Part II

Globalization and Foreign Policy
Morality is a poor practical guide to foreign affairs. However, power politics in its pure form has been equally deplored by the developed world of democratic states. Walking the narrow path between these two extremes, a policymaker looks for stable principles that fall short of moral altruism or excessive self-restraint but provide enough psychological comfort, can be successfully “sold” to the public, and can be defended in the face of domestic or international criticism. The principle of a “just” foreign policy fits well in this niche exactly because it meets the demands for a reasonable compromise between power and the ideal.

Concepts of justice need to be more in themselves than a smokescreen or decoy offered by cynical politicians to their naive constituencies. Even if initially introduced into foreign policymaking to mislead potential critics, the notion of justice in its applied form soon becomes deeply incorporated into the country’s self-perception and international identity. It is mainly through identity politics that the notion of justice translates into the foreign policy “habits” and “inclinations” of a state.
Historically, the idea of justice resonated strongly with Russian culture. From Pushkin to Dostoevsky to Tolstoy, much of classical Russian nineteenth-century literature revolved around the notion of justice and its psychological and social repercussions. But apart from the elusive features of the “Russian soul,” there seem to be more down-to-earth explanations for the impact of justice concepts on the country’s international conduct. Such explanations invoke Russia’s crisis of identity after the end of the Cold War. This crisis brought about the need for points of reference in constructing a new Russian identity. Although no dramatic break with the Soviet identity eventually occurred, justice turned out to be an important fallback in formulating the new features of the “democratic Russia’s” identity and, consequently, in defining the country’s patterns of international conduct.

Justice concepts are especially powerful in raising an actor’s self-assessment—something that is badly needed in times of identity crisis, when witch-hunters are seeking out those responsible for the collapse of the previous identity. It is also in times of crisis that countries become especially concerned with their external image. Because they need international recognition of their emerging identity, they stress their past roles as providers of “common international good.” And self-perceptions of these roles constitute the core of “international justice” concepts cherished by the country’s policymakers and public. Yet when the comfort of a clear identity is recaptured, foreign policy becomes more pragmatic and, consequently, less reliant on justice concepts. Once a more or less comfortable niche for a country is found, policymakers realize that the problems they face in the real world often require “unjust” policies and treatment of other actors. This makes the case for the implementation of justice principles more difficult to defend and diminishes the salience of justice rhetoric in the country’s public discourse.

Justice reappears on the scene as a principle motivating foreign policy when a state begins to seek favorable changes in the status quo. Strong arguments are usually needed to justify assertive policies aimed at improving a state’s standing vis-à-vis other states, and justice can be a handy diplomatic instrument in limiting external resistance to one’s expanding influence.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it analyzes the mechanisms whereby justice concepts affect foreign policy decisionmaking. Second, it seeks to substantiate the hypothesis that the salience of justice concepts tends to decrease as a state overcomes its identity crisis. The foreign policy of Russia—a country that suffered a severe identity crisis in the 1990s—provides a remarkable testing ground for this hypothesis. I argue that the in-
fluence of “justice discourse” on foreign policy was diminishing in Russia as the country was consolidating its post–Cold War identity.

The Past as a Moral Guide to the Future: What Is Justice in International Politics?

Hedley Bull defined justice in terms of the distribution of resources or conduct. He wrote that justice “is a particular kind of right conduct, viz. conduct in which persons are treated fairly, or given the rights and benefits that are due to them.” In a similar vein, he regarded a just distribution of resources to be a “fair” distribution. To make a step further, one needs to single out the abstract yet specific principles of “fairness” in distribution or conduct.

Let us assume that the notion of justice finds expression in an actor’s (A) behavior vis-à-vis another actor (B). Then the principles of “just treatment” will arguably include:

1. **Reciprocity.** All other things being equal, B deserves from A the same treatment that A was receiving from B in the past. For example, just treatment implies gratitude for services rendered in the past.

2. **The “general past record”** of B as recognized by A. If A’s experience of treatment from B is absent, too limited, or too mixed to be used by A as a guide in dealing with B, the whole “past record” of B can be referred to in determining what kind of treatment to which B is “entitled.” This principle, which can be viewed as a “diffuse” form of reciprocity, equally applies to a “fair distribution” among a group of actors. In such a case, other things being equal, the share each actor gets depends on her merit defined, for example, by her previous contributions to the common cause.

3. **Certain inherent features of B.** Judgments on whether B is “good” or “bad” and hence what treatment B deserves often hinge on B’s nature or acquired properties that have not affected A-B relationship to date. For example, if A and B are humans and have not had any prior interaction, B’s nature as a human being, who enjoys the right to life and dignity, can define the boundaries of “fair” treatment of B by A. Yet sometimes, it is exactly the opposite: Treatment will be “unfair” if it is a function of certain inherent features of B. In the case of humans, such features can include sex, race, or other properties that a human is not able to choose. In the international community of states, for example, the legal understanding of justice implies that if a dispute between two states is consid-
ered by an international court, the size and the relative national wealth or strength of the armed forces of each party should not be taken into account by the court when ruling on the case.

4. If the first three principles are met, the fairness of treatment is reinforced by A’s *consistency in policy and observance of unswerving principles* in dealing with B. This factor plays a crucial role in defining the moral image (and hence the extent of righteousness) of A as an actor seeking to influence B. If A’s guidelines in treating B used to comply with the first two criteria, a change in those guidelines could testify to egoism, opportunism, and irresponsibility on the part of A. Conversely, adherence to a “fair” status quo is a reliable criterion of “justice” because there were precedents. Shifting away from this status quo risks breaking the justice principle.

Given our definition of justice and “just behavior,” what are the alternatives to the justice-based principles of action and decisionmaking? One can point out at least two other principles that have considerable intersections with each other and with the justice principle but are still not identical. The first principle is premised on the current balance of forces between A and B. A treats B in a purely rational way that reflects A’s ultimate power (or lack thereof) over B. In other words, in any interaction or distribution, everyone gets what she can. As an illustration, some Russian pundits have maintained, commenting on the purportedly thankless U.S. policy toward Russia in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, that the West does not understand the notion of gratitude but rather takes what it can at each particular moment.2 Such comments demonstrate that Russia never pursued a “pure” balance-of-power strategy in its post–Cold War international relations. Russian policymakers needed to explain (more to themselves than to the outside world) that their actions were morally sound and met the international standards of justice.

The second alternative principle puts the formal norms existing in a society at the core of decisionmaking about mutual treatment or the distribution of resources. It is easy to note that formal norms (e.g., those stipulated by law) can deflect from the commonly accepted meaning of justice. Most sociologists would maintain that formal laws tend to reflect reciprocity. However, it is exactly because justice involves more than reciprocity (see the four determinants of “fair” treatment defined in the list above), formal norms can contradict the meaning of justice for a particular case. Therefore, in certain situations, norm-based treatment of B by A will be different from
justice-based treatment. The Russian political tradition, manifest in the country’s foreign policy at all stages of identity formation, implies a “selective” approach to the observance of norms. Here justice again serves as a concept defining Russia’s attitude to a particular norm. For example, the sense of injustice among decisionmakers under President Vladimir Putin pushed Moscow toward claiming access to retail natural gas networks and oil-processing facilities in the Western countries—major buyers of Russian natural resources. The prospect of Russia becoming a “raw materials appendage” to the Western economies—that is, a simple seller of oil and natural gas—was brushed aside as fundamentally unjust because it perpetuated the technological gap between Russia and the West. The concept of an “energy superpower” that crystallized in Russian foreign policy thinking in the mid-2000s demanded a “fairer” distribution of revenue than was otherwise generated by Russian natural resources.

To sum up, by putting justice at the center of the decisionmaking process, an actor or a group of actors attributes primary importance to what happened in the past or the inherent nature of other actors, as opposed to the current status quo or an ideal state of affairs as enshrined in law.

A coherent theory of the role of justice in foreign policymaking should not only stipulate why the “justice factor” is important but also show how the meanings of justice affect foreign policy and provide a clue as to where such ideas come from. A full-fledged theory of justice applications to foreign policy falls beyond the scope of this chapter. I limit my theoretical deliberations to arguing that the meaning of justice comes to bear on foreign policy in the realm of a country’s self-identity. An essential part of self-identity is what the state thinks it deserves from other actors, what it feels it is allowed to do internationally, and what it is entitled to vis-à-vis other states. It is this aspect of self-identity whereby the meaning of justice finds a way to affect policymakers’ thinking about their country’s natural interests and necessary policies. All three guiding principles that define “fair treatment” come into play here: past record, “normative consistency,” and reciprocity (on a case-by-case basis). Policymakers construct a justice-ridden image of their own country mainly from ideas of their country’s past achievements as well as from their assessment of themselves as consistent promoters of the “common international good.”

During the 1990s and the early 2000s, Russia has been an illustrative example of a justice-laden approach to the formulation and execution of foreign policy guidelines. In the following section, I explore how the meaning of justice informed Russia’s post–Cold War self-identity during the emer-
gence of the country’s statehood. Once that process (though incomplete) came to a halt at the beginning of the 2000s, the influence of justice concepts on the making of Russian foreign policy began to crumble, but it then resurfaced during Putin’s second term as president. This claim, in its turn, is substantiated in the final case study section of this chapter.

The Meaning of Justice as an Identity-Shaping Force in Russia

The abstract principles of “just treatment” materialized into the features of Russia’s post–Cold War identity through commonly accepted interpretations of several historic events and tendencies along with specific assets of the Russian state, as well as widespread theoretical ideas and constructs. These interpretations and ideas helped the Russian foreign policy community—which encompasses the political leadership, foreign policy bureaucracy, mainstream experts, and journalists—to define what Russia deserved and, consequently, to what it was entitled in world affairs. Let us briefly examine each of the six pertinent factors.

The first factor is the crucial role played by the Soviet Union in the victory over Nazism and the sacrifices made by the Russian people in World War II. Having played a crucial role in defeating Nazi Germany, Russia (formerly the USSR) has since enjoyed moral authority, which justified Russia’s aspirations to international leadership. This factor not only was instrumental in shaping the justice discourse among Russian experts and policymakers in the 1990s but also continues to play an important role in the mid-2000s.

The second factor is the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet bloc in Central and Eastern Europe and the subsequent self-destruction of the USSR in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As the successor state to the Soviet Union, Russia naturally expected the West to acknowledge its goodwill to do away with Cold War hostilities and make a number of important concessions in 1989–91, such as agreeing to the reunification of Germany and German membership in NATO or cooperating with the United States in resolving a number of conflicts in the developing world (Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Angola, etc.). Though in the West the events of 1989–91 were regarded as an indisputable victory in the Cold War, mainstream Russian political discourse never fully acknowledged Russia’s defeat. Sergey Kortunov, an influential Russian expert and policymaker, wrote in 1998: “The historical
truth is that the Soviet communist system imploded and collapsed due to its internal tensions. . . . The collapse of the Soviet system was primarily an internal process, natural and inevitable. "3

The third factor is Russia’s role as a Eurasian power whose existence and integrity guarantee the stability of the vast Eurasian territory and whose natural resources the international community (including both Western and Asian economic giants) is doomed to rely upon and will increasingly need in the future. Echoing the views of Halford MacKinder, Eduard Pozdnyakov, a prominent Russian representative of the “geopolitical school of thought,” concluded in 1992 that “a stable world is inconceivable without geopolitical power balance,” ensured by Russia, which “controls the world’s Heartland.”4 This implies a deeply rooted, if not often articulated, view that Russia provides a crucial “bridge” linking East and West and stabilizing their mutual relations. An essential part of the country’s mission is to maintain that bridge “in order” and ensure access to it—yet with due attention to Russia’s own national interests. Hence, if Russia disintegrated or its state institutions weakened to the extent that proper management of its territory was not possible, then much of the international community—and especially, its most developed part—would suffer. As the then–chief of President Putin’s staff, Dmitriy Medvedev, once opined, in comparison with such a scenario, “the collapse of the Soviet Union could look like a child’s game.”5 Although criticized by Russia’s prominent geographers and social anthropologists (see chapter 11 in this volume by Solov’ev), the view of Russia as one of the few geopolitically pivotal states providing stability on the world scale has been widely accepted by the Russian public and extensively played upon by populist politicians.6

The fourth factor is Russia’s posture as a major nuclear power. In this capacity, Russia, on one hand, provides strategic stability by balancing the United States and—potentially—Chinese nuclear capabilities and, on the other hand, contributes to nonproliferation efforts as a nuclear-weapon state party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968. A country’s possession of nuclear weapons automatically promotes it to the highest ranks within the international community—not only because these weapons constitute a formidable military deterrent but also because having them places special requirements on the responsibility of the nuclear state’s leadership.

The fifth factor is Russia’s and the Warsaw Pact’s history of an “equal relationship” with the United States and NATO during the Cold War. According to conventional wisdom, the Soviet Union and its allies were treated “equally” by the West thanks primarily to their significant military power.
and political influence, which matched and in some areas exceeded NATO’s capabilities. As long as Russia managed to preserve its principal components of state power—that is, the nuclear deterrent and most of its geopolitical resources—it deserved to be treated as an “equal counterpart” by the West, even after the end of the Cold War.

“Equal treatment” implied, first, according priority to Russia’s concerns in relations with the West and, second, managing these relations in direct communication between Russia and the United States or other great powers—leaders of the Euro-Atlantic community. For example, during the first half of the 1990s, Russia was reluctant to deal in high-politics issues (e.g., NATO enlargement) with smaller international actors, such as countries of the former Soviet bloc.

The sixth factor is Russia’s outstanding contribution to the world’s cultural heritage and the resulting spiritual authority of the Russian state as the embodiment of a profound civilization. This tenet not only asserted the important role that Russian culture and language play around the globe (clearly, an uncontestable point) but also implied equal rights to existence for all cultures, with no exception for Western and, particularly, American value systems. Such conceptions, which are quite popular among the makers of and experts on Russian foreign policy, are generally in line with common sense. However, in Russian political discourse, they are often overstated, their main thrust being not to support cultural diversity around the globe but rather to reject the applicability to Russia, as a unique, “self-sufficient” civilization, of American or European political traditions and institutional designs.

Viewing American leadership in the international arena as inescapable, quite a few Russian observers pointed to the inability of the United States to put forth a set of ideas and values that could soothe the sharp contradictions within the international community. In the 1990s, it was popular to argue that America did not possess, as Kortunov expresses it, “the moral, spiritual, cultural and historical assets that are more necessary than pure military or economic power . . . for a country that wants to act as a dominating and unifying force for the new civilization.” A required contribution to the spiritual authority of the world leadership group, as Kortunov and the philosopher Eduard Batalov maintained, could be made by Russia—a country with a highly respected culture and profound history.7

To sum up, at the initial stage of identity formation, post-Soviet Russia viewed itself as a great power representing a distinct, outstanding cultural system. It voluntarily embarked on political transformation, which led to a
temporary decline in its influence. Because this transformation was regarded as an act of goodwill aimed at enhancing international security, the Russian foreign policy community felt that the country continued to deserve “equal treatment” from the United States and its allies. This feeling was reinforced by the availability of such assets as nuclear arms and abundant natural resources, whose importance as Russia’s trump cards was somewhat exaggerated. Even if Russia acknowledged that it was lagging behind the West in economic development or diplomatic influence, its foreign policy community believed that the West (and particularly the United States) would not be able to sustain its preponderance in world affairs due to the inevitable logic of power balancing. Russian politicians viewed their country as a weakened yet ultimately reemerging power center that would be courted by both East and West in their quest for global influence.

During the 1990s and especially in the second half of the current decade, these “justice-informed” components of the Russian international identity played an important role in the formulation of concrete doctrines and policies. A few examples further illustrate this point. (The impact of Russia’s perception of international justice on its concrete foreign policy actions is considered in greater detail in the concluding case study section of this chapter.)

The sixth factor noted above combined with multipolarity theories to shape a Russian version of the “multipolarity doctrine.” This doctrine, in its normative part, regarded hegemony as intrinsically unjust—because no country can win enough credit (by contributing to the world’s well-being or any other past achievement) to claim the right to dominate or even lecture the rest of the international community. The multipolarity doctrine further argued that the world hegemon must pursue multilateral policies and abstain from imposing its will on other members of international community. Acknowledging that such a scenario was highly unlikely given the United States’ military preponderance and dominant political and economic resources, Russia pledged to contribute to the formation of a multipolar world, which implied a clear choice for a balancing (rather than bandwagoning) policy toward the United States.

Yevgeniy Primakov, the Russian foreign minister in 1996–98 and one of the founding fathers of the Russian multipolarity doctrine, argued that “the evident unwillingness of most states to put up with a world order shaped by only one country” gives Russia extended opportunities “to play a leading role in international relations.” Given Russia’s unique natural resources and geopolitical advantages and the widespread dissatisfaction with the
unipolar world, it would be quite natural for Moscow to embark on a multipolar course, that is, to assist in creating and possibly lead coalitions that would seek to balance the United States. During the second half of 1990s, multipolar rhetoric was one of the cornerstones of Russia’s international agenda.

On a regional scale, Russia was claiming the right to become integrated into multilateral European and Euro-Atlantic security and, possibly, economic institutions. This should have followed from a fair recognition of Russia’s being part of Europe and was regarded as a benefit that the West had to guarantee to Moscow for consistent pursuit of democratization and economic reforms. Russia proposed organizing the core of European security architecture in the form of consultations among Europe’s great powers, possibly involving the United States as a member of the Conference (since 1995, Organization) for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Russia also sought to preserve an important component of its “just influence”—the prestige of the United Nations—and argued for an increase in the UN’s role in maintaining international security. On the issue of Security Council reform, Russian leadership, up to the late 1990s, was opposed to the admission of any new permanent members to the Security Council because such move could siphon away Russia’s influence within the council. However, under President Putin, who at the initial stage of his presidency dismissed much of the Yeltsin-Primakov justice rhetoric, Russia adopted a more positive stance on admitting Germany, India, or even Japan, because this could (1) win Russia important concessions from the states Russia promoted as would-be permanent Security Council members and (2) enhance the prestige of the UN, which had been steadily declining over the 1990s.

The “Relativistic Drift” of the Early 2000s:
Factors of Change

Since Russia’s emergence as an independent state distinct from the USSR and the prerevolutionary Russian Empire, Russia has been undergoing intense “socialization” under the influence of various realities. The new Russian identity has thus been maturing under the influence of factors which, as it has turned out, often work against “justice universalism”—by “convincing” the foreign policy community that a consistent application of justice-ridden concepts to substantiating a foreign policy course could actually contradict Russia’s interests. Consequently, a decade after 1991, Russia’s
“mature identity” was much less interwoven with the discourse of justice that it was at the initial stages of identity formation. As a new identity was emerging and justice concepts receded, Moscow began changing previously uncontested official views on a number of substantive foreign policy issues.

Two of these issues are explored below in case studies that illustrate the contrast between the Yeltsin-Primakov justice-ridden approach of the late 1990s and President Putin’s initially more pragmatic (“relativistic”) vision of “international justice.” These case studies, however, need to be preceded by an analysis of the perceptions and ideas that, in the course of Russia’s “socialization,” weakened the imprint of international justice concepts on the Russian identity. As Russia’s international socialization was progressing, the country’s foreign policy community was acknowledging a number of realities about the emerging characteristics of international relations, Russia’s objective place in the world, and the country’s interests. During the 1990s, the Russian political leadership and foreign policy bureaucracy had to accept five realities in particular. Let us look at each.

The first reality was that Russia was irreversibly weakened after the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War, while the United States rose to the position of the only superpower, whose edge in military strength, technology, and economic well-being was rapidly increasing. This naturally led to doubts about whether Russia could expect “equal treatment” from the West. Such doubts began to emerge even among liberal-minded experts sometime in 1994–95. Aleksey Arbatov, at that time one of the most pro-Western and influential members of the Russian foreign policy community, wrote in 1994: “Russia will never enjoy the position of an equal [partner] either in NATO or in the European Union. . . . This will mean Russia will only be able to play secondary roles while remaining a key member in any conceivable Euro-Atlantic security system.”

Discussions about Russia’s changed status in international affairs reached their climax in 1996–97. At that point, as the political scientist Tatiana Shakleina observed, “Most experts of various political orientations acknowledged a decline in Russia’s status as well as in the resource base of its foreign policy”—a development that required the elaboration of a new “realistic external strategy.” Further debate on such a strategy was won by the analysts who maintained that “Russia should not aspire to the status of a global power.” A few years down the road, President Putin unambiguously stated that Russia could no longer afford competing with other great powers in faraway regions or for the benefits of secondary (or purely ideological) interest. The official Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Feder-
ation, signed by the Russian president in June 2000, acknowledged that “ex-

The second reality was that Russia had to reassess threats to its national
interests and recognize the need for at least tactical cooperation with the
United States in combating these threats, including armed separatism in
Chechnya and tensions with countries accused by Russia of closing their
eyes to or even supporting the Chechen separatists, such as Georgia,
Turkey, and several Arab states. As long as combating Chechen separatists
(which had been necessary since 1999) required military means and warn-
ings to other states of the serious consequences of supporting the rebels,
Russia had to waive many of its earlier objections to U.S. counterterrorism
policies carried out with limited respect for other states’ sovereignty. Rus-
sia supported the American anti-Taliban campaign in Afghanistan in 2001,
and in 2003 it ultimately watered down its criticism of the United States–led
intervention in Iraq aimed at toppling Saddam Hussein. At the same time,
as John Ikenberry observed, Putin skillfully negotiated concessions from
the West in return for Russian support of the Afghan campaign.\textsuperscript{17}

The third reality was that an “absolutist” interpretation of justice actu-
ally limited Russia’s freedom to maneuver in its foreign relations. Russia
needed to retain flexibility in determining its official position not only to
tackle new security challenges but also to explain its support for a number
of separatist regimes in regions crucial to its interests, such as the Transnis-
trian Republic, Abkhazia, and—since 2003—South Ossetia. Russian poli-
cymakers started taking it for granted that too many countries relied in part
on “double standards” in their relations with the outside world. This, in turn,
significantly constrained the policymakers’ ability to use justice concepts in
asserting Russia’s rights in the international arena.

The fourth reality was that the Russian foreign policy community failed
to rally potential allies behind the Russian conception of justice in the
1990s. The Russian vision of a just world order and its regional components
turned out to be insufficiently attractive on the whole to other great powers
or to most countries in Russia’s neighborhood—the former Soviet re-
publics. These republics either chose to pursue a balanced course (and, to-
ward the end of the 1990s, an increasingly pro-Western course)—in the case
of Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Uzbekistan until 2005—or
to promote their own views on the goals of partnership with Russia—in the
case of Belarus—which were, however, too radical for Russia to accept. The
end of the Kozyrev era marked the acknowledgement that, if a new Russ-
ian identity ever matures, it will not be fully Western. The bankruptcy of Kozyrev’s admittedly “idealistic” approach to formulating Russia’s interests, amplified by the West’s (and especially America’s) perceived disregard for Russian concerns, significantly undermined the justice discourse.

The former Soviet allies in Central and Eastern Europe opted for integration into NATO and the European Union immediately after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact—no matter how much this strategy would cost them in relations with Russia. In the early 1990s, Moscow still expected that these countries would seek to “restore their ties with Russia because [further] damaging these relations, especially in the economic domain, [could] complicate . . . economic modernization and transition to market institutions.” However, such countries as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic (and later the Baltic states) coped with the challenges of their transition to the extent of being able to join the EU without restoring an alliance or even partnership with Russia.

*The fifth reality was that Russia could not endorse any of the alternative “strong” conceptions of international justice.* America-centrism, anti-Americanism, antiglobalism, or any kind of religion-based radical conception was too eccentric to underlie the foreign policy of a regional power that seeks to position itself in a balanced way vis-à-vis the only superpower—uninterested and unable to either build a formal alliance with the hegemon or to openly challenge it. Starting in 2000–1 and at least until late 2004, Russian foreign policymakers watered down their multipolarity rhetoric directed against “American dominance” and President Putin expressed Russia’s commitment to reforms and development in accordance with Western patterns of economic and political organization and governance.

To sum up, Russia’s established identity as a midrange power seeking to retain as much freedom of action as possible pushed its politicians (consciously or unconsciously) toward a “relativistic” approach in applying international justice principles to formulating the country’s foreign policy agenda. As a result, Russia departed from an “absolutist” interpretation of justice—makers of foreign policy ceased insisting on a uniform application of norms, rules, and procedures that defined justice for them, but they acknowledged that these norms could be interpreted differently depending on the situation. As a consequence, Moscow became more willing to budge on those issues on which, in the past, no concessions from the Russian side could have been contemplated.

Justice rhetoric resurfaced during President Putin’s second term in office, which started in May 2004. By that time, the issue of reciprocity again be-
came key to the justification of Russia’s foreign policy choices. In 2000–1, Russia arguably embraced Western-style liberal reforms and began to make attempts to become more attractive to foreign investment. It also provided almost unconditional support to the America-led “war on terrorism,” and it acquiesced to the abrogation of the Anti–Ballistic Missile Defense Treaty of 1972 and the second round of NATO expansion. Moscow tried hard to get its position on Chechnya across to Western audiences (see chapter 10 in this volume by Fawn) and made clear that it wanted a continued rapprochement with NATO and the EU in their respective spheres of competence.

Yet the Russian assessment of Western response to this bid for partnership fell short of satisfaction. Russia’s mainstream politicians and analysts complained about “unfair” (i.e., not reciprocal) treatment by the West, which failed to appreciate Russia’s friendly posture during the first two years of Putin’s presidency. Evidence to substantiate that point was found in such moves by the West (notably, the United States) as the continued criticism of Putin’s ostensibly undemocratic domestic policies, the sponsoring of mass protests that led to regime changes in Georgia and Ukraine, and the lack of willingness on the part of the European Union to ease visa regimes with Russia.

As the debate over Iraq and subsequently American involvement in the “colored revolutions” in Russia’s immediate neighborhood were heating up, Russian foreign policy discourse recaptured much of the justice rhetoric of the 1990s. Explaining Russia’s growing cooperation with China or policies designed to limit U.S. involvement in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Eastern Europe, Russian pundits criticized the West for “unfair” anti-Russian policies as well as its inability to compromise. A good illustration of this most recent trend, which it is still perhaps too early to analyze in depth, is the change in Russia’s mainstream attitude toward globalization—the third case study presented in the following section.

Case Studies in International Justice and Russian Foreign Policy

For Russian foreign policymakers, the meaning of justice played an important role in defining Russia’s position on a number of key foreign policy issues and influenced the formation of Russia’s strategy vis-à-vis major international actors. Here, I present three illustrative cases: the evolution of Russia’s approach toward NATO enlargement, the ups and downs of Russ-
NATO Enlargement

One of the best examples of how the diminished role of international justice as an identity-shaping force affected Russia’s official position on concrete foreign policy issues is the country’s evolving attitude toward NATO enlargement. Russia’s initially high expectations for an easy accession to or at least close partnership with Western economic and political institutions, including NATO, were reflected in the Russian Foreign Policy Concept of 1992—the first detailed, official document issued by the Foreign Ministry that set guidelines for Russia’s relations with the outside world. It noted the importance of “intensification of contacts [with NATO] on both bilateral and multilateral levels and interaction with NATO bodies in strengthening peace and security.” In the early 1990s, Russian politicians also deemed it possible to “ensure a most tight connection between the EU, NATO, Western European Union, and the emerging security architecture under the aegis of the CSCE [Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe],” expecting that these Western institutions would agree to subordinate their security policies to the CSCE’s pan-European yet very loose structures.

These hopes, grounded in Russia’s mainstream perception of international justice, continued to inform its official position on European security issues until the mid-1990s. Consequently, in 1994–97, the eastward expansion of NATO became one of its primary negative concerns: The West was acting “unfairly” in trying to impose NATO as the core European security institution instead of nonexclusive structures, such as the CSCE. The Russian National Security Concept adopted in 1997 argued that “the plans to enlarge NATO to the East are unacceptable to Russia because they pose a threat to Russia’s national security.” It further claimed that “the expansion of NATO to the East and its emergence as the dominant politico-military force in Europe threaten to . . . divide the continent, which is extremely dangerous at a time when . . . multilateral peace-support mechanisms are insufficiently effective.”

A revised version of the National Security Concept, issued in 2000 by the Putin administration, still maintained that “the consolidation of military blocs and alliances, especially NATO expansion to the East,” was one of “main threats [to Russia’s interests] in the international arena.” This document, however, was principally conceived and developed well before
Putin, who signed it in January 2000, became acting president of the Russian Federation.

Just as Russia’s reliance on international justice concepts diminished after 2000–1, so too did its criticism of NATO enlargement and the Alliance itself. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, President Putin stated: “Over 40 years Russia and NATO eyed each other with suspicion and anger. . . I think that now we are entering an era of substantive and practical cooperation.” He added that “if NATO transforms into a political organization, we will certainly review our attitude towards the enlargement.”26 Similarly, in the spring of 2004, he expressed only a mild criticism of NATO enlargement by saying that “a mechanical expansion of NATO does not help to combat the threats we are facing.” Downplaying Russia’s dissatisfaction even further, he added that he hoped “NATO enlargement will promote trust in Europe and the whole world and will serve as a [new] element of international security.”27 Several months later, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov reiterated that position when he told an Egyptian newspaper that “realizing that Russia and NATO pose no threat to each other, we do not regard the expansion of the Alliance as an obstacle to continuing our collaboration . . . and to moving toward a genuinely cooperative model of European security.”28

Russian-American Relations, 1992–2005

Another remarkable example of how ideological shifts in Russian foreign policy course have affected the country’s external strategy is Russia’s changing official attitude toward relations with the United States. Since the end of the Cold War, this attitude has passed through three major phases, which could be tagged the “early Kozyrev,” “Primakov,” and “Putin” approaches.

Russia’s first foreign minister, Andrey Kozyrev (1991–96), identified Russia with the West (at least, in the long run) and consequently saw no alternative to developing a close partnership or even alliance with the United States. This view was initially endorsed by President Boris Yeltsin, who instructed his foreign policy bureaucracy in 1992 to direct Russian foreign policy at helping the country’s economic and political reforms. During the first two years of Russian statehood, Yeltsin and Kozyrev were ready to make concessions to the United States on various important international issues in exchange for unequivocal support from Washington for Yeltsin’s transition strategy for Russia. Moreover, the “early Kozyrev” approach was based on the assumption that an unconditional partnership with the United
States would help achieve a stable and democratic world order, which was at that time considered one of Russia’s primary foreign policy goals. This approach was severely criticized by Kozyrev’s opponents, who argued, for example, that a partnership with the United States should not come at the expense of other Russian interests, such as influence in the post-Soviet space. These critics maintained that Washington was in fact squeezing Russia out of its historical “spheres of influence”—the Balkans and “near abroad”—which should have become the main focus of Russia’s foreign policy instead of the United States. These analysts and politicians finally got the upper hand in 1996, when Yevgeniy Primakov replaced Kozyrev as the Russian foreign minister.

As a consequence, Russia’s approach to relations with the United States toughened radically in light of the rising popularity of Primakov’s “multipolarity doctrine.” Not only did Russia adopt a more assertive stance vis-à-vis Washington, but Russia’s official National Security Concept of 1997 did not even mention relations with the United States among Russian foreign policy priorities, which included enhancing integration within the Commonwealth of Independent States, cooperation in combating transnational crime, and strengthening collective security mechanisms. The authors of the National Security Concept also maintained that “how well Russian interests will be served in the international arena depends largely on Russia’s relations with major powers and integration blocs.” To compensate for a cool-down in Russian-American relations, Moscow moved to a more active policy vis-à-vis the European Union. The Russia-EU Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, signed in June 1994, came into force in December 1997. During the second half of the 1990s, Russia and the EU pursued active talks over the implications of EU enlargement for Russia’s relations with would-be EU members from Central and Eastern Europe. In 1999–2000, the Russian Foreign Ministry and the European Commission published documents outlining strategies for mutual relations.

Russia’s preoccupation with the EU as well as its unnecessarily harsh criticism of U.S. policies ended in mid-2001, when President Putin showed clear signs of departure from the “multipolar world” rhetoric that was so dear to Yeltsin in his final years in the Kremlin. After meeting with President George W. Bush in June 2001 and, most markedly, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, Putin not only endorsed much of the U.S. approach to security policy but also returned a commitment to close relations with Washington to the top of the Russian foreign policy agenda.
On the wave of cooperation in the antiterrorist campaign, Russia and the United States got over their contradictions on the future of anti-ballistic missile defense and the second round of NATO expansion. In May 2002, the two presidents signed a Joint Declaration on New Strategic Relations as well as a Strategic Nuclear Potentials Treaty, which was to create a formal basis for mutual arms reduction efforts until 2012. The importance of cooperation with the European Union was, at the same time, somewhat downplayed, especially after a bitter row over the status of Russia’s Kaliningrad exclave and Russia’s economic ties with the EU after its enlargement.

Having accepted Russia’s identity as a regional yet Eurasian (i.e., “transcontinental”) power, President Putin realized that good relations (though, indeed, something short of an alliance or even full-fledged partnership) with the United States were the sine qua non for retaining Russian influence in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and even the Caucasus. Moreover, supporting the United States–led “war on terrorism” required considerable flexibility in construing international legal norms, which used to constitute one of the cornerstones of the Russian conception of international justice. Generally, changes in this conception were not only the precursors but also the necessary conditions for shifts in Russian-U.S. relations to occur during the decade and a half after the end of the Cold War confrontation.

These relations, however, started to sour in 2003–4 as a new wave of justice rhetoric emerged in the Russian foreign policy discourse. As in the 1990s, the return of “justice” resulted from the feeling that Washington was not making reciprocal moves to reward Moscow’s support for the “war on terrorism” and readiness to put up with the abrogation of the Anti–Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972 and the second wave of NATO enlargement, which was finalized in early 2004. Divergences over Iraq and the “colored revolutions” in the Russian neighborhood, and continued criticism by the United States of Putin’s internal policies, led many influential politicians and experts in Moscow to conclude that Washington was again acting unfairly by denying Russia much of what the United States allowed itself to do both domestically and in the international arena.

Russia’s Evolving Views on Globalization, 2000–5

The evolution of Russia’s mainstream views on globalization provide a good example of how a particular international trend moved a long way from being perceived as a “fair,” beneficial phenomenon to an “unjust,” selective instrument that the only superpower uses to advance its interests in
the world. Early in Putin’s presidency, a moderately positive perspective on globalization dominated the Russian mainstream political discourse. Whatever the scholarly meaning of globalization may encompass, it was widely acknowledged in Russia that globalization implied not only increased openness to foreign economies and extensive opportunities to conduct business abroad but also stronger competition in Russian internal markets, which would become increasingly accessible to foreign companies. Putin made it clear in 2001 that “we [Russia] should not be afraid of globalization” because “there is nothing worse than isolation, which is disastrous for any country and its economy.” He added, as late as June 2004, that “there is no country that could rely only on its own economy and not be affected by outside developments. This is impossible in the age of globalization.”

Russia’s official Foreign Policy Doctrine, signed by President Putin in June 2000, stated that “under globalization, Russia’s economic development is unthinkable without the country’s deep involvement in the world economy.” In his early years as Russian president, Putin also stressed, on a number of occasions, that Russian companies will need to adapt to the increasingly competitive environment of both domestic and international markets. Boosting the “competitiveness of the Russian economy” became one of the core slogans of the “early Putin,” who clearly sought to encourage Russian economic agents to increase efficiency and review the range of products and services they were offering to both Russian and foreign customers.

The start of the “war on terrorism” highlighted yet another meaning of globalization for Russia. This perception was focused on international security threats that have either emerged or been magnified in the globalized world but also create a security agenda that Russia, the West, and the rest of the world need to address cooperatively. A commonly accepted list of these threats features megaterrorism (which has become possible due to terrorists’ expanded range of means of communication, proliferation of knowledge, and technological advances), the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (especially when combined with terrorism), trafficking in drugs and human beings, and the spread of infectious diseases. For example, in April 2000, President Putin pointed to “international terrorism and organized crime, militant separatism, and illegal trade in arms and drugs” as the most dangerous threats in the globalized world.

This school of thought about globalization recommended strengthening international cooperation and coordination on security policies among most powerful actors and their main regional allies. In 2002, Putin noted that the “threats that have emerged in the age of globalization [require] a new ‘phi-
losophy of partnership’ based on a firm legal basis, respect to others’ interests and the equality of rights.” The Declaration of the Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member Countries, signed in Moscow in May 2004, stated that because “no country can isolate itself from the transnational threats that have emerged in the era of globalization, . . . there is no doubt that comprehensive cooperation to combat these threats should be developed at both regional and global levels.” More recently, an official spokesperson for the Russian Foreign Ministry stated in an article outlining Russia’s basic foreign policy orientations: “The contradictory nature of globalization focuses our attention on the search for concerted efforts to respond to the new challenges because it became evident that no single state or even group of states, irrespective of their economic potential and military might, can combat . . . transnational threats to security and stability, threats that have a bearing on all members of the international community.”

Integration with Russia’s neighboring states was seen as one of the most effective responses to the challenges of globalization. Addressing a meeting of high-ranking representatives of Kazakhstan, Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia—countries that launched, in 2003, a project to establish a Single Economic Space—President Putin reminded the stakeholders that “however difficult it could be to advance on the way towards the Single Economic Space, . . . the objective world-economic trends, caused by the so-called globalization, will put us on that track.”

Through such a lens, the United States was viewed as a partner in combating the negative implications of globalization. The “common threats” philosophy in Russia received a strong impetus after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. So did the Russian-U.S. partnership, which now had a common security agenda.

This agenda, however, did not result in the consolidation of a long-lasting U.S.-Russian alliance. Disputes over Iraq, regime changes in the Russian “near abroad,” and the fate of Russian democracy brought about a certain disillusionment over the implications of globalization for Russia. It became increasingly fashionable to point out the “uneven nature” of globalization, which can become a blessing for one country and a curse for another. As particularly unfair, Russian analysts and politicians noted the fact that the United States was unwilling to agree to constraints on its own sovereignty while trying to limit the sovereignty of other states. It was argued in Russia that Russia had the same rights as the United States to manage its internal affairs and retain a free hand in foreign policy. According to a
number of observers, after a series of regime overthrows in the post-Soviet space in 2003–5, top Russian policymakers decided to call for a “consolidation of elites” against various destructive external (and internal) forces.41 These events markedly changed the tone of Russia’s official view of globalization. Concern over national sovereignty started to outweigh positive spin-offs of globalization in the eyes of the Russian political elite, who feel that control over key socioeconomic and political levers may well slip out of their hands. The shift in Russia’s response to globalization toward stronger protectionism in politics and the economy has reflected the changing perspective on the “fairness” of globalization. In 2005, globalization was no longer viewed in Russia as an “objective phenomenon” equally harmful or beneficial to most countries across the globe. The dominant view in the middle of the decade was that of the selective nature of globalization, harnessed (if not directed) by the West to its global cause.

Conclusions

By the end of 2005, Russia’s adherence to justice principles in formulating its foreign policy options had come full circle. Kozyrev’s “idealistic” policies and later Primakov’s “national-interest-based” approach were formulated against a backdrop vision of the “fair treatment” to which Russia was entitled from the outside world. As Russia’s international socialization was progressing and the acceptance of its midrange power status was growing, mainstream politicians and experts adopted a more “relativistic” approach toward the discourse of justice. By the mid-2000s, Russia’s growing resources allowed its leadership to step up efforts aimed at preserving the country’s positions in the world and expanding its influence in neighboring regions such as Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Eastern Europe.

These trends, along with the disappointment about the failure of the alliance with the West in the wake of 9/11, may be bringing the justice discourse back to the agenda for Russia’s dialogue with the outside world. So far, examples of this change include Moscow-backed pressure on the United States to downsize the American military presence in Central Asia (which is “fair,” given Washington’s insistence on the withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgia and Moldova) and reprisals on the United States for its “unfair” criticism of the allegedly undemocratic elections in Chechnya and Belarus (given America’s own involvement with the less-than-transparent elections in Afghanistan and Iraq).
The return of justice discourse to the foreign policy rhetoric of a country with a relatively robust identity and increasing resources may occur because of the country’s rising self-assessment and ability to dictate rules in the games where it has a stake. A powerful actor can assume more responsibility for the developments around it. This naturally gives it grounds for asking for “fair” compensation—not only in the form of the satisfaction of its own demands but also in other actors’ consent to consider it a legitimate mediator or even a “judge.” Here, justice-based arguments initially come into play. Once a country feels strong enough to project power abroad, it may seek to impose its own rules of the game in its sphere of influence—for example, to resolve conflicts among third parties, to find ways to enhance regional security, or to reshape trade relations. Judges or mediators need to offer their vision of justice, and if one is not yet in existence in the form of long-standing norms, it should be built up from scratch. In such a case, justice-based arguments can help promote the rules that an outside power seeks to establish.

An analysis of international justice perceptions on the part of Russian political elites provides a good explanation for a number of important Russian foreign policy trends. A student of justice rhetoric and its applications cannot claim an exhaustive account of a country’s foreign policy conduct. However, the process of exploring applications of the justice discourse to foreign policy opens a vast research agenda. Russia provides a remarkable case, allowing us to observe how a country’s inclination to resort to justice-based arguments depends on the degree of its “socialization,” that is, the maturity of its external and internal international identity. As has been shown in this chapter, norms-based and power-based explanations draw a far less original, if not misleading, picture of the evolution of Russian foreign policy since 1991.

At the same time, “static” investigations into the role of justice discourse for a country not experiencing identity transformation can also enrich the constructivist paradigm. It is important to further explore the sources of the meaning of justice used by policymakers, how it affects decisionmaking, and how it depends on the position of a state in the international hierarchy. The task is formidable given the fact that policymakers rarely call a spade a spade, that is, refer to justice by its own name. One must employ a precise definition of justice and strong interpretative skills to unveil the references to the meaning of justice that may be deeply hidden in a country’s public discourse.
Notes


6. Solov’ev quotes V. Kolosov and R. Turovskiy, who called the notion of Russia as the “geographical center of world politics” an essentially flawed and misleading concept.


8. This perception was supported by manifold international relations theories pointing to the instability and transitory nature of bipolar and, especially, unipolar international systems. In line with political scientists who argued that such systems cannot last long and will be inevitably succeeded by multipolarity, influential Russian policymakers, during the 1990s and even later on, sometimes went as far as to call multipolarity “the God-blessed international order.” This effectively implied that any distortion in the equal distribution of power would run against the will of God.


10. The 1992 Russian Foreign Policy Concept stated that it was necessary to “covert Russian-European partnership ties into concrete measures and arrangements”: i.e., at that point Russia expected the West to deliver on its praise for Russian democratization and market reform efforts. These achievements, however, needed to get a clear acknowledgement in the form of shared institutions or other long-term arrangements where Russia had to enjoy an equal treatment. See “Konseptsiya vneshney politiki Rossiyskoy Federatsii 1992” (1992 Russian Foreign Policy Concept), officially published in *Diplomaticheskiy vestnik*, January–February 1993, 13.

11. As was mentioned in the 1992 Foreign Policy Concept, “Russia’s interest is to promote . . . and further institutionalize the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe . . . [in order to] turn it into the fundamental block of the emerging international society architecture.” *Diplomaticheskiy vestnik*, January–February 1993, 12.

12. The 1992 Foreign Policy Concept warned against “encroaching upon the time-tested basic principles of UN functioning” and continued: “Our interests will not be served by attempts to revise the UN Charter, the composition and the working principles of the Security Council.” Russia only supported noninstitutionalized “involvement of large regional states in decision making at the Security Council.” *Diplomaticheskiy vestnik*, January–February 1993, 21.
13. See, e.g., the official Russian Foreign Ministry document titled “Issues in Reforming the [UN] Security Council” and dated July 17, 2005, available at http://www.ln.mid.ru/. Although Russia continued to argue against an “excessive enlargement” of the Security Council, the document stated that “Germany, Japan, India and Brazil . . . could be worthy candidates for seats on the Security Council once it is expanded.”


15. Tatiana Shakleina, Rossiya i SShA v novom mirovom poryadke (Moscow: ISKRAN, 2002), 182–83.


19. Ibid., 14.

20. Ibid., 17.

21. Russia’s first foreign minister, Andrey Kozyrev, believed in 1994 that “trust cannot be unilateral. We [Russia] have the right to expect that the United States will disregard skeptical warnings about the need to ‘keep an eye’ on Russia.” According to Kozyrev, the primary element of Russian-American partnership should be “the mutual recognition [by the United States and Russia] as likeminded states committed to common democratic values and norms of the United Nations and CSCE.” While Russia had made its way to partnership with the West, Kozyrev was expressing disappointment with “the continued existence of institutions embodying our common values yet still excluding Russia, such as [Group of Seven] and NATO.” Andrey Kozyrev, “A Strategy of Partnership,” Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn’, May 1994, 9–10.

22. Western reluctance to pay tribute to Russia’s record of reforms and reciprocate her friendly attitude toward the West was harshly criticized, e.g., by a former Soviet ambassador to the GDR: “Right after the ideological confrontation was quickly and radically overcome, Russia started to behave as an informal yet full-fledged ally of the West. Russia has joined forces with the West to prevent any complications that could threaten the mutual rapprochement on the Continent (. . . as an ally, Russia had plenty of obligations, but no rights whatsoever). At first, the West was accepting Russia’s commitment to the ‘Western cause’ with enthusiasm, then—with irony. It regarded Russia’s behavior as her unilateral concession that did not require reciprocity. Ultimately, the West started to take Russia’s rejection of her own national interests for granted and deny Russia any right to depart from such position.” Igor’ Maksimychev, How the Beginning of NATO Enlargement Threatens Russian Security (Moscow: Institute of Europe, Russian Academy of Sciences, 1998), 8.


24. Ibid., 20.


31. One of the best analyses of “ideological shifts” in Russian foreign policy, including those affecting Russian-American relations, can be found in Igor Zevelev, “Russia and the U.S. at the Turn of the Century: ‘Anarchy, the Mother of Partnership’?” Pro et Contra, Autumn 2002, 72–85.
41. See, e.g., Vedomosti, April 26, 2005.