



**CENTER FOR FOREIGN POLICY AND PEACE RESEARCH**  
**PEACETALK: YOUNG SCHOLAR SERIES**

**The Importance of Being Soft: Russian Soft Power Identity Narratives**

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6 December 2016, Tuesday at 12.30 P.M.

Bilkent University, Main Campus, G Building, Room: 160

One of the most pressing issues that soft power scholars face nowadays is the problematic application of the concept to non-Western, sometimes illiberal, rising powers. As a contribution to this debate, this research looks into the triangular relationship between soft power, identity and discourse, and presents an analytical framework to assess Russia's soft power through its three main identity narratives ('Russia as a champion of multilateralism and multipolarity', 'Russia as a conservative power', and 'Russia as an elder brother') constructed through official discourse, i.e. speeches, foreign policy concepts et cetera. These narratives have very different effects depending on where they are employed. In Russia's neighbourhood, they tend to appeal to like-minded political elites and those segments of the society more refractory to change, such as those nostalgic of Soviet Union, and they can also give way to hard policies, as the crisis in Ukraine shows. In the West, on the other hand, these narratives tend to appeal to forces that challenge the existent order. The presentation will draw upon a forthcoming book chapter and primary data gathered during a fieldwork in Russia.

***About the Speaker***

Eleonora Tafuro Ambrosetti is a Marie Curie Early Stage Researcher based at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, enrolled in the Power and Region In a Multipolar World (PRIMO) project. Her areas of interest include EU enlargement and neighbourhood policies and EU-Russia relations. She has a BA in International Relations from the University of Salento, an MA in European Studies from the University of Roma Tre, and an MRes in International Relations from the Barcelona Institute of International Studies (IBEI). She has previously worked as a junior researcher at the Brussels office of the think-tank FRIDE, and as a research assistant at CIDOB in Barcelona. While in Brussels, she was a member of the steering committee of WIIS (Women in International Security) Brussels, an international network dedicated to increase the influence of women in the field of foreign and defence policy.

***Center for Foreign Policy and Peace Research*** welcomes researchers, graduate students as well as policy makers. Lunchtime snacks and refreshments will be served.

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