

“The securitization of Russia in the EU: the risk of being locked between the ‘Hybrid War’ and the ‘New Cold War’ frames”.

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Abstract:

Relations between the European Union (EU) and Russia entered in its more difficult era coinciding with the Ukraine’s crisis and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 by Russia. This relationship has moved from “strategic partnership” to being cast as one of threat or even enmity. Following the Copenhagen School's theory of securitization, which studies the processes of transforming subjects into matters of security by the framing of them as “existential threats”, both the EU and Russia have concluded securitization processes vis-à-vis the other. This chapter analyses the securitization in the EU of Russia, and particularly focuses on two frames that can operate as “securitization moves”: the “Hybrid War” and the “New Cold War”. The EU’s securitization of Russia escalated through three stages, both in terms of scope and intensity.

Being the initial one limited to the coordination of Central and Eastern Europe EU Members States after the August 2008 Russian-Georgian War, Ukraine’s crisis provided the scenario for a securitization of Russia joined actively by the Western European powers. In this second phase, between 2014 and 2016, these countries narratives blamed Russia for undermining regional security and threatening their national and European security interests. However, only in 2016 securitizing narratives, within the wider frame of the “Hybrid War”, included direct and existential threats to their countries and the EU systemic survival. This third phase may either stabilize in the same level of securitization or evolve to one of two opposed directions: the “(de)securitization” and the “macro-securitization” if a “New Cold War’s “securitization move” is successful.

Keywords: EU-Russia relations, Securitization, Hybrid War, New Cold War.

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