Memory, Media, and Securitization: Russian Media Framing of the Ukrainian Crisis[1]

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Abstract: This article uses securitization theory as a lens for analyzing the Russian media framing of the Ukrainian crisis as a struggle against "fascism". It argues that the distinctive shape of the post-Soviet Russian collective memory is a crucial factor enabling the successful use of the "fascism" frame. The article combines "big data" and qualitative analysis of the Russian media discourse in the spring and summer of 2014. It compares the prevalence of the fascist frame in different forms of media: *Pervyi kanal* news reports; mass media more broadly; and social media (*Twitter*, *VKontakte*, and *Zhivoi Zhurnal*), and finds that there is a high degree of similarity across "old" and "new" media in the categories and terms used to narrate the conflict in Ukraine.

Introduction

From the outset, the Euromaidan was viewed as a threat by the Russian authorities. For the Russian elite, these events called up an alarming parallel with the 2004 Orange Revolution:[2] not only had the possibility of Ukraine moving into the "West"'s sphere of influence reared its head once again, but so too had the threat that of a Ukrainian revolutionary movement spreading to Russia. As the

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2   On the Russian elite's reaction to the Orange Revolution see further R. Horvath, *Putin's Preventive Counter-revolution: Post-Soviet Authoritarianism and the Spectre of Velvet Revolution* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).