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Politics of History in the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict Between the Orange Revolution and the Annexation of Crimea (2004-2014)

Since the end of the Orange Revolution in 2004, Russia has increased its historical-political campaign in Ukraine both in scope and in intensity, hoping to persuade Ukrainian population in the futility of its European aspirations and in the benefits of unity with Russia. The campaign's masterminds in the Kremlin have capitalized on the existing prejudices and misconceptions about Ukraine and its history and created an all-encompassing mythology of the Russian "sacred bond" with Ukraine, covering everything from Ukraine's name, territory, ethnic composition, and language to its political and religious structure. In this Russian narrative, all mentioned characteristics are constructed in the way to support the thesis of an inferior but inseparable relationship of Ukraine with its "older brother" Russia. This paper strives to analyse Russia's historical-political actions in Ukraine from 2004 until 2014 and the counter-actions, or lack thereof, applied by various Ukrainian governments. In the article we try to show that while Russian leadership was executing a sophisticated, pre-planned strategy of historical-political measures, the Ukrainian governments have focused on cancelling unwanted policies of their predecessors or instituting their own, often radical and always short-lived, memory policies. Considerable inequality between the memory policies on the Russian and the Ukrainian side is seen here as a deciding factor in the relative success of Russia's historical-political actions that prepared the ground for the annexation of Crimea and are still to this day contributing to the lack of objection to this grave breach of the post-war order on the part of the international community.