



Proctor, Craig (2015) *The Kremlin's new propaganda and the Ukrainian crisis*. [MA]

<http://endeavour.gla.ac.uk/196/>

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author(s)

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author(s)

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, institution and date must be given



JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY IN KRAKOW
CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES



UNIVERSITY
of
GLASGOW

The Kremlin's New Propaganda and the Ukrainian Crisis

27,452 words

Craig Proctor
0703483
K-1506

Masters thesis written under the supervision of
Prof. dr. hab. Zdzisław Mach and Doctor Clare McManus

Degree: International Masters in Russian, Central and East European
Studies and Master of Arts in European Studies

September 2014
Krakow, Poland

ABSTRACT

In November 2013 tens of thousands of people took to the streets in central Kyiv to protest the government's last minute decision not to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union. It was widely believed that the Ukrainian government had been pressured into their decision by Russia. The situation escalated quickly leading to the tragic deaths of at least 77 protestors and several *Berkut*¹ members when violence broke out on Maidan square in Kyiv in events that are now widely regarded as the beginning of the Ukrainian Crisis.

The situation continued to worsen following the Maidan protests leading to Russia's annexation of the Crimean peninsula, the Odesa trade union fire, storming of police stations in both the East and West of the country by pro-Maidan activists and later by an anti-Maidan movements mainly in the Donbas, which thereafter transformed into a separatist movement eventually declaring independence in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

Unsurprisingly, the Ukrainian Crisis has been widely covered in the international media, however in extremely different ways. Russia's largely state-owned and state-controlled media has been vehemently critical of the protest movement and the Ukrainian government while supporting and justifying Russia's annexation of the Crimea leading to accusations that the Kremlin is leading a propaganda war against Ukraine by targeting various demographics in Russia, Eastern Europe and the West.

This research paper will analyse the Russian media's approach to the Ukrainian Crisis and the weaponisation of the media by the Kremlin. To do so it will cover the development of Russian war coverage from the Afghan War to the present, it will focus on the way the media has been used to garner support in Russia proper, to increase support for Russian actions in the near abroad and sow discord in the West. Focus groups were held in Russia as part of this research to gauge the effectiveness of the Kremlin's approach at home.

This research deals with a new phenomena applicable to media and propaganda studies that has only recently been recognised in the West as such it will cover largely untouched ground and therefore will represent a necessary addition to this new area of research.

¹ *Berkut* – Ukrainian special police force under the previous government, disbanded by the post-Maidan government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS.....	5
1.2. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	6
1.3. METHODOLOGY.....	6
1.3.1. SOURCES.....	7
1.3.2. FOCUS GROUPS.....	8
1.3.3 TABLE 1: ARTICLES USED DURING FOCUS GROUPS.....	10
1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
2. CHANGING TRENDS IN RUSSIAN MEDIA WAR COVERAGE.....	22
2.1. AFGHAN WAR.....	22
2.2. FIRST CHECHEN WAR.....	23
2.3 SECOND CHECHEN WAR.....	24
2.4. RUSSO-GEORGIAN WAR.....	26
2.5 UKRAINIAN CONFLICT.....	28
2.6 RUSSIA TODAY TO RT.....	34
3. KEY CHARACTERS IN MODERN RUSSIA; THE IDEOLOGY BEHIND THE PICTURES.....	36
3.1. DUGIN AND A LOST GENERATION.....	36
3.1.1. DUGIN AND A LOST GENERATION.....	36
3.1.2 DUGIN’S NATIONAL BOLSHEVIK PARTY.....	37
3.1.3 DUGIN AND NEO-EURASIANISM.....	39
3.2. SURKOV, THE PUPPET MASTER AND NON-LINEAR WAR.....	41
3.3. PANARIN INFORMATION WARFARE.....	45
3.4 KISELYOV, the KREMLIN’S FRONTMAN.....	47
3.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION.....	47
4. SYMBOLISM IN PUTIN’S RUSSIA.....	49
4.1 THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR.....	49
4.2 BANDERA AND UKRAINIAN NATIONALISM.....	50
4.3 COMMON TERMINOLOGY IN THE RUSSIAN PRESS.....	51
4.3.1. NEGATIVE TERMINOLOGY.....	51

4.3.2. POSITIVE TERMINOLOGY.....	52
4.4 THE CITY OF RUSSIAN GLORY.....	53
5. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ARTICLES.....	55
5.1. SELECTED ARTICLES.....	55
5.1.1. ARTICLES ONE AND TWO; CRIMEA, ANNEXATION OR REUNIFICATION.....	55
5.1.2. ARTICLES THREE AND FOUR; THE ODESA TRADE UNION FIRE.....	57
5.1.3. ARTICLES FIVE AND SIX; RUSSIA’S INVOLVEMENT IN THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS...58	
5.2. FOCUS GROUPS ANALYSIS.....	60
5.2.1. CRIMEA, RUSSIAN OR UKRAINIAN?.....	60
5.2.2. FASCIST UKRAINE?.....	61
5.2.3. RUSSIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONFLICT AND CASUALTIES.....	63
5.2.4. INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT.....	66
6. CONCLUSION.....	69
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	72

INTRODUCTION

The study of propaganda, especially contemporary propaganda, is difficult. As the scholar Scot MacDonald stated because of “the inherently secretive nature of intelligence work, it is difficult to distinguish truth from fiction in researching the effectiveness of deception operations”² however this does not mean it does not deserve research, on the contrary more research on this subject is necessary as a better understanding of contemporary propaganda would be of great worth to scholars, politicians, military staff, foreign policy makers and the general public. To this end organizations such as StopFake³ and Meduza⁴ have been founded in the recent past⁵.

This dissertation will deal specifically with Russian propaganda and the Kremlin’s current use of propaganda in relation to the Ukrainian Crisis at home and abroad. The Ukrainian Crisis began in the first months of 2014 in Kyiv following the Euromaidan protests that began in November 2013. The situation escalated at the beginning of 2014 when *Berkut* opened fire on protestors killing at least 77. The crisis escalated further resulting in further deaths in Odesa at the trade union fire and culminated in the annexation of Crimea and a proxy war between Ukrainian separatists in the East supported unofficially by Russia.

Unsurprisingly, the Kremlin’s propaganda was been active at home and abroad with the aim of justifying Russia’s support for the Luhansk and Donetsk People’s Republics as well as the annexation of Crimea. This dissertation will focus on the methods used by the Kremlin and its propagandists as well as the ideology behind it.

² McDonald, Scott *Propaganda and Information Warfare in the Twenty-First Century: Altered Images and Deception Operations* (Routledge, 2007, Oxon) p 70

³ An organisation founded in cooperation with Mohyla Academia Kyiv to challenge Russian propaganda and educate the public how to check up on stories.

⁴ A news agency based in Riga, which aims to supply more balanced reporting of events in Eastern Europe

⁵ StopFake, *O nas* (StopFake, 02/03/2014) from <http://www.stopfake.org/o-nas/> (20/04/2015)

1.1. BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS

Towards the end of the Soviet Union the Soviet media experienced a period of comparative freedom thanks to Gorbachev's policy of *perestroika*, however this period was short lived. Following the failed 1991 putsch and Yeltsin's dramatic ascent to power, in what is often forgotten in recent scholarly articles, the Russian media began a period of consolidation into the hands of private owners loyal to Yeltsin. This meant that the relative freedom of the *perestroika* period already began to be curtailed as the Cold War came to a close. The curtailment of the media in Russia and media freedom gained considerable speed following Putin's electoral victory in May 2000. The method of consolidation also changed drastically with many formally private or privatised news and entertainment outlets being (re)nationalised or brought nominally under state control through harassment, the political use of state subsidies and replacement of directors amongst other methods. That is not to say that all Russian media is state owned and there are no dissenting voices in the Russian media. Nevertheless since 2000 Putin and his supporters have been extremely successful in assuring that the main stream media is directly or indirectly under their control and can be relied on to virtually always follow the government's line.

Control of the media by the state was desired for various reasons including its use during parliamentary and presidential elections, although this study is mainly concerned with the media's use as a medium during periods of strife and conflict. The evolution of Russian war coverage for a native audience can be clearly seen from the Soviet Union's lack of open reporting during the Afghan War and Russia's subsequent coverage of the First Chechen War from December 1994 to August 1996, the Second Chechen War from August 1999 to February 2000, through the 2008 Georgian conflict to the present proxy war seemingly taking place between Ukraine and Russian in the Donbas region of Ukraine. In addition to media aimed at forming opinion in Russia's native audience the Georgian conflict was accompanied by the Kremlin's first real attempt to affect public opinion abroad using the Kremlin funded foreign news agency *Russia Today* before its rebranding as *RT*. *RT* has often been accused of transmitting Russia state propaganda and disinformation aimed at a foreign audience⁶.

The use of *RT* and other state-controlled media outlets in Russia proper, the near abroad and further from Russia's borders has been largely over-looked by Western scholars as dominant thinking in recent years has suggested that Putin and his supporters have returned to a Soviet style propaganda

⁶ Bidder, Benjamin *Russia Today: Putin's Weapon in the War of Images* (Spiegel online, 13/08/2013) from <http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/putin-fights-war-of-images-and-propaganda-with-russia-today-channel-a-916162.html> (22/04/2015)

and media system. The premise in this study is that this is far too simple a view, which misses the actual existing complexities of a new type of media coverage, disinformation and propaganda that are currently being weaponised by the Kremlin as part of a new approach to geopolitics that serves to counter balance Russia's apparent military weakness compared to NATO, the US and the West⁷.

1.2. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This dissertation covers two main aspects namely the use by the Russian state of various types of media abroad with non-Russian citizens in the European Union and the United States, and secondly the use of various types of media in Russia proper and Russia's near abroad. Russia's near abroad, which consists of the former Soviet Republics, is highly populated by Russian citizens, ethnic Russians as well as non-ethnic Russophones and those feeling an affinity with Russia or the Soviet past. The media broadcasts in the near abroad are Russian language broadcasts and do not vary from broadcasts in Russia proper. For example the largest mainstream Russian channels were also broadcast directly to Ukraine and can still be accessed on-line. For the most part the content meant for an external western audience does not differ from that in Russia proper except for a heavier emphasis on local stories such as the Occupy movements.

This research endeavours to develop a better understanding of how the Kremlin's propaganda machine works. To do this it will try to define the aims of such propaganda, whom it is aimed at and why such groups are targeted, where it emerged from, why it was founded and how it is being used. Therefore those who seemingly developed this new mode of propaganda and the ideology behind them will be covered in a separate section.

Furthermore, material from Russian focus groups held in September 2014 will be analysed using discourse analysis to search for similarities between the respondents' views and those promoted by the Russian media. The information acquired during these focus groups will be analysed in reference to terminology, symbolism, prominent ideology, beliefs and popular conceptions in Russian society and media portrayals.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

This section on methodology will be broken into three parts. The separate sections will draw an outline of the study materials in the following order; primary sources such as publication by Russian

⁷ Gerasimov, Valeriy *Tsennosti' Nauki v Predvidyeni* (The Values of Science in Foresight) (Voyenno-promishlyenniy kur'yer/ Military-Industrial Courier, 05/03/2013) p 3, http://vpk-news.ru/sites/default/files/pdf/VPK_08_476.pdf (01/2/2015)

state-owned and state-funded news outlets, and secondary sources from Russian media studies and propaganda studies in general. These will be discussed in turn below. Finally three focus groups organised in Russia with the aim of gauging the respondents' reactions and understanding of the Kremlin's propaganda were held in 2014. The focus groups will also be explained in detail below.

1.3.1. SOURCES

The following research on the use of propaganda by the Kremlin is based on primary sources in the Russian media including newspaper articles, internet publication and social media, as well as references to Russia's television broadcasts due to their popularity in Russia. Russian news agencies will include RT, *Первый канал* (Channel One), *Аргументы и Факты* (Arguments and Facts), *РИА новости* (Russian Agency of International Information – RIA News), *РБК* (RosBusinessConsulting – RBC) and *Лента* (Ribbon). Further primary sources, such as materials used in the education of media students for example *Операции информационно-психологической войны. Краткий энциклопедический словарь-справочник* (Information-Psychological Warfare Operations; a short encyclopedia and dictionary reference book) and works by influential Russian scholars such as Igor Panarin⁸ and the philosopher Alexandr Dugin⁹ who are regarded to be influential ideologists, scholars and advisors to the Kremlin.

There have been a multitude of works and publications from the late 1990s dealing with the Russian media. These studies have most commonly focused on the media's post-soviet transformation and the media's use during election campaigns in Russia. Amongst them are studies by Sarah Oates such as her *Introduction to Media and Politics*, which focuses heavily on the Russian news production model and media ownership in Russia¹⁰. Oates' publication also pays particular attention to war coverage in the West and Russia and how it has developed from Vietnam to the Second Iraq War, which was useful in supplying the background to the development of war coverage. A further publication by Oates with a particular focus on Russia, namely *Television and Democracy in Russia*, will also be of relevance to this study as it covers developments in Russian media following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Scholars such as Olessia Koltsova and her book *Media and Power in Russia* as well as Andrei P. Tsygankov and his publication *The Strong State in Russia: development and crisis* which centers on managed democracy, a theory generally attributed to Vladislav Surkov, have also been extremely influential in developing the field of Russian media studies and therefore will be extensively cited in the chapter dealing with the Russian medias' development, history and

⁸ Panarin – Russian professor, political scientist and advisor to the Kremlin

⁹ Dugin, Russian philosopher, political scientist and advisor to the Kremlin

¹⁰ Oates, S., *Introduction to Media and Politics* (SAGE, London, 2008) pp 23-32

war coverage. All of these publications form a strong basis for further researching contemporary events and Russian propaganda and will be included in the section dealing with historical changes in the Russian media. These academic pieces will form the backbone of this dissertation's secondary sources.

Additional secondary sources also come from various sources such as academic articles dealing with propaganda as a general phenomenon, the Russian state and the Russian media specifically as well as the history of conflict coverage in the Russian media such as *Introduction to Media and Politics* and *News Media and Power in Russia*. Secondary sources will also include speeches by the Russian President and Prime Minister officially published by the Kremlin's press office online, and reports by organizations such as OSCE. Furthermore, more recent articles by scholars of Eastern Europe, Russia and media studies such as Timothy Snyder and the Ukrainian media expert George Pocheptsov covering symbolism and the use of historical interpretation in Russian propaganda are also of importance, although these are far and few between given the contemporary nature of the subject. Furthermore, focus groups were employed as part of this study to gauge the effectiveness of Russian media output and record the opinions of the respondents. The specific details concerning the focus groups and their structure will be elaborated in the following section.

1.3.2. FOCUS GROUPS

Three focus groups were held in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia in the sociological department of Lobachevsky University. The focus groups took place between the 4th and the 8th of September 2014. The focus group target was students between the ages of 17 and 24 holding Russian citizenship. This demographic was chosen to represent the first generation born after the fall of the Soviet Union and the declaration of Ukrainian independence¹¹. Students were chosen because of their accessibility and as representatives of the educated class that began formal education after the demise of the Soviet Union.

A list of available rooms and times at the institution was arranged. Then at the beginning of September students were invited to take part in focus groups at a time that suited them within the timeslots available. Twelve students were invited to each focus group and the students were then contacted the day prior to the arranged focus group to confirm their attendance. The desired number of respondents for each focus group was six and above. Twelve were invited in case of nonattendance. Focus group attendance varied between all groups but fell within the parameters of

¹¹ Hamilton, D., Mangott, G., *The New Eastern Europe: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova* (Washington D.C., Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation, 2007) pp 5-8

the study. The attendance for groups one, two and three were eleven, eight and six respectively. A further focus group was held as a practice and to gauge the practicality of leading the groups in Russian and the validity of the articles being used, however this focus group will not be analysed as part of this study. It is most likely that the lower attendance for group three was due to the early meeting time at 8 am. Unfortunately, this was unavoidable as this was the only room time available. However all focus groups were conducted and ran without difficulties.

The focus groups lasted between one hour and an hour and a half. During this time the respondents were given 6 texts in sets of two. Each set contained one text from a Russian news website and one from a Polish website translated into Russian. The texts were varied in writing styles and the respondents were not informed that there were Polish texts amongst them until the end of the focus group. Students were asked to read out a text and after each pair had been read the texts and their contents were discussed. Additional questions were prepared for each set of texts referring to the content, and events they reported, to be used if the respondents were slow in voicing their opinions or if the discussion went off course and to encourage the more reluctant respondents to take part. Prompts were added covering a wider range than desired to cater for any common digressions from the expected range of answers.

The Polish texts were selected to convey opposing views to those in the Russian texts. The texts were not directly juxtaposed so as not to be too obvious and the variations in writing style for example between reports and opinion pieces also served to hide the contradictions in the texts. The contradicting language in use in the texts is the main point of importance to this section of the study, for example the use of “Ukrainian activists” opposed to “Nazis”, “terrorists” and “*opolchentsi*” (home guard/ militia), or “accession” of Crimea to the Russian Federation rather than “annexation” by Russia were present in the texts so as to gauge the respondents’ reactions. The following websites and articles were used;

1.3.3. TABLE 1: ARTICLES USED DURING FOCUS GROUPS

1 st pair	2 nd pair	3 rd pair
<p><i>Комсомольская правда</i> (Komsomol Truth) – “Владимир Путин: Мы не могли оставить жителей Крыма в беде. Это было бы предательство”¹² (Vladimir Putin: We can’t abandon the inhabitants of the Crimea in peril. That would be betrayal)</p>	<p><i>Fakt</i> (Fact)– “Dziesiątki osób zginęło w płomieniach!”¹³ (Tens of People perished in the Flames!)</p>	<p><i>Newsweek Polska</i> (Newsweek Poland) – “Rosyjscy bojownicy próbowali przedostać się na Ukrainę”¹⁴ (Russian militants attempted to make it through to Ukraine)</p>
<p><i>Rzeczpospolita</i> (Polish Republic) – “Aneksja Krymu jest faktem”¹⁵ (The Crimea’s annexation is a fact)</p>	<p><i>Аргументы и Факты</i> (Arguments and Facts) – “Майданная Украина обречена”¹⁶ (Maidan Ukraine is Doomed)</p>	<p><i>РИА Новости</i> (RIA news)– “Силовики Украины обстреляли Углегорск, погибли десятки мирных жителей”¹⁷ (Ukrainian security forces personnel bombarded Vuhlehirsk, tens of innocent civilians perished)</p>

All articles were selected from internet sources. They include the dailies *Fakt*, *Rzeczpospolita* and *Комсомольская правда*, the weeklies *Newsweek Polska* and *Аргументы и Факты* and the larger news agency *РИА Новости*, which is presently in the process of shutting down due to a decision by the Russian state with its remaining staff facing redundancy or being incorporated into *Россия*

¹² Ivashkina, D., *Vladimir Putin: Mi nye mogli ostavit’ zhityelyey Krima v Bedye. Eto Bilo bi predatelstvo* (Komsomol’skaya pravda, 19/03/2014) from <http://www.kp.ru/daily/26207/3092784/> (12/08/2014)

¹³ Fakt., *Dziesiątki osób zginęło w płomieniach!* (Fakt.pl, 03/05/2014) from <http://www.fakt.pl/wojna-na-ukrainie-odessa-we-krwi-pozar-w-domu-zwiazkow-zawodowych,artykuly,458991,1.html> (01/08/2014)

¹⁴ Newsweek., *Rosyjscy bojownicy próbowali przedostać się na Ukrainę* (Newsweek Polska, 01/08/2014) from <http://swiat.newsweek.pl/ukraina-konflikt-bojownicy-na-granicy-z-ukraina-newsweek-pl,artykuly,344861,1.html> (01/08/2014)

¹⁵ Jendroszczyk, P., *Aneksja Krymu jest faktem* (Rzeczpospolita, 19/03/2014) from <http://archiwum.rp.pl/artykul/1236434-Aneksja-Krymu-jest-faktem-.html> (09/08/2014)

¹⁶ Sidorchik, A., *Maydannaya Ukraina obrechena* (Argumenti i Fakti, 05/05/2014) from <http://www.aif.ru/euromaidan/opinion/1162373> (04/08/2014)

¹⁷ RIA., *Siloviki Ukraini obstrelyali Uglyegorsk, pogibli dyesatki mirnikhzhityelyey* (PIA Novosti, 13/08/2014) from <http://ria.ru/world/20140813/1019884153.html> (14/08/2014)

Сегодня (Rossiya Segodnya)¹⁸, however at present it is still operating¹⁹. Poland's *Fakt* and Russia's *Комсомольская правда* are both tabloid newspapers and therefore represent what is generally considered to be a lower quality of journalism, although this is, of course, debatable. All six news agencies have internet websites, from where these articles were taken, which are updated daily, meaning their printed versions as dailies or weeklies are of less importance.

The time period covered by the articles is from the 19th March to the 13th August 2014. The articles are concerned with the Ukrainian Crisis; however they also use the symbolism and references to Russian history and more specifically the Second World War known as The Great Patriotic War in Russia. The time period is significant as this can be seen as the highpoint of the Ukrainian Crisis in 2014 and took place before the Minsk Protocol²⁰ on the 5th September, which coincidentally fell during the focus groups, and the Ukrainian parliamentary elections held on 26 October 2014²¹. The timing was also important because the discussion was partially based on the legitimacy of the Ukrainian post-Maidan *Rada*²² following the set-up of the interim government²³. The “illegitimacy” of the interim government has been one of the main themes in the Russian media following President Yanukovich’s flight from Kyiv.

1.4. LITERATURE REVIEW

As previously stated the study of propaganda, disinformation and subversion is a rather difficult task as there is generally a lack of available primary sources. Despite this there have been many publications made on this subject especially in a historical context with particular attention to the First World War, the Second World War and to a lesser extent the Cold War. However, there is a distinct lack of serious and academic publications on current Russian propaganda, which this dissertation aims to fill. This is due to how contemporary the subject is and the obvious desire of the Kremlin to keep its inner workings secret. Fortunately, recent articles by Joergen Oerstroem Moeller, Timothy Snyder, Richard Sakwa, Jolanta Dorczewska, Geroge Pocheptsov, Peter Pomerantsev and a longer piece jointly by Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss have been published on this new

¹⁸ *Россия Сегодня*, literally meaning Russia Today, but not to be confused with RT or Russia Today, which broadcast in English.

¹⁹ Oliphant, R., *Vladimir Putin dissolves Russia’s RIA Novosti* (The Telegraph, 09/12/2013) from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/10505386/Vladimir-Putin-dissolves-Russias-RIA-Novosti.html> (12/08/2014)

²⁰ Minsk Protocol – a ceasefire agreement signed by representatives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation, The People’s Republic of Luhansk and the People’s Republic of Donetsk.

²¹ OSCE, *OSCE Chief Monitor in Ukraine urges all sides to allow monitors to carry out duties safely* (OSCE, 15/09/2014) from <http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/123591> (07/03/2015)

²² *Rada*, abbreviation of *Verkhovna Rad* – Supreme Council/Ukrainian Parliament

²³ BBC, *Ukraine crisis: Yatsenyuk is PM-designate, Kiev Maidan told* (BBC, 26/02/2014) from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26359150> (01/03/2015)

phenomenon in the Kremlin's propaganda. Additionally, the short book *Война – Путин* (War – Putin) compiled by Russian opposition activists from materials collected by Boris Nemtsov shortly before his murder in Moscow on the 10 February 2015 also deals with Russian propaganda²⁴, and finally Marcel Herpen's book *Wojny Putina* (Putin's Wars) includes sections focusing on this subject. This rather limited number of publications represents the main body of literature specific to contemporary Russian propaganda, which will be discussed below.

Moeller's short article centers on Russian *Maskirovka* and its use in the Ukrainian Crisis. This is relevant to this dissertation because Moeller believes that contemporary Russian propaganda is a modern development of *Maskirovka*. *Maskirovka* is a concept that came into use during the Second World War on the Eastern front. It "stands for deliberately misleading the enemy with regard to your own intentions causing the opponent to make wrong decisions and thereby play into your hands"²⁵. He believes that the military tactic from the Second World War is now being applied to the Russian media in an attempt to blur the truth and try to change world opinion in Russia's favour and by doing so legitimize the Kremlin's actions. For examples of this he uses the media's attempt to portray the Ukrainian presidential elections as illegitimate as Ukraine still has a legitimate leader in Yanukovich, although he suggests that this was a dead end for the Kremlin as there was popular support for the presidential elections in 2014²⁶. He goes on to predict that Russia will use its media presence in Ukraine, and especially the eastern regions, to mobilize the Russian population by reporting on "atrocities committed against ethnic Russians" in the region. This premise has been corroborated by the near constant flow of such stories into the Russian mainstream press including a story of a child being crucified by a Ukrainian volunteer battalion²⁷. In his opinion this removes the need for Russian troops – "at least officially" – to cross the border, however they may still do so in the guise of local militias or volunteers. In this way Russia can destabilise Ukraine while being able to deny its role in the conflict. It is possible that *maskirovka* does serve as the basis for modern Russian propaganda, however there is no definitive evidence pointing in this direction. Furthermore Moeller has overlooked many features of post-Soviet Russian society and politics, which are more likely to form the basis of state propaganda such as managed democracy.

²⁴ Świat, Newsweek.pl, „*Jak zginął Niemcow?* (Newsweek Polska, 01/03/2015) from <http://swiat.newsweek.pl/borys-niemcow-nie-zyje-nagranie-z-zamachu-na-borysa-niemcowa,artykuly,358126,1.html> (12/04/2015)

²⁵ Moeller, J. O., „*Russia's Masterful Use of Deception in Ukraine* (Huffington Post, 23/04/2014) from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joergen-oerstroem-moeller/maskirovka-russias-master_b_5199545.html (23/04/2014)

²⁶ Unian, „*Ukrainci rozpovili, za koho holocuvatimut' na byborakh prezidenta – opytubannya* (Unian, 26/03/2014) from <http://www.unian.ua/politics/900778-ukrajintsi-rozpovili-za-kogo-golosuvatimut-na-viborah-prezidenta-opituvannya.html> (28/04/2015)

²⁷ Pyerviy Kanal, „*Byezhenka iz Slavyanska vspominayet, kak pri nyey kaznili malyenkogo sina i zhyenu opolchentsa* (Pyerviy Kanal, 12/07/2014) from <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/262978> (12/04/2015)

Timothy Snyder has taken a similar historical approach to Russian propaganda with a particular emphasis on symbolism and revival of Soviet terminology in the Russian media. The well known historian and scholar of Eastern Europe, has recently made several short publications on the Ukrainian Crisis and Russian media coverage including an interview with The Lithuanian Tribune in Washington²⁸ and the piece *Europe and Ukraine; Past and Future*²⁹. In these articles Snyder concentrates on the historical similarities to the present situation. In his opinion the Russian army is now largely taking credit for victory in the Second World War despite the fact that a large number of Ukrainians among other groups played an important role in the Red Army's victory. This is a common feature in the Russian media, which in Snyder's opinion is used to portray Russia and Russians as anti-fascist. By leading the discourse in this direction and basing much of it on Soviet history, be it *Banderites*, Nazis or *Novorossiya* as historically and legitimately Russian, the Kremlin is trying to promote Russia as anti-fascist, as the conqueror of fascism. Once this premise is accepted the debate over Russian policies, internal and external, is already skewed in favour of the Kremlin's actions. This also serves to distract much of the Russian population from persistent problems at home as the enemy at the gate becomes the main focus for much of the population's attention. Snyder admits that Ukrainian fascist were present at the Maidan and have remained involved in events. He cites *Pravy Sektor*³⁰ as one such group, however he argues that this has been greatly exaggerated in the Russian media and also points to the contradiction in the Kremlin's use and support of 'fascist' elements in the EU such as Die Linke or Jean-Marie Le Pen. However, Snyder fails to provide a proper definition for what he means by fascist in the same way the Russian media, which he openly criticizes, also fails to. Despite this fault, Snyder's contribution to the way in which the Kremlin has revived Soviet historical stereotyping of much of Ukraine is of relevance to this dissertation.

Война – Путин was compiled by Ilya Yashin and Olga Shorin from Nemtsov's unfinished research. Similar to Snyder, Yashin and Shorin note the Kremlin's systematic use of the Great Patriotic War as a justification of Russia's stance towards Ukraine³¹. The piece expresses the constant presence of *Pravy Sektor* in the Russian media despite them being small in number in Ukraine and only achieving

²⁸ Garbaciauskaite, M., *Historian Timothy Snyder: Ukrainian crisis is not about Ukraine, it's about Europe* (DELFI, 12/11/2014) from <http://en.delfi.lt/central-eastern-europe/historian-timothy-snyder-ukrainian-crisis-is-not-about-ukraine-its-about-europe.d?id=66368672#ixzz3JLn9ZWTD> (07/01/2015)

²⁹ Snyder, T., *Europe and Ukraine; Past and future* (Eurozone, 16/04/2014) from www.eurozine.com/pdf/2014-04-16-snyder-en.pdf (06/07/2014)

³⁰ *Pravy Sektor* – A paramilitary and political organization of Ukrainian nationalists often accused of following Nazi rhetoric

³¹ Yashin, I., Shorin, O., *Voina – Putin* (Nyezavisimiyekspertnydoklad(Russian Opposition), Moscow, May, 2015)

2% in the Ukrainian elections³². Russian propaganda certainly does give undue importance to *Pravy Sektor's* role in Ukrainian politics, however Snyder and Nemtsov can also be accused of underplaying the issue as *Pravy Sektor* punch above their weight and represent a threat to Ukrainian democracy³³. *Война – Путин*, partially in agreement with Snyder, describes the rebranding of The Great Patriotic War in Russia and its near abroad. In the editors' opinion the media has portrayed Ukrainians as *Banderits* and Nazis, while rebranding the Ribbon of Saint George, traditionally worn to remember Soviet soldiers fighting in The Great Patriotic War, as a symbol of support for the separation of the Crimea and the Donbas from Ukraine. In essence this has taken a symbol for all former Soviet Republics that fought against the Third Reich and transformed it into a contemporary pro-Russian symbol³⁴. *Война – Путин* is also of importance as it is one of the few recent publications to recognize the importance of Vladislav Surkov. The authors specifically express Surkov's importance in Ukrainian events even going as far as describing him as the main Russian player in proceedings. They even ascribe him overall control of the Donbas region and the Crimea as well as the Georgian separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, by citing interviews with key figures from Ukraine's breakaway regions³⁵. This will be invaluable to this dissertation as very little has been written about Surkov to date, yet he is one of the main personalities behind the forming of the modern Russian state and its brand of propaganda.

Geroge Pocheptsov's piece *Ошибки информационной политики в период российско-украинского конфликта* (Mistakes in information politics during the Russo-Ukrainian War) also focuses on Russian symbolism. He expands on Snyder's work on standard Russian discourse in use against Ukraine adding "punishers" a term commonly used to blight the Ukrainian army fighting in the East as well as others. However he also criticizes the Ukrainian government for its approach to combating Russian propaganda, which in the writer's opinion largely involves mimicking Russia's simplistic methods all be it rather less effectively for example the *Rada's* naming of their Eastern military operation as Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO)³⁶.

³² Yashin, I., Shorin, O., *Voina – Putin* (Nyezavisimiy ekspertniy doklad(Russian Opposition), Moscow, May, 2015) from <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B80YSM1UOoT6aHc1ZEIqZTZ2T2M/view> (11/04/2015) p 9

³³ Yarosh, D., *Zvernennyya do prezidenta Ukraini viy'kobo-politichnoho pukhu "Pravy Sektor"* (PravySektor.info, 16/08/2014) from <http://pravyysektor.info/NEWS/ZVERNENNYA-DO-PREZYDENTA-UKRAJINY-VIJSKOVO-POLITYCHNOHO-RUHU-PRAVYJ-SEKTOR/> (20/08/2014)

³⁴ Yashin, I., Shorin, O., *Voina – Putin* (Nyezavisimiy ekspertniy doklad(Russian Opposition), Moscow, May, 2015) pp 9-11

³⁵ Yashin, I., Shorin, O., *Voina – Putin* (Nyezavisimiy ekspertniy doklad(Russian Opposition), Moscow, May, 2015) pp 50-54

³⁶ Pocheptsov, G., *Oshibki informatsionnoy politiki v pyeriod rossiysko-ukrainskogi konflikta* (Media Sapiens, 19/10/2014) from http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/ethics/manipulation/oshibki_informatsionnoy_politiki_v_period_rossiyskougkrai_nskogo_konflikta/ (14/02/2015)

Furthermore, Snyder also claims that Russia's aim is to divide Europe and position itself as the alternative, although he does not elaborate on why this may be the case, an issue that is relevant and will be covered in this dissertation. Snyder suggests that the Kremlin is appealing to EU citizens that feel sidelined and ignored in their own societies and governments, as well as appealing to those who have become disenfranchised and disillusioned with the EU many of whom are on the extreme right of European politics. Moreover, the Russian media is openly and clearly trying to portray the EU as immoral and debauchorous. This appeals both to Russia's traditionalists and the less liberal sections usually on the right of EU politics. This approach and portrayal of the EU is a common feature in the teachings of Alexander Dugin, the prominent Russian philosopher who is widely believed to have strong influence on Putin. Snyder goes on to quote Dugin calling for "fascism as red as our blood". I would suggest however, that Snyder views this new phenomenon with a facile argument through a historical prism and by doing so may overlook much in Russian propaganda, which is entirely new³⁷. That said, Dugin does seem to have a strong influence on political thinking in Russia.

Joltana Darczewska in her article *Autonomia rosyjskiej wojny informacyjnej: Operacja krymska – Studium przypadku* (The Autonomy of the Russian Information War: Operation Crimea – a case study) gives particular attention to Dugin alongside Panarin, a Russian professor who from the late 1990s has written many articles on information warfare and military tactics of the future, and their influence over state ideology³⁸. She pays particular attention to Dugin's self-declared patriotism and teaching as a mixture of post-modernism with Russian specifics. According to Darczewska Dugin's school of thought is based on the American concept of "net-centrist warfare", which Dugin believes to be responsible for the spread of Western propaganda and ideals incompatible with Russia. In response to this challenge and to counter its affects Dugin quickly founded "Eurasian network". The organization was to be staffed by the very best Russian intellectuals, high officials, cultural activists and journalists with a "patriotic orientation". The Eurasian network's aim, in Darczewska's words, is to "counter the "Atlantic network", by combining basic elements of American post-modernism and the network centric approach with specific Russian elements"³⁹. This would be done by "destroying information" coming from the Atlantic network in the exact same way that Dugin perceives the West to be acting against Russia's near abroad. Dugin adds that without such action Russia will be condemned to further defeats in the field of information war. In Dugin's opinion the Orange

³⁷ Snyder, T., *Europe and Ukraine; Past and future* (Eurozone, 16/04/2014) from www.eurozine.com/pdf/2014-04-16-snyder-en.pdf (06/07/2014)

³⁸ Darczewska, J., *Autonomia rosyjskiej wojny informacyjnej: Operacja krymska – Studium przypadku* (Punkt widzenia, 42, May/2014, Warsaw) pp 7-9

³⁹ Darczewska, J., *Autonomia rosyjskiej wojny informacyjnej: Operacja krymska – Studium przypadku* (Punkt widzenia, 42, May/2014, Warsaw) p 18

Revolution in 2004 exemplifies just such a defeat. For Dugin an ideological war between the Atlanticists and Eurasianists is underway and Ukraine due to its geographical setting has become the battlefield of this ideological, information war, in which Russia is locked in a struggle for a multi-vector world against the liberal template of the West⁴⁰. Dugin's stance as a "patriot" and ideologist is of lesser concern here than the influence he is said to have over Russian officials and students who pass through his faculty. The strength of Eurasianism in Russian thought, an ideology imbedded in Dugin, is also of relevance here. Panarin shares many similarities with Dugin, and agrees as to the dangers posed by a Western information war against the Russian state. To counter this, in various publications, he calls for a Russian counter operation, which would use a mixed approach against the West including "manipulation of information", "disinformation", "the fabrication of information" as well as "lobbying", "blackmail" and "promoting desired information", while a method of "social maneuver", meaning intentional directing of society to achieve desired aims, should be employed at home and abroad⁴¹.

Darczewska goes on in her study to use the annexation of Ukraine and the use of information warfare during its annexation as an example of Panarin and Dugin's teaching put into practice, which she believes Panarin considers to be a form of information warfare defence⁴². Although aware of other parts of "Operation Crimea" Darczewska pays particular attention to the key and successful role played by the Russian media, which, according to her, had been actively using political myths, such as *Banderites* being fascist and Maidan leading to chaos, from as early as 2003. Furthermore, she claims justifiably that the Russian state holds control over the majority of media outlets and techniques of propaganda, therefore the government apparatus undoubtedly has a say in what is being promoted.

Darczewska's study on modern Russian propaganda and "Operation Crimea" is extremely informative and fits well into the field of this study, however she has overlooked the philosophy on modern (information) warfare and influence on events of Russian politician and theorist Vladislav Surkov, which has become widely known as "Non-linear Warfare"⁴³. However, Darczewska's academic research on Panarin and Dugin is of extreme importance to this dissertation and will be widely utilized during the section *Key Characters in Modern Russia; the Ideology Behind the Pictures*.

⁴⁰ Darczewska, J., *Autonomia rosyjskiej wojny informacyjnej: Operacja krymska – Studium przypadku* (Punkt widzenia, 42, May/2014, Warsaw) pp 17-24

⁴¹ Darczewska, J., *Autonomia rosyjskiej wojny informacyjnej: Operacja krymska – Studium przypadku* (Punkt widzenia, 42, May/2014, Warsaw) pp 14-18

⁴² Darczewska, J., *Autonomia rosyjskiej wojny informacyjnej: Operacja krymska – Studium przypadku* (Punkt widzenia, 42, May/2014, Warsaw) p 24

⁴³ Pomerantsev, P., *How Putin Is Reinventing Warfare* (Foreign policy, 05/05/2014) from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/05/05/how-putin-is-reinventing-warfare/> (24/05/2014)

In 2014 Pomerantsev, a former Russian media insider, and Weiss produced a report on the new Russian propaganda approach for The Institute of Modern Russia published in *The Interpreter* with the title *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money*. To date the piece is the most inclusive and thorough openly accessible study on contemporary Russian propaganda. Pomerantsev and Weiss's article closely lays out the Kremlin's mixed approach to propaganda and disinformation in a section named *The Kremlin Tool Kit*, which includes the RT broadcasting network, Russian funded NGOs operating in the West, financial support for right and left-wing groups in the EU and supposedly free organizations such as the Valdai Forum, which arranges intellectual debates and publications. RT and its use will feature heavily in this dissertation as it is perceived that the state-owned and funded RT broadcasting organization is the main method used by the Kremlin for propagating in the West. They also give reference to the Kremlin's "weaponization of information, culture and money" as part of its "hybrid, or non-linear, war", which they claim has already been put into action using "covert and small scale military actions" in Ukraine⁴⁴. They also express a fear that the same media approach is already being used in the Baltic States, where a large proportion of the population is ethnic Russian or Russian speaking, to influence public opinion. As an example of this the authors refer to the removal of the Soviet Bronze Soldier statue in Estonia and the Russian media's overly emotional coverage of this back in 2007⁴⁵.

Herpen in his book *Wojny Putina* also references the Bronze Soldier scandal, but gives credit for it to Russia's ultra-nationalistic youth movement *Nashi*, which was seemingly founded by Surkov, rather than Russia Today's media campaign⁴⁶. The actual events surrounding the Bronze Soldier were clearly influenced by both *Nashi* and the media campaign. Pomerantsev and Weiss's article also expresses a strong concern for the way RT has been operating internationally with channels in English, Spanish and Arabic. In their opinion RT acts as a direct attack on traditional journalism and journalistic ethics. The line that they ascribe to RT that "there is no such thing as objective truth" depicts this rather well⁴⁷. This line of thought by the authors is important and attests to what is becoming ever more widely understood in academic circles to be an attempt by the Kremlin not to push its own line in the traditional sense of propaganda but rather to create an atmosphere, in which the audience is led to an almost nihilistic stance and conditioned to distrust all that they hear. However this is also based on the premise that something like traditional or proper journalism does

⁴⁴ Pomerantsev, P., Weiss, M., *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money* (The Institute of Modern Russia, published in *The Interpreter*, New York, 2014) pp 4-8

⁴⁵ Pomerantsev, P., Weiss, M., *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money* (The Institute of Modern Russia, published in *The Interpreter*, New York, 2014) pp 24-25

⁴⁶ Herpen, Macel, H. Van., *Wojny Putina* (Prószyński i S-ka, Warsaw, 2014) pp 30-31

⁴⁷ Pomerantsev, P., Weiss, M., *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money* (The Institute of Modern Russia, published in *The Interpreter*, New York, 2014) pp 11-16

or at least did exist. However, Olessia Koltsova challenges the western liberal concept of a free media when compared to different systems and norms of journalism in her book *News Media and Power in Russia*⁴⁸. This premise is compatible with the teachings of Dugin and his attachment to post-modernism with a Russian character. That is to say his obsession with the post-modernist world and the lack of truth in all reports, to which his answer is a multi-vectored world replacing American hegemony. Sarah Oates largely disagrees with this in her book *Television, Elections and Democracy in Russia*, in which she criticizes the Russian media for its lack of journalistic ethics in the last decades⁴⁹.

Pomerantsev's short article titled *Yes, Russia Matters, Putin's Guerrilla Strategy* spreads light on the use of RT to subvert public opinion abroad in favour of the Kremlin's politics. Pomerantsev articulates the changes in RT's approach to broadcasting from its founding in 2005. In his opinion the station was set up to promote Russia in a positive light, however in recent times its agenda has changed. In the author and Russian media insider's words RT "chose to climb inside existing Western ideological narratives that were already hostile to the US and "Western hegemony""⁵⁰. Supporting this he cites the programme time given to George Galloway and Julian Assange, who he suggests represent an anti-Western ideology. Moreover he cites the "generous airtime" given to anti-western propaganda including 9/11 conspiracy theories, democratic deficit in the EU, the Occupy movement and Nigel Farage and his UKIP party amongst others. This is far removed from Russia Today's original focus of its broadcasts⁵¹.

During preliminary research in preparation for the focus groups the issue of conspiracy theories and their presence in Russia arose on more than one occasion. Accordingly, a study by the academic Richard Sakwa covering both conspiracy theories and the Russo-Georgian Conflict, also of importance, was included in this piece. In his article, *Conspiracy Narratives as a Mode of Engagement in International Politics: The Case of the 2008 Russo-Georgian War*, Sakwa explains the importance of conspiracy theories in the Russian psyche. Sakwa traces the prominence of conspiracy theories in Russian culture and their long tradition to pre-revolutionary Russia, but he stresses the importance of Stalin and his time in power characterized by an almost constant mistrust and paranoia. He, furthermore, poses the question whether or not conspiracy theories have replaced the Marxist narrative⁵². Sakwa views the Russo-Georgian war in 2008 as a turning point, which quickly transformed in the Russian mindset, media and conspiracy websites into a war between NATO and

⁴⁸ Koltsova, O., *News Media and Power in Russia* (Routledge, London, 2005) pp 1-10

⁴⁹ Oates, S., *Television, Elections and Democracy in Russia* (SAGE, London, 2008) pp 21-23

⁵⁰ Pomerantsev, P., *Yes, Russia Matters, Putin's Guerrilla Strategy* (World Affairs, 9/2014) p 19

⁵¹ Pomerantsev, P., *Yes, Russia Matters, Putin's Guerrilla Strategy* (World Affairs, 9/2014) pp 19-20

⁵² Sakwa, R., *Conspiracy Narratives as a Mode of Engagement in International Politics: The Case of the Russo-Georgian War* (The Russian Review, Vol 71, Issue 4, 03/09/2012) pp 582-587

Russia, a “war of NATO enlargement”. In this he sees a Cold Peace mimicking the Cold War. Furthermore, he believes the roots of much that presently forms Russian conspiracy theories, which, as Pomerantsev shows, are often promoted on television and in the press seemingly by the state, largely run back to the Coloured Revolutions. The Coloured Revolutions were viewed in Russia as Western funded *putsches* aimed at replacing governments, which had nominally good relations with Russia with pro-Western and pro-NATO stooges. The most important of these from Russia’s stand point were those in Georgia and Ukraine. Understandably, the Coloured Revolutions which took place closer to home in Russia’s near abroad are viewed with much more anxiousness than those further afield, but the premise that they are Western funded operations often through NGOs is a constant feature in Russian discourse.

Sakwa also emphasizes the role that has been played by media organisations such as RT. He perceives a change in the Kremlin’s approach to external broadcasting, that is to say broadcasting aimed at a worldwide audience outside of Russia’s near abroad and more specifically the Western world. In his opinion Russia may have won the Russo-Georgian war but it lost the information war⁵³. This certainly seems to be the case. An EU-sponsored independent report on the conflict found that an unprovoked Georgia started the war, although the report also criticizes Russia for taking advantage of the situation as it unfolded⁵⁴. Sakwa states that Russia may have benefited from the situation militarily by securing the breakaway region of South Ossetia and crippling much of Georgia’s infrastructure, but the Kremlin failed to capitalize on the situation through the media outlets under its control and the conflict was for the most part portrayed as unprovoked Russian aggression in Europe and the United States. Sakwa describes how an anti-Moscow bloc in NATO was formed including Poland and the Baltic states that were not concerned with the actual events and reasons behind them. Moreover, when Germany voiced its concerns at placing the blame squarely on Russia and took a more skeptical approach the country was described as “the standard bearer for the pro-Russian camp”. In Sakwa’s opinion the move to rubbish any attempt at an objective understanding of the sources of the conflict that could challenge the pro-Georgian, pro-NATO view was a clear display of “the alarming degradation of Western public discourse in recent years”⁵⁵. This was not overlooked by Moscow and has been the main catalyst for the Kremlin’s new approach to broadcasting leading to the reforming of RT.

⁵³ Sakwa, R., *Conspiracy Narratives as a Mode of Engagement in International Politics: The Case of the Russo-Georgian War* (The Russian Review, Vol 71, Issue 4, 03/09/2012) pp 582-597

⁵⁴ BBC., *Georgia ‘started unjustified war’* (BBC NEWS, 30/09/2009) from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8281990.stm> (12/05/2015)

⁵⁵ Sakwa, R., *Conspiracy Narratives as a Mode of Engagement in International Politics: The Case of the Russo-Georgian War* (The Russian Review, Vol 71, Issue 4, 03/09/2012) p 600

Pomerantsev argues that RT was already operating in this manner and after establishing itself in the West has been used to push pro-Russian propaganda. For instance, he argues, that Russia Today was to some degree successfully used during the Georgian war to disperse stories of Georgians committing genocide in order to justify a Russian invasion. In his eyes the media's Georgian experience and the practices Russia Today perfected during that period have placed it in good stead for the Ukrainian crisis. In the chapter *Wojna z Gruzją, część III: wojna propagandowa* (The War with Georgia, part III: propaganda war) from *Wojny Putina* Marcel Herpen predominantly agrees with Pomerantsev and his premise that the Kremlin was already successfully using its media in support of its military actions during the Georgian conflict. Herpen argues that the Kremlin's propaganda war in Georgia had been pre-organised with large teams of journalists loyal to the Kremlin being placed in the conflict zone shortly before the action began. In his opinion the groups were placed there with a mission to inflate the amount of civilian casualties in South Ossetia so as to justify Russia's incursion into the area as a humanitarian operation. Herpen goes on further to claim that Dmitry Medvedev's, serving Russian president at the time, accusation that "The ferocity in which the actions of the Georgian side were carried out cannot be called anything else but genocide" alongside the inflated casualty numbers were a pre-prepared and cynical attempt by Russia to mimic NATO's 'humanitarian' action in Kosovo, and by doing so justify Russia's intervention as just such a 'humanitarian' action⁵⁶. Again here, as with Pomerantsev, Herpen willfully overlooks Georgia's culpability in the conflict, however his accusations, against the Kremlin and its propaganda operation, are well founded. Sakwa, Pomerantsev, Weiss and to a lesser degree Herpen are in agreement that modern Russian propaganda is in essence a post-modernist approach to the propagation of 'information'. Moeller's concept of the modern use of *Maskirovka* also roughly falls in line with the other authors albeit under a different name. In essence this post-modernist approach to propaganda can be explained in the following way. The information is not dispelled through the internet and international media with the aim of convincing the audience as to its validity in the traditional sense, but rather the aim of this new breed of information warfare is to confuse the audience and lead it to an almost nihilistic view of news broadcasts. It is, in this sense, an attack on the traditional ideas of 'ethic' journalism.

For the purpose of this piece the articles by Pomerantsev as the scholar with the most experience and the only Russian media insider, including the joint report with Weiss, will be the most important in forming this dissertation's approach. Pomerantsev's recent works are arguably the best contribution to this particular field of study as they are strongly focused on the pessimistic view that is widely held amongst Russian journalists as to what journalism really is. In short, he provides proof

⁵⁶ Herpen, Macel, H. Van., *Wojny Putina* (Prószyński i S-ka, Warsaw, 2014) pp 347-349

that the gap between propaganda and 'ethnic' as it is generally understood in the West has little place in the Russian psyche. Sakwa's piece on the importance of conspiracy theories and their use in Russia and its near abroad as is relevant given the popularity of conspiracy theories in Russia. Articles by Snyder with a stronger historical approach are of importance particularly for his focus on the use of symbolism and namely the revamping of the Great Patriotic War. The following chapter will describe developments in post-Soviet Russian media, common factors in its discourse and its use during conflicts.

2. CHANGING TRENDS IN RUSSIAN MEDIA WAR COVERAGE

2.1 AFGHAN WAR

The evolution of war corresponding and propaganda in the Soviet Union and its successor state the Russian Federation has been well documented by both Russian and foreign scholars. For the purposes of this study the following chapter will discuss the development of war correspondence and the Kremlin's approach from the Soviet-Afghan War, through the First and Second Chechen Wars, the Russo-Georgian Conflict and the current Ukrainian Crisis.

In December 1979 the Soviet Union began deploying troops to Afghan airfields. The Kremlin justified its invasion on the grounds that the government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan had requested aid from the Soviet Union⁵⁷. The war was heavily censored by the Soviet censor *Glavlit*, so much so that by 1983 the press was still insisting that Soviet troops present in Afghanistan were “not engaged in combat, but were merely fulfilling their ‘international duty’ to help the Afghan people”⁵⁸. Most reports were filled with pictures of Soviet troops holding hands with, helping or embracing the local population in essence portraying them as comrades in arms. During this period Soviet journalists were prohibited from reporting on casualty numbers. This lasted right up till 1985 when Gorbachev succeeded Chernenko⁵⁹. This period of reasonable relaxation of the Soviet press would last until 1991 and Yeltsin's ascent to power after the “August Putsch”⁶⁰. In a paradoxical way this period in the Russian media saw a proliferation of new channels and broadcasters thanks to the “privatisation of state assets however the profitability of these outlets fell dramatically. Either as a consequence or causation these new channels and outlets quickly took up the role of propagating for private hands, oligarchs and state funding essentially pushing propaganda for financial reward. This seeming press freedom did not last long. Freedom of the press in Russia actually reduced from the fall of the Soviet Union into the 1990s. By the middle of the decade a strong and influential group of advisors and oligarchs known as ‘the family’ had formed around Yeltsin with control over the most powerful and prominent media outlets”⁶¹.

⁵⁷ Payind, A. *Soviet-Afghan Relations from Cooperation to Occupation* (International Journal of Middle East Studies, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1989) pp 121-123

⁵⁸ Braithwaite, R. *The Russians in Afghanistan: part II* (Open Democracy, 06/05/2011) from <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/rodric-braithwaite/russians-in-afghanistan-part-ii> (27/05/2015)

⁵⁹ Braithwaite, R. *The Russians in Afghanistan 1979-89* (Profile Books Ltd, London, 2011) pp 235-239

⁶⁰ A coup d'état by members of the Soviet government in 1991

⁶¹ Koltsova, O. *News media and power in Russia* (Routledge, London, 2005) pp 29-39

2.2. THE FIRST CHECHEN WAR

In October 1991 several months before the collapse of the Soviet Union, and declarations of independence by its constituent Republics, Chechnya held a presidential election following which the new president Dzhokhar Dudayev declared independence. Moscow, at this point in disarray, sent two and a half thousand troops under the command of the KGB, but it was little use. It was not until 1994 that things in Russia had calmed down enough for Yeltsin to turn his attention back to Chechnya. Despite the point that the war did not explode from out of nowhere but rather was characterized by a constant build up in tensions, including economic and financial sanctions from Moscow, the Russian media transfixed by the ongoing battle between Yeltsin and Gorbachev did not report on events until the failed attempt to take Grozny⁶². The incoming reports following the botched attempt to take Grozny represent an exception in Russian war corresponding⁶³. The state owned channels were predictably supportive of Moscow repeatedly exaggerating the then levels of support from the local population for remaining within the Russian Federation, while also depicting an overly sanitized version of events. However, alongside the state media there was now in existence a comparatively free branch of media. The key player amongst them was National Television commonly known as NTV. NTV, founded in 1993 by Vladimir Gusinsky as he was emerging as a Russian media tycoon, challenged the state line. NTV often featured interviews with Chechen fighters and the Chechen population⁶⁴. One of their main reasons for doing so was the unwillingness of Russian military officials to speak out on such subjects. State silence on the conflict and the decision taken by the military to keep journalists at a distance led to them finding their stories through different sources, which often meant the Chechen rebels. This, of course, in turn led to negative portrayals of Moscow's intervention and operation while also giving a voice and a face to those suffering from or opposing Moscow⁶⁵. Gusinsky was playing a political game, one that would not be possible under Putin. NTV's coverage of the First Chechen War during an election campaign in Russia took an antagonistic approach to Yeltsin's administration. The channel was often used to challenge Russian victories that were being declared by state owned and pro-Yeltsin channels. NTV even went as far as broadcasting film of Grozny being shelled for more than a week following Yeltsin issuing an order to cease the bombardment. The Russian authorities seemed unable to deal with NTV's dissenting voice and nonconformist approach⁶⁶. No doubt, at least in part due to NTV's

⁶² Grozny, Chechen capital, assaulted by the Russian army resulting in heavy casualties on both sides from December 1994 to march 1995

⁶³ Koltsova, O. *News media and power in Russia* (Routledge, London, 2005) pp 205-209

⁶⁴ Oates, S. *Introduction to media and Politics* (Sage, London, 2008) pp 126-127

⁶⁵ Koltsova, O. *News media and power in Russia* (Routledge, London, 2005) pp 209-212

⁶⁶ Oates, S., *Television, Elections and Democracy in Russia* (SAGE, London, 2008) pp 30-34

campaign, Yeltsin made a public appearance transmitted throughout the nation in which he declared a peace plan, which obliged Russia to withdraw all its military forces from Chechnya by the end of March 1996 and begin a dialogue with Dudayev⁶⁷.

2.3. THE SECOND CHECHEN WAR

September 1999 signals the beginning of the Second Chechen War when Chechen fighters seemingly tried to invade Dagestan⁶⁸. However, in the West this is widely considered to have been an inside job by Russian intelligence to justify Moscow's subsequent actions, although this has never been conclusively proven one way or the other. Putin, only recently taking up his position as the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, called short a summit meeting with US President Clinton to return to Moscow. The operation was initially framed as an anti-terrorist operation in the hope that as such it would receive support from abroad, but in the year that followed it was revamped as a "police job" to "maintain public order"⁶⁹. Although, Putin's discourse specifically for a foreign audience did return time and time again to the idea of Chechen rebels being "terrorists", while at home portraying them as 'bandits' that were being pursued by a police operation. The framing of Chechen rebels as international Islamic terrorists effectively shut down debate abroad and countered official demands from Western states for Moscow to enter into dialogue with them. An example of this is Putin's response to just such a question during a televised question-and-answer session: "Who is left for us to negotiate with? Today our opponents are international terrorists and bandits. It is generally impossible to negotiate with terrorists and bandits"⁷⁰.

At home the Second Chechen War was publicized radically differently from the First. Putin, fresh in his new position as Prime Minister, used the opportunity to develop his hard-man image. The outbreak of war was also a rather large media-event. The media, by the start of the conflict, had spent several years featuring stories of Chechen criminals and bandits, which made the invasion of Dagestan and subsequent military operations all that easier for the public to swallow. The second Chechen conflict also played a key role in Putin's presidential campaign, and he used it to its fullest to promote himself as Russia's strongman⁷¹. However, at least at the outset of the conflict there were still some nonconformist voices. *NTV* had continued to go strong throughout the 1990s even supporting an alternative candidate and former Prime Minister, Evgeny Primakov, in the presidential

⁶⁷ Herpen, Macel, H. Van., *Wojny Putina* (Prószyński i S-ka, Warsaw, 2014) pp 266-268

⁶⁸ A Republic of the Russian Federation situated in the North Caucasus.

⁶⁹ Bacon, E. Renz, B. Cooper, J. *Securitising Russia: the domestic politics of Putin* (Manchester university Press, Manchester, 2006) pp 49-50

⁷⁰ Bacon, E. Renz, B. Cooper, J. *Securitising Russia: the domestic politics of Putin* (Manchester university Press, Manchester, 2006) p 52

⁷¹ Koltsova, O. *News media and power in Russia* (Routledge, London, 2005) pp 217-220

elections. However its time was fast coming to an end. Once Putin was selected by Yeltsin as his preferred replacement for the office of president NTV tried to step in line reducing the ferocity of their broadcasts. But even this seemed not to be enough. In the following period the station was soon forced into a change of ownership effectively silencing the main and only national TV channel with a dissenting voice⁷². In relation to this in 2002 Gusinky alongside Berezovsky a large and influential shareholder in Russia's *Channel One* (ORT) and a former part of Yeltsin's "family" was also forced to leave the country⁷³. By this time Putin and his associates had taken the majority of the Russian media under their control in one way or another, however the printed press did have more leeway than TV broadcasts, and this remains the case today. Given Russians overdependence on the TV for their news coverage the printed press media is considered to pose a lesser threat to Putin's administration, but at times even printed newspapers manage to go too far and have to face the consequences.

One more event is notable in relation to this. The influential and internationally acclaimed Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya continued reporting on events in Chechnya as well as corruption and atrocities committed by the military until her murder in 2006, which is widely believed to have been carried out because of her journalistic foci⁷⁴. This is because she gave a voice to the Chechen people who were practically ignored by the mainstream media, while also representing one of the main and most respected critics of Putin still to remain in Russia⁷⁵. All of these proceedings brought coverage of the Second Chechen War in the mainstream press virtually under the Kremlin's control. In addition to this a pooling system for journalists was introduced to incorporate them within the Russian military units⁷⁶. This tactic meant that journalists could only get to the front line, or at least closer to it than before, as an imbedded part of the Russian military operations. It also reduced the need for journalists to search for other sources thereby removing interviews with local Chechens and rebels for the most part from state broadcasts. Pooling also has a psychological effect on the journalists as they naturally build a personal bond to the military personnel they live and work with on a daily basis. This bond in turn usually has a conditioning effect by provoking them to write in a positive way about the men they live alongside and also leads to more personal stories getting airtime than the actual military actions. It also effectively removes the stories of the victims. In

⁷² Oates, S., *Television, Elections and Democracy in Russia* (SAGE, London, 2008) pp 33-35

⁷³ Oates, S., *Television, Elections and Democracy in Russia* (SAGE, London, 2008) pp 34-37

⁷⁴ Mantilla, K. *Anna Politovskaya, award-winning Kremlin critic assassinated* (Off Our Backs, Vol. 36, No. 3, 2006) p 5

⁷⁵ Politkovskaya, A. *Poisoned by Putin* (The Guardian, 09/09/2004) from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/sep/09/russia.media> (10/06/2015)

⁷⁶ Koltsova, O. *News media and power in Russia* (Routledge, London, 2005) pp 220-224

addition self-censorship becomes the norm as journalists would be unlikely to get any more information off combatants if they publish articles criticising their actions⁷⁷.

The second Chechen War's internal media coverage was largely characterized by patriotic hype and silence. The media for the most part, and even before the takeovers of *ORT* and *NTV*, took a particularly strong and patriotic stance offering little more than patriotic excitement and justification for the military offensive. However, it also seems that the public preferred the sanitized patriotic reports than actual reporting of events. This is most probably due to fatigue and perhaps in response to the First Chechen War when a public educated and thinking in a Soviet way was first challenged by broadcasts such as those by *NTV*. By the later years of the second conflict news reports of the ongoing fighting basically disappeared from Russian TV screens meaning the army then had a free hand in its operations with the knowledge that any atrocities committed or losses taken would be unlikely to make it to mainstream news reports⁷⁸.

2.4. RUSSO-GEORGIAN WAR

By the time of the Russo-Georgian Conflict in 2008 the media was firmly in the hands of Putin's Kremlin. Although, Saakashvili may have made the first move to retake the separatist region of South Ossetia, Russia was prepared for the event and went further than was necessary if their claims of acting in defence of the Ossetian people to avoid genocide at the hands of Georgian forces are to be believed. The Russian media also appeared to have been prepared in advance. Journalists were present from the outset of the conflict⁷⁹. The Russian state-owned media began almost instantly to report on mass numbers of civilian casualties in Tskhinvali. Although, Tbilisi's offensive operation did result in civilian casualties the Russian reports massively inflated these numbers reporting on several thousand deaths during the first day of fighting alone⁸⁰. On the 11 of August president Medvedev publically stated that;

“The ferocity in which the actions of the Georgian side were carried out cannot be called anything else but genocide, because they acquired a mass character and were directed against

⁷⁷ Oates, S. *Introduction to media and Politics* (Sage, London, 2008) pp 113-130

⁷⁸ Oates, S., *Television, Elections and Democracy in Russia* (SAGE, London, 2008) pp 124-130

⁷⁹ Herpen, Macel, H. Van., *Wojny Putina* (Prószyński I S-ka, Warsaw, 2014) pp 347- 348

⁸⁰ Allison, R. *Russia Resurgent? Moscow's Campaign to 'Coerce Georgia to Peace'* (International Affairs, Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944, Vol. 84, No. 6, Nov 2008) pp 1153-1154

individuals, the civilian population and peacekeepers that carried out their functions of maintaining peace”⁸¹.

On the same day in another public statement the then Prime Minister Vladimir Putin accused the United States of hypocrisy for hanging Saddam Hussein while Georgian rulers had wiped out ten Ossetian villages and were using “tanks to run over children”⁸². This hyperbole was aimed at an internal as well as external audience to justify the Kremlin’s operation. The casualty numbers were later lowered in subsequent news reports including one in September by RIA⁸³. Despite this official and unofficial publications have continued to appear with exaggerated civilian casualty numbers⁸⁴.

The Russo-Georgian conflict in 2008 also saw a reaffirmation and strengthening of the premise that the conflict was in actual fact one between NATO and the Russian Federation. This idea of Russia defending itself in the face of NATO aggression through enlargement policy has become a staple in the Russian psyche since Putin’s rise to power, however this line of thought was considerably popularised during the Russo-Georgian conflict⁸⁵. As articulated by Timothy Snyder this approach enables Russia to portray itself as the victim being attacked by a larger stronger NATO bloc led by the United States⁸⁶. In essence this removes Georgia from the debate, although it should be said that this approach proved unsuccessful during the conflict and in the end Russia was the one to be perceived, if not at home, then at least in Europe and the West as the aggressor taking reprisals against the much weaker Georgia for its pro-Western political stance⁸⁷.

Another aspect of the Kremlin’s policy accompanying the Russo-Georgian conflict was the transformation in the use of *Russia Today*⁸⁸. During the Russo-Georgian conflict *Russia Today* was used to justify the Kremlin’s actions and became more visibly a tool of propaganda rather than a soft-power tool promoting the curiosities of Russia⁸⁹. In addition there were many stories published

⁸¹ BBC. *Georgia conflict: Key statements* (BBC, 19/08/2008) from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7556857.stm> (27/05/2015)

⁸² BBC. *Georgia conflict: Key statements* (BBC, 19/08/2008) from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7556857.stm> (27/05/2015)

⁸³ Sputnik. *South Ossetia conflict FAQs* (RIA/Sputnik, 17/09/2008) from <http://en.ria.ru/russia/20080917/> (27/05/2015)

⁸⁴ Herpen, Macel, H. Van., *Wojny Putina* (Prószyński i S-ka, Warsaw, 2014) pp 347-348

⁸⁵ Sakwa, R., *Conspiracy Narratives as a Mode of Engagement in International Politics: The Case of the Russo-Georgian War* (The Russian Review, Vol 71, Issue 4, 03/09/2012) pp 582-583

⁸⁶ StopFake. *Amyerikanskiy istochik: nastoyashcheyey mishyen’yu Putina bila nye Ukraina* (StopFake.org, 11/17/2014) from <http://www.stopfake.org/amerikanskij-istorik-nastoyashhej-mishenyu-putina-by-la-ne-ukraina/> (09/01/2015)

⁸⁷ Polskie Radio. *Rosja atakuje Gruzję* (Polskie Radio wiadomości, 08/08/2008) from <http://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/177854,Rosja-atakuje-Gruzje> (10/04/2015)

⁸⁸ RT. *About RT* (RT, 04/06/2015) from <http://rt.com/about-us/> (04/06/2015)

⁸⁹ RT. *Georgian tanks head for South Ossetia* (RT, 07/08/2008) from <http://rt.com/news/georgian-tanks-head-for-south-ossetia/> (01/06/2015)

in the period running up to the war portraying Georgia and its government in a distinctly negative light⁹⁰. In spite of *Russia Today's* efforts their attempt to promote Russia as acting out of humanitarian concerns for the Ossetian population came to nothing and till today Russia is still considered in many European states to have been the unprovoked aggressor⁹¹. The lesson was quickly learned and *Russia Today* revamped. The Russian scholar and teacher at the Russian Foreign Ministry's Academy for Future Diplomats Igor Panarin drew up a plan for redesigning *Russia Today* to be a more effective tool in the Kremlin's "information war" as part of a bigger scheme⁹². As the author of a considerable amount of publications on information warfare such as *Information Warfare and Geopolitics* as well as *A system of Informational Counteraction* amongst many others Panarin was the perfect candidate for that very task. A suggestion put forward at the time was to form "information troops made up of state and military news media" tasked with "operational concealment measures and counterintelligence work"⁹³. Furthermore, Dmitry Kiselyov one of the most influential and famous Russian radio and television journalists made a statement that "information wars" have become "the main type of wars"⁹⁴. The argument and justification for these steps was that the West was already involved in such a covert operation against Russia and had been weaponising everything from CNN to NGOs involved in human rights campaigning and protection for some time. These methods were said to have already been used to overthrow Gaddafi in Libya and it was believed that similar operations had been the real power behind the Coloured Revolutions.

2.5. UKRAINIAN CONFLICT

The current conflict taking place between Ukrainian separatists supported by Russia, a charge that the Kremlin still denies, shares many similarities with the previous conflicts but in essence it is a completely new ball game. Another way of viewing the conflict, and more precisely Russia's media coverage of it, would be to see it as an accumulation of methods practiced in the past. For instance, just as during the Afghan War, the presence of active Russian soldiers in the Donbas region of Ukraine is strenuously denied in a way that at times could pass for a Monty Python sketch such as

⁹⁰ RT. *Medvedev won't let Georgia offend Russian peacekeepers* (RT, 21/06/2008) from <http://rt.com/politics/medvedev-wont-let-georgia-offend-russian-peacekeepers/> (01/062015)

⁹¹ Sakwa, R., *Conspiracy Narratives as a Mode of Engagement in International Politics: The Case of the Russo-Georgian War* (The Russian Review, Vol 71, Issue 4, 03/09/2012) pp 589-593

⁹² Pomerantsev, P., Weiss, M., *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money* (The Institute of Modern Russia, published in The Interpreter, New York, 2014) pp 12-13

⁹³ Pomerantsev, P., Weiss, M., *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money* (The Institute of Modern Russia, published in The Interpreter, New York, 2014) p 12

⁹⁴ Pomerantsev, P., Weiss, M., *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money* (The Institute of Modern Russia, published in The Interpreter, New York, 2014) pp 11-17

when Alexander Zakharchenko, self-proclaimed Prime Minister of the Donetsk Peoples Republic, claimed that Russian soldiers witnessed in the area were merely taking their holidays there⁹⁵. This is a line that has been mockingly repeated time and time again by Russian officials. The statement is more than a little reminiscent of the use of “green men” and “polite people” to describe the Russian special forces who took part in the annexation of the Crimea⁹⁶. Their involvement was vigorously denied by the Russian administration and personally by Putin on more than one occasion who claimed the “defence” of the Crimea against “fascists and nationalists” had been organized and led by “home guard units”⁹⁷. But in a more recent turn of events in the documentary film *Crimea. The Way Home*, which was released in March 2015 to celebrate Crimea’s ‘reunion’ with Russia, Putin openly admits during an interview that the “green men” were in actual fact Russian special forces acting on his direct orders⁹⁸.

A further aspect of the Russian media’s approach to the annexation of Crimea has been its constant output of flamboyant stories showing the Crimean population’s preference for joining Russia. This type of story is still commonplace today more than one year after the Crimean Referendum and there are often articles describing the popularity of Crimea’s unification with Russia and the local population’s feelings of satisfaction with the change⁹⁹. At the time of the referendum in 2014 the Russian press heavily emphasized the legality of the vote describing the many foreign observers that had been present¹⁰⁰. Moreover, Kyiv’s interim government has been continuously portrayed as an illegitimate body supported by radicals and fascists in a similar way to which the Georgian government was represented as blood-thirsty ‘rulers’. Furthermore, the situation in ‘fascist’ Ukraine is rarely seen as a local matter, but generally reported on as a wider confrontation between Russia and the US or NATO. This is conducted in much the same way as the Russo-Georgian conflict was, again, in essence, removing Ukraine from the discourse portraying it merely as Washington’s stooge in the bigger geopolitical picture¹⁰¹. In addition to this there has been, just as during the Second

⁹⁵ Lenta. *Pryem’yer DNR rasskazal o voyuyushchikh na Ukrainye rossiyskikh dobrovol’tsev* (Lenta.ru, 28/08/2014) from <http://lenta.ru/news/2014/08/28/zacharchenko/> (07/09/2014)

⁹⁶ Barantsev, V. Boyko, A. Ivanov, A. Zakharova, L. Khodarev, V. Peremikina, K. Kolganova, A. *Prisoyedinyeniye Krima: Kak “zyelyeniye chelovyeki” stali “vezhlivimi lyudmi”* (Komsomol’skaya Pravda, 19/03/2014) from <http://www.kp.ru/daily/26356.4/3237819/> (04/06/2015)

⁹⁷ Putin, V. *Vladimir Putin otvyetil na boprosi zhurnalistov o situatsii na Ukrainye* (President Rossii, Kremlin, Moscow, Novo-Ogaryovo, 04/03/2014) from <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20366> (04/06/2015)

⁹⁸ Taroshchina, S. *Zhivi i pomni, gdye zhivyosh’* (Novoya Gazyeta, 18/03/2015) from <http://www.novayagazeta.ru/columns/67680.html?p=2> (04/06/2015)

⁹⁹ Khovanskaya, A. *Krimchanam ponravilos’ zhit’ v Rossii* (Komsomol’skaya Pravda, 14/05/2015) from <http://www.kaliningrad.kp.ru/daily/26381.4/3259483/> (07/06/2015)

¹⁰⁰ Siraziyev, T. *Inostranniye nablyudateli: referendum v Krimu prokhodit bez narushennii* (1TV, 16/0/2014) from <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/254234> (07/04/2015)

¹⁰¹ RT. *Ekspert: fashistskoye napadeniye na grazhdan v Odessye – chast’ sovместnoy politiki Kieve i Vashingtona* (RT na rusском, 03/05/2014) form <http://russian.rt.com/article/30432> (10/06/2015)

Chechen War, a complete lack of pro-Kyiv voices. Ukrainians are either described as ‘fascists’ and ‘nationalists’ or shown to be anti-Kyiv and pro-Russian.

Another similarity to the Afghan War has been the refusal of Moscow to confirm the deaths of its service men that have been killed in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions of Ukraine. Moreover, on the 28 of May 2015 Putin signed into law a decree that makes it a formal offence to report Russian troop losses in peacetime making such information a state secret. In reality this has long since been the practice in Russia, and the Soviet Union before it, therefore making little change to the state of affairs, with the exception of making families publicly speaking of their lost loved ones fighting in the Donbas directly punishable under the juridical system¹⁰². But this may also point to the Kremlin’s discomfort with books and articles such as Nemtsov’s *Война – Путин* (Putin’s War), which have tried to publicise and inform the Russian public of this matter.

The present conflict has also been characterized by a strong reliance on social media. RT makes no secrets of its use of the internet through FreeVideo and YouTube and is rather proud of the coverage it has achieved¹⁰³. There have also been repeated and sustained accusations that the Kremlin is employing an army of internet trolls to flood comment pages on Western news websites. This is, of course, difficult to conclusively prove and will surely remain so at least in the near future but such is the nature of propaganda campaigns. However, despite this and given the sheer amount of evidence pointing in that direction, it does bare mentioning. To name only just a few the online websites of *the Guardian*, *Der Spiegel* and the Polish version of *Newsweek* have reported cyber attacks by Kremlin trolls. In March 2014 *Newsweek* reported on “mercenaries” who were responsible for 80 percent of the posts being made on the website characterized by a pro-Russian and anti-Western political stance. *Newsweek* believed this to have been a cyber attack originating in Russia, however lacked the evidence to prove it¹⁰⁴. In April 2015 the *Guardian* also ran with a story reporting on insiders who worked as Russian trolls out of a “business centre” in St Petersburg. The report informs that this method has been used internally against nonconformist media outlets like *Эхо Москвы* (Echo of Moscow), and opposition figures such as Alexei Navalny¹⁰⁵, as well as against the foreign press¹⁰⁶. As aforementioned the *Guardian* and *Newsweek* are not alone in this and there has been a

¹⁰² BBC Europe. *Putin declares Russian troop deaths in peacetime a secret* (BBC Europe, 28/05/2015) from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32913929> (28/05/2015)

¹⁰³ RT. *About RT* (RT, 04/06/2015) from <http://rt.com/about-us/> (04/06/2015)

¹⁰⁴ Wachnicki, M. *Wynajęci Rosjanie cyber-bombardują polski internet?* (*Newsweek.pl*, 04/03/2014) from <http://swiat.newsweek.pl/wynajeci-rosjanie-cyber-bombarduja-polski-internet-newsweek-cyberatak,artykuly,281538,1.html> (10/04/2014)

¹⁰⁵ Russian politician and political activist

¹⁰⁶ Walker, S. *Salutin’ Putin: inside a Russian troll house* (*The Guardian*, 02/04/2015) from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/02/putin-kremlin-inside-russian-troll-house> (02/04/2015)

string of accusations coming from other media outlets to corroborate their stories. It is highly debatable as to what affect this approach could have and how the Kremlin might benefit from it. However, it has been suggested that this manner of trolling is designed simply to close down debate on 'highbrow' websites, but it is an open question whether or not it really has an effect on the readership¹⁰⁷. What is unquestionable is that the Russian media has been intentionally saturated with disturbing and hysterical broadcasts and reports designed to play on emotions rather than provoke debate.

Since protestors took to the Maidan at the end of 2013 to protest against Yanukovich's government the Russian press has seen an almost daily assignment of anti-Ukrainian hyperbole. However, the trend in anti-Ukrainian propaganda in Putin's Russia can be traced back considerably further. A common feature in Russian media, textbooks and publications is the denial of Ukraine as a sovereign and actual existing state. Instead, it is common practice to deny its existence and a preference to view Ukraine as an integral part of Russia alongside Belarus¹⁰⁸. An example of this would be books such as *Украинский сепаратизм в России. Идеология национального раскола* (Ukrainian Separatism in Russia. The Ideology of a National Schism) by the historian Mikhael Slomin, in which he repeatedly challenges the existence of Ukraine, Ukrainians and the Ukrainian language, which in his opinion is a dialect of Russian borrowing heavily from Polish vocabulary¹⁰⁹. Therefore in essence there has been an ideological movement for some time that is attempting to deny Ukraine's existence and sovereignty¹¹⁰.

The Russian media has relied heavily on historical perceptions playing on them at every opportunity. The main point of reference in this game has been The Great Patriotic War. The elements of Soviet mythology and historical perception that have been prominent in its revival for propaganda purposes are those such as St George's ribbon, a fascist attack on the Russian way of life from the West and Ukrainians as *Banderites* to name just a few. Reviving these conceptions, and reinventing them especially in the case of St' George's ribbon, has not been particularly difficult for the media as the underlying nations were already present in the psyches of much of the Russian population at home and abroad. For instance there has been a steady but constant flow of stories and rumours of

¹⁰⁷ Sindelar, D. *Do Trolls Matter?* (Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, 12/08/2014) from <http://www.rferl.org/content/do-trolls-matter/26526879.html> (04/06/2015)

¹⁰⁸ White, S. Feklyunina, V. *Identities and Foreign Policies in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus; The Other Europes* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstock, 2014) pp 103-107

¹⁰⁹ Smolin, B, M. *Ukrainskii separatizm v Rossii: ideologiya natsional'nogo raskola* (Moskva, Moscow, 1998) pp 7-15

¹¹⁰ Medvedev, O. *Ukrainskii tuman dolzhen rasseyat'sya, I russkoe slontse vzoydet* (Den' Kiev.ua, 19/07/2002) from <http://www.day.kiev.ua/ru/article/nota-bene/ukrainskiy-tuman-dolzhen-rasseyatsya-i-russkoe-solnce-vzoydet> (07/01/2015)

Russophobes in Western Ukraine and specifically L'viv since before Ukrainian independence¹¹¹. The prominence Stepan Bandera, leader of a Ukrainian independence movement and Nazi collaborator, has received since Ukrainian independence, and more fervently following Yushchenko's time in office with statues being erected in his name and streets renamed in his honour, has only served to supply the Russian media with more ammunition¹¹². But here, the Ukrainian governments past and present also need to shoulder some of the blame. For example the failure or refusal of the interim and now present Ukrainian government to properly investigate the trade union fire in Odesa on the 2nd of May 2014 that resulted in upwards of 40 deaths has supplied the Kremlin with ample ammunition to use against the *Rada*. There have still been no prosecutions despite a vast amount of witnesses and video footage of the event¹¹³.

A further trait, predating the conflict in the East of Ukraine, ever present since the annexation of Crimea has been a constant flow of stories and publications reporting on the many 'atrocities' committed by the Ukrainian army and volunteer battalions. These accusations have included the intentional targeting and killing of civilians, mistreatment of prisoners of war, targeting of politicians who are not believed to be loyal to the new regime, torture and the intentional creation of a humanitarian crisis to name but a few. This has acted as justification for Russia's annexation of the Crimea, which has been portrayed as having been the only option available to avoid the same taking place there. There is a clear similarity here to the accusations made against Saakashvili's government in 2008, however, unfortunately, many of these claims regarding wrong-doing in Ukraine have turned out to be true. Successive publications from Amnesty International have found reasons for concern and released reports condemning Russia, the Ukrainian government and more vehemently the volunteer battalions for various acts including summary executions. "There is no doubt that summary killings and atrocities are being committed by both pro-Russian separatists and pro-Kyiv forces in Eastern Ukraine, but it is difficult to get an accurate sense of the scale of these abuses," although it was also added that the Russia media was hugely exaggerating these acts¹¹⁴. A good example of the Russian media's exaggerations was the story of the 3-year old child who had been crucified by Ukrainian troops in Slavyansk on one of the main squares. The story was

¹¹¹ Kuchma, L. *Ukraina – ne Rossiia* (Vremliia, Moscow, 2003) pp 280-292

¹¹² Marples, R, D. *Stepan Bandera: The Resurrection of a Ukranian National Hero* (European-Asia Studies, Vol. 58, No. 4, June 2006) pp 555-559

¹¹³ Sidorchik, A., *Maydannaya Ukraina obrechena* (Argumenti i Fakti, 05/05/2014) from <http://www.aif.ru/euromaidan/opinion/1162373> (04/08/2014)

¹¹⁴ Amnesty International. *Eastern Ukraine conflict: Summary killings, misrecorded and misreported* (Amnesty International, 20/10/2014) from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/articles/news/2014/10/eastern-ukraine-conflict-summary-killings-misrecorded-and-misreported/> (12/10/2014)

accompanied by a tearful witness calling herself Galina Pyshnyak¹¹⁵. The story was first broadcast on Russia's *Первый канал* (Channel One). This particular story, still uncorroborated by anyone other than Pyshnyak, seems to have been a step too far and even met with open criticism from other Russian news sites. For example the story was challenged by *Эхо Москвы* and *Новая газета*, two of the more outspoken Russian outlets¹¹⁶.

In addition to the media's constant criticism of the post-Yanukovich Ukrainian *Rada* and Ukrainian society as a whole, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation has to date published two rather extensive reports called *White Book on Violations of Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Ukraine* in support of their accusations. The reports have been officially published in Russian and English through the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the European Union and are available from various other sources online¹¹⁷. The reports would be familiar to anyone who has ever read a report by Amnesty International including chapters such as "Violations of the rights of minorities, discrimination, xenophobia and aggressive nationalism"¹¹⁸. Rather unsurprisingly the reports lay the blame squarely on the Ukrainian government, military and Ukrainian extremist groups with Russia coming out as white as snow.

This section has shown the development from the Afghan War through to the present Ukrainian Conflict of the Soviet and Russian media. A clear line of evolution can be seen in the changes as they have taken place, with the Russo-Georgian conflict representing a major turning point. The Russo-Georgian Conflict witnessed the first use of the internet as a mode of delivering propaganda as well as the first use by the Russian state of an international news agency to justify its actions during the conflict. That broadcaster, namely *Russia Today*, was shown to have largely failed at that task, which in turn led to its revamping as *RT*. The following section will elaborate on this. As previously mentioned the propaganda and methods of its delivery, especially to a western public, was in essence new during the Russo-Georgian Conflict and has since been improved on as can be seen by its current success in relation to the Ukrainian Conflict. However, there are also a wide range of tactics and characteristics currently being used that predate the Russo-Georgian Conflict such as

¹¹⁵ Moscow Times. *State-Run News Station Accused of Making up Child Crucifixion* (Moscow Times, 14/07/2014) from <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/state-run-news-station-accused-of-making-up-child-crucifixion/503397.html> (20/07/2014)

¹¹⁶ Ekho Moskvyy. *Zhiteli Slavyanska oprovergayut informatsiyu o beschinstvakh ukrainskikh voennikh b gopode* (Ekho Moskvyy, 14/07/2014) from <http://echo.msk.ru/news/1359740-echo.html> (21/07/2014)

¹¹⁷ Russianmission.eu. *New edition of the White Book on human rights violations in Ukraine* (Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the European Union, 08/072014) from <http://www.russianmission.eu/en/news/new-edition-white-book-human-rights-violations-ukraine> (09/08/2014)

¹¹⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. *White Book on Violations of Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Ukraine (July – November 2014)* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Moscow, 2014) pp 57-69

hiding casualty numbers and using cultural references and historical terminology such as *Banderites* to demonise the enemy to name just a few. The following chapter will better describe the transformation from *Russia Today* into *RT*.

2.6 RUSSIA TODAY TO RT

A poll commissioned by the Kremlin in 2003 taken in America showed that the vast majority of the population polled viewed Russia in a negative light¹¹⁹. The main connotations associated with Russia were with Kalashnikovs, Molotov cocktails, communism, the KGB and Russian mafia. The Kremlin's conclusion was that the West was overly concentrated on anti-establishment Russian personalities such as Gusinsky¹²⁰ and Mikhail Khodorkovsky¹²¹ with the Western media's focus often falling on events such as Khodorovsky's arrest and subsequent trial. To counterbalance the Western perception, be it real or imagined by the Kremlin, the decision was made to employ soft power through the medium of a foreign news agency¹²². Svetlana Mironyuk, a former employee and advisor to Gusinsky, was tasked with making this happen¹²³. *Russia Today* went live internationally in 2005. It was originally set-up with about £20,000 and employed 300 journalists a large number of them from abroad tempted by the high wages on offer¹²⁴. To begin with *Russia Today* broadcast in English and Russian, however, due to its success, Spanish, Arabic, French and German have been progressively added to the list of its output languages.

Russia Today as a mode of soft power broadcasting light stories about Russia and Russian culture was shown to have failed during the Russo-Georgian Conflict when its broadcasts had taken a different direction. Following this the channel was reborn as *RT*. *RT* has proven to be far more successful with most of the language additions and broadcasting-destinations such as Argentina taking place after its transformation. The transformation also involved *RT's* move into social media, which has included the launching of the FreeVideo project for "media professionals". In *RT's* own words "FreeVideo, Russia's first English-language video agency... gives users free online access to broadcast quality *RT* footage". Thanks to this and direct posts from the channel *RT* has managed to saturate the internet with its productions. In addition *RT* claims that they possess the first YouTube

¹¹⁹ Evans, J. *Spinning Russia* (Foreign Policy, 01/12/2005) from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2005/12/01/spinning-russia/> (01/05/2015)

¹²⁰ A former Russian media tycoon

¹²¹ Russian oligarch and advisor to Yeltsin

¹²² Evans, J. *Spinning Russia* (Foreign Policy, 01/12/2005) from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2005/12/01/spinning-russia/> (01/05/2015)

¹²³ Klimyenyuk, N. *Mironyuk, skryepi, Sodom* (Snob, 12/12/2013) from <http://snob.ru/selected/entry/69275> (01/05/2015)

¹²⁴ Evans, J. *Spinning Russia* (Foreign Policy, 01/12/2005) from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2005/12/01/spinning-russia/> (01/05/2015)

channel to have reached over a billion views¹²⁵. This is undoubtedly true as *RT* has dramatically increased in its international popularity with its mixture of alternative views, anti-Western propaganda and conspiracy theories that appeal to those who feel marginalized and ignored throughout Europe and the Americas. The substantial increases in *RT*'s funding assigned directly from the national budget pay testament to how highly the Kremlin values the media outlet¹²⁶. A further personality who was of paramount importance not just concerning Russia Today's transformation, but the Kremlin's new approach to propaganda and information warfare as a whole is Igor Panarin. In the following chapter Panarin and his ideology will be elaborated on alongside other important personalities close to the Kremlin.

¹²⁵ RT. *About RT* (RT, 04/06/2015) from <http://rt.com/about-us/> (04/06/2015)

¹²⁶ Orttung, R. Walker, C. *Russia's International Media Poisons Minds* (The Moscow Times, 08/10/2014) from <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/russia-s-international-media-poisons-minds/508653.html> (04/06/2015)

3. KEY CHARACTERS IN MODERN RUSSIA; THE IDEOLOGY BEHIND THE PICTURES

Given the nature of propaganda and the secrecy with which the Kremlin protects its interests it is no small feat to accredit specific operations or roles to Russian officials and those close to the Kremlin. However there are several larger than life characters that are noteworthy here. They are Alexander Gelyevich Dugin, Igor Nikolaevich Panarin, Vladislav Yuryevich Surkov and Dmitry Konstantinovich Kiselyov. Each one of them plays a different but important role in modern Russia. These figures are largely responsible for developments in the Russian media and the Kremlin's propaganda as well as the wider ideology behind such developments and therefore are of relevance to this dissertation.

3.1. DUGIN AND A LOST GENERATION

3.1.1. DUGIN AND A LOST GENERATION

The former rather unsuccessful politician and philosopher, Alexander Dugin¹²⁷ is often accredited with far more power and influence amongst the Russian elite by western scholars than he actually possesses. However, he is still a notable character and his actual clout should not be undervalued. The reason Dugin is all too often given a prime position as the Kremlin's philosopher is that he seemingly preaches a philosophy of Eurasianism that fits neatly into the Kremlin's actions and is favoured by many Russian politicians with his style of speech apparently rubbing off on Putin from time to time. Nevertheless, without trying to belittle Dugin and his teachings too much, his main relevance here is one as a mirror image of a sizeable part of the Russian political elite and societal changes from the 1980s onwards.

The Soviet Union, during the Brezhnev period until its collapse, was characterized by a gradual loss of faith in the Communist system during which many politicians and party members were seen to be only paying lip service to the Communist beliefs that had seemed so logical and sacrosanct to the previous generation. This, the period in which Dugin was maturing, bred a very skeptical and pessimistic generation. This atmosphere was strengthened when the Soviet Union became entangled in the Afghan War. The failure to assure a stable Communist regime just across the Soviet Union's southern border and the lies and propaganda that accompanied the war became somewhat of a distorted mirror image of the crumbling system at home. On top of this many of the young Soviet specialists and activists in Kabul as well as military personnel in Afghanistan witnessed the

¹²⁷ Dugin, born 7th of January 1962, age 53

conflict and failure to build the Communist dream first hand. Many were surprised with the brutality they witnessed after all in their minds they were intervening to support a brotherly nation that had requested just such help. They had expected a very different war to what they actually saw¹²⁸. Once they returned home to the Soviet Union they were only too aware of the disparities between media reports back home and the actual situation on the ground, which for many had an immense psychological effect and could be said to be the final nail in the coffin of their already waning ideological belief. In short the period can be seen as the start of a strong shift away from a dogmatic belief in Communism and its replacement with less dogmatic post-modernism.

Post-modernism and its accompanying atmosphere were encapsulated in the youth movements of the 1980s and 1990s in the Soviet Union and Russia with writers such as Eduard Limonov and punk bands like *Grazhdanskaya Oborona* capturing the feeling shared by much of the Soviet youth¹²⁹. Although disillusionment with the Soviet system did not translate into support for the West, which was considered by Dugin and Limonov to be no better than the crumbling Soviet system and just as morally bankrupt. Their solution was to invent something that at least in their eyes would be altogether new.

3.1.2. DUGIN'S NATIONAL BOLSHEVIK PARTY

The National Bolshevik Party (NBP) was founded by Dugin, Limonov¹³⁰, writer and political dissident, and Igor Letov¹³¹, the lead singer from *Grazhdanskaya Oborona*, at the beginning of the 1990s. The party was extremely controversial. It has been continuously criticized by the left and right sides of the political spectrum and is often portrayed as a fascist party¹³². However, it is no easy task to set out exactly what the party stood for as their actions more closely resembled performance art and can even be viewed as a form of avant-garde subculture. A good example of this is the party's logo an amalgamation of the Nazi swastika flag where a hammer and sickle replaces the swastika. However, there is one element of their philosophy that was clear from the outset and is still all apparent in the echelons of Russia's cultural and political elite today, namely a modern version of Russian imperialism. Their philosophy exhibits a Russian arrogance, belittlement and even a form of

¹²⁸ Crowe, D. M. *War Crimes, Genocide, And Justice* (Palgrave, New York, 2014) pp 329-335

¹²⁹ Curtis, A. *The Years of Stagnation and the Poodle of Power* (BBC, 18/01/2012) from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/adamcurtis/entries/20c22534-f722-3d7a-b7ba-0506fcc00063> (12/07/2015)

¹³⁰ Limonov, born February 22nd 1943, age 72

¹³¹ Born, September 10th 1964, age 43

¹³² Dunlop, J, B. *Alexandr Dugin's "Neo-Eurasian" Textbook and Dmitrii Trenin's Ambivalent Response* (Harvard Ukrainian Studies, Vol. 25, No 1/2, Spring 2001) pp 94-96

racism against other ethnolinguistic groups that inhabit the former Soviet Republics¹³³. Much of the NBP's early activism was aimed against the Baltic States, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan, which in the NBP's opinion were at least partially, that is in areas heavily populated by ethnic Russians or Russian speakers, part of the Russian world, *Ruskii mir*, and therefore should not have received independence, or at the very least the Republics' borders should have been redrawn so that regions containing large groups that identified as Russian would be included in the new Russian Federation.

The NBP's actions were for the most part peaceful, but still managed to cause a fair amount of controversy. Limonov and another activist Rabko were arrested in Sevastopol in 1994 while taking part in a pro-Russian separatist rally this resulted in them being deported from Ukraine. The section on symbolism will explain the importance of Sevastopol in the Russian psyche. Later that same year a visit by Dugin and Limonov to Minsk ended in large scale fighting with the Belarusian National Front a Belarusian linguistically based national rebirth movement. In the same way members of NBP once again took to Ukraine in 1999 on Ukrainian Independence Day to interrupt the proceedings by chaining themselves to fences. This action resulted in them being arrested and charged with attempting 'to damage the territorial integrity of Ukraine' a crime punishable by a jail sentence in Ukraine. Similar action was taken by NBP members on Latvian Independence Day in 2000, however this time their aim was threefold. The activists wanted Russian Second World War veterans, who had recently been arrested for alleged crimes during the Second World War, freed, equal rights for the Russian population and to prevent Latvia from joining NATO¹³⁴. Despite this or perhaps because of it, the NBP initially received state support and subsidized apartment space to set up their party headquarters in Moscow before running into conflict with the authorities at a later date¹³⁵. A further element of the NBP was a fervent anti-Americanism. In 1998 they organized a protest outside the American embassy in Moscow where placards were carried with slogans like 'Kill the Yankees!'¹³⁶. The NBP makes no secret out of the fact that it is anti-American, however even here the grotesque exaggerations in the slogans used have more than a little theatrical flavor to them.

NBP came under some flak from the administration in the second half of the 1990s and even stood against Putin and was openly critical of him. However, Dugin left the NBP in 1998 when the party

¹³³ Rogatchevski, A. *The National Bolshevik Party (1993-2001): A Brief Timeline* (New Zealand Slavonic Journal, Vol. 41, 2007) pp 93-95

¹³⁴ ¹³⁴ Rogatchevski, A. *The National Bolshevik Party (1993-2001): A Brief Timeline* (New Zealand Slavonic Journal, Vol. 41, 2007) pp 107-108

¹³⁵ Rogatchevski, A. *The National Bolshevik Party (1993-2001): A Brief Timeline* (New Zealand Slavonic Journal, Vol. 41, 2007) pp 92-104

¹³⁶ Rogatchevski, A. *The National Bolshevik Party (1993-2001): A Brief Timeline* (New Zealand Slavonic Journal, Vol. 41, 2007) p 101

was at the height of its popularity¹³⁷. Dugin had decided that the best way to improve the lot of Russians was not to act against the establishment but to work with them in defining and building an “openly nationalist and authoritarian system”¹³⁸. Now seen to be a turncoat by many in the NBP Dugin was surprisingly embraced with open arms by the administration. He quite quickly received preferential treatment with a large amount of TV broadcasting time allocated to him and undisclosed funding, which is believed to have come from the Kremlin. This is even more peculiar as by this time Putin had largely taken control of the media, meaning that Dugin’s airtime must surely have been condoned by the Kremlin. With these special benefits Dugin was able to widely broadcast his ideas more freely than before¹³⁹.

3.1.3. DUGIN AND NEO-EURASIANSIM

Dugin’s doctrine of Neo-Eurasianism, which is built on the premise that the world must once again become multipolar and the necessity of the construction of a Eurasian empire consisting mainly of Slav and Turkic peoples formed under the leadership of Russia, has become one of the most prominent ideologies in modern Russia, albeit often lacking the Turkic element¹⁴⁰. It is possible however that Putin has been more directly influenced by Yevgeny Primakov, another keen supporter of Eurasianism and one who found himself much closer to Putin until his death in mid 2015. Primakov never personally described himself as Eurasianist but his views are very similar to those of Dugin. They both believe in a Neo-Eurasianism that has much in common with western post-realism, the only main difference being the replacement of nation states by empires. Putin, although not entirely conformist to the principles of Neo-Eurasianism in practice, has most certainly been strongly influenced by these ideals¹⁴¹. In his 2005 national address Putin adopted the language of Eurasianists when he stated that Russia had a special mission “in the Eurasian continent” and that the collapse of the USSR had been “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the last century”¹⁴². Moreover, Putin has not been the only one to be influenced by this strain of thinking. Dugin is regarded to have had quite a strong influence on General Nikolai Klokotov’s worldview while working with him as an

¹³⁷ Rogatchevski, A. *The National Bolshevik Party (1993-2001): A Brief Timeline* (New Zealand Slavonic Journal, Vol. 41, 2007) pp 101-105

¹³⁸ Shlapentokh, D. *Dugin Eurasianism: A Window on the Mind of the Russian Elit or an Intellectual Ploy!* (Studies in East European Thought, Vol. 59, No. 3, September 2007) p 217

¹³⁹ Shlapentokh, D. *Dugin Eurasianism: A Window on the Mind of the Russian Elit or an Intellectual Ploy!* (Studies in East European Thought, Vol. 59, No. 3, September 2007) pp 217-219

¹⁴⁰ Ersen, E. *Neo-Eurasianism and Putin’s ‘Multipolarism’ in Russian Foreign Policy* (Turkish Review of Eurasian Studies, Annual 2004) pp 135-137

¹⁴¹ Ersen, E. *Neo-Eurasianism and Putin’s ‘Multipolarism’ in Russian Foreign Policy* (Turkish Review of Eurasian Studies, Annual 2004) pp 140-146

¹⁴² Shlapentokh, D. *Dugin Eurasianism: A Window on the Mind of the Russian Elit or an Intellectual Ploy!* (Studies in East European Thought, Vol. 59, No. 3, September 2007) p 219

advisor. Additionally, his position at the head of the Eurasian Party, and successive Eurasian Movement, as well as his previous professorship at Moscow State University, has given him great access to and the ability to form opinions in Russia's next generation of leaders and politicians¹⁴³.

Eurasianism or Neo-Eurasianism may not be the founding blocks of Putin's foreign policy but there is more than enough evidence to show that the ideology and personalities such as Dugin and Primakov have had an undeniable influence on large proportions of Russia's political class. Furthermore, a survey by Valadi, led among the general public in 2014 showed that 29 percent of respondents considered Ukraine to be by and large part of Russia. Similar results were reached for South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Although far less than half of respondents considered these regions to be Russian the percentage that did is still representative of a large proportion of the population. Moreover 44 percent would consider Ukrainians and Belarusians living for many years in Russia to be Russian. This may be down to the weakness of ethnic nationalism in Russia due to the Soviet Union's drive away from traditional nationalism, but it is also possible that the Soviet idea of united brothers or the neo-Eurasianist idea of a Slavic world also play some part. It also must be remembered that this survey was conducted in late 2013 and early 2014 before the Ukrainian crisis had really begun¹⁴⁴.

Some may have expected the Ukraine crisis to have affected the President's popularity but it seemingly has not done Putin's credit rating any harm¹⁴⁵. This is because Russians want a strong leader and Putin has seemed nothing if not strong when facing the EU and America. In addition the population has been delivered a stream of documentaries, educational books, political broadcasts and panel shows supporting Dugin's ideas, expressing the corruptness of Ukraine, as well as suggesting if not directly pointing out that there is no Ukraine or Ukraine is a failed state. For instance it was reported that the former Prime Minister of France, Dominique de Villepin, had stated Ukraine was a failed state¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴³ Shlapentokh, D. *Dugin Eurasianism: A Window on the Mind of the Russian Elit or an Intellectual Ploy!* (Studies in East European Thought, Vol. 59, No. 3, September 2007) pp 219-225

¹⁴⁴ Likhacheva, A. Makarov, I. *Natsional'naya identichnost' I budushchee Rossii* (Valadi, Moscow, February 2014) pp 33-34

¹⁴⁵ Boren, D, Z. *The world's most popular politicians: Putin's approval rating hits 86%* (The Independent, 27/02/2015) from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/chart-putins-popularity-reaches-86-but-how-does-it-compare-to-other-world-leaders-10075063.html> (29/07/2015)

¹⁴⁶ RT. *Eks-prem'er Frantsii: Ukraina – nesostoyavsheesya gosudarstvo* (RT, 25/10/2014) from <http://russian.rt.com/article/56107> (29/07/2015)

3.2. SURKOV, THE PUPPET MASTER AND NON-LINEAR WAR

Although, Surkov¹⁴⁷ is more relevant and important to this study than Dugin there is a distinct lack of information and publications on his life, views and operations. This is because Surkov has been unusually successful in leading his life in secrecy despite never straying too far from Putin's side. Because of his veil of secrecy Surkov only rarely features in academic research, however he has become a more visible personality since the onset of the Ukrainian Crisis and is often cited as Moscow's man and the invisible hand responsible for the workings of the Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples Republics as well as South Ossetia and Abkhazia. During the ceremony in the Kremlin's St George Hall to celebrate the Crimea's reunification with Russia to which Igor Strelkov, real name Girkin, and Alexander Borodai, self-proclaimed Prime Minister of the Donetsk Peoples Republic at that time, travelled to, Borodai made no secret of the fact that he regularly met with Surkov in Moscow for advice and said of him that "for a long time I have known and respected the president's assistant, Vladislav Surkov, who is always ready to give serious support to the Donetsk People's Republic – with no exaggeration, he is our man in the Kremlin"¹⁴⁸. Furthermore, Girkin, a Russian national, spoke out publicly after he had been replaced in his position prior to the conference in Minsk so as to avoid any Russians signing on behalf of the Republics, he was evidently disconcerted with this decision. He claimed that Surkov, the former deputy prime minister and personal advisor to Putin, was responsible for allocating positions in the administration of the Donetsk People's Republic. In support of this the Russian journalist for *Коммерсантъ* (The Businessman), Andrey Kolesnikov, who was present reporting on the Minsk II discussions in February 2015 accredits Surkov as being the main man in charge speaking on behalf of Alexander Zakharchenko and Igor Plotnitsky who were there as the official representation of the two Republics¹⁴⁹. Accordingly, Surkov's influence in the Ukrainian Crisis, the Donbas and position in the Kremlin is of extreme importance, but Surkov's significance did not start with Ukraine nor has his main focus been the administration of Georgian and Ukrainian breakaway regions.

As previously mentioned much of Surkov's history is shrouded in mystery and it is for the most part only recently that he has been elevated to a more prominent position by outsiders looking in. What is known for sure about Surkov is that he is extremely ambitious and sways a large influence in the Kremlin and directly on Putin. At an open discussion in 2013 at the London School of Economics Surkov said "I am the author, or one of the authors, of the new Russia... My portfolio at the Kremlin

¹⁴⁷ Surkov, born September 21 1964, age 50

¹⁴⁸ Yashin, I., Shorin, O., *Voina – Putin* (Nyezavisimiy ekspertniy doklad (Russian Opposition), Moscow, May, 2015) p 51

¹⁴⁹ Yashin, I., Shorin, O., *Voina – Putin* (Nyezavisimiy ekspertniy doklad (Russian Opposition), Moscow, May, 2015) pp 52-54

and in the government has included ideology, media, political parties, religion, modernization, innovation, foreign relations, and... modern art”¹⁵⁰. Beyond this not much can be said about Surkov with complete certainty. For instance it is open knowledge that Surkov served in Hungary for two years as part of his national service. Officially he was attached to a Soviet artillery regiment, however, it was also claimed by Sergey Ivanov that he was part of Soviet intelligence at that time¹⁵¹. In the mid 1980s following completion of his military service he moved to Moscow. This means Surkov was present in Moscow at the same time as Dugin. Once in Moscow Surkov began studying to become a theatre director at the Moscow State Art and Cultural University but dropped out before finishing his course. By the late 1980s Surkov was the head of the PR and advertising department for Mikhail Khodorkovsky the future Russian oligarch who would later be imprisoned by Putin and against whom Surkov would run a media campaign¹⁵². There is no proof or public documentation to show that Surkov was in any way affiliated to the youth movements of that period but in all likelihood he can be assumed to have had at least some contact with them. A book published under Surkov’s pseudonym Nathan Dubovitsky is widely regarded to be a semi-autobiography. Surkov denies this strenuously, but in a strange twist he also claims it is the best book he has ever read, furthermore he provided the introduction to the book and often came close to admitting it is his own work rather suggestively stopping short of a full confession¹⁵³. This is very much a part of Surkov’s playful and more than a little arrogant character when facing the press. The book is named *Almost Zero* and has several main threads running through it. The aspect that is important here is loss of faith in the communist system that is portrayed as a facade withering away from inside. The main character is loosely involved in youth movements of the time and avant-garde theatre and eventually becomes a cynical PR man¹⁵⁴. So from what is known about Surkov it does seem quite likely that the book is at least in part a reflection of his own life.

Another short story *Without the Sky* was published in March 2014 during the annexation of Crimea under the same pen name of Dubovitsky. The story is set during “the fifth World War” and expresses a pessimistic view of future warfare and hints towards events that were unfolding at the time.

¹⁵⁰ Pomerantsev, P. *The Hidden Author of Putinism* (The Atlantic, 07/11/2014) from <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/11/hidden-author-putinism-russia-vladislav-surkov/382489/> (12/07/2015)

¹⁵¹ Rozhkov, E. *Cvoremenniy kompleks dlya rossiyskoy razvedky* (Rossiya 1 besti nedeli, 11/12/2006) from <http://vesti7.ru/news?id=9346> (12/07/2015)

¹⁵² Lenta.ru. *Surkov, Vladislav: Vitse-prem’er, glava apparate pravitel’sstva RF* (Lenta, 2012) from <http://lenta.ru/lib/14159273/full.htm> (12/07/2015)

¹⁵³ Pomerantsev, P. *How Putin Is Reinventing Warfare* (Foreign Policy, 05/05/2014) from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/05/05/how-putin-is-reinventing-warfare/> (12/07/2015)

¹⁵⁴ Curtis, A. *The Years of Stagnation and the Poodle of Power* (BBC, 18/01/2012) from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/adamcurtis/entries/20c22534-f722-3d7a-b7ba-0506fcc00063> (12/07/2015)

“It was the first non-linear war. In the primitive wars of the 19th and 20th centuries it was common for just two sides to fight, two countries, or two groups of allies. But now four coalitions collided. It wasn’t two, or three against one. No. It was everyone against everyone... A few provinces would join one side. A few others would join a different side. One town or generation, or gender would join yet another one. They had very different aims. Most people realized that the war was just part of the process. It wasn’t necessarily the most important part”¹⁵⁵.

In 2013 Russian general Gerasimov wrote an article named *Ценность Науки в Предвидении* (The Value of Science in Foresight) published in the military newspaper *Военно-промышленный курьер* (Military-Industrial Courier). The piece has much in common with Surkov’s short story and the concepts of ‘information warfare’ and ‘non-linear war’. Gerasimov’s premise is that traditional warfare is outdated. As examples of this he cites the US involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan neither of which has of yet resulted in final victory for anyone of the multiple sides involved. Instead these examples more similarly resemble what Surkov calls war as a process. General Gerasimov sees the future of warfare in the following way:

“Widespread asymmetric actions will result in the neutralization of the enemy’s superiority in armed combat. To these ends special operations and internal opposition should be utilized to form a constantly active front throughout the entire territory of the enemy nation, as well as Information Social Influence, of which forms and methods will continuously improve”¹⁵⁶

The textbook *Операции информационно-психологической войны. Краткий энциклопедический словарь-справочник* (Information-Psychological Warfare Operations; a short encyclopedia and dictionary reference book) in wide use across Russian universities and institutes defines Information Social Influence as:

Influence that is carried out by the use of information weapons; meaning tools that make it possible to realise the intended actions by transmitting, processing, creating, destroying and interpreting information. Information-psychological, propaganda influence is most effective when used alongside full Media capabilities that ‘attack’ the target’s intellectual and emotional life from all possible sides”¹⁵⁷.

¹⁵⁵ Dubovitsky, N. *Bez neba* (Rusky Pioner, 12/03/2014) from <http://ruspioner.ru/honest/m/single/413120/09/2014>)

¹⁵⁶ Gerasimov, Valeriy *Tsennosti’ Nauki v Predvidyeni* (Voyenno-promishlyenniy kur’yer, 05/03/2013) p 3

¹⁵⁷ Veprintsev, V, B. Manoylo, A, V. Petrenko, A, I. Frolov, D, B. *Operatsii informatsionno-psikhologicheskoy voyny* (Gorachaya liniya-Telekom, Moscow, 2015) p 46

The conclusions drawn by Gerasimov, Surkov and many others, are that traditional warfare has seen its day, the future is information warfare. Information warfare is far cheaper than maintaining a traditional army and makes it possible to spread a state's influence far beyond its borders without having to actually involve its own army or at the very most by using small numbers of special forces that can easily be denied. Another benefit to Russia of this new model of warfare is that it promises to improve Russia's chances and clout against America and NATO, which Russia is unlikely to defeat in a conventional war. Furthermore, it reduces the risk of taking losses that could result in a lower level of support at home as it had in the Afghan War¹⁵⁸. Upon accepting this it is easy to conclude how information warfare, the media and propaganda will form strong parts of any future warfare and also offer the Kremlin the added bonus of compensating for Russia's weakness in conventional weaponry when compared to the only surviving super power the United States. In short information warfare is the future of Russian warfare and one important aspect of it is the use of confusion.

The creation of confusion is just one of the main qualities Surkov possesses. Surkov, with his past experience in avant-garde theatre, is often referred to as the 'puppet master'¹⁵⁹. The reason for this is that it is believed that he is the main man responsible for turning fledgling Russia's politics into a stage show in what is commonly referred to as managed democracy. The basis for managed democracy *à la* Surkov is the controlling of all main political movements to give the impression of a real opposition movement. Surkov is considered to be one of the founders of United Russia the current ruling party in Russia¹⁶⁰. He is also thought to be the mastermind behind *Nashi* a youth organisation that is favoured by and supports Putin. *Nashi*, with its military like apparatus and stark right-wing nationalist ideology, is often referred to as the *hitlerjunge* of Russian youth movements¹⁶¹. Of course, as with much of Surkov's history there is no undeniable proof of his involvement, but his public support for the group is no secret¹⁶². What at first may seem more surprising is that Surkov often also seems to be the man behind anti-Putin movements and opposition parties. A European Parliament report from 2014 found that in 2006 none other than Surkov was responsible for the merger of three smaller Russian parties to form A Just Russia, which

¹⁵⁸ Gerasimov, Valeriy *Tsennosti' Nauki v Predvidyenii* (Voyenno-promishlyenniy kur'yer, 05/03/2013) p 3

¹⁵⁹ Pomerantsev, P. *The Hidden Author of Putinism* (The Atlantic, 07/11/2014) from <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/11/hidden-author-putinism-russia-vladislav-surkov/382489/> (12/07/2015)

¹⁶⁰ Lenta.ru. *Surkov, Vladislav: Vitse-prem'er, glava apparate pravitel'stva RF* (Lenta, 2012) from <http://lenta.ru/lib/14159273/full.htm> (12/07/2015)

¹⁶¹ Jones, J. *Putin's youth movement provides a sinister backdrop to Russia's protests* (The Guardian, 8/12/2011) from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/dec/08/putin-russia-elections> (12/07/2015)

¹⁶² Lenta.ru. *Surkov, Vladislav: Vitse-prem'er, glava apparate pravitel'stva RF* (Lenta, 2012) from <http://lenta.ru/lib/14159273/full.htm> (12/07/2015)

posed as Putin's opposition¹⁶³. In Surkov's theatre this should not come as a surprise. The aim is to make there seem outwardly that democracy is taking its course, however with the opposition in the hands of Surkov and the Kremlin every aspect is under control. Surkov's talents as an artist and PR man do not stop there. He has also been responsible for the branding of Putin as Russia's hard man and hero. The same trait can be found in Russia's contemporary propaganda and presence in Europe.

The Kremlin has taken versatility to its extremes playing the role of a chameleon. It uses media outlets like RT and generous allocations of funding to try and appeal across the board. For the European left, which is traditionally anti-American, Russia promotes itself as the only alternative to US hegemony and neo-liberalism, despite being a neo-liberal state itself. It entrusts right-wing and Eurosceptic parties with generous donations and public support, which goes some way to legitimising such movements. Most ridiculous of all it promotes itself as the heartland of traditional Christian values to appeal to conservative sections of western society and Orthodox Christians in the near abroad while openly mourning the fall of Communism to win favour with large numbers of the older generations in the former Soviet Republics and once again some left-wing groups abroad.

3.3. PANARIN; INFORMATION WARFARE

The next important character standing behind the Kremlin administration is the academic Igor Panarin¹⁶⁴. Panarin has published a multitude of books and articles on information and psychological warfare and geopolitics. Panarin, just as Dugin, is also a strong believer in Eurasianism. He believes that Russia has a special mission in the 21st century. In his book *Информационная война и геополитика* (Information War and Geopolitics) he writes "only the Rus' political elite... is capable of saving the world from the height of geopolitical problems in the 21st century". He believes the way to do this is to lead an "active and harsh information confrontation and defence of their (Russian) interests"¹⁶⁵. Furthermore, Panarin is convinced that there has been a string of information wars taking place since early in the 20th century between the Soviet Union, Russia and America and the West. He divides these wars into different time periods and concludes that Russia lost the "fourth 'information-financial-terrorist war'", which he believes took place from 1991 till 2005. The elements constituting defeat were, in his opinion, the encroachment of NATO up to the Russian border and the 'Coloured Revolutions' in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine¹⁶⁶. Panarin is staunchly anti-American seeing America's hand behind the Coloured Revolutions that took place across

¹⁶³ At a glance. *Russia: political parties in a 'managed democracy'* (European Parliament, December 2014) pp 1-2

¹⁶⁴ Panarin, born October 30 1958, age 56

¹⁶⁵ Panarin, I. *Informatsionnaya voina i geopolitika* (Moscow, Velikiy Put', 2006) p 6

¹⁶⁶ Panarin, I. *Informatsionnaya voina i geopolitika* (Moscow, Velikiy Put', 2006) pp 6-9

Eastern Europe and Central Asia. During the 2011 Moscow protests against the re-election of Putin Panarin publicly criticized the western media coverage and specifically the British and American coverage. He claimed that an information war was underway, in which the size and importance of the protests was greatly exaggerated. He also criticized America for supplying much of the funding for opposition groups just as they had in the run up to the 2004 Orange Revolution. Furthermore, he pointed out that many of the protestors carried signs in English rather than Russian, which, in his opinion, proved they were merely part of a western propaganda ploy as the signs would have been unintelligible to the majority of Russian voters. To counter the western propaganda and information warfare Panarin proposed the following:

“1.The Presidential State Council on information policy with representations of the government’s executive branch, all factions of the Duma, the business community, and the general public.

2.The position of information counteraction Advisor to the Russian President

3.A state-owned internet corporation

4.An international governmental media corporation that would represent Russia abroad and create a positive image of the country. This network should be accountable to the president”¹⁶⁷.

Much of Panarin’s advice was taken up and a new approach to Russia’s foreign media broadcasting was formed¹⁶⁸. Dmitry Konstantinovich Kiselyov was appointed directly by the President as the director general of Russia’s newly formed international broadcasting agency *Россия Сегодня* (Russia Today), not to be confused with RT¹⁶⁹. The new project is being largely built on the backs of *РИА Новости* and *Голос России* (Voice of Russia), which have been officially liquidated but in actual fact most of their structures and capacity has simply been transferred to *Россия Сегодня*¹⁷⁰. *Россия Сегодня*, although new on the market, has benefited massively from its consumption of *РИА Новости* and *Голос России*. *РИА Новости*, although far from perfect, was generally considered to be one of the freer and at times controversial media sites, meaning that the Kremlin has surely

¹⁶⁷ Panarin, I. *December 2011: Information War against Russia* (RT, 30/12/2011) from <http://rt.com/politics/information-war-russia-panarin-009/> (14/07/2015)

¹⁶⁸ Darczewska, J., *Autonomia rosyjskiej wojny informacyjnej: Operacja krymska – Studium przypadku* (Punkt widzenia, 42, May/2014, Warsaw) pp 14-18

¹⁶⁹ Putin, V. *O gendirectope mezhdunarodnogo informagentstva “Rossiya segodnya”* (Prezident Rossii, 09/12/2013) from <http://kremlin.ru/acts/news/19806> (14/07/2015)

¹⁷⁰ Putin, V. *Ukaz o merakh poo povisheniyu effektivnosti deyatelnosti gosudarstbennikh SMI* (Prezident Rossii, 9/12/2013) from <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19805> 04/09/2014)

benefited by shutting it down in more than one way. A *Россия Сегодня* is extremely well positioned with its internet output, radio station and live news updates. Additionally it is also well funded by the state so it is unlikely to see any problems at least in the near future with its budget¹⁷¹. Furthermore another broadcaster *Sputnik* is directly owned by *Россия Сегодня*. *Sputnik* already publishes in English, Arabic, Spanish and Chinese giving it a truly international reach, however it has not reached the popularity of RT and it is as of yet unclear why the Kremlin feels the need to be involved both in *Sputnik* and RT as they so far seem to be largely copies of each other pushing the exact same lines¹⁷².

3.4. KISELYOV, THE KREMLIN'S FRONTMAN

Kiselyov¹⁷³ has considerable experience working within Russian broadcasting in the sphere of organization and structuring as well as reporting and hosting shows. More importantly he is widely considered to be the Kremlin's man in the media promoting the official line in his rather uncouth and outspoken manner, which has led to more than a few scandals. He has also fallen under EU travel sanctions since the beginning of the Ukraine crisis alongside Surkov, who incidentally said he considered the sanctions against him personally to be a badge of honour for his services to the Russian Federation¹⁷⁴. Kiselyov has become very much the front man in the propaganda war against Ukraine. In 2014 a website named *Ukraina.ru* promoting the Russian line on Ukraine was founded. A documentary was also released under the same name by *Россия 24*¹⁷⁵, in which there was a clear and open attempt to deny the existence of sovereign Ukraine. Soon after its presentation Kiselyov was asked about the legitimacy of the Ukrainian *Rada* to which he replied "there is no Ukraine. Now there is only the virtual understanding, a virtual site. If you want to live in a virtual world be my guest. But "Ukraina.ru" is a real portal. It is no longer about the country, but about the territory that used to come under that country's governance. Now that country is a failed state"¹⁷⁶.

3.5. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

All four men are extremely important in terms of ideology, propaganda and the inner workings of the Kremlin's media machine. The point that Kiselyov and Surkov have now come under western

¹⁷¹ RBK. *Rossiya sozdast hoviy internet-proekt dlya propaganda za granitsey* (RBK.ru, 05/11/2014) from http://daily.rbc.ru/ins/technology_and_media/05/11/2014/54592396cbb20f2381c3e089 (12/01/2015)

¹⁷² RIA. *MIA "Rossiya Segodnya"* (RIA Novosti) from <http://ria.ru/docs/about/> (12/01/2015)

¹⁷³ Kiselyov, born April 26 1954, age 61

¹⁷⁴ RBK. *Surkov o sanktsiyakh SSHA: Eto bol'shaya chest' dlya menya* (RBK, 18/03/2014) form <http://top.rbc.ru/politics/18/03/2014/911681.shtml> (04/09/2014)

¹⁷⁵ Russia 24, state-owned Russian language news channel.

¹⁷⁶ Focus. *V Rossii predstavili gil'm o tom, chot Ukraina ne sushchestvuyet* (Focus.ua, 15/05/2014) from <http://focus.ua/country/306044/> (18/06/2014)

sanctions plays witness to the fact that their contribution has not gone unnoticed. Panarin and Dugin are extremely influential academics giving them great sway over the next generation of graduates. They are also both known to have advised certain people in the government and higher echelons of the Russian Federation's administration. Panarin is also at the cutting edge of information technology and warfare and therefore often fills the role of advisor in such fields. He learned many of his skills during his previous career in the KGB and still openly exhibits hostility towards America.¹⁷⁷ Kiselyov's importance as Director General of the newly founded *Россия Сегодня* and the Kremlin's unofficial mouth piece is rather obvious. Whereas the importance of Surkov is hard to definitely gauge. However, it seems that much of the Russian media's recent output with its continuous trips into what resembles fantasy or conspiracy theories quite closely correlates with the theatrical way that managed democracy has been incorporated into Russian elections and politics to make sure everyone fills their role to give the impression of something real. Pomerantsev, the former Russian media insider and current analyst, sums up how it feels to be one of Surkov and Dugin's generation growing up in the 1980s and living through the changes in the system pretty well with a quote from another media insider:

“Over the last 20 years we've lived through a communism we never believed in, democracy and defaults and mafia state and oligarchy, and we've realized they are illusions, that everything is PR¹⁷⁸.”

All of these traits can also be found as common features in current Russian documentaries and news broadcasts specifically the lack of belief in 'real' journalism in the western understanding. The next chapter will focus on the Russian reality of broadcasting, where symbolism plays the main role.

¹⁷⁷ Osborn, A. *In Moscow, Igor Panarin's Forecasts Are All the Rage; America 'Disintegrates' in 2010* (The Wall Street Journal, 29/12/2008) from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB123051100709638419> (20/07/2015)

¹⁷⁸ Pomerantsev, P. *The Hidden Author of Putinism* (The Atlantic, 07/11/2014) from <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/11/hidden-author-putinism-russia-vladislav-surkov/382489/> (12/07/2015)

4. SYMBOLISM IN PUTIN'S RUSSIA

The following chapter focuses on symbolism used in Russia and Russian propaganda. The symbolism in common use generally relates to Russian and Soviet history and is used to justify present actions such as the annexation of the Crimea. This is relevant to this dissertation as the Russian press as well as Russian politicians often try to justify the state's actions by setting them in a historical context, which is of course, a Russian state interpretation of history.

4.1. THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

The symbolism of the great Patriotic War and the Soviet victory have been a constant and all embracing feature of Soviet and Russian national identity ever since the fall of Berlin. With the sheer scale of the war and the unimaginable losses that the Soviet Union sustained this should not come as a surprise. Although there have been slight digressions and changes in how the Great Patriotic War has been celebrated and remembered. However, these variations are limited with the exception of Stalin and the role he was and is currently ascribed. The standard view is one of the Soviet Union as a peace loving nation that was dragged against its own free will along with the Soviet people into Total War, a Total War in which the Soviet Union and Communism would ultimately be triumphant¹⁷⁹. The period beginning with Putin taking up office can largely be seen as a continuation of this approach as Putin and Medvedev are considered to be keen supporters of this interpretation of the Great Patriotic War¹⁸⁰. However there have been a few post-Soviet adaptations. Russia now very prominently portrays itself as the carrier of Soviet history despite the fact that the Soviet Union was of much larger proportions represented by 15 republics at the time of the outbreak of war, Russia being only one of them. This reinterpretation was introduced quite smoothly because since the fall of the Soviet Union many of the former Republics including Ukraine and the Baltic states have gone to great lengths to distance themselves from their Soviet past. Since the Orange Revolution in 2004 Ukrainian nationalists, ever present, have been presented with a great deal of opportunities to promote their heroes while distancing the state from its Soviet past. This has led to a strange situation where the role of Ukrainian nationalists formed around the Ukrainian Insurgency Army (UPA) and the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) during the Second World War and never numbering more than a few hundred thousand at most are now taking the leading role in defining Ukraine's role in the Second World War despite the fact that the number of Ukrainians who

¹⁷⁹ Uldricks, T, J. *War Politics and Memory: Russian Historians Reevaluate the Origins of WWII* (Indiana University Press, Indiana, Vol. 21, No. 2, winter 2009) pp 60-63

¹⁸⁰ Uldricks, T, J. *War Politics and Memory: Russian Historians Reevaluate the Origins of WWII* (Indiana University Press, Indiana, Vol. 21, No. 2, winter 2009) pp 68-70

fought alongside their Soviet comrades far outweighs that of the nationalist movements. In effect the role Ukraine, the second most important republic only after Russia, has been badly undermined, which in turn plays into the Kremlin's hands and leaves Russia alone to portray itself as the Soviet Union's successor state¹⁸¹.

4.2. BANDERA AND UKRAINIAN NATIONALISM

The Ukrainian obsession with Stepan Bandera, active during the interwar years and the Second World War, and the Ukrainian nationalist movements of the last century have done much to delegitimise the state in the eyes of many Russians as well as ostracising much of the Ukrainian population. This is due to the role played by these organizations and the extremist nationalism they fought for. Stepan Bandera, leader of one of the most radical Ukrainian nationalist movements, as well as other similar movements remain controversial even today with many historians classing them as fascist and condemning them for collaboration with the Nazis, a fact that is all too often overlooked in Ukraine in an organized attempt to whitewash the groups less flattering attributes and actions¹⁸². Moreover this has helped to further support and for many justify the Kremlin's discourse in which Russia is now fighting a war, albeit covert, against fascism once again but this time a fascism that has open support from the West. In accordance with this Russia has strongly emphasised the role played by extremist groups in the Orange Revolution and the Maidan protests as well as the Odesa trade union fire, Ukrainian's attempt to hold on to the Crimea and the proxy war that is currently underway in the East of Ukraine. To reinforce this stance the symbolism surrounding fascism, Nazism and Ukrainian nationalism from the 1940s is very much back in vogue.

Bandera and the Ukrainian nationalists formed somewhat a boogymen in Soviet discourse for obvious and arguably justifiable reasons, with Bandera and UPA becoming a generic term used to tar all Ukrainian groups that were and are today opposed to the Soviet Union and Russia with the same brush. On top of this, the phrase 'fascism' in Soviet and subsequently Russian propaganda has been so wildly and vehemently twisted as to lose all but the slightest connection to anything resembling academic terminology. Nazis, fascism and Banderits, the name originally given to members of UPA by Moscow are used interchangeably despite having different, albeit nominally connected, meanings¹⁸³. The phrase means little more for a large proportion of the population than the evil enemy that must be, if not destroyed, withstood at all costs as the only way to ensure self-

¹⁸¹ Snyder, T. *The Reconstruction of Nations* (Yale university, 2003) pp 150-159

¹⁸² Snyder, T. *The Reconstruction of Nations* (Yale university, 2003) pp 142-150

¹⁸³ Ostapenko, R. *The Success of Russia's Propaganda: Ukraine's 'Banderovtsy'* (Cambridge Globalist, 29/01/2015) from <http://cambridgeglobalist.org/2015/01/29/success-russias-propaganda-ukraines-banderovtsy/> (04/02/2015)

preservation. The phrases also conjure up and represent everything that threatens Russia, everything in essence albeit vaguely that is not Russian. These symbols have in short become the antonym to Russianness.

Ukrainian nationalists and many of the volunteer battalions now engaged in conflict, although far from all, share responsibility for this. Paramilitary groups such as the Azov battalion, the fighting wing of Pravy Sektor amongst others have been on many occasions witnessed sporting Nazi symbols such as the swastika and Nazi Wolfsangel. Furthermore, the trend which had already started in Ukraine previous to the Euro Mайдan protest of renaming streets, and raising billboards and statues for Ukrainian nationalists and Nazi collaborators has done much to play into the hands of Russian propagandists and foster a belief within Ukraine specifically the East and South, as well as Russia, of the real existence of a fascist threat. Unfortunately, this threat is very much real and the failure to properly challenge its existence in the Ukrainian and western media has only further ostracised many Russians in Russia proper and abroad as well as a proportion of the left leaning Europeans. However, it should be made clear that the Kremlin's media continuously exaggerates the presence of such symbols and atrocities committed by Ukrainian paramilitary organizations to achieve its own goals in various ways including the doctoring and photoshopping of photos, or simply rehashing photos from different conflict zones with misleading captions¹⁸⁴.

4.3. COMMON TERMINOLOGY IN THE RUSSIAN PRESS

4.3.1. NEGATIVE TERMINOLOGY

Amongst the terms that have been reinvented, revived and popularized once more by Moscow to refer to Ukrainian 'nationalists' are *Banderits*, fascists, Nazis and *karateli* (punishers/ penal brigades). These phrases have all been revived from World War II. Neo-Nazi has also been added to this list as the only noticeable modern term; however it is used in the exact same way as the former and brings nothing new to the existing discourse¹⁸⁵.

Karateli is a slightly more complex term due to its rather ambiguous meaning. The original meanings were that of penal or punitive brigades forced to collaborate alongside Nazi Germany or brigades tasked with dangerous assignments as way of punishing them for cowardice, desertion etc.

¹⁸⁴ Coyle, J. J. *Russian Disinformation Alienates the West from Russian Periphery* (Atlantic Council, 20/07/2015) from <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/russian-disinformation-alienates-the-west-from-russian-periphery> (21/07/2015)

¹⁸⁵ Pocheptsov, G. *osobennosti propagandistskikh mekhanizmov s dvukh storon rossiysko-ukrainskogo konflikta* (Media Sapiens, 10/09/2014) from http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/ethics/manipulation/osobennosti_propagandistskikh_mekhanizmov_s_dvukh_s_toron_rossiyskoukrainskogo_konflikta/ (01/04/2015)

However, the term can also be translated into English as punishers. ‘Punishers’ is now more precisely the way the phrase is being used by the Russian press, used to demarcate Ukrainian military and paramilitary members. There has been a continuous flow of articles referring to “the punishers of the Donbass” and so forth accompanied by stories, photos and occasionally videos supposedly bearing witness to atrocities committed by them against the local ‘peaceful’ population¹⁸⁶.

4.3.2. POSITIVE TERMINOLOGY

Positive terms in use in the Russian media include *Novorossia*, the St George Cross and *Opolchentsi* (home guard)¹⁸⁷. *Novorossia* came into common use during 2014 as a territorial name referring to the breakaway regions in Luhansk and Donetsk¹⁸⁸. The resurgence of the name caused, understandably, some anxiety in Kyiv as historically the name demarks a much larger territory that embraced lands reaching Ukrainian regions far to the West of the present occupied territory¹⁸⁹. As such the use of the term in the Russian media could be understood as a badly veiled suggestion of what may be to come, as well as implying that Ukraine may not be a sovereign state in the eyes of Moscow. The lack of Ukrainian sovereignty is also a common feature in Russian discourse, which predates the Euro Mайдan and conflict in the East but has grown in popularity in the last two years. *Opolchentsy* is a term in common use in Russian news reports for describing the separatists or ‘terrorists’ as Ukrainian politicians and media generally refer to them. The term can be translated into English as home guard or militia and has a long history in the Russian language. The term is profoundly positive and also implies that its members are merely defending their homes and families from an external invasion, in this case an invasion of ‘nationalists’ and ‘banderites’, which most strongly connects them to the use of *opolochentsi* from the Second World War and in doing so keeps steadfast within the Kremlin’s main train of discourse¹⁹⁰.

¹⁸⁶ Teleradiokompaniya zvezda. *Ukrainskiye ugrozhayut zhitelyam Donbassa “Tochkoyu”* (Tzvzevda.ru, 26/05/2015) from http://tvzvezda.ru/news/vstrane_i_mire/content/201505261711-8klu.htm (12/07/2015)

¹⁸⁷ Rossiya segodnya. *V Novorossii karteli iz Ukraini nesut ogromniye poteri* (Rossiya segodnya, 16/11/2014) from <http://www.segodnia.ru/news/151542> (12/12/2014)

¹⁸⁸ Newman, D. *What is Novorossiya role?* (BBC, 16/02/2015) from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31490416> (20/02/2015)

¹⁸⁹ Encyclopedia of Ukraine. *New Russia gubernia* (Encyclopedia of Ukraine, Vol. 3, 1993) from <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\N\E\NewRussiagubernia.htm> (19/11/2014)

¹⁹⁰ Dic.academia.ru. *Sovetskaya istoricheskaya entsiklopediya: opolcheniye* (Akademik.ru, 2014) from <http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/sie/12628/%D0%9E%D0%9F%D0%9E%D0%9B%D0%A7%D0%95%D0%9D%D0%98%D0%95> (12/06/2015)

4.4. THE CITY OF RUSSIAN GLORY

Russian nationalism centered on the idea of Russian empire and then the USSR as a land based empire developed differently to the French or British empires. The main differences were that the Russian empire was created simultaneously with the Russian national identity as Muscovites became Russians, whereas in the West national identity in England and France were at least partially developed before the age of empires arrived. Secondly, Russian imperialism actively incorporated and Russified the elites of other regions and nations. Thirdly, Ukraine and Belarus were not so much Russified from Great Russia as they were from within by their own Little Russian/Ukrainian and Belarusian elites. So it is possible to say that the development of national identity that embraced the peasantry as well as the elite took place in Ukraine and Russia at the same time, furthermore, Little Russians/Ukrainians played an active role in its development. For this reason many Ukrainian cities are still considered in the Russian psyche to be Russian, despite the fact that Ukrainians themselves have largely ceased to consider themselves as Russian or Little Russian¹⁹¹.

For the Russian state Sevastopol and the Crimea are geopolitically important as the Russian Federation's only port on the Black Sea. However this has not been the main reasons given for the Crimea's annexation. The annexation was rather framed as a necessary move to defend the Crimean and Russian population there from the fate met by those in the Odesa fire. However the desire to 'reunite' the peninsula was already present in Russia previous to the Ukrainian crisis and had been since Ukrainian independence as can be seen in the actions taken by NBP partially supported by the local population.

The importance of the city in Russian mythology dates back to the siege of Sevastopol during the Crimean War. Despite the fall of the port to British, French and Ottoman forces the event has gone down in Russian mythology as 'The City of Glory'. In the beginning this myth had a uniting effect as a battle fought by Little Russians, Belarusians and Russians side by side, however it has been rebranded several times. Most importantly was the rebranding of the siege during Stalin's period, which was based on Russian nationalism and largely overlooked Little Russians by this time rebranded as Ukrainians. Under Khrushchev it was once again reinvented to express the brotherhood between soviet Slavs, who had fought together just in time for the peninsula to be gifted to the Ukrainian Republic an event that is now looked on rather bitterly by many Russians¹⁹². A prevalent view in contemporary Russia has become that the peninsula rightly belongs to the Russian

¹⁹¹ Plokyh, Serhii, *The City of Glory: Sevastopol in Russian Historical Mythology* (Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 35, No. 3, Jul., 2000) pp 369-371

¹⁹² Plokyh, Serhii, *The City of Glory: Sevastopol in Russian Historical Mythology* (Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 35, No. 3, Jul., 2000) pp 371-379

Federation and that the majority of the population desires this. Russian media has done much to propagate this idea, but more strongly depends on the siege of Sevastopol during the Second World War in line with official symbolism of the Great Patriotic War then the Crimean War. The Russian documentary *Crimea. The way back home* released on the anniversary of Crimea's 'reunification' is a masterpiece of Russian propaganda mixing old, new and Hollywood style effects. The documentary was also reported to have had extremely high viewing figures for a film of its type with as many as one in two families in Moscow watching its TV premier.¹⁹³

The role of symbolism, and mainly of the Great Patriotic War, is a constant and prevalent feature of modern Russian propaganda. The Kremlin uses symbolism to conjure up images of an imagined past when Russia, or more precisely the Soviet Union, was a great power and could achieve great victories. The prevalence of this view and fixation on the Great Patriotic War will become more obvious in the following chapter that deals with primary sources from Russian news agencies before analyzing the focus group results.

¹⁹³ Vesti.ru, *Fil'm "Krim. Put' na rodinu" v Moscve smotreli prakticheski kazhdaya vtoraya sem'ya* (Vesti.ru 16/03/2015) from <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=2429508> (20/04/2015)

5. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ARTICLES

5.1. SELECTED ARTICLES

In the following section the selected articles, which were presented to the respondents during the focus groups, will be analysed. As previously stated six articles were chosen from Polish and Russian media outlets of various types. The six articles were then placed into three pairs with one Polish and one Russian article in each. The articles were specifically chosen to contradict each other so as to determine the respondents' awareness of the conflicting reports and furthermore record their responses. The three general subjects that are covered are as follows; articles one and two focus on the annexation or reunification of Crimea with Russia, articles three and four focus on the fire in the Odesa trade union building in tragic events that witnessed upwards of 40 deaths, articles five and six are rather shorter and could be said to be more general but their main focus and reason for their selection was to spur on a conversation about Russian military and non-military involvement in eastern Ukraine. A further two aspects of the third and final pair of articles are the terminology used to describe combatants in eastern Ukraine as 'terrorists', 'soldiers' or '*opolocheniye*' (home guard) as well as the use of the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR). The DNR has to date only been recognised by South Ossetia, a breakaway region of Georgia that itself faces a great deal of problems with gaining recognition¹⁹⁴. The articles will be assessed in the corresponding order to which they were used during the focus groups. Several questions also followed each pair of articles to be used in directing the conversation only if and when the respondents went too far out of the parameters of this study, or to provoke them into debate if they appeared to be hesitant in their replies. The questions are not as closely connected to the subjects of the articles as may be expected. Following the final articles there were also substantially more questions as this was the main period in which the respondents could more fully express their opinions and discuss the material. They also alternate between extremely wide questions to which some discussion would be expected and extremely specific questions, however almost all topics were raised by the respondents without prompts.

5.1.1. ARTICLES ONE AND TWO: CRIMEA, ANNEXATION OR REUNIFICATION

The focus of the first two articles used during the focus groups was the annexation or reunification of the Crimean peninsula with Russia. The first text used in the focus groups was *Владимир Путин: Мы не могли оставить жителей Крыма в беде. Это было бы предательство* (Vladimir Putin: We could not leave the residents of Crimea in trouble. This would have been betrayal)

¹⁹⁴ Kyiv Post. *South Ossetia recognises Donetsk People's Republic* (Kyivpost.com, 24/06/2014) from <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/south-ossetia-recognizes-donetsk-peoples-republic-353815.html> (29/07/2015)

We can't abandon the inhabitants of the Crimea in peril. That would be betrayal) from Russia's popular daily tabloid *Комсомольская правда* (Komsomol Truth). The article, in the style of a report, is full of patriotic pomp several times expressing the support for the Crimea's unification with Russia and the population's support for Putin with several references to the amount of applaud he received. "There was such an incredible amount of people in the Kremlin's St George Hall. So many that even the famous defender of Sevastopol and the Crimea, former deputy to the State Duma Konstantin Zatulin was forced to search for a seat". Further on Putin yet again receives great applaud when expressing the "Russianness of the Crimea" and diving into its long history he emphatically states "the Crimea will never be *Banderite!*" The author also attempts to show the contradiction between Ukrainian lack of respect towards *Berkut* an elite Ukrainian police formation that had been present throughout the Maidan protests, where they took many casualties before a large proportion of them defected to Russia, and the refusal of many Ukrainians to accept the peninsula as Ukrainian during the last 20 years. "I asked him (a *Berkut* officer) where they would now keep the Sevastopol flag that had been Ukrainian for more than twenty years? – It has never been Ukrainian. It has always been ours, our Russian flag"¹⁹⁵.

The opposing text was selected from the Polish broadsheet *Rzeczpospolita* with the title *Aneksja Krymu jest Faktem*. The text is in dry journalistic style and generally just points out the facts such as the signing of the treaty in St George's hall to incorporate the Crimea into the Russian Federation. However, in contrast with the previous article the text mentions casualties that have been sustained in the Crimea demonstrating that it was not entirely peaceful. The previous text made no mention of this but referred to casualties *Berkut* sustained during the Maidan protests, which were largely portrayed as peaceful in Europe despite this. The article also contains a rather pessimistic quote from Arseniy Yatsenyuk, acting prime minister in the Ukrainian interim government at the time of publication, "The conflict is losing its political character and taking on the form of a military confrontation". The article does not hide its belief that Russian military units were involved in the action as they refer to actors as "the so-called Russian home defence". Clearly the most important characteristic of the article is the use of the term 'annexation', which for obvious reasons does not appear in Russian state discourse¹⁹⁶.

¹⁹⁵ Ivashkina, D., *Vladimir Putin: Mi ne mogli ostavit' zhityelyey Krima v Bedye. Eto Bilo bi predatelstvo* (Komsomol'skaya pravda, 19/03/2014) from <http://www.kp.ru/daily/26207/3092784/> (12/08/2014)

¹⁹⁶ Jendroszczyk, P., *Aneksja Krymu jest faktem* (Rzeczpospolita, 19/03/2014) from <http://archiwum.rp.pl/arttykul/1236434-Aneksja-Krymu-je-faktem.html> (09/08/2014)

5.1.2. ARTICLES THREE AND FOUR: THE ODESA TRADE UNION FIRE

The following pair of articles refers to the Trade Union fire. The first article *Dziesiątki osób zginęło w płomieniach!* (Tens of People perished in the Flames!) from the Polish tabloid known for its exaggerations and sloppy reporting *Fakt* makes a series of uncorroborated statements. The article rightly refers to the tragedy as the bloodiest day in the Ukrainian crisis. It follows on with what seems to be false information citing sources extremely vaguely as the ‘media’. The author takes great care not to lay the blame on pro-Ukrainian activists. Rather it blames ‘pro-Russians’, ‘separatists’ and ‘pro-Russian forces’ throughout the article. There is also a claim that “Ukrainian activists were also amongst those burned in the building”. Most interestingly is the claim that “most of the victims were armed militants hiding in the trade union building” a statement that there is no proof to confirm. Also of interest is the way that one side is described as ‘Ukrainian activists’ while the opposing side, which sustained nearly all the casualties and largely consisted of local pensioners is described in negative terms as ‘separatists’, ‘armed militants’ and ‘pro-Russian forces’. There is also a clear attempt by the author to balance out the casualties and play down the ‘pro-Russian’ losses¹⁹⁷.

The following article could not be more juxtaposed to the Polish article. The article is taken from the weekly and previously most widely read Russian newspaper, *Аргументы и Факты* (Arguments and Facts), which was bought out by the Russian Government at the beginning of 2014¹⁹⁸. The article *Майданная Украина обречена* (Maidan Ukraine is Doomed) is the longest and most emotionally charged of all the articles used. The author does not even attempt to write in a journalistic style. He rather relies on stereotypes and typecasting Ukrainian activists, and to a lesser extent all of Ukraine, as Nazis in what strongly resembles Soviet style propaganda.

The article opens by comparing the Odesa fire to Khatyn a town in Belarus where more 149 civilians were massacred in the Second World War by the Dirlewanger Brigade, which had recruited Ukrainian and Russian collaborators¹⁹⁹.

“Odessan Khatyn 2014 is decisive and undeniable proof of what was said from the first appearance of people at the EuroMaidan with portraits of Bandera and slogans promising to

¹⁹⁷ Fakt, *Dziesiątki osób zginęło w płomieniach!* (Fakt.pl, 03/05/2014) from <http://www.fakt.pl/wojna-na-ukrainie-odessa-we-krwi-pozar-w-domu-zwiazkow-zawodowych,artykuly,458991,1.html> (01/08/2014)

¹⁹⁸ Lenta. *Moskovskoye pravitelstvo kupilo “Argumenty i Fakty”* (Lenta.ru, 11/03/2014) from <http://lenta.ru/news/2014/03/11/aif/> (29/07/2015)

¹⁹⁹ Khatyn’, gosudarstvenniy memoral’niy kompleks. *Tragedya Khatini* (State Memorial Complex “Khatyn”, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Belarus) from <http://www.khatyn.by/ru/tragedy/> (29/07/2015)

slaughter *Moskali* (derogatory term for Russians) and hang their remains in the branches of the trees”²⁰⁰.

The author raises the issue of Bandera several times and repeatedly refers to Ukrainians as Nazis comparing contemporary Ukraine to 1930s Germany. “The group proclaiming to be ‘true Arians’, or ‘true Ukrainians’, is establishing its domination over the ‘*untermenschen*’. In the author’s opinion those ‘Ukrainian Arians’ involved in the Odesa fire are worse than those collaborating with the Nazis in Khatyn, because they had a choice and have chosen to murder and burn out of their own free will.

Further on he states that they are Nazis “no matter what they may think themselves to be, it also doesn’t depend on what actors, singers or the US State Department thinks of them”. This statement suggests American support for the ‘Nazis’ and provokes the reader to ignore dissenting voices. Furthermore the article displays tendencies for straightforward fear mongering and calls for action defending Russian involvement.

“Those today who implore us not to become involved in ‘an internal-Ukrainian conflict’ are generally not aware that the Ukrainian Nazis who have by fire and sword turned the inhabitants of East Ukraine into slaves will not stop at that. Their nature is such that after that they will begin torching ‘*untermenschen*’ in Voronezh, Belgorod, Kursk, Moscow...”

The scaremongering goes on with reference to the peace and tranquillity created by their victory in the Great Patriotic War followed by “Nazism is on our threshold” calling to the patriotic spirit to fight Nazism once more. He ends by expressing the futility of the Ukrainian state. “I know one thing. Maidan Ukraine in its short existence has shown itself to be a Nazi state... For that reason Maidan Ukraine is doomed to disappear”. Although this article is quite strong it is not a rarity in the Russian media to hear these types of expressions²⁰¹.

5.1.3. ARTICLES FIVE AND SIX: RUSSIA’S INVOLVEMENT IN EASTERN UKRAINE

The first article *Rosyjscy bojownicy próbowali przedostać się na Ukrainę* (Russian militants attempted to make it through to Ukraine) from the Polish language weekly *Newsweek* is written in the style of a journalistic report and contains several quotations taken from an interview with Andriy Lysenko spokesman for the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine. The brief article’s main and only focus is Russia’s violations of Ukraine’s sovereignty. The violations listed in the article include Russian aircraft and helicopters allegedly violating Ukrainian airspace, the firing of Russian artillery

²⁰⁰ Original; “*москалям ножи и гиляки*”

²⁰¹ Sidorchik, A., *Maydannaya Ukraina obrechena* (Argumenti i Fakti, 05/05/2014) from <http://www.aif.ru/euomaidan/opinion/1162373> (04/08/2014)

and Grad rocket launcher vehicles from Russian territory into Ukraine and the attempt made by 150 'Russian militants' to cross into Ukraine. This is self-explanatory, but was included to gauge the respondents' reactions. The only further point worth noting in this text is the general and vague use of the term 'terrorist' by Lysenko to refer to any and all of the combatants fighting against the Kyiv *Rada* in eastern Ukraine²⁰².

The next article is *Силовики Украины обстреляли Угледорск, погибли десятки мирных жителей* (Ukrainian security forces personnel bombarded Vuhlehirs'k, tens of innocent civilians perished) from *PIA Новості* (RIA news), which at the time of the publication had already been transformed into a state-run outlet. This final text, also with its focus on fighting in the East, gives specific attention to civilian casualties so as to contradict the tendency in the Ukrainian *Rada* to label everyone in the East as 'terrorists' no matter what their age, position or level of involvement in the conflict. The source of information for the article is a declaration from the DNR, which in some way justifies the Republic's existence by treating it as a legitimate organisation worthy of quoting. The DNR declaration that is quoted is also of extremely vague and poor quality for an organisation trying to pose as a legitimate governing body. "The town infrastructure is destroyed... there is talk of tens, and even hundreds of dead". The article also condemns the Kyiv *Rada* for "leading an armed operation, in the East of Ukraine, targeting civilians of the region who were displeased with the February *coup*". The point that the Maidan led to a *coup* against the legitimate Ukrainian government is then used as justification for the founding of the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics. The piece ends with a statement from Moscow "Moscow has called the special operation, which has led to a large number of casualties on both sides including civilian casualties, a punishment operation and has called on Kyiv to cease the operation at once". The Kremlin has strived very hard to position itself as the defender of the oppressed people of the Donbas from the outbreak of the conflict.²⁰³ In line with this during 2014 the Russian press commonly featured stories in relation to refugee numbers and the help they had received in Russia, and to a lesser extent the delivery of food and medical supplies to the Donbas.

²⁰² Newsweek, „Rosyjscy bojownicy próbowali przedostać się na Ukrainę” (Newsweek Polska, 01/08/2014) from <http://swiat.newsweek.pl/ukraina-konflikt-bojownicy-na-granicy-z-ukraina-newsweek-pl,artykuly,344861,1.html> (01/08/2014)

²⁰³ RIA, „Силовики України обстріляли Угледорск, погинули ддесятки мирних жителів” (PIA Novosti, 13/08/2014) from <http://ria.ru/world/20140813/1019884153.html> (14/08/2014)

5.2. FOCUS GROUPS ANALYSIS

In this section the focus groups based on the articles in the previous section will be analyzed. Three focus groups took place during the last week in August and first in September 2014. They were led in Russian and organized with the help of, and on the premises of, Lobachevsky University in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia. The analysis of the transcripts will be conducted by theme, meaning that for the most part the analysis will follow the previous section's breakdown of events by article. However, some statements and periods of the resulting discussions will not fall into chronological order, as at times respondents would briefly return to formerly discussed subjects to add a point that they forgot to make earlier, or to connect it to a further theme. Therefore, the sections will begin by analyzing the juxtaposition between the annexation of Crimea and the reunification with Russia.

5.2.1. CRIMEA: RUSSIAN OR UKRAINIAN?

The general consensus on the first theme was that it was a case of reunification with Russia. However, there were varied responses between the groups. The third focus group displayed vehement nationalism and agreement with Russian propaganda;

“I can't understand why the Crimean battalions (here Ukrainian) refused to leave... to voluntarily lead their battalions out of Russian territory. It seems to me in any case to be a provocation by the Ukrainian government to start a war with Russia”.

The respondent's answer clearly shows that she unquestionably accepted the Crimea as Russian territory. Further on the respondent repeats several times that the Crimea is Russian to which all other respondents in the group agree. Moreover one respondent points out that it is unfair to try and convey, as the article does, that there was any sort of occupation. When asked about the Crimean referendum all of group three agreed to its legitimacy pointing out that “by law the citizens had a right to a referendum”. Keeping with this trend group two was also in agreement that the referendum was legitimate for the most part, although it was also expressed that this was of little concern as the Crimea was Russian anyway. However some voices of concern were raised as to the conflict starting due to Russia's actions in the Crimea. More importantly several respondents explained that the Crimea had previously been Russian and to them always seemed to be;

“It was always Russian. Really... in the history of the Russian state it (Crimea) was from the very start Russian – It's our City of Glory (lit. Hero City). – Yes, it's Crimea, it's well, Sevastopol. – There are so many Russian citizens in the Crimea. I for one wasn't surprised that the Crimea joined Russia, anyway that is exactly what was supposed to happen. – How to put it, well I

think for everyone, not just in Russia, this didn't come as much of a shock. – Generally it had always seemed to me that the Crimea was ours”.

The first group displayed the highest level of disagreement and made comparisons with Chechnya and Russia's hypocrisy in not allowing a referendum there. However in general most respondents also agreed that the Crimea was Russian. The next theme to be covered was the legitimacy of the interim government.

All groups viewed the interim government as less than legitimate, but it was clear from the responses that group two and three had little idea of what and from whom the government was made. Group one was the only group to possess an actual understanding of the government yet still believed it to be illegitimate:

“No. speaking bluntly, their prime minister is a guy from the square who got to the parliament from all the screaming. No, that's not right... it's as if I would go to the square and we'd shout to see who has the most friends... No, it's not right” .

5.2.2. FASCIST UKRAINE?

The next pair of texts and the accompanying questions was focused on the Odesa fire and the proclaimed fascist threat facing Russia and beyond. The fascist/Nazi threat and the re-emergence of *Banderovtsy/Banderites* and Ukrainian nationalists has been a main feature of Russian propaganda as has been mentioned. Nevertheless, the resulting discussions during the focus groups were not what had been anticipated. Group one criticised the fourth article, *Майданная Украина обречена*, for the writers warmongering approach and hyperbole, going as far as accusing the writer himself of sounding like a Nazi for his use of the phrase “I am not interested if Ukraine will survive after this”. A second respondent believed the article was a provocation to justify further violence in Ukraine “I have a similar feeling (that the writer sounds like a Nazi). So they are Nazis, they're bad, it doesn't matter what will happen to them, let them (Ukrainian nationalists) wipe each other out – none of it really matters”.

Group two was more in line with our predicted results. Without the use of the prompts several respondents quickly began accusing Ukrainians and the Ukrainian government of being and supporting fascism. The government was accused of adopting Nazi symbols, treating Nazism in a positive way and using Nazis to secure its position in power. There were no voices of dissent, however several respondents in group two felt it necessary to point out that not all Ukrainians nor were all of the participants of Maidan Nazis.

Group three only approached the subject after the prompt “is there a real fascist threat in Ukraine”. The first respondent to speak declared “that’s simply propaganda”, to which two further respondents proceeded to challenge her raising the issue of Bandera and Ukrainian *Banderovtsy*. “It seems to me to be a provocation. Some people want to raise the issue that Russia didn’t fight with fascism, the real heroes are *Banderovtsy*, and show Russia as if it was an occupant”. In the following discussion the respondents articulate anxiety over the number of right-wing radical and *Banderits* in Ukraine, however this group also expressed their beliefs that ,as worrying as they may be, they only make up a small group of the population. Furthermore, there is a strong feeling through all the groups that right-wing fascist/Nazi elements are small in size in Ukraine, but are using the crisis in Ukraine to make their presence felt. It is also of interest that the respondent uses Russia rather than the Soviet Union when referring to the Great Patriotic War. This is a prime example of the rebranding of Russia as the sole bearer of the Soviet past disregarding Ukraine’s role and therefore represents a historical inaccuracy. Although this inaccuracy has become beneficial for Ukrainian nationalists and nation builders as well as the Russian state because it enables Ukraine to distance itself from its Soviet past and blame the Soviet Union for any failings, despite being for the most part a willing and influential member of the Union. On the other hand it leaves Russia to claim full responsibility for Soviet victories and demonise independent Ukraine for its alleged fascist alignment visible in the admiration shown to Nazi collaborators and Ukraine nationalists.

A final point in this section closely connected with the strength of fascist movements in Ukraine, was who was actually involved in the Maidan protests and why. This question was only briefly covered due to time restrictions. A reasonably wide variety of answers was given including extremists, the youth, students and just the general public. The most common feature, however, was a commonly held belief that a large proportion of protestors were paid to take part in the protest. “As far as I know, a lot of them were school pupils and students who were enticed to get involved and paid for their time”. However, it was agreed that not all the protestors were there for financial reward. Furthermore, in group two, arguably the most ‘patriotic’ of the groups, several respondents accused the United States of sponsoring events in Ukraine. To the follow up question of who holds real power in Ukraine, there was unanimous agreement in group two that the United States held real sway. It was further expressed that “Ukraine like a dog runs where it’s told to”, Ukrainians had no real power, and “real power is no longer on the territory of Ukraine”.

In conclusion, the respondents were rather more tempered in their responses than had been anticipated. Although, the majority of respondents did voice concerns as to Nazis/fascists, right-wing ultras and *Banderovtsy* in Ukraine it was also made clear in each group that these were marginal

groups and did not represent all of Ukraine. This goes against the hyperbole that has been one of the most common features of Russia's media coverage of the Ukrainian crisis. A further element specific to the protests was the widely held belief that a large proportion of the protestors took part in Maidan for financial reward with some convinced that the United States had been the sponsor behind events. This is a common conception in Russia that predates the Ukrainian crisis, and has risen again with each of the Coloured Revolutions. It is not a baseless belief as western NGOs are known to have spent considerably amounts of money in Ukraine as well as over former Soviet Republics to promote western values, the rule of law and European integration amongst other things. Unsurprisingly, this is seen by the Kremlin as a challenge to its interests in what it still considers to be its sphere of influence.

5.2.3. RUSSIAN INVOLVEMENT THE CONFLICT AND CASUALTIES

The final two articles and following discussion was the most extensive in all focus groups. The main focus of the discussion was the involvement of foreign forces and the influence of foreign nations in Ukrainian events. These of course included the United States, the European Union and Poland as joint initiator of the Eastern Partnership alongside Sweden. The Eastern Partnership, of which the Association Agreement that led to the first protest at Maidan, is considered by many to be the reason behind the Ukrainian crisis, however this is still passionately disputed. The final point of discussion in this section was the humanitarian situation with the local population.

All three groups raised the humanitarian cost of the Ukrainian crisis in the Donbas. They were all similar in their responses blaming the Ukrainian government for targeting peaceful civilians. In group one a respondent blamed the Ukrainian President Poroshenko personally for civilian losses, and a respondent in group two went a little further in calling Ukrainian military actions "punishment operation" targeting civilians in the Donbas for voting to leave Ukraine in the DNR and LNR referenda. "Punishment operation" has been a regular tag for what Ukraine calls Anti Terrorist Operation in eastern Ukraine. One respondent declared;

"Well there is an infinite number of casualties. Every day they (Russian media) are reporting on how many have been killed. Anyway, this is also a difficult situation for Russia, I mean I heard that more than half a million (Ukrainian) citizens have ended up in Russia".

In all groups attention was also brought to the fact that the Ukrainian crisis had resulted in hundreds of thousands of refugees entering Russia many to Nizhny Novgorod. In group three it was mentioned that many cars with Ukrainian number plates could now be seen in the city. In group one a respondent complained that from the international community only Russia was willing to supply

humanitarian aid to citizens in eastern Ukraine perhaps in response to the controversial convoys of trucks, one of which was on its way to Luhansk at the time of the focus group and received a great deal of air time in Russia and abroad²⁰⁴. Furthermore, solidarity with the population of eastern Ukraine which was strongly expressed in all groups was not without its limits. In group one a young female student expressed with more than a little resentment the preferential treatment she believed Ukrainians were receiving;

“They (Ukrainians) can enter university with lower requirements; they don’t even have to supply original documents. As a matter of fact it’s a pretty lousy situation for Russia, because we have to support people who are basically from another country. We have our own problems, we should be looking after our own, and now others as well, from a different country. The problem is that not all of them are escaping those Oblasts because they are suffering. There are also those who want to use the situation to move to Russia... There are those who are really suffering and those who just want to use the situation to their benefit”.

Arguably the main aim of the focus groups was to gauge the awareness of the respondents as to Russia’s role in the conflict. Russia has strenuously denied any involvement in the conflict in eastern Ukraine from the outset. The Russian media has also been adamant that no Russian soldiers have been sent to the region neither have any weapons or military supplies. The Kremlin has maintained this stance despite mounting and extensive evidence to the contrary. There was consensus across the groups that the Ukrainian conflict was in essence a civil war, with only one dissenting voice from a young male respondent in group one. Group three displayed an astounding level of cognitive dissonance simultaneously claiming that Russia was only acting in defence while completely denying the presence not only of Russian soldiers but even of Russian volunteers in eastern Ukraine. When challenged as to whether there could be Russian volunteers fighting there one respondent replied;

“No, entrance is blocked. They don’t let anyone through. We have Ukrainian friends here who are students... they didn’t let them go home in the summer. They didn’t let them go home. I mean, they don’t let anyone through. There are no volunteers there, they simply wouldn’t get through. It’s the media that are inflating this. As if it’s our military vehicles with soldiers and flags driving around... Basically it is hard to tell a Russian from a Ukrainian. They speak Russian just the same. Specifically foreigners can’t tell who is who, who is that shouting and who is that driving”.

²⁰⁴ RT, *Russia’s 2nd Ukraine aid convoy of 200 trucks arrives in Lugansk* (RT.com, 13/09/2014) from <http://www.rt.com/news/187460-russian-aid-convoy-ukraine/> (10/08/2015)

This statement was then affirmed by the further members of the group with not even a hint of disagreement. This is an impressive level of ignorance considering the amount of recruitment tents for volunteers to be sent to the Donbas on Russian streets, one even positioned no more than three hundred meters from the premise where the focus group was held. Even furthermore considering that the Kremlin's official stance is that it cannot prevent individuals for volunteering, but no official troops will be stationed in Ukraine. There has also been a significant amount of statements released by military officers, politicians and officials from the DNR and LNR confirming that Russian volunteers are present. Group two took a slightly different approach, however also denied the presence of Russian military personnel in eastern Ukraine. The most forceful voices in the group were convinced that Russian troops had been massed on the border to defend Russia against Ukrainian attacks. Additionally, it was mentioned that Ukrainian artillery had been actively targeting Russian villages close to the border, which was yet another Russian media story that for a brief period received extensive coverage. Furthermore, one respondent voiced suspicion that article five had been taken from the Ukrainian media due to its anti-Russian stance and claims that Russians had attempted to cross the border.

When asked directly about Russian involvement in eastern Ukraine, unlike group three group two displayed a large degree of scepticism towards both articles and their own experiences with the media in general, however they were unconvinced that Russians were actively fighting. When group one was asked who they believed was involved in fighting on the side of DNR and LNR one respondent replied "a peaceful home guard (locals) was formed to resist (Kyiv)". However she was challenged by a young male respondent who was throughout the focus group the most outspoken critics of Putin and Russian policy;

"So peaceful home guard just took some military vehicles and surrounded the Ukrainian army. That's impossible, no way. Without a doubt there are Russians fighting there... so they simply took some guys from the scheme grabbed some assault rifles and went off, coming up with a plan to outsmart the Ukrainian army. Come on..."

The same respondent had made a similarly interesting statement earlier in the focus group;

"We basically took the Crimea thinking they would be glad. Then we said eastern Ukraine will be glad too, but they don't want to join Russia, and now I feel we are quietly taking over the East. Well, it won't be this quiet this time as it was with the Crimea. Have you heard about how we took our army in there? I mean the ones that are on holiday, soldiers on holiday, they don't let them out the country, and that's why they are off to help their brothers in Ukraine.

That's drivel. A soldier would be sitting at his Dacha outside the city, not going to fight in Ukraine".

He was met with grudging acceptance that there was a possibility he was correct, but the group was not overly convinced of Russian military involvement. In short the majority of respondents across the board were either strongly convinced that there was no Russian involvement, or sceptical of all they had heard from all sides and uncomfortable with voicing a definitive answer. This may be down to the fact that more timid members of the group were uncomfortable with expressing their views when they were faced with vehement patriotic support from other members. The only exception was the young male respondent from group one, who was more than comfortable with expressing a consistent anti-Putin stance from the outset and confidently criticised Russian action on several occasions throughout the focus group.

5.2.4. INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

The question about Polish involvement was met with confusion across the board as the respondents were dumbfounded as to why a question about Poland would be posed. In general Poland is not considered to be a worthy adversary in Russia and is largely overlooked in all spheres of life, which cannot be said about Russia in Poland. However, there was one exception. In group two a respondent had heard that there were training camps for activists and mercenaries in Poland who were being used in Ukraine and against Russia. Besides this no one had anything to say about Poland. The same cannot be said for America.

As aforementioned, one of the tactics employed by Russian propagandists is to portray the conflict as being one between Russia and the United States or NATO expansion. Timothy Snyder has written about this phenomenon in several recent publications that have been included in this study. Therefore, the opinions voiced by the respondents in the following section should come as little surprise.

Group one was rather tempered. America was not too strongly criticised, however it was understood that the Soviet Union and now Russia represented America's main geopolitical enemy and it was believed that Russia was growing year by year in strength and therefore stood in the way of American plans to build "worldwide hegemony". It was also mentioned that the American economy booms on war especially since the wars always take place beyond America's borders. There was also an extremely pessimistic outlook as to the future in group one. They believed that Russia would become isolated and would most likely have to build stronger connections with countries such as Brazil, but they also accepted that there was a strong possibility that Russia might annex eastern

Ukraine. This is interesting because no other group expressed this possibility, however not unexpected as group one also stands alone as the only group to partially accept the presence of Russian forces in the Donbas.

In group two, one respondent was mocked for suggesting that there were Russian military personnel present there, yet more interesting was the statements that followed from other respondents. “Well it is the same with the Ukrainian army. There are Americans and British amongst them”, a second respondent added that Germans were also present. It was widely believed that paid mercenaries from western Europe and America formed a large part of the Ukrainian fighting forces. The name Blackwater was also raised several times during group two. Blackwater is an extremely controversial American private contracting ‘security’ company that was heavily involved in fighting and illegal actions in Iraq, but as a private company acting outside of America’s jurisdiction was thought to be easily deniable for the government of that day²⁰⁵. The presence of Blackwater, which has neither been conclusively proven nor disproven, was for a short period reported in Russian press and has recurred from time to time thereafter²⁰⁶. The story may just be a conspiracy theory as several other conspiracy theories were raised during the study including the possible involvement of masons, however none of them were taken seriously enough by other respondents to generate any real debate or characterise the conversation. However, it is notable that the Blackwater story was also picked up by some British tabloids²⁰⁷. For group two, the most patriotic group of respondents even reciting several anecdotes centred on Russian military bravery, Ukraine was seen to be a bystander an ‘intermediary’ in what is actually a conflict between the United States and Russia. This fits perfectly with what Snyder has suggested is one of the main aims of the Kremlin’s propagandists, namely to withdraw Ukraine from the discourse altogether and therefore portray this as an attack on Russia from a warmongering America rather than an attack by a militarily superior Russia on its neighbour. This is also the group that most strongly sees the US presence standing behind events on the Maidan. In addition Obama was accused of spoiling Russian-US relations, which in one respondent’s opinion had been improving until America’s involvement in Ukraine as it tried to use the country as a weapon against Russia. America is also condemned for its part in the Coloured

²⁰⁵ Roberts, D. *Blackwater verdicts seen as watershed for accountability in war zones* (The Guardian, 22/10/2014) from <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/oct/22/blackwater-iraq-killings-verdicts-watershed-accountability> (15/08/2015)

²⁰⁶ RT. *SMI: Na storonye Kieva v DONbasse voyuyut naemniki iz Blackwater* (RT na ruskom, 22/02/2015) from <http://russian.rt.com/article/70186> (15/08/2015)

²⁰⁷ Gayle, D. *Has Blackwater been deployed to Ukraine?* (Daily Mail, 08/03/2014) from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2576490/Are-Blackwater-active-Ukraine-Videos-spark-talk-U-S-mercenary-outfit-deployed-Donetsk.html> (19/20/2014)

Revolutions. However the strongest statement immersed in paranoia about American involvement was;

“All Slavs are under threat at the moment. In all there is an active attempt to exterminate all Slavs, Slavic nations, their languages and Slavs themselves. Not just America, the EU as well, they are trying to destroy the Russian nation, blame her for absolutely everything, and they are starting to exterminate Russia. These wars, provocations to start wars, it’s all done in order to exterminate Russians and Slavs completely. This isn’t just what I think. It’s a fact!”

This was certainly the most outspoken and heated response from all of the focus groups. Although an element of the respondent’s beliefs is present in Russian propaganda and media output it is quite unlikely that this is her sole or even main source of such beliefs. However, this impression of a Russia under attack is widely accepted and has been since the late 1990s. It has been further aggravated by NATO’s continuous push East onto Russian borders. A strong element of Eurasianism can also be seen in the respondent’s words although in a much cruder version than the academic would be accustomed to. For the respondent Slavs quite clearly form a civilisation of their own separate from that of Europe and America an assumable Russia would fill the role as the dominant leader.

The respondents’ statements and responses were also flavoured with a strong dose of scepticism as many of them commented that they simply did not know what to believe. Moreover, they also found time to criticise the Ukrainian media for purportedly continuously printing lies, and mentioned the lack of ethics amongst Ukrainian bloggers who, they also claimed, were being paid to lead an anti-Russian campaign. Furthermore, the western press, and more precisely American, was condemned on several occasions for leading and engaging in anti-Russian propaganda. However, veiled criticism was also voiced against the Russian media as some respondents were not sure that they could believe what was being broadcast, and whether they were being told the full story. Despite this, it was clear that the respondents were more antagonised by foreign broadcasters than Russian regardless of the fact that very few of them claimed to have even read the foreign press. It was therefore an assumption that the western press would of course have taken an anti-Russian line.

6. CONCLUSION

This dissertation has discussed the methods used by the Kremlin in its propaganda war against Ukraine regionally and internationally. Furthermore, chapter two entitled “Changing Trends in Russian Media War Coverage” has set the background for developments in relation to the Ukrainian Crisis. Additionally, the following chapter “Key Characters in Modern Russia: The Ideology Behind the Pictures” focuses on key players amongst the Russian elite and the ideological characteristics that stand behind their actions. Chapter four describes the importance of symbolism and its use before chapter five analyses several examples of this propaganda in comparison to Polish news reports before dealing directly with the results collected from Russian focus groups.

In conclusion, there is a perception amongst many of the Russian elite that Russia is under attack and losing a geopolitical battle against the West. One of the main aspects of this battle, as Panarin has made clear, is the use of soft power in the form of media, propaganda, NGOs etc. Panarin developed a new approach to this battle, seemingly borrowing much from the West such as the use of broadcasters and NGOs that is generally known as ‘information warfare’. The benefits of this new type of war, amongst others, are its use to compensate for Russia’s weakness in conventional arms, and perhaps more importantly with these means a clandestine war can be more easily led enabling the Kremlin to deny all involvement.

The targets of this new ‘non-linear war’ are varied. They include western populations with the aim of spreading discord and immersing the public in a nihilistic or post-modernist doubt, where anything or nothing could be true and it is difficult to decide whom to trust. This in turn puts western governments, cautious of public opinion, in a tricky situation where they may be more hesitant to act. In essence, this can be viewed as an attempt to export the nihilistic view of news that took hold of Russia during the 1980s and 1990s. The aim of propaganda in Russia’s near abroad is a little different. There it is used in a similar way to conventional soft power to promote Russian values and a Russian take on history. It is being used particularly well to divide the local population and bring neighbouring governments into disrepute with at least some citizens.

The development of methods that have led to this new breed of propaganda are evident in past war coverage. However, the Russo-Georgian Conflict stands out as the turning point when an active and sustained attempt was made through *Russia Today* to affect western public opinion. This was shown largely to have failed, but the Kremlin has clearly made drastic improvements to its output with increased funding and some of the greatest minds in the country such as Panarin working on reforms.

The background for this Russian style of journalism was several decades of disillusionment and lack of faith in a crumbling Communist system and rampant Capitalism, 'everything is PR'. This atmosphere had a distinct influence on the generation reaching maturity at the time, a generation that is now largely responsible for running the country in people such as Dugin and Surkov. Aspects of the ideology that stands behind such characters, namely Neo-Eurasianism, were also visible in the respondents' answers such as the view that Russia exists to fulfil a predestined role as a world power.

The symbolism used by the Russian state and media is used with several aims. First of all it provides a perception of stability and a connection with former greatness and splendour when the Soviet Union, now solely represented by Russia, achieved its greatest victory in the Great Patriotic War. Of course, as is commonplace in state and national history this is largely based on a myth that involves forgetting as much as remembering. For instance, the part played by Ukraine and Ukrainians in the final victory over Nazi Germany and more generally in the construction of the Soviet Union and its system is largely forgotten. The same can also be said about the defence of Sevastopol in the Crimean and Great Patriotic War in which large numbers of Ukrainian and Belarusians took part. Fortunately, for Russia this version of history also suits the Ukrainian *Rada*, which has put great effort into distancing itself from Russia and its Soviet past. Secondly, the emphasis on Bandera, *Banderites* and Ukrainian nationalists is also used to justify Russia's involvement in the Donbas. However, as Snyder points out, this is an oxymoron that seemingly goes unnoticed in Russia as it did during the focus groups. Russian involvement is continuously justified by the Russian media and representatives of the state as well as those of the Luhansk and Donetsk Peoples' Republics, while simultaneously being vehemently denied by the Kremlin.

It is telling that only one respondent from all the focus groups criticised Russia's annexation of the Crimea. It is unlikely however that the belief that the Crimea is rightfully Russian is solely based on recent Russian media broadcasts from the beginning of the Ukrainian Crisis. It is far more likely that support for such a move predates the crisis and is more deeply imbedded in Russian culture, history teaching and the Russian psyche. More research on this matter would be beneficial to the wider academic community and unfortunately could not be included in this study due to obvious limitation.

The main two areas where results from the focus groups diverged drastically from the study's expectations were those concerned with a fascist threat posed by Ukrainian nationalists to Ukraine and Russia, which has been one of the strongest lines in Russian propaganda, and the role played by conspiracy theories, which have been extensively studied by Sakwa. Conspiracy theories were raised

by several respondents despite there being no prompts in this direction; however they were quickly passed over by other respondents in the groups who did not consider them worthy of discussion. This exemplifies less interest in conspiracy theories than had been expected. The rather tempered replies to the questions and articles were unexpected, as was the criticism by the respondents of one of the authors for displaying fascist tendencies in the article. However fears were expressed and a stereotyping of Ukrainians as *Banderites* by small number of respondents did occur.

By and far the main view expressed was, as mentioned previously, one of a Russia under attack from America, NATO and to a lesser extent the European Union. This is a view that has a long tradition in Soviet and Russian teaching as well as the media, and is arguably to at least some extent accurate. The enlargement of NATO into Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Coloured Revolutions has served to intensify this feeling in Russia. In addition the present Ukrainian Crisis and accompanying propaganda has done much to strengthen the impression that the West poses a threat to the Russian Federation and ethnic Russians.

This study has also found that current Russian media output concerning the Ukrainian Crisis has done much to revive and reinforce negative stereotyping of Ukrainians as *Banderites* etc. to justify Russian actions such as the annexation of the Crimea. Respondents, at times doubtful and pessimistic as to the information they were receiving, were still far more likely to follow the state line even when this meant contradicting themselves.

Furthermore, the study has also shown that a new form of propaganda is currently being used against a foreign readership and viewers specifically through organisations such as RT. Rather unconventionally the aim of this new approach appears to be to undermine foreign news agencies and has at times been labelled as an attack on traditional journalism. As such it is a rather pessimistic, post-modernist approach to news broadcasting. The ideology for such an approach can be traced back to the 1980s and 1990s when a crumbling Soviet Union, a loss of faith in the state ideology and the appearance of widespread nihilism provided fertile ground for such a sceptical view of journalism as no more or less than 'PR'. It is possible that the post-Iraq, post-Afghan invasions period in the West accompanied by falsities concerning weapons of mass destruction will prove to have supplied similar fertile ground in the West for just such a nihilistic view of the media to take hold. For this reason similar results to those acquired during the focus groups could possibly be found amongst western viewers who rely on *RT* and similar broadcasters for their information needs, however this falls outside the parameters of this study. More research in this direction would be beneficial to the field of study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books, articles and reports

- Amnesty International. *Eastern Ukraine conflict: Summary killings, misrecorded and misreported* (Amnesty International, 20/10/2014) from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/articles/news/2014/10/eastern-ukraine-conflict-summary-killings-misrecorded-and-misreported/> (12/10/2014)
- Allison, R. *Russia Resurgent? Moscow's Campaign to 'Coerce Georgia to Peace'* (International Affairs, Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944, Vol. 84, No. 6, Nov 2008)
- At a glance. *Russia: political parties in a 'managed democracy'* (European Parliament, December 2014)
- Bacon, E. Renz, B. Cooper, J. *Securitising Russia: the domestic politics of Putin* (Manchester university Press, Manchester, 2006)
- Braithwaite, R. *The Russians in Afghanistan 1979-89* (Profile Books Ltd, London, 2011)
- Braithwaite, R. *The Russians in Afghanistan: part II* (Open Democracy, 06/05/2011) from <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/rodric-braithwaite/russians-in-afghanistan-part-ii> (27/05/2015)
- Crowe, D, M. *War Crimes, Genocide, And Justice* (Palgrave, New York, 2014)
- Darczewska, J., *Autonomia rosyjskiej wojny informacyjnej: Operacja krymska – Studium przypadku* (Punkt widzenia, 42, May/2014, Warsaw)
- Dunlop, J, B. *Alexandr Dugin's "Neo-Eurasian" Textbook and Dmitrii Trenin's Ambivalent Response* (Harvard Ukrainian Studies, Vol. 25, No 1/2, Spring 2001)
- Ersen, E. *Neo-Eurasianism and Putin's 'Multipolarism' in Russian Foreign Policy* (Turkish Review of Eurasian Studies, Annual 2004)
- Gerasimov, Valeriy *Tsennosti' Nauki v Predvidyeni* (Voyenno-promishlyenniy kur'yer, 05/03/2013)
- Hamilton, D., Mangott, G.,. *The New Eastern Europe: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova* (Washington D.C., Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation, 2007)
- Herpen, Macel, H. Van.,. *Wojny Putina* (Prószyński I S-ka, Warsaw, 2014)
- Koltsova, O.,. *News Media and Power in Russia* (Routledge, London, 2005)
- Kuchma, L. *Ukraina – ne Rossiia* (Vremlia, Moscow, 2003)
- Likhacheva, A. Makarov, I. *Natsional'naya identichnost' I budushchee Rossii* (Valadi, Moscow, February 2014)
- Mantilla, K. *Anna Politovskaya, award-winning Kremlin critic assassinated* (Off Our Backs, Vol. 36, No. 3, 2006)

- Marples, R, D. *Stepan Bandera: The Resurrection of a Ukrainian National Hero* (European-Asia Studies, Vol. 58, No. 4, June 2006)
- McDonald, Scott *Propaganda and Information Warfare in the Twenty-First Century: Altered Images and Deception Operations* (Routledge, 2007, Oxon)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. *White Book on Violations of Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Ukraine (July – November 2014)* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Moscow, 2014)
- Oates, S,. *Introduction to Media and Politics* (SAGE, London, 2008)
- Oates, S,. *Television, Elections and Democracy in Russia* (SAGE, London, 2008)
- Payind, A. *Soviet-Afghan Relations from Cooperation to Occupation* (International Journal of Middle East Studies, Cambridge University Press ,Vol. 21, No. 1, 1989)
- Pomerantsev, P,. Weiss, M,. *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money* (The Institute of Modern Russia, published in The Interpreter, New York, 2014)
- Panarin, I. *Informatsionnaya voina i geopolitica* (Moscow, Velikiy Put', 2006)
- Pomeranstevev, P,. *Yes, Russia Matters, Putin's Guerrilla Strategy* (World Affairs, 9/2014)
- Rogatchevski, A. *The National Bolshevik Party (1993-2001): A Brief Timeline* (New Zealand Slavonic Journal, Vol. 41, 2007)
- Sakwa, R,. *Conspiracy Narratives as a Mode of Engagement in International Politics: The Case of the Russo-Georgian War* (The Russian Review, Vol 71, Issue 4, 03/09/2012)
- Shlapentokh, D. *Dugin Eurasianism: A Window on the Mind of the Russian Elit or an Intellectual Ploy!* (Studies in East European Thought, Vol. 59, No. 3, September 2007)
- Smolin, B, M. *Ukrainskii separatizm v Rossii: ideologiya natsional'nogo raskola* (Moskva, Moscow, 1998)
- Snyder, T,. *Europe and Ukraine; Past and future* (Eurozone, 16/04/2014) from www.eurozine.com/pdf/2014-04-16-snyder-en.pdf (06/07/2014)
- Veprintsev, V, B. Manoylo, A, V. Petrenko, A, I. Frolov, D, B. *Operatsii informatsionno-psikhologicheskoy voiny* (Gorachaya liniya-Telekom, Moscow, 2015)
- White, S. Feklyunina, V. *Identities and Foreign Policies in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus; The Other Europes* (Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstock, 2014)
- Yarosh, D,. *Zvernennya do prezidenta Ukraini viy'kobo-politichnoho pukhu "Pravy Sektor"* (PravySektor.info, 16/08/2014) from <http://pravyysektor.info/NEWS/ZVERNENNYA-DO-PREZYDENTA-UKRAJINY-VIJSKOVO-POLITYCHNOHO-RUHU-PRAVYJ-SEKTOR/> (20/08/2014)
- Yashin, I,. Shorin, O,. *Voyna – Putin* (Nyezavisimiy ekspertniy doklad(Russian Opposition), Moscow, May, 2015)

Internet sources and newspaper articles

Barantsev, V. Boyko, A. Ivanov, A. Zakharova, L. Khodarev, V. Peremikina, K. Kolganova, A. *Prisoyedinyeniye Krima: Kak "zyelyeniye chelovyeki" stali "vezhlivimi lyudmi"* (Komsomol'skaya Pravda, 19/03/2014) from <http://www.kp.ru/daily/26356.4/3237819/> (04/06/2015)

BBC. *Georgia conflict: Key statements* (BBC, 19/08/2008) from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7556857.stm> (27/05/2015)

BBC, *Ukraine crisis: Yatsenyuk is PM-designate, Kiev Maidan told* (BBC, 26/02/2014) from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26359150> (01/03/2015)

BBC Europe. *Putin declares Russian troop deaths in peacetime a secret* (BBC Europe, 28/05/2015) from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32913929> (28/05/2015)

Bidder, Benjamin *Russia Today: Putin's Weapon in the War of Images* (Spiegel online, 13/08/2013) from <http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/putin-fights-war-of-images-and-propaganda-with-russia-today-channel-a-916162.html> (22/04/2015)

Boren, D. Z. *The world's most popular politicians: Putin's approval rating hits 86%* (The Independent, 27/02/2015) from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/chart-putins-popularity-reaches-86-but-how-does-it-compare-to-other-world-leaders-10075063.html> (29/07/2015)

Curtis, A. *The Years of Stagnation and the Poodle of Power* (BBC, 18/01/2012) from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/adamcurtis/entries/20c22534-f722-3d7a-b7ba-0506fcc00063> (12/07/2015)

Dubovitsky, N. *Bez neba* (Rusky Pioner, 12/03/2014) from <http://ruspioner.ru/honest/m/single/4131> (20/09/2014)

Ekho Moskvyy. *Zhiteli Slavyanska oprovergayut informatsiyu o beschinstvakh ukrainskikh voennikh b gopode* (Ekho Moskvyy, 14/07/2014) from <http://echo.msk.ru/news/1359740-echo.html> (21/07/2014)

Evans, J. *Spinning Russia* (Foreign Policy, 01/12/2005) from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2005/12/01/spinning-russia/> (01/05/2015)

Fakt., *Dziesiątki osób zginęło w płomieniach!* (Fakt.pl, 03/05/2014) from <http://www.fakt.pl/wojna-na-ukrainie-odessa-we-krwi-pozar-w-domu-zwiazkow-zawodowych,artykuly,458991,1.html> (01/08/2014)

Focus. *V Rossii predstavili gil'm o tom, chot Ukraina ne sushchectvuyet* (Focus.ua, 15/05/2014) from <http://focus.ua/country/306044/> (18/06/2014)

Garbaciauskaite, M., *Historian Timothy Snyder: Ukrainian crisis is not about Ukraine, it's about Europe* (DELFI, 12/11/2014) from <http://en.delfi.lt/central-eastern-europe/historian-timothy-snyder-ukrainian-crisis-is-not-about-ukraine-its-about-europe.d?id=66368672#ixzz3JLn9ZWTD> (07/01/2015)

Gayle, D. *Has Blackwater been deployed to Ukraine?* (Daily Mail, 08/03/2014) from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2576490/Are-Blackwater-active-Ukraine-Videos-spark-talk-U-S-mercenary-outfit-deployed-Donetsk.html> (19/20/2014)

Ivashkina, D., *Vladimir Putin: Mi nye mogli ostavit' zhityelyey Krima v Bedye. Eto Bilo bi predatelstvo* (Komsomol'skaya pravda, 19/03/2014) from <http://www.kp.ru/daily/26207/3092784/> (12/08/2014)

Jendroszczyk, P., *Aneksja Krymu jest faktem* (Rzeczpospolita, 19/03/2014) from <http://archiwum.rp.pl/artykul/1236434-Aneksja-Krymu-jest-faktem-.html> (09/08/2014)

Jones, J. *Putin's youth movement provides a sinister backdrop to Russia's protests* (The Guardian, 8/12/2011) from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/dec/08/putin-russia-elections> (12/07/2015)

Khatyn', gosudarstvenniy memoral'niy kompleks. *Tragedya Khatini* (State Memorial Complex "Khatyn", Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Belarus) from <http://www.khatyn.by/ru/tragedy/> (29/07/2015)

Original; "москалям ножи и гуляки"

Khovanskaya, A. *Krimchanam ponravilos' zhit' v Rossii* (Komsomol'skaya Pravda, 14/05/2015) from <http://www.kaliningrad.kp.ru/daily/26381.4/3259483/> (07/06/2015)

Klimyenyuk, N. *Mironyuk, skryepi, Sodom* (Snob, 12/12/2013) from <http://snob.ru/selected/entry/69275> (01/05/2015)

Kyiv Post. *South Ossetia recognises Donetsk People's Republic* (Kyivpost.com, 24/06/2014) from <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/south-ossetia-recognizes-donetsk-peoples-republic-353815.html> (29/07/2015)

Lenta. *Moskovskoye pravitel'stvo kupilo "Argumenty i Fakty"* (Lenta.ru, 11/03/2014) from <http://lenta.ru/news/2014/03/11/aif/> (29/07/2015)

Lenta. *Pryem'yer DNR rasskazal o voyuyushchikh na Ukrainye rossiyskikh dobrovol'tsev* (Lenta.ru, 28/08/2014) from <http://lenta.ru/news/2014/08/28/zacharchenko/> (07/09/2014)

Lenta.ru. *Surkov, Vladislav: Vitse-prem'er, glava apparate pravitel'stva RF* (Lenta, 2012) from <http://lenta.ru/lib/14159273/full.htm> (12/07/2015)

Medvedev, O. *Ukrainskii tuman dolzhen rasseyat'sya, I russkoe slontse vzoydet* (Den' Kiev.ua, 19/07/2002) from <http://www.day.kiev.ua/ru/article/nota-bene/ukrainskiy-tuman-dolzhen-rasseyatsya-i-russkoe-solnce-vzoydet> (07/01/2015)

Moscow Times. *State-Run News Station Accused of Making up Child Crucifixion* (Moscow Times, 14/07/2014) from <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/state-run-news-station-accused-of-making-up-child-crucifixion/503397.html> (20/07/2014)

Moeller, J, O., *Russia's Masterful Use of Deception in Ukraine* (Huffington Post, 23/04/2014) from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joergen-oerstroem-moeller/maskirovka-russias-master_b_5199545.html (23/04/2014)

Newsweek., *Rosyjscy bojownicy próbowali przedostać się na Ukrainę* (Newsweek Polska, 01/08/2014) from <http://swiat.newsweek.pl/ukraina-konflikt-bojownicy-na-granicy-z-ukraina-newsweek-pl.artykuly.344861.1.html> (01/08/2014)

Oliphant, R., *Vladimir Putin dissolves Russia's RIA Novosti* (The Telegraph, 09/12/2013) from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/10505386/Vladimir-Putin-dissolves-Russias-RIA-Novosti.html> (12/08/2014)

Ortung, R. Walker, C. *Russia's International Media Poisons Minds* (The Moscow Times, 08/10/2014) from <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/russia-s-international-media-poisons-minds/508653.html> (04/06/2015)

OSCE, *OSCE Chief Monitor in Ukraine urges all sides to allow monitors to carry out duties safely* (OSCE, 15/09/2014) from <http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/123591> (07/03/2015)

Osborn, A. *In Moscow, Igor Panarin's Forecasts Are All the Rage; America 'Disinegrates' in 2010* (The Wall Street Journal, 29/12/2008) from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB123051100709638419> (20/07/2015)

Panarin, I. *December 2011: Information War against Russia* (RT, 30/12/2011) from <http://rt.com/politics/information-war-russia-panarin-009/> (14/07/2015)

Pocheptsov, G., *Oshibki informatsionnoy politiki v pyeriod rossiysko-ukrainskogi konflikta* (Media Sapiens, 19/10/2014) from http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/ethics/manipulation/oshibki_informatsionnoy_politiki_v_period_rossiyskoukrainskogo_konflikta/ (14/02/2015)

Politkovskaya, A. *Poisoned by Putin* (The Guardian, 09/09/2004) from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/sep/09/russia.media> (10/06/2015)

Polskie Radio. *Rosja atakuje Gruzję* (Polskie Radio wiadomości, 08/08/2008) from <http://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/177854.Rosja-atakuje-Gruzje> (10/04/2015)

Pomerantsev, P., *How Putin Is Reinventing Warfare* (Foreign policy, 05/05/2014) from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/05/05/how-putin-is-reinventing-warfare/> (24/05/2014)

Pomerantsev, P. *The Hidden Author of Putinism* (The Atlantic, 07/11/2014) from <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/11/hidden-author-putinism-russia-vladislav-surkov/382489/> (12/07/2015)

Putin, V. *Vladimir Putin otvyetil na boprozi zhurnalistov o situatsii na Ukrainye* (President Rossii, Kremlin, Moscow, Novo-Ogaryovo, 04/03/2014) from <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20366> (04/06/2015)

Putin, V. *O gendirectope mezhdunarodnogo informagentstva "Rossiya segodnya"* (Prezident Rossii, 09/12/2013) from <http://kremlin.ru/acts/news/19806> (14/07/2015)

Putin, V. *Ukaz o merakh poo povisheniyu effektivnosti deyatelnosti gosudarstbennikh SMI* (Prezident Rossii, 9/12/2013) from <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19805> (04/09/2014)

Pyerviy Kanal, *Byezhenka iz Slavyanska vspominayet, kak pri nyey kaznili malyenkogo sina i zhyenu opolchentsa* (Pyerviy Kanal, 12/07/2014) from <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/262978> (12/04/2015)

RBK. *Rossiya sozdast hoviy internet-proekt dlya propaganda za granitsey* (RBK.ru, 05/11/2014) from http://daily.rbc.ru/ins/technology_and_media/05/11/2014/54592396cbb20f2381c3e089 (12/01/2015)

RBK. *Surkov o sanktsiyakh SSHA: Eto bol'shaya chest' dlya menya* (RBK, 18/03/2014) from <http://top.rbc.ru/politics/18/03/2014/911681.shtml> (04/09/2014)

RIA. *MIA "Rossiya Segodnya"* (RIA Novosti) from <http://ria.ru/docs/about/> (12/01/2015)

RIA,. *Siloviki Ukraini obstreyali Uglyegorsk, pogibli dyesatki mirnikhzhityelyey* (PIA Novosti, 13/08/2014) from <http://ria.ru/world/20140813/1019884153.html> (14/08/2014)

Roberts, D. *Blackwater verdicts seen as watershed for accountability in war zones* (The Guardian, 22/10/2014) from <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/oct/22/blackwater-iraq-killings-verdicts-watershed-accountability> (15/08/2015)

Rozhkov, E. *Cvoremenniy kompleks dlya rossiyskoy razvedky* (Rossiya 1 besti nedeli, 11/12/2006) from <http://vesti7.ru/news?id=9346> (12/07/2015)

RT. *About RT* (RT, 04/06/2015) from <http://rt.com/about-us/> (04/06/2015)

RT. *Georgian tanks head for South Ossetia* (RT, 07/08/2008) from <http://rt.com/news/georgian-tanks-head-for-south-ossetia/> (01/06/2015)

RT. *Medvedev won't let Georgia offend Russian peacekeepers* (RT, 21/06/2008) from <http://rt.com/politics/medvedev-wont-let-georgia-offend-russian-peacekeepers/> (01/06/2015)

RT, *Russia's 2nd Ukraine aid convoy of 200 trucks arrives in Lugansk* (RT.com, 13/09/2014) from <http://www.rt.com/news/187460-russian-aid-convoy-ukraine/> (10/08/2015)

RT. *Ekspert: fashistskoye napadeniye na grazhdan v Odessye – chast' sovместnoy politiki Kieve i Vashingtona* (RT na rusском, 03/05/2014) from <http://russian.rt.com/article/30432> (10/06/2015)

RT. *Eks-prem'er Frantsii: Ukraina – nesostoyavsheesya gosudarstvo* (RT, 25/10/2014) from <http://russian.rt.com/article/56107> (29/07/2015)

RT. *SMI: Na storonye Kieva v DONbasse voyuyut naemniki iz Blackwater* (RT na rusском, 22/02/2015) from <http://russian.rt.com/article/70186> (15/08/2015)

Russianmission.eu. *New edition of the White Book on human rights violations in Ukraine* (Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the European Union, 08/07/2014) from <http://www.russianmission.eu/en/news/new-edition-white-book-human-rights-violations-ukraine> (09/08/2014)

Sidorchik, A,. *Maydannaya Ukraina obrechena* (Argumenti i Fakti, 05/05/2014) from <http://www.aif.ru/euromaidan/opinion/1162373> (04/08/2014)

Sindelar, D. *Do Trolls Matter?* (Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, 12/08/2014) from <http://www.rferl.org/content/do-trolls-matter/26526879.html> (04/06/2015)

Siraziyev, T. *Inostranniye nablyudateli: referendum v Krimu prokhodit bez narushennii* (1TV, 16/0/2014) from <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/254234> (07/04/2015)

Sputnik. *South Ossetia conflict FAQs* (RIA/Sputnik, 17/09/2008) from <http://en.ria.ru/russia/20080917/> (27/05/2015)

StopFake. *Amerikanskiy istochik: nastoyashchey mishyen'yu Putina bila nye Ukraina* (StopFake.org, 11/17/2014) from <http://www.stopfake.org/amerikanskiy-istorik-nastoyashhej-mishenyu-putina-byla-ne-ukraina/> (09/01/2015)

StopFake, *O nas* (StopFake, 02/03/2014) from <http://www.stopfake.org/o-nas/> (20/04/2015)

Świat, Newsweek.pl, *Jak zginął Niemcow?* (Newsweek Polska, 01/03/2015) from <http://swiat.newsweek.pl/borys-niemcow-nie-zyje-nagranie-z-zamachu-na-borysa-niemcowa,artykuly,358126,1.html> (12/04/2015)

Taroshchina, S. *Zhivi i pomni, gdye zhivyosh'* (Novoya Gazyeta, 18/03/2015) from <http://www.novayagazeta.ru/columns/67680.html?p=2> (04/06/2015)

Unian, *Ukrainci rozpovili, za koho holocuvatimut' na byborakh prezidenta – opytubannya* (Unian, 26/03/2014) from <http://www.unian.ua/politics/900778-ukrajintsi-rozpovili-za-kogo-golosuvatimut-na-viborah-prezidenta-opituvannya.html> (28/04/2015)

Wachnicki, M. *Wynajęci Rosjanie cyber-bombardują polski internet?* (Newsweek.pl, 04/03/2014) from <http://swiat.newsweek.pl/wynajeci-rosjanie-cyber-bombarduja-polski-internet-newsweek-cyberatak,artykuly,281538,1.html> (10/04/2014)

Walker, S. *Salutin' Putin: inside a Russian troll house* (The Guardian, 02/04/2015) from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/02/putin-kremlin-inside-russian-troll-house> (02/04/2015)

JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY IN KRAKOW CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES

THESIS AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

Name/ Student ID number:

Craig Proctor

0703483

K-1506

Title of thesis: The Kremlin's New Propaganda and the Ukrainian Crisis

I hereby confirm that this paper is my own work and that all sources have been properly and clearly credited. I am familiar with the Centre for European Studies and Jagiellonian University's policy on plagiarism, detailed in the Student Handbook and defined as "the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own". I understand that this practice is considered unethical and expressly prohibited, that even an unintentional failure to properly credit text, images or ideas may be considered plagiarism, and that perpetrators may be called before the Ethics Board and/or expelled from the university.

Date: 04/09/2015

Signature:



PLVS RATIO



QVAM VIS