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The Rogue and the Diplomat

An Analysis of Conservative American Media Discourse on Russia in the Trump Era

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DECLARATION

I, Daniel Juddson Lohmann, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

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Any errors are mine alone.

ABSTRACT

In December of 2016, the CIA announced that Russian actors had hacked into US servers in an effort to assist then-candidate Donald Trump in his 2016 bid for the US presidency. This revelation, amidst increasing political polarization in the US and the common use of phrases like ‘fake news’ and ‘alternative facts’, contributed to a controversial election landscape that combined elements of US-Russian relations, journalistic ethics, and technological advancement. This thesis uses a case study to examine if and how conservative American media shifted its discursive tendencies on the topic of Russia after the election of Donald Trump to the presidency. In observing the shifting of discourse, we may both observe how conceptions of identity, security and power constituted and were constituted by media, and how journalistic ethical change and media developments may have enabled these types of shifts. By exploring transcripts of Fox News Television programs, this study has been conducted in effort to simultaneously provide broad insight into modern developments in geopolitics and media and specific investigation into a unique chapter in American history and in US-Russian relations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

On March 21st, 2014, one month after the start of ongoing Russian military incursions into Ukraine, real estate mogul and celebrity TV personality Donald Trump tweeted the following comments regarding the state of US-Russian relations:

“I believe Putin will continue to re-build [sic] the Russian Empire. He has zero respect for Obama or the U.S.!”

Four years later on July 19th, 2018, in spite of the continued annexation of Ukrainian territory by Russia, President Trump tweeted that “The Fake News Media wants so badly to see a major confrontation with Russia, even a confrontation that could lead to war. They are pushing so recklessly hard and hate the fact that I’ll probably have a good relationship with Putin. We are doing MUCH better than any other country!”

These tweets, as well as nearly one hundred others in which Trump has shared his opinions on the subject of either Putin or Russia, provide a narrative that follow a fairly stable discourse: Barack Obama is weak, while Vladimir Putin is strong and dangerous, but Donald Trump is stronger. If accepted at face value, this formulation posits a simple and consistent structuring of the major subjects of US-Russian relations, including their identities, the extent of their power, and the perception of security between the two nations. Giroux (2017) writes that much of Trump’s success has come from his presentation of a “consistent narrative of a reality of which they [his audience] are a part” (p.199). While many aspects of Trump’s political career have defied common expectations of proper presidential behavior (with accusations of his flip-flopping on issues, backtracking on comments, and making inflammatory statements being a constant), his supporters have largely remained steadfast to his handling of foreign affairs, with only an 8% disapproval rate in December of 2018 (Struyk, 2018). Still, Trump’s tone toward Putin and Russia has been noticeably more amicable toward Russia than his presidential predecessors, a trend that has not gone unnoticed by media. Reporting on this topic has ranged from laudations of Trump’s masterful deal making skills (Ingraham et. al, 2018) to accusations of Trump being a Russian pawn (Boot, 2019), reflecting the polarized state of the contemporary American political landscape. The refraction of Trump’s behavior through the mainstream media has brought the state of US-Russian relations to the fore of the national consciousness while simultaneously leading to increased public scrutiny over the state of political journalism in the US (Neave, 2018, p.vii).

This represents one of the many cases that have led to broad conclusions about US mainstream media existing in a ‘post-truth’ state, in which perceptions of truthful reporting are heavily influenced by how information is shared and who has shared it (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, p.49). This effect has been popularized through the phrases like ‘fake news’ and through studies of how the increased sharing of news through social networks has resulted in echo chambers and truth silos, but longitudinal studies of the effects of shifts in media technology has been given less attention in international relations (Flaxman, Goel, & Rao, 2016). Trump’s emergence onto the American political scene as a Republican candidate whose views challenged those of the conservative establishment provided an opportunity to observe how conservative modern media outlets shift their prior representations of particular issues; a friendly and admiring tone towards Putin from a conservative president is one such anomaly that could provide significant insight. Through the observation of the language used to report on this dynamic and multifaceted situation, this thesis seeks to add knowledge to the nature of discursive shifts in modern American mass media, how shifts occur, and the general implications that this case has regarding the role of media in International Relations.

1.1 Research Overview

By analyzing transcripts of talk shows from the Fox News Channel, I seek to identify and describe the discourse of conservative mainstream media on Russia (primarily focusing on the last decade), and to investigate the nature of any shifts or ruptures that may have occurred within this discourse over the same time period. In doing so, I hope to shed light on how the dynamics of discourse within American media are affected by the evolving nature of information dissemination via mass media, particularly in regard to topics of concern to International Relations scholars. These general goals are formulated throughout this thesis through the following two research questions:

- 1. How did the election of Donald Trump shift the discourse of mainstream conservative media as it conceives of Russia and US-Russian relations, and how does this relate to conceptions of identity, power, and security?*
- 2. How (if at all) were such discursive shifts acknowledged by Fox News hosts, and what implications does this have for agency in mass media discourse?*

These questions are important for multiple reasons. First, the revelations of Russian interference in the 2016 US election as well as subsequent investigations of contact between

members of the Trump administration and Kremlin-affiliated individuals have brought the state of US-Russian relations to the center of media attention as the US grapples with its identity and security vis-à-vis its formal superpower rival. The tracing of contemporary conservative discourse on Russia can provide insight into one specific perspective of this complex and ever-shifting relationship, as well as important dynamics of conservative views on liberal America within the realm of foreign policy.

Second, technological innovations have altered the tone, pace, and nature of news media to such an extent that the credibility of media journalism itself has come into question. Widespread claims of the emergence of a ‘post-truth’ era in media combined with the election of a TV personality to the Oval Office require investigation into the processes by which discourse in media is capable of legitimizing a particular set of actions within a state, thereby influencing democracy. By analyzing recent media broadcasts, we can update our understanding on how accelerating technological development plays an emerging role in the power of mass media to influence international relations and perceptions of other states.

Third, the extent to which certain actors may be able to wield influence through media is also shifting as the power structures within and between the media and political actors evolve. Observing discursive shifts and considering the extent to which they are acknowledged could allow for increased understanding of how these shifts are permitted by the public and where agency lies among the actors involved. Finally, while this process is in a state of constant flux, it is worthwhile to observe the state of a discourse through a snapshot of a critical time period.

This thesis seeks to add to literature on how discursive shifts may affect notions of identity, power, and security, specifically through American conservative media depictions of Russia. The first question is comprehensively addressed through a plethora of discourse analysis techniques and by comprehensively covering each of these elements, while the second question is more generally answered through the observation of subject agency in this case. A number of important points are relevant to mention here: first, I do not claim to have identified a new discourse surrounding Russia – the concept of Russia being at odds with the US is one that is nearly as old as the relationship itself. Nor can I claim to have identified a definitively conservative discourse on Russia – I recognize the variety of viewpoints that fall under the realm of conservatism, particularly given the limitations of the binary state of

contemporary US politics. Additionally, the rhetoric of conservative media takes place within the larger discursive realm of American mass media, which both constitutes and is constituted by current events and wider conservative discourse (more on this in the second section). For this reason, rather than providing a traditional literature review outlining security concepts, I instead include sections that elaborate on the constitutive nature of discourse, as well as specific details pertaining to the case currently under consideration.

Clarifications

It is worthwhile to provide certain clarifications early on in this thesis to avoid misinterpretation – this is particularly important in a thesis centered around the concept of discourse as (by definition) it considers the meanings of words and how they are used. First, this thesis has adopted the common practice of referring to the academic field of International Relations (or IR) with capitalization, while using the lower-case form to refer to the phenomena of international relations within the study. Second, discussion of conservatism and liberalism refer to these terms as they are situated upon the American political spectrum, as American media takes place within this context. Third, major actors under consideration will be referred to under a variety of metonyms. For example, the US political administration may be referred to as the White House while the Russian political administration may be referred to as the Kremlin. While it is important to distinguish between comments about the head of a state and the state itself (i.e. comments about Putin specifically vs. comments about Russia), this thesis considers such comments to be closely related. Thus, the distinction between the two will be specified but they will be included within the same section of analysis. Fourth, throughout this paper single quotation marks (‘) will be used to denote terms that serve as signifiers (that is to say that we are discussing these signifiers’ conceptions without granting them a priori meaning). Two quotation marks (“) will be reserved for instances where text is being cited from another literary source. Beyond these more general notes, the definitions of other larger concepts crucial to this thesis (such as discourse and the terms used to conceive of it) will be defined and discussed at greater lengths in later sections.

Challenges

Conducting social research in the arena of the politically-charged contemporary mass media in which fundamental notions of knowledge and truth are fiercely contested posed a number of challenges in the effort to conduct valuable research. First, political discourse does not take place in a vacuum – efforts to reveal a discourse on Russia that was consistent, pervasive,

and persistent beyond momentary reactions to current events was not a simple task. This required the careful selection of temporal boundaries for the data sets (this process is described in the methodology section alongside a justification for the case selection). Second, maintaining neutrality in spite of personal political opinions held by the researcher must be acknowledged as a challenge within this thesis. While this issue is briefly addressed in the next section, the ubiquitous and charged nature of this topic within current American politics would make it nearly impossible to conduct this type of research without any type of pre-existing opinions on the subject. For this reason, every effort was made to incorporate a variety of perspectives in an effort to control the influences of any internal biases upon the findings of the research, while simultaneously accepting the inevitability of the existence of such biases. Third, the nebulous nature of discourse analysis that is frequently admitted by social scientists made it a difficult process to employ, as its methodology was unfamiliar to the researcher prior to this thesis. This resulted in an experience that felt more like trailblazing than the sterile environment of investigation one might associate with research. While these challenges were present throughout the writing of this thesis, their acknowledgement allowed for constant adjustments to be made that ideally mitigated any major compromising consequences.

1.2 Structure

The second section of this thesis will situate the reader within the basic theories of constructivism, discourse, and journalism that underpin this thesis, including their respective roles within the field of International Relations. The third section outlines and justifies the choice of case and data and lists the steps of the analytical process used to conduct discourse analysis. The fourth section will provide historical context for the thesis by briefly reviewing American discourse on Russia through a modern history of US-Russian relations, by recounting of the development of Fox News and its entry into the landscape of American mass media, and by detailing the emergence of Donald Trump into the international political stage. The fifth section introduces the major emergent analytical categories within the data and then provides discursive analytical observations from the transcripts of hundreds of Fox News opinion shows over two distinct periods of time, focusing upon the shifts and changes observed between them. The sixth section further processes and summarizes these findings and considers their wider applications, while a seventh section offers concluding thoughts and possibilities for further research. The eighth and final section provides a bibliography for the literary and data sources of the thesis.

2. THEORY

This section serves to outline the fundamental theories underlying this thesis. First, discourse theory is introduced as being situated within the epistemological field of constructivism, comprised of language, and taking a critical view of power structures of International Relations. Second, the theory of the general role of media within IR is discussed, as well as how discourse is used within mass media as it pertains to concepts of identity, power, and security. Third, the question of agency within IR mass media discourse is explored, including actors involved in influencing media discourse (namely the media, the state, economic actors, and smaller group interests). This section will provide general accounts of key theories that are then expanded upon in following sections.

2.1 Discourse Theory

Constructivism

To properly introduce the concept of discourse, we must first familiarize ourselves with the larger ontological and epistemological assumptions that comprise discourse as a theory and a method of research. Discourse takes place in a world as conceived of by the theory of constructivism (also known as constructionism), which sits firmly between two opposing extremes on the spectrum of ontology: realism and solipsism (Poerksen, 2013, p.13). Where realism posits the existence of a reality independent of any external observer (implying the possibility of objective knowledge), solipsists question the existence of any world beyond the individual mind, arguing that there is no way to confirm any common shared experiences, let alone concrete reality. Constructivist theory is located between these two extreme positions through its rejection of the a priori world of realists as well as the abstract cognitive loneliness of solipsists, defined as it is by an overarching metaphysical position that “any attempt to answer [such a question] will inevitably remain linked to an observer” (Poerkson, 2013, p.14). Instead, constructivism conceives of a world that is shared via the intersubjective process of social interaction, which can be described as a conceptual network (Milliken, 1999). Constructivists by and large do not concern themselves with the idea of an independent external world, denying “not that [...] objects exist externally to thought, but the assertion that they could constitute themselves outside of any discursive condition of emergence” (Mouffe & Laclau, 1985, p.113). While the exact conception of an objective reality varies among constructivists, as a whole the theory dismisses this claim as unverifiable and instead unites around the understanding that “one cannot take for granted the availability of a pre-constituted world for investigation” and instead must “examine the processes by which the

social world is constructed” (Walsh, 1972, p.19). This shift of focus has significant implications for both the epistemology and ontology permissible in research grounded in constructivist theory: by rejecting the possibility of objective knowledge beyond that which is shared socially, constructivist research cannot claim to pursue permanent ontological ends. Instead, the primary focus of constructivist research lies the epistemological approach of tracing the process through which the shared conceptual network of reality is constructed; this is what we refer to as discourse.

Discourse

Within this world constructed through social interaction, we may conceive of discourse as the method by which meanings are generated through representational practices (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). Discourse can be described and analyzed in a variety of ways; Milliken (1999) identifies three major properties that unite this surplus of conceptualizations. First, discourse describes systems of *signification*: through discourse, things are constructed and ordered (for example, it is through discourse that we assign meaning to the concept of ‘the state’). Such constructions of signification are built through the establishment of relationships between the elements involved (known as *signifiers*) and may be mutually associated in a positive or negative manner. Through this process of signification, binaries are constructed to delineate what something is and what it is not, usually with one element of the binary being privileged over the other. Second, discourses are productive: through their existence they structure the world, both in a theoretical sense but also in a literal sense as well – for instance, the shared understanding of ‘state’ has a physical manifestation that results in the delineation of both conceptual and physical barriers between states. By legitimizing regimes of truth, discourse can dictate what is considered to be valid behavior (for example, a government stopping someone crossing state borders illegally) and thus produces the preconditions for action (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). Third, discourses are fluid: rather than assuming that a particular concept has a fixed or intrinsic meaning, discourse theory assumes that the constructed meaning constituting a subject varies over time. For example, the early conception of ‘the state’ as an independent and primary actor within IR could be said to have been altered by the emergence of larger international regional organizations like the EU (Wissel & Wolff, 2017). This property of the fluidity of discourse results from the existence of multiple discourses that can be pitted against one another for dominance in the depiction of social reality. Like weaponry in war, discourse can be utilized (be it wittingly produced or unwittingly transmitted) to assert representative authority over others.

Language

Discourse as a method of interactive, constitutive construction takes various forms, but in practice it is most commonly associated with language and/or language in use (Gee, 2014). The presence of discourse within language fits within a poststructuralist conception of language as being an unfixing, differential phenomenon that relates subjects to one another (as opposed to it being a referential phenomenon that describes subjects by fixing them to inherent qualities) (Wæver, 2002). This concept of wielding discursive power through language is one that was popularly transmitted by author George Orwell's novel *1984*, through his description of the fictional language *Newspeak*: in this story, an authoritarian government continuously and blatantly re-maps the national language to fit reality within its own ideology (the most famous example being the impossible claim that $2+2=5$), and even seeks to eliminate existing words in an effort to prevent thoughts that threatened to undermine the government's discursive tyranny (Orwell, 1949). Poststructuralism maintains that the transient and malleable properties of language imply that there is no start or end point to the assignment of meaning within language, but instead posit that language develops through *intertextuality*, or its relationship to previous meanings that occur through the referencing of prior texts (Bakhtin, 1984). Foucault (1972) recognized that this intertextual property of language implies that discursive meaning can be traced along intertextual links in a process he referred to as *genealogy*, which allows for the study of discursive change. The instrumental role played by language in mapping reality establishes it as a crucial ontological focus in the study of meaning (Steele, 2008).

Hegemony

As a research method, discourse analysis sits firmly in the field of postpositivism – its rejection of the observability of any world beyond one that is socially constructed precludes its ability to conduct the type of measurement required within positivist research. Without the ability to measure and compare variables, the pursuit of correlation is abandoned for the description of meaning, adhering to Nietzsche's (1910) assertion that "there are no facts in themselves. It is always necessary to introduce a meaning in order that there can be a fact" (p.72). This political power of language to assign meaning makes it "a site for the production and reproduction of particular subjectivities and identities while others are simultaneously excluded" (Hansen, 2006 p. 16). In general, critical theories task themselves with challenging the status quo by questioning the identities and power structures held to be essentially true, as Gramsci (1971) did in his writings on hegemony: he observed that regimes

of truth were created wherever a certain epistemology dominated over other forms of meaning production. Because the process of meaning-making involves competition for supremacy, discursive hegemony is achieved when one particular discourse reaches a state of dominance over other alternative discourses. According to Dunn and Neumann (2016), discourse usually contains dominating representations of reality; how hegemonic discourses develop, achieve their dominance, and are challenged are of great interest to discourse theory. While the method of discourse analysis used in this thesis is primarily based upon the works of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) (which does not fall into the method of discourse analysis closest to the critical theories) the author echoes Hansen's (2006) sentiment that there are "significant points of convergence between [the discourse analysis used here] and Critical Discourse Analysis, in particular the latter's concern with media representations" (p.xv). The inherently political nature of questioning existing power structures equips discourse theory to contend with major themes within IR including those considered by this thesis.

Discourse in IR

Although discourse theory can be applied throughout many different fields, the struggle for discursive control has direct connections to some of the major topics within IR: identity, power, and security. As mentioned, the process of signification within discourse constructs the performative constitution of identities – in IR, this would commonly refer to the state (as it is the primary unit of focus) (Campbell, 1994). The idea of a world of sovereign states is not feasible without the existence of constructed binaries of Self and Other; this essential "imagined political community" must be constantly reproduced to be sustained (Anderson, 1991). Discursive constitutions of identity thus are used to compete to grow and maintain these imagined political communities; these discourses occur in layers which vary in the degree of their state of relative fixity or flux (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). The ability of discourse to interpellate a structure onto subjects within IR can constitute the *identity* of a given political entity, wield the *power* to guide and constrain possible actions of operation, and (through a subject's perception of the constructed Other) affects one's perception of *security*. While the connection to discourse within each of these themes will be unpacked in following sections, it is important to recognize the degree to which discourse pervades within international relations. While IR discourse is often studied at its source (namely through primary sources such as political speeches or official state documents), it can also be disseminated through to secondary and tertiary sources (such as through news media or

cultural works, respectively), which in turn possess distinct expressions of a discourse based upon their authors, styles, and audiences (Dunn & Neumann, 2016).

2.2 Media Theory

Mass Media

The media is a prominent example of a secondary source of IR-related discourse and is the discursive agent/tool of focus within this thesis. While the role of mass media in political discourse has varied over the course of history by the time period, location and type in question, it has been closely involved since the conception of IR, even playing a crucial role in the in the primordial formations of statehood - if mass media is defined as any method of communication that links humans not necessarily known to one another, then it played a crucial role in shifting the scale of possible human communication beyond the Dunbar number (which suggests a cognitive limit to the number of humans one can ‘know’) to allow for human cooperation on the scale of state-level organization (Boyle, 2016). This opened mass media to become a “dynamic site of struggle over representation, and [a] complex space in which subjectivities are constructed and identities are contested” from which discourse emerged (Spitulnik, 1993, p.296). In turn, the technological innovations that enabled mass media provided a basis for an “imagined community of a single family [to be] imposed upon the real mass-community”, allowing for physically disparate peoples to cooperate and influence one another in a mass society, laying the foundation for the emergence of the state (Boyle, 2016, p.26). As such, mass media has been a crucial contributor in “providing the basis upon which groups construct an image of their lives, meanings, practices and values of other groups and classes” (Hall, 1977, p.145). Today, the advanced nature of mass media brings it into increasingly closer contact with the field of IR, as more information can be broadcast to more people more quickly. As mass media’s ability to disseminate discourse (and thereby depict reality to disparate groups of people) increases, so too does its power to influence notions of identity, power, and security within and between nations (Coban, 2016).

Journalistic Ethics

As mass media evolved in Europe, journalism emerged as a practice of ethics that forged a unique role for the press as a defender of the civil society that produced it, assuming a unique sense of “legitimacy and moral ascendancy in society” that resulted from its crucial role in checking authority and preventing abuses of power (Simons & Strovsky, 2018, p.4). In his written history on the development of journalistic ethics, Ward (2006) remarks that, as early

as the 17th century, the first newspapers developed an “embryonic journalism ethic” (p.90) with claims of objectivity (although these claims were widely disputed). In the 18th century, the institution of this purpose of journalism had grown to such an extent that played a significant role in the creation of a public ethic, eventually coming to be characterized as the ‘fourth estate’ of government, being “almost sanctified as a medium” (Barnhurst & Nerone, 2001, p.1). By providing civil society with empowering and accessible narratives of reporting, the concept of journalism as a vessel of objectivity continued to advance through to the 19th century to the extent that it came to be seen as an “independent institutional source of political and cultural power which monitors and scrutinizes the actions of the powerful in other spheres” (McNair, 1998, p.19-20). This reputation as an impartial information source helpful to the public was bolstered by both general information scarcity and the rise of reporting based upon scientific principles, which crystallized a hegemonic position for journalism as a purveyor of truth; in this environment, “the ideal of professional journalism gained traction” (Waisbord, 2018, p.1869). This elevated the status of journalists to such a degree that they were seen to comprise a crucial part of society, entrenching their role as arbiters of truth. In spite of this lofty standing, journalism remained a product steeped in discourse throughout, therefore clashing with its purported objectivity of ‘truth-telling’. In the following paragraphs, three examples from the past century will be reviewed to demonstrate how, under the guise of objectivity, journalism served state interests and has been tied to major themes within IR.

2.3 International Relations Theory

Identity

The technological developments of the 20th century continued to grant journalism both an expanded reach (through radio, TV, and the internet) and an expanded role within a world thrust into unprecedented global warfare. The US’s entry into the world wars brought about a stronger need to assert a national identity (or ‘Self’) onto the international playing field, particularly to starkly differentiate itself from its enemies. This need was fulfilled through media to such an extent that by the 1940’s “communication and mass media were considered as the propaganda ‘tools’ that states used toward ‘Others’ in interstate conflicts in the international arena” (Coban, 2016, p.46). Media frequently relayed information about the enemy to the American public, constructing binaries that asserted American soldiers’ moral superiority to, say, German soldiers. Not long after this, mass media would be increasingly used to defined identity during the ideological battle of the Cold War between the USSR and

the West. In an effort to prevent communist ideology from spreading, American media was co-opted for the dissemination of anti-communist propaganda (a topic expanded upon later in this thesis). Comprehensive scare tactics and other types of negative signifiers attached to a Soviet enemy were used relentlessly to establish a hegemonic position that sharpened the borders between the ideological poles of capitalist and communist identity. By engaging in efforts to shape and emphasize identity via discourse, the media has authored much of the story of IR “in terms of construction of allies and enemies of state. In other words, the media help to construct the reality of international politics” (Coban, 2016, p.47). Throughout recent history, these types of efforts have been used to assert identities of the Self and the Other, through the construction of privileged binaries; by favoring the qualities of the Self above those of the Other, a state that harnessed the power of its media could in turn justify its actions through a discourse of moral superiority.

Power

The head of a major media organization within a given democracy is not elected by its citizenry, but in spite of this fact could be said to wield a significant amount of political power. The propaganda deployed in the US during the world wars of the 20th century proved to be so effective that the messages of the press were said to act like “magic bullets that directly entered the minds of citizens and altered their opinion” (Ward, 2006, p.228). Taylor (1997) theorizes that media became increasingly intertwined in the process of international relations as media saturation increased and government officials increasingly began to appear on mass media to explain and justify policy decisions (previously made behind closed doors) to their electorate. While media can be harnessed effectively as a tool for state actors, this is not always the case (nor is it necessarily often the case); Robinson (1999) describes four major types of policy-media relationships: supportive, non-influential, critical, and one that takes its own position, all of which can have profoundly different influence on a state seeking to push a particular foreign policy. For example, Coban (2016) cites the power of media reporting as a likely impetus for the strong negative public reaction against the Vietnam War in the 1970’s, eventually leading to the collapse of the American will to fight and forcing policymakers to back down. The media’s increased ability to provide regular around-the-clock content in the past few decades (referred to by Robinson (1999) as the CNN effect) allowed it to further integrate audiences into the processes shaping war, peace, and diplomacy. The discourse of media can also strongly influence the directors of foreign policy in diplomatic societies, as political leaders will often play close attention to the pulse of their

electorate's opinions in an effort to secure support and eventual re-election. As Lăzăroiu (2018) argues, it is in and through journalism that a society disputes how to restructure its organizations, and (given media's role in how the public perceives its public organizations) its part in this process is consequential.

Security

By extension, the media's capability to construct enemies and legitimize political action allows it a function in shaping the conception of a state's perception of its own security (manifested in any state behavior that results from the consideration of the Other). Campbell (1994) discusses the concept of 'danger' and how the interpretation of a threat plays a far greater role in its magnitude than the actual level of risk involved – he provides as an example the persistence of the war on illegal drugs when licit drugs have been shown to cause a far greater danger to the health of the public. Discursive discussions on the perception of threats from foreign countries play out regularly on mass media; the reach of modern media coverage has amplified the ability for journalism to prioritize which matters are of the greatest concern. McNair (1998) adds that the perception of an enemy can easily be changed through the manipulation of symbols and images in the media, an example of which can be seen from media coverage of the September 11th terrorist attacks: the advent of the 24-hour news cycle (the CNN effect) and subsequent creep of media into everyday life resulted in endless repetitions of footage of airplanes hitting the World Trade Center towers, something that “increased the feeling of insecurity and war hysteria” (Kellner, 2003, p.144). In the wake of 9/11, the CNN effect is thought to have led to changes in the character of war, to a new paradigm in which “politics of fear and risk society” can lead to war through the media's framing of traumatic events and terrorism (Hammond, 2007, p.11). In one example, Coban (2016) argues that the national media played a critical part in “construct[ing] a link with the events [of 9/11] and the Saddam regime” (p.55). In the past decade, the ongoing expansion of media has continued to affect the construction of national security, as the rise of alternative news sources has caused a flood of information emanating from non-traditional news suppliers. While an in-depth account of the oft-heralded rise of a ‘post-truth’ society in which ‘fake news’ is pervasive goes beyond the scope of this paper, it nevertheless demonstrates the immense influence of journalism in the perception of state security and ensuing policy.

Agency

The past three paragraphs have briefly demonstrated how discourse carried through journalism in media has had a major impact on popular perceptions of international relations, demonstrating its power as a tool. Yet there remains one major gap in this discussion to be considered: where does agency factor into discourse? If discourse is constituted intertextually through other discourse, is it possible for individuals to actively alter discourse? Where then do changes in discourse come from? Discourse theorists provide space for agency through the recognition of the constitutive property of discourse, whereby subjects contribute to discourse production while also being influenced by their own social surroundings, something Jackson (2006) describes as “unpredictable social actions [having] a meaningful effect on outcomes” (p.32); Thibault (2006) expands upon this point by noting that “the study of language cannot...be divorced from scientific inquiry into the nature of human consciousness and agency” (p.1). While discourse is limited in how it can analyze questions of human agency on an individual basis, it is possible to observe agency within the larger system of actors engaged in the struggle for discursive domination (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). For example, while Donald Trump is an individual, his statements may be considered to be merely the tip of a larger iceberg of discourse that is less exposed to the public; while Trump as an individual certainly wields discursive power, in a study of discourse it is more important to conceive of the larger discursive communities and concepts that he represents and embodies. In this way, we can view the origin of meaning-making as stemming from actors with agency, whose worldviews are constructed from earlier discourses. As such, journalism may be viewed as “a communicative vehicle for the transmission to an audience, not just of facts, but of assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, and values of its makers, drawn from and expressive of a particular worldview” (McNair, 1998, p.6).

Actors

If we accept the premise that large system actors use agency to wield journalistic discourse as an influential tool within the realm of IR, it is worthwhile to identify these key actors involved in this process. In spite of journalism’s lionized reputation within many parts of western society as an ethically-grounded institution driven by civil society that serves as a check on authoritarian overreach, this notion unfortunately overlooks a number of forces that continuously subvert this ideal of journalism and have done so from its onset. Even with the best intentions of an author, where “the idea of neutrality remains at the core of journalism, values and convictions are unavoidable in the selection and prioritization of material”

(Lăzăroiu, 2018, p.113). This need not be a conscious bias to be true; even without sacrificing the science-based ethics of journalism, “a given report can be both true and factual at the same time as the choice to report those events is born out of a political or personal economic agenda” (Lăzăroiu, 2018, p.113). Still, even beyond the inextricable bias essentially bound to a narrative, major actors have purposefully seized upon the hallowed reputation of journalism ethics to promote discourse that serves their own ends: the major groups we consider here are state interests, economic interests, and the self-interest actors among the citizenry. The prior instance of the success of anti-communist propaganda during the Cold War (as well as the widespread persecution of critical journalists in authoritarian countries such as Turkey and Russia) exemplifies the ability of a state to co-opt media for its own aims. In consideration of economic journalistic appropriation, Lăzăroiu (2018) paraphrases Ward (2006), noting that “investigation and assessment in journalism take place in the framework of an economic reality and a media-imbued infosphere, where self-interest, unwarranted beliefs, and group advocacy are the context in which these high aims are achieved” (p116). In the United States, for example, audiences are marketed as commodities, and (particularly in the online era) interest in generating traffic and therefore profit are prioritized above channeling ideas grounded in scientific principles (Spitulnik, 1993; Mooney, 2005). Finally, as discussed previously, the decentralization of media production as enabled by the rise of the internet has granted individual agents the ability to disseminate virtually any falsehood or fact under the mantle of journalism. With political, financial, or personal motivation, and enabled by technological advancement, these actors are able to exercise agency in an effort to shift the discursive forces that constitute the world around them.

Having presented this way of understanding of the role of discourse within the media, as well as the media’s role within IR and the actors that affect such discourse, we have established both an epistemological and ontological groundwork and introduced the general thematic subjects necessary in answering our research questions. This paves the way for an explanation of the particular research method that will be used within this study, and how these general theoretical concepts will be specifically applied to a particular case and set of actors.

3. METHODOLOGY

With a theoretical framework in place and an understanding of the ontological grounding and epistemological aims of our study, we may then proceed to describe the methodology that was utilized to carry out research. This section is divided into two parts: first, a research design section will initially list the essential decisions that must be made in the development of a poststructuralist research design and then reveal and justify the particular choices made for this thesis. Second, a methodology section will delineate the lexical and analytical tools that were employed to answer the research questions.

3.1 Research Design

In the realm of poststructuralist discourse research, Hansen (2006) identifies choices that a researcher must make along four dimensions of project design: the number of Selves included, the intertextual model employed, the temporal range covered, and the number of events considered. While a particular set of research questions may not clearly favor one option over the other, these choices will have a significant impact upon the results of a study, and therefore must be carefully considered. For this reason, each of these dimensions of design will be discussed, followed by a paragraph outlining and justifying each choice made for this thesis.

Intertextual Model

The first important choice to be made involves the selection of an intertextual model, which delineates the domain of the project by providing parameters for the analytical focus, the object of analysis, and the goals of analysis. Hansen (2006) describes four different models that rely upon a range of sources from official government documents of foreign policy, to cultural representations of discourse. Given that the research questions require observation of media materials, Hansen's (2006) second intertextual model (which focuses upon secondary sources such as media coverage and commentary) was selected for this thesis. This model, which can cover content ranging from 'objective' reporting to opinion-laden editorials provides "a good indication of how official discourse might change, either through a discursive adjustment made by [a] present government or were there a change in the government itself", and thus fits securely within the aims of this thesis (Hansen, 2006, p.123).

Selection of Self

Another major component of discourse involves the construction of mutually constitutive identities (of one or multiple Selves which is/are contrasted with one or multiple Others), and the interpellation of these identities onto subjects (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002). Given the research questions' focus upon conservative American media discourse on Russia, the inclusion of an American Self and a Russian Other was a necessary choice. In addition, the constant depiction of an Internal Other, perceived within American liberals, alongside discussion of Russia resulted in its inclusion in the study; while this was not initially the intention of the author, it provided significant insight into the contemporary balance of the politically-divided US and Russia. While the consideration of additional Selves may have been of interest (for example, an analysis of Russian and/or liberal American newspapers relating to each Other), a *discursive encounter* of this type would prove to be outside of the scope of this thesis; additionally the study of a Russian Self would require a fluency in the Russian language beyond the skill level of the author. To keep research manageable, straightforward, and directly relevant to the research questions, the study was thus limited to one Self (conservative media), and two Others - one internal (US liberals) and one external (Russia).

Case Study

The choice to include one Self (the conservative American mainstream media) led to another set of decisions: first, the choice of the number of subjects (news outlets) to include, second, which specific subject(s) to focus upon. In choosing the number of subjects, it is important to identify the scope of the proposition (whether it is important to know more about less, or less about more) as well as the extent to which the data is meant to be generalized (Gerring, 2004). Given the data-heavy process of identifying discourse (as well as the somewhat murky process involved in determining which media is conservative), this study opted to observe a single subject with the broadest reach in the conservative market, with the idea that (while this network would have its own particular style and perspective) its market dominance might result in its discourse being influential among general conservative media. With this in mind, the decision was made to observe Fox News. Being the cable network with the highest viewership for 22 years (with a most recent viewership of 2.5 million in 2018) (Joyella, 2018), of whom 94% identify themselves as or lean Republican (Saad, 2013), Fox News was the clear choice as a subject that would represent the most-heard and dominant conservative voice in contemporary American media.

Data Selection

As a media outlet, Fox News produces both televised and online content that ranges from standard reportage to hosted opinion programming, content styles that “fall into different categories depending on their official and explicitly political status” (Hansen, 2006, p.55). This study incorporated transcripts from TV broadcasts of political talk shows in which regular Fox contributors report news interlaced with opinionated commentary, often accompanied by guest pundits who provide additional perspective on the topic in question. There were multiple motivations behind this decision: first, opinion-based talk shows that were broadcast on TV provided the opportunity to analyze messaging that was less scripted, processed or edited, which often served to exaggerate otherwise latent discursive elements. Second, the demographic makeup of Fox’s TV viewers (whose median age is 68) (Thompson, 2014), implies that this type of programming may be primarily catered towards individuals who may be less likely to access competing news narratives, which may also enhance the strength and boldness of discursive application (Matsa, 2018). Both of these facts point to a likelihood that TV broadcasts may provide less processed instances of opinion reporting, which can increase the relevance of the data by virtue of its exaggerated political nature.

Event Selection

This study seeks to observe how conservative American mass media discourse on Russia shifted between the Trump and Obama eras. In one sense, the transition of Trump into the White House could be considered the single major ‘event’ under consideration within this study, yet it is doubtful that observing the short period of time directly associated with his inauguration event would produce meaningful evidence indicative of any such shift. Instead, this study viewed the start of the Trump presidency as a pivot around which discursive shift could have occurred, and thus observes two distinct time periods that surround this central ‘event’: one prior to Trump’s major entry as a discursive contributor to conservative media, and one after. This decision of the event in focus (and the resulting temporal range) has a major influence in addressing research questions; because discourse is not fixed or rigid, there is never a clear starting or finishing point to its development (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002). Still, merely choosing two arbitrary points before and after Trump’s inauguration was not sufficient; Hansen (2006) notes the importance of contextualizing discourse to ensure that one is not merely capturing a short-term reaction to a particular event (as opposed to a more general discursive representation). Avoiding this required contextual awareness of noteworthy geopolitical sub-events surrounding this larger event to ensure relevant discourse was being

analyzed (for example, had one of our investigative periods come directly following Russia's invasion of Crimea, Trump's election, or the Helsinki Summit, it is likely that media coverage would have represented short-term ruptures from more established discourse).

Temporal Range

With these parameters in place, two time periods were selected for discursive analysis and comparison. The first period ran a four-month period from January 1st to May 1st, 2015. This selection was made for the following reasons: first, it provided a glimpse into conservative media discourse on Russia during the Obama era prior to the entry of Trump onto the scene of conservative political discourse. Second, it began a full year after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, a major geopolitical event that almost certainly incurred its own set of discursive shifts. Finally, while the original intent was to cover the six-month period leading up to Trump's campaign announcement in July 2015, four months of data provided a sufficient amount of material to achieve a satisfactory degree of discursive saturation, similar to Milliken's (1999) observation that "when upon adding new texts and comparing their object spaces, the researcher finds consistently that the theoretical categories she has generated work for those texts" (p.234). The second period selected was significantly shorter – lasting from June 1st to July 15th, 2018. While this was also intended to be a much longer period (at least three months), the increased frequency of discussion of Russian on Fox News (as a result of the Russia Investigation) resulted in data saturation being achieved much more quickly. This period was selected to occur as long after the first time period as possible (to provide ample time to capture discursive shifts) without going beyond the dates of the Helsinki Summit between Trump and Putin (which occurred on July 16th, 2018).

Data Gathering

These choices along the four dimensions of research design were applied to generate a set of data that was then subjected to discourse analysis. As mentioned, the data consisted of transcripts from political talk shows that were broadcast on Fox News between two distinct time periods: from January 1st to May 1st, 2015, and from June 1st to July 15th, 2018. These transcripts were accessed using the LexisNexis Nexis Uni database (which provides a comprehensive and searchable database of news sources), using three filters: a Source filter (Fox News), a Time Period filter, and a Keyword filter which limited articles considered to those that contained the words 'Russia', 'Russian', and/or 'Putin'. Within these parameters, 282 articles were found within the first time period and 265 were found within the second

time period. Of these articles, the majority of the relevant material was provided by specific Fox News hosts, including Tucker Carlson, Laura Ingraham, Sean Hannity, Martha MacCallum, and Bill O'Reilly, as well as their interviewed guests. While all articles were considered, focus was given solely to those that considered Russia as a subject, while more reflective, non-subjective mentions of Russia (such as mentions the Russian Investigation) were noted but not analyzed.

3.2 Methods

Analytical Process

This study relied on a methodology based in discourse analysis: while the fundamental theory that underlies genealogical analysis has been covered in a previous section, the specific steps used to extract discursive material will be outlined in the following paragraphs. This step of definition is particularly crucial given the fact that one of the sole points of consensus among discourse analysts regarding the topic is that “there is no single way to conduct discourse analysis” (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p.7). In order to provide a transparent and organized process that was at least somewhat tethered to preestablished standards, analysis was conducted in line with Dunn & Neumann’s (2016) general outline on poststructuralist discourse analysis, which consists of the following general steps: identifying discourses, interpreting discourses, inventorying representations, mapping discourses, and layering discourses.

Identifying

Once commitments were made regarding the research design, contextual research was conducted in order to identify historical discourses involving the subjects of research. Hansen (2016) remarks that the collection of a conceptual history is important “not only ... to create a comparison with past discourses, but also, in Foucault’s (1984) terms, to conduct a genealogical reading which traces the constitution of the present concept back in history to understand when and how it was formed as well as how it succeeded in marginalizing other representations” (p.47). This research then allows for the first engagement with the data by conducting a double-reading of the text: first, the text is read to give first impressions of the discursive terrain, to identify important points (and filter out irrelevant points) within the data, and allow for broad categories of analysis to emerge from the text. A second ‘dialogical’ reading of this now familiar and slightly condensed data then allows for the researcher to challenge the fixity and consider alternative possibilities that the text omits – put simply, the

first read reveals what the text is, while the second reading shows what the text isn't (Shepherd, 2008). Having completing this step, one may begin to conceive of what Hansen refers to as the 'basic discourses' in the text that "construct different others with different degrees of radical difference; articulate radically diverging forms of spatial, temporal, and ethical identity; and construct competing links between identity and policy" (Hansen, 2006, p.46). This broad intake of the data allowed for the situating of the data and prepared for the next step of interpretation.

Interpreting

These basic discourses and the representations contained within them were made apparent through a process of interpretation of the data gathered. The process of interpretation utilized a variety of lexical analysis techniques, which can be credited largely to Richardson (2007) and Dunn and Neumann (2016). These techniques range in observation of specific words, to sentences, to larger narrative creation, including noting instances of *presupposition* (in which a preconstructed discourse is commonly taken as truth – for example 'capitalism is good'), *predication* (looking at how verbs, adjectives and adverbs attach certain qualities to certain subjects or ideas), *subject positioning* (looking at implicit contrasts or parallels constructed among subjects in a text), *sentence construction* (for example whether something is described in an active or passive tone, i.e. 'the bombs were dropped' vs. 'the US dropped the bombs'), *modality* (altering a statement with could, should, may, etc.), and other literary tropes including *hyperbole*, *metaphor*, *metonym*, and *neologisms* that provide instances of representations. While some researchers choose to limit their analysis to one main technique (for example Milliken (1999) discusses studies that focus on solely predicate analysis, or metaphor analysis), in this case any and all techniques found were included so as not to exclude relevant information. Any techniques not mentioned here are described specifically in the analysis section; what is important to note is the granular process of interpretation that allowed for the recognition of more structural components of discourse through inventorying.

Inventorying

Having gathered these textual indicators of discursive representations, the next step of analysis required the inventorying of these relevant points of data to identify what roles they played in constructing discourse (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). Specific words that reoccurred in a meaningful way (or *signifiers*) were identified as crucial starting points within a discourse (examples of signifiers could be the mention of general concepts like 'capitalism',

‘communism’, or ‘freedom’). Where signifiers occurred without consensus regarding their underlying meaning, they are referred to as *rhetorical commonplaces* – noting how rhetorical commonplaces shift over time can provide insight into the development of a discourse. While our understanding of meaning in discourse strips signifiers of any intrinsic value, it was possible to look instead at the internal relationships between signifiers. Those that were associated through positive affiliation were noted as *articulations* where their continued pairing resulted in the terms to seem linked by necessity (for example ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’); through these articulations, different terms, symbols, and meanings come to connote one another and to thereby be welded into associative chains (Hall, 1985). Negative associations, or *differentiation*, described the opposite (for example, ‘communism’ and ‘freedom’). The identification of particularly important signifiers that provide access to many associative chains (known as *nodal points*) are particularly helpful in understanding the relationship between the language of the data and unraveling a discourse.

Mapping

With the makeup of the representations within our data in focus, the next step involves the mapping of these articulations and differentiations to the subjects and institutions in question – this process, known as *interpellation*, refers to a dual process whereby subject positions are created and concrete individuals are ‘hailed’ into or interpellated by them (Althusser, 1971). This process allows for the mapping of discursive elements to the Self and the Other (and, in this case the Internal Other), and shows how the interpellation of these elements result in the naturalization of identity, power relations, security conceptions and the interests entailed in them (Laffey & Weldes, 2004). Through the comparison of the representations that have been interpellated to the Self and Other over time, we may uncover shifts that comprise a genealogy, “demonstrat[ing] that where the carriers of a position see continuity, there is almost always change” (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p.119). This mapping can allow us to identify larger, longer-term products of the discourse, such as *myths* that provide complete representations to rhetorical commonplaces (such as Fukuyama’s (1989) claim that the end of the Cold War was the ‘End of History’), and *imaginaries*, or myths that are so successful that they have shaped the overall ‘field of intelligibility’ (for example, the concept that the US ‘won’ the Cold War) (Tsygankov, 2017).

Layering

The final step of analysis involves the observation of larger scale elements of discourse that result from the articulation and interpellation of discourses; because discursive shifts occur at different rates, we can conceive of discourse within layers (with some core elements staying relatively fixed, and others changing with little viscosity). This last step is crucial to a genealogical interpretation of a discourse; because our observation of discourse rupture occurs over an extremely short period of time (on the scale of the history of US-Russian relations), it is important that we incorporate our historical knowledge of discourse in US-Russian relations to identify both what has changed, but also what has remained as we conceive of the American conservative media's perception of identity, power, and security as it relates to Russia (and the liberal media, albeit indirectly). This layered and long-term perspective allows for the meaningful application of the discourse found in the data back to our research questions as well as more general questions surrounding the original thematic concepts of this thesis, including the evolving role of media in international relations and the dynamics of politics with and within the US – these last steps will be taken in the discussion and conclusion sections of this thesis.

With this research design selected and justified, and a methodology in place, we may then turn the contextual research into the subjects and discourses in question. This will include a broad history of American discourse surrounding Russia, backgrounds of Fox News and Donald Trump, and the general development of American media, before continuing on to data presentation and analysis.

4. CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

This thesis conducts a case study of Fox News in order to investigate how the Trump presidency has accompanied shifts in conservative American media discourse on Russia. With this choice of case and a methodology specified, the final step prior to commencing research is to provide a historical context that situates the case and provides a background of pre-existing relevant discourse. In this section, the development of American discourse on the topic of the Soviet Union and Russia will be introduced with a focus on the forging of identity that took place over the course of the Cold War. Next, Donald Trump's entry onto the political scene will be traced, including his personal, economic, and political background, with a paragraph that discusses the factors leading to his ascendance to the presidency, as well as a discussion of possible personal interests he may have in Russia. Fox News' origins will be explored alongside a discussion of its coverage of Russia prior to the time period researched by this thesis, and finally some of the theoretical points directly applicable to this case will be introduced pertaining to the concept of discourse shift and/or rupture.

4.1 The US and Russia

Soviet Discourse

As is commonly known, the degree to which American propaganda represented the Soviet Union as an enemy during the Cold War resulted in a long-lasting perception of Russia as the quintessential antithesis of the US. This relationship provides a clear example of Said's (1978) conception of the 'Other'; in his work *Orientalism*, he demonstrates how a culture or country may assert its own identity through the opposing characterization of a foreign country using discursive tools to assert its own moral and cultural superiority. For nearly the entirety of their mutual history, Russia has been perceived as an 'Other' to Western society; Neumann and Pouliot (2011) studied this 'hysteresis' and maintain that the original 'Othering' arose as European nations perceived Russia's incorporation of both European and Asian diplomatic practices as foreign and inferior. In a separate study, Neumann (1998) contended that this ambiguity surrounding Russia's European-ness persists, and that where Russia is characterized as European, it is said to be a very recent and ongoing development. From an American perspective, some of the primary artifacts of discursive formulation of the Soviet Union came from George Kennan's "Long Telegram" in 1946, (which was an effort to explain the USSR's unruly behavior) and a 1949 report of foreign cultures called the *Columbia University Research Project on Contemporary Cultures*. The former, which provided an account of the "Kremlin's neurotic view of world affairs" (par.1) which is

“impervious to logic of reason” (par.5), stressing that “we must see that our public is educated to the realities of Russian situation. [...] Press cannot do this alone” (par.4). The section of the latter report that focused upon the Russian people, entitled ‘*The People of Great Russia*’, written by anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer, described Russian culture around three cornerstones of basic needs of affiliation, dependency, and impulsivity (Gorer & Rickman, 1949). These characteristics were (perhaps unsurprisingly) based mostly upon anecdotal evidence from Americans who had visited Russia and were contrasted by ‘superior’ American traits: where Russians required a collective with a source of strong authority, Americans were independent and enterprising (Dalby, 1988). This report, born as the USSR and the US began the process of positioning for the Cold War, ensured that “the rhetoric dimensions and arguments that established the political reality of the succeeding years was set” (Hinds & Windt, Jr., 1991, p.5). Over the course of the Cold War, the stereotypes contained within both reports were reified as they were absorbed into general anti-Communist discourses and policies (known as McCarthyism) that were used to fight the ‘Red Scare’. As the Cold War escalated, this persisting dynamic led to such a degree of ‘Othering’ that the USSR was seen as the ‘dark double’ of the US, diametrically opposite in almost every way (Foglesong, 2007); McNair (1998) claims that this was so successful that the nature of ‘the enemy’ changed as a result of the manipulation of media images and symbols. This view of the Soviet Union as the arch-enemy of the US provided the basis for the next half-century of discourse within the US, layers of which endured long past the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Russian Discourse

The period following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in which Russia entered the global capitalist market represented a period in which popular and political representations of Russia were not always aligned. On one hand, in its political reporting, media narratives surrounding Russia often included more hopeful language as Russia began to reshape its internal economic structure, representing a new effort to create a shared meaning of international politics to shape the behavior of both domestic and international actors (Roselle, Miskimmon, & O’Loughlin, 2014). In line with this effort, nearly every American president since 1991 has called for a stronger relationship or a reset with Russia. In spite of these sentiments, popular media has continued to push forth an image of Russia that mirrors Cold War characterizations; narratives continue to be woven together by providing “a particular presentation of news promoted under a perception of what will be consistent and congruent with the culture and expectations of its target audience” (Entman, 2004, p.147). One instance

of this can be seen in tertiary sources of discourse, notably the proliferation of Russian villains in American films. In Hollywood, the Russian accent has become strongly associated with treachery; for example, Lawless (2014) uses discourse analysis to observe this phenomenon in the popular James Bond film franchise. In other media, narratives have tended to frame Russia not in terms of how far it had come from the Soviet era, but instead upon how far removed it was from Western civilization (Neumann, 1998). Much of this was dependent upon Cold War rhetoric; even significant changes in Russian leadership between the Medvedev presidency (2008 – 2011) and Putin’s return to the presidency (2012 onward) were not accounted for by media assessments, in spite of many analysts noting a distinct difference in these periods (Petrov, Lopman, & Hale, 2014). Instead, media outlets tended toward the old binary opposition, replete with metaphors and characterizations that historically parallel the US-Soviet division (Tsygankov, 2017). For example, Tsygankov’s (2017) study of framing within American media found repeated instances of Putin being depicted as “paranoid and vindictive”, “weak and insecure”, “KGB-trained”, and “like Stalin”, while governance was referred to as “belligerent autocracy”, “a one-man show”, and “a Soviet political model” (p.28). In the 21st century, in spite of the more liberalist call for a relationship reset within the US, recent geopolitical actions by Russia seemed to have reduced the likelihood of any veering from this discourse: the Russo-Georgian war of 2008 and Russia’s annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 provided renewed material for the ‘evil empire’ discourse to dominate, even being resurrected at a political level as American politicians sought to curtail the behavior through sanctions. Even when criticism was warranted, Tsygankov (2017) notes that “the puzzle is not why prominent US media outlets [...] are critical of Russia’s political system, but why their criticisms lack nuance and a sense of proportion” (p.20).

4.2 ‘The Donald’ and Fox

Fox News

Five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Australian-American media mogul Rupert Murdoch confided to the FCC chairman at the time that he had envisioned a conservative news outlet that would emulate the sensationalist tabloids that led to his success in Australia and England. In 1996, two years after this plan of “going after a working-class audience”, he would hire former Nixon campaign worker Roger Ailes, a “master of attack politics and wedge issues” to create a network that found an economic market in the American “attraction to fear-based, anger-based politics that has to do with class and race” (Mayer, 2019, par.22).

This led to the creation of Fox News, which adopted around-the-clock reporting that eventually spread to internet programming as well as TV and radio broadcasts. Fox's emotive style of reporting rapidly increased its viewership, particularly during the American invasion of Iraq, and by 2002 had already secured the position of most-viewed cable network (Steinberg, 2004). Over its 22 years as the most popular supplier of news (in which it has generated approximately \$2.7 billion per year and accessible to 80% of cable subscribers) Fox has (according to former hosts) shifted from a conservative-leaning to a fully conservative network (Mayer, 2019). According to some of these former hosts, Fox's on-air rhetorical shifts are a direct result of a prioritization of market viability over any type of purely political agenda or journalistic ethic. For example, when asked about Fox's frequent broadcast of anti-immigrant sentiments in the mid 2010's despite Murdoch's personal objection to xenophobia, a former host remarked that this rhetorical turn was unsurprising, saying "Rupert [Murdoch] is first about the bottom line. They [the media] are all going out to play to their crowd" (Mayer, 2019, par.32). Similarly, Mayer (2019) reports Obama's Chief of Strategies indicated that Murdoch had frequently revealed to him that specific decisions about content were often deferred to Ailes, as Murdoch was "ultimately a businessman" (par.75). Characterizations of Fox News have varied from being a Republican brand to a right-wing propaganda machine, as a result of Murdoch's political donation history (in 2010 he donated \$1 million to Republican political candidates) (Lichtblau & Stelter, 2010). While specific commentary about Fox's reporting on Russia will be adopted in the analysis section of this thesis, it suffices to say that Fox has historically been characterized by those familiar with the inner-workings of the organization as a major media outlet with a primary focus on economic profit and conservative messaging, in that prioritization.

Donald Trump

According to Mayer's (2019) article in *The New Yorker*, "[Donald] Trump became famous, in no small part, because of Rupert Murdoch" (par.18). The piece goes on to report that the founder of Fox News and the young son of a real estate magnate established a symbiotic relationship after being introduced in the 1970's, whereby Trump would attain celebrity by generating scandals while Murdoch would sell tabloids by reporting them. One report by *The Financial Times* stated that "both men have tapped into anti-elitist resentment to connect with the public and increase their fortunes. Trump and Murdoch also share a transactional approach to politics, devoid of almost any ideology besides self-interest" (Mayer, 2019, par.19). As Trump began to politicize his media appearances and eventually announced his

presidential bid, his controversial statements and celebrity status resulted in disproportionate media coverage by American news networks, to which Reuning and Dietrich (2018) attribute “a modest polling bump” (p.1). Trump’s presidential campaign, inauguration, and presidency have been noteworthy for their almost constant production of media scandal, from Trump’s confirmation of hush payments made to adult film stars for their silence surrounding affairs, to a near-constant turnover of White House staff, to the indictment of Trump’s personal lawyer, campaign manager, and others during the special counsel investigation of Russian meddling in the 2016 election. Over the course of this period, two discoveries have implied a likelihood of a feedback loop occurring between the messaging of the White House and Fox News. Trump has consistently spared Fox News from his constant depiction of mainstream media as ‘fake news’, and content analysis has found a correlation between Fox’s morning show ‘Fox and Friends’ (which Trump watches daily) and Trump’s tweeting habits (Anderson, 2017). Second, Trump’s White House staff has overlapped with Fox’s: long-time Fox employee Bill Shine was made Trump’s Deputy White House Chief of Staff, while ex-staffer Hope Hicks was made Executive Vice President at Fox in 2019. Additionally, Mayer (2019) reported that lead Fox contributor Sean Hannity and the president are reported to speak on the phone almost every night after Hannity’s show ends at 10pm, causing another source to remark that “Hannity has essentially become a West Wing advisor” (par.13). The major question posed by Mayer (2019) is that “Trump’s arrival marked an important shift in tone at Fox” (par.25); who is controlling who? While the messaging between Fox and Trump is not identical (Trump once threatened to boycott Fox on the campaign trail), the relationship between Fox and Trump could be characterized as a symbiotic one, in which both factions pursue personal advancement self-interestedly. Unlike Trump and Murdoch’s prior symbiotic arrangement, Trump’s position as president makes him a much more valuable ally for his access to state power, both in discourse and policy.

Vladimir Putin

While these reported connections between Trump and Fox News (and the resulting power dynamic between state, media and economic interests) are difficult to validate, they are clear in comparison to what is known for certain about Trump’s relationship with Russian actors (including the Kremlin, oligarchs, and Vladimir Putin). In contemporary media, these relationships have been subject to an intense degree of scrutiny, yet it is crucial to leave speculation aside and focus solely on what is known at the present (as of May 2019). What is established is that Trump visited Moscow for the first time in 1987 after meeting Soviet

ambassador Yuri Dubinin with the hope of building a luxury hotel in Moscow. From 1987 up until his presidency, Trump visited Moscow on various occasions (Lederhandler, 2017), saying that his repeated (but unsuccessful) attempts to build had resulted in contacts with “the top-level people, both oligarchs and generals, and top of the government people and the relationship was extraordinary” (Twohey & Eder, 2017, par.12). Financial ties with Russia have been repeatedly revealed by Trump associates, including his son Donald Jr., who said in 2008 that Russia was an important source of money for the Trump business (Weiss, 2018). In November of 2013, Trump revealed in an interview with MSNBC that he had a relationship with Putin and said two years later in November 2015 that he “got to know Putin very well” when they had both appeared on the same episode of the show *60 Minutes* (Kaczynski, Massie, & McDermott, 2017). In spite of this, during Trump’s candidacy he claimed to “not know who Putin is”, something he repeated throughout his campaign (Pager, 2016). During a presidential debate, he appealed to Russia to hack into Democratic servers (which subsequently happened); it was later revealed that members of his staff had met with Russians who claimed to have ‘dirt’ on opponent Hillary Clinton (Becker, Apuzzo, & Goldman, 2017). These occurrences contributed to the creation of a special counsel led by Robert Mueller in 2017 to investigate possible links between Trump’s campaign and the Russian government, which was concluded in 2019 with no findings of indictable offenses (Mueller, 2019). Since Trump’s election, his commentary on Russia and Putin (among other topics) has differed from the discourse of previous presidents; he has taken Putin’s word over the findings of his intelligence agencies regarding Russia’s role in meddling in the 2016 election, has repeatedly referred to Putin as “very nice”, “a strong leader” who had “outsmarted” Democrats, and has said about Russia that “we have a great relationship” while chastising Clinton for speaking negatively about Russia (Kaczynski, Massie, & McDermott, 2017). While Trump has occasionally made negative remarks both about Putin and Russia, the majority of his statements have differed significantly from prior presidential discourse.

4.3 The Post-Truth Era

Discursive Shift

Having introduced the basic theoretical foundations of discourse, as well as the particular actors involved in our case study and their known representation of a combination of state, economic, and media-based interests, one final area of contextual discussion is required in order to grasp the research questions of this project: what is meant by a discursive shift within media? Should we choose to accept the premise that Trump, as a representative of economic

and state interests, has openly and repeatedly referred to Russia in a manner that starkly contrasts previous presidential discourse, there is value in observing how conservative media (particularly one as interlinked with Trump as Fox News) would report on such a change. Salter & Mutlu (2013) note the value of this type of research, contending that “often attention is focused on continuity, change, or rupture within specific discourses, either within a specific historical moment or comparatively” (p.113-144). While there has been to a large extent relative continuity within the longstanding history of US discourse on Russia (with a major shift occurring with the dissolution of the Soviet Union), the introduction of a president who shows evidence of being directly connected to the country’s largest news media outlet could be expected to contribute to a rupture (a sudden break) or a shift in discourse. Our first research question seeks to investigate the possible existence of discourse rupture or shifts.

Fake News

The second research question takes this investigation one step further: if discursive changes occurred, how did Fox News address and/or acknowledge such change? To explore this, it is necessary to briefly outline the environment of popular mass media in which Fox News currently operates. The period of time particularly from 2010-2019 has popularly been characterized as one of post-truth, a claim that must be unpacked in order to theorize why Fox may or may not be expected to address discourse changes (especially given the role that Fox and Trump have played in the popularization of the term ‘fake news’). The 2018 Oxford Dictionary’s definition of ‘post-truth’ refers to it as a climate in which “objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief”, while D’Ancona (2017) defines it as “a crash in the value of truth, comparable to the collapse of a currency or a stock” (p.122). This concept has been made popular largely through the actors observed within this thesis: through Russia’s interference in the 2016 election (in which fake news stories were inserted into social media sites like Facebook to rile up political animosity) to Trump’s insistence that certain members of the mainstream media were engaged in publishing false stories, to Fox’s echoing of these claims and levelling them against competitors. This era is comprised of three important characteristics that will be discussed in the next paragraphs in order to encapsulate the essential components of the ‘post-truth’ era: mediatization, shifts in trust, and epistemic democracy.

Mediatization

The Fairness Doctrine (introduced by the US Federal Communications Commission in 1949) was designed to ensure that media coverage portrayed both sides of a controversial debate fairly; in 1987, the doctrine was repealed, as it was criticized for violating free speech – something that set the tone for the future of mass media broadcast in the US (Pagano, 1987). While this policy pertained solely to public broadcast (and not cable television, upon which Fox is broadcast) its repeal has been said to have contributed to the rise of political polarization within US media (Patterson, 2013). In parallel, the widespread availability of access to free news has decreased consumer willingness to pay for quality journalism, creating an attention economy in which newspapers are required to compete for the attention of readership, filling the economic void with advertising revenue. This dynamic incentivizes media outlets to provide narratives that play to the emotions and personal beliefs of their audience. This concept, referred to by Keunelius and Rheunaen (2016) as ‘mediatization’, demonstrates the “construction of public attention as an institutional power resource” and its distinct effect on “the coordination of institutional action” (p.381). This production of purposefully captivating news can in turn be filtered by audiences so as to validate personally-held convictions while simultaneously avoiding any challenge to them, which in turn creates a slew of media systems that individual and private interests can cater to. This has expanded the role of media to affect the actual function of society beyond the communication realm, as journalistic media becomes “steadily more important as [a] ‘reality-defining’ institution”, in which even “politicians and public organizations [...] have gradually come to understand this and adapt their organizations and practices accordingly” (McNair, 1998, p.55). Correspondingly, a market defined by the struggle to control the attention economy has given rise to cheaper reporting, where headlines often play on a human appetite for sensationalism rather than striving to adhere to the journalistic ethic of attempted objectivity.

Alternative Facts

Where the exchange of information via mass media was previously a somewhat simple dichotomy of production by the journalist and consumption by an audience, modern access to virtually unlimited information sources (individual, private, public, corporate, etc.) facilitated by the internet has resulted in the critical problem of where to locate a reliable production of meaning and ideology in the flooded mass communication complex. This ‘too-easy-to-publish’ world of journalism has resulted in a dwindling of the role of society-wide trusted authorities to distinguish authenticity in texts (Coughlin, 2017). The collapse of news

gatekeeping has opened the floodgates to a torrent of both information and misinformation, truth and lies, facts and fictions, creating an environment in which communities will prioritize reporting from sources which are trusted emotionally over those which are factual or consistent. In turn, this can lead to disdain for sources of media that conflict with the narratives of a trusted source; for example, after conflicting reports were given by mass media outlets regarding the relative number of attendees at Obama and Trump's respective presidential inaugurations, White House staffer Kellyanne Conway encouraged Trump supporters to trust the numbers released by the Trump campaign, calling them "alternative facts" (Conway, 2017). This represents the introduction of modal power – the idea that whatever the rules of the game may be, they may be otherwise; the shifting of the media landscape allows for one's own individual beliefs to be asserted where they were once trumped by collective ideals of objectivity (Fuller, 2018). Waisbord (2018) characterizes this new status quo as the emergence of epistemic democracy, where allegiance may be granted toward any pseudo- or non-scientific anchor – two popular contemporary examples of this can be found in climate change denial or in the flat earth community. Taken to its philosophical end, this notion "shifts the concept of 'truth' from being a substantive to a procedural notion", "lacking any determinate meaning except relative to the language in which knowledge terms can be expressed" (Fuller, 2018, p.19). In other words, this causes a major shift in how knowledge is produced, analyzed, assessed, and tested; the innovation of dissemination vehicles like social media (where 'like' generation and share-ability is often prioritized above scientific method) can serve as kindling to alternate epistemologies. In this atmosphere where trust can be prioritized above consistency, discursive rupture is entirely permissible, so long as it comes from a trusted source; thus, in the post-truth world, according to Stephens (2014) "the future of news appears reasonably secure. It is the future of journalism that is looking grim" (p.xiii).

Soft Power

One final important possibility regarding discursive changes on Russia is that the creation of populist truth markets has created an opportunity for Russian cultural 'soft power' to be effective among certain Americans in a way that was impossible under prior discursive hegemony, and that discursive shifts may have occurred because it was culturally feasible. Specifically, it has been theorized that advocating for Putin and Russia may counterintuitively have some support among the most conservative audiences (even those that may have formerly held strongly anti-Russian views) (Keating & Kaczmarek, 2019). To the adherents

of the alt-right movement that lionized Trump, the socially conservative and authoritarian character of Russia could be appealing in its own right. Certain examples of this include Russian policy tendency towards the suppression of homosexuality, upholding family values, and appealing to traditional religion, all of which could easily be considered “attractive beyond the post-Soviet and authoritarian space” (Keating & Kaczmarek, 2019, p.9). Trump’s slogan ‘Make America Great Again’ is not unlike Putin’s frequent aspirations toward the restoration of a ‘Great Russia’, and certain elements of the Russian political establishment (such as illiberal governance, an unrestrained executive, and a reduction in the freedoms of civil society groups) have been idealized by Trump and the alt-right movement. Under these circumstances, it becomes more fathomable that reality TV star Donald Trump and Fox News (as an avid participant in this media environment) could find success in their respective political and media races in spite of a discursive shift on America’s ‘dark double’. By developing their own reputations of trust as emotive broadcasters in an attention market-style competition, they have placed themselves in a position where it may not be necessary to need to justify discursive changes to followers.

The allegation of possible links between Fox News and the Trump White House, as well as between the Trump White House and Russia, all set in the backdrop of the discursive historical relationship between the US and Russia make this case a unique opportunity to view how discourse can be shifted in the era of modern media. To ascertain whether discursive shifts or ruptures occurred, and (if so) how this was achieved and the extent to which it was acknowledged (both by producers and consumers of media), we will proceed to the primary research section of this thesis, in which Fox News TV transcripts will be introduced, analyzed and discussed.

5. DATA & ANALYSIS

5.1 Data Presentation

Having outlined the thematic foundation, methodology and historical context of this research, we now proceed to a presentation and analysis of the data under consideration. In the first subsection, the data will be presented in a manner that highlights the major themes that were uncovered within the entire collection of over 500 Fox News broadcast transcripts. The persistence of these themes will be demonstrated by providing textual examples and general citations, while the relevance of these themes will be justified through their direct connection with larger theoretical topics of IR. This will be followed by a second subsection that will provide an in-depth analysis that covers each of these analytical discursive categories' shifts from the first time period to the second.

Good and Evil

“Isn’t it true that it’s good versus evil?” This question, posed by Bill O’Reilly et al. (2015I) summarized a major consideration of discourse within Fox, particularly regarding how foreign powers and leaders are portrayed on the network. In general, the consideration of whether good and evil has a dualistic relationship or whether there was a more complicated spectrum of morality inherent in international relations was a constant throughout the data. The verdict delivered from Fox pundits and their guests was far from unanimous, yet the word ‘evil’ appeared in over half of the texts surveyed. In certain examples, appraisals of Russia took a binary approach that hearkened Reagan’s view of the USSR as the “focus of evil in the modern world” (Hannity et. al, 2018) – many characterizations broadcast on Fox of Russia and Putin reduced the foreign power to being purely evil, for example Isso’s comment that “what we know is the Russians are still the evil empire” (Pirro & Gray, 2018) or O’Reilly’s mention of Putin as “a menace” in a “dangerous, nasty place” where “villains are running wild” (O’Reilly et al., 2015H) (Guilfoyle et al., 2015B; Hannity, 2015; O’Reilly et al. 2015B; O’Reilly et al., 2015B). At other times, depictions of Russia fell more into the grey area of this spectrum of morality, not necessarily tending towards the negative pole. Fox contributors made statements that were less binary, including that “the media is telling us Moscow is the greatest threat to this country when it is not” (Carlson & Finn, 2018), that “it’s OK to be friends with Putin” (Carlson, 2018), that Putin is a “charming” leader with whom a good relationship is important (Emanuel et al., 2018), and various others prescribing varying degrees of amicability (Perino et al., 2018A; Carlson et al., 2018). Perhaps the most interesting contributions from Fox on this topic were when the question of a binary morality

were challenged directly and openly in spite of previous characterizations, as was the case when Williams stated that “only the idiot sees the world as good and evil” (Gutfeld et al., 2018). These moments of self-aware questioning demonstrated the relevance of articulations of good and evil onto the subjects of international relations, as when Gutfeld & Rafferty (2018) noted that “if someone is evil, you can do anything to them”. The power bestowed upon a subject that is successfully articulated to be ‘good’ to act as it sees fit upon an ‘evil’ is immense, as any course of action against an ‘evil Other’ may be justified morally.

Strength and Weakness

Another recurring category that was frequently interpellated onto the subjects of this thesis were depictions of strength and weakness. As was discussed in the introduction, the perceptions of relative strength and weakness between Trump, Putin, and Obama were part of a consistent narrative that Trump pitched to his electorate. Fox’s conceptions of strength and weakness were frequently articulated by Fox in varying degrees; while Obama and Russia were usually depicted as weak (Baier et. al, 2015; Gigot et al., 2015A; Gigot et al., 2015B; O’Reilly et al., 2015G), Trump and Putin were regularly depicted as strong (O’Reilly et al., 2015D; Levin & Gray, 2018; Perino et al., 2018B). Weakness as an analytical is thus distinct from good and evil but is tied to the success or failure of the state. It can be seen as a personal characteristic in a leader that determines status (for example, that Obama was “run over because he was so weak in the eyes of President Putin” (MacCallum & Hall, 2018) who in turn is an “intelligence operative, experienced and wise to the world” (Wallace et al., 2018C). Strength is a quality that grants authority and power, as exemplified in frequent supplications that “it takes American strength; it takes American power” to maintain order in the world (Van Susteren et al., 2015B), that “topping vis-à-vis Putin [...] has a knock-on effect in all of these other parts of the world” (Van Susteren et al., 2015C). When weakness is demonstrated, it permits those with strength to act within their own interests, evidenced in the comment that “showing weakness to Putin will allow him to do more” (O’Reilly et al., 2015A), and that “there is little fear of President Obama; the bad guys are running wild and, of course, this situation lessens the perception of American power (O’Reilly et al., 2015F). Articulations of strength and weakness appeared in almost every article analyzed, and due to its constitutive connection to formations of identity, power, and security, was a major focus of analysis.

Words and Wars

The third major analytical category that ran through the entire data set dealt with prescriptions for the appropriate course of policy action between the Self and the Other. Generally, this runs on a spectrum of positive affiliation (using words to promote cooperation and seeking to improve relations) to negative affiliation (using words or physical displays of strength to force submission by the Other). Opinions of appropriate action varied significantly, as did each approach's affiliation of being weak or strong, good or evil. For instance, military force was frequently urged, ranging from indirect reporting on Russia's intimidating material capabilities (Baier et al., 2015E) to the more overt ("I would blow Putin up" (O'Reilly et al., 2015B), or "the only thing that Putin and the terrorists understand is force" (O'Reilly et al., 2015C), while verbal displays of strength were linked to policy failure ("[Obama] taunted Vladimir Putin in the State of the Union [...] now Vladimir Putin controls more of Ukraine" (Kelly et al., 2015)). Appraisals of a positive diplomatic approach also ranged wildly in terms of their reception, from harsh critiques of presidential attempts at a 'relationship reset' with Russia (Hannity et al., 2015B; Guilfoyle et al., 2015B) to assertions that Trump should "define what a better relationship looks like" (MacCallum & Hall, 2018), that there is great value in "looking for the opportunity to remove the requirement to treat Russia as a permanent enemy in Europe" (Kilmeade et al., 2018), and that the US must "work with Russia where it can" (Baier et al., 2018B). This topic is crucial to international relations, as discursive representations of proper policy is directly tied to permissible courses of action. By shifting the prescriptive assessment toward more diplomatic or more aggressive tactics, the appropriate behavior can precede the situation, allotting a great degree of power to any agent that plays a dominant role in the dissemination of a discourse.

These three categorical axes of depictions, interpellated onto the Self, Other, and Internal Other, were selected due to their ubiquitous and self-evidence presence within the text. Through discourse, combinations of each of these were articulated, shifting the dynamics of identity, power, and security between the Self and the Others during the time periods under analysis. With these broader analytical categories introduced, we are now prepared to conduct a more in-depth analysis of discursive shift within Fox News TV broadcast transcripts that refer to Russia. In accordance with the methodological section, this section will primarily concern itself with the general identification of discourses (through the historical context as well as basic signifiers), interpretation of the text (looking at lexical data to uncover meaning) as well as some degree of inventorying (observing how these data are

articulated). The purpose of this section will be to introduce and make sense of the data collected; the following steps of mapping and layering will be left to the following discussion section. In general, this section is structured around the two distinct time periods under which data was selected, identifying first how discourses played into the historical construction of Russia as the ‘dark double’ of the US, and second how this discourse shifted during the Trump presidency, particularly in relation to the Self (Conservative America), Other (Russia), and an Internal Other (Liberal America). These two sections will be followed up by a third section with observations of discursive constants between these two periods, as well as a look into evidence of self-awareness of discursive shifts at Fox. This section is meant to primarily address my first research question: *How have American conservative media discourses regarding Russia and its relationship to the US shifted under the Trump presidency?*

5.2 The Other and the Self

Soviet Russia

The first set of data contained a discourse that relied heavily on historical intertextualization, particularly stemming from the Cold War, and the conception of Russia as the ‘dark double’ of the US. The term ‘Soviet’ served repeatedly as a nodular point of discourse that tied Russia to negative historical associations, both as references to Soviet state structures such as communism and ‘Cold War tactics’, to character descriptions such as ‘cunning’, ‘corrupt’, and ‘backwards’. Additionally, historical events were periodically referenced that recalled the era of Russia as the ultimate source of global danger: in one instance, a Fox anchor likened the rise of ISIS to the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia (Van Susteren et al., 2015A); in another instance, Russia’s belligerent military behavior to force border change in Europe in 1945 was discussed (Van Susteren, 2015E). While in some cases, this was reasonable (the latter example followed a discussion of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea), it is noteworthy that these historical references, linked by the articulation of ‘Soviet’, portrayed Russia as an enemy of the US.

The Enemy

The question of whether or not Russia is an enemy is one that persists throughout both periods of focus: “are the Russians friends, are they foes, are they frenemies, are they somewhere in between?” (Baier et al., 2015F). During the initial period studied, these types of questions were frequently answered in a definite form (both directly and indirectly) that Russia is indeed an enemy of the US. When this was not referred to directly, it was implied through

Russia's frequent inclusion in lists of enemies, often appearing alongside other states and groups antagonistic to US interests, including ISIS, Iran, North Korea, and China. These lists, which tended to be vague but threatening (for example, "we have Russia and China and North Korea ... there is a whole hodgepodge of things and they're happening right now and we're getting attacked pretty much on a frequent basis" (Hannity et al., 2015A)) implied the status of 'enemy' to be a binary one. Rather than appreciating degrees of animosity or the nature of an adversarial relationship, Fox most frequently phrased questions to epitomize Russia's status as an enemy, such as the question of "the biggest geopolitical risk this country faces is what? Is it Russia, or is it ISIS, or is it something else?" (Bartirolo, 2015). While this characterization of Russia as a binary enemy was occasionally challenged (for example, Russia's assistance in combating ISIS caused reporters to briefly question whether it might be less of an enemy than ISIS), they tended to revert back to an 'enemy' articulation, as evidenced by the statement days after this assistance that "the two countries that were barred from helping [to fight ISIS] because we knew that they ... would be snakes inside the tent were Iran and Russia" (Cavuto, 2015A). This rhetorical commonplace found in the term 'enemy' was found to be linked strongly to number of representations that reinforced Russia's status as an intrinsic enemy to American interests. In addition to the previously-referenced "snake in a tent" quote, reporters frequently placed other negative qualities in association with Russia, many of which cast Russia in an irredeemable light. For example, Putin's actions demonstrated an "evil madness where there is actually ... not even any remorse" (Guilfoyle et al., 2015C), he is "a bully" who is "unafraid" (Bartirolo, 2015B), and "in total disregard of all rational thought" (Wallace & Bayer, 2015); in one instance Russians in general are even referred to as "animals" (O'Reilly et al., 2015A). At the same time, the power of the enemy is regularly accentuated, increasing the sense of an urgent threat to security. Putin is referred to as "the richest, most powerful man in the world, the most ruthless man in the world" (Bartirolo, 2015B), with "an enormous nuclear arsenal ... that if pushed into a corner he would not be afraid to use" (Van Susteren et al., 2015D), while Russia is depicted as being "in charge" of Europe (Baier, 2015A) and "doesn't want peace" (Baier et al., 2015B). Although depictions occasionally acknowledged non-dualism within "a complicated relationship", these were a minority during the first period of study, underlining an unequivocally negative picture of Russia and its leader.

The Internal Other

Russia's depiction as 'Soviet' and 'enemy' represents a clear Other within Fox's discourse, but this commentary was also accompanied by the near-constant presence of critiques of the Obama administration's policy towards Russia. This resulted in the construction of an 'Internal Other', given that the Obama administration represented the Self (the US) but violated the proper courses of action as outlined by conservative discourse. Throughout this period, the Internal Other was articulated as being a 'victim' of a Russian 'enemy', through repeated assertions that Obama was "showing weakness to Putin" (Rosen, 2015) and "blaming us [America] first" (Bolling et al., 2015). In another account, Putin is depicted to be "poking the cage with Obama" (Guilfoyle, 2015B), showing a vulnerable and trapped Internal Other, while taking advantage of Obama's lack of power to "stop [Putin] or push aggressively from the things that [he has] been doing" (Perino et al., 2015). Hillary Clinton is also regularly implicated as a component of the Internal Other (something that would increase alongside 2016 presidential election campaigning) and is accused of being a friend of Russia for having sold uranium to Russians. Through repeated characterizations of "weakness" and "incompetence of the highest order" (Baier et al., 2015A), Fox News repeatedly draws links between its others of a powerful enemy and an emasculated victim.

The Exceptional Self

The discursive depiction of the 'Soviet enemy Other' and the 'emasculated victimized Internal Other' simultaneously serves to shape the conception of the 'Self', as well as the legitimate courses of action as conceived of by Fox. Throughout, Obama's diplomatic efforts are dismissed as continuing to victimize the US at the hands of the enemy, remarking that "to kind of warm up to Putin and be an intermediary, an envoy, is so strange. It's the kind of thing that smacks of desperation and would make Vladimir Putin laugh" (Henry et al., 2015). In contrast, commentary advocating for a more assertive US policy on Russia is commonplace, including appeals to American exceptionalism: "it's time for us to step into the breach once again, become the country that leads around the world, and becomes that beacon of freedom, because that is what we represent", and "we are the greatest nation on the face of the earth. We need to have a commander in chief that embraces the role and doesn't avoid it" (Cavuto, 2015B). By repeatedly linking the weak Internal Self with a security threat from the Other ("our foes don't fear us" (Cavuto, 2015C)), the range of acceptable action is limited to displays of strength. This in turn is also tied through intertextualization to historical anecdotes that demonstrate American dominance to assert a powerful conservative American Self,

comparing to the Internal Other: “the difference is that President Ronald Reagan was not ... apologizing for Americans. He was embracing the strength of America and ... saying we were the shining city on the hill that Russians should be looking to and the rest of the world should be modeling their systems after” (Bolling et al., 2015). Instead of conducting bilateral diplomacy, this conception of the Self favors action: “the West has the capacity to stop Russia. The question is if it will” (Baier et al., 2015C). In another quote, a guest remarks that “most of our problems...are coming from other States, coming from Eastern Europe, coming from Russia. We need to be able to come together and enforce laws in other jurisdictions” (Bartirromo, 2015A). The creation of a powerful, action-favoring, exceptional American Self starkly contrasts the Russian Other and the liberal Internal Other, creating a position in which enacting policy based upon conservative morals becomes the only acceptable course of action.

Summary

The overall effect of this discourse is an emulation of the historical, dualistic American view of the Soviet enemy during the era of McCarthyism. Through this discourse, Russia is most commonly represented as a clear threat, and an enemy (although this is occasionally questioned). This is achieved through intertextual ties to acts of historical Russian aggression, coupled with the depiction of Russia as powerful, dangerous, devious, and uninterested in peace. This Othering of Russia is accompanied by a Self-Othering of Barack Obama and the liberal establishment (in which they are them as weak and ineffective in leadership), as well as a clear missive for the Self to exhibit strength and “come down hard on Russia” (. This discourse was bolstered through intertextuality, through the nodal point of the Soviet identity, as well as juxtaposition with American exceptionalism, and was reinforced with emotional language based in fear and violence. This messaging, which appeared consistently over a 6-month period, provides a clear discourse of Russia as an ‘enemy’. While this narrative shifted slightly in accordance with global events, there was no lasting deviation identified in the sample taken. Still, these elements of discourse were largely absent from the sample taken in 2018, which shall be discussed in the next section.

5.3 The Rogue and the Diplomat

The Trickster

The second set of data revealed noteworthy and major shifts in some of the signifiers, most notably among articulations that accompanied Russia’s identity as an ‘enemy’ of the US; this

later set of data saw an increased degree of uncertainty surrounding this enemy status. These ranged from adjustments of the extent to which Russia was a threat (or “not a threat”) to a change in the type of descriptors used to characterize Russia (Hannity et al., 2015B). While still described in negative characteristics (albeit in a somewhat softened manner, such as “a rogue regime” conducting “a shadow war” (Bream et al., 2018)), Russians also began to be described in ways that can only be described as a mix of positively and negatively: for example, in one case Russians were described as “crazy wild, intelligent and interesting” (Carlson et al., 2018A), while Putin was an “impressive guy who kills his opponents” whose “manfulness” justifies Trump’s amicable demeanor (Wallace et al., 2018A). In one instance, Russia in Trump era is no longer described as being a “bully” but is now a “thief”; this is certainly not a positive connotation but could be interpreted as reducing the perception of its status as a threat to American security (Henry et al., 2018). Finally, hosts regularly reminded their audience of Russia’s previous assistance in Syria, allowing its character as an ‘enemy’ to develop into more of a trickster or wily nuisance rather than the clear-cut villain previously depicted (Henry et al., 2018; Carlson, 2018).

Reagan’s Legacy

As Russia’s perceived status as an unredeemable ‘enemy’ shifted between these time periods, so too did the type of historical associations made with Russia. Contrasting the first periods recounting of periods of history in which the Russia acted as the US’s arch enemy, multiple anecdotes were shared in this second period that depicted Russia as historically open to diplomacy and willing to see reason. Most noteworthy was the retelling of a meeting between Reagan and Gorbachev in 1988, when “walking through the Red Square with Gorbachev, Reagan was asked whether he still thought Russia was an evil empire”, to which the American president replied “I was talking about another time, another era” (Wallace et al., 2018C). The story continues, directly linking Reagan’s diplomatic meetings with a humanized Soviet Union to the end of the Cold War. These recollections of a revered conservative hero unequivocally stating that the USSR was not an evil empire, serve to further depict the Soviet enemy as redeemable, and to associate the suitability of diplomacy over hostility. This shift towards viewing Russia as a redeemable adversary under the Trump administration downplays the ‘black and white’ dualism that was depicted under the Obama administration. Where enemies previously tended to be listed together indiscriminately, the 2018 data shows that countries tended to be discussed on a case-by-case basis alongside provided context of the transgressions. For instance, after President Trump controversially

stated that Russia should be readmitted into the G7 (it was originally banned as punishment for the annexation of Crimea), Carlson asks his guest to explain “why is Russia a greater and more imminent threat to us than Mexico? Are they killing tens of thousands of Americans with Fentanyl? Have they flooded our country with 20 million illegal aliens?” (Carlson, 2018). Beyond the fact that the phrasing of this statement is exaggerated fearmongering (that Mexico is directly killing Americans or deliberately flooding the US) and is meant to distract, this suggestion that the US need not consider Russia as a primary adversary solely due to the existence of other problematic states contradicts its prior perception of Russia as being on par with ISIS and the North Korean regime. In addition to Mexico, China is also stated to be Donald Trump’s true adversary due to its economic might, which, according to Carlson (2018C) minimizing the threat of Russia to being “irrelevant”.

The Victim

Another significant shift in discourse occurred within the characterization of the Internal Other and its relation to the Other. In the prior discourse, the emasculated Internal Other of the Obama administration was seen as having fallen victim to the Russian Other; under the Trump presidency (in which the conservative Self has regained relative control), this dynamic appears to have been reversed. In many of the mentions of US-Russian relations within this second period, the Internal Other’s identity has moved from Obama and his administration to “Democrats and a few low IQ Republican holdovers”, or to “the deep state” (Carlson et al., 2018D); in a reversal of roles, this Internal Other is now victimizing Russia. This dynamic change manifested itself in the reversal of articulation: for example, Ingraham stated that this Internal Other “is worried about Russia but they’re adopting the tactics of the old Soviet Union, it’s stunning” (Ingraham, 2018). Later, Carlson (2018C) asks “why is everyone pushing [Trump] to hate Russia? Should we hate Russia? What do we get out of hating Russia?”. In a later interview where this question resurfaces, Carlson asks “why is Russia at the heart of the liberal mind? I mean honestly I think it’s a psychiatric disorder” (Carlson et al., 2018C). At one point, the Internal Other is actually compared to the Soviet Union, with “the left adopting the old tactics of the Soviet Union” in its treatment of Trump and Russia (Ingraham, 2018), distancing Russia from its own past identity and demonstrating that, within Fox’s representation that “the left has blamed Russia for everything you can think of” (Carlson et al., 2018D).

Normalization and Diplomacy

This reversal of victimhood has also been accompanied by other representations that shift the discourse on Russia by normalizing behavior that was previously articulated with an irredeemable enemy. When confronted with the confirmation of Russian hacking in the 2016 US election, anchors on multiple occasions constructed their responses to normalize such behavior rather than vilifying it. For example, Carlson responded in this instance by asking “do you think that Russia did more to undermine the legitimacy of our elections than those politicians who have argued against voter I.D. laws [liberal Democrats]?” (Carlson et al, 2018C). In another statement, he downplays the threat of Russian political ignorance by suggesting that the Internal Other has compromised the integrity of the American political system to begin with, stating that “I’ve said this with before and you’re new to DC. I would say a third of the city are agents of foreign powers. Not of Russia” (Carlson & Dobbs, 2018). Finally, when a guest mentioned to Carlson that “if anyone is doing something to undermine the integrity of the US election [that person] should be held to account”, he responds by saying “I couldn’t agree more. I see it happen here in Washington every day as we kowtow to all kinds of different countries, Russia not among them” (Carlson, 2018). Carlson in particular demonstrates a propensity to use discourse to shift the sense of a threat away from the Other and toward the (Internal) Self. Additionally, as was mentioned in the analysis from the first data set, the formation of identities of and relations between the Other, Self, and Self-Other also prescribe possible courses of action. In this case, where diplomacy was previously seen as a manifestation of weakness within the Self-Other, in these new articulations “the Russia bashing must end” (Baier et al., 2018) and instead “if you can have a good relationship with Russia, you could help solve problems in Syria, Iran, elsewhere” (Henry et al., 2018). This new articulation between diplomacy and threat-reduction was also aided through historical reference; a story was shared on air in which Soviet statesman Nikita Khrushchev wrote a personal letter to Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The resolution of this story with peace between the US and the USSR was used to support Trump’s diplomatic efforts, or in the words of Huntsman, “you’ve got to have both sides willing to meet, and I think we’ve got both sides that would look favorably on that” (Henry et al., 2018). The president is also exonerated from potential criticism in the pursuit of diplomacy: “Trump is going to be attacked over Russian ties regardless so he might as well drive his opponents into apoplexy” (Henry et al., 2018). The result of this shift is a discourse that produces an unassailable case for diplomacy, a shift from the more hawkish prescriptions of conservative media during the Obama era.

Summary

The discourse of the second section was markedly different from that of the first, with strong articulations and differentiations that contrasted the clear ‘Soviet enemy’ of the first section. Through this discourse, Russia was commonly represented as being post-Soviet, and while it was still portrayed as an adversary, the ‘enemy’ articulations expressed had downgraded Russia’s standing in the previously ‘enemy’ binary to being less of a security threat and more of a trickster. The change of power resulted in a clear shift of interpellation in regard to the Internal Other, bestowing upon it the role of a victimizer against Russia; this shift resulted in the creation of a dynamic in which diplomacy proved to be a more sensible course of action for the president to take.

5.4 Additional Notes

Violence and Masculinity

Throughout Fox’s discourse on Russia (but especially in its discourse associating ‘enemy’ with a ‘Soviet’ threat) was the commonplace invocation of violent language in metaphor. While standard international discourse on adversarial states will likely include terms that could be perceived as physical (such as ‘aggression’, ‘challenge’, ‘confront’, and ‘eliminate’), many more blatant terms of physical violence were also included within discussions of US-Russian relations. Clear examples of this can be found in comments like “we should keep our foot on the necks of the Russians who have been incredibly aggressive” (Henry et al., 2015), “strangle them” (O’Reilly & Rove, 2015), “we should be breaking them” (O’Reilly et al., 2015A), as both sides “flex their muscles” (Perino et al., 2015). This type of language functions as a discursive tool that disperses meaning in a more immediately tangible way to an audience, unequivocally emphasizing both the security threat of Russian strength and the physical strength of America. While these types of physical descriptors were a constant presence throughout both sections of data, these terms shifted in the second set of data to describe shared characteristics of masculinity that justified Trump and Putin’s relative affinity’ as mentioned, it was Putin’s “manfulness” that resulted in a warmer tone from Trump (Wallace et al., 2018C).

Humor

While the first set of data had few instances of the use of humor in its discussion of Russia (being solely reserved for sarcastic reactions to the Obama administration’s policies, e.g. “I’m sure Russia is quaking in its boots”), mocking or sarcastic humor was a commonplace feature

within the second set of broadcasts reviewed, particularly of those who viewed Russia to be a threat (Guilfoyle et al., 2015D). For example, when a guest brought up concerns of reports that Ivanka Trump may have been involved in the meeting with Russian agents to obtain compromising information on the Clinton campaign, Carlson responded with “Ivanka is definitely a foreign agent. Consider her name. It doesn’t sound American, does it? We should deport her” (Ingraham & Ibanez, 2018). Later, when a guest challenges Carlson’s claim that Mexico should be considered a greater threat to the US than Russia, Carlson asks why, “if Russia is the most evil place ever and Putin, obviously, is Lord Satan himself” that recent hockey sports champion Alexander Ovechkin would be a friend of Putin, and promoting Putin within the US (Carlson, 2018). By using a popular figure as leverage while mocking articulations of Russia as an ultimate ‘enemy’, humor and popular references are used to distance, and challenge formerly utilized discursive meaning.

Distancing

It is important to note that in general, Trump’s more controversial opinions regarding Russia (for example, suggesting that Russia should be permitted to rejoin the G7) were not met with unanimous approval at Fox. In fact, these types of actions were questioned far more than they were outright agreed upon: in this instance, many of the guests that appeared on Fox supported Putin’s continued expulsion from the G7, recognized Russia as a significant power, and agreed that a crime had been committed when Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine. However, in the majority of the cases these opinions were provided by guests rather than the hosts of the shows; the hosts (who were more familiar to viewers, and therefore likely held higher levels of viewer trust) regularly provided emotional counterarguments that were more closely in line with established discourse. In other instances that countered this discourse (for example, reporting on polls that expressed disapproval on Trump’s handling of various Russia-related issues) Fox tended to report these through the citation of other news networks rather than having their own anchors directly challenge the Trump administration (Wallace et al., 2018B; Kurtz et al., 2018; Watters et al., 2018). In this way, Fox could discuss Russia using its own discourse while simultaneously reporting contradictory information from sources were regularly undermined on the network as being sources of ‘fake news’.

Self-Awareness

The final important point of analysis that must be covered is the acknowledgement within Fox of these discursive shifts. While such moments did occur, they were infrequent, relatively

indirect, and came from guests on talk shows (not hosts). Perhaps the most direct example of this occurred when guest Goldstein remarked that “for Donald Trump to stand up time after time for Russia seems bizarre, unexplainable”, to which Carlson interrupts “who cares? Honestly who cares?” (Carlson et al., 2018C). Goldstein goes on to remark that “there wouldn’t be billions of dollars spent on ads on Fox News if somebody out there didn’t think that that would influence people’s opinions, and that’s exactly what the Russians did reaching through Facebook” (note that Carlson quickly interrupts this point with humor: “people would’ve never voted for Trump unless Vladimir Putin told them to”) (Carlson et al., 2018C). Other instances of relative acknowledgement of contradiction in discourse are less direct, including justifications for Trump’s unpredictable behavior - “Trump is constantly playing a bit of a game with that dynamic” (Bream et al., 2018) - as well as moments in which panelists are simply unable to make sense of his policies; these occasions were almost always cut short or silenced through humor which pivoted to other points of interest. The strongest instance of the endorsement of active discursive agency came during a discussion of the utility of Reagan’s characterization of Russia during the Cold war: “he re-moralized the Cold War by saying [the USSR] was an evil empire and the focus of evil in the modern world. People were horrified, but he did it deliberately in order to say clarity matters here” (Baier et al., 2018A). The rarity of these moments of lucidity within discursive inquiry (as well as the forced changes of topic when they did appear) suggests a relatively low degree of open acknowledgement of these discursive shifts on air, a finding that will be expanded upon in the final discussion.

In this section, an overarching discourse on Russia was identified from Fox’s programming, albeit one with a large number of rhetorical commonplaces and articulations that were shifted and interpellated between one set of data and the next. Additionally, analysis uncovered a certain degree of language actively questioning and acknowledging these shifts in discourse, although this was infrequent and the majority of it came from individuals outside of the Fox network (i.e. guests and other news networks). The identifying, interpreting and inventorying of discursive elements paves the way for the final section of this thesis, in which the more generalized steps of discourse analysis will allow for conclusions to be drawn that will present findings for our research questions.

6. DISCUSSION

The aim of this thesis has been to analyze how Fox News' representations of Russia have shifted over time, particularly before and during the Trump presidency. The hope of this was to witness how discursive change takes place in contemporary mass media within the field of international relations, and to observe the extent to which shifts were internally acknowledged. The purpose of this section is to outline the findings from the previous section, complete higher-level processes of discourse analysis (inventorying, mapping and layering), and to discuss the implications of these findings, particularly as they apply the original research questions.

6.1 Processing

Mapping

Through mapping, we take our previous analyses of our data (in identifying, interpreting, and inventorying) to a higher level of analysis that connects the text to larger themes within a conceived discourse. According to Dunn and Neumann (2016), "mapping is about recognizing relations in the constitution of a discourse", which "examine[s] the degree to which representations continue, change, or challenge existing discourses" (p.190). To this end, we must first conceive of the various discourses that exist on this particular subject, and then explore these discourse's positions relative to one another. Of the subjects involved in this study (which we refer to as the Self, the Other, and the Internal Other), we identify a dominant discourse within Fox News that relates the three actors to one another; within the data set studied, this discourse had achieved nearly full dominance, punctuated by occasional challenges (the suggestion that Trump is being too kind to Putin for example) but successfully policed by the Fox hosts. While we can say with some confidence that this discourse dominated the airwaves of Fox during this time period, we cannot say the same thing for conservative news stations in general, as this would require significant expansion to our data set. Taken further, it seems extremely doubtful that either Russia or liberal media has co-opted any elements of this discourse, given each party's relative vilification; instead, conservative discourse likely serves as a reaction point by which Russian and liberal media discourses might define their respective Selves and refine their own discourses. Still, the dominance of Fox's narrative within its viewership seems likely; according to a poll by Democratic Group Global Strategies, nearly 8 in 10 Republican Fox Viewers believed Trump to be the best president in history (Tani, 2019). Through mapping, we can also compare

discourses that have undergone transformations; this process we will leave for a larger discursive summary later in this section.

Layering

The remaining step as outlined by Dunn and Neumann (2016) is to observe the existence of layers within our given discourse, as distinguished by the speed and degree of change experienced over time by particular articulations. Given that this study's focus was upon a relatively short period for discourse (merely four years) it is difficult to perform this step without making major assumptions. Still, having provided a basic contextual overview of US discourse on Russia (particularly focusing upon the Cold War), there are very basic observations of layers that can be distinguished. The slowest changing layer of discourse appears to be persistent conceptions of Russia as an 'enemy' of the US – even in circumstances where US and Russian interests align, a consistent factor divides the two former global power poles from mutual trust – where Foglesong (2007) discusses the proselytizing mission of the US to Russia and Russia's resistance to it, this concept seems to be pervasive throughout the time periods observed in this study. Within this layer also exists notions of permanent Soviet-ness (as conceived of within American discourse) which ascribe 'backwardness', 'corruption', and 'madness' to the Russian character. To some degree, this could be said to be reinforced by US conceptions of Russia's annexation of Crimea and invasion into the Ukraine – acts such as these cement this fundamental layer of US-Russian relations in a way that continues. The second layer perceived, perhaps first seen after the fall of the Soviet Union, hopefully considers Russia on a more case-by-case basis, might be more reactive to everyday events that provide a less stable characterization of Russia as a frenemy, a trickster, or even a target for a relationship reset. Beyond these large generalizations, other smaller and more subtle layering will also be reviewed in the next section, in which the discourses analyzed will be summarized prior to their application.

Discourse Summary

Throughout the period of time covered during the first set of data, Russia was almost unequivocally represented as an 'enemy' to the US, in a manner that was strongly articulated to references to the Soviet era. This 'enemy' articulation is one that is applied to a variety of countries whose actions oppose US interests, with rare mention of the distinctive factors that result in Russia's inclusion in this category. Of these factors, historical references are bolstered by recent geopolitical actions of Russia in Eastern Europe, as well as its opposition

to American domination. Still, the identity of Russia is assigned unique characteristics that are linked with a ‘Soviet enemy’, with an Orwellian mysteriousness that includes negative and untrustworthy qualities, as well as a simultaneous assertion of Russian strength and inferiority to the US. Moreover, Russian interests are denied the moral legitimacy of American interests, being instead seen as illogical and wild. As such, Russia is viewed as a threat to the US’ global position, particularly as it associates itself as the leader of the free world; this in turn reflects the identity of the Conservative Self and Internal other, where liberal leadership makes the US weak and provides the opportunity for an ‘evil’ force to triumph. Representing a Russian ‘evil’ enemy in dualistic terms allowed for representations to tap into historical references providing a chain of associations for audiences and serves as a way of increasing criticism upon the Internal Other, elevating the Conservative Self to a morally and physically superior position to the American audience.

From the second period analyzed, while Russia was not portrayed as having shed ‘enemy’ status, the representations connected to enemy had significantly – with ‘frenemy’ or potential ‘frenemy’ perhaps being a better characterization of Fox’s representation. Consistently questioned was why one could not treat Russia as redeemable, something supported intertextually by historical instances in which diplomatic efforts by American presidents had brought great success for the US. While the perception of Russia as an enemy mostly remained, the articulations that described an enemy changed considerably: first, the dualistic ‘good and evil’ was swapped out for a hopeful view of US-Russian relations that mirrored the view of Russia in the 90’s (this viewpoint was repeatedly attacked within the first data set as Obama and Clinton (as Secretary of State) repeatedly called for a ‘Russian Reset’. As the liberal media began to attack Trump for his alleged connections to Russia, Fox’s anchors began to articulate Russia as a ‘victim’ over an ‘enemy’, an instrumental tool that allowed for the Internal Other to be seen as being below a redeemable enemy. Noticeably absent from the second set was commentary on Russia’s material strength, which was a constant presence throughout the first data set. This shift accompanied the change in power – as the Self obtained political power, it is possible that provocative discourse on US-Russian relations was abandoned. Commentators used sarcasm and emotion to push back on and police the idea formerly pushed by prior discourse, namely that Russia was a purely evil entity that was fundamentally opposed to the United States. In doing so, conservative voices could justify the actions of their president while further maligning the Internal Other. These factors will be more thoroughly discussed in the next section.

Also worth noting is that a third set of data initially intended for analysis was abandoned that included stories from the period of July 15th – 31st, 2018, as it followed Trump's participation in the Helsinki Conference, which proved to be a moment of discursive rupture, as Trump said he believed Putin's assertion that Russia was not involved in meddling in the 2016 election. This can be understood in the following way: whereas the status of the Other was being shifted to maintain the credibility of the Self in the eyes of the audience against the Internal Other, in a sense Trump was seen favoring the Other over the Self (or Internal Other, for that matter). While intensive research into this data was omitted (due to constraints of scope), this further demonstrates a tendency for an instrumental application of the Other to maintain the power position of the Self. By altering the degree to which one constructs a security threat in the Other, power can be increased or maintained. This event also goes to show the speed at which circumstances can alter the upper layer of discourse, as Fox widely condemned Trump's performance alongside other news networks both conservative and liberal.

6.2 Consequences

RQ1

The discourse analysis conducted in this study confirmed that US conservative media generally adhered to certain representations of Russia that aligned with historical constructions of an 'enemy', but that the articulations and differentiations associated with these signifiers, as well as the implications this had for identity, power and security shifted during the period under scrutiny. The first research question in this thesis sought to describe how this shift was associated with Donald Trump's assumption of the presidency: indeed, a number of elements within this discursive shift appeared to be related to the power shift that occurred with the rise of the Trump White House. First, Trump's success in captivating the attention economy of modern media combined with his ability to appeal to the citizenry resulted in a degree of trust that both Trump and Fox were able to utilize; so long as Trump's actions were viewed favorably, conservative interests could maintain power. The polarized dualism of modern American politics combined with the conservative directorship of Fox required the execution of a way of accommodating Trump's frequent non-traditional-conservative statements in a way that did not alienate their shared base (note again the previously-cited statistic that 8 out of 10 Republicans who view Fox believe Trump to be the greatest president in American history) (Tani, 2019). The political tug of war between liberals and conservatives within the US resulted in the Othering of Russia to be used as a

political weapon; first by painting Russia as a major security threat under a weak Internal Other president, and then by painting Russia as a somewhat friendly victim of a liberal deep state. While this will be further discussed in a following section, it characterizes the nature by which discourse changed, and that much of the discursive shift was a reactive shift that co-opted external threats to gain advantages in internal politics. Thus, to bolster conservative causes, conservative media appeared to alter the perception of Russia as a security threat, so as to undermine its Internal Other and secure its own political power. Beyond that, this shift may have benefitted Trump personally, as it legitimized his policy choices in the eyes of the viewership as well as the Fox company, which saw that Fox viewers at disproportionate levels found Trump to have been completely honest regarding the Mueller probe (NBC/Wall Street Journal, 2019). Thus, the general finding was that conservative media was able to exact discursive shifts to accommodate the view of Russia that reflected best upon conservative American politicians, securing its own power and identity.

RQ2

Although this question received considerably less attention than the first question, it required a much more specific type of data than the all-encompassing discourse analysis study; this question sought the presence of self-acknowledgement of discourse shifts. As briefly presented in the previous section, only a couple instances within the data set studied indicated any kind of metacommentary on Fox News or its own coverage of Russia; this type of commentary came externally (i.e. not from Fox's own anchors) and could thus have been written off as untrustworthy by viewers. Still, the commentary that was made internally (particularly surrounding the acknowledgement and justification of Reagan's 'evil empire' discourse) illustrates a number of things: first, that Fox still broadcasts challenges to its own discursive shifts and narratives, in spite of the fact that they question its narrative. Second, that while momentary changes are discussed, the larger way picture in which Russia is discussed isn't. Third, other forms of metacommentary (such as the guest's critical discussion of Fox's advertising revenue) are indeed broadcast on the show. This demonstrates a few things: first that Fox isn't an all-out propaganda machine, and critical topics are aired. Second, that the presence of criticisms on air does not seem to result in a decrease in Fox viewership. Similar to Trump's presidency, this indicates that to some degree it is the source of information over the information itself that has more credibility. The findings also reinforced a few of the notions outlined in the theoretical section, including the formation of truth in media based upon trustworthiness, and the content of media being dictated both by

mediatization as well as personal bias of content directors, and finally the short span of recall by the general public, feasibly as a result of information overload in the modern era.

The findings of this thesis have broader implications that go beyond the specific bounds of the research questions which will also be discussed here. Over the next three paragraphs, the insight found in the analysis section will be tied back to themes from the theory section (particularly regarding US international policy and the modern mass media) as well as internal US politics, which was found to play a significant role in conservative discourse on Russia.

Mass Media

Previously in this thesis, we outlined general trends within mass media that are shaping the role it plays within international relations; among these we identified major themes of mediatization (in which an overload of media results in the creation of attention economies), an increase in emotion and trust in determining truth, and the development of epistemic democracy within media viewership. This research has demonstrated how these trends might generally be linked to discursive shifts in media, particularly in instances where state and media actors form a pseudo-cooperative relationship (as with Trump and Fox). The increase in mediatization as a result of overwhelming media accessibility and coverage could be seen as a factor in the ability of conservative news to rapidly shift the tone on Russia; by leveraging current events and providing emotional commentary, Fox commentators were able to maintain attention and thus have greater power in forming viewer's perceptions of the identities of the actors involved. Particularly for more fluid layers of discourse, mediatization likely permitted acceleration of discursive change – although in this case we arguably witnessed more fundamental layers also being affected. On a related note, by initially appealing to viewers' security concerns about Russia, Fox provided an emotional and genealogical case to enable the election of a conservative candidate; in the same way, by policing with emotional tone and language and using humor that shamed opponents, Fox anchors were occasionally able to cast America's dark double as a victim. Finally, the emotional style of reporting that is argued to have facilitated the rise of epistemic democracy among media viewers would very easily support the change witnessed in Russian discourse, without requiring (and perhaps even seeking to avoid) active acknowledgement of the shift. As discussed, the trust placed in a media source may make it more likely that viewers will look at news that doesn't challenge their beliefs – because viewing Trump's policy as negative would require major shifts in identity, the argument is that discursive shifts on an

external Other may be easier to achieve. More general questions and implications about the future of mass media in American international politics will be discussed in the conclusion.

US-Russian Discourse

The observations found in this study may also be tied to larger conceptions about discourse as it relates to US-Russian relations, and external international relations in general. Although strongly tethered to past discourses, this study found that conservative discourse on Russia appears to have undergone strong shifts during the power transition between the Obama and Trump administrations, with greater appeals to Russia's soft power attraction, its 'frenemy' status, and its redeemable nature. While the international events that took place during the period studied had a strong effect on the tone of the broadcasts that were observed, this study found that much of the US' discourse on Russia actually served for the purpose of obtaining power over internal political actors. This fact seems to suggest that at least in this case, media reporting on international relations may have been used as much to promote internal conservative power in the US as much as it was for the sake of informing its viewership about events transpiring beyond US borders. Although Russia's behavior on the international scale has shifted in the new millennium, this behavior changed very little between the two periods studied; the lack of a shift in security points the source of discursive shift elsewhere. Rather than sizing up the US and Russia to assert identity and posit American dominance on the international scene, the discourse seen by conservative media seemed to have a more internal focus. This may demonstrate that conservative discourse on international relations remains very internally focused.

US Politics

This internal focus observed pertains to an initially unexpected subject within this study, that of the Internal Other, as interpellated onto liberal American politicians, including Obama, Clinton, and Democratic members of Congress. The extent to which this Internal Other was discussed upon by Fox anchors led it to become a primary focus, often relegating Russia to a more instrumental role, even in news stories of which Russia was the primary actor. This fact seems to suggest that, for American conservative mass media outlets, internal politics may pervade into international affairs, suggesting (perhaps unsurprisingly) that American audiences may only be interested in hearing about international affairs insofar as it affects the internal politics (and external security) of the Self. Thus, in a period of political polarization in the US, Russian behavior (be it that of the victimizer or the victim) becomes more

important based upon its effect upon the power dynamic of conservative and liberal forces within the US. With the power and identity shift that accompanied the conservative candidate's rise to the presidency, this required a shift in certain conceptions that in turn shifted discourse; for conservative supporters of Trump, shifting their perceptions about Russia was a simpler shift than shifting their perceptions about the Self as a result of Trump's warm behavior towards an 'enemy'. This demonstrates how, the polarized and intense state of contemporary American politics, actual values of identity and conceptions of security may be set aside for short-term internal political goals.

Shortcomings

For reasons of time and scale, the scope of research had to be limited to cover only one case – the coverage of the largest (conservative) cable news network, Fox News. Many changes could've expanded the applicability of this study, including expanding to wider periods of time, a range of conservative news outlets, including both liberal and conservative newspapers, or even incorporating Russian perspectives. Additionally, as secondary sources of political events, news outlets frame events – by incorporating primary sources (such as speeches from Trump and other prominent conservatives), conservative media functions and shifts could've been observed in relation to their original source. While shifts in discourse (most notably around the representation of Russia as an 'enemy' and the signifiers associated) were easily identifiable, the speed at which discourse appeared to shift following the second study period challenged the applicability of these results beyond describing a specific historical circumstance. Also, the relative density of material on Russia limited the data to shorter durations that originally intended, something that may have limited the signifiers identified, as well as having possibly exaggerated their significance in the grander scale of US discourse on Russia. While the material research often contained parallel tones and ideas in their references to Russia, actual textual commonalities between comments was relatively rare, making the first few steps of discourse analysis rather challenging. The second research question presupposed the existence of a type of dialogue that only occurred in limited circumstances – a broader question that was not contingent upon the presence of specific types of comments would likely have been better suited to a master's thesis of this size. Still, given the limitations of discourse analysis and the scope of the data sources, the study was able to answer the research questions posed in an informed and direct manner.

By completing a higher-level analysis of Fox News discursive shifts in its coverage of Russia prior to and after Trump's election to the White House, it was possible to fully summarize the

findings from our data analysis and distill these findings into relevant discussion points. Through discussion, these discussion points were applied to address the initial research questions posed in this thesis, while addressing the shortcomings of the study, as well as the wider implications of what was discovered. In a final conclusion, we will briefly explore more broadly some of the other questions surrounding technological development in media particularly in international relations, and the place of this thesis in that larger field.

7. CONCLUSION

This thesis sought to investigate the evolving role of media in shaping discourse in international relations by investigating how one prominent conservative American media outlet (Fox News) discussed Russia before and during the Trump presidency. This final conclusion section looks more broadly at these topics, forecasting future possibilities for media in international relations and other possible extensions of the research conducted in this thesis.

Further Research

The relatively contemporary nature of the case analyzed in this case, as well as the decision to cover two relatively short time periods in the study provide simple opportunities to expand the research by expanding the temporal range of analysis or by appending information that (as of the time of this paper's writing) was not yet known. By including other noteworthy points during Trump's presidency (for example, the period just after the Helsinki Summit, or after the release of the Mueller report) the analysis would be enriched by a broader perspective, through a more comprehensive genealogy and a better sense for the 'viscosity' of the discourse and what types of events may result in faster or slower representation changes. The Mueller Report (as of the release of this thesis) has concluded that there was no evidence that the Trump campaign engaged in any criminal behavior with any Russian actors; the report did conclude that Russians interfered in the election in an effort to facilitate his victory, and that Trump efforts to construct a tower in Moscow continued during his presidential campaign (Mueller, 2019). As other investigations surrounding Trump and Russia are concluded, future revelations could be usefully affixed to this paper to provide context between Trump's behavior and Fox News coverage.

US-Russian Relations

While we have been able to conduct a basic genealogy of conservative discourse on Russia, the future of any such discourse is as unpredictable as the future of US-Russian relations, which are entirely dependent upon the actors assuming positions of power within state and media as well as more general events amongst the global community. For the time being, much of the discourse since the period studied in this paper has been occupied with the corrupting influence of Russia in the 2016 election and the possibility of more sinister actions – the conception of Russia as a threat to American security will likely not face anytime soon. The conservative media's criticisms of Trump's actions and questions of Russia's intentions

following the Helsinki Summit suggest that the discursive shifts described in this thesis may have been temporary shifts that would not outlast Trump's presidency; perhaps a more relevant question (given the findings of this thesis) would be a broader question of how news coverage of international events will be used in the future to navigate between the two opposing poles of US politics. So long as international relations are used instrumentally to obtain discursive leverage over an opponent, coverage of foreign affairs within the US will likely be subject to discursive swings in sacrifice of balanced and objective reporting.

Future Media

If modern mass media technology (online newspapers, social media, etc.) has accelerated the ability of news outlets to shift discourses to match their goals, what implications does this have as development provides new opportunities? A number of projected technological developments raise questions about the fate of discourse in the future – for example, the company OpenAI (affiliated with billionaire Elon Musk) has recently announced that a revolutionary AI system that wrote “believable but fake” news stories and fictions was being withheld from the public for fear of its misuse (Fingas, 2019). If such a system were able to learn from and cater to the emotions of its audience it could quicken and control the pace of discursive shifts, or it could be used to alter constructions of foreign actors to the political or economic benefit of the state or company wielding it. While this event seems at least far from the present (and at most like science fiction), it is clear that there is a great deal of power held by the creators and disseminators of captivating media, as demonstrated both by Russian efforts to meddle in the 2016 US election, as well as by the election of Donald Trump. The acceptance of articles based upon their ability to confirm internal biases or appealing to emotion can be dangerous to a democracy. Be it through fake news or the strategic framing of truthful stories, the preservation of journalistic integrity through waves of new technology, echo chambers and viral falsehoods will likely prove a major challenge for this generation; according to Waisbord (2018), even now with contemporary technological innovations, “journalism as an institution cannot possibly control this environment” (p.4).

American Propaganda

In the US, the unique situation afforded to both Fox and the Trump administration through the alleged close symbiosis described in the New Yorker demonstrates the degree to which the two actors co-constituted each other: Trump by listening to and endorsing Fox News, and Fox News by shifting Russian discourse to favor Trump's policy decisions and public comments.

While this may currently be the case, it is uncertain that such a trend could continue beyond Trump's presidency: Trump's unique experience with mediatization during his time as a reality TV star may have uniquely positioned him for the intimate but tempestuous relationship he appeared to keep with Fox. Still, should the trend of electing media celebrities into political roles continue, a unique style of American propaganda could emerge in which interests of powerful individuals are so effective at manipulating attention markets that sympathetic media outlets shift their reporting to accommodate these narratives (this contrasts the standard form of propaganda in which an overbearing state power controls and limits media outlets). Still, even in less sensational political elections, the media wields a great degree of power to influence the attention and perception of its readership through representation and discourse, something that no amount of fact-checking can fully check. The ability of mainstream media to shift discourse in a manner that is invisible (or unimportant) to viewers is an alarming modern trend, as is the increasing tendency of voters to place emotional trust in a leader while ignoring the 'non-alternative facts'. These factors make it difficult to conjecture where the onus lies in efforts to address this issue and attempt to restore future media to its historical role as the reliable fourth estate of government.

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- Gutfeld, Greg; Williams, Juan; Watters, Jesse; Perino, Dana; Guilfoyle, Kimberly. (June 26, 2018 Tuesday). Civility And Politics; Comedian Norm McDonald Says The World Is, And Always Has Been, A Battle Of Good Versus Good; Supreme Court Upholds President Trump's Travel Ban And Restricting Travel From Iran, North Korea, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia And Venezuela; Supreme Court Rejects Claims That Travel Ban Was Motivated By Religious Discrimination; President Trump Rallies Supporters Ahead Of Several Key Primaries; Gallup Poll Shows Americans Certainty About Voting In Midterm Elections Lower Than Previous Years; Obama Absent from Political Stage; Curbing Social Media Addiction. *Fox News Network*.
- Hannity, Sean; Henry, Ed; Hoffman, Daniel; Carter, Sara; Gorka, Sebastian. (June 12, 2018 Tuesday). President Trump's Successful Summit; The Media Attacks Trump Over North Korea Summit; Interview with President Trump; President Trump in an Interview with Sean Hannity in Singapore, Says that He Had a Good Feel about Kim Jong-un and that He is Optimistic that They Will Both Achieve the Goals that They Want for the Country; President Trump Said that They Signed an Agreement about Denuclearization and Also Pledge to Get Rid of the War Games; A Fight Emerging between Rod Rosenstein and Devin Nunes' Senior Aide, Kash Patel, Who Said that He was Threatened by Rosenstein to Subpoena His E-Mails and Phone Records. *Fox News Network*.

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Hannity, Sean; Williams, Juan; North, Oliver; Lt. Col. Peters, Ralph. (January 21, 2015 Wednesday). Defiant Obama Delivers State of the Union; Interview With Sen. Ted Cruz; Interview With Radio Talk Show Host Mark Levin; Obama Fails to Mention Terrorism or al Qaeda; Medal of Honor Winner Counters Michael Moore on Snipers. *Fox News Network*.

Hannity, Sean. (April 8, 2015 Wednesday). Obama Lectures Christians Again; Interview With Radio Talk Show Host Mark Levin; Interview With Gov. Scott Walker; Police Officer Arrested for Shooting Man Running from Him. *Fox News Network*.

Henry, Ed; Huntsman, Abby; Hegseth, Pete (June 3, 2018 Sunday). Interview with Jon Huntsman. *Fox News Network*.

Henry, Ed; McKelway, Doug; Bream, Shannon; Griffin, Jennifer; Herridge, Catherine; Rosen, James; Piper, David; Springer, Dan; Emanuel, Mike. (January 1, 2015 Thursday). Foreign Policy Hotspots; Secretary Kerry's Progress Report; Recovery Work Continues for AirAsia Flight 8501; Hiring for Immigration Action; Congress Report Card; New Economy Regulations for 2015 Examined; Obama Administration Reportedly Reaching Out Diplomatically to Russia; Governing Prospects for New Republicans Congressional Majorities Analyzed. *Fox News Network*.

Ingraham, Laura; Ibanez, Jackie. (June 8, 2018 Friday). Adam Schiff Claims Roger Stones Lied To Congress; Trump Heads Into Trade Talks; Justice Department Seizes Phone And Email Records Of Reporter Ali Watkins; James Wolfe Arrested And Charged Yesterday; Coach Lou Holtz On The Intersection Of Sports And Politics; Defending The First. *Fox News Network*.

Ingraham, Laura; Pirro, Jeanine; Schlapp, Matt; Crowley, Monica. (July 16, 2018 Monday). President Trump Meets with President Putin in Helsinki; Vladimir Putin Denies Russian Meddling Accusations; Cartoon Critical of Trump-Putin Relationship Draw Controversy; Protests Continue in Chicago after Body Cam Footage of Police Shooting Released; Lisa Page Meets with Congress for Closed-Door Testimony. *Fox News Network*.

Ingraham, Laura. (June 1, 2018 Friday). President Trump Criticizes Samantha Bee For Controversial Remark About Ivanka; Joy Reid Criticized For Past Blog Posts; President Trump Touts May Jobs Report; Interview With National Economy Council Director Larry Kudlow; FBI And Russia Probe Not Adding Up; Exclusive Interview With Dinesh D'Souza; Reactions To Trump's Presidential Pardon; Samantha Bee's Shocking Statements On Ivanka Trump. *Fox News Network*.

Kelly, Megyn; Henry, Ed; Rosen, James. (February 19, 2015 Thursday). White House Summit On Extremism Wraps Up; U.S. Reveals and Details Iraq War Plans; Arrest in Nevada Road Rage Case. *Fox News Network*.

Kilmeade, Brian; Dobbs, Lou; Whitlock, Jason. (July 11, 2018 Wednesday). Trump calls Germany "captive to Russia"; Poll: Majority don't want to abolish ICE; Lisa Page defies congressional subpoena; Law professor makes liberal case for Kavanaugh; Players file grievance over NFL anthem policy; Greg Gutfeld's case for social media redemption. *Fox News Network*.

Kurtz, Howard; Turner, Gillian; Williams, Juan. (July 15, 2018 Sunday). Media Malign Trump Europe Trip; Some Pundits Say Drop Putin Meeting; Media Scrutinize Brett

- Kavanaugh; NBC Retracts Story On Court 'Deal'; Protesters Scream At Fox Anchor. *Fox News Network*.
- Levin, Mark; Gray, Robert. (July 1, 2018 Sunday). Sean Hannity's View On Present American Politics, His Past, Present, And His Future In The Industry; Exit Polls Are In For Mexico's Presidential Election And They're Predicting Victory For Leftist Candidate, Andrew Manuel Lopez Obrador. *Fox News Network*.
- MacCallum, Martha; Hall, Benjamin. (July 13, 2018 Friday). President Trump, Prime Minister May Meet Face-To-Face; DOJ Indicts 12 Russian Officers For Hacking; Senator Graham: Trump Must Tell Putin To Be "Better World Citizen;" A Former Investor in Russia, Bill Browder, Shares His Harrowing Experience During His Stay in Russia, Saying Putin is a Cold-Blooded Killer and He Wants Him Killed in Any Way Possible Just Like What They Did to His Attorney, Sergei Magnitsky; President Trump and First Lady Melania Trump Finally Met with Queen Elizabeth at the Windsor Castle and It Was Widely Watched All Around the World; The White House Ordered a Wider Access for the Classified Documents that Detail the Investigation on FBI Agent Peter Strzok, Which Means that the Files that Were Only Accessible to the Gang of Eight Will Soon be Available to All the Members of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees. *Fox News Network*.
- O'Reilly, Bill; Henry, Ed; Marshall, Leslie; Tantaros, Andrea. (February 12, 2015A Thursday). Rising Terror Threat; President Obama's Legacy; The Truth about Race. *Fox News Network*.
- O'Reilly, Bill; Hume, Brit; Williams, Juan; Ham, Mary Katharine; Kelly, Megan; Watters, Jesse. (April 6, 2015B Monday). Trusting President Obama on Iran; Update on Bowe Bergdahl; Religious Freedom Law Controversy.
- O'Reilly, Bill; Krauthammer, Charles; Peters, Ralph; Williams, Juan; Ham, Mary Katherine. (March 2, 2015C Monday). Danger Overseas Getting Closer; How to Defeat ISIS; Netanyahu Speech to Congress. *Fox News Network*.
- O'Reilly, Bill; Powers, Kirsten; Crowley, Monica; Napolitano, Judge Andrew; Starks, Patricia. (May 29, 2015D Friday). War and Peace in the U.S.A.; Fighting the Terror Threat; Free Speech Debate. *Fox News Network*.
- O'Reilly, Bill; Powers, Kirsten; Crowley, Monica; Stossel, John. (February 24, 2015E Tuesday). ISIS Atrocities Continue; Confronting Evil. *Fox News Network*.
- O'Reilly, Bill; Powers, Kirsten; Crowley, Monica; Stossel, John. (April 14, 2015F Tuesday). A Matter of Respect; Church and State. *Fox News Network*.
- O'Reilly, Bill; Rove, Karl. (February 2, 2015G Monday). The Modern Day Nazis; Jeb Bush Being Examined by the Media; Presidential Politics. *Fox News Network*.
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- Perino, Dana; Baier, Bret; Doocy, Peter; Emanuel, Mike; Henry, Ed; Corke, Kevin; Hume, Brit; Rosen, James; Krauthammer, Charles; Lane, Charles; Hayes, Steve; La Jeunesse, William. (April 15, 2015 Wednesday). Tax Day; Rubio on Tax Reform; Hillary Clinton Presidential Campaign; Iran Nuclear Deal; Russia's Playbook. *Fox News Network*.

- Perino, Dana; Hume, Brit; Williams, Juan; Turner, Gillian; Wallace, Chris; Corke, Kevin. (July 8, 2018A Sunday). Interview with Kay Bailey Hutchison; Interview with Sen. Lindsey Graham; Trump's Supreme Court Pick; Democrats Warn of Shift; Impact of Court Pick on Midterms; North Korea Meeting; Trump-Putin Meeting; Power Player Elise Stefanik. *Fox News Network*.
- Perino, Dana; Roberts, John; Stirewalt, Chris; Kurtz, Howard; Hilton, Steve; Griffin, Jennifer; Hegseth, Pete. (July 6, 2018B Friday). Trump To Attend NATO Summit, Meet Putin, Visit U.K. And Make Supreme Court Pick; President Trump Attending NATO Summit Amid Demands That Members Pay "Fair Share;" U.S. Army Calls A.P. Report Misleading Says There's No New Policy To Oust Immigrant Recruits; Departing Congressman Calls Washington A Place That Just Sucks Your Soul; President Trump Will Be Announcing His Pick For The Supreme Court This Monday. And Democrats, Especially Those Running For Re-Election Will Be Pressured To Vote Whoever The President's Choice Might Be; A Song Posted By A Choir Group Was Mistakenly Misunderstood By Facebook As Hate Speech And Removed It From Their Site, But They Restored It And Apologized To The Group After Realizing That It Wasn't A Hate Speech; A Dog Who Had Road Trip With His Owners Amazingly Became Viral When His Photos Went All Over Social Media And Hit Almost Four Million Views. *Fox News Network*.
- Pirro, Jeanine; Gray, Robert. (July 14, 2018 Saturday). The Man Leading The Fbi's Investigation Into Hillary Clinton's Use Of A Personal E-Mail Server And Russian Interference In The 2016 Election Testified Before Congress This Week; The Presidential Palace In Mogadishu, Somalia Coming Under Attack Saturday; Mcdonald's Pulling Salads From About 3,000 Of Its Restaurants After Customers Got Sick From A Parasite Causing An Intestinal Illness. *Fox News Network*
- Rosen, James; Herridge, Catherine; Leventhal, Rick; Cameron, Carl; Roberts, John; Bream, Shannon; Springer, Dan. (January 16, 2015 Friday). United Front on Iran; Terror Threat: Digital Jihad; RNC Meeting in San Diego; Primary Colors; Funding Abortions; "Boston Globe" Writer Fired for Comment on Speaker Boehner; President and British Prime Minister Urge Congress to Hold Off on Passing Sanction Against Iran. *Fox News Network*.
- Van Susteren, Greta; Ingle, Laura; Huddy, John; Bolton, John; Jenkins, Griff. (March 13, 2015A Friday). ISIS Recruiting Teenagers from U.S.; Terror Suspects Talked U.S. Attack, Killing Obama; CIA's John Brennan Calls ISIS Expansion "Worrisome"; ISIS, Boko Haram Uniting Could Be Game Changer; Manhunt for Police Shooter Continues in Ferguson; Ferguson Protesters Call for Mayor to Resign; Witness Talks Filming Ferguson Police Shooting; Some Protestors from Outside of Ferguson Want "Dead Cops.". *Fox News Network*.
- Van Susteren, Greta; Klein, Rick; Ferrechio, Susan. (February 26, 2015B Thursday). More Christians Kidnapped by ISIS; ISIS Executioner Jihadi John Identified; Secretary John Kerry, DNI James Clapper Tell Different Stories on Global Terrorism; Susan Rice to Address AIPAC after Slamming Netanyahu's Upcoming Speech to Congress; Millions Given to Clinton Foundation while Hillary Clinton Was Secretary of State.. *Fox News Network*.
- Van Susteren, Greta; McKelway, Doug; Klein, Rick; Fournier, Ron. (February 23, 2015C Monday). Al Shabaab Threats Attacks on Western Shopping Malls; Mall of America Specifically Named Target in New Terror Threat; Al Shabaab Video Also Naming Shopping Centers in England; American Matthew VanDyke In Iraq On His Own Training Iraqi Christians to Fight ISIS; Daniel Hannan Says Obama Not Helping in

- Stopping Westerners Flocking to ISIS; DHS's Jeh Johnson Playing Defense for Obama's Refusal to Link ISIS with Radical Islam.. *Fox News Network*.
- Van Susteren, Greta; Powell, Conor; McKelway, Doug; Rove, Karl; Harrigan, Steve; Henry, Ed; Klein, Rick; Kucinich, Jackie. No Title In Original (March 16, 2015D Monday). *Fox News Network*.
- Van Susteren, Greta. (February 12, 2015E Thursday). IRS Seizing Bank Accounts of Small Businesses Doing Nothing Wrong; IRS Chief Gets Grilled at Hearing over Targeting Scandal, Rehiring Tax- Cheat Employees; Rep. Jim Jordan Warns Obama's Immigration Executive Action Could Lead to Voter Fraud; Russia, Ukraine Reach Peace Deal on Cease-Fire Agreement to Start Sunday; Government Employees Watching Porn at Work on Taxpayer Dime; Inside the "American Sniper" Trial.. *Fox News Network*.
- Wallace, Chris; Baier, Bret. (February 6, 2015 Friday). Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker Profiled; ISIS Claims Jordanian Airstrike Killed American Aid Worker; Violence Continues in Ukraine. *Fox News Network*.
- Wallace, Chris; Roberts, John; Edson, Rich. (June 10, 2018A Sunday). Discussion of Trump-Kim Meeting; Peter Navarro Interview; Allies Retaliate over Trade; Trump Wants Russia Readmitted to G-7; Summit with Reagan and Gorbachev. *Fox News Network*.
- Wallace, Chris; Rove, Karl; Lane, Charles; Gingrich, Newt; Roberts, John. (July 15, 2018B Sunday). Interview with Sen. Chris Coons; Russian Military Officers Indicted for Election Interference; Objectives of Trump-Putin Meeting; Signs of Success from the Russian Meeting; Impact of Kavanaugh on Supreme Court; China and U.S. Allies Retaliate with Tariffs; FBI Agent Testifies. *Fox News Network*.
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- Watters, Jessie; Gray, Robert; Pavlich, Katie; Milley, Jillian. (July 14, 2018 Saturday). A Tale Of Two Tours On Watters' Words; Trump Hating Fbi Agent Peter Strzok Testified On Capitol Hill; The Top Us Diplomats Saying President Trump And Russia's Vladimir Putin Should Meet As Planned Monday; The Israeli Military Unleashing The Largest Daytime Airstrikes In Four Years On The Gaza Strip After Hamas Fired Dozens Of Rockets Into Israel Throughout The Day; As Illegal Immigrants Pour Into The United States, Violence Continues To Surge South Of The Border.. *Fox News Network*.



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