided the answers to the four sub questions that have been formulated for this research.

After the end of the Cold War the international order shifted drastically. During the Cold War the geopolitical relationship between Western states and the Soviet Union can be described as hostile. The analysis of this research has shown that this relationship changed, almost immediately, after the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the USSR. With the establishment of a new Russian Federation with Yeltsin as its leader, the Russian attitude towards the West and European states became more friendly. Yeltsin even recognised the European states as Russia's allies and European leaders stated that security threats for European states were no longer present on the European continent. This led to the answer to the first sub question, stating that after the end of the Cold War the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia was 'friendly'.

The third chapter of this research provided an analysis on many territorial and policy changes that occurred in the period of 1994 to 2014 and the question of how these have had effects on the geopolitical behaviour and strategies of the EU and Russia. In these twenty years the EU has expressed expansionist behaviour mostly through the enlargements of the EU Eastwards and realising agreements with (potential) candidate member states. The Russian events that have been discussed in the analysis showed a geopolitical strategy dominated by geopolitical behaviour, most changes that occurred in this period were to protect Russia from instability and insecurities to the state along the Russian border. However, for both entities the period of 2004 to 2007 seemed to have been a pivotal period. During this period, EU's geopolitical strategy and the expressed behaviour started to become more protective, mainly focussing on strengthening its security policy. On the Russian side of the relationship, the geopolitical strategy started to express more expansionist characteristics, with more aggressive foreign policies and military actions towards countries in the region in order to realise the "Русский Мир" (Russian World).

Chapter 4 focused on the developments of the geopolitical relationship in 2015 to 2019. The analysis presented in this chapter provided reasoning for stating that the current geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia is more 'hostile' than 'friendly'. This was based on the trend of a growing fear and distrust in Russia that is present in the EU, mainly due to increased feelings of insecurity in the EU and the Russian unchanging attitude in the aftermath of the Ukrainian crisis and

Russian interference in national and European politics. The trend that has been identified in Russia is a geopolitical strategy focussing on demanding respect and recognition in the international political arena and attempts to destabilise Western and European states with all different types of tools. However, due to the need for cooperation against terrorism and since the EU and Russia are still important trading partners, one could not state that the geopolitical relationship between the two is clearly 'hostile'. In some areas the relationship is not good, but due to the importance of other area's, they have to make it work. Therefore, the description of the geopolitical relationship as 'complicated', could be the best way to describe under the current circumstances.

The geopolitical strategies that have had the most influence on the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia are: EU's persistent expansionist behaviour through enlargements, its protectionist behaviour through the strengthening of security policies in the period of 2004 to 2007, Russia's geopolitical protectionist behaviour regarding the protection of the stability and security of Russia and its culture, and its expansionist behaviour to establish and realise "Русский Мир" (Russian World) in the period of 2004 to 2007. Furthermore, EU's geopolitical strategy towards Russia in 2015 to 2019 which has been influenced by the distrust and fear for Russia's influence in the EU and member states, and the Russian strategy in 2015 to 2019 that involved demands for respect and recognition, and destabilisation of Western and European influence.

The periods of 2004 to 2007 and 2015 to 2019 seem to have been pivotal in the change in geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia. Two main events have been important for the change in geopolitical behaviour in these periods. Firstly, the enlargements in 2004 of the EU and NATO, which included states of the former Soviet sphere of influence and led to Putin's statement in 2007 "*NATO has put its frontline forces on our borders […], it represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust*". Secondly, the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia in 2014. The annexation has been condemned by the EU as illegal and as a challenge for the established security in the region. It is important to understand that these events have had an important role in the change geopolitical strategies towards each other and therefore a change in the geopolitical relationship between the two entities. Understanding how these events came about and what the effects of these events were on the relationship, helps in understanding how the relationship between the two could be improved and how the two entities could warm the current cold peace.

Discussion

For this research a vast amount of secondary data was analysed in order to understand which expressions in geopolitical behaviour through changes in policy, territory or geopolitical attitude in 1989 to 2019 have had influence on the development of the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia. The research started off with identifying 'point zero' and the current status of the

geopolitical relationship between the two entities. Based on the theoretical explanation provided by Flint (2012) a geopolitical relationship could be defined as 'friendly' or 'hostile', implying that a geopolitical relationship is either one of the two. Based on the results of this research one could state that a definition of the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia, specifically in the current situation, cannot be labelled as either 'friendly' or 'hostile'. The results of this study showed that for the explanation for the relationship between the EU and Russia other labels should be used. Since it was not possible to define the two as allies or enemies, due to the levels of distrust and aggressive behaviour towards each other. At the same time, the two have to cooperate in certain organisations and policy areas, therefore the relationship could not be labelled as 'hostile'.

This research has shown that besides the two categories 'friendly' or 'hostile' geopolitical relationships, other categories do exist in practice. Due to the lack of a sharp all-encompassing term, the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia has been labelled as 'complicated'. Flint (2012) emphasised that the identification of allies and enemies help in defining a country's orientation in the world and contributes in understanding the nature of the geopolitical relation between states and the interaction between them. However, the analysis in this research has shown that the fact that countries are considered to be enemies in certain political areas, does not mean that they cannot be allies in other areas. The EU and Russia have clear differences and even a hostile attitude as a result of lack of recognition of Russia by EU and Russian military actions in the Crimea Peninsula, but simultaneously they cooperate on fighting terrorism and maintaining economic relationships. This makes it difficult to label the relationship between the EU and Russia as exclusively 'friendly' or 'hostile'.

This research has shown that geopolitical relations are complex and that states can be involved with each other on many different levels and in different policy areas. This research has shown that a disagreement or even hostile attitude in one area does not eliminate the possibly of cooperation and ties in other areas. Therefore, one could state that the categorisation by Flint (2012) of the geopolitical relationships as either 'friendly' or 'hostile' is too simplistic. It is possible that in other geopolitical relationships between different parties Flint's labels will not cover the true nature of the relationship as well. Based on this research I would state that additional labels to describe geopolitical relationships are needed and will be beneficial for other contexts as well. Since the current classification that is suggested by Flint, does not provide a labels for geopolitical relations that should be placed somewhere on the spectrum between 'friendly' and 'hostile'.

One could ask whether the existence and the usage of these type of labels for identifying and understanding geopolitics fits the current geopolitical situation in the world. However, I do think that having these type of labels makes it easier to understand and order the complexity of the geopolitical relationships. The existence of these type of labels is especially useful for young scholars who are still

new to the field of geopolitics. Since these labels will help and guide them in understanding the important elements when deciphering and analysing geopolitical relationships.

Furthermore, as expected based on literature about the different geopolitical behaviours, identifying 'expansionist' and 'protective' geopolitical behaviour was easier than identifying 'paranoid' geopolitical behaviour. Pain (2009) implied that 'paranoid' geopolitical behaviour is based on the emotional reaction of fear towards a certain perceived external threat. However, protection of an entity from external factors through for example policies, is one of the characteristics of 'protectionist' geopolitical behaviour (Atkinson & Dodds, 2000). Threats could be considered to be external factors, which justifies protectionist behaviour, therefore, the recognition of 'paranoid' geopolitical behaviour could have been missed. Especially since entities would try to justify their convinced need for a specific policy, which would contribute to the proof of a perceived threat, even when the identified threat was more based on assumptions in the first place. This accentuates that indeed the identification of a 'paranoid' geopolitical behaviour is harder than the identification of either of the other two. However, one should be aware of the existence of this type of geopolitical behaviour since it can have significant influence on a geopolitical relationship. Since the arguments for a strategy influenced by paranoid behaviour could be not valid and result in unnecessary disturbances in the geopolitical relationships between entities.

Despite the fact that this research was focused on the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia, therefore focussing on these two entities, does not imply that 'paranoid', 'protective' or 'expansionist' geopolitical behaviour in other contexts could be more difficult or more easy to identify. On the contrary, the case of the EU and Russia proves how hard it is to identify, especially, 'paranoid' geopolitical behaviour. The fact that both entities in this research speak out strongly more often and seem to pursue clear policies, implies that in other contexts the identification could be just as hard, or even more difficult. This does not imply that one should abandon these concepts when analysing other geopolitical relationships, understanding and deciphering the different geopolitical attitudes is important and valuable since it helps in understanding the geopolitical strategy and aims of an entity (Atkinson & Dodds, 2000).

The last chapter of this research has provided insights on the current way Russophobia by the EU and European and Western states is expressed and how Putinism nowadays is expressed. The weight of the negative prejudices, dislikes or fears for Russia, Russians, or Russian culture as claimed by Taras (2014) and Mészáros (2016) seem to be key characteristics in the concept of Russophobia, and happen to be valid in the current geopolitical climate as well. Moreover, today Russophobia is also highly influenced by distrust in Russia, which has not been mentioned as a dominant characteristic of

Russophobia in the existing literature. This indicates that additional to negative prejudices, dislikes or fears, the concept of distrust is also of a great importance in explaining the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia in the context of Russophobia. Taking this extra element into account when conducting research on topics that are related to EU's relation with Russia or are focussing on European foreign policy, could help in better understanding European motives behind the expressed attitudes or policies. With recognising the presence and possible influence of Russophobia on EU foreign policy and geopolitical strategy, geopolitical behaviour expressed by the EU could be understood better. Moreover, the origins of specific policies, agreements or statements could be placed within this context and therefore they could be put into a different perspective. A perspective that could indicate and take into account the influence of fear and distrust, lacking actual valid threats.

Existing literature on Putinism has been focussing on the explicit Russian demand for respect and recognition from its European and Western counterparts (Forsberg, 2014 & Sakwa, 2015). The results of this research has shown that the recent attitude of Russia towards its European and Western counterparts has been strongly focused on destabilising the European and Western states and weaken their influence in the international political arena (Polyakova, 2016 & McFaul, 2020). This finding shows a shift in focus of Putinism in the period of 2015 to 2019, which is effecting the geopolitical relationship today. Understanding this change in Putinism will be helpful in future research that involves Russia and focusses on Russia's geopolitical strategy and attitude towards European and Western counterparts. Since this change in geopolitical strategy is affecting, not only the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia, but the world politics in general as well.

Reflection

In the process of data collection certain choices had to be made, due to the vast majority of available literature. This could be considered to be one of the limitations of this research. Since it was not possible to include all available literature on the topics and moments in this research, due to the amount of time this would have taken, a different interpretation, description or opinion on the discusses issues could have been excluded in this research. However, in order to keep the validity of this research as high as possible and in the attempt to include most important and most dominant arguments, opinions and descriptions, the choice has been made to include secondary data that had the highest number of citations in Google Scholar. Mainly due to the assumption that academic literature on search engines with a higher number of citations is more reliable than literature with a lower number of citations. This method in data selection has only been adapted when the number of secondary data after inserting terms on a specific topic or issue in Google Scholar made it hard to read all suggested data.

Another limitation of the data collection of this research is the overrepresentation of data in search engines that tended to have a critical stance towards the EU. Especially compared to the amount of (critical) literature on Russian policies and practices. With this I do not suggest that it was hard to find (critical) literature on the Russian role, but I do point out that the amount of (critical) literature on the EU that was possible to find was in much higher numbers. Two possible reasons for this phenomenon could be given. Firstly, the language barrier. Especially as a Dutch student, being enrolled in a Dutch university, with limited mastery of the Russian language, and using English based search engines, the chances of finding more literature on the EU in general is higher than finding literature on Russia. Especially, since not all data that would cover the same issues in Russian is available in English. Additionally, the overrepresentation of (critical) literature on the EU could be linked to the assumption that the Western and European academic world tend to provide a lot of critique on the EU and its institutions willingly. Whereas, the expression of criticism on Russian politics and practices is often done with more caution and in smaller numbers, is assumed to be due to the limited freedoms of expression in Russian compared to Western and European standards.

Due to the time scope of this thesis, I was able to provide an extensive overview of the development of the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia since 1989 until 2019. However, partly due to this grand time scope, not all issues and moments in history have been discussed that evenly. Again certain choices had to be made, which could have led to the exclusion or the overlook of crucial moments in the history between the EU and Russia. As stated in the first chapter on the methodology of this study, the choice was made to focus mainly on events in history that affected the territory of either the EU, European states or Russia, or the borders of any of the involved entities. Therefore, events that had no effect on borders or territories, have automatically been excluded in this analysis. The justification for this way of selecting the events for this research was based on Scott's (2009) statement that the process of geopolitics should be understood as a process of bordering.

Future research recommendations

This thesis has provided an extensive overview of the development of the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia, ever since the establishment of the Russian Federation until recently, 2019. This helped in gaining an understanding of how the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia has developed since the Cold War and which changes in policy, territory or geopolitical behaviour has led to a change in geopolitical relationship. However, due to this extensive coverage of the relationship, there is still room for future research based on the insights that have been provided on the development of the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia. As stated before, the wide time scope of this research demanded for choices to be made, therefore, not all events have

been discussed as thoroughly as desired. Especially the crucial periods in the development of the relationship should be investigated more into detail. Future research recommendations based on this would be research that would focus on the events, developments and changes that have occurred in the period of 2004 to 2007 and the period of 2015 in 2019. Understanding which party played which role during this period and how the two entities interacted with each other during this period, will contribute to a more complete understanding on how the events and issues that occurred during these two periods affected the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia.

Additionally, future research based on this thesis should focus on the current expression of Russophobia and Putinism in the Western and European states and Russia. This research has already briefly touched these topics. However, a deeper understanding of these two concepts, especially how these concepts are expressed nowadays, will help in understanding the existing perceptions and assumptions that are present in Western/European and Russian society about each other. Future research on these topics should focus on how the present ideas of fear and mistrust in Russia are fed, where these come from and if the Russohobic claims that are made are valid. Research focussing on Putinism should focus on how this strategy is expressed, who are key players in this strategy and an analysis of the effects and effectiveness of this strategy would add useful insights that would benefit the greater understanding of the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia.

Moreover, future researches on this topic that include interviews with experts on the topic, such as scholars, policy makers and political reporters, could provide valuable and useful contributions to the understanding of the development of the geopolitical relationship between the EU a Russia. Including this type of data collection would provide more insights and understanding on 'why' and 'how' certain policies or geopolitical choices have been made and ambiguities could be cleared up. These issues have been difficult to decipher in this thesis since it was exclusively based on the secondary data.

Lastly, I would like to provide policy recommendation that could be applied to all geopolitical entities. This thesis has shown the influence of non-demonstrable facts based on emotions such as fear and distrust on geopolitical strategies and therefore on geopolitical relationships. I would like to stress towards policy makers to be aware of the influence of the decisions based on emotions. I do understand that the different emotions affecting the geopolitical strategies also reflect the emotions of an entity's society. However, this thesis has shown how the influence of these emotions could result in deterioration in the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia. It is important to limit the influence of these emotions on the geopolitical relationship between the EU and Russia, since the two are each other's neighbours geographically and important partners economically, for example. An increase of tension between the two could have negative consequences for relationship but also the levels of security in the entire region. This would not be beneficial to either of the entities.

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