

# The equalization of nationalism and Nazism in Russian strategic narratives: a postcolonial perspective

Ieva Berzina

National Defence Academy of Latvia, Center for Security and Strategic Research,  
[ieva.berzina@mil.lv](mailto:ieva.berzina@mil.lv)

Russia's strategic narratives concerning its aggression against Ukraine exploit the concepts of "nationalism" and "Nazism" as complementary or even interchangeable. The paper addresses the problem of the equalization of these two concepts through the postcolonial theoretical framework (Annus, 2018; Carey & Raciborsky, 2004; Chernetsky, 2003; Gerasimov et.al, 2013; Gerasimovs, 2014; Keertas, 2006; Koplatadze, 2019; Kudaibergenova, 2016; Kuznetsova & Round, 2018; Morozov, 2013; 2015) because it has implications for the security of countries once being part of the Russian Empire and/or the Soviet Union. By equalizing nationalism and Nazism, Russia challenges the right of self-determination of its neighboring countries and creates a pretext for aggression. The paper aims to answer the research questions: How does Russia relate the concepts of "nationalism" and "Nazism" in its strategic narratives about ex-Soviet countries? How the strategic narratives of "nationalism" and "Nazism" are being used to justify military aggression against neighbouring countries? To answer the research question the thematic analysis of the speeches of Russian officials, reports, media publications, expert opinions, and other sources that provide an in-depth understanding of nationalism and Nazism from a Russian official perspective will be conducted. The time frame of the study is limited to a period from 2014, when Russia started a hybrid warfare against Ukraine, till 2022 when Russia's aggression against Ukraine turned into full-scale high-intensity warfare. A comparative perspective with other ex-Soviet states is expected to provide insight how the strategic narrative of the equalization of nationalism and Nazism is being used in Russian foreign policy in relation to the so called "near abroad" countries.

**Keywords:** Russia, nationalism, Nazism, postcolonialism

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