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ОСНОВНЫЕ КОМПОНЕНТЫ ВЫСТУПЛЕНИЙ В. СУРКОВА НА ТЕМУ БУДУЩЕГО РОССИИ С. М. Макинен

BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE SURKOVIAN NARRATIVE ON THE FUTURE OF RUSSIA S. M. Mäkinen

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В статье рассматриваются выступления Владислава Суркова на тему будущего России. Автор показывает, что тексты выступлений Суркова отражают влияние неолиберальной идеологии, и, следовательно, подчеркивает, что граждане сами несут ответственность за свое счастье и благосостояние. Однако Сурков отводит государству более важную роль, чем следует из логики неолиберализма. Таким образом, Сурков подчеркивает отчетливое движение России в сторону модернизации, частично повторяя тезисы прежних советских и российских политиков о модернизации.

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The article discusses the narrative of Vladislav Surkov on the future of Russia. The author argues that the Surkovian narrative is strongly influenced by neo-liberal ideology and accordingly emphasizes the responsibility of citizens for their own well-being and happiness. However, Surkov assigns the state a stronger role than the conventional neo-liberal logic would suggest, thereby partly reproducing the former Russian and Soviet modernization discourses by stressing Russia's distinctive path to modernization.

Ключевые слова: Сурков, Россия, неолиберальный дискурс, политический нарратив, модернизация, суверенная демократия.

Keywords: Surkov, Russia, neoliberal discourses, political narratives, modernization, sovereign democracy.

Introduction

At the time of the writing of my original article, published in *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* in 2011 (now *East European Politics*), Vladislav Surkov was still the first deputy head of the presidential administration (прим. автора: *During his presidency Medvedev was not too keen on all Surkov's ideas, like sovereign democracy, yet in May 2008 Surkov's position was upgraded from deputy head to first deputy head of the presidential administration. In addition, President Medvedev nominated Surkov to chair the working group for revising the legislation on noncommercial organizations, and as the deputy chair of the presidential commission on modernization and technological development of economy. Consequently, we could assume that Surkov's influence remained considerable during the 'tandem rule'*).

He had been described as Vladimir Putin's chief ideologist [2, p. 3 – 4] and even compared to Mikhail Suslov, the *éminence grise* of the Soviet Union during the Brezhnev era [8, p. 67]. Chief Editor of *Nezavisimaya gazeta* Konstantin Remchukov went as far as to say that 'Vladislav Surkov is responsible [...] for the creation of the political system in contemporary Russia.' [13] As part of the political system, Surkov also supervised the creation and guidance of United Russia, the so-called party of power. Now, as the deputy prime minister, Surkov's position in Russian politics has changed, but we can still take him as a representative of the Russian ruling elite [see e.g. 9] and the Surkovian narrative as an example of the discourse of this elite. There are competing narratives (прим. автора: *See [11] for the contestable nature of all stories*) in Russian society (and within the

elite), but here they are referred to only as far as Surkov himself refers to them when defining the opponents or alternative futures for Russia.

In this article we will examine the goal that Surkov sets for Russia in the future, how this goal is justified and what is required in order to achieve it. In addition, we will study how Surkov construes the political subject (who will take us to the goal), helpers (who will help this subject) and opponents (who will try to prevent us from reaching the goal). Thus, the main goal of this article is to represent these building blocks (прим. автора: *The building blocks of the narrative are adapted from Greimas' actantial model as presented in [32], but the Greimas' model is not otherwise used*) – political subject, helper, goals, justifications for the goals, opponents – of Surkov's narrative or the Surkovian 'metanarrative' [see 18, p. 78]. The metanarrative will be constructed from many different texts created for different audiences, including speeches, interviews and articles published in the book *Teksty (Texts) 97-07 [19]* and a small booklet *Osnovnye tendentsii i perspektivy razvitiya sovremennoi Rossii (Main Tendencies and Perspectives for the Development of Contemporary Russia)*, published in 2007 [20]. In addition, we have analyzed more recent texts from 2009. What these texts have in common is that they have been published as a newspaper or an Internet article or a book chapter, even though Surkov would have originally given them as speeches to a narrower audience. Thus, we can name Russian speakers as the audience of all these texts.

We may understand a narrative not just as an 'object to be interpreted and evaluated but also a way of inter-

preting and evaluating' [11, p. 167]. In political science, political narrative has been described as a 'subcategory of political discourse', which can be used as a method to 'study different "voices" in politics' [18 p. 76 – 77]. Here this voice belongs to Vladislav Surkov, and narrative would rather be understood as the object of study than the actual method of studying.

In what follows, we will argue that Surkov reflects the contemporary neoliberal logic [14, p. 198] (прим. автора: *'Neoliberalism' was coined by the Freiburg School of German economists between the world wars and signified a more moderate form of liberalism than classical liberalism* [1, p. 136]. *Elsewhere it has been argued that at first neoliberalism was a movement in response to collectivism, and also to 'the "new" interventionist variants within liberalism itself'* [30, p. 69 – 70]. *Usually we refer to neoliberalism with regard to the ideas of Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, their criticism of Keynesianism, and to radical forms of market liberalism, such as in Pinochet's Chile, or Reaganism and Thatcherism*) in his narrative on the future of Russia. In parallel, he partly reproduces the former Russian/Soviet modernization discourses stressing Russia's distinctive path to modernization. Neoliberalism should be understood as a criticism of the Soviet or Western type welfare state and against 'a culture of dependency'. Neoliberals do not want the state to wither away, but the role of the state should be changed, it should 'ensure order by providing a legal framework for social and economic life. But then within this framework autonomous actors [...] are to go freely about their business, making their own decisions and controlling their own destinies' [14, p. 199] The role of the state transforms into that of a supervisor [see 17, p. 324]. Neoliberalism may also be taken as a hegemonic discourse which has reached most of the countries, their education systems, media, financial institutions, state institutions [see 4]. Accordingly, the Russian political elite – in this article Mr. Surkov – advances the ideas of neo-liberalism, but also combines them with what Surkov calls respect for Russian traditions and Russian political culture, including the centralization of power.

The highest goal of all for Surkov is to make Russia a world leader and to achieve the well-being of her citizens. Making Russia a sovereign democracy and a modern society can be taken as interim goals and they also serve as the instruments for making Russia a world leader. As argued in previous studies, sovereign democracy can be understood as Russia's own distinctive path to democracy. Nobody from outside should dictate to Russia and Russians how this path should be taken. However, it is the Russian political culture that sets the limits for possible futures (or for paths to the future). This goes for the task of modernization too, the main motive of which is competitiveness of Russia's economy – Russia should be transformed from a raw-material based economy into an innovative, intellectual economy. This, in its turn, would enable the greatness of Russia. When studying Putin's ideology (or rather the values and identity according to which the goals are set and actions taken), Evans has also argued that for Putin 'economic strength is the basis of survival [...] to be inferior economically is to be vulnerable politically and militarily' [3, p. 902]. Surkov

follows the same line of thinking stressing the role of economy in Russia's development.

In the Surkovian narrative a nationally oriented elite is required in order to take Russia through modernization. Russian people are not yet efficient or innovative enough. Even though modernization is mainly understood as modernization of economy, it is also as an enlightenment process – modernization of minds – which requires modernization of education [21 in 19, p. 145]. In its current form the 'system of education trains specialists for the economy of the last century' [22 in 19, p. 24]. What Surkov says about education is directly linked to the political subject part in his narrative, because education is what should produce the leading class, the new elite. The main helping actor, e. g. in the modernization project, should be United Russia, the party of power, which has the majority of seats in the State Duma, the lower house of the federal parliament, and in most regional parliaments. On the narrative level, United Russia should be a representative of the huge middle class. However, in practice, it should be the tool of the ruling elite which sets the goal for the future in the name of the Russian people.

Surkov represents the Soviet past and the Yeltsin period as models which should not be repeated as such; they are alternative futures which have once been abandoned. The negative experiences of these periods also serve as justifications for the future which Surkov advocates. Accordingly, those advocating neo-Soviet models or 'liberal dogmatism' represent the main opponents.

Below we will briefly introduce the building blocks of the Surkovian narrative on the future of Russia. For a more comprehensive account of the narrative and for a discussion of previous studies on Vladislav Surkov, and in particular the concept of sovereign democracy, please see the original article from 2011.

Making Russia a leader

Below we will see how Surkov construes Russia's past, what role the Soviet and Yeltsinite past play in his narrative and what goals Surkov sets for the future of Russia. However, first we will see who will take Russia to the desired goal, who is the political subject.

A new nationally oriented elite as the political subject?

Surkov empowers Russian citizens, stresses that the future is in their hands, but at the same time places a huge responsibility on their shoulders: 'Whether the great history of Russia gets a great continuation depends only on us, its citizens' [23 in 19, p. 56]. He also defines strict limits within which this power may be utilized. That is, the Russian people have a mission presented by the political leadership: 'President Putin continuously reminds us that on the agenda is [...] active work for modernization [...]. We have to build a foundation for an innovative culture [...]. We have to convert the raw material economy to an intellectual economy' [23 in 19, p. 56]. So even though Surkov tries to convince us that 'now our main value is an individual who for his/her part builds innovative economy and creates civil society' [24] (The interview was given in relation to the Cadre Reserve project of President Medvedev. The discourse which stresses the importance of individuals was shared by Then

President Medvedev and United Russia [e. g. 33]. Then Prime Minister Putin also from time to time stressed ‘putting people first’ and contrasted the ‘bad’ Soviet past (or part of that past) with the different realities of today and tomorrow, see e.g. Putin quoted in [2]), the meaning of an individual is instrumental: an individual has no value as such, but the value comes with *the ability to perform something*. This is exactly what has been argued to be true of Friedrich Hayek’s understanding of neoliberalism: ‘For Hayek [...] freedom is identified with efficiency [...]’ [17, p. 324] and in addition, freedom is equated with future-oriented efficiency and thus freedom becomes instrumental [17, p. 325]. According to Surkov, what Russia needs are ‘new effective people’ because the ‘innovation economy is about people’, Russia needs ‘creative people’, that is, those who ‘want to change the world’ [24]. A human capital approach is manifest in the Surkovian narrative.

When defining the political subject, Surkov refers to an authoritative source – the Constitution of the Russian Federation: ‘The sovereign is the people of the Russian Federation.’ Therefore, the Russian people are those who should make the decisions: ‘Sovereign democracy is a way of political life of society in which the power and its bodies and actions are chosen, formed and implemented exclusively by the Russian nation (*rossiiskaya natsiya*) [...] for the material well-being, freedom and equality of all citizens, social groups and peoples [...]’ [23 in 19, p. 44]. Thus Surkov emphasizes that the decisions concerning Russia must be made within Russia and by the Russian nation. What is then the nation (*natsiya*) Surkov refers to? According to him, it is a supraethnic (*sverhetnicheskii*) entity of all citizens of the country and corresponds to the concept of multinational people (*narod*), used in the Constitution [23 in 19, p. 43]. Thus in Surkov’s narrative the nation, the political subject, is not defined by ethnos, but by citizenship. This can be called ‘civic nationalism’ as for instance Viatcheslav Morozov has argued [10, p. 166] (*Morozov also notes that the Putin administration has recognized the danger of ethnic nationalism for the unity of state [10, p. 165]*).

However, it seems that the Russian people as a whole is not qualified or educated enough to function as the political subject, and Surkov would rather give power to the new nationally oriented elite: ‘What makes sovereign democracy different from others is *an intellectual leadership, a united elite*, a nationally oriented open economy and an ability to protect oneself. What is required for this is civil solidarity, *an intellectual layer as the leading layer of society*, which is formed in free competition [...]’ [23 in 19, p. 51 – 52] (прим. автора: *Morozov also notes that the Putin administration has recognized the danger of ethnic nationalism for the unity of state [10, p. 165]*). Here we can again see the mix of usually contradictory concepts, such as *nationally oriented* and *open* when referring to economy, or when referring to the leaders, a predetermined understanding that they should be ‘intellectuals’ but also a condition that they will reach the leading position in *free competition*. The latter follows the neoliberal logic, in which a free society produces a better elite [17, p. 327]. However, it should also be noted that in the Surkovian narrative the elite should arise from within the Russian nation and not

from outside Russia, or from within those socialized into the ways of ‘abroad’. The political subject is national, Russian (a state-minded citizen of the Russian Federation, *rossiiskii*). ‘Foreign’ elements would again pose a threat to Russia and Russians’ well-being.

Sovereign democracy and modernization

The ultimate goal in Surkov’s narrative is to make Russia number 1: ‘a leader nation’ and ‘one of the centres of intellectual activity.’ [22 in 19, p. 23] Sovereign democracy and modernization can be taken as interim goals, or preconditions or means to reach this ultimate goal. Furthermore, democracy can also be seen as secondary in relation to modernization.

To Surkov, democracy is a precondition of modernization, of making Russia competitive. Accordingly, democracy is not necessarily a goal *per se*, but has an instrumental value: ‘only society based on competition and cooperation can be effective and competitive.’ [21 in 19, p. 136] Actually the instrumental nature of democracy has been noted for example, by Alexander Lukin when explaining the Russian (popular) political culture. Democracy was understood as a ‘means to achieve a political ideal that was very different from that of Western democratic theory’ [6, p. 85] Lukin explained that liberalization was also seen as a means to achieve the goal of material prosperity, and that accordingly, the task set for the leadership in post-Soviet Russia was specifically to guarantee the material wealth [6, p. 76]. According to Lukin, Putin’s term (after evolving from ‘authoritarian monetarism towards a more social orientation’) actually came close to the political ideal of the majority of Russians [6, p. 76] and therefore, Putin’s popularity should have been no surprise.

In the Surkovian narrative democracy is also a precondition for cooperation with the West, accordingly, it is a pragmatic choice. If Russia is not an open democratic society then it has no access to the modern technology of the West and as a consequence it will not be able to carry out modernization [21 in 19, p. 136]. Thus, democracy is again secondary to the goal of making Russia compatible with the rules of contemporary neoliberal capitalism, of modernizing Russia.

Moreover, in Surkov’s concept of sovereign democracy, democracy is described as individual freedom and sovereignty as national freedom [23 in 19, p. 57]. There cannot be individual freedom without national freedom. Democracy and sovereignty go together because the ‘dignity of a free man requires that the nation to which he belongs is also free’ [23 in 19 p.44]. The Putin era, supported by the majority of Russians, unlike the regime of the 1990s, is described as a real move towards democratization with stabilization and dictatorship of law; it signifies a return of democracy to democratic institutions [e. g. 20, p. 16]. Russian democracy is most often justified by stability, it is an alternative to revolution - if a revolution were to take place then ‘maniacs and terrorists’ would assume power [29 in 19, p. 34].

Democracy is defined as democracy *à la Russe*, democracy based on Russian culture and Russian statehood in the past. Thus even though ‘democracy comes from European civilization’, in Russia it should also originate from a ‘very specific Russian version’ [22 in 19, p. 10] (прим. автора: *Elsewhere Surkov [20, p. 6 and 8]*

stresses that Russian (rossiiskaya) civilization is part of European civilization and has gone through the same phases in history, and that Russia is a European country. Similar statements (on Russia's Europeaness but the need to follow a distinctive path) can be found in Putin's argumentation, see [3, p. 902]. Surkov denies that sovereign democracy signifies self-isolation or any exotic Russian version of democracy. Yet cultural tradition sets some limits to the pace at which the reforms can be executed; culture cannot be changed overnight. Surkov defines sovereignty as openness, participation in open competition: 'it is a political synonym for competitiveness' [20, p. 23]. Again the Surkovian narrative departs from what could be defined as a more 'conventional' neoliberal logic by stressing the sovereignty aspect, or 'Russianness', *national version of neoliberalism*.

Regarding the foreign policy level, Surkov understands democracy as a 'struggle against hegemonic pretensions' of any one country. Russia stands for multipolarity and equal cooperation of sovereign states: 'national sovereignty [should be made] a factor for equal globalization and democratization of international relations. Sovereignty must be maintained without damaging democracy, and be open without losing one's identity' [23 in 19, p. 47]. Sovereign democracies are against all global dictatorships and monopolies [23 in 19, p. 47]. Accordingly, Russia should continue to struggle for 'real democracy' instead of the phony one advocated by some other states. We can see that Surkov defends Russia's position by referring to the true essence of a concept, misunderstood by others – either intentionally or by mistake. Democracy should stand for equality, but also diversity in the sense of different cultures maintaining their own identity such as the Russian identity. When Surkov stresses equality and diversity in foreign policy, he continues the discourse of the Russian foreign policy leadership except for the short period of the pro-Western Russian foreign policy discourse under foreign minister Andrei Kozuyev (прим. автора: *The shift from 'pure pro-Western' to 'pure Eurasian' foreign policy has also been questioned, see [7]*).

Even though Surkov argues that modernization can be built on the foundation of a democratic regime and that Russia does not need the modernization models of Mao Zedong or Pinochet [23 in 19, p. 47], Surkov's narrative on modernization seems to be close to what Ol'ga Kryshtanovskaya has described as the Andropov model of modernization, which was typical of the Putin era [5]. Of course, this is no surprise as Surkov has been said to be one of the chief ideologists of that time. Kryshtanovskaya understands the Andropov model as the authoritarian political leadership carrying out economic reforms; something similar to the Chinese model of modernization as she argues [5]. Putin's task was therefore to stop the revolution started in the Yeltsin era, to catch up with the West but not to become like it [5]. However, as argued above, in 2009 Surkov did emphasize that the economy could not be reformed without a comprehensive change in society [25]. A modernized society is a precondition for a successful modernization of the economy, which in turn is required in order to succeed in conditions of contemporary neoliberal capitalism. The Surkovian narrative thus seems to accept the framework of neoliberal logic for

what it is, but intends to modify some parts of it by adapting it to Russian conditions, to make it *Russian* neoliberal capitalism.

Political culture as a justification for the goals

One of the main justifications for the ways in which modernization should be carried out (and for the present political system or the mid-term goal of sovereign democracy) is the Russian political culture. To Surkov, it is Russian culture which defines the limits for the alternatives open to Russia in the future: 'there are many options for the future but the list is not unlimited, it is limited by genetic formulation of the national culture' [22 in 19, p. 18]. Thus, unlike most scholars studying political culture, Surkov's understanding of the relationship between the political culture and political system is to a certain extent deterministic. Russia cannot escape her culture and should find the alternatives within the limits of that culture: 'culture is a destiny' [22 in 19, p. 14&18] and 'Russia has no future outside its own culture' [22 in 19, p. 21]. This culture should be seen in a positive light. Russia should use the 'strengths of the national character and political culture for creating competitive economy and viable democracy' [22 in 19, p. 18]. Surkov refers to an authority when defining the political culture, that is, to a Russian philosopher Ivan Il'in (прим. автора: *When Surkov refers to Il'in, as Prime Minister Putin has done, Surkov tries to convince the audience of his own authority, positioning himself in the same group with Putin and Il'in. Surkov sees Il'in as a soothsayer, a prophet, who in the 1940s was able to see to the future, to the collapse of the Soviet Union and its consequences [20, p. 10; 21 in 19, p. 129]*). The Russian culture, according to Il'in, should be taken as an organic whole characterized by a holistic view, intuitive approach and idealism. Thus, according to Surkov, in Russian political practice/culture there is a tendency to wholeness through the centralization of power, idealization of the political struggle and personification of political institutions [see also 30]. Accordingly, Russian political culture of the past and present justifies the political system characterized by the power vertical. Decentralization would undermine democracy, create chaos and the degradation of social institutions and the structure of democracy. Again, this should also be seen as a criticism of the Yeltsin era.

Soviet and Eltsinite pasts as further justifications

The main reference points for Surkov's story on Russia's future are the Soviet past and the Yeltsin period; they function as his justifications for the goals and the ways to achieve them in the future. These two stories about Russia's past also represent possible alternatives (which should definitely be rejected) for the future [20, p. 41 – 42], and their advocates also represent the two groups of internal opponents.

According to Surkov, the two major achievements of the Soviet Union were its ideological work and industrialization. The first, freedom and equality rhetoric, for its part enabled de-colonization in Africa. However, even though there was freedom and equality on the rhetorical level, in practice they did not exist in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was a closed society. In addition, the Soviet Union was unable to produce an *effective elite*: the results were assessed in terms of a dogmatic aspect of the party and not from the pragmatic

point of view. What was also negative about the Soviet period was that the material needs of citizens were not satisfied. Despite all these negative sides, Surkov would still like to stress that the Soviet Union was a huge modernization project. Here we must understand modernization as technological modernization to do e.g. with electrification, nuclear and military technology. However, according to Surkov, the Russian people paid a huge price for it [21 in 19, p. 127 – 128, also 20, p. 8 – 9] (прим. автора: *This claim is repeated in the United Russia programme: Russia has in the past achieved many things at too high a cost. This should not be repeated and the state should not ignore its responsibilities to its citizens in situations of crisis [33]*). In addition, they later made a great sacrifice when they chose to get onto the ‘right path’, that is, when they chose not to continue the Soviet project and consequently, ‘lost a part of their territory, people, a huge part of the economy’ [21 in 19, p. 128 – 129]. Accordingly, here Surkov is again referring to the political subject, their decision made, but also to its characteristic willingness for self-sacrifice if required for a better future.

Surkov does indeed also refer to the Yeltsin regime, ‘liberal fundamentalism’ [27 in 19, p. 60]. as another sad period in Russian history. What characterize this period were ‘temporary leaders who did not take responsibility’. Surkov criticizes their disregard for the state: the ‘state was an evil for them’ and because of this ‘the power moved to the financial groups – oligarchy instead of democracy, power of the minority, manipulation instead of representation, corruption replaced competition’. However, there was at least something good in the 1990 s: ‘strong people came to significant positions, [...] formation of a new layer of the nation’, including Putin and with him stabilization and movement towards democracy supported by the majority of Russians [27 in 19, p. 60, also 20, p. 10 – 11 & 15].

Internal and external opponents

As usual, there are both internal and external actors or phenomena that make it difficult to attain the set goals in the narrative. Surkov classifies Russia’s internal foes, that is, those threatening Russian democracy and the path to modernization, into two separate ‘camps’. On one side there are communists or extreme nationalists whom Surkov calls ‘nationalist isolationists’, that is, those who want to revert to ‘quasi-Soviet models’. On the other side, there are ‘oligarchs’, those who want to transfer the power to some groups which advocate the interests of financial or administrative structures [21 & 23 in 19, p. 51 & 49, see also 20, p. 41]. By the latter he again refers to the Yeltsin regime and the political and economic elite of that time, which he also calls an ‘off-shore aristocracy’ [20, p. 32 – 33]. If ‘nationalist isolationists’ came to power, Russia would become a Soviet-like bureaucratic state but without the greatness of the Soviet Union, and this would also bring about conflicts between different nations [20, p. 42]. If the oligarchic state were re-created, then it would mean losing Russia’s sovereignty and democracy [20, p. 41].

Surkov is worried in particular about the threat of external intervention, intervention manifested as a ‘fifth column’ in Russia, which is no surprise, as the speeches in 2006 and 2007 were given in the aftermath of the ‘col-

oured revolutions’ in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. ‘Today we have politicians who publicly declare and are not even ashamed about it [...] that the destiny of the country will be decided outside its borders’ [20 in 19, p. 31]. Surkov wants to defend the Russian people against this external threat and defend Russian citizens and their right to make the decisions: ‘democracy is the power of the people [...] and this power of our people (*narod*) [should be] in our country and not the power of other [foreign] people in our country’ [20 in 19, p. 31]. In addition, Surkov emphasizes that democracy cannot be exported, but ‘it must be borne and grown from within the country and people [...]’ [20 in 19, p. 32]. That is, democracy should be national as well: ‘even if there might be common human values, each nation (*narod*) has its own way of adopting these ideals’ [20 in 19, p. 32].

If we then look at external opponents, the West may be named as such. However, Surkov argues that it would be a simplification to say that the West pressures Russia with its supposed lack of democracy because the West has other goals, namely, to get control over the natural resources of Russia by undermining her state institutions, her ability to defend itself, and her independence (*samostoyatel'nost'*). Thus, here he implicitly argues that he does not believe in the conspiracy theories of (extreme) nationalists and communists. Surkov interprets the problems with the West as having to do with two European cultures which differ from each other in their ‘spirit or ethos’. However, it is possible and even vital to get these cultures closer to each other [22 in 19, p. 20].

Surkov also admits that Russia cannot ‘create an innovative economy’ or modernize without Western knowledge, Russia ‘should get access to intellectual resources of the West’ [22 in 19, p. 20]. There cannot be any ‘sovereign modernization’, that is, Russia cannot count solely on her own resources [20, p. 46]. Therefore, Surkov speaks for cooperation in the fields of science, technology, higher education, multi-national corporations in high technology spheres [23 in 19, p. 56]. Again we can see that the West is there to be ‘exploited’ as Russia should pick everything she needs from the Western experience, but still not become Western-like. Russia should modernize on her own terms. This is exactly what Richard Sakwa has argued with the term partial adaptation [15]. According to Sakwa, the cultural trap has meant that modernization is not comprehensive; the goal is economic and technological modernization and certain spheres of life will be safeguarded against modernization [15, p. 63].

Conclusions

The Surkovian narrative on the future of Russia constitutes an example of the Russian elite’s discourses emphasizing the need both to involve and integrate Russia into the world economy and world political system, and to do this on Russia’s own terms, taking into account Russia’s past and traditions. The neoliberal ideology has had a major impact on Surkov’s narrative, but as Sergei Prozorov has argued concerning the discourses of the Russian leadership, here it is also a question of ‘domestication’ of neoliberalism [12, p. 121 – 122] (прим. автора: *Prozorov argues that liberal ideology has been ‘domesticated’ in Russia and that Putin’s hegemonic*

discourse is liberal conservatism). The role given to the state is not only that of supervisor or facilitator; Surkov also argues for a more active role, e. g. intervention in the Russian economy by the state. In addition, the state's strong role in society, the centralization of power, is also justified (in addition to the political culture) by the 'quality' of the citizens of Russia. They should become more effective, more responsible, and only then can the power be vested in their hands. Of course, both the state's strong role and not trusting the people to make the decisions can be seen as a transition period, which can be left behind when the elite and the people are 'educated' enough.

Modernization argumentation forms an important part in Surkov's narrative and can also be seen as taking some ground from the earlier key concept, sovereign democracy. Surkov seems to stress modernization in the field of economy and technology, but increasingly also in

the field of education and culture, understood as a way of life. As the logic of this narrative suggests, economy cannot be transformed into something else, that is, there can be no innovative development or technological innovations, unless there are innovative, creative and initiative people. The whole way of thinking should be changed and people should be taught to take responsibility for their own future.

Construing a metanarrative from Surkov's texts has afforded a more organized view of the foundations on which Surkov builds Russia's future. The Surkovian narrative has taught us to whom Surkov has vested the responsibility and right to build this future, how this future is justified and whom he perceives as threats to this future. How this narrative evolves in the future and what position it will occupy in the discourses of the Russian political elite will remain to be explored later.

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Информация об авторе:

Сирке Макинен – доктор социологии, старший научный сотрудник Центра исследований России при Александровском институте Хельсингского университета и Школы менеджмента Университета Тампере, Финляндия.

Sirke Melina Mäkinen – Doctor of Social Sciences, Research Fellow, Finnish Centre of Excellence in Russian Studies: Choices of Russian Modernization, Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki, and School of Management, University of Tampere, Finland. Sirke.Makinen@uta.fi