

RUSSIAN INFORMATION CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE UKRAINIAN STATE AND DEFENCE FORCES

COMBINED ANALYSIS

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SHORT ANNOTATION

K. MÜÜR, H. MÖLDER, V. SAZONOV

Description

The project analyses the information activities of the Russian Federation performed against Ukraine from 1 April until 31 December 2014.

Firstly, it examines and systematises the phenomenology of image building in the Russian media about Ukraine, its authorities, and its armed forces during the anti-terrorist operation in Eastern Ukraine. Then it gives an overview of the Russian information activities and their impact in Ukraine.

Justification

From December 2014 the Russian military has adopted a new doctrine that explicitly states that information superiority is essential to achieving victory on the physical battleground in the modern war.¹ Therefore the Ukrainian case offers lessons that can potentially be applied to other NATO member states. For example, in many cases Russia actively accuses the Baltic States of the same matters as it accuses Ukraine in order to deliberately discredit these countries in the international arena (e.g. accusations of rehabilitation of Nazism etc).

It is crucial for NATO to draw appropriate conclusions from the on-going conflict in Europe in order to further strengthen the unity of the alliance and avoid such conflict scenarios between Russia and NATO in the future.

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¹ Чекинов, Богданов 2013, 17.

Objectives

The objective of this research is to identify how the Russian media portrays the Ukrainian military and security structures, including the policies of the Kyiv government and their 'collaboration' with the West. The research group looks at how messages disseminated in the media attempt to construct attitudes and advocate behaviours in parallel to political and military events on the ground in Ukraine.

Methods

The study combines standardised content analysis (online news and social media) with interviews. During the course of two field trips to Ukraine (Kyiv and Eastern Ukraine) interviews were carried out with different media representatives, political and military experts, officials and politicians, as well as soldiers and officers of the Ukrainian defence forces that have actually been involved in the conflict in Donbass.

Outcomes

The media analysis executed for this report maps the various communicative strategies used in Russian information campaigns against the Ukrainian defence forces, and the interviews help to provide an assessment of their possible impact. Understanding the nature of Russian information warfare provides NATO, the Baltic States, and Europe in general with input that can improve the level of preparedness to respond to the challenges of 21st century warfare.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Russian Information War in Ukraine:

- The Russian information war in Ukraine in 2014 was a massive, multifaceted, and coherent operation. Russia denies direct involvement, but supports local pro-Russian separatists to maintain the conflict that can be considered a proxy war. Military activities are supported by an active media campaign that undermines Ukrainian authorities and their political goals to reunite the country.
- Russia often adopts defensive narratives, which justify its positions in the mythologized opposition between East and West. The Ukrainian authorities as well interested international organisations are considered to be merely puppets of the West under the guidance of the United States and NATO. During Putin's presidency, Russia has declared the restoration of Russia as a Eurasian empire as its national goal.
- However, according to the ruling narrative, Russia cannot be a real Eurasian Empire if it does not control Ukraine and the Black Sea, and control over Crimea is of utmost importance. In the Russian national mythology, Ukraine was an integral part of the birth of the Russian Empire. Ukraine's special position makes crisis management there extremely sensitive.

- Russian information activities skilfully target a wide range of audiences with different beliefs and convictions. The anti-Ukrainian approach relies on a variety of stylistic forms and nuances. It can take the form of sensationalism and blaming (e.g. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*) or use a more restrained approach (e.g. *Regnum*, *TV Zvezda*).
- In addition to the content of the messages, Russia technically ensures that certain messages reach specific audiences and others do not (i.e. by controlling TV and radio towers, mobile phone operators etc.).

2. Recommendations

- NATO must make every effort to de-mystify Russia and stop cultivating a culture that sees the Russian state and culture as something inevitably incomprehensible. There is no ‘mysterious Russia’, which acts in an untold manner. The major difference lies in the governance of Russia and the West, and its implications for international relations. However, there is no fundamental difference between Russia and any Western country in terms of carrying out research and raising awareness.
- NATO must raise public awareness of specifics of Russia – its history, culture, ideology, politics, governance, army, etc.—in public diplomacy and strategic communications targeted toward internal audiences within member states.
- Any efforts on behalf of Russia to portray itself as an exporter of ‘alternative opinions’ must be taken seriously. Lies produced by a country where there is effectively no democracy or freedom of speech cannot be mistaken for a source of alternative opinions. In this respect, NATO could foster closer cooperation with numerous NGOs, think tanks, and human rights watchdogs (e.g. Freedom House, Reporters without Borders, Amnesty International, etc.) that are already producing quality materials regarding the real situation in Russia.
- NATO must continuously pay attention to non-military actions that may have military co-objectives, especially those trying to circumvent NATO Article 5. This includes all operations related to information warfare, which have an increasing importance in contemporary conflicts, especially those with the Russian involvement.

- NATO must increase its information warfare capabilities and be prepared in the event of any kind of information operation that would lead not only to military conflict, but also toward political, social, economic, or environmental crisis. Emotions are essential for narrative building and a powerful tool in shaping international relations. The power of information warfare may nullify military advantages and disadvantages and may distract political leaders from making rational decisions and designing the attitudes and beliefs of states and societies.

The best way to face information warfare would be to present rational arguments supported by real evidence to overturn myths and beliefs that are introduced by destructive powers in order to create panic and manipulate populations. Greater awareness about Russia is a vital component in increasing the share of fact-based assessments and informed opinions in the society, and thus reduces susceptibility for different manipulations by Russia.

1. INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

K. Müür, P. Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, V. Sazonov

1.1. RESEARCH GOAL

The research project *Russian Information Warfare against the Ukrainian State and Defence Forces: April-December 2014* was carried out by scholars from the Estonian National Defence College Centre for Applied Studies under the auspices of the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence. Our cooperation partners were the University of Tartu Institute of Social Studies and the Headquarters of the Estonian Defence Forces Strategic Communication Department. This was an interdisciplinary endeavour involving political, historical, military, and communication studies. The research was carried out March-July 2015.

The project focused on Russian information activities that took place soon after the annexation of Crimea by Russia — from 1 April to the end of 2014. This period includes the activities of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics in Eastern Ukraine; Russian Federation campaigns in support of pro-Russian forces against the Ukrainian Defence Forces; and the so-called 'humanitarian convoys'. Research methods included the analysis of various media sources and conducting interviews with relevant experts in Ukraine. Media analysis was used to map the communicative strategies of the Russian information campaigns against the Ukrainian defence forces and the interviews provided the assessment of various experts as to their possible impact.

The main goal of the research was to provide further insight into the nature of Russian information warfare and, thus, input for NATO, the Baltic States, and Europe in general to improve the level of preparedness in countering the challenges of 21st century warfare.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of this research was to identify how the Russian media portrays Ukrainian military and security structures, and the Kyiv government and their ‘collaboration’ with the West. The research group looked at how these messages were disseminated in the media in an effort to construct attitudes and advocate behaviours parallel to political and military events on the ground in Ukraine. The following research questions were addressed:

1. How has the Russian Federation constructed images related to the performance of the Ukrainian armed forces (including volunteers²), army leadership, and the Ukrainian government?
2. How have Russian information activities portrayed the various Western players (USA, NATO, and the EU) and their role in the on-going Ukraine crisis?

1.3. METHODOLOGY

The study combined standardised content analysis with interviews. Media analysis made it possible for researchers to examine both explicit and implicit messages from a variety of sources and compare the results across media channels. Content analysis also made it possible to quantitatively depict trends in using various keywords, labels, and other phenomena. During the course of two field trips to Ukraine (Kyiv and Eastern Ukraine) in May and June 2015, interviews were carried out with a number of political and military experts, officials and politicians, media representatives, as well as soldiers and officers of the Ukrainian defence forces who were actually involved in the conflict in the Donbass area.

The coding manual

The first aim of the project was to develop a methodology for the systematisation of the rich empirical Russian propaganda material into a coherent structure. The added value of the resulting coding manual is that it is not limited to analysing this case study alone, but could be a useful starting point for others doing similar research.

.....
 2 Those voluntarily fighting in support of Ukrainian sovereignty

The coding manual can be roughly divided into two parts. The first part deals with the various characteristics of the news stories, such as main topics, sources used, geopolitical locations referred to, and both past and present events referred to in each of the stories. The second part of the manual deals with the meaning-making aspects of the propaganda material. A series of questions were posed about what kinds of attitudes (if applicable) the articles conveyed about the various groups being researched—the Ukrainian defence forces (including volunteers), the army leadership and the Kyiv government; the USA/NATO, the EU, or the West in general. Even though the US does not equal NATO and vice versa, then in the Russian discourse they are often regarded as the same, therefore for the sole purposes of this research, they are examined together as one target group.

The representation of these target groups in the media was scrutinised against the following labels and phenomena:

- parallels with Third Reich—fascists, Nazis, neo-Nazis, Banderivtsi³ etc.
- humiliation and belittlement of Ukrainian soldiers by, for example, calling them criminals, rapists, drug addicts, and cowards, or by claiming that there is an abundance of violence, chaos, etc within the Ukrainian armed forces
- execution squads, punitive units (*karateli*)
- genocide, fratricide, terrorists
- the Kyiv junta and its followers
- Russophobia—discrimination, nationalism, xenophobia
- Ukrainians as ‘false Russians’, little brothers, Ukraine as a failed state
- the West as fascist
- Ukrainians as puppets of the West
- Western provocations against Russia in Ukraine

These criticisms are tools used in Russian information activities to achieve their objectives—to demonise, deter, and demoralise the adversary, i.e. Ukraine and the West.⁴

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 3 *Banderivtsi* – the followers of Stepan Bandera (1909-1959), leader of the Ukrainian nationalists, head of Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN, in Ukrainian *Організація Українських Націоналістів*). Bandera was also the leader of Ukrainian independence movement. See more in Chapter 2.2.

4 Since the present study did not involve image-building concerning Russia itself, keywords/ labels/phenomena that would help to analyse other objectives of information activities—e.g. the legitimization of Russian activities on Russian soil to the general public and the promotion of Russian political elites—was not assessed.

In addition to the preponderance of negative images, other possibilities were included in the coding manual. For example, a text might be conveying a positive image of the target group, either through a supportive statement by the author himself or by use of a supportive quotation. The articles might also take a justifying stance—not directly supportive, but nevertheless providing an explanation or an excuse for a certain behaviour or event. An important category was that of neutral-looking articles, which simply presented facts and events (true or untrue), but without explicit judgements. If an article conveyed a negative tone that did not fall under any of the above-mentioned negative categories, it was coded as ‘other negative’. This analysis did not include an examination of the share of true and false stories presented in the messages.

Data sample

Three channels of online news were used for the media analysis—*Komsomolskaya Pravda (KP)*, *Regnum*, and *TV Zvezda*. Although not representative of the entire Russian media landscape, these three outlets were of particular interest.

Komsomolskaya Pravda is one of the most widely circulated newspapers in Russia and abroad, especially in the CIS.⁵ The paper targets not only the Russian media audience, but has many readers in Ukraine (especially Eastern Ukraine), Moldova, Belarus, and in other countries with large Russian diasporas, including the Baltic States. It is published altogether in 53 countries: 11 CIS countries and 42 countries in the rest of the world.⁶ The overall circulation of the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* Publishing House comprises 46.1 million copies/month; the kp.ru web portal is visited by more than 20 million people/month.⁷ Historically, during the Soviet Era, the ranks of ‘journalists’ working for *Komsomolskaya Pravda* were often filled with officials from the Russian intelligence services and the KGB. Even in the 1990s, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* had about a dozen foreign correspondents of which only one was not connected to the intelligence services.⁸

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5 CIS—the Commonwealth of Independent States (Содружество Независимых Государств).

6 <http://advert.kp.ru/Files/20150901122913.pdf>. However, the list of CIS countries also includes the Georgian breakaway territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, recognised as independent by Russia.

7 See <http://www.kp.ru/about>, see also <http://www.chel.kp.ru/daily/24213.4/416227/>; http://mediaguide.ru/?p=house&house_id=04

8 Earley 2009: 244.

Regnum represents an information agency that focuses on events in the post-Soviet space or the so-called ‘near abroad’.⁹ According to *LiveInternet.ru*, the monthly audience is more than 4.3 million people.¹⁰ Vigen Akopyan, former editor-in-chief of *Regnum*, has declared that the agency will oppose Russian investments in any country where political opinion is hostile to Russia or supports the rehabilitation of fascism.¹¹ *Regnum* is also connected to the Russian government. For example, Modest Kolerov, *Regnum* co-founder and current editor-in-chief, worked in the Presidential Administration of Russia (2005-2007) and is one of the most prominent pro-Government ideologists in Russia.¹²

TV Zvezda is owned by the Russian Ministry of Defence and is therefore important in terms of reporting the military aspects of the crisis. The media analysis for this report concentrated only on the online news part of the channel.

In order to cover the research period from April-December 2014, each week was examined in the following way:

Table 1. Principles of data sampling

CHANNEL	MON	TUE	WED	THR	FRI	SAT
<i>Regnum</i>	X		X			
Komsomolskaya Pravda		X		X		
TV Zvezda					X	X

Each day two relevant news stories—first and last—were analysed according to the coding manual. Altogether the data sample comprises 418 articles.

9 Regnum – информационное агентство. <http://www.regnum.ru/information/about/> (04.07.2015).

10 See more <http://www.liveinternet.ru/stat/regnum.ru/>

11 Информагентство «Регнум» не станет рекламировать Эстонию даже за деньги. Baltija.eu. <http://baltija.eu/news/read/25568> (04.07.2015).

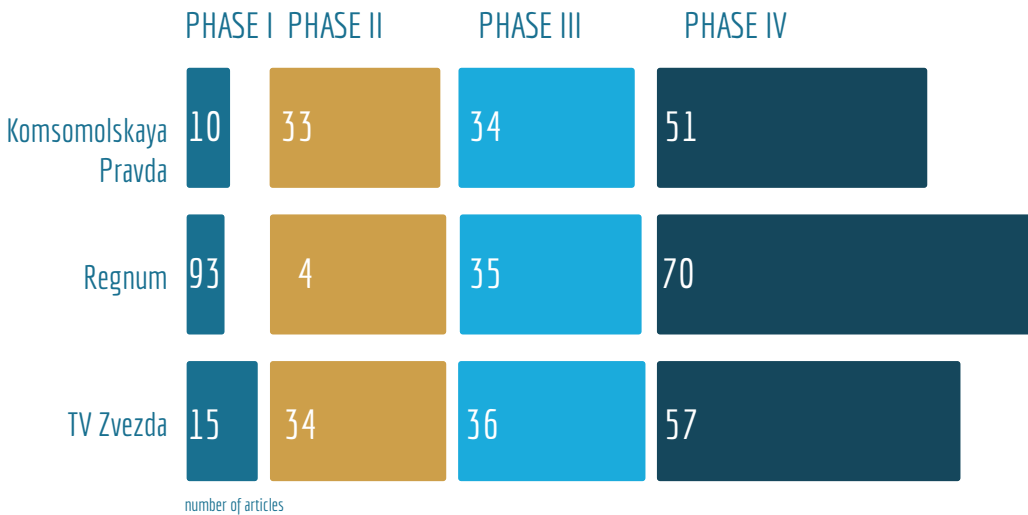
12 Obschchaya Gazeta 2015.

For certain coding manual categories, the results were divided into four phases according to different stages in the military events on the ground (for additional information see Chapter 4):

- I – Provoking the military conflict – April 2014.
- II – Escalation of the military conflict – May-June 2014.
- III – Direct intervention in the military conflict, changing the situation – July-September 2014.
- IV – Stirring up the military conflict – September-December 2014.

The breakdown of articles according to the phases and outlets was the following:

Table 2. Breakdown of the data sample according to phases of the military conflict in Ukraine (2014)



A supplementary analysis of social media was carried out on one public Facebook group—Национально-Освободительное Движение (the National Liberation Movement).¹³ The National Liberation Movement unites political forces that support ‘the territorial integrity of Russia’ and whose aim is to ‘re-establish the sovereignty lost in 1991’.¹⁴ Since the Ukraine crisis can to a large extent be seen as an existential quest for Russia to secure its sphere of influence (see Chapter 2.4), this group was chosen as representative of this particular line of Putin’s thinking. Due to the large volume of posts in the group, every 50th post was examined; the number of overall data units came to 165. The group was created at the beginning of May 2014, so the month of April is not included the data sample.

¹³ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/306119699545500/>

¹⁴ <http://rusnod.ru/index/o-dvizhenii/>

Interviews

Researchers Vladimir Sazonov and Igor Kopõtin made two field trips to Ukraine in May and June 2015 to carry out interviews with relevant media representatives, political and military experts, as well as soldiers and officers who were actually involved in the military conflict. The aim of the interviews was to get an overview of the strategies, effectiveness, and impact of Russian information activities in Ukraine. Altogether 24 interviews were carried out.

2. CLASHES BETWEEN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE: IDEOLOGIES AND POLITICS

This chapter provides insight into the ways in which Russia and Ukraine position themselves in the international arena and how identity influences the way in which each country sees the other. The chapter begins with an overview of the state ideology of Putin's Russia and its historical roots. Prevailing attitudes in Ukraine are then scrutinised against this historical background. Attention is primarily focussed on providing a military-historical retrospective into events that have contributed to the identity of the Ukrainian armed forces. Next, a comparison of the Russian and Ukrainian security narratives is also provided, including the question of whether or not Ukraine is still within Russia's sphere of interest and how this issue is perceived by Russia and contested by Ukraine. Then the chapter turns to Russia's use of international law and the Budapest memorandum to justify its actions. Finally, Russian propaganda tools are considered.

2.1. THE IDEOLOGY OF PUTIN'S RUSSIA AND ITS HISTORICAL ROOTS

V. Sazonov. The Concept of the Russian World

As political scientist Andreas Umland remarked:

Since coming to power in 1999, Vladimir Putin has purposefully instrumentalized Russian imperial nostalgia, national pride, and ethnocentric thinking for the legitimization of his authoritarian regime. The repercussions of this strategy are becoming a threat to the integrity of the Russian state in the 21st century.¹⁵

.....
15 Umland 2010.

The recreation or re-establishment of the Russian Empire in accordance with the borders of the former USSR is one of greatest ambitions of Vladimir Putin, his *idée fixe*. Kremlin ideologists and political technologists¹⁶ have created a new ideological platform, which is now known as *Ruskiy mir* (the Russian World or *Pax Russica*).¹⁷

Probably the most fundamental idea of Vladimir Putin's state philosophy is the concept of *Ruskiy mir* that he and his ideologues officially introduced in 2006-2007.¹⁸ The idea of *Ruskiy mir*¹⁹ has been developed over the past decade, promoted by PR companies and information campaigns for both internal and external Russian-speaking audiences through mass media, social media, and in Russian popular and scientific literature (especially historical, political, economic journals), etc.²⁰

But what does '*Ruskiy mir*' mean? How should we understand it? Is it something new?²¹

In April 2007, Vladimir Putin said the following:

The Russian language not only preserves an entire layer of truly global achievements, but is also the living space for the many millions of people in the Russian-speaking world, a community that goes far beyond Russia itself. As the common heritage of many peoples, the Russian language will never become the language of hatred or enmity, xenophobia or isolationism. [...]

.....
16 A term commonly used in Russia for campaign and PR-managers in the spheres of politics and ideology.

17 This comes from the idea of Pax Romana (Latin "Roman Peace" or "Roman World"), which was introduced by first Roman emperor Augustus after the end of Roman Republic. Later there were several Pax'is – Pax Britannica, Pax Americana.

18 Послание Федеральному Собранию Российской Федерации Президента России Владимира Путина. Российская газета 27.04.2007, <http://www.rg.ru/2007/04/27/poslanie.html>.

19 See more Л. Сычева. Русский мир, русская культура, русский мир – РФ Сегодня 14/2007 http://russia-today.ru/old/archive/2007/no_14/14_look.htm. In June 2007, Putin founded the Ruskiy Mir Foundation (<http://ruskiymir.ru/fund/>).

See also: Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of the Establishment of the *Ruskiy Mir* Foundation (<http://ruskiymir.ru/en/fund/decreephp>).

See also Ростислав Ищенко. Русский мир и национальный вопрос. Эксперт online. 7.09.2014 <http://expert.ru/expert/2014/37/ruskij-mir-i-natsionalnyj-vopros/>;

Фокина А.В. К вопросу о русском мире, <http://filos.univ-orel.ru/media/issue/1/2014-01-04.pdf>

20 For example, see a profound philosophic, but propagandistic book—'Project Russia' (Проект Россия)—that was published in 2014. This book was recommended by the Administrative Department of the President of the Russian Federation to be read by statesmen and politicians of Russian Federation.

21 See more <http://ruskiymir.ru/en/fund/index.php>

In my view, we need to support the initiative put forward by Russian linguists to create a National Russian Language Foundation, the main aim of which will be to develop the Russian language at home, support Russian language study programmes abroad, and to generally promote Russian language and literature around the world.²²

Dr. Iaroslav Kovalchuk, Head of the Internal Policy Department of the International Centre for Policy Studies in Kyiv, defines Vladimir Putin's state ideology:

The desire to build the state philosophy on the past, namely the glory of the Kyivan Rus, resulted in the elaboration of the concept 'Russkiy Mir' (the Russian world). 'Russkiy Mir' means an international commonwealth based on affiliation with Russia, the Russian language, and Russian culture. The advocates of the concept believe that it has a right to be treated as a separate civilization space, which includes more than 300 million people. 'Russkiy Mir' was first used in public discourse in 2006 by Vladimir Putin, and ever since it has been gradually adopted as a Russian soft power tool in relations with its neighbours.²³

This fundamental idea of the Russian World is vigorously used by Moscow for imperialistic and expansionistic purposes, especially regarding aggression against Ukraine and its government. The concept of the Russian World is used as an ideological tool by Russian political elites to unite all Russian-speaking people worldwide and to create a powerful and global Russian-speaking cultural, ideological, historical, social, political and informational space as an alternative to the Soviet Union. This concept of the Russian World is closely connected to the compatriots (*соотечественники*) policy of the Russian Federation—Russia declared that her duty is to protect Russian-speaking people not only in Russia, but also abroad.²⁴

Many historical phenomena, ideas, narratives, and historical myths that originated in the 18th and 19th centuries, or from the beginning of the 20th century (e.g. Holy Rus, Greater Russia, the Russian World, the Russian soul) are actively reused by Putin's propaganda machine in their renewed forms. Various historical myths used during the period of Russian Empire before 1917 have been reawakened and mixed with Soviet ideas, narratives, and phenomena. The concept of the Russian World is partly based on the legacy of Imperial Russia (1721-1917) and partly on ideas introduced by

.....
22 <http://russkiymir.ru/en/fund/index.php>.

23 Kovalchuk 2015.

24 See more <http://pravfond.ru>; <https://interaffairs.ru/news/show/9505>; <http://archive.mid.ru/bdomp/sitemap.nsf/kartaflat/03.04>; <http://www.russkie.org/?module=interview&action=view&id=18>.

the Bolsheviks (e.g. *the enemy of the people*²⁵, execution squads²⁶, the Nazis, the Great Patriotic War²⁷ (1941-1945), *banderivtsi*, fascists, Western spies). In addition to Soviet narratives and ideas, Russian ideologists introduced some images from the Third Reich in early 2014, such as ‘the national traitor’ (*национал-предатель*) that has its roots in the German term *Nationalverräter*.²⁸

The concept of the Russian World is used as an ideological tool by Russian political elites to unite all Russian-speaking people worldwide.

In many cases Vladimir Putin’s national idea does not offer anything new. It copies Count Uvarov’s national idea from the first half of the 19th century, which is based on three ideological concepts—**autocracy**, **orthodoxy**, and **nationality** (*самодержавие, православие, народность*).²⁹

Count Sergey Semionovich Uvarov (1786-1855) was a highly influential imperial political leader under Tsar Nicholas I of Russia. He was one of the fundamental ideologues of the Russian Empire and author of the ‘theory of official nationality’ (*Теория официальной народности*), which promoted the famous slogan, ‘Autocracy, orthodoxy, and nationality!’ His theory became the basis for Russian imperial ideology and public education.

Today these ideas are reused in official Russian narratives in a revitalised contemporary manner. Already in the first half of the 19th century, Count Uvarov actively accentuated the uniqueness of Russian state, the Russian people, and the Russian-Orthodox civilisation. Uvarov’s theory postulated that Russia is a unique civilisation, different from all others, especially

25 The term *enemy of the people* was used during the Soviet Period for those who were considered to be political opponents of the Bolsheviks. This term was first used in the Soviet Union in 1917, introduced by Vladimir Lenin in his 28 November 1917 decree.

26 Execution squads or death squads – armed groups perpetrating acts of terror, genocide, or mass killings (e.g. ethnic, political, religious groups) used by some totalitarian states, e.g. Einsatzgruppen in Nazi Germany.

27 In Soviet and Russian historiography, the term *Great Patriotic War* is more commonly used instead of WWII. However, it refers mostly to war between Nazi Germany and Soviet Union during 1941-1945.

28 <http://www.svoboda.org/content/article/25302687.html>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJkN76EystU>; 18.03.2014.

29 Эйдман 2014, 11.

“
Count Sergey Uvarov was one of the fundamental ideologues of the Russian Empire and author of the ‘theory of official nationality’ that is reused in official Russian narratives.
 ”

Europe.³⁰ In the 19th century many Russian ideologues (Pan-Slavists) and statesmen already viewed Ukraine as part of Russia. They often refused to accept Ukraine as a separate nation or the Ukrainian language as an independent language. For example, in 1863 Count Pyotr Aleksandrovich Valuyev (1815-1890), a Russian statesman, author, and nationalist who served as Emperor Alexander II’s Minister of the Interior, declared that a separate Ukrainian language does not exist; it is rather a Russian

dialect. In 1876, during the process of the Russification of Ukraine, Russian Emperor Alexander II (1855-1881) forbid in part the publication of books in the Ukrainian language (the Ems Ukaz of Alexander II).³¹ Putin’s propagandists, Russian politicians, opinion leaders, and authors often recycle this opinion in their declarations that there is no Ukrainian state, nation, or language.³²

1) What does the concept of **autocracy** (*самодержавие*) mean for *Rex Russica*? This was a fundamental concept for the Russian Empire and Great Russia and it is used to mean a ruling system in which the leader (dictator or king) has unlimited power. The idea has been very popular among nationalists and monarchists, especially ultra-monarchists, throughout Russian history. It even influenced the Soviet ruling system where some leaders of the Communist party and Soviet Union had unlimited power. This idea is also promoted by Putin’s close supporters, whose last ruling years are more similar to the dictatorship of António de Oliveira Salazar (1932-1968) in Portugal.³³

2) The second, but no less important basic concept is **orthodoxy** (*православие*, *ortodoxia* in Latin, *ὀρθόδοξια* in Greek), which means ‘right’, ‘true’, or ‘straight’, and is also a ‘religion’. Orthodoxy has played a central role for Russians for more than 900 years—since 988 when Kievan Rus was allegedly Christianised, up until the events of 1917. This idea was

.....
 30 Заичкин, Почкаев 1994, 595.

31 See more Rudnyckyj 1976 , 153-155.

32 See e.f. Вассерман 2009.

33 See Piirsalu 2015.

reintroduced after the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991) and it has once again become extremely popular, and powerfully reused by the Russian state ideology mostly for propagandistic purposes. Orthodoxy has an important and influential role in modern Russia³⁴, as well as for Putin's national idea (*Pax Russica*).

The so-called 'orthodox fascism'—a radical form of orthodoxy grounded in orthodoxy, anti-Semitism, and chauvinism—is relatively popular among certain Russian groups.³⁵ This extreme ideology is strongly based on the views of the Black Hundreds (*Chornaya sotnya, chernosotentsy*)—an ultra-nationalist, radical movement of imperial Russia in the early 20th century before the Revolution (1917) and the Civil War (1917-1922/1923). The Black Hundreds supported the legacy of the House of Romanovs, and their ideology drew on xenophobia, anti-Semitism, ultra-monarchist views, imperialism, Russo-centrism, Pan-Slavism³⁶ and, last but not least, chauvinism. This movement became very popular in Russia in the early 20th century, as did many other similar ultra-monarchist movements such as '*Soyuz russkogo naroda*' (Union of the Russian Nation), '*Soyuz russkikh lyudey*' (Union of the Russian People), '*Russkaya monarkhicheskaya partiya*' (Russian Monarchist Party), and '*Belyi dvuglavyy oryol*' (White Two-headed Eagle). Later, after the Revolution in October 1917, these ideas spread among the Russian emigrants.³⁷

For example, the Black Hundreds were devoted to the support of the Russian Tsar, the Orthodox Church and, of course, the motherland (the Russian Empire).

Their ideas were expressed by Uvarov's imperial motto, 'Autocracy, orthodoxy, and nationality!' At the beginning of the 20th century, the Black Hundreds carried out a masterful propaganda campaign against socialists, anarchists, and Jewish people during church services, community meetings, academic lectures, and public demonstrations. This propaganda caused large-scale anti-Semitic hysteria and a patriotic fever among the Russian people, and was used by many ideologists and orthodox clerics

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34 Riistan 2015.

35 e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rHvt199fKc> or http://news.eizvestia.com/news_politics/full/726-russkij-pravoslavnyj-fashizm-vo-vsej-krase-video, last visited 10.10.2015.

36 This ideological movement became popular in Russia in the middle of the 19th century. The main idea of this ideology was to unite all Slavic people under the Russian dominance. As a political movement it started after Crimean War (1853-1856) that Russia lost. After their defeat, the Russian elite started to cultivate hatred and labelling of the Western countries (e.g. Great Britain, France, etc.) and West in generally. This idea is still alive and popular in Putin's Russia and actively used by Russian propaganda machine also today (see e.g. Report about the XII. Pan-slavic congress in Moscow, May 2015— „Славянский дух подпитал Путина и нас“. 22.05.2015. <http://lenta.ru/articles/2015/05/22/slavesobor>).

37 e.g. Стефан 1992.

to promote their ideas. These attitudes led to pogroms and waves of terror against Jewish people, especially those living in Ukraine, and, at times, against Ukrainians, revolutionaries, socialists, anarchists, other national minorities, homosexuals, and certain key public figures.³⁸ Russia is now actively promoting Pan-Slavism, chauvinism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism as it did two hundred years ago. Traditions originating in the 19th and early 20th centuries such as blaming the West (since the Crimean War 1853-1856), promoting the uniqueness of the Russian soul and Russian civilisation, chauvinism, nationalism, Russo-centrism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia are once again being followed by Russian nationalists and ultra-nationalist, radical fascist movements are on the rise again in modern Russia. Andreas Umland writes:

Racially motivated hate crimes are frequently presented as outcomes of mere 'youth hooliganism' while the manifestly neo-Nazi skinhead mass movement has, until recently, often been dismissed as a marginal phenomenon. In fact, the overwhelmingly ultra-nationalist Russian skinhead movement has been estimated to have between 20 and 70 thousand members—depending on the definition of such membership. This would seem to make the Russian skinheads the largest informal, openly neo-Neo-Nazi youth movement in the world.³⁹

For several days now, Russia has been haunted by nationalistic demonstrations, violent ethnic brawls, and the resulting mass arrests. A series of interrelated events was triggered by the death of a Russian soccer fan in a scuffle between an ethnic Russian and a north Caucasian youth in Moscow, on 6 December 2010. International media has focused on the following violent clash between neo-Nazi demonstrators on the one side and Russian policemen on the other, in Manezh Square in the Moscow city centre, on 11 December 2010, as well as on subsequent clashes in the Russian capital. Prior to this confrontation there were several other, less spectacular, but impressively massive public gatherings of Russian nationalist youth in Moscow, as well as more in other cities including Rostov-on-the-Don and St. Petersburg.⁴⁰

This attitude is not limited to radical youth. According to Levada Tsentr, more than fifty per cent of Russians support the slogan 'Russia for Russians'.⁴¹

3) Count Uvarov's third important idea was that of **nationality** or **national character** (народность). Russian nationalists and chauvinists have been exploiting this idea since the beginning of the 20th century and it is still reflected in the Russian ideology of the 21st century.

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38 See e.g. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Hundreds.

39 Umland 2010.

40 Ibid.

41 See <http://www.levada.ru/cp/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/STS.pdf>

Today, the concepts of **autocracy**, **orthodoxy**, and **nationality** are being re-appropriated by Putin's Russia. Lectures, demonstrations, and sermons organised by Kremlin propagandists during the Ukrainian conflict were often directed against Western countries, homosexuality, and certain nationalities while, at the same time, Russia was pictured as the defender of traditional values against the immorality encroaching from the West.



Picture 1. “For Fatherland, For Putin!”⁴² (Source: http://ic.pics.livejournal.com/tov_ignat/27119593/5816/5816_original.jpg)

⁴² For example, a military slogan used by the Soviets ‘For the Fatherland, for Stalin!’ (За Родину, за Сталина!) or sometimes ‘For the Fatherland, for Stalin, for the Communist Party!’ (За Родину, за Сталина, за Партию!) appeared in the Russian press for the first time in September 1938 in articles of Pravda and Krasnaya Zvezda (Красная Звезда). On 1 September 1938, a politruk’s deputy G. Szyskin wrote about the battle for lake Hasan (29.07-08.08.1938): «Вперед, за Родину, за Сталина!— кричим мы с командиром во весь голос» (Pravda, article «За родину!»). The slogan ‘For the Fatherland, for Stalin!’ (За Родину, за Сталина!) was nothing more than a modification of a military slogan used by Russian soldiers and officers during 19th and at the beginning of 20th century— ‘For the Tsar, for the Fatherland, for Fate!’ (За царя! За родину! За веру!). Interestingly, many people in Russia have started to use a new slogan ‘For Putin, for the Fatherland!’ (За Путина, за Родину!) or modifications like ‘For Putin! For Great Russia!’ (За Путина! За Великую Россию!) or ‘For Fate, for the Fatherland, for Sovereignty!’ (За Веру, Родину, Суверинетет!). Therefore, this old idea from the Russian imperial period is still very well usable in Putin’s Russia. Patriotic and military songs and marches have always been in service of Russian propaganda—e.g. the famous ‘Farewell to Slavyanka’ (Прощание славянки). This extremely patriotic Russian march, composed by Vasily Agapkin in 1912 (ideologically connected directly to the Balkan wars), was still popular after the 1917 Revolution and it was not forbidden during the Soviet period when it retained its amazing popularity. Putin’s propaganda and Russian military forces still use it very actively. One of many such examples is ‘God is with us!’ referring to the war in Donbass (Сергей Трофимов. С нами Бог). The phrase ‘Gott mit uns’ (God is with us) was used in the German military during the 19th and at the beginning 20th of century and later in the Nazi Germany. It also included the imperial Russian motto «Съ нами Богъ!», the idea of which comes from Late Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire) and was used as battle cry (Nobiscum deus).

The Idea of Moscow as the Third Rome

In addition to the Russian World, another significant concept used by Moscow's politicians and ideologists is based on the ancient ideological dogma originating from Late Middle Ages—the concept of the Third Rome. This idea helps justify Russia's foreign policy of expansionism and to legitimate Russia's imperialist claims in the Eurasian region. The idea of Moscow as the Third Rome is skilfully exploited for propagandistic means.

The concept of Moscow as the Third Rome is more than 500 years old. It is related to the continuity of the Roman Empire. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 A.D. and the Byzantine Empire (or Eastern Roman Empire) in 1453, Moscow took advantage of the political and ideological vacuum and began to ascribe itself the role of sole legitimate successor of the Eastern Roman empire and the rulers of the Grand Duchy of Moscow were successors of Byzantine (or Roman) emperors.⁴³ Even today, the state symbol of Russia is the Byzantine double-headed eagle to show that Russia is the new Byzantine Empire and Moscow is the successor of Constantinople (Byzantine) in terms of orthodox religion and state ideology. It is neither accidental nor surprising that in modern Russia Vladimir Putin is often compared to Roman emperors and pictured as Julius Caesar or Octavian Augustus, who were the first emperors and created the 'Roman world' (*Pax Romana*).⁴⁴

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43 For promoting the imperial idea and accentuation of 'Roman (Byzantine) origin' of his dynasty Ivan IV the Terrible (ruled 1533-1584) was crowned as Tsar of Russia (1547). Ivan, who wanted to become a new Caesar—completed the centralisation of his state and tried to create a powerful empire. His grandfather was Ivan III or Ivan the Great (1462-1505) who became a ruler of a vast territory and was married to Sophia Paleologue, who was a daughter of Thomas Palaeologus, a ruler of Morea. Thomas was brother of the last Byzantine emperor Constantine XI. Ivan III was influenced by Byzantine imperial traditions due to Sophia's imperial origins. From this time Moscow began to promote the idea of legacy of Roman Empire. Ivan the Terrible was a grandson of Ivan III and Sophia and he had the blood of Byzantine emperor. He introduced a new title for himself, which originates from Rome—the title 'Tsar' (meaning 'Caesar'). So Ivan IV became 'Tsar of all Russia' in 1547 and used this title until his death in 1584. He conquered Kazan, Astrakhan and Siberia, etc. and under his rule Russia became an influential regional power. Style of Russian diplomacy and ruling system became more and more similar to Late-Byzantine style. However, it seems that elements of the old ruling system of the Golden Horde were more widespread in Moscow even in 16-17th centuries or even later.

44 See Sharkov 2015; Koreneva 2015.

Modern Russia often turns to the old ideological software of the Third Rome and the so-called ‘Byzantine type of diplomacy’,⁴⁵ which in some cases drastically differs from that of Western democracies.

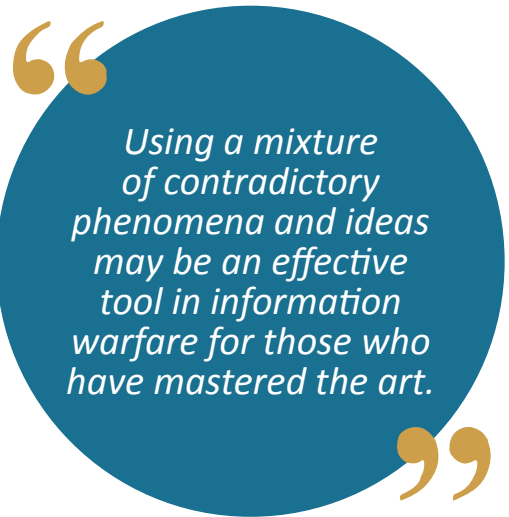
Conclusion

While Western media and politicians often regard Putin’s national idea (*Pax Russica*) as a new phenomenon, it is actually

not new. Russia’s ideology is, to a great extent, an irrational mix of older systems—i.e. Byzantium, the Golden Horde, the Grand Duchy of Moscow, the Slavophile legacy from the beginning of the 20th century, the Soviet system and its ideological elements, and some ideas from Orthodox Christianity.

Nevertheless, Putin’s state philosophy is strongly influenced by nationalism, chauvinism, clericalism, orthodoxy, xenophobia, imperialism, and autocracy. In addition, the whole concept is decorated with ideological inventions and myths from the ‘glorious’ Soviet times. The Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state are both playing the same game as they share an important role in all spheres of modern Russian society—education, science, media, warfare (e.g. justification of wars, aggression), politics, economy, culture, etc.

Although Putin’s ‘new’ ideology, which has been developing in Russia over the past decade, makes effective use of modern technologies for influencing people, the Kremlin’s propaganda machine is still mostly built on old traditions. It is flexible and



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45 In his article ‘The Return of Byzantine Diplomacy’ historian Mart Nutt remarked: One might argue whether there even is such a thing as a particular, clearly distinct Byzantine diplomacy that differs from every other type. However, particular characteristics manifest themselves during different civilisations, cultures and eras that make it possible to group and distinguish between them, which is why I now take the risk of limiting Byzantine diplomacy to being a phenomenon. In doing so, I do not view Byzantine diplomacy as the diplomacy of Byzantium, but rather as a tradition of diplomacy whose legacy continues today, in the first decades of the 21st century (Nutt 2014). We agree with the following opinion proposed by Nutt: However, Byzantine diplomacy did get a foothold in Russia. Ivan III wanted to make Russia the Third Rome and the legacy of Byzantium was part of this. Despite Russia’s backwardness in other fields, its diplomacy had attained a high level of professionalism in the Tsarist Empire (Nutt 2014).

adapts to each new situation, but has certain weaknesses. Using a mixture of contradictory phenomena and ideas may be an effective tool in information warfare for those who have mastered the art, but it can easily backfire, for example, when two historical enemies—Communist ideology and Orthodox religion—are branded as twin brothers (see the picture below).



Picture 2. The text on poster reads 'Merry Christmas! Jesus Christ is with us! Ideas of Communism, spiritual freedom, equality, brotherhood lived already among followers of Christ. Whoever is against Communism, is against Christ and against peace on Earth.'⁴⁶

2.2. A MILITARY-HISTORICAL RETROSPECTIVE OF THE IDENTITY OF THE UKRAINIAN ARMED FORCES

I. Kopōtin

One characteristic of the organisational culture of the armed forces is the collectivist disciplinary model. This model is based on values that have developed by the officers' corps as 'experts of violence'. Military professionalism is considered to be the main value-based concept and is shaped by military, instrumental, nationalist, and traditionalist aspects. A military (self-)identity based on the above aspects can be seen as a

⁴⁶ Source: https://scontent-ams.xx.fbcdn.net/hphotos-xft1/vt1.09/10386398_1189434491082802_7565534049252295534_n.jpg?oh=0360a7e96addfbca28eeb4adceca604b&oe=55C56756

type of formalism that is the sum total of other values of individual and collective (including the unconscious) identity. In other words, a serviceman, especially an officer, may also be influenced by the elements of his other non-military identities, e.g. ethnic, religious, political, sexual, or other value-based identities.⁴⁷

During the civil war (1917-1921), a number of armed groupings emerged, the most powerful of them being the Red Army, South-Russian Armed Forces (Russian White Army), the UNR⁴⁸ army, and the Galician Army. From 1991 onwards, a committee of historians formed by order of the Ukrainian President began studying the historical and political significance of the activities of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and their Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). The present-day Ukrainian armed forces share a number of controversial military-historical traditions that have been influenced by the historical narrative of the Red Army and the narrative of the Great Victory of the Soviet Union in World War II (1941-1945). This is reflected in the way military personnel are educated, military history is approached, military symbols are used, and in the work of military museums.⁴⁹

Historical myths and elements of historical political discourse designed by pro-Russian separatists and Russia are actively used in the Donbass conflict. These concepts coincide to some extent with Ukrainian ideas of their common (Soviet) past with Russia. A central question is to what extent can Russia's historical and political measures damage the image of the Ukrainian armed forces by taking advantage of the weaknesses of the Ukrainian military and national identity?

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, a significant number of Russian Army assets remained in Ukrainian territory, e.g. army units (over 700 000 soldiers), as well as significant numbers of weapons (6500 tanks, 7000 armoured vehicles, 7200 pieces of artillery, 2500 tactical nuclear weapons). The process known as Ukrainisation started with the units located in Ukraine, especially those located in the defence command of Kyiv, Odessa, and Carpathia. For the most part this meant the promotion of Ukrainian

47 Max Weber, *Võimu ja religiooni sotsioloogias* (Vagabund, 2002), 97-98. Samuel P. Huntington. *Sõdur ja riik. Tsiviil-militaarsuhete teooria ja poliitika* (Riigikaitse raamatukogu: Tallinn, 2013), 18-22, 92-93.

48 The Ukrainian People's Republic or Ukrainian National Republic (Ukrainian: Українська Народна Республіка, *Ukrayins'ka Narodna Respublika*; abbreviated УНР, UNR)

49 *Политична система для України 2008*, 920-922. Михайло Слободянюк, *Сухопутні війська України. Історія та символіка 13-го армійського корпусу*. Львів: Астролябія, 2012, 6-15. Михайло Слободянюк, *Сухопутні війська України. Історія та символіка 8-го армійського корпусу*. Львів: Астролябія, 2011, 7-18.

symbols, and did not involve manning or training armed forces personnel. By 2014 the Ukrainian army had lost not only its combat capability, but also its popularity and respect in society.

A significant issue was the subdivision of the Black Sea fleet, which was finally resolved in 1997.⁵⁰ Out of the 43 warships given to Ukraine, only four ships were combat-ready by 2014. During the annexation of Crimea, the majority of Ukrainian ships, as well as naval officers and the commander of the Ukrainian Navy, deserted to join the Russian army. Ukraine also lost the Naval Academy located in Sevastopol named after famous Russian Naval commander Admiral Pavel Nakhimov.⁵¹

Historically, the Ukrainian armed forces were established during the Revolution of 1917, followed by the Ukrainisation of the southwestern Russian front, the Romanian front, and the Black Sea Fleet.⁵² This process was led by Simon Petlyura and coordinated by the Central Rada of Ukraine.⁵³ The Ukrainisation of the military forces was synchronised with political developments in Ukraine and followed a decrease in the military morale of the Russian army. Many soldiers preferred Ukrainisation over going to war and thus it mostly served its formal purpose. After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Hetmanate led by Pavlo Skoropadski was established in Ukraine, which was occupied by Germany and Austria-Hungary at the time.⁵⁴ The officers serving the Ukrainian army and fleet formed during that time also preferred service in the Ukrainian army to service in a Russia that was governed by Bolsheviks. In the chaos of World War I, the defeat of Germany and Austria-Hungary, and the withdrawal of occupation forces from Ukraine, the Hetmanate's rule in Ukraine ended as it lacked the value-based link with a national ideology. Approximately one quarter of the Ukrainian officer corps and a few units joined the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) led by the Ukrainian Directorate. When the Bolsheviks invaded Ukraine, the majority of the Hetmanate's forces dissolved and joined the Russian White Guard.⁵⁵

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50 Федоровых 2007.

51 Военный флот Украины в Крыму перешел на сторону Автономной Республики.

52 Ярослав Тинченко. Новітні Запорозжці. Війська Центральної Ради, березень 1917 р. – квітень 1918 р. Київ, Темпора, 2010, С. 4-5.

53 Заява С.В.Петлюри про вступ на посаду генерального комісара військових справ України. 02.11.1917 Укрийнська Центральна Рада. Документи и матеріали. Т.1 Київ: Наукова думка 1996, 385; 393.

54 Реєнт 2013, 654, 666-372; Дерябин 1998, 12-13.

55 Тинченко 2014, 62-6; Пиріг 2011, 256-257.

The clash of the Ukrainian unit formed from university and secondary school students with the Red Guard units invading Kyiv near Kruty⁵⁶ in January 1918 represents a special myth of Ukrainian military history. This showed clearly that neither the regular army of the UNR nor the regular army of the Hetmanate were morally prepared to defend Ukraine as a nation-state, so patriotically-minded students started fighting for Ukraine instead.⁵⁷

During the civil war, a number of armed groupings emerged, the most powerful of them being the Red Army, South-Russian Armed Forces (Russian White Army), the UNR army, and the Galician army. In addition to these, several spontaneous Hetman gangs emerged, the biggest of them undoubtedly being Nestor Makhno's anarchist army with more than 100 000 soldiers (also known as the Ukrainian Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army and the Gulyai-Pole Republic). A significant military force were the insurgent units led by Otaman Nikifor Grigoryev. Grigoryev, a former Tsarist army officer, led a division of the UNR. Afterwards he started supporting the political ideas of Borotbists⁵⁸ and changed sides, joining his division with the Red Army. In April 1919 his division organised an anti-Communist revolt, but was defeated by the Red Army. Grigoryev was shot dead by Makhno's army. The activities of Otaman Zelyonyi (Daniil Terpilo) were similar to Grigoryev: he also changed sides between the UNR and the Red Army.⁵⁹

In different parts of Ukraine, semi-independent republics were formed to support different parties of the conflict. At one point the Makhno units allied with the Red Army fought against the Whites, while somewhat later they fought with the UNR against the Red Army. The Hladnyi Jari Republic should be highlighted as one of the biggest 'republics' supporting mostly the UNR and the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Republic (DonKrivBas) in the Donbass region, founded by Comrade Artyom.⁶⁰ Sometime later DonKrivBas joined the Russian SFSR.

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56 The Battle of Kruty (Ukrainian: Бій під Крутами, *Biy pid Krutamy*) took place on January 29 or 30, 1918 near Kruty railway station, about 130 kilometres northeast of Kyiv. Battle of the military units of the UNR Army against the Red Army.

57 Бойко 2008, 43-53.

58 Borot'ba (Struggle) - Ukrainian Communist party, founded in 1918.

59 Солдатенко. Гражданская, с. 314-315. Серебряков, Г.И. и др., Краснознаменный Киевский. Очерки истории Краснознаменного Киевского военного округа (1919-1979). Киев: Издательство политической литературы Украины, 1979, С. 23, 25-27, 35;

60 Fyodor Andreyevich Sergeyev (1883-1921), better known as Comrade Artyom (товаариш Артём), was a Russian revolutionary organizer of a military coup-d'etat in Kharkiv and the whole Donbass region. At the 1st Soviet congress in Ukraine he was elected to the Central Executive Committee of Ukraine. Comrade Artyom was a chairman of the Sovnarkom (Soviet narodnykh kommissarov or Sovnarkom – the Council of People's Commissars) of the unrecognized Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Soviet Republic (1918) in Ukraine.

In order to politically divide Ukrainians, Russia founded the Ukrainian Red Army. The involvement of the Ukrainian socialist 'Borobists' in the activities of the Red Army during 1919-1920 was an important political step.⁶¹

It should be noted that during the civil war the UNR Army had control over no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{6}$ of the territory of the Ukrainian Hetmanate, the exact size of it being extremely unclear. In addition, a relatively numerous Galician army was formed in the territory of former Austria based on local Ukrainians and officers of the former Austrian-Hungarian army.⁶² The Galician army operated in cooperation with the UNR, but also with Russian White, and for some time even as part of the Red Army. It is important to highlight that the Galician army did not consider the Russian Red Army or Whites as its main enemy, but Polish and Romanians, having constant ethnic fighting with them.

Throughout the year 1920 General Baron Wrangel's White army was located in Crimea. As it is known the White forces fought for the 'united and undivided Russia' and therefore they had conflicts with the nation states emerging in the periphery, in this case with Ukrainian and Polish people.

In conclusion, the Ukrainian revolution with the Civil War (1917-1921) was an armed conflict between different political powers, which could be addressed from completely different viewpoints.

After the Treaty of Riga in 1921, the current territory of Ukraine was divided between Poland and Soviet Russia. In order to counterbalance the Polish areas inhabited by Ukrainians, the Ukrainian SSR⁶³ was created within the Soviet Union. The purpose of creating the Ukrainian SSR was to organise diversionary attacks to the areas of Poland in the 1920s and thereby attract patriotically minded Ukrainians to cooperate with the Red Army. Indeed, many Ukrainians, after being under pressure from Poland, fled to the Soviet Union, among them Mikhailo Grushevsky, a former chairman of the Central Rada. As part of the policy called *korenizaciya* for the first time the use of the Ukrainian language was promoted in Kharkiv, Zaporozhye and Dnepropetrovsk (Yekaterinoslav) regions and elsewhere in the Ukrainian SSR. The *korenizaciya* ended in 1929 with collectivisation and Holodomor

61 Солдатенко 2012, 123-124, 260.

62 Монолатій 2008, 80-81.

63 The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Ukrainian SSR or UkSSR; Ukrainian: Українська Радянська Соціалістична Республіка, Українська РСР; Russian: Украинская Советская Социалистическая Республика, Украинская ССР)

followed by political terror and repressions by the civil guard.⁶⁴

At the same time several ethnic Ukrainian centres emerged in Poland and Germany with the aim to organise armed resistance to Poland and Russia and re-establish the Ukrainian Republic. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) was among the most powerful of them, organising terrorist attacks in Poland and cooperating with German intelligence units. USSR leaders considered the activity of the OUN extremely dangerous, and therefore the Foreign Department of GPU⁶⁵ organised several large-scale actions against the Ukrainian nationalist movement, including the assassination of their leader Konovalytsch. After that, the OUN split into two parts: supporters of Stepan Bandera OUN (b), and supporters of Andrii Melnik—OUN (m). With Germany's attack on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, Ukrainian nationalists became more active. Two Ukrainian intelligence battalions participated in warfare, and with their support the Ukrainian National Republic was declared in Lviv that time controlled by Germany. As a result of that the Gestapo arrested Bandera and other leaders of the OUN (b) and put them to concentration camps. The OUN (b) formed the groups of partisans in western Ukraine, which started working against Germans and later on against the Red Army. The OUN (m) continued active collaboration with Germans and formed the Waffen-SS Division 'Galicia' in 1943-1944, which was defeated in heavy combat against the Red Army in Brody.⁶⁶ The OUN (b) continued fighting as a guerrilla army called the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) led by Roman Shukhevych.⁶⁷

Starting from the Civil War many Ukrainians served in the Red Army, made career and received recognitions, among them Stepan Saenko, the murderer of the State Commission of Kharkiv: he murdered several hundreds of people and afterwards was responsible for the upbringing of Soviet youth; the USSR Marshal Semyon Timoshenko; General Chernyakhovsky; an outstanding fighter pilot Ivan Kozhedub; General Kovpak, a well-known leader of red partisans, and many others.

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64 Екельчик 2012, 129-173.

65 The State Political Directorate (also translated as the State Political Administration) of the Russian SSR during 1922-23. Russian abbreviation GPU, (Russian: Государственное политическое управление при НКВД РСФСР, Gosudarstvennoye politicheskoye upravlenie under the NKVD of the RSFSR).

66 Вольф-Дітріх Гайке, Українська дивізія «Галичина». Історія формування і бойових дій у 1943-1945 роках, Тернопіль: Мандрівець, 2014, 75-83.

67 ОУН в 1941 році. Документи. Частина 1 2006, 273-274. Іван Патриляк, Перемога або смерть. Український визвольний рух у 1939-1960 роках. Харків: Часопис, 2015, 444-448.

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Underfunding, little respect in society, inefficient conscript service, and ageing of weapons, equipment and vehicles are the main problems with the Ukrainian armed forces.

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There were lots of Ukrainians among the organisers of Holodomor and among those fighting against the UPA or collaborating with the NKVD. Bohdan Staszynski, a NKVD agent and murderer of Stepan Bandera was also a Ukrainian by nationality.

In the newly independent Ukraine, the attitude toward its 20th century history was extremely controversial and complex. Over years different approaches to history were developed in Ukrainian schools

depending on the region. Relatively little attention has been paid to the history of the Ukrainian National Republic – one of the central themes of Ukrainian history. Instead, the Ukrainian revolution and the activities of the Central Rada preceding the Republic are researched. The era of the UNR is addressed relatively briefly in grade 9. A clash of different discourses with regard to the 20th century Ukrainian history can be witnessed in Ukrainian historical research. For example, the attitude toward the events of 1917-1920 as a civil war and intervention of foreign countries, the invasion of Soviet Russia to independent Ukraine, and many other.

The history of the present-day Ukrainian army is generally divided into five stages: 1991-1996 – formation, 1997-2000 – further organisation, 2001-2005 – reforms, and 2006-2011 – development. The processes initiated in the Ukrainian armed forces in 2012 are called a new stage of development and reforms. Soon after the takeover of the Soviet Army units on the 24th of August 1991, a large-scale downsizing of the armed forces started. By 1994, 12 thousand active servicemen left for former Soviet republics. 33 thousand active servicemen of Ukrainian nationality returned to Estonia. By 1996 Ukraine eliminated nuclear weapons from its territory, the size of the active force was cut by 410,000 men, 850 aircrafts and 4400 armoured vehicles were written off. Shrinking the army continued, and by 2011 there were only 192 000 servicemen in active service. In the 1990s, there was the lack of laws and legal acts regulating the work of armed forces. In 1997-1999, relevant legal acts were passed, tasks of the ministry of defence and headquarters, as well as issues of strategic planning, and

the territorial subdivision of the armed forces at defence command level were specified. The problem of the Black Sea fleet was resolved. By 2005 the structure was approved and organised into three defence commands: western, northern and southern defence commands with their tasks and structure. Western and southern commands are tasked with operational command.⁶⁸ The underfunding of the Ukrainian armed forces,⁶⁹ not much respect of the armed forces in society, inefficient conscript service, and ageing of weapons, equipment and vehicles became the main concerns.⁷⁰

2.3. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECURITY NARRATIVES IN UKRAINE AND RUSSIA

H.Mölder

Introduction

Contemporary security narratives reflect the public understanding of security matters and expectations and the best way to translate this information to a wider audience.⁷¹ Arun Kundnani writes: *Narratives are the stories we tell ourselves and others about the world in which we live.*⁷² Shaul R. Shenkiv adds: *Examinations of political discourse show that it relies extensively on narrative patterns. This is partly the result of the human tendency to rely on narrative as a way of understanding the world and endowing it with meaning.*⁷³ Conflicting narratives can cause status conflicts between international actors, especially for rising powers that want to ensure a good position in the international system. Rationalist theories have often marginalised questions of perceptions, beliefs, and identity that may impact narratives in a unique, unexpected,

68 Міністерство оборони України.

69 Мунтіян 2002.

70 See more – Украинская правда. Контрактную армию отодвинули еще на три года; Армия будет покупать более дешевые танки ради экономии; Через пять лет армия будет в 2,5 раза меньше?; Аргат 2012; Шеляженко 2011; Максименко 2011; Армии недодали более 4 миллиардов.

71 McLeod 2013, 166.

72 Kundnani 2012.

73 Shenhav 2006, 246.

and uncalculated way.⁷⁴

The end of the Cold War changed the dominant ideas about security.⁷⁵ The Kantian security culture became a major driving force for the international community of states, especially in the 1990s. The post-Cold War concepts of security governance have broadened institutional and cooperative security options, moving on from the simplifying framework of the Westphalian nation-states and their search for military security. There are significant cultural divergences between Russia and the West, including their definition of liberal democracy. Russia's definition of democracy differs to some degree from the standard Western ideal of liberal democracy. The question the extent to which Russia shares Western democratic values is still highly contestable as they tend to define international policy in the traditional Westphalian terms,⁷⁶ emphasising the availability of spheres of influence in their security policy narratives.

The post-Cold War environment strengthened nationalist sentiments in former Communist countries by becoming a driving ideological force for post-Communist societies, including Ukraine and Russia. The latest challenge to the Kantian international system initiated by Russia is manifest through the status conflict between Ukraine and Russia in the Eastern part of Ukraine accompanied by a value-related internal conflict between pro-Western and pro-Russian identities in Ukraine.

The Russian narrative

Although on some counts it may be considered a democracy, Russia can hardly pretend to be a stable liberal democracy. Authoritarian tendencies in the country have strengthened during the second presidency of Vladimir Putin. During that time the economic situation in the country was notably improved due to high oil prices, and Russia has clearly demonstrated its willingness to restore the position it once held as a superpower. The Russian security narrative increasingly follows the spirit of Cold War competition between the East and the West, where Russian ambitions require the

.....
74 Williams 2007, 44.

75 Ibid. p. ix.

76 The Westphalian system was established with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, after the Thirty Year's War (1618-1648) in Europe, which recognised that every state has sovereignty over its territory and domestic affairs, and all states are equal under international law. Since the 1980s and early 1990s the processes of globalization, institutionalization, and enhanced interdependence between states have lead to international integration and the erosion of Westphalian sovereignty.

country to position itself as a competing power with the United States and the West in the polarised world. Russia tries to overcome its international isolation by attempting to build a Russian world that consolidates its initiatives in the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Eurasian Economic Union. Unlike China, which is gradually spreading its economic influence around the world and becoming active in Latin America and Africa, Russia's main concern seems to be with its neighbours.

Russia is promoting the concept of the 'near abroad', which is closely related to the concept of 'legitimate sphere of influence'.

Russian narratives often evoke messianic goals that contain strong moral judgement and opposition to what it calls 'American imperialistic expansionism'. Marcin A. Piotrowski identifies three competing geopolitical narratives concerning Russia.⁷⁷ The Westernizers give priority to Russia's modernisation and its cordial relations with Europe. They believe that the West is inherently a partner of Moscow and its newly independent neighbours against the Islamic world and China. The Great Russians base their arguments on the ideology of the nineteenth-century Slavophiles. They believe that the main goal of the state is the rebirth of Greater Russia and they idealise a common eastern-Slavic state of Russians, Byelorussians and Ukrainians. The Eurasianists base their ideology on the ideas developed by Lev Gumilev and the post-revolutionary emigrant movement. They believe that Russia should build a bloc of Eurasian countries that are dissatisfied with American dominance and globalisation, and establish a partnership with countries such as China, India, and Iran.⁷⁸

Vladimir Putin does not have clear ideological preferences, besides of being the leader of a great power. His ideology⁷⁹ includes elements



.....
77 Piotrowski 2002, 60-61.

78 Ibid.

79 See more in Chapter 2.1.

of all three aforementioned narratives. He wants to cooperate with the West, to establish the glory of the Russian Empire, and to be respected as a Eurasian regional power.

Andrew Monaghan describes his ambitions: *Moscow thus considers Russia to have a right to sit among other leading powers and have its interests and views considered, even when they differ from those of the West.*⁸⁰

Conclusively, Russia does not have permanent friends in foreign policy, but rather relies on strategic partners that are revealed by their response to Moscow's proposals and initiatives.⁸¹ Along with other regional powers China, India, South Africa, and Brazil, Russia has been able to raise its status vis-a-vis US primacy within the international system and can now be identified as a rising power—a state that intends to gain recognition as a great power in the eyes of its contemporaries.⁸²

Timothy Frye examines two of the most popular explanatory narratives, which have spread in the West concerning Russia's attack on Ukraine. The first one explains the hostilities with the sluggish Russian economy and declining public approval ratings. The second narrative emphasises foreign policy concerns that Ukraine will align itself with the West, and is becoming an ally of the United States and NATO.⁸³ During the last several years, Russia has been facing heightened nationalism as it attempts to establish a patriotic spirit to fight against its foreign and domestic foes. Putin's foreign policy goals are closely aligned with the postulates of US neo-conservative foreign policy—patriotism is a necessity; world government is a terrible idea; statesmen should have the ability to accurately distinguish friend from foe; the protection of national interests both at home and abroad; and the necessity of a strong military.⁸⁴ Russia attempts to increase its role in world affairs on the basis of its national interests in a way that is reminiscent of George W. Bush's foreign policy doctrine.⁸⁵

.....
80 Monaghan 2009, 88.

81 Ibid., 89.

82 Lebow 2010, 243.

83 Frye 2014.

84 Kristol 2003.

85 Frye 2014.

The Ukrainian narrative

It is more difficult to identify a single narrative for Ukraine, because the competition between different orientations is stronger than in Russia. The post-Cold War Ukrainian narrative manifests a pro-statehood and anti-statehood cleavage between Ukrainophones and Russophones. Ukrainophones favour state- and nation-building that rely on economic and political reforms. Russophones support the policies of returning to Eurasia.⁸⁶ Currently, there are Westernizers (Arseniy Yatsenyuk and the People's Front, Vitaliy Klichko), Russophiles (the Party of Regions and its spin-offs), and Ukrainian Nationalists (Svoboda, the Right Sector). President Petro Poroshenko is pro-European, but holds more pragmatic positions towards Russia than Prime Minister Yatsenyuk. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the country has been split between Western Ukraine and its more western orientation and Eastern and Southern Ukraine, which are interested in retaining friendly relations with Russia. There are historical reasons for this split; for centuries western Ukraine was aligned with Poland and the Austrian Empire, the eastern and southern parts were under the Russian rule and Russian language and culture attained primacy, even among ethnic Ukrainians living in these areas. The separatist republics of Donetsk and Luhansk identify themselves through their special relationship with Russia and their adherence to the aforementioned Russian world.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine's security policy did not adopt a strict Western orientation, but rather intended to build a bridge between the West and Russia. Russia was not treated as a security threat by the Ukrainian political elites, which is characteristic of the Baltic States or of Georgia during the Saakashvili period, and it was generally recognised as a friendly partner nation to Ukraine. The two countries conducted intensive security- and defence-related cooperation. Personal contacts between Ukrainian and Russian military personnel and Army units were maintained after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Before the current crisis, Ukraine was passive in regard to enhancing its political ambitions towards the West and the Western institutions, and never officially aspired to EU accession and NATO membership.

However, Russia uses Eastern Ukraine as a stronghold for destabilising the country and moving it away from ties with Europe. Therefore, Russia is probably more interested in maintaining Ukraine as a satellite state in its sphere of influence than in restoring the greater Russian Empire. Russia produces narratives about Ukraine that are not objective and do not foster

.....
86 Moroney, Kuzio, Molchanov 2002, 205.

Russia is developing a particular nationalist state narrative that relies on the country's glorious past and its claims to become a leader of the Eurasian nations.

crisis management. On June 24 2014, US Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power claimed:⁸⁷

...Time and again -- at least 17 times since February -- we have gathered here to discuss the situation in Ukraine. And time and again, we've had to dedicate significant amounts of time to reviewing the efforts of Russia to destabilize its neighbor and to refuting the bald misinformation and outright fiction about what is happening on the ground in Ukraine. ... Russian rhetoric has been inaccurate, inflammatory, and self-justifying. On June 17, just last week, Foreign Minister Lavrov

accused Ukrainian military authorities of carrying out 'ethnic cleansing.' Days earlier a leader in the Duma accused Ukraine of committing 'mass genocide'.

The escalation of tensions certainly makes an impact on Ukrainian narratives. On February 5 2015 the Verkhovna Rada imposed a decree that restricts the distribution of movies and TV series about the Russian armed forces that have been released after 1991, because it calls them a threat to Ukrainian national security.⁸⁸ Ukraine's return to Europe signifies a rejection of imperial rule and Soviet totalitarianism. But, if Ukraine is fully integrated into the so-called Eurasian space,⁸⁹ becoming a part of Europe (including the European Union and NATO) is impossible. The civil war prompted by Russia pushed Ukraine more strongly in the direction of Europe.

Another important issue not sufficiently covered in the analysis is Russia's hidden support for extremist and nationalist movements in Ukraine (e.g. the Right Sector). The political positions of the Right Sector and the representatives of so-called 'Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk' towards crisis management in Eastern Ukraine tend to converge, since both groups reject the Minsk Agreements. Russia's connection with far-right nationalist movements in Europe tends to be obvious.⁹⁰

87 Countering Russia's False Narratives on Ukraine. Dipnote, U.S. Department of State Official Blog.

88 Mashable: Ukraine is banning films and TV shows that glorify Russia's military.

89 Moroney, Kuzio, Molchanov 2002, 202.

90 Polyakova, 2014

Conclusion

The analysis is based on a comparative inquiry into Ukrainian and Russian political narratives and it examines which perceptions have influenced the formation of their security positions. During the crisis, the Great Russian and Eurasianist narratives grew stronger in Russia and the Westernizers started to lose their influence. In Ukraine, the Russophiles were gradually downplayed after the fall of President Yanukovich and his government.

The parliamentary elections of 2014 indicate that Westernizers had significantly more public support than Russophiles, but Ukrainian Nationalists also received marginal support from society.

Russia is developing a particular nationalist state narrative that relies on the country's glorious past and its claims to become a leader of the Eurasian nations. The Russian security narrative is a product of the aforementioned state narrative, which prepares the nation to face military threat from the West and consequently identifies Ukraine as a battleground in the value-based conflict between Russia and the Western civilisation. Russia identifies itself as the holder of traditional values facing Occidental decadence. While previously Ukraine preferred to stay in the grey zone between Russia and the West, the anti-Western attitudes have encouraged Ukraine to adopt a more rigorous Western orientation and have actually forced the country to distance itself from Russia's sphere of influence. Through the destabilisation of Ukraine, it is likely that Russia intends to cause massive discontent with Ukrainian authorities, and thus, sooner or later, return the country to the Russian sphere of influence.

Up to the current crisis, Russian and Ukrainian security narratives were close, or at least did not contradict each other. However, they rapidly started to diverge during the crisis. The Western influence has grown in the Ukrainian narratives and dramatically weakened in the Russian narratives. Nationalist narratives have started to play a more important role in shaping national consciousness for both nations. In the long run, social-economic factors may cause changes for both nations—the Westernizers will return to the Russian political landscape and the Russophiles will get more support in Ukraine, as we saw after the Orange revolution. The worst-case scenario may lead to the strengthening of even more extremist forces. If the West intends to maintain its influence in Ukraine, it has to offer large-scale

development assistance, similar to the Membership Accession Plan it provides for potential NATO candidates. Social reforms are necessary to avoid a social-economic catastrophe, otherwise Russia will achieve its political goals in Ukraine, and Ukraine will return to the Russian sphere of influence.

2.4. UKRAINE IN RUSSIA'S SPHERE OF INTERESTS

V. Sazonov, H. Mölder, K. Müür

Before going any further in-depth with analysing the current Ukrainian crisis, it is essential to understand the underlying reasons for its outbreak. Russia's painful reaction to the events in Ukraine unfolding with the EuroMaidan of December 2013⁹¹ is well explained by Zbigniew Brzezinski⁹² who already two decades ago described Ukraine as an *'important space on the Eurasian chessboard'*, the control over which is a prerequisite for Russia *'to become a powerful imperial state, spanning Europe and Asia'*.

Ukraine's independence in 1991 was a shock too hard to swallow for the patriotically minded Russian political groups as it meant a major defeat for Moscow's historical strategy, which attempts to exercise control over the geopolitical space around Russia's borders. According to Brzezinski,⁹³ losing Ukraine decreases Russia's ability to rule over the Black Sea region. Crimea and Odessa have historically been important strategic access points to the Black Sea and even to the Mediterranean through the Bosphorus strait. Throughout history, Ukraine has always been essential to Russian nation-building narratives⁹⁴. Ukraine holds a special place in Russian national myths as Kyiv has traditionally been regarded as the *'mother of all Russian cities'* – also brought out by Russian President Vladimir Putin in his 18 March 2014 address to the members of State Duma and Federation Council⁹⁵. Therefore, Ukraine does not only play a pivotal role in Russian geopolitical strategic thinking, but also holds a symbolic value as the homeland of the Russian civilisation that should not be underestimated.⁹⁶

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91 See e.g. Кошкина 2015, Мухарьский 2015

92 Brzezinski 1997, 46.

93 Brzezinski 1997, 92.

94 e.g. Екельчик 2012

95 President of Russia 2014

96 e.g. Грушевский 1891, Гайда 2013

“Ukraine holds a special place in Russian national myths as Kyiv has traditionally been regarded as the ‘mother of all Russian cities’.”

In addition to Ukraine, Russia sees Belarus and the Baltic States as part of the Russian World (*Pax Russica*). However, from the Russian point of view, the Baltic States have chosen the wrong side in the clash of civilisations.⁹⁷ This is another reason why Russia perceives the Baltic States as geopolitical puppets of the West, the civilisation that ‘dreams’ of annihilating the so-called unique Russian Orthodox world.

After the fall of pro-Russian President Yanukovich on 22 February 2014, the Kyiv government set on a more determined path towards integration with the West. In Moscow, the possibility of losing Ukraine from its geopolitical sphere of influence was seen as a catastrophic defeat⁹⁸, probably even more so than the collapse of the Soviet imperial system in 1991. In order to prevent that from happening and to keep Ukraine, or at least part of Ukraine, under its control, Russia occupied Crimea in March 2014⁹⁹ and destabilised the predominantly Russian-speaking Eastern Ukrainian regions by means of asymmetric warfare¹⁰⁰—information activities, economic measures, cyber warfare, psychological warfare, etc. on all levels. Russia has not taken any initiative favouring international or regional crisis management, though it would have had good tools for mediating between the Ukrainian government, recognised by Russia, and unrecognised People’s Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, had those in charge so wished. Russia’s behaviour during the crisis indicates that Russia is not interested in peace and is trying to use the current crisis to advance its national interests by increasing its political influence as an alternative power to the West. By destabilising Eastern Ukraine and undermining the peace processes, Russia also avoids taking any responsibility for the security and well being of the mostly Russian-speaking people living in the conflict area.

.....
97 See Huntington 1993.

98 Brzezinski 1997, 92

99 Concerning the annexation of Crimea see Mölder, Sazonov & Värk 2014, 2148-2161; Mölder, Sazonov & Värk 2015, 1-28.

100 See, for example, Rosin 2015, 33-39.

2.5. THE LEGAL NARRATIVE: RUSSIA'S CLAIMS THAT ITS ACTIONS ARE LAWFUL AND LEGITIMATE

R. Värk

Russia continuously makes use of international law in order to justify its actions and to legitimise the breakaway regions in Ukraine, but it also claims that Ukraine violates the terms of international law.

The Concept of the Foreign Policy of Russian Federation (2013) emphasises that the consistent application of international law is indispensable for orderly and mutually beneficial international relations, and that Russia conducts its foreign policy in accordance with international law.¹⁰¹

Russia often portrays itself as a guardian of international law. The message is that only Russia understands the original meaning of central legal instruments, notably the United Nations Charter, and general principles of international law. According to Russia, others misinterpret and misuse the rules of international law and therefore destabilise international relations, e.g. the on-going conflict in Eastern Ukraine was begun and continues to be fuelled by the support of the European Union and the United States.

Russia focuses on the rules that regulate and safeguard inter-state relations, e.g. sovereignty, prohibition of the use of force, prohibition of intervention in internal affairs, and respect for territorial integrity. Russia often adheres to an overly conservative understanding of these rules that avoids the discussion of the rights and interests of individuals, and in many ways, it shares the opinion that these rules were carved in stone (e.g. in 1945 with the adoption of the United Nations Charter) and should not evolve over time. In other words, when Russia and other states discuss these issues, they may be using the same terms, but have a different understanding of them.

Although Russia's Foreign Policy Concept gives the international law a prominent role, it is not the only factor that governs Russia's actions. '*Russia pursues an independent foreign policy guided by its national interests and based on unconditional respect for international law*'.¹⁰² It is true that a given state's national interests can override its obligations under international law and the state can make a conscious choice to ignore international law when

.....
101 The role of international law is discussed in different paragraphs of the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation 2013.

102 Ibid. para. 24.

considering its course of action—this is the inescapable reality of international relations.

Russia acknowledges that the fundamental legal instrument of international law is the United Nations Charter (1945). Additionally, Russia likes to refer to such well-known documents as the Friendly Relations Declaration (1970)¹⁰³ and the Helsinki Final Act (1975).¹⁰⁴ These sources contain universally endorsed principles such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-use of force, inviolability of borders, non-intervention and peaceful settlement of disputes. Although Russia stresses the importance of these principles, it has blatantly violated them in connection with Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. When challenged by others, Russia simply denies that it has done anything unlawful (e.g. there are no Russian armed forces in Ukraine, Russia is not providing any assistance to ‘self-defence forces’), or tries to distract others by repeating its propaganda narratives (e.g. someone has to support the people who are mistreated or threatened by the pro-Western regime in Kyiv). Such narratives carry powerful historical connotations and therefore should hopefully end the discussion about the lawfulness of Russia’s conduct by justifying, at least morally, the necessity to fight against extremism and its equivalents.

Russia skilfully uses the mistakes of other states to defend or to justify its own actions. Domestic discussions and textbooks of international law focus and repeat certain events, which show how the West disrespects international law, likes to act unilaterally (outside the authoritative collective mechanisms, foremost the United Nations) and, as a result, is not trustworthy. Most notably, these events include the NATO military operation in Kosovo (1999), the United States invasion of Iraq (2003)¹⁰⁵ and the Western intervention in Libya (2011), which eventually exceeded the Security Council’s mandate. These actions are taken as precedents and used to defend Russian interests, despite arguments to the contrary made by the West. However, it is no problem for Russia to abandon its long-term positions in favour of Western positions, if these serve its interests better. In the case of Crimea, Russia abandoned its conservative position on self-determination, presented to the International Court of Justice in 2009 in connection with Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of sovereignty,¹⁰⁶

.....
103 GA Res 2625 (XXV), 24 October 1970.

104 Final Act, Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, 1 August 1975.

105 See more Sazonov; Mölder; Värk 2013, 405-418.

106 Written Statement of the Russian Federation, para. 88. For more discussion, see Värk 2014, 111–127, 123–125.

and adopted the liberal position by emphasising that the United States had put forward the position in the same proceedings.

When Russia claims that its actions are in accordance with international law and the actions of other states are in violation of it, it makes no reference to specific legal sources that explain its position. Instead Russia makes general statements that they act in accordance with international law or that other states violate international law. It is more difficult to provide specific rules, which actually support or prohibit particular actions. There are reoccurring concepts, e.g. the protection of nationals abroad, intervention by invitation, and providing ‘humanitarian’ assistance, but such concepts are either questionable by nature or implemented controversially by Russia. When states provide genuine humanitarian assistance, it is done openly; often in co-operation with IOs/NGOs (e.g. the International Committee of the Red Cross) and in a way that allows others to verify the nature of the assistance. States are certainly free to offer humanitarian assistance, but other states are not obliged to accept such assistance, especially if the delivery is not co-ordinated with them and they cannot verify the contents of the humanitarian convoys, as was the case with Russian ‘humanitarian assistance’ to Ukraine.

Even if Russia puts forward specific legal arguments to justify its actions, they are used in a twisted way. The regions in Eastern Ukraine should have the right of self-determination and potentially secede, but Ukrainians did not have the right to force the president, who had lost people’s confidence, to step down. Likewise, Russia claims that it respects the territorial integrity of Ukraine, but at the same time intervenes in Eastern Ukraine, destabilises the situation in Ukraine, and legitimises the so-called ‘People’s Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk’ by recognising elections in these regions.

When it comes to sanctions against Russia, it maintains that the sanctions are unlawful, as the Security Council does not impose them.¹⁰⁷ The latter has a legitimate right to impose general sanctions binding for all states, but the United Nations is not the only mechanism to impose sanctions. States and international organisations have also such rights, although not unlimited, including retorsions and reprisals. Nevertheless, Russia strives to portray states that have imposed sanctions against Russia as violators of international law, and itself as the innocent victim who is subject to unfair and unlawful coercion by the West.

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107 E.g. News conference of Vladimir Putin, 18 December 2014.

2.6. THE BUDAPEST MEMORANDUM (1994)

R. Värk

The Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances was signed on 5 December 1994. It was done in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and it provides security assurances by the United States of America, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom. The signatories promised to:

- Respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine in accordance with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act (1975);
- Refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, except in self-defence or otherwise in accordance with the United Nations Charter;
- Refrain from using economic coercion to subordinate Ukraine to their own interests;
- Seek immediate United Nations Security Council action to provide assistance to Ukraine, if it becomes a victim of an act of aggression or an object of a threat of aggression in which nuclear weapons are used;
- Not to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine, except in self-defence;
- Consult with one another if questions arise regarding these commitments.

It is debatable whether the memorandum is a political document or a legal treaty.

When considering the statements made by the signatories during and in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis, it seems that the signatories do not strictly consider the memorandum to be binding legal treaty. Furthermore, they disagree on what the exact purpose of the memorandum is. For example, United States Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt claimed that the memorandum was not an agreement on security guarantees, but an agreement to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.¹⁰⁸ If so, it means that no one can accuse the United States and the United Kingdom of not fulfilling their obligations towards Ukraine.

.....
 108 Ukraine's forgotten security guarantee: The Budapest Memorandum, Deutsche Welle, 5 December 2014, <http://www.dw.com/en/ukraines-forgotten-security-guarantee-the-budapest-memorandum/a-18111097> (29 October 2015).

Russia denies that it has violated the memorandum. Firstly, the crisis in Ukraine is a result of complex international processes, which are unrelated to Russia's obligations. Secondly, due to the anti-constitutional coup, Ukraine is 'a new state with which we have signed no binding agreements'.¹⁰⁹ By using this argument, Russia is claiming that agreements are not concluded between States, but between governments, and agreements lose their meaning when governments change. This is not a sound position under international law.

The memorandum speaks mostly about 'commitment' and only once mentions 'obligation' (the 'obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force' against Ukraine). The wording is not of the strongest kind. But, even if the signatories did not intend for the memorandum to have the same effect as a traditional legal treaty, the memorandum reaffirms matters that are otherwise legally binding. For example, States are obliged to respect the independence and sovereignty of other States in any case. When it comes to providing tangible security and defence assistance in case of an attack against the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine, the memorandum is of little use.

2.7. TOOLS OF PROPAGANDA WAR IN THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN CONFLICT

V.Veebel

Introduction

The propaganda war plays a growing role in the confrontation between Russia, Ukraine, and Western countries. However, the criteria and definitions of success in this war have been in constant development during the last two years of the confrontation. The central activities of are based on the same concepts—the demonization and deterrence of the adversary, the legitimisation of one's own activities to the general public, and the mobilisation of the population and promotion of political elites. In the light of public opinion polls on the support to their respective governments and opposition to their adversaries, all three parties have mostly reached their objectives, but should this be considered evidence of tactical success and a sustainable strategy in the longer run?¹¹⁰

.....
109 Vladimir Putin answered journalists' questions on the situation in Ukraine, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20366> (29 October 2015).

110 Veebel and Markus 2015a, 191.

A second important aspect is related to the management of a peaceful exit after participants achieve their goals. Or is an exit strategy part of the success package at all? Maybe success is calculated in terms how the propaganda war contributes to the resolution of traditional conflict.

To sum up, the main objectives of information campaign are

- to demonise the adversary
- to deter and demoralise the adversary
- to legitimize one's own activities to the general public
- to mobilise target populations
- to promote one's own political elites

Despite the cost, it is important to combat psychological attacks for two reasons. First, as the scale and significance of information warfare grows, it draws attention away from the objective circumstances of the conflict, including self-criticism and potential solutions to the conflict. Second, distorted information, initially intended to distract opponents, may eventually come to be believed even by the initial source of the disinformation. Once falsehoods begin to circulate, it is difficult to limit their spread.

The components of propaganda war

A psychological war, waged by experts, can be won—regardless of ideology—by using certain best practices. For example, a democratically elected prime minister is just as eager to climb into a fighter jet for a photo opportunity, as is an authoritarian president. Methods and patterns remain the same as in conventional warfare; no matter how noble and benevolent we are deterring and destroying the enemy is the goal of warfare. Showing empathy to one's opponents scores no points and has no place in history books.¹¹¹

The processes of competition in an arms race and conflict escalation are similar in both propaganda wars and conventional conflicts.¹¹²

.....
111 Veebel 2014, 42.

112 Veebel and Markus 2015b, 157.

The initiatives of one side provide the impetus for the opponent to balance the situation by retaliation. This urges each side to engage in pre-emptive activities to regain the initiative,¹¹³ which inevitably refuels the confrontation and moves it to the next level. Additionally, while each side tends to see its own actions as defensive, they tend to see the opponents' actions as predominantly offensive, which is the key mechanism of the ever-reactive propaganda war.

Propaganda wars can be set up initially by an open, balanced, and factual model that reflects the reality and is not prejudiced. In such a case every activity, whether one's own or that of the adversary, is assessed rationally, sensibly, and separately, and communication is not filtered or manipulated. Facts always take precedence in this model, both in shaping positions and accepting alternative explanations. Such a model can work when knowledgeable and educated consumer of information (political elites and interested citizens) refuse to accept simplified or exaggerated solutions without a convincing analysis. The disadvantage of this model is that it is resource-intensive and the information that needs to be understood, and may be massively manipulated by the adversary, can not be analysed with the speed and skill required.

Psychological war in practice: aims and tools

When starting to lose out with the fact-based and open model in propaganda war, a solution is often found in reconstructing (manipulating) the image of oneself and of the enemy, allowing to retake the initiative with less (sometimes limited) resources. As a general rule, replacing an objective image on the media with a distorted (manipulated) one is first justified by the practical need to retaliate in a deserving and operative manner, to mislead the adversary, or with the argument that it's more effective mobilising and motivating the simple-man in the street, and besides, it was meant as a temporary measure anyhow.¹¹⁴

In a constructed field of information during a psychological conflict, it's essential to set a single clear goal. To accomplish that goal, a polarised image is created (the dark enemy vs. the forces of light); attitudes are attributed and, finally, carefully selected facts are served with the 'right' attitudes. Adherence to a clear and confident message is central to the process, as well as keeping the initiative (truth sides with the one who says it first) and quantitative pressure (as many mutually corroborative messages from allies

.....
113 Veebel and Markus 2015c.

114 Veebel and Markus 2015c.

as possible). The methods include presenting true information together with lies, so that the consumer of the message recognises a familiar fact and then is primed to trust the rest, which actually is manipulated information. The reader is patronised (e.g. ‘Even a child knows that Putin is insane.’ or ‘The Soviet Union liberated Europe from the Nazi terror.’) and the adversary is labelled (e.g. they are ‘fascists’, ‘Nazis’, etc.). As a general rule, quantitative information is not source-referenced and, in case of conflicting data, a more favourable version is presented—if, later on, one fact or another turns out to have been fabricated, it is suppressed. The main criterion for producing news and press releases is conformity to the ‘right’ ideology with right terminology. One of the keys to popularity is a clear, resolute message and increasing confrontation with the rival parties.¹¹⁵

To sum up, the main components of propaganda war are:

- **Demonise:**
 - Ukrainians deliberately make ‘unimaginable’ excuses, Putin is characterized as insane and not rational, Poroshenko characterized as corrupted
 - Ukraine has intensified military action in the affected areas
 - The Ukrainian government wants civilians to suffer as punishment, so the convoy might face further delays
 - The other side is corrupt
- **Legitimise, demoralise:** There is a humanitarian catastrophe in UKR
 - Russia has fulfilled all demands posed by the UKR government
 - Russia is supported by the Red Cross
 - Russia fulfils its duty to protect compatriots abroad
 - Use academic experts to confirm your positions
- **Mobilise, promote political elite:** Russia acts according to Christian values
- **Promote political elite, demoralise:** Putin stands above it and is merciful to Ukrainian population; Russia is strong and does what it wants
- **Confuse:** mix the precise facts with lies to confuse the readers and abuse their trust
- **Patronise:** tell to the readers the ‘respectful’ opinion and positions about the situation
- **Overload with information:** give readers so many useless facts that they do not look for additional facts themselves

Europe needs to devote more financial resources to create balanced sources of information that are based on facts rather than prejudice.

Outcomes of propaganda war

A reconstructed information field of psychological conflict neither requires nor involves in-depth analysis of the facts or the use of scientific methods, as this would undermine its credibility. Instead, self-legitimising expert opinions, presented by confident government officials or ‘bearded opinion leaders’, glorified with fancy titles, tend to prevail.

Propaganda department essayists gather the wind under their wings, while those presenting factual information are forced out of the media as boring sceptics, defeatists, or even influence-agents of the enemy. The hesitant are soon paired with the enemy (‘You’re either with us or against us!’), and a difference of opinion in one question is considered a sign of disloyalty in others. Looking for comparative information from alternative sources is seen dangerous and negative (‘Don’t be influenced by false information.’). Once labelled as opponents or sceptics, experts and academics that do not agree can be excluded from further debate.¹¹⁶

Political elites, who are able to differentiate between facts and slogans or the reconstructed information field, soon lose interest in facts since slogans facilitate gaining popularity more effectively. As a result, the simple man in the street might easily develop the belief that the information he is given reflects the objective reality and, despite occasional inconsistencies, the constructed images are true. This is especially true when access to information is limited. A reconstructed reality does not pose a problem for the general populace as long as the news remains positive and credible to a certain extent. If there is bread on the table and hot water in the bathroom, there is a decreasing tendency to challenge the logic and plausibility of the news or political elite.

What can the international community learn from Russia’s information warfare techniques in Estonia in 2007 and Ukraine in 2014-2015? Over the past decade, disinformation has become one of the main tools of Russian propaganda during times of conflicts.

Russian media sources label their adversaries as ‘fascists’ or ‘criminals’. This is intended to discredit those countries in the eyes of the West and to convince the Russian people that their government’s actions are just. In light of this new reality, providing balanced information sources to Russians is an important policy goal.

Europe needs to devote more financial resources within the framework of European Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership to create balanced sources of information that are based on facts rather than prejudice. The EU’s recent initiative from March and June 2015 to counter Russian media propaganda with ‘positive messages’ serves as a first step.¹¹⁷

Conclusions

The international community faces serious challenges arising from a new mode of information warfare, which Russia has deployed during the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in 2014-2015. This on-going ‘propaganda war’ is the most recent and frightening example of information warfare. It reflects a wide array of non-military tools used to exert pressure and influence the behaviour of countries. When skilfully combined, disinformation, malicious attacks on large-scale information and communication systems, and psychological pressure can be even more dangerous than traditional weapon systems, since they are extremely difficult to discover and combat. Today psychological warfare involves certain ‘best practices’. Disinformation, media propaganda, threats, and psychological techniques are used to deter or to destroy opponents. Defending against such attacks requires an open and balanced model that is based on facts, reflects reality, and is not prejudiced. The best antidote to information warfare is for the public to assess the conflict situation rationally and individually, and to guarantee that communication is not filtered or manipulated. Facts should take precedence, as should the assessment of alternative viewpoints. Knowledgeable and critical ‘consumers of news’ do not expect simplified and exaggerated solutions. They expect a thorough analysis of all aspects of the story. But providing this model of careful journalism is resource-intensive.

The main threat of a gripping and gradually deepening psychological war is that it draws attention away from the objective circumstances of a conflict, self-criticism, and solution scenarios.

.....
117 Veebel, Kulu, Tartes 2014.

In time it may sever the political leadership from access to objective information or alternatives (Hitler had the same problem with actual precise news from the front during WWII), because bearers of good news, even if calibrated or distorted, are rewarded, but critical experts are ostracised, however reliable.

The second threat of a reconstructed information field is that distorted information meant to deter the adversary, may also be accepted at face value by the populace and eventually by the political elites. The constructed worldview achieves supremacy over the actual circumstances. Markers to measure information objectivity or avoid manipulated information will be seen as unnecessary, because there is only one truth. Once the construction has been set in motion and the wish for plausibility has been overpowered, every new piece of news seems to drift further from the truth in comparison to the earlier news stories.

3.CHANGING CONCEPTS OF WAR: RUSSIA'S NEW MILITARY DOCTRINE AND THE CONCEPT OF HYBRID WARFARE

The following chapter unveils the conceptual background for the on-going Russian-Ukrainian conflict that began in 2014 by explaining the nature of unconventional warfare, the role of information warfare in it, and how they relate to the new Russian military doctrine.

Increasing our knowledge of Russian strategies in exploiting different avenues for realising its geopolitical ambitions helps other countries, especially those neighbouring Russia, to build their own strategies for countering these attempts. This is of utmost importance to NATO in order to enhance its unity in the face of Russia's possible attempts to try something similar against, for example, the Baltic States. Over the last years these countries have continuously faced deliberate efforts by Russia to discredit them in the international arena.

Russia's New Military Doctrine and the Concept of Hybrid Warfare

A.Ermus and K. Salum

President Vladimir Putin approved the new military doctrine of the Russian Federation on 26 December 2014. This document takes into account the fundamentals of other key strategy documents: the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation until 2020, the Concept of Foreign Policy until 2020, the Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation until 2020, the Development Strategy of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation, and others.

The Chief of the Russian General Staff General Valeriy Gerasimov introduced the key elements of the new military doctrine to the wider public in January

2013.¹¹⁸ The new doctrine was most probably tested during the conflict in Ukraine. In his speech,¹¹⁹ Gerasimov emphasised the lessons learned from the Arab Spring and other conflicts. This was likely an attempt to legitimise his views and future actions by building on what others have done previously.

The second chapter of the Russian military doctrine defines the military risks and threats for the Russian Federation and describes also the Russian understanding of the characteristics of a modern military conflict. It is the key to understand Russian official views on modern war and fighting. By this doctrine, modern military conflicts are characterised by:

- Integrated use of military force, political, economic, informational, and other non-military tools, implemented with extensive use of the protest potential of the population, and special operations forces;
- Massive use of weapons systems and military technology, precision, hypersonic weapons, electronic warfare, weapons based on new physical principles comparable in efficiency with nuclear weapons, information management systems, unmanned aircrafts, autonomous marine vehicles, controlled robotic weapons, and military equipment;
- Impact on the enemy throughout the depth of its territory simultaneously in the global information space, in the air, on land, and at sea;
- Selectivity and a high degree of destruction of objects, speed of manoeuvre and fire of troops (forces), the use of various mobile groups of troops (forces);
- Reducing the time parameters to prepare for hostilities;
- Strengthening the centralisation and automation the command and control of troops and weapons as a result of the transition from a strictly vertical command and control system to the global network of automated management systems of troops (forces) and weapons;
- The creation of a permanent war zone in the territories of warring parties;
- Participation of irregular armed groups and private military companies in hostilities;
- The use of indirect and asymmetric methods of action;
- The use of externally funded and managed political forces and social movements.¹²⁰

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118 Герасимов 2013, 2-3.

119 Ibid.

120 <http://www.rg.ru/2014/12/30/doktrina-dok.html> (19.06.2015).

The similar approach is also seen in General Gerasimov's statement describing the modern military conflict as an integrated application of military, political, economic, informational, and other powers by state or non-state actors to achieve their political goals.¹²¹ Therefore, warfare as understood by Russian military leaders is not '... the continuation of politics by other (military) means...' but an integral part of politics.

Increasing our knowledge of Russian strategies in exploiting different avenues for realising its geopolitical ambitions helps other countries build their own strategies for countering these attempts.

For Russians modern wars will be fought on all levels of an adversary's territory—on land, at sea, in the air and in space, as well as in the global information space. The latter being especially important, according to the new Russian doctrine, information superiority is essential for achieving victory on the battlefield in a modern war.¹²²

The importance of non-military means in conflicts will increase dramatically. According to the Russian General Staff, the ratio of non-military to military means is expected to be 4 to 1.¹²³ As a result, the line between the state of peace and the state of war will be blurred.¹²⁴ This idea is similar to the older Communist idea of permanent struggle.

Alongside traditional military forces, a wide variety of paramilitary, special and insurgency forces will be used to achieve political objectives. An important and the most visible role in fighting will be carried out by irregular military formations, private military companies and insurgency forces with special forces supported and funded from outside. The open and visible participation of own military forces may take part only at the final stages of an operation to finalise the direct takeover, or if not possible/acceptable, as peacekeeping forces.

The implementation of the doctrine will be carried out by new forms and methods, such as:

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121 Герасимов 2013, 2-3.

122 Чекинов, Богданов 2013, 17.

123 Герасимов 2013, 2-3.

124 Ibid.

- Military actions will start with peacetime units;
- Non-contact clashes of joint forces with high manoeuvrability;
- Annihilation of the adversary's military and economic powers by precise short-time strikes against military and civilian infrastructures;
- Massive use of high-precision weapons, special operation forces, weapons based on new physical principles, and the use of armed civilians;
- Simultaneous impacts on an adversary's military units and objects across the entire breadth of its territory;
- Simultaneous battles on land, at sea, in the air and space, and in the global information space;
- The use of asymmetric and indirect methods;
- The command of forces in a unified information space.¹²⁵

After the publication of the new Russian military doctrine there were numerous discussions about the Russian new generation warfare, especially in relation to the crisis in Ukraine. Some analysts call it hybrid warfare, some call it the full spectrum conflict, asymmetrical, unconventional, or nonlinear warfare. At the same time, these new elements—information activities, physical and informational provocations, the use of special operation forces, paramilitary units, and internal oppositions, economic pressure and deception—have been part of Russian or Soviet strategies for a long time. As stated by general Gareev:

All the time the international confrontation was implemented through the use of different forces and methods such as intelligence, counterintelligence, deception, manipulation, disinformation and others. Only some of our philosophers think that all these non-military tools appeared today...¹²⁶

Of course, Russian/Soviet strategists have been more or less successful in their implementation of these elements and making them work together. The crisis in Ukraine in general, especially the takeover of Crimea shows an increase in abilities and capabilities to implement the doctrinal views first written down by General Gareev in 1995.¹²⁷

.....
125 Ibid.

126 Гапеев 2013.

127 Gareev 1998

Chekinov and Bogdanov divide the new-generation war into two phases—an opening and a closing period. The opening phase starts with an intensive and centrally coordinated non-military campaign against a target country. The campaign includes diplomatic, economic, ideological, psychological, and information measures. In addition, a heavy propaganda campaign is conducted to depress the enemy

population, to disrupt the government and to demoralise the enemy's armed forces. The actions also include the deception and bribing of governmental officials and members of the armed forces.¹²⁸ In addition to a large-scale intelligence and information gathering, different covert operations to create chaos and instability are launched. By the authors, the enemy would have the main governmental and military command centres destroyed, critical infrastructure heavily damaged to the extent of non-governance. The second or the closing phase consists of the open entrance of occupying forces into the country and destruction of remaining points of resistance.¹²⁹ Chekinov and Bogdanov consider the first phase of operation more critical and important than the concluding part. This supports Gerasimov's view that non-military means play the main role in future conflicts.

Information activities have the key role in future conflicts. According to the Russian theorists, the war will be conducted in the two domains: in physical and informational realms. The decisive battle is to be fought in the latter one. Interestingly, according to Gerasimov, information means are not clearly identified as military or non-military means.¹³⁰

Even if the new Russian military doctrine seems to resemble a revolutionary approach to warfighting, it is still old wine in a new bottle.



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128 Чекинов, Богданов 2013, 20-21.

129 Ibid., 22.

130 Герасимов 2013, 2-3.

The Russian military thinking has always been more close to Sun Tzu's military thinking rather than to the Western understanding of conducting wars. The key difference today is the Russian increased ability to carry out their doctrinal principles successfully as it was seen in Crimea. In previous post-Cold War conflicts, Russia employed its traditional doctrine and was not impressively successful. Thus, Crimea may either be an exception to the norm—or a new norm for the West to reckon with.

What can we conclude from this analysis of the new military doctrine and Gerasimov's views? First, the Russian military maintains its traditional role as defender of the homeland. Second, the key role in future conflicts has been assigned to the Security Services and Special Forces. This was apparent in Crimea and has been apparent in Eastern Ukraine where Russian military units have been assigned a supportive, secondary role to the GRU/FSB. Third, all branches of Russian government, especially the executive branch, is even more heavily involved in the war effort than on previous occasions. Their role is to provide the political conditions for the forces in fight. It has to be noted, though, that while fulfilling this role today, different branches of the Russian government have strayed of the traditional paths of their colleagues in other countries. In support of the information warfare campaign, it now appears that especially the executive branch has clearly crossed the fine line between classic diplomatic ambiguity and lying.

Fourth, the term 'hybrid warfare' is as misleading for Western audiences as it does not mean the same thing as the Russian term 'new generation warfare'. The word 'hybrid' derives from Latin '*hybridae*' which means 'a mongrel, half breed'. Hence, hybrid warfare should be the offspring of 1) warfare as an act of execution or implementation and 2) some concept or idea from a particular realm or sphere of life (economy, social affairs, information etc.). In order to achieve goals or implement national interests via the aforementioned spheres, a country may decide to utilise the ways and means of warfare within these realms.

Perhaps one of the earliest academic uses of the term 'hybrid warfare' was in 2002 by William J. Nemeth in an unpublished Naval Postgraduate School's master's thesis titled "Future war and Chechnya: a case for hybrid warfare", which did not reach wider audiences. The term became more public in academic literature in 2005 after an article by LtGen James

N. Mattis and Frank Hoffman, “Future Warfare: The Rise of Hybrid Warfare”¹³¹. The term did not spread until the conflict between Lebanon and the Hezbollah in 2006, which was somewhat mistakenly labelled as a ‘hybrid conflict’. After that conflict, ‘hybrid warfare’ was used to describe activities similar to those of unconventional warfare as defined by the US and NATO with one clear distinction—there was no obvious state power behind it. With the annexation of Crimea and subsequent invasion of Eastern Ukraine, the comprehension of ‘hybrid warfare’ changed and it was used to refer to a comprehensive approach of using military, non-military, and non-official means to wage warfare.

There was now a clearly identified state power behind the events. When we compare the phases of Russian new generation warfare to the phases of US unconventional warfare, we can see many similarities (Fig. 1¹³²).

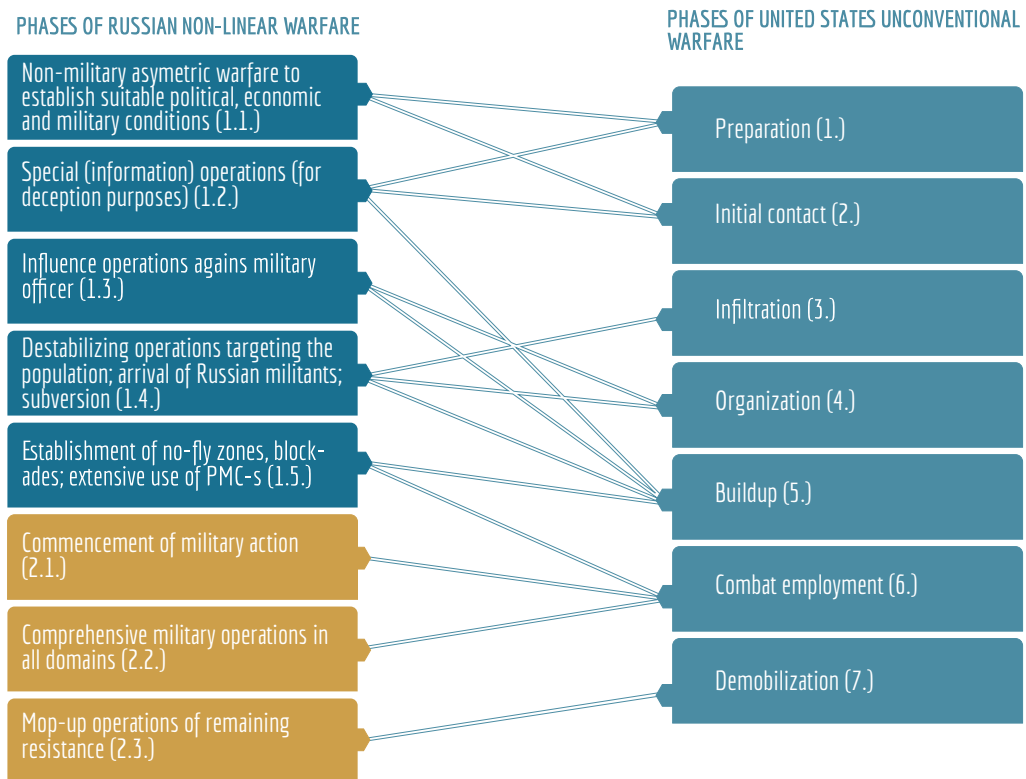


Figure 1. Comparison of the phases and sub-phases. Russian new generation and US unconventional warfare.

131 LtGen Mattis, J. N. & Hoffman, F. 2005. Future Warfare: The Rise of Hybrid Warfare. Naval Institute Proceedings, Nov 2005, pp 30-32. For a more thorough review see Hoffman, F. 2007. Conflict in the 21st century: the rise of hybrid wars; at http://www.potomac institute.org/images/stories/publications/potomac_hybridwar_0108.pdf, William J. Nemeth in “Future war and Chechnya: a case for hybrid warfare”, unpublished master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA: 2002; at http://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/5865/02Jun_Nemeth.pdf.

132 Чекинов, Богданов 2013, 15-22. For US doctrine, see FM 3-05.201: Special Forces Unconventional Warfare Operations, paragraph 1-12.

Despite apparent differences in the titles of the phases, the contents of the Russian and US approaches are quite similar. Specifically:

- Russian subphases 1.1 and 1.2 match several activities in the US phases 1 and 2.
- Russian subphases 1.2 and 1.3 serve the same purpose as the conduct of PsyOps in US phase 2.
- Russian subphases 1.3 and 1.4 are comparable to the PsyOps efforts of US phase 4.
- The build-up described in the US phase 5 occurs during the Russian subphases 1.2 to 1.5.
- The Russian subphase 1.5 makes the conflict and the actual forces behind it open to the public as is the case of the US phase 6.
- The Russian subphases 2.1 and 2.2 match US phase 6.
- Mop-up operations of the Russian subphase 2.3 are one of the measures undertaken in the US phase 7.

Despite differences in timing and sequencing, the ways, means, and ends of the Russian and US approaches are largely similar for such operations. Perhaps the only major difference we can identify is that events in the first phase may occur simultaneously with those in the second phase according to Chekinov and Bogdanov. The US field manual stipulates that the phases should ideally occur sequentially, even though one or more may be skipped if conditions permit.

Hence we should stop using the term ‘hybrid warfare’ and refer to the Russian campaign in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine as unconventional warfare, at least in Western terms of reference. The most notable difference between Russian and US conduct of unconventional warfare is the Russia’s heavy emphasis on information activities. When we compare Russian Special Forces with those of the US and the vast difference in capabilities and experience between them, this makes sense. The sudden increased in focus and reliance on information activities in the Russian military doctrine is an indicator that Russia is well aware of the developing situation and has found alternate ways and means of conducting unconventional warfare.

4. OVERVIEW OF POLITICAL AND MILITARY EVENTS

This chapter gives an overview of the political and military conflict unfolding in Ukraine in 2014. The events from April until December 2014 have been divided into phases.

4.1. POLITICAL OVERVIEW

H.Mölder, V.Sazonov

The political events unfolding in Ukraine after the Vilnius Summit can be systematised in the following way. The first two phases describe the events before the research period of 1 April 2014 – 31 December 2014, yet we include them here because they help to decode the major events that took place during the research period.

Phase A: 21 November 2013 – 21 February 2014. EuroMaidan in Kyiv.¹³³

On 21 November 2013 the Ukrainian government suspended its preparations for signing the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement.¹³⁴ This caused riots, civil unrest and demonstrations in Kyiv, which began on the same day in Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti) in Kyiv.¹³⁵ On 27–28 November 2013 the third Eastern Partnership Summit took place in Vilnius.¹³⁶ Hundreds of anti-government protesters were killed in Kyiv during EuroMaidan between November 2013 and February 2014. The period ends with President Viktor Yanukovich leaving the country on

133 See more about Euromaidan – Мухарьский 2015; Кошкина 2015.

134 Кошкина 2015, 22-23.

135 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/12/12/us-ukraine-idUSBRE9BA04420131212>

136 <http://www.eu2013.lt/en/vilnius-summit>

21 February 2014.

Phase B: 22 February 2014 - 1 April 2014. Annexation of Crimea.¹³⁷

On 21 February 2014 President Yanukovich signed the 'Agreement on the settlement of political crisis'.¹³⁸ On the same day Viktor Yanukovich left Kiev and moved to Kharkiv, some days later he was already in Moscow. Yanukovich was removed from office by the Ukrainian parliament on 22 February 2014. Also in February, the Crimean crisis began with demonstrations against the new Ukrainian government. Russian support of separatist politics culminated in March 2014 with the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. On 21 March Vladimir Putin ratified the inclusion of two new areas into the Russian Federation: the Republic of Crimea and the City of Federal Importance Sevastopol.

Phase I-II: 1 April 2014 - 30 June 2014. Pro-Russian offensive.

This phase of the conflict leads to the armed conflict. On 7 April 2014 the so-called People's Republic of Donetsk was declared. Militants took control of SBU offices in Donetsk and Luhansk.

Phase III: 1 July 2014 - 1 September 2014. Ukraine's offensive.

On 5 July, Slavyansk was retaken by Ukrainian forces. The battle of Ilovaysk (10.08-02.09.2014), a turning point in the war in Donbass, ended on 2 September as the Ukrainian forces withdrew from the area.

Phase IV: 24 August 2014 - 31 December 2014. Pro-Russian counteroffensive.

A major offensive against Mariupol started at the end of August (24.08.2014). The first Minsk ceasefire protocol was signed under the auspices of the OSCE by both parties on 5 September 2014 in Minsk, but it failed.

The table below shows the four stages of the conflict during the period under research, plus the two preceding stages (A and B) taking place between the Vilnius Summit and the annexation of Crimea in March of 2014.

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137 See more Mölder, Sazonov, Värk 2014, 2148-2161; Mölder, Sazonov, Värk 2015, 1-28.

138 Signed by Yanukovich and the leaders of the Ukrainian parliamentary opposition.

The table is followed by a summary of the military events during the four periods. The media events are elaborated further in Chapter 5.

PHASE	POLITICAL EVENTS	MILITARY EVENTS	MEDIA
A	21 November 2013 – 21 February 2014 EuroMaidan	_*	_*
B	22 February 2014 – 1 April 2014 Annexation of Crimea	_*	_*
1	1 April 2014 – 30 June 2014 War in Donbass begins	End of March – beginning of May Provoking the military conflict	April Low variety of anti-Ukrainian information activities
2		May – beginning of July Escalation of the military conflict	May-June Multitude of anti-Ukrainian attitudes and narratives
3	1 July 2014 – 1 September 2014 Ukraine's offensive	July-September Direct intervention in the military conflict, changing the situation	July-August Multitude of anti-Ukrainian attitudes and narratives
4	24 August 2014 – 31 December 2014 Pro-Russian counteroffensive	September-December Stirring up the military conflict	September-December Multitude of anti-Ukrainian attitudes and narratives

Table 3. Overview of the Ukrainian crisis

*not analysed in the report

4.2. MILITARY OVERVIEW

A. Šlabovič

The intervention of the Russian Federation in Eastern Ukraine can be divided into four distinct phases.

Phase I: Provoking the military conflict (end of March - beginning of May 2014)

The first provocations were the activities of the Igor Girkin's (Strelkov) diversion group in Slavyansk and Kramatorsk on 12-14 April 2014. These included the first armed attack on representatives of the Ukrainian government and seizing government and civilian-military authority buildings. The group was clearly better organised and better equipped than other pro-Russian groups active during the same period (e.g. in Donetsk, Mariupol). It is possible that the key individuals in the Girkin group were associated with the Russian Federation. Bringing Cossacks to the areas of Antracyt and Krasnyi Luch.

Phase II: Escalation of the military conflict (May - beginning of July)

Forming an assault and defence group based on local pro-Russians and volunteers from the Russian Federation,¹³⁹ and taking control of the majority of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The Russian Federation supports its 'volunteers' in every possible way. They are recruited, trained, transported to their area, and provided with armament and ammunition. The role of the civil-military authorities of the Russian Federation mostly involves command and coordination; however, direct military intervention by the special forces and the participation of various specialists is also possible. It can be that the involvement of the Russian Federation in Donetsk was no longer direct when Girkin left Slavyansk at the beginning of July and moved to Donetsk. Emphasis switched to the activities of the powers organised and funded by local oligarchs (e.g. Khodakovsky's Vostok Battalion by Rinat Akhmetov). However, the arrival of Chechens and other volunteers from the Russian Federation in Donetsk, as well as the first attack on the Donetsk airport on 25-26 May, were obviously directly supported by the Russian Federation.

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139 However, the majority of them could be regarded as "mercenaries": there is abundant information about hiring former servicemen for a remarkable reward.

Phase III: Direct intervention in the military conflict, changing the situation (July-September)

Since the units involving ‘volunteers’ and local pro-Russians were not able to stop the attack on Ukrainians, there was a danger of being isolated from the Russian Federation and isolated from each other (e.g. seizure of border areas by Ukrainian forces, manoeuvre in an area between Donetsk and Luhansk), thus most probably Russian forces were directly involved. From July the special forces and artillery units of the Russian Federation denied the activities of Ukrainians near the border and supported the counterattacks of pro-Russians with everything they had to restore the situation to normal (e.g. Zelenopolye, Saur-Mogila, the attacks were carried out from both Donetsk and the Russian Federation). At first, the activities of the regular forces of the Russian Army were somewhat limited, most likely in border areas in the form of tactical battle groups of units up to the size of a company, while the participation of specialty units (e.g. artillery, air defence, etc.) was considerably increased. However, with the continued pressure on the part of Ukrainians, the Russian Federation had to intervene with numerous regular forces (battle groups of several battalions), and this became the turning point of the conflict (the Ilovaysk battle). From that point Ukrainians had to stop attacking and concentrated on defensive activities. Possibly, after this battle during September, the majority of the Russian regular forces withdrew to the Russian border.

Phase IV: Stirring up the military conflict (September-December)

After a successful operation against Ukraine in August-September, the Russian Federation continued to support the conflict. The activities were relatively similar to those of the second phase (providing equipment, armament, and the supporting of ‘volunteers’). However, there is some evidence that the percentage of former Russian military personnel (‘individuals on vacation’) and ‘volunteers’ coming from the Russian Federation. Compared with August, the regular Russian forces in the form of special forces and specialists were less active, yet they remained active in certain places (e.g. attacks on the Donetsk airport). Russia’s support for rebels in the form of equipment and armaments remains high. The Russian Federation keeps training ‘volunteers’¹⁴⁰ who are prepared to participate in the conflict when needed.

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140 The majority of them being recently retired reservists or even servicemen in active service.

5. RUSSIAN INFORMATION WARFARE AGAINST UKRAINE I: ONLINE NEWS AND SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents research findings on Russian information activities against Ukraine based on the media analysis. The results of the interviews are presented in Chapter 6.

5.1. RUSSIA'S INFORMATION WARFARE AGAINST UKRAINE

V. Sazonov, K. Müür

Introduction

Since 2014, during the course of the Ukraine crisis the role of actual military interventions has remained low in comparison to different tools of asymmetric warfare (information warfare, economic measures, cyber war, and psychological war on all levels), often referred to as hybrid warfare.¹⁴¹ Despite the recent increased usage of this term due to the Ukraine crisis, the principles of the phenomenon it is used to describe were also characteristic to already the Soviet military thinking. According to András Rácz, in hybrid war, *'the regular military force is used mainly as a deterrent and not as a tool of open aggression'*¹⁴² in comparison to other types of war.

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141 For further elaboration on the ambiguity of the concept 'hybrid warfare', see Chapter 3.

142 Rácz 2015, 88-89.

However, what was new in 2014, was the ‘*highly effective, in many cases almost real-time coordination of the various means employed, including political, military, special operations and information measures*’ that caught both the Kyiv government and the West off guard in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine.¹⁴³ This chapter focuses on one component of the unconventional or non-linear war—information warfare. It gives an overview of Russian information warfare against Ukraine during 2014, concentrating on the different keywords and labels that Russia uses against the Ukrainian army, government, and the West.

According to Ulrik Franke,¹⁴⁴ information warfare is about achieving goals, e.g. annexing another country, by replacing military force and bloodshed with cleverly crafted and credibly supported messages to win over the minds of the belligerents. However, for Russia, information warfare is not simply an accidental choice of instruments in a diverse toolbox of weapons. The new Russian military doctrine from December 2014¹⁴⁵ explicitly states that in modern warfare information superiority is essential to achieve victory on the physical battlefield. Or, as Army General Valery Gerasimov,¹⁴⁶ Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia, explains: ‘*Information warfare opens wide asymmetric possibilities for decreasing the fighting potential of enemy*’. Russian scholars Chekinov and Bogdanov¹⁴⁷ use the term *strategic information warfare*, which forms a vital part of supporting different military and non-military measures (e.g. disrupting military and government leadership, misleading the enemy, forming desirable public opinions, organising anti-government activities) aimed at decreasing the determination of the opponent to resist. Starodubtsev, Bukharin and Semenov¹⁴⁸ point out that it is already in peacetime when successful information warfare can result in decisions favouring the initiating party.

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143 Rącz 2015, 87.

144 2015, 9.

145 Rossiyskaya Gazeta 2014.

146 2013, 2-3.

147 2011, 6.

148 2012, 24.

Yevhen Fedchenko, Director of the Mohyla School of Journalism in Kyiv and co-founder of the StopFake.org website describes the Russian state propaganda:

For the Kremlin, propaganda has become an integral part of information warfare. Throughout the past decade the Russian propaganda machine has been structured and effectively implemented, reaching a climax during the occupation of Crimea and the subsequent devastating war in Eastern Ukraine. It started in 2005 with the creation of Russia Today (subsequently RT) and every year more 'media' outlets are added to this global network. Almost every week another propaganda outlet, Sputnik International, opens a new bureau somewhere in the world, hiring qualified local journalists and producing radio and multimedia content in almost 30 languages. According to their website, 'Sputnik points the way to a multipolar world that respects every country's national interests, culture, history and traditions. This is just one of the many examples of media outlet double-speak. In reality, their aim is to influence global public opinion, distort reality and act as a mouthpiece for the Kremlin.'¹⁴⁹

Compared with the 2008 war in Georgia, when Russia misjudged the importance of information warfare¹⁵⁰ and eventually it lost the war of narratives to the West, Russia has learned its lessons and now pays more attention to the role of information in the high-tech world, strategic communications, and modern warfare.¹⁵¹ In 2014, Russia's information activities against Ukraine played a significant part in its actions on the territory of Eastern Ukraine.¹⁵²

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the Russian information activities against Ukraine are not new. Vitalii Moroz,¹⁵³ Head of the New Media Department at Internews Ukraine, and Tetyana Lebedeva,¹⁵⁴ Honorary Head of the Independent Association of Broadcasters, point to the years 2003-2004 when the Russian propagandists started to develop the idea of dividing Ukraine into two or three parts. Moroz associates it with the events taking place in Russia at the same time—the oppression of the NTV news channel and the appearance of political technologists.¹⁵⁵ Some of these technologists were simultaneously hired by the team of Yanukovych

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149 Fedchenko 2015.

150 See eg Niedermaier 2008.

151 Ginos 2010.

152 See eg Berzinš 2014, De Silva 2015, Galeotti 2014, Howard & Puhkov 2014.

153 Interview with Vitalii Moroz carried out by V. Sazonov, 28.05.2015.

154 Interview with Tetyana Lebedeva carried out by V. Sazonov, 27.05.2015.

155 Interview with Vitalii Moroz carried out by V. Sazonov, 28.05.2015.

to work against the Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko (2005-2010).¹⁵⁶ According to Lebedeva, Russian information activities started to appear already during the presidency of Leonid Kuchma (1994-2004), but the impact of the ‘first Maidan’—the Orange Revolution of 2004—made the Russian rulers uneasy about maintaining their influence over Ukraine.¹⁵⁷

Back then, Russian information activities were not as massive, aggressive, influential, or visible as they are now. Dmytro Kuleba, Ambassador-at-Large of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry, is of the opinion that a more aggressive wave of Russian information campaigns began approximately one year before the annexation of Crimea, in 2013.¹⁵⁸ The way in which the process unfolded indicates that this was a well-prepared action and Russia was militarily ready to conduct the operation in Crimea.

In the conflict in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea during 2014, Russian information activities were used at all levels from the political level against the state of Ukraine, its structures, and politicians, up to the military level. According to Jolanta Darczewska,¹⁵⁹ diplomats, politicians, political analysts, experts, and representatives of the academic and cultural elites supported an unprecedentedly large-scale exploitation of Russian federal television and radio channels, newspapers, and online resources.

In Russia’s information campaigns against Ukraine, Moscow propagandists use a number of different myths and narratives that are mostly related to the Second World War, Stepan Bandera, and the Ukrainian nationalists of the 1940s, but also refer to Nazism and violence. Additionally, they use the images of the ‘glorious’ Soviet period. Such manipulations in the Russian media are very common since Vladimir Putin came to power in the Russian Federation.¹⁶⁰

Russia’s propaganda machine is powerful, functions well, and targets a number of different audiences in Ukraine. It aims to disparage the Ukrainian government and demonstrate that it is a corrupt, illegal, and fascist junta.

The Ukrainian defence forces and its volunteer units are often compared to *Einsatztruppen* (executions squads), Nazis, killers, terrorists, bandits, and servants of the Kyiv junta. Ukraine is portrayed as a failed state, or a puppet of NATO and Western countries.

.....
156 Ibid.

157 Interview with Tetyana Lebedeva carried out by V. Sazonov, 27.05.2015.

158 Interview with Dmytro Kuleba carried out by V. Sazonov, 27.05.2015.

159 2014, 5.

160 Lipman 2009.

Another strong narrative promoted by Russian propagandists is the existence of a Western conspiracy against Russia, Russians, and the Russian World.¹⁶¹ Western politicians are depicted as cowardly and double-faced people who support killing civilians in Ukraine, especially children.¹⁶²

The Russian propaganda machine is continuously creating new terms, especially related to WWII,¹⁶³ that are meant to support them in information war—they try to humiliate Ukrainians by using labels such as *Maidanjugend* (майданюгендовец), which is a direct analogue to *Hitlerjugend*.¹⁶⁴

Additionally, Russia has used the Orthodox Church in its information campaigns. Very often one can find articles about a priest recounting stories about the Ukrainian army killing civilians, priests, and looting churches.¹⁶⁵ Sometimes the Ukrainian government is depicted as evil and associated with demons and Satan.¹⁶⁶

5.2. A COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW OF ONLINE NEWS

K. Müür, H. Mölder and V. Sazonov

Analysis of the three online news channels—*Komsomolskaya Pravda (KP)*, *Regnum*, and *TV Zvezda*—revealed a range of approaches used in Russian information campaigns to construct a negative image of Ukraine. Although the three channels under scrutiny do not represent the entire spectrum of the Russian media, the study nevertheless shows how an anti-Ukrainian approach can take different stylistic forms and rely on various nuances.

By using different channels with different approaches, Russia's information warfare manages to cater for different audiences with different tastes and needs for media consumption.

As to the **genre**, each of the channels can be characterised by a different style of broadcast (see Figure 2). While *Komsomolskaya Pravda* uses the greatest variety of different journalistic genres, it is *TV Zvezda* that spreads the word predominantly in the form of news.

161 See e.g. <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26310.3/3188038>

162 See e.g. <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26273.7/3150573/>

163 See e.g. <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26317.5/3196304/>; <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26317/3196365/>

164 See e.g. <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26278.4/3155601>

165 See e.g. <http://www.kompravda.eu/daily/26294/3172487/>

166 See e.g. <http://www.kompravda.eu/daily/26283/3161165/>

Therefore, while *TV Zvezda* focuses on the newsworthiness of different events and fast facts (whether or not they are actually true), *Komsomolskaya Pravda* presents not only facts, but also provides conclusions and interpretations by going further in-depth with interviews, reports, and opinion pieces in addition to classical news stories.

Regnum has adopted an interesting approach by relying mostly on two genres—news and statements. The statements are mostly quotations from various politicians, institutions, and experts that are used to gain additional credibility by relying on the external authority of prominent figures.

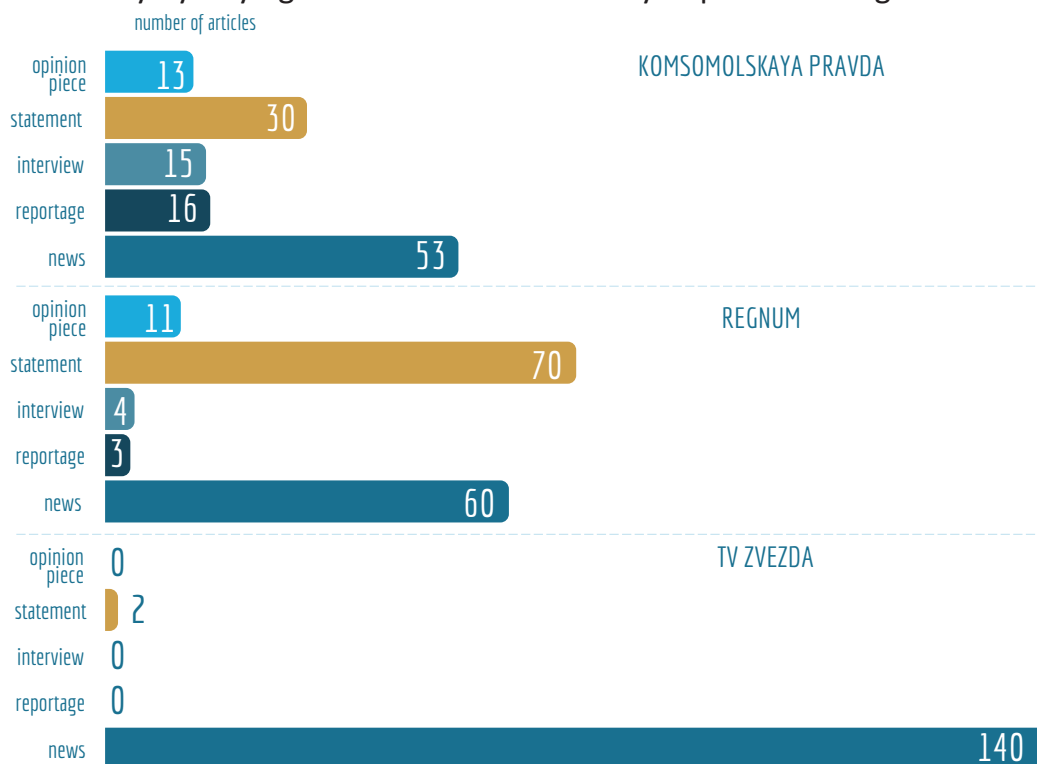


Figure 2. Genres of the articles analysed

The list of **main topics** (see Figure 3) is dominated by different war-related events—combat activities, violence, and terrorism. Since the focus of the study was on the military aspects of the on-going crisis, this is to be expected.

The presence of the participants in the conflict on the ground—Ukrainian and separatist armed forces, as well as prisoners of war (POWs)—is less prevalent. Nevertheless, in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*

and *TV Zvezda*, the Ukrainian armed forces are still the third most common topic. These two outlets pay considerably less attention to the separatist armed forces. In *Regnum*, on the other hand, the armed forces, whether Ukrainian or separatist, figure equally little.

Of the three outlets surveyed, it is *Regnum* that focuses most on the political aspects of the conflict by including stories that deal with the Ukrainian government, the West's interference in Ukraine, and Russia. These topics also appear in *TV Zvezda*, but to a lesser extent. Interestingly, they are virtually non-existent in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*.

Topics concerning the separatists—the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics (DPR/LPR), Novorossiia, and Crimea—are present to only a very small degree as main topics across all three outlets. This shows that while reporting the military aspects of the crisis, even if the articles deal with Eastern Ukraine, the main focus was on specific events (battles, shootings, violence etc.) rather than on broader questions, e.g. legal recognition of the separatist entities.

All in all, it is *Komsomolskaya Pravda* that stands out with the narrowest range of topics, concentrating largely on the events on the ground, and leaving the political aspects of the crisis in the background. *Regnum* and *TV Zvezda* have a more even distribution of main topics.

When it comes to a breakdown of the main topics across the four phases of the conflict (as specified in Chapter 4), the overall trend is that the first phase (April 2014 – provoking the military conflict) can be distinguished from the phases II-IV, which correspond to the direct military conflict. The various main topics of the articles do not display any major trends throughout phases II-IV, except for the appearance of certain time-specific events in the media (e.g. MH17 plane crash, the Minsk peace talks, and 'humanitarian convoys').

Komsomolskaya Pravda stands out by focusing exclusively on topics related to combat activities and separatist armed forces during Phase I. During Phases II and III, the relative share of topics related to combat activities and terrorism is the highest in KP across all outlets, which coincides with the most acute phases of the military conflict and is in line with our expectations. The selection of the main topics is the widest in Phase IV. This illustrates how the Russian information campaigns against Ukraine grow broader in scope.

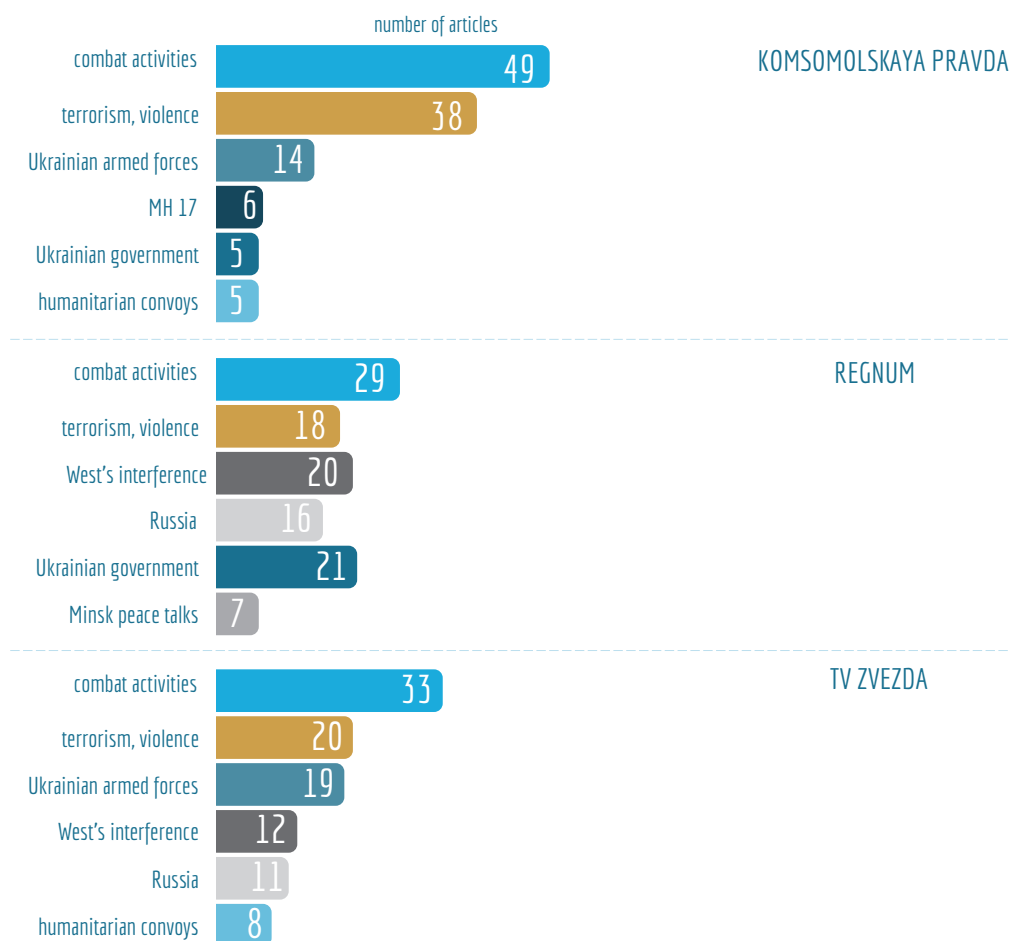


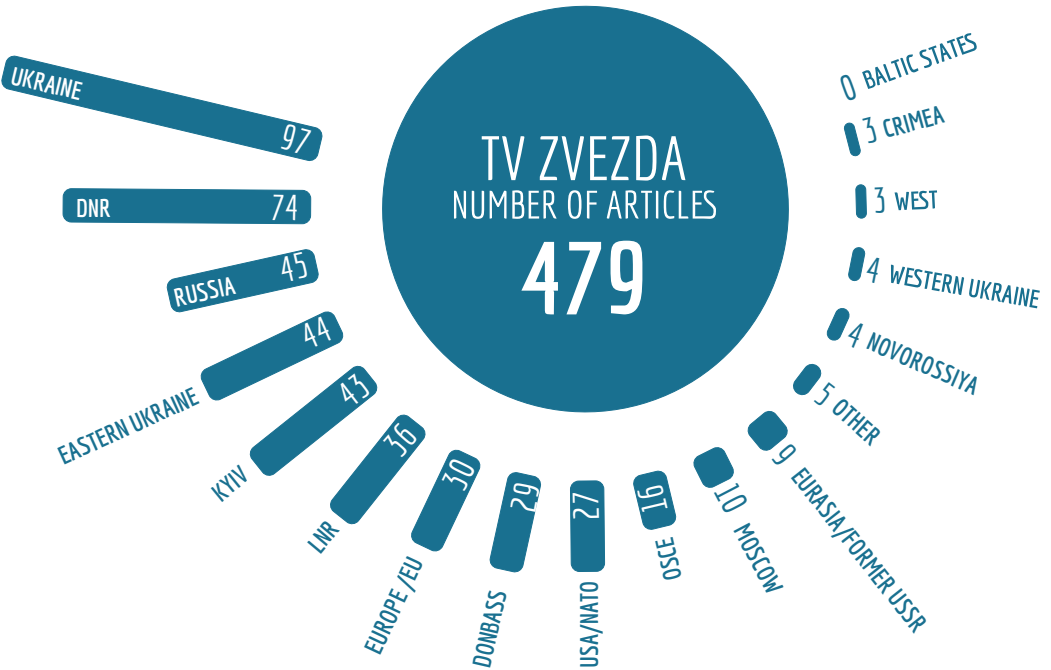
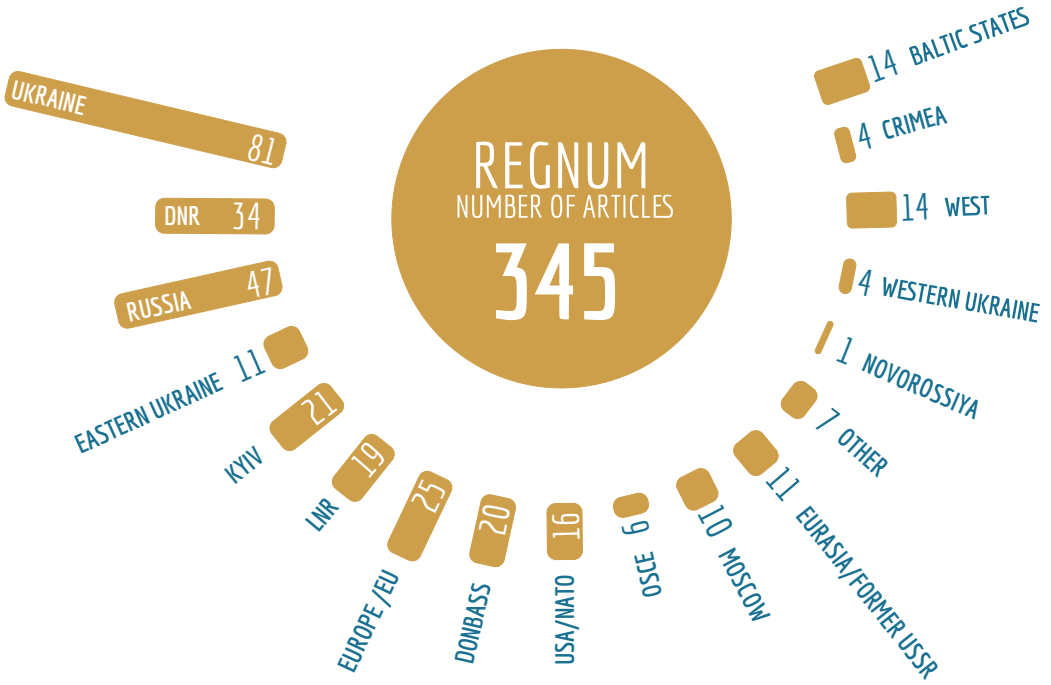
Figure 3. Main topics of the articles in Komsomolskaya Pravda, Regnum, TV Zvezda

In terms of **geographic contextualisation** (see Figures 4-6), the three news channels also exhibit different focuses.

Komsomolskaya Pravda treats the crisis most ‘locally’. References to Eastern Ukraine and the different entities in that region—the DNR, Donbass, LNR—dominate. In comparison to the other outlets *Komsomolskaya Pravda* publishes the least number of references to the whole of Ukraine. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* concentrates on Kyiv, mostly in the form of stories about the Eastern regions being in opposition to the policies of the new government.

The frequency and scope of geographical/geopolitical references in *Regnum* and *TV Zvezda* is considerably higher, therefore showing more of the ‘big picture’. *Regnum* and *TV Zvezda* mention Ukraine the most.

Regarding the different possible territorial entities in Eastern Ukraine, they refer mostly to the DNR, followed by Donbass. *TV Zvezda* and *Regnum* also bring in Russia, the West, and the USA/NATO, which remain largely untouched by *Komsomolskaya Pravda*.



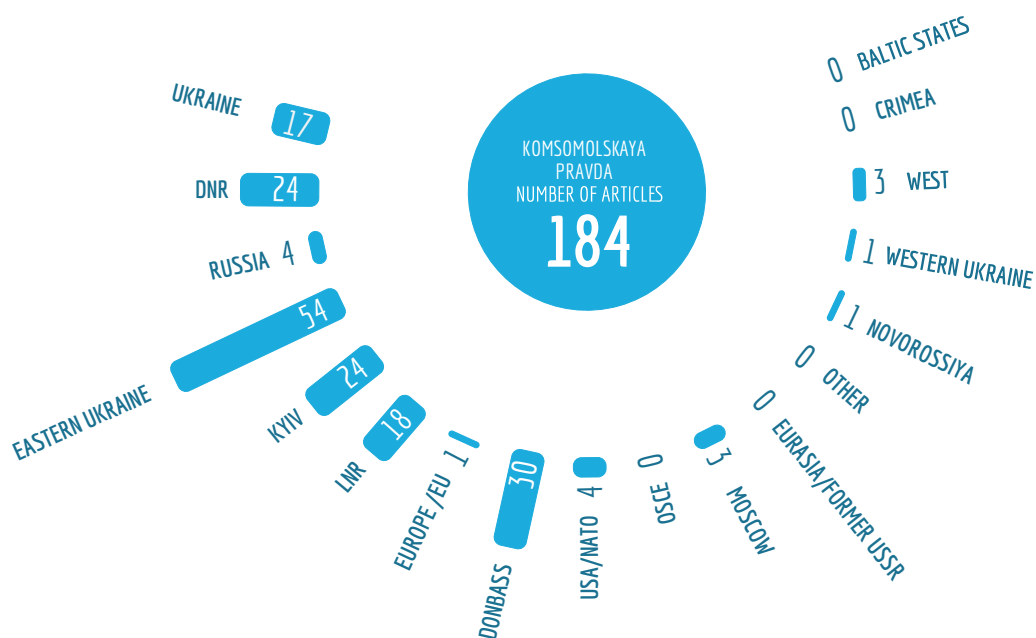


Figure 4. Figure 5. Figure 6. Geographic contextualisation of the Ukraine crisis in the articles

Contrary to expectation, the **temporal contextualisation** (see Figure 7) of the stories was predominantly present-centred.

Komsomolskaya Pravda did not make a single reference to past events.

On a few occasions *TV Zvezda* referred to the events of the recent past, starting from the EuroMaidan.

Regnum used the widest selection of references to historical events, including WWII and the Soviet period, but the share of articles referring to past events did not account for more than 10 per cent of the overall number of articles examined.

Therefore, the parallels that are often drawn between Ukraine and Nazi Germany do not come in the form of references to the actual events of the past. Instead, they appear in the form of labels used to describe target groups in Ukraine.

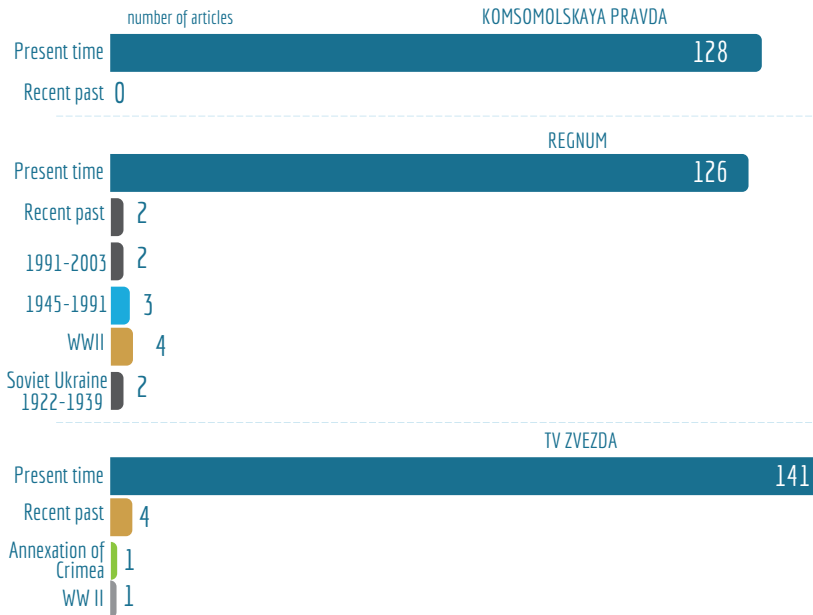


Figure 7. Temporal contextualisation of the Ukraine crisis in the articles

The news outlets also differ in terms of **sources** used (see Figure 8). *Komsomolskaya Pravda* relies mostly on the Russian media and different groups of people involved in the events. The categories most often referred to are other Russian media outlets, participants/civilians among separatists, separatist soldiers, and Ukrainian soldiers.

Regnum relies mostly on experts and authorities. Ukrainian and Western politicians and institutions, the Russian media, and Russian experts/analysts top their list of sources.

The list of sources used by *TV Zvezda* is the most varied and includes Ukrainian politicians and institutions, the Russian media, and separatist and Western politicians/institutions.

TV Zvezda mostly relies on political figures and institutions as sources (see Figure 9). While Poroshenko is the most often cited individual politician in *TV Zvezda* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Regnum* refers mostly to Putin. While Putin is shown as being critical towards Ukraine, the outlets are critical towards Poroshenko for a wide array of grievances. Lavrov is also somewhat visible—mostly with regard to his statements in international organisations—but references to, for example, Yatsenyuk, Shoigu, and Yanukovich are rare. Interestingly, the Russian Prime Minister Medvedev is not referred to even once in any of the outlets. Quotes from ministries and their spokespeople provide the greatest number of references to other politicians in Ukraine and Russia.

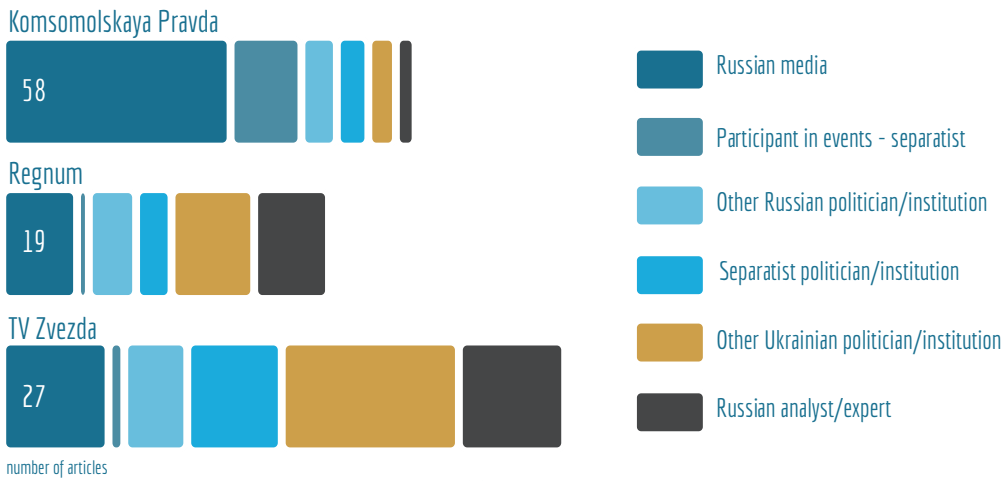


Figure 8. Most popular sources referred to in the articles

John Kerry and Anders Fogh Rasmussen figure most as individual Western politicians, mostly in the context of the alleged USA/NATO interference in Ukraine, together with references to different ministries and their spokespersons.

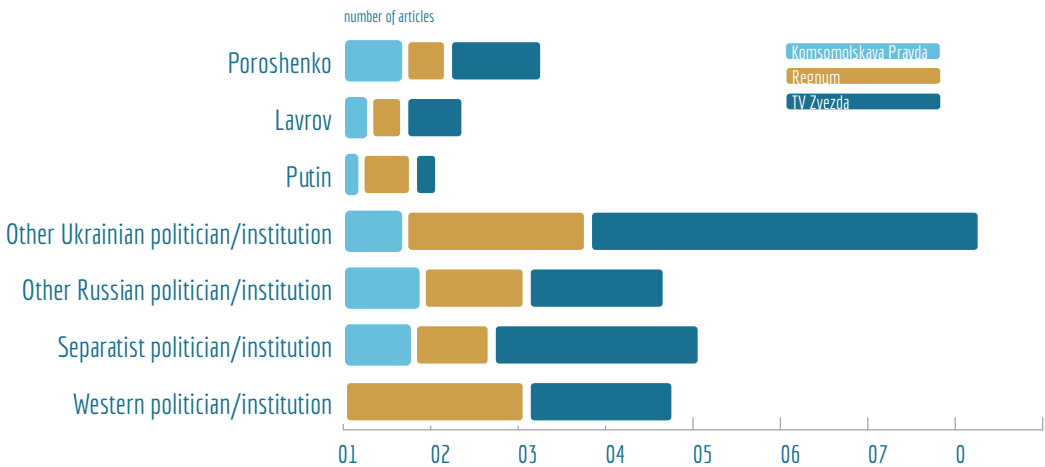


Figure 9. Politicians and official institutions referred to the most in the articles

Different target groups in **Ukraine—soldiers, army leadership, and the government** (see Figures 10-12)—receive the most diverse and critical treatment by *Komsomolskaya Pravda*.

While *TV Zvezda* and *Regnum* only compare the Ukrainian government with Nazis, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* extends this judgement to the Ukrainian army and its leadership as well. In general *Komsomolskaya Pravda* is the most judgemental of the three.

In many cases *Regnum* and *TV Zvezda* simply present events in a neutral-looking manner, whether or not the facts they use are actually true, but do not draw explicit conclusions and are, therefore, more reserved in their style.

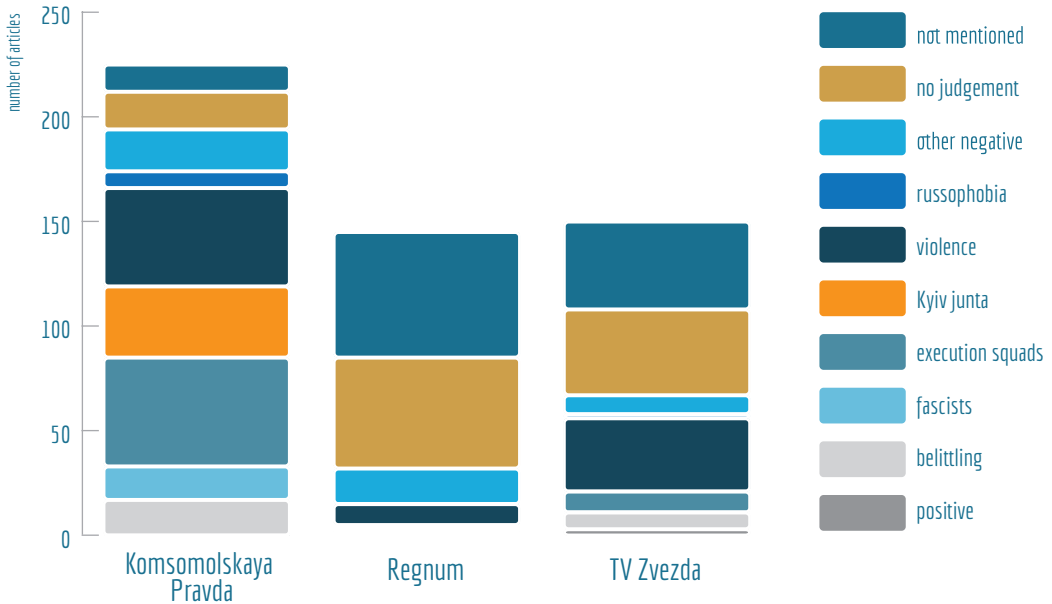


Figure 10. Attitude of the articles towards the Ukrainian armed forces¹⁶⁷

TV Zvezda pays much less attention to the leadership of the Ukrainian army in comparison with Ukrainian soldiers and government, and also when compared to the other outlets.

Throughout the period under scrutiny, it is phase I (April – provoking the military conflict) that stands out in terms of portraying the Ukrainian armed forces and its volunteers. This is evident by the highest share of non-judgemental articles (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Regnum*) and the lowest number of articles to mention the Ukrainian armed forces (*TV Zvezda*) in comparison to the later phases.

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167 including volunteers.

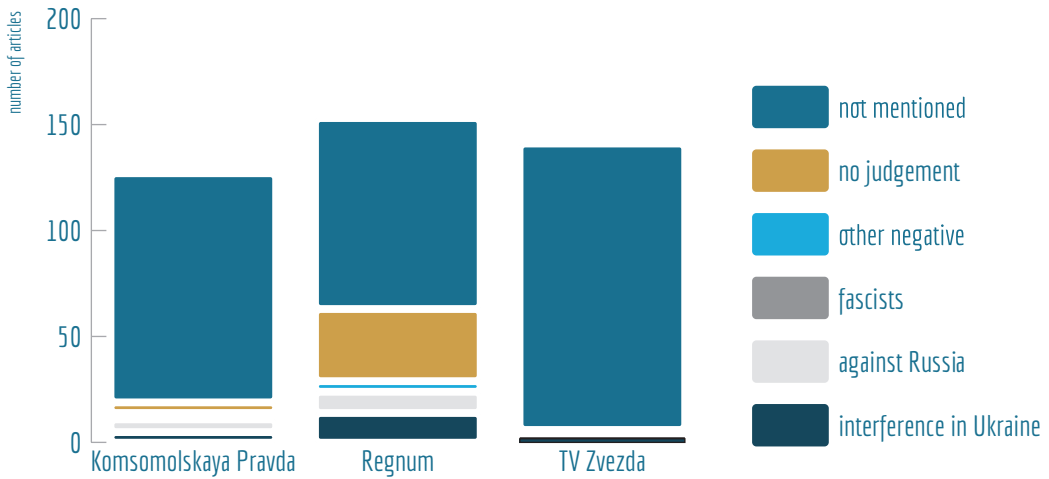


Figure 11. Attitude of the articles towards the command authorities of the Ukrainian armed forces - most mentioned

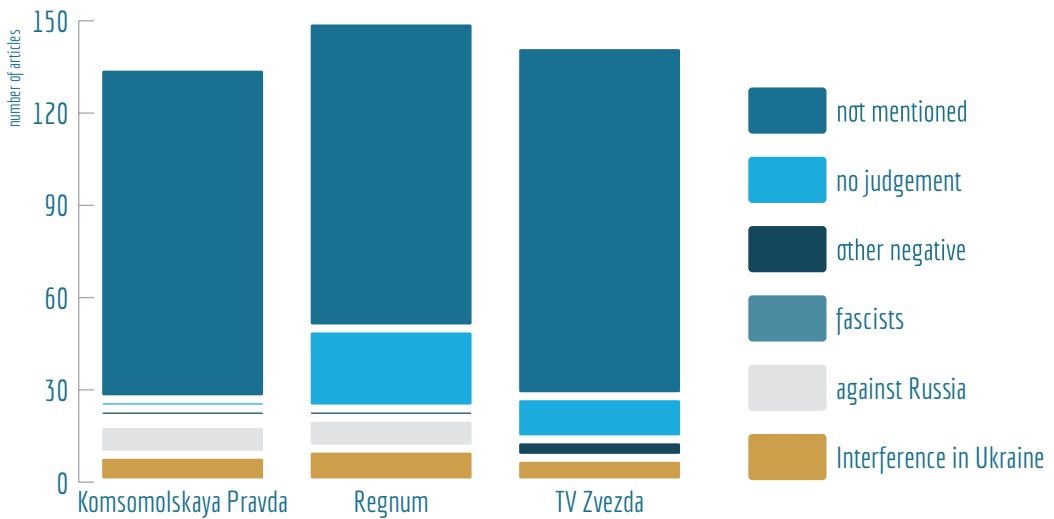


Figure 12. Attitude of the articles towards the Ukrainian government - most mentioned

The overall picture of different labels and keywords used about the Ukrainian armed forces also becomes more diverse during phases II-IV (direct military conflict) across all outlets as the demonisation of Ukraine intensifies.

In terms of change in attitudes towards the Ukrainian government regarding the different phases of the conflict, the greatest difference comes into play when associating the government with violence against its people. Similarly to previous categories, the change also becomes evident when comparing the first phase with the later ones.

While *TV Zvezda* remained relatively modest about the Ukrainian armed forces in April when compared to the other outlets, then it is in April when *TV Zvezda* associates the government the most with violence.

TV Zvezda argues less for acts of violence during the later phases while *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, on the other hand, increases its use of this narrative. The selection of narratives used by *Komsomolskaya Pravda* also widens with time, while *Regnum* and *TV Zvezda* display more fluctuation.

The **West** gets considerably less attention in all three outlets than Ukraine, whether in the form of USA/NATO, Europe/EU, or as a whole (see Figures 13-15). Across all of these categories, the West figures mostly in *Regnum*, despite half of those articles actually not making any explicit judgements. While *TV Zvezda* focuses on the West's involvement in Ukraine, then *Regnum* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* also bring in the narrative of the West's involvement in Ukraine as provocation against Russia.

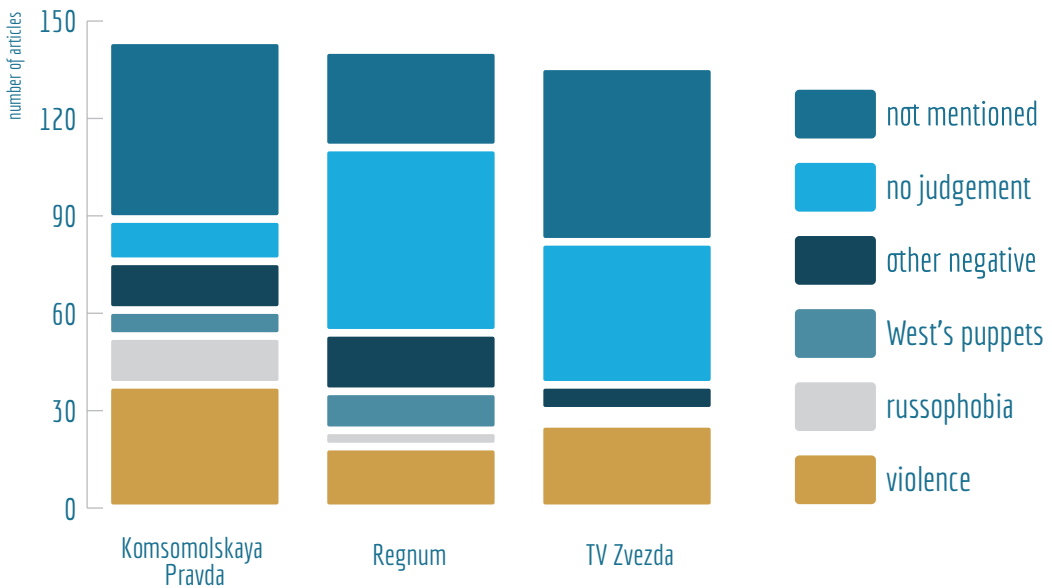


Figure 13. Attitude of the articles towards USA/NATO - most mentioned

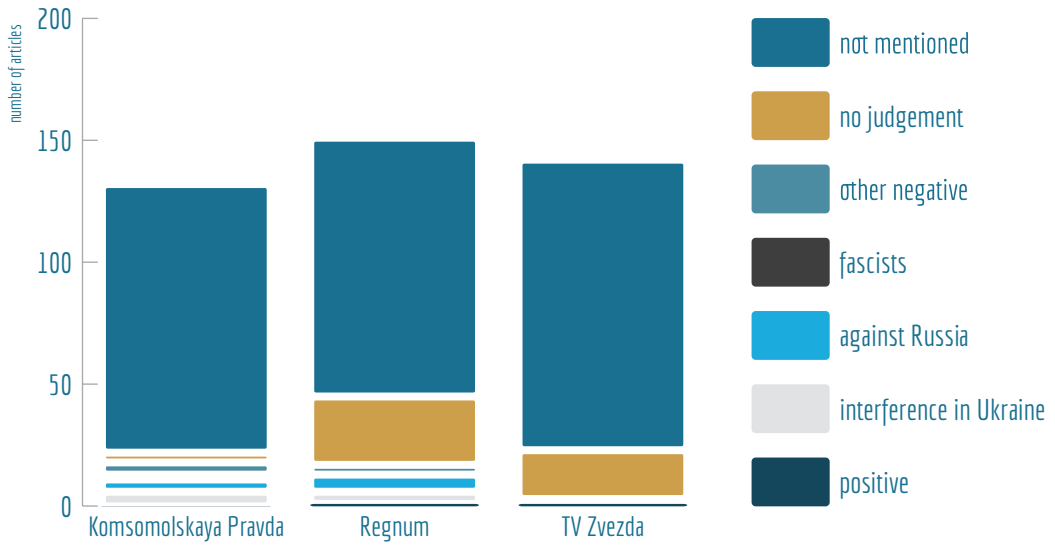


Figure 14. Attitude of the articles towards Europe/EU - most mentioned

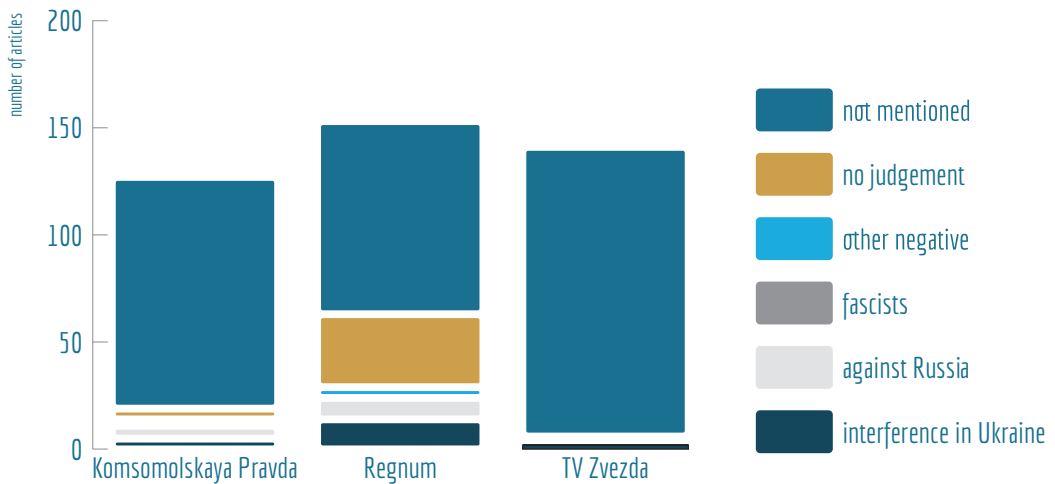


Figure 15. Attitude of the articles towards the West as a whole - most mentioned

Interestingly, the **USA/NATO**, which are depicted as the major Western adversaries, are treated roughly the same way throughout the entire period under research. No significant change in tonality towards the USA/NATO can be observed throughout the four phases.

5.3. KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA

Komsomolskaya Pravda is still well respected among the Russian audience and is very influential not only in Russia, but has also in Ukraine (especially in Eastern Ukraine), Moldova, Belarus, and in other countries with large Russian diasporas, including the Baltic States.¹⁶⁸ It is published in altogether 53 countries: 11 in the CIS and 42 in the rest of the world.¹⁶⁹ The overall circulation of the entire *Komsomolskaya Pravda* Publishing House comprises 46.1 million copies per month; the kp.ru web portal is visited by more than 20 million people a month.¹⁷⁰ The headquarters of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* are located in Moscow, but it has several offices across the country. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* gathers information through its own correspondents, affiliated agencies, and partners.¹⁷¹ Importantly, the ranks of ‘journalists’ working for *Komsomolskaya Pravda* have historically included numerous spies from the Soviet intelligence services and the KGB, especially during Soviet times. Even in the 1990s, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* had about a dozen foreign correspondents, of whom only one was not related to the intelligence services.¹⁷²

In total, the research comprised 128 articles examined using the coding manual. The majority of articles were news stories, followed by statements, but there were also many opinion pieces, interviews and reportages.

Komsomolskaya Pravda, like *Regnum*, often refers to soft propaganda mechanisms and methods, but it relies more heavily on aggressive and emotional rhetoric incriminating the Ukrainian state, its army and army volunteers in different crimes and misdeeds—e.g. crimes against humanity, genocide, international terrorism, torturing and murdering civilians, as well as chauvinism, the discrimination of Russian-speaking people, nationalism, xenophobia, and fascism. The most frequent negative narrative used by *Komsomolskaya Pravda* associated the Ukrainian government with violence and terrorism against its people. The Ukrainian government was

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168 see Комсомольская Правда <http://www.kp.ru>; Комсомольская Правда в Украине, www.kp.ua; Комсомольская Правда: Северная Европа www.kompravda.eu; Комсомольская Правда в Молдове, <http://www.kp.md>

169 <http://advert.kp.ru/Files/20150901122913.pdf>. However, the list of CIS countries also includes the Georgian breakaway territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, recognised as independent by Russia.

170 See <http://www.kp.ru/about/>, see also <http://www.chel.kp.ru/daily/24213.4/416227/>; http://mediaguide.ru/?p=house&house_id=04

171 АО «ИД «Комсомольская правда». <http://www.kp.ru> (5.07.2015)

172 Earley 2009, 244.

accused of ordering the killing of Russian-speaking people in *KP* news stories, and genocide was referred to as the Ukrainian state policy. For example, one article describes how the Investigations Committee of the Russian Federation started a criminal case against the Ukrainian armed forces, which had killed over 2,500 civilians.¹⁷³ Another article stated that *'the Ukrainian TV channel Hromadske TV announces the planned killing of at least 1.5 million Novorossiysans'*.¹⁷⁴

The ranks of 'journalists' working for Komsomolskaya Pravda have historically included numerous spies from the Soviet intelligence services and the KGB, especially during Soviet times.

During the entire year of 2014, especially since the annexation of Crimea in April 2014, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* continuously depicted the Ukrainian government and politicians, governmental organisations, the defence forces and its volunteers as Russophobes, Nazis, liars, and criminals.¹⁷⁵ The West (the USA, NATO, and Europe) is sometimes, but not often, referred to as fascists trying to annihilate the Russian World who use the Ukrainians as puppets in the global information and economic war against Russia. Sometimes *Komsomolskaya Pravda* gives negative information about NATO's 'interventions' and 'provocations' in the Donbass conflict and in Ukraine generally.¹⁷⁶ Maidan and the conflict in Donbass are allegedly nothing more than Western provocations against Russia. Other times, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* chooses a Western country and then creates an illusion of this country being directly involved in the Ukrainian crisis—for

173 А. Гришин. Обыкновенный геноцид: «Высшее руководство Украины приказывало уничтожать русскоязычных». *Комсомольская Правда*, 29.09.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26288.5/3166244/>

174 О.Рёснес. Укро-нацистский лохотрон. – *Комсомольская Правда*, 2.09.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26276/3154284>

175 А. Панкин. Активист «болотного движения», вернувшись с Украины: «Ты как знаешь, Леша, но это реальный фашизм» - «Комсомольская правда». 30.09. 2014. <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26288/3166866>

176 Виктория ДЭ. Спецкор «КП»: В ДНР не желают видеть у себя солдат НАТО, Радио «Комсомольская правда», 7.10.2014 <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26291.5/3169107/>; Андрей Баранов. Раскроют ли США «военный зонтик» над Украиной? «Комсомольская правда», 28.07.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26261.5/3140138/> Морская пехота США высадилась в Киеве. – *Комсомольская правда*, 26.02.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26200.4/3086371/>

example Sweden ‘sent soldiers to Ukraine near Poltava’.¹⁷⁷ This is a reference to the famous battle of Poltava that took place on 27 June 1709 near Poltava (Ukraine). This was a decisive Russian victory over the Swedish army during the Great Northern War (1700-1721).

Komsomolskaya Pravda pays close attention to the **Ukrainian government**, usually in a negative way. Roughly one quarter of the articles from the entire data sample showed the Ukrainian government as illegitimate and corrupt. Kyiv is labelled as junta together with the Ukrainian army, and the army leaders are pictured as blind followers of the junta.

Another popular topic is the misdeeds, crimes, inefficiency, and incapability of the **Ukrainian armed forces, volunteers, and their commanders**. Numerous articles in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* refer to violence, e.g. against people of Donbass. Many articles deal with executions, killings and the torture of Russian-speaking people by Ukrainian forces and volunteers.¹⁷⁸

More than 10 per cent of the whole data sample portrayed the Ukrainian government and armed forces as fascists or Nazis.

The Ukrainian army is often associated with the Nazis and their war crimes, and depicted as execution squads (*‘karатели’*) who rape and kill women, children, etc.¹⁷⁹

Komsomolskaya Pravda continuously depicted the Ukrainian government and politicians, the defence forces and its volunteers as Russophobes, Nazis, liars, and criminals.

177 М. Архангельский. Шведские солдаты отправляются под Полтаву? - Комсомольская правда 15.05.2015. <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26381/3259838/>

178 E.g. А. Коц. «Били тупой стороной топора по почкам...» Западная правозащитная организация обнародовала факты зверств в Донбассе карателей из батальона «Айдар». – Комсомольская правда, 24.09.2014. <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26286/3164117/>

179 E.g. В лагере карателей под Донецком нашли тела зверски убитых женщин <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26285/3163684/> А.Новикова. Ополченцы: В районе дислокации батальона Нацгвардии пропали без вести почти 400 женщин. «Комсомольская правда». 31.10.14 <http://www.kp.ru/online/news/1885285/>; В. Сборщикова. В Донецке каратели убили двоих детей на школьном стадионе – Комсомольская правда. 6.11.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26304.4/3182699/>

An article concerning the Ukrainian subunit Tornado establishing a 360 degree defence calls Ukrainian soldiers Nazis-perverts (see Picture 3).¹⁸⁰ Ukrainian soldiers are also portrayed as homosexuals who do not want to fight in battles.

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2015

УКРАИНСКИЙ КРИЗИС

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Александр БОЙКО @AlexBoykoKP

Аа+

Нацисты-извращенцы из украинского подразделения "Торнадо" заняли круговую оборону



Руслан Онищенко. Фото: соцсети

Picture 3. 'Nazis-perverts of the Ukrainian subunit Tornado established a 360 degree defence' (Source: Komsomolskaya Pravda)

The humiliation and belittling of Ukrainian soldiers and their leaders is common. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* journalists often call the Ukrainian army and their volunteers criminals, rapists, drug addicts, alcoholics, robbers,

180 А. Бойко. Нацисты-извращенцы из украинского подразделения «Торнадо» заняли круговую оборону. - Комсомольская правда 19.06.2014 <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26395.4/3272387/>

and cowards who taunt and torture women, children, and the elderly.¹⁸¹ The Ukrainian armed forces are pictured as revolting due to grave conditions in the army.¹⁸² One article claims that *'The moral conditions of the Ukrainian army make us more and more concerned. But the moral condition of army authorities is laughter through tears'*.¹⁸³ *Komsomolskaya Pravda* attempts to show that the Ukrainian army is governed by violence and chaos, hunger and illnesses. During the escalation of the conflict in Donbass, especially before the mobilisation of Ukrainians, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* regularly published news of deserters from the Ukrainian army, hundreds and thousands of soldiers leaving the army *en masse* to go to the Russian side.¹⁸⁴

Komsomolskaya Pravda refers to opinions regarding to the Ukrainian crisis from different European countries, also from Eastern Europe (including former Soviet republics). The style is rather emotional especially in statements, reportages and opinion pieces. *KP* opinion pieces are pro-Russian. Zakharchenko and Igor Girkin (Strelkov), leaders of the so-called 'People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk', receive very favourable treatment. Along with the separatist combatants they are described as heroes fighting against the evil Nazis and terrorists.

The majority of news, statements, reports, and interviews in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* are loaded with strong judgement and play on emotions. Most of them are written in a relatively simple manner, using primitive propaganda methods. The share of neutral-looking articles that do not include direct accusations is quite low—less than 15 per cent. However, some of the neutral-looking articles still manage to take an implicitly negative stance. Several articles present opinion pieces by different experts, analysts and politicians from Russia, Ukraine and the West in order to increase the authority of the content. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* sometimes refers to criticism against Ukraine by respected Western outlets.

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181 e.g. В. Баранец. «Комсомолка» узнала имена фронтовиков, которых ограбили украинские солдаты - Комсомольская правда. 26.9.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26287/3165405/>; В. Дэ. Украинская армия открыла огонь по своим же солдатам. – Комсомольская правда. 17.10.2014 <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26296/3174231>

182 В украинской армии начались бунты. – Комсомольская правда. 23.04.2014 <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26223/3106716>

183 В украинской армии начались бунты. – Комсомольская правда. 23.04.2014 <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26223/3106716>

184 Д. Стешин. Снова бои под Донецком: армия Украины перешла в отступление. – Комсомольская правда, 3.6.2014 <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26389/3267064/>

“
The majority of news, statements, reports, and interviews in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* are loaded with strong judgement and play on emotions, using primitive propaganda methods.
”

When military operations were in an active phase (battle of Ilovaysk, in Donetsk airport, Mariupol etc.) and also in the case of MH17 or when Ukrainians started mobilisation, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* became more active in its usage of aggressive rhetoric against the Ukrainian army, volunteers, and government, in order to create panic or hysteria among the Russian-speaking audience in Ukraine, but also in Russia.

No doubt, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* is a powerful instrument of Russia's information warfare and has played an important role in spreading anti-Ukrainian views. This was also confirmed by several Ukrainian media experts, with whom interviews were carried out in May 2015 in Kyiv.¹⁸⁵

5.4. I.A. REGNUM

The *Regnum News Agency* is a Russian non-governmental federal information agency, which gathers information through its own correspondents, affiliated agencies and partners. They focus on news from Russia and its so-called near abroad.¹⁸⁶ According to *LiveInternet.ru*, the monthly audience is more than 4.3 million people.¹⁸⁷ Vigen Akopyan, the former editor-in-chief of *Regnum*, has declared that the agency will oppose Russian investments in any country, whose politics are hostile to Russia or which support the rehabilitation of fascism.¹⁸⁸ *Regnum* is also known for its anti-Baltics activity. For example, in 2010 it published a memorandum of the principles of Russia's politics towards Estonia.¹⁸⁹ The aim of the memorandum was to persuade the Russian government to continue its

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185 See more in Chapter 6. Russia's Information Warfare against Ukraine II: Influences on the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Based on Interviews in Ukraine

186 Regnum – информационное агентство. <http://www.regnum.ru/information/about/>

187 See more <http://www.liveinternet.ru/stat/regnum.ru/>

188 Информагентство «Регнум» не станет рекламировать Эстонию даже за деньги. 15.07.2012. [Baltija.eu. http://baltija.eu/news/read/25568](http://baltija.eu/news/read/25568) (

189 Общественный Меморандум о принципах политики России в отношении Эстонии (январь 2010). 15.01.2010. <http://www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1243064.html>

anti-Estonian policy (for a more detailed overview see the 2010 Yearbook of the Estonian Security Police). The memorandum accused the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the attempts to improve their relations with Estonia, Russian businessmen being mostly to blame for that. It required the maintenance of its strict foreign policy. The aggressive style of *Regnum* towards Estonia continued afterwards.¹⁹⁰

Nonetheless, the style used by *Regnum* is more restrained compared with the style of newspapers and they use also Ukrainian and Western sources for balancing Russian and pro-Russian channels in their routine work of news-building. There are no colourful metaphors for labelling the Ukrainian armed forces – just *siloviki*¹⁹¹ is probably most frequently used for indicating the Ukrainian fighters in the Eastern Ukraine. *Regnum* usually refers to soft propaganda mechanisms, which puts emphasis on facts and does not provoke emotions. In total, the research involved 148 articles; the majority of them were news or news related to statements made by somebody on the Ukrainian crisis. The minority of articles were opinion pieces, interviews and reportages. They continue to follow the Ukrainian events on a normal basis, not focusing its special attention on the Ukrainian crisis.

The majority of news is given without judgement. *Regnum* often refers to opinions from different Eastern European countries (including former Soviet republics) regarding the Ukrainian crisis. They paid attention to the attitudes especially in Poland, Baltic countries, Moldova and Georgia. The style of certain authors is emotionally loaded in opinion pieces. Opinion pieces are overwhelmingly pro-Russian or at least neutral and do not demonstrate criticism towards the Russian government.

Regnum also turns to Ukrainian and Western analysts that have critical views of the Ukrainian authorities or experts from other CIS countries that may produce opinions favourable for Russia. However, in the opinion-building *Regnum* usually avoids direct disparagement of opponents. There can be found indirect belittling, which makes the Ukrainian authorities responsible for the violence and human catastrophe in the Eastern Ukraine and describes the Ukrainian crisis as a conflict between the Western and Russian civilisation, where the Ukrainian authorities are the puppets of the West. At the same time, *Regnum* avoids calling the Ukrainian authorities and armed forces fascists or criminals, or using other extreme expressions to describe them. Military activities (i.e. battles, direct clashes between armed units) are usually given fact-based without judgement.

Local news often describes the situation in different places of Ukraine,

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190 Kaitsepolitsei aastaraamat 2013, 9; Kaitsepolitsei aastaraamat 2010, 8-9.

191 'persons of force', representatives of the security or military services

including Crimea and the so-called Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk. Moreover, *Regnum* often produces news, how Ukrainian war refugees have been settled in Russia and other humanitarian issues related to the crisis.

5.5. TV ZVEZDA

TV Zvezda is a nationwide Russian TV network owned by the Russian Ministry of Defence. Therefore, it was of special interest for this research project. Although primarily a TV channel, the study analysed the online news published on the *TV Zvezda* website. Altogether 142 articles were analysed.

Similarly to *Regnum*, the style used by *TV Zvezda* is more restrained compared to *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in terms of portraying the crisis. The vast majority of the articles were news stories as opposed to a wider selection of genres in the two other outlets. As news stories, the articles were heavily present-centred with less than 5% of the stories referring to past events. Although the Russian information campaigns often rely on drawing parallels between Ukraine and Nazi Germany, these associations were largely missing in *TV Zvezda*, whether referring to past events or describing the Ukrainian government, army, or army leadership. Although the term *karатели* (execution squads) was sometimes used, the frequency was low. The most negatively loaded expression commonly used for the Ukrainian army was *siloviki*.

Another feature characteristic of *TV Zvezda* is a significantly more thorough geographical contextualisation of the stories in terms of frequency. While *Komsomolskaya Pravda* remained rather Ukraine-centred, then *TV Zvezda* and *Regnum* also included the West as a counterpart into their information campaigns. The latter was done mostly by referring to events, speeches, and statements from the international arena—the USA, NATO, the UN—which also included the topic of the West providing financial or military support for Ukraine.

Regardless of whether the content was factually correct, the format of news stories included references to different sources. In comparison with the other two outlets, references to political figures and institutions were used more often, but official documents were not referred to at all. While the articles and sources quoted by *TV Zvezda* remained stylistically reserved, more colourful descriptions and negative judgements were brought in when occasionally quoting civilians. On the political level, bolder statements about Ukraine appeared when

referring to statements made by Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov or Russian diplomats in the international arena. John Kerry and Anders Fogh Rasmussen were the most often mentioned figures from the West; this mostly happened in the context of the alleged interference of the USA/NATO in Ukraine. While *TV Zvezda* refrains from openly attacking high-level politicians, it does allow a considerably more critical approach when it

comes to statements made by spokespersons for different institutions. For example, US State Department spokesperson Marie Harf is readily described as making unfounded accusations against Russia on the subject of war crimes.¹⁹²

When it comes to portraying different groups of adversaries—Ukrainian military and government institutions, and the West—*TV Zvezda* adopted a subtle method of conveying its messages. *TV Zvezda* mostly targets the Ukrainian armed forces and the government as ‘enemies’ within Ukraine. The Ukrainian army leadership does not appear in almost any of the stories. Half of the articles dealing with the Ukrainian army and government convey negative attitudes, mostly associating them with various acts of violence and terrorism within the country. The remainder of the stories simply describe events without any explicit judgement, thus seemingly leaving it to the readers to draw conclusions for themselves. At first glance, the news stories seem to follow the logic of solid journalistic production—referring to sources, avoiding the extravagant display of emotions, using reserved language. Nevertheless, when looked upon as a whole, the anti-Ukrainian stance becomes apparent.

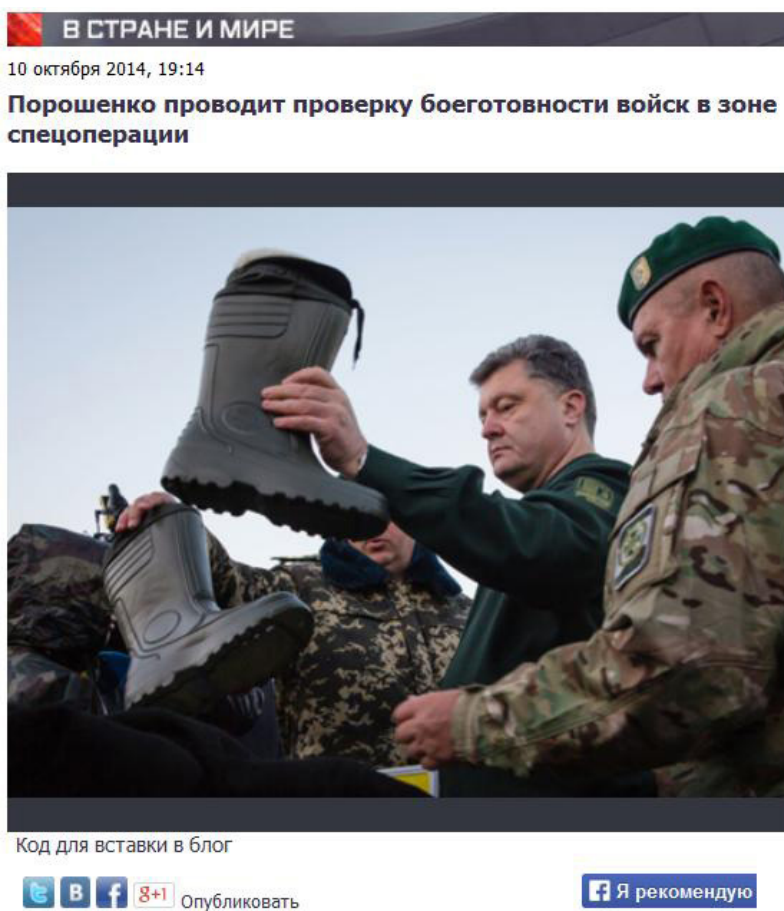
Also, *TV Zvezda* has its ways of ‘helping’ the reader reach an anti-Ukrainian point of view. One of the ways is choice of illustrative photos. For instance, a



TV Zvezda has its ways of ‘helping’ the reader reach an anti-Ukrainian point of view. One of the ways is choice of illustrative photos.

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192 Звезда. (2014). Госдеп США безосновательно обвинил Россию в военном преступлении. 26 июля. http://tvzvezda.ru/news/vstrane_i_mire/content/201407260011-1tmz.htm

news story with a headline about Poroshenko checking the readiness of the troops in the special operations zones is paired with a photograph showing Poroshenko holding a pair of rubber boots (see Picture 4).¹⁹³ As a result, the article can easily succeed in giving a discrediting impression of Ukraine – whether targeted specifically at the military supplies of the army, the ability of Poroshenko or the Ukrainian government to provide that to the troops, or contributing generally to the overall negative tonality.



Президент Украины Петр Порошенко начал проверку боеготовности силовиков в зоне спецоперации. Об этом сообщает пресс-служба администрации украинского президента 10 октября.

Picture 4. 'Poroshenko checking the military preparedness of troops in the special operations zone' (Source: TV Zvezda)

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 193 Звезда. (2014). Порошенко проводит проверку боеготовности войск в зоне спецоперации. 10 октября. http://tvzvezda.ru/news/vstrane_i_mire/content/201410101914-yjur.htm

Another example is choosing a title that implies far-reaching conclusions than the content of the story that follows justifies. For example, an article is published under the headline ‘German troops preparing to be deployed to Ukraine’ (see Picture 5).¹⁹⁴ Upon reading the article it becomes clear that ‘Germans troops’ means 200 soldiers securing OSCE observers according to the Minsk agreements. Nevertheless, before reading to understand, the reader may have already imagined something significantly more large-scale.

В СТРАНЕ И МИРЕ

4 октября 2014, 01:42

Германские войска готовятся к отправке на Украину



Код для вставки в блог





 Опубликовать


 Я рекомендую

Германские войска будут вскоре отправлены на восток Украины. Речь идёт о десантном подразделении численностью в 200 солдат. Они будут обеспечивать безопасность наблюдателей ОБСЕ, которые, согласно минскими договоренностям, должны мониторить соблюдение режима прекращения огня в 30-километровой «буферной зоне» конфликта. Об этом пишет газета Bild.

Picture 5. ‘German troops preparing to be deployed to Ukraine’ (Source: TV Zvezda)

194 Звезда. (2014). Германские войска готовятся к отправке на Украину. 4 октября. http://tvzvezda.ru/news/vstrane_i_mire/content/201410040212-8ujh.htm

Another subtle way of constructing a negative image of the Ukrainian army is to report a brutal crime against innocent people and then casually mention that a Ukrainian army base happens to be located in the same town (see Picture 6).¹⁹⁵ Indeed, technically the article does not accuse anyone but it does require a conscious effort in critical thinking on behalf of the reader not to associate these two separate statements.



За последнее время в районе города Красноармейска Донецкой области были обнаружены тела 286 женщин. Об этом со ссылкой на премьер-министра самопровозглашенной Донецкой Народной Республики Александра Захарченко сообщает РИА Новости. Всего пропавшими без вести на территории ДНР числились 400 человек в возрасте от 18 до 25 лет.

Picture 6. 'Bodies of 286 women found near Krasnoarmeysk' (Source: TV Zvezda)

195 Звезда. (2014). Тела 286 женщин обнаружены под Красноармейском. 31 октября. http://tvzvezda.ru/news/vstrane_i_mire/content/201410311222-k3zy.htm.

The main body of the article says: 'Bodies of 286 women were recently found in a district of the Krasnoarmeysk town in the Donetsk oblast. This was reported by RIA Novosti with reference to the Prime Minister of the self-proclaimed People's Republic of Donetsk Alexander Zakharchenko. Altogether, 400 people aged 18 to 25 have been reported missing on the territory of DPR. 'Nearly 400 women aged 18 to 25 years went missing in Krasnoarmeysk, where the battalion 'Dnepr-1' is quartered. 286 bodies of women were found around Krasnoarmeysk raped', - the agency quotes Zakharchenko. '

When it comes to constructing an image of the West, it is mostly the US and NATO that are depicted as the enemy. Europe and the EU do not figure nearly as much and references to the West as a whole are rare. Interestingly, while *TV Zvezda* is the most thorough of the three media outlets analysed in terms of geographic contextualisation, it does not argue that the West intentionally stages provocations against Russia as *Regnum* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* do on occasion. *TV Zvezda* mostly argues that the USA/NATO are interfering in Ukrainian matters.

5.6. SOCIAL MEDIA

Despite the Facebook study being based on a single public group, *Национально-Освободительное Движение* (National Liberation Movement), it revealed interesting results and highlighted questions for potential future research. The National Liberation Movement unites political forces who support the ‘territorial integrity of Russia’ and whose aim is to ‘re-establish the sovereignty lost in 1991’.¹⁹⁶

Level of public engagement in debates

Despite the popular assumption that the almighty Facebook and Russian troll factories rule the hearts and minds of people simply due to the massive influx of information, our results provide arguments for more research into the actual reception and influence of these messages. For example, one of the initially unexpected results of the study was the lack of public engagement and passivity of the group. Although the frequency of new postings in the group was relatively high, the number of individuals actually writing posts in the data sample was very limited and relied mostly on a few activists even though the study looked at postings from almost every day. In most cases the posts were also limited to sharing photos, videos, and links from other sources. The number of original texts was very small. Furthermore, the reaction from other members in the group remained passive. More than half of the posts received no comments or likes. Only about 10% of the posts under scrutiny received any comments at all. Less than half of all posts received any likes, and those that did, got a maximum of two or three. Whether or not it was orchestrated by trolls, the group seemed to serve as a channel for a top-down flow of information. Since these messages did not engage the audience in any immediate visible way, the possible long-term impact of these information activities could depend mostly on the repetition of certain messages.

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196 <http://rusnod.ru/index/o-dvizhenii/>

The content of the information activities

Considering the aims of the National Liberation Movement, the messages in the group were unsurprisingly mostly contextualised around the clash between Russia and West, the Ukraine crisis being the most acute example. The list of topics was topped by Russia and the West, and followed by the combat and terror activities perpetrated by the Ukrainian government (for a set of more extravagant examples of these topics, see Pictures 7-11). Topics focusing on separatists, including Crimea and Novorossiia, figured to a lesser extent. Although separatists were not high on the list of main topics, various other entities, such as the so-called Donetsk People's Republic, Donbass, and Novorossiia were still highly visible among posts mentioning different geographical/geopolitical locations.

The content of the posts relating to the Ukraine crisis was of a more general nature, providing overviews and generalised information, not focusing on specific events. For example, posts regarding the MH17 catastrophe and the Minsk peace talks were virtually non-existent. Similarly, almost no references were made to Maidan (or AntiMaidan). The study did not include the content of the videos or links shared.

Contrary to our expectations and similarly to the results of the online news analysis, the content of the Facebook posts was present-centred and references to historical events, especially to WWII, were rare. Less than 5% of the stories contained references to WWII. The same applied to the Soviet period and even the events related to the on-going crisis, such as the Vilnius summit or the annexation of Crimea. The sources referred to also reflect the present-centred stance of the stories; most often they cited either the Russian press or other social media sources. In the case of social media, YouTube videos were frequently cited (very often these were videos from other Russian or separatist news channels), *Vkontakte* also figured to a lesser extent. It is important to note that many of the videos were no longer available due to copyright issues or accounts being closed. Therefore, we can assume that at least some sort of countermeasures to Russian information warfare are being carried out.

When it comes to constructing the enemy, two categories emerged—Ukraine and the West. The Ukrainian government received much more attention than the Ukrainian armed forces or the army leadership. However, it is important to note that the share of posts mentioning the Ukraine government was only about one quarter of the overall amount of

posts. While the parallels with the WWII did not prevail in the stories when referring to past events, associations with the Nazis and Third Reich were often used to characterise the Ukrainian government. Two other common characterisations associated the Ukrainian government with violence (occupation, genocide, terrorism etc.) in Eastern Ukraine and portrayed the Kyiv government as puppets of the West, mostly the US. Articles referring to Ukraine as a failed state or defining Ukrainian statehood through Russia/the Soviet Union were largely non-existent. The Ukrainian armed forces were mostly associated with the war atrocities.

As for the West, it is mostly the USA/NATO that are identified as the enemy. Europe/EU figure considerably less, and generalisations about the Western world as the enemy are rare. Again, the share of stories actually dealing with any of these groups is not high. The USA/NATO figure in almost one quarter of the posts, the highest share overall. The USA/NATO were mostly depicted as engaging in confrontation with Russia or interfering in Ukraine, which was often regarded as indirect provocation of Russia. The most radical line of thought regarding the US was about its involvement in genocide against the Russian nationals in Eastern Ukraine.



Picture 7. 'Referendum in the East. Ukrainian media. Reality.' (Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1401189390165493&set=gm.309015822589221&type=1>)



Picture 8. 'Road to Donbass. Road from Donbass'. (Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1410177119266720&set=gm.314165772074226&type=1>)



Picture 9. Obama vs. Putin, 'freedom' vs. 'occupation' (Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=747957925286365&set=gm.392088527615283&type=1>)



Picture 10. 'Referendum for detaching the US from planet Earth. Repost if you agree.' (Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1489749131309518&set=gm.401719373318865&type=1>)



Picture 11. The USA did not leave the British Empire entirely legally. (Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1414239628860469&set=gm.318447504979386&type=1>)

6. RUSSIA'S INFORMATION WARFARE AGAINST UKRAINE II:

INFLUENCES ON THE ARMED FORCES OF UKRAINE

V. Sazonov and I. Kopõtin

This chapter presents the findings from 24 interviews carried out by Vladimir Sazonov in Kyiv and Igor Kopõtin in Kyiv, Dnepropetrovsk, and Eastern Ukraine (also in conflict zone) during May and June 2015.

Vladimir Sazonov focused on civilians—media, political, and security experts, journalists and politicians, as well as advisors for the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine, and experts in strategic communication and information policy.

Igor Kopõtin interviewed mostly people with a military background—officers, volunteers, members of the Ukrainian army, the National University of Defence of Ukraine, and the Ministry of Defence—some of whom had participated in battles in the Donbass region (see Table 2 for more information).

INTERVIEWEE	POSITION	DATE	PLACE	INTERVIEWER
Alina Frolova	Advisor to Deputy Minister, Strategic Communication Specialist, Ministry of Defence of Ukraine/ Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine	26.05.2015	Kyiv	V.Sazonov
Dr. habil. Mykhailo Minakov	Associate Professor, University of Kyiv-Mohyla. Editor-in-chief, Ideology and Politics Journal; President, Foundation for Good Politics, Director of Krytyka Institute	26.05.2015	Kyiv	V.Sazonov

INTERVIEWEE	POSITION	DATE	PLACE	INTERVIEWER
Anna Honcharyk	International Outreach Coordinator, Ukraine Crisis Media Centre	26.05.2015	Kyiv	V.Sazonov
Dmytro Kuleba	Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine	27.05.2015	Kyiv	V.Sazonov
Tetyana Lebedeva	Honorary Head, Independent Association of Broadcasters	27.05.2015	Kyiv	V.Sazonov
Tatyana Popova	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine	27.05.2015	Kyiv	V.Sazonov
Oleksiy Melnik	Director, Foreign Relations and International Security Programmes	28.05.2015	Kyiv	V.Sazonov
Alya Shandra	Managing Editor, Translator, and Coordinator at Euromaidan Press	28.05.2015	Kyiv	V.Sazonov
Vitalii Moroz	Head of New Media Department, Internews Ukraine	28.05.2015	Kyiv	V.Sazonov
Dr. Iaroslav Kovalchuk	Head of Internal Policy Department, International Centre for Policy Studies	28.05. 2015	Kyiv	V.Sazonov
Anatolii Oktysiuk	Political Expert, International Centre for Policy Studies	29. 05.2015	Kyiv	V.Sazonov
dr. Yevhen Fedchenko	Director, Mohyla School of Journalism, The National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy; Co-founder of stopfake.org	29. 05.2015	Kyiv	V.Sazonov
Sergey Vysotsky	Deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, member of the People's Front parliamentary faction. Deputy Chairman of the Department of the Verkhovna Rada for freedom of speech and information policy	29. 05.2015	Kyiv	V.Sazonov
Oleksandr Omelchuk	Former Chief of Staff of the former Governor of Donetsk Oblast Serhiy Taruta	25.06.2015	Kyiv	I.Kopōtin
Anonymous	Officers of the National University of Defence of Ukraine	25.06.2015	Kyiv	I.Kopōtin

INTERVIEWEE	POSITION	DATE	PLACE	INTERVIEWER
Anony- mous	Officers at the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine	26.06.2015	Kyiv	I.Kopõtin
Anony- mous	Volunteer corpus	26.06.2015	Kyiv	I.Kopõtin
Anony- mous	Head of the 5th Battalion of the Right Sector	27.06.2015	ATO	I.Kopõtin
Anony- mous	Advisor, Armed Forces of Ukraine	28.06.2015	Dnepropetro- vsk oblast, in field camp of Pokrovskoe	I.Kopõtin
Anony- mous	Colonel, Armed Forces of Ukraine	30.06.2015	Kyiv	I.Kopõtin

Table 4. List of interviewees

The interviews revealed how Russia endeavoured to harm the morale of Ukrainian soldiers and officers by using any and all available methods and techniques during the course of Russia's information and psychological war against the Armed Forces of Ukraine and its volunteer battalions in 2014.

Russia's intention was to destabilise the situation at the front in the Donbass region using specific messages/images to misinform Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel, the local population in Eastern Ukraine, and Ukrainians in general, causing chaos and panic.

The interviews confirm that the modern hybrid war in Ukraine is characterised by a plurality of InfoOps and PsyOps features; the key role being played by the media. In 2014, the most important instrument of Russian information and psychological warfare was television, but the Internet also played a significant part.

Russian propaganda goals¹⁹⁹

The main goal is to spread panic among Ukrainians, foster mistrust between the Ukrainian state and the Ukrainian army, and to demoralise the soldiers and their commanders.

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199 Based on interviews carried out by Sazonov and Kopõtin.

Target groups²⁰⁰

The Russian propaganda machine targets not only soldiers, but also their relatives and friends. The aim is to split families and other groups by taking advantage of and further exacerbating conflicts along the lines of ethnic, religious, sexual, linguistic, political, and regional identities. Identity plays an important role in influencing international relations; therefore it is not surprising that Russia exploits identity narratives to stir up conflict in Ukraine.

Most important channels²⁰¹

The following channels are often used in Russian information activities to achieve its aims in the Ukrainian conflict:

1. Russian national television channels (e.g. *LifeNews*, *Россия1*, *Россия24*, *Первый канал*, *НТВ*, *РЕН ТВ*). Although they are banned in Ukraine, it is possible to watch them via satellite.
1. Ukrainian TV channels (*Inter and Ukraina24*) that transmit messages that damage soldiers' morale.
2. Internet resources including traditional online media (e.g. *Komsomolskaya Pravda v Ukraine*), social media such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Odnoklassniki*, *Vkontakte (Vk.com)*, *LiveJournal (livejournal.com)*, *Liveinternet (li.ru)*, *YouTube*, *RuTube*.
3. Ukraine's pro-Russian newspapers, such as the Kyiv-based *Vesti*.
4. The separatists' information channels, such as *Новости Донецкой Республики*²⁰² and *Центральное информационное агентство Новороссии*²⁰³.
5. Russian radio channels that are freely transmitted in Ukrainian territory, e.g. *Radio Mayak*.
6. Mobile phone operators. The majority of mobile phone operators in Ukraine are under the direct or indirect control of Russian capital, e.g. *KyivStar* and *MTS (MTC)*.²⁰⁴
7. Loudspeakers and media players used for targeting Ukrainian soldiers and influencing their morale.

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200 Based on interviews carried out by Sazonov and Kopõtin.

201 Based on interviews carried out by Sazonov and Kopõtin.

202 <http://dnr-news.com/>

203 Novorus.info

204 Из России с любовью. Кому принадлежат украинские операторы.

8. Russian agents and spies—pro-Russian activists in Donbass who support Russian information activities against Ukraine.

The role of Russian TV in information activities against the Ukrainian armed forces²⁰⁵

According to the interviews, TV channels addressed to foreign and Russian-speaking audiences (such as RT [Russia Today], *Первый Общественный*, *Россия 1*, *Россия 2*, *HTB*, and *LifeNews*) broadcast relentless propaganda against the Ukrainian defence forces until 2014, when they were banned in Ukraine. However, although they are banned in Ukraine as cable TV, they can still be watched via satellite. Moreover, these channels continue to be highly relevant for the Donbass region and in Crimea.

After the Ukrainian TV channels were banned in the occupied territories, it was possible to get information from mainly Russian and local separatists' channels. Several propaganda-oriented channels that were founded as online news portals have now become influential TV channels, *LifeNews* in particular.²⁰⁶

The role of Ukrainian TV in information activities against the Ukrainian Armed Forces

According to interviews with Ukrainian military personnel, some Ukrainian channels with pro-Russian tendencies, such as *Inter*, showed demoralised prisoners of war, reluctant mobilised reservists and poorly maintained facilities. The distribution of such content is detrimental to the reputation of the Ukrainian Army soldiers (reservists) and the confidence of their families. Ukrainian reservists and regular forces are particularly sensitive to Russian and pro-Russian separatist propaganda. Volunteer battalions are less sensitive and they are more motivated and more informed about Russian propaganda.²⁰⁷

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205 Based on interviews carried out by Sazonov and Kopõtin.

206 Interview with Moroz, carried out by Sazonov.

207 Based on interviews carried out by Kopõtin.

Control of TV and radio towers

According to officials and advisers of the Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine and media experts interviewed, the control of TV and radio towers was an important method Russia used to support its information activities. When a group of separatist militants captured a city or town, one of the first steps taken was to occupy the local radio and TV towers. After that Ukrainian TV and radio channels were immediately turned off in that area and Russian channels were broadcast.²⁰⁸

The role of the Internet²⁰⁹

Our interviewees considered the Internet to be a highly influential propaganda tool. Social media is especially influential, but various portals, websites, and online media outlets also play a role. Dr. Yevhen Fedchenko said that a large number of websites and portals were created in 2014 and the Russian media began to refer to them regularly. These newly created portals and websites referenced prestigious Russian media outlets and agencies (e.g. *ITAR TASS*,²¹⁰ *RIA Novosti*,²¹¹ *Regnum*,²¹² *TV Zvezda*,²¹³ *Komsomolskaya Pravda*²¹⁴) in order to appear as having greater authority and reliability.²¹⁵

This way, a special kind of ‘ecosystem’ was created where members of the system refer to each other, thereby multiplying the number of messages, news, and other information. This was done in order to manufacture an information bubble and make it more difficult to gain access to more factual news sources. For example, when someone was searching for something specific in Google, then large volumes of references to certain types of messages and news would immediately appear. Trolls also played a significant role in trying to bring misinformation to the social media sites Ukrainian soldiers were using.²¹⁶

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208 Interview with Popova, carried out by Sazonov.

209 Based on interviews carried out Sazonov.

210 <http://tass.ru/en>

211 <http://ria.ru/>

212 <http://regnum.ru/>

213 <http://tvzvezda.ru/>

214 <http://kp.ru>

215 Based on interviews carried out by Sazonov

216 Based on interviews carried out by Sazonov

The trolls mainly spread the same ideas that were communicated by the other media channels, e.g. they claimed that the Ukrainian army was falling apart and fleeing, and the Ukrainian government or the military leadership had betrayed their soldiers.²¹⁷

Media expert Tetyana Lebedeva said that during the first months of the conflict many local people fell into depression because of such panic-inducing and frightening information.²¹⁸

a) The role of rumours and stories in social media

Panic stories were also distributed *en masse* on the frontlines. Local populations and Facebook messages played an important role in distributing such rumours and stories. As a result, Ukrainians were compelled to abandon a number of villages without a fight. Rumours or ‘news’ such as ‘Enemy forces are approaching.’ or ‘Russian tanks are coming.’ spread faster via social media than through the formal chain of command. Ukrainian soldiers were not aware that they were helping to distribute these rumours, especially when they returned home and told their friends about their frontline experiences, also a cause of dangerous information leakages.²¹⁹

b) The role of YouTube and other video portals in information activities against the Ukrainian Armed Forces

YouTube was used to show video clips of broken or abandoned Ukrainian army equipment, dead Ukrainian military personnel, prisoners of war and their poor treatment, and other content to harm morale.²²⁰

The role of mobile phone operators in information activities against the Ukrainian Armed Forces

Panic and fear were spread via mobile phone operators as a part of the Russian psychological operations. The most widely used operator in the anti-terrorist operations (ATO) region is *KyivStar*, belonging to Russian businessmen. Information centres in so-called ‘Novorossiya’ would register the phone numbers of people who visited the ATO area. They began to send text messages with content such as: ‘Soldier, go home if you want to live.’

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217 Interview with Fedchenko, carried out by Sazonov

218 Interview with Lebedeva, carried out by Sazonov

219 Based on interviews carried out by Kopõtin.

220 Based on interviews carried out by Kopõtin.

‘Welcome to the territory of Donetsk People’s Republic.’ ‘Your generals are cowards and liars.’ ‘Your commanders have escaped, because they know that the war is already lost.’ ‘You are alone and nobody will help you.’²²¹

The phone numbers of family members and friends are similarly used. Examples of messages that have been sent include: ‘Your son is a prisoner of war.’ or ‘Your husband is dead.’ Sometimes separatists called officers in the ATO area and tried to intimidate them. The network of separatist agents used the same scheme.²²² For example, when the battles were under Debaltsevo (in July 2014 and later, in January-February 2015) this strategy of calling or sending SMS was actively used. During the intense phase of the battles, Ukrainian soldiers also received messages such as: ‘Your commanders have fled.’ or ‘The Ukrainian army will flee.’²²³

Loudspeakers and reproducers²²⁴

According to the officials of the Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine and media experts, another effective way to get people quickly and effectively under control in the Donbass area is to use the loudspeakers - a technique actively used during the Second World War. Information transmitted through loudspeakers to Ukrainian soldiers on the front lines reduces their willingness to wage war and influences their morale. Loudspeakers accentuate the idea that members of the Ukrainian government and army commanders are traitors and liars who have sent Ukrainian troops to their death and left them there. And since the Russian military machine is so powerful, they all will die soon.²²⁵

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221 Based on interviews carried out by Kopõtin

222 Based on interviews carried out by Kopõtin.

223 Interview with Kuleba, carried out by Sazonov.

224 Based on interviews carried out by Sazonov.

225 Interview with Popova, carried out by Sazonov.

The role of FSB, GRU, Russian saboteurs, spies, agents of influences and pro-Russian activists²²⁶

A widespread and effective network of Russian agents connected to the GRU²²⁷ and FSB²²⁸ was created in the Donbass region even before the outbreak of the military conflict. They began to spread information to create panic, fear and hatred. The psychological influencing of people was carried out in a highly methodological and systemic manner. With the support of local agents, the Russian information activities in Donbass area had begun already many years before the actual conflict broke out in Donbass. Local Communist functionaries and pro-Russian activists played an important role in that. Based on its network of agents, separatists monitor the distribution of newspapers in the ATO region.²²⁹

When the intensive phase of the conflict began, Eastern Ukraine had already become susceptible to Russian propaganda, and groups of saboteurs and spies were brought there. This was done actively and vigorously at an earlier stage, particularly during the war. Russia had sent its spies and groups of saboteurs to the Donbass region with approximately thirty to forty people in each group. They were professional and experienced intelligence officers (saboteurs, spies), who were sent to Eastern Ukraine to destabilise the situation and carry out information activities, as well as military tactical tasks.²³⁰

What did such operations look like? One example among several how the operation was carried out in 2014 in Eastern Ukraine took the following form. Saboteurs, spies (Russian 'diversants'), and intelligence officers arrived in a certain location and were accompanied by trained journalists (usually two). One journalist specialised in military issues and the second dealt with civilian issues. They began to fabricate certain 'necessary' situations and then made a video that was immediately uploaded to *YouTube* or other social media.²³¹

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226 Based on interviews carried out by Sazonov and Kopõtin.

227 Main Intelligence Directorate (Главное разведывательное управление).

228 The Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB) (Федеральная служба безопасности Российской Федерации).

229 Interview with Vysotsky, carried out by Sazonov.

230 Interview with Vysotsky, carried out by Sazonov.

231 Interview with Vysotsky, carried out by Sazonov.

These ‘reports’ were shown on television both in Russia and Ukraine. *LifeNews* in particular indulged in forwarding them, as well as Russian channels such as *NTV* and others. Typical images/messages included the Donbass people rebelling against the Ukrainian fascists and execution squads; the Kyiv junta has ordered troops to kill Russians, torture civilians in Donbass, etc. This operation was coordinated by a group leader who was a professional saboteur, and spies with significant experience in military operations who received instructions from an FSB coordinator. The leader of this group had at least two important numbers in his mobile phone. One was the number of the FSB coordinator, who was responsible for the region and local agents. Both the FSB coordinator and the group leader coordinated their work and tried to recruit local people. Many of the local groups of the so-called militants were ready to help and were just waiting for instructions from the coordinator. The other number was that of the local Communist Party leader. Essentially, almost all the Communist functionaries were recruited in Eastern Ukraine.²³²

Aggressive and emotional rhetoric

The image of the Ukrainian army, as put forward by Russian information activities, portrays Ukrainian soldiers as murderers, criminals, and Nazis. These images are created methodically, using very aggressive and emotional rhetoric.²³³ Stories of crucified children and women who have been raped and killed were created and replicated in order to discredit the Ukrainian army personnel and volunteers. These narratives were disseminated in the media with such frequency that the action could be considered information overload specifically meant to reduce the enemy’s ability to think critically. Such steps are taken with one aim—to decrease immunity against propaganda.²³⁴

There was a significant mass dissemination of information, in order to confuse militants. MAJ Uku Arold highlights this very effective and important Russian propaganda method—information overload—in regard to the MH17 aircraft incident.²³⁵ This method is also being used in other cases.

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232 Interview with Vysotsky, carried out by Sazonov.

233 Interview with Kuleba, carried out by Sazonov.

234 Interview with Fedchenko, carried out by Sazonov.

235 Arold 2015, 14.

Most Widely Used Narratives

1. Narratives of World War II

The interviews confirmed that the most common historical narrative in Russian information warfare is that of World War II and narratives related to the crimes of Nazis, fascism, and Stepan Bandera. However, Dmytro Kuleba said: *in this also lies their [the Russians] weakness because the whole narrative is based largely on Stepan Bandera. They do not have anyone like Bandera. They can think of someone, but they do not have such a strong candidate as Bandera regarding symbolism and from semiotics part.*²³⁶

In addition, the Information Operations Division officers of the Ukrainian Defence Ministry believe that the main focus of Russian propaganda is on historical and cultural aspects through territorial claims and ethnic myths, for example, ‘eto – naše’ (this belongs to us) or ‘Ukrainians are part of the Russian people’, are cultivated. The main target group is of course civilian, but Russia information activities aim to influence Ukrainian soldiers through them as well.²³⁷

2. Narratives of separatists as heroes

Russia is continuously creating images of the so-called martyrs of Novorossiya about separatist fighters such as Igor Girkin (Strelkov) and others who are ‘fighting against fascism in Ukraine’ or the ‘Kyiv junta’. This image was created already in spring 2014.²³⁸

3. Narratives of fear and panic as tools

Russia actively attempts to bring about panic and fear within the Ukrainian army by broadcasting information laden with strong emotions, threats, and intimidation. Many websites were established to generate such information, e.g. ‘on Zaporozhye route Russian tanks were seen, that have already crossed the border city of Chernigov and in three hours will arrive in Kyiv’ or ‘a large number of bombers are moving toward Kyiv’.²³⁹

Oleksiy Melnyk, Director of the Foreign Relations & International Security Programmes, described how Russia was trying to undermine the morale of

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236 Interview with Kuleba, carried out by Sazonov.

237 Interview carried out by Kopõtin.

238 Interview with Melnyk, carried out by Sazonov.

239 Interview with Lebedeva, carried out by Sazonov.

Ukrainians with regard to mobilisation:

*“Another strong message is to create panic and horror about mobilisation and other issues related to manning the army. The aim of such messages is to undermine morale of soldiers, their relatives and society at large by repeated demonstration of bloodied and mutilated corpses, scared and demoralised prisoners (Ukrainian soldiers) admitting their fault, beaten and shot in front of the camera. For example, the prisoners were publicly humiliated on the 9 May 2014 Victory Day parade in Donetsk”.*²⁴⁰

Conclusions

Compiled by V. Sazonov

The interviews show that Russian information and psychological operations in 2014 were successful. However, it is difficult to measure the extent of their devastating influence in Ukraine.

Several aspects argue for the effectiveness of Russian information activities in Ukraine in 2014—the use of innovative aspects of modern information activities and high-scale exploitation of the opportunities provided by television, social media etc. In addition, Russia has a long propaganda tradition into which it has always invested a great deal of time, money, and human resources.

Russians used a wide variety of methods, techniques, and approaches in their information activities. Information and psychological operations were carried out in parallel with military operations, often integrated to support each other. For example, at the start of one of the larger military offensives conducted by Ukraine, fierce fighting fronts were set up at Ilovaysk, Debaltsevo, Mariupol, and the Donetsk Airport. Information activities were also employed to respond to preparations for the further mobilisation of the Ukrainian army. In addition to Russian media and trolls, the FSB and the GRU, their agents active in Eastern Ukraine, and a myriad of recruited separatist activists also played an active role in information campaigns.

Information and psychological warfare takes place at all levels. Local people are interviewed in the street; ‘surveys’ are conducted; referendum rallies, meetings, and gatherings are organised; posters, brochures, flyers, and leaflets are distributed; SMSes are sent. It is important to note that

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240 Interview with Melnyk, carried out by Sazonov.

the majority of Ukrainian mobile telephone operators are controlled by Russian capital—i. e. *KyivStar*.

The interviews revealed that Russian information activities are situational in nature, and make use of a wide variety of information tools. Each case is approached individually. If a narrative is not effective enough, then it is immediately revised or replaced by another narrative or idea that is expected to produce better results.

The Russian propaganda machine is quite flexible and quickly adapts to new situations. Although many propaganda operations are spontaneous, they are clearly derived from an existing strategic plan. The biological term ‘mimicry’ describes the nature of Russian propaganda well; it is like a chameleon that constantly changes and adapts. This makes it difficult to fight. However, the system also has its weaknesses. Since many campaigns are hastily and spontaneously produced, sometimes even serious mistakes occur.

The results obtained from the interviews coincide with the results of our media analysis. Although the starting point of our research was the exploration of Russia’s use of historical narratives, the results of our media analysis and interviews show a more diverse picture.

The share of direct references to past events, especially to WWII, the Nazis and Nazi atrocities, depend on the specific media outlet. These associations may be frequently employed or almost not at all. In the latter case, Russian information campaigns actively make use of other types of narratives and strategies in order to convey a negative image of Ukraine. Although identity-related arguments are an influential tool, not all Russian communicative strategies are related to identity. For example, emotional manipulation (e.g. messages such as ‘your son is dying’, ‘your father has been killed’, ‘the boy was crucified’, etc.) is also common and effective.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Compiled by H. Mölder

At the current time Russia is not ready to enhance its military presence in Ukraine and follow the model of Crimea in East Ukraine. Russia's military aid is used for keeping the conflict up in Donbass, maintaining separatist governments in Donetsk and Luhansk and destabilizing the Ukrainian state in order to return Ukraine to the Russian sphere of influence.

First, Russia's behaviour during the crisis has always been rational and calculated. There is no 'mysterious Russia' acting in an untold manner. Sometimes Russia's actions are responses to certain situations (e.g. the legitimisation of Yanukovych, the annexation of Crimea), which indicate flexibility and openness to scenario changes. The political decision to interfere in Crimea was probably made some time at the end of February 2014, after President Yanukovych escaped to Russia, and Russia became worried about their strategically important military presence in Crimea. The takeover process indicates that this was a well-prepared action and Russia was militarily ready to conduct its operation in Crimea.

Second, Russia has learned from the previous crisis in Georgia and now pays more attention to information warfare issues. The Georgian campaign of 2008 emphasized the demonstration of Russian military power; 'information warfare' is a key term for the current Ukrainian crisis. Military activities often support the main battles, which are conducted through media channels. Russia is testing its new military strategy in which various non-military actions, known as hybrid warfare, are used to achieve military goals.

Third, Russia has not taken any initiative favouring crisis management, though it would have had good tools for mediating between the Ukrainian government, recognised by Russia, and unrecognised Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk. Russian behaviour during the crisis indicates that Russia is not interested in peace and aims to use the current crisis to promote its national interests and to increase its political influence in Ukraine as an alternative power to the West.

Information warfare and various psychological operations continue to play a substantial role in the current crisis in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian crisis has proven that Russia has adapted well to the new strategic environment and uses non-military tools skilfully to support its military objectives. The extensive use of special operations to foment public discontent in the crisis area and manipulate public opinion can be clearly identified during the Ukrainian crisis. The capability to attack the enemy simultaneously in the global information space, in the air, on land, and at sea may give huge advantages in a contemporary armed conflict. Russia has stimulated a proxy war in East Ukraine, where the local pro-Russian separatists are used as military tools for Russia's political goals. Russia offers extensive support to the separatists, but its support is thoroughly calculated and tied to Russian national interests. In the Eastern part of Ukraine, Russia mainly participates in hostilities by means of irregular armed groups and private military companies, which can be supplemented with specialists needed to operate within a complex system. The active demonstration of military exercises and military power in the neighbouring areas during the Ukrainian crisis has also been noted. In conducting its operations against Ukraine, Russia follows the guidelines of its 2013 military doctrine. With the new military doctrine, Russian military thinking approaches the military thinking of Sun Tzu, rather than the Western understanding of wars.

Russia's information activities have played a significant role in the overall military operations carried out in the territory of East Ukraine since 2014. Information activities were used at all levels starting with the political level (against the state of Ukraine, state structures, politicians) up to the tactical level for justifying military actions initiated by pro-Russian forces.

There is no consistent pattern that can be used for interpreting current Russian information warfare narratives. Russia frequently floods the media with information to stimulate strong emotions.

Information warfare and various psychological operations continue to play a substantial role in the current crisis in Ukraine. Russia uses various media channels to conduct its operations against Ukraine, including governmental and private TV channels (e.g. *Pervyi Kanal, Rossiya 1, NTV, Russia Today, LifeNews*), radio (e.g. *Radio Mayak*), mobile phone operators (e.g. *KyivStar*), Internet sources (including online publications, e.g.

IA Regnum, TV Zvezda, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Itar Tass, RIA Novosti) and social media networks (e.g. *YouTube, Facebook, Vk.com, odnoklassniki.ru*). Some Ukrainian sources hold pro-Russian attitudes and can also be used to spread disinformation (e.g. *Vesti*). The separatist People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk have their own channels producing anti-Ukrainian propaganda (e.g. *dnr-news.com, novorus.info*). The current study has focused on the media channels that represent the Russian mainstream—*Komsomolskaya Pravda, Zvezda, IA Regnum*. These mass media channels are generally critical against the Ukrainian government and armed forces, but do not offer a critical view of the Russian government; they justify Russian policy in Ukraine and see the Ukrainian crisis as a battlefield between Russia and West, referring to the clash of civilisations with the West (primarily the US and NATO, but also the European Union) allegedly intending to advance its sphere of influence towards Russian borders. Some social media networks were also examined.

Komsomolskaya Pravda, Regnum and ***TV Zvezda*** often refer to *soft propaganda* mechanisms and methods used for the production of information. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* tends to be more aggressive against Ukraine, using emotional rhetoric and a style that constantly incriminates the Ukrainian state, armed forces, and volunteers in crimes against humanity, genocide, international terrorism, torturing and killing of civilians, as well as chauvinism, the discrimination of Russian-speaking people, nationalism, xenophobia, and fascism. The majority of news, statements, reports, and interviews in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* are given with a strong judgement. *Regnum*, on the other hand, usually emphasises facts (whether or not true) and avoids provoking emotions. The majority of news published by *Regnum* appears without judgement, but does not offer

any criticism of the Russian government. Similarly to *Regnum*, *TV Zvezda* is restrained in portraying the crisis and its counterparts. *TV Zvezda* mostly targets the Ukrainian armed forces and government when building negative images. Despite the popular assumption that the almighty *Facebook* and Russian troll factories rule the hearts and minds of people due simply to the massive influx of information, our results demonstrate the need for further research on the reception and influence of these messages. Two categories emerge strongly in constructing the enemy – Ukraine and the West.

When conducting information activities, Russia capably uses the deficiencies of the West and Ukraine, the political-social-economic crisis in Ukraine, and urges the strengthening of nationalist and xenophobic trends that often occur in a crisis-prone Ukraine, divided between its pro-Russian population (Russophones) living mostly in the Eastern and Southern parts of Ukraine (depicted as Novorossiia), and pro-Ukrainians (Ukrainophones) with their stronghold in Western Ukraine, the areas that belonged to Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania before World War II.

Russian information warfare against Ukraine is multifaceted and can be interpreted in **different ways**. Russian information activities tend to be **situational** and **flexible**; every narrative is given an individual touch, considering all of its peculiarities. There is no consistent pattern that can be used for interpreting current Russian information warfare narratives. Instead of holding back information, Russia frequently floods the media with information, providing an overwhelming amount of information about a single event, skilfully blended with disinformation. These media campaigns stimulate strong emotions, promote a culture of fear, and create panic. The majority of Russian media channels we analysed emphasized nationalist trends in Russian society to justify the conflict. Each publication we examined during this research project has its own specific journalistic style. Some publications hold restrained views and avoid emotions. Others foment hatred against the Ukrainian nation, and describe the Ukrainians as puppets of the West, traitors, criminals, fascists, and extremists among others, but describe the separatists as ‘true patriots’.

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