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# The Ukrainian Crisis: An Eclectic Analysis

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS: AN ECLECTIC ANALYSIS

By

Christian Brodermann

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty  
of the University of Miami  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Arts

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THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS: AN ECLECTIC ANALYSIS

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The Ukraine Crisis is a complex and nuanced situation in the modern day. The interactions between the various actors involved in it, from the Western powers, to Ukraine and Russia themselves are examined by examining the secondary literature using an eclectic theoretical framework combining Constructivism and Neorealism. The Russian and Ukrainian socio-political frameworks are used as points of reference for the positions they play not just in the crisis, but in Russia and Ukraine's relationship over time. This shared history of the two nations informs us of the social construction of the identity of what it means to be Russian or Ukrainian and how this has affected their actions in the crisis. The crisis is examined from the point of the Euromaidan, the War in Donbass, and the annexation of Crimea. This thesis wishes to answer why Russia maintains their annexation of Crimea and support for a frozen conflict the West seems willing to fight over long-term, at least diplomatically. It also wishes to answer why Ukraine's people found themselves in a civil war between its Russian and Ukrainian-speaking populations, and why the West has been so ambivalent in its support for Ukraine over the time since the start of the crisis.

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## **Chapter 1: Why Ukraine? Why Now?**

Ukraine is a state constantly at odds with itself. It is a nation of Ukrainians, yet half of them consider Russian the language they are most comfortable with.<sup>1</sup> It is in civil war, yet it has still been able to have internationally-verified free and fair elections since 2015.<sup>2</sup> It is a nation split between East and West, a microcosm of the Post-Soviet world. It is a nation with all of the oligarchs and corruption of Yeltsin's Russia, the Russia-backed volatility of Georgia, the dependence on Russian petroleum products of Eastern and Central Europe, and the independent streak and refusal to be seen as just "another Russia" of its neighbor Belarus. Yet, it has a more democratic and free nature more similar to the West than the other former Soviet states, and a population willing to fight for their democracy and independence from Russia, which they have done in 1991, 2004, and 2014, with the most recent series of protests leading to the so-called "Ukraine Crisis".

This situation, beginning in 2013 and continuing to the present day, has left Ukraine in a state of crisis that is the topic of this thesis. This topic is significant, as this crisis has become the staging ground for what is the first post-Soviet conflict between the former Soviet Union and the allies of NATO, and will decide whether or not Ukraine, the most prominent of the post-Soviet states after Russia, will join the EU and NATO, or if it will maintain its status as a state under Russian influence. This topic also has theoretical importance, as the international system is in a state of flux, transitioning from a unipolar

1 FOM-Ukraine LLC. *Opinions and views of the Ukrainian population in September-October 2009*. Kyiv: FOM-Ukraine LLC, 2009. Accessed July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018. [http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/ukrain/ukrain\\_eo/du091015](http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/ukrain/ukrain_eo/du091015).

2 Freedom House. *Freedom in the World 2017: Ukraine Profile*. Washington, DC: Freedom House, 2017. Accessed July 6<sup>th</sup> 2018. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/ukraine>

system to a more multipolar system, with the influence of the US declining since the mid-2000s, with the 2008 Russo-Georgian War and the crisis in Ukraine being two of the first major diplomatic crises between the two Cold War enemies in the post-Soviet era.

Beyond the significance of the crisis as a subject, studying this from an eclectic perspective gives us a perspective not normally seen when studying this region and this crisis in specific. Using a combination of constructivist and neorealist viewpoints allows for both a macro and micro look at the situation in order to understand it more completely and explain more fully the reasoning behind the actions of the actors involved.

neorealism allows for a look at that macro level, the structural reasons behind the actions and reactions of states. Constructivism, as well as an ability to look into the social, cultural, and societal reasons behind the decisions of the actors in this situation, lets us look personally, at the most micro level, at the way societies react through their most prominent individuals, using the authoritative speech acts of various leaders as a guide.

The questions to be answered by this framework when studying this crisis are many, but the main ones to focus on in this thesis are as follows. First, why does Russia maintain this idea that an imperialistic state apparatus is the most effective way to govern itself and influence the states surrounding it, and how has this mentality led to their role in the Ukraine crisis, as well as the question of why Russia, despite the huge economic sanctions placed on it, has decided to pursue and maintain their annexation of Crimea. Second is why has the West been so ambivalent when it comes to supporting Ukraine's efforts to separate itself from said imperialist state apparatus, seemingly quite opposed to the neoliberal idea of building relationships and encouraging democracy in democratic states, and why the sanctions they have placed upon Russia

have not been effective in deterring it. Lastly, we should ask how Ukraine's current civil war, initiated by Euromaidan and the counter-protests afterwards, was formed from its internal struggle between the Russian and Ukrainian identities of its citizens, and the influence of Russia and the West on both communities.

To this end, this thesis will begin with an overview of the theoretical perspectives to be used throughout in Chapter Two. This will be followed by an exploration of existing literature on the subject and the methodology used to obtain said literature for the purposes of this thesis in Chapter Three. The next chapter will lead us through Ukraine's history and through the evolution of it as a political entity, leading through to the Yanukovich administration and Euromaidan, with a special focus on medieval Ukraine, Soviet Ukraine, and the evolution of the trends in terms of governance, as well as the historical memories that Ukraine and its people have that has separated it from Russia and brought it closer to the West and its political culture in the modern day. The next chapter will be an analysis of the literature and current situation from the eclectic perspective of this thesis in Chapter Five. Finally, we will end with conclusions on the main questions asked in this introductory chapter in Chapter Six. This thesis will interpret and analyze work from noted Ukraine scholars Taras Kuzio (*Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism*), Ostap Kushnir (*Ukraine and Russian Neo-Imperialism: The Divergent Break*), Serhii Plokhii (*The Gates of Europe*), Eugene Menon and Rajan Rumer (*Conflict in Ukraine: The Unwinding of the Post-Cold War Order*), and Orest Subtelny (*Ukraine: A History*), authoritative speech acts from leaders such as Angela Merkel, Barack Obama, Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Viktor Yanukovich, and Petro Poroshenko, journals such as *Foreign Affairs*,

*Connections*, and *World Affairs*, and newspapers and news organizations like *The Washington Post*, *Interfax-Ukraine*, and *Izvestia*. It will include elements of theory from neorealists Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer, and constructivists Alexander Wendt and Martha Finnemore, and will analyze the Ukraine Crisis with the help of the viewpoints of these theorists.

### **Ukraine: A Microcosm of the Post-Soviet World**

Ukraine, as the most prominent of the Post-Soviet states, has been the state with the most extreme of the Post-Soviet world's issues with political, cultural, and economic turmoil. Ukraine has been subjected to varying levels of volatility in the last half-decade due to the recent crises it has suffered and has been damaged greatly. From protests in the streets of Kiev calling for closer ties to Europe to counter-protests in the Eastern oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk that have led into a civil war in Eastern Ukraine, the country has been thrown into turmoil socially and militarily. On top of this, the country has been thrown into political chaos after the ouster of president Viktor Yushchenko in favor of more EU-friendly politicians during Euromaidan and has suffered an invasion and annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea by Russian forces, led by members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in the area, most prominently First Deputy Commander of the Ukrainian Fleet Sergei Yeliseyev<sup>3</sup>. Even after the Euromaidan protests and restoration of a democratically-elected government under Petro Poroshenko, said government has reduced the civil liberties of those Ukrainians who

3 Reuters. "HOW RUSSIA TOOK CRIMEA WITHOUT A FIGHT FROM UKRAINE." *Newsweek*, July 24, 2017. Accessed September 22, 2018. <https://www.newsweek.com/russia-crimea-ukraine-how-putin-took-territory-without-fight-640934>.

speak Russian and of those critical to the government, and has not dealt with the corruption of a government still beholden to oligarchs like Mr. Poroshenko himself.<sup>4</sup>

Ukraine, despite its domestic issues however, has continued to be a vital partner for the European Union in Eastern Europe, with state-owned oil and gas company Naftogaz being one of the largest suppliers of petroleum and natural gas products to the European Union, with over 30 billion cubic meters of storage capacity<sup>5</sup>, and the ability to send hundreds of billions of cubic meters of natural gas to Europe yearly<sup>6</sup>. Ukraine has also been the focus of US efforts to expand NATO since the Yushchenko presidency and the premiership of Yulia Tymoshenko, the first leaders of Ukraine to support NATO membership, especially with the current existential threat to Ukraine presented by Russian invasion and support of rebel groups in Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts. Russia has also kept its eye on Ukraine, not wishing to relinquish its sphere of influence on it, as well as its control and maintenance of the warm-water port and home of the Black Sea Fleet, the Crimean Peninsula. Russia has used any means necessary to maintain this power, including supporting the rebel republics in the Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts, and creating yet another frozen conflict in one of the former Soviet republics in Crimea, joining South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Transnistria.

4 Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2017: Ukraine Profile*.

5 Interfax-Ukraine. "Ukraine Raises Gas Stocks in Underground Storage by 45 Percent." *Kyiv Post*, June 25, 2018. Accessed July 9, 2018. <https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/ukraine-raises-gas-stocks-in-underground-storage-by-45-percent.html>.

6 NJSC Naftogaz of Ukraine. Corporate Communications Department. "Ukraine's Gas Transmission System Will Make up for Nord Stream Halted for Maintenance." News release, November 11, 2017. Naftogaz Group. Accessed July 9, 2018. <http://www.naftogaz.com/www/3/nakweben.nsf/0/3936F89F4E3094EBC2258198004C5BD3OpenDocument&year=2017&month=09&nt=News&>.

## **Chapter 2 – Theory: Neorealism and Constructivism, Can They Mesh?**

“Anarchy is what states make of it.”

Alexander Wendt

In International Relations, one of the hardest-fought debates is the one between those who believe in an objective or materialistic understanding of the international system, and those who believe in a subjective or idealistic understanding<sup>7</sup>. Materialism, in which the processes which occur in the international system are fixable and reliable facts, the only thing that we as analysts of said system is to describe, understand, and interpret the actions of international actors through the system as it is. This is opposed to idealism, where facts do not rule supreme, but share their sphere with values and perception, and analysts of the international system have to take changes in the perception of actors into account when interpreting their actions, and there is no fixed system as there is in materialist thinking, it changes with the actions of international actors.<sup>8</sup> Of the major theoretical frameworks in international relations, neorealism, historical materialism, and neoliberalism fall into the materialistic side of the argument, and liberalism and constructivism fall on the idealistic side.<sup>9</sup> This thesis will use elements of both understandings to answer and explain the main questions presented in Chapter One.

7 Wendt, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 139-93.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

## Neorealism and Constructivism – The Basics

In this thesis, neorealism and constructivism will be the main theories used to explain the central questions. Neorealism, as developed by Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer, claims that the international system is by its nature anarchic and decentralized, with every state equal to every other. In practice, this leads to a system in which states seek their own interests on their own, and will not put the interests of another state above their own.<sup>10</sup> The most basic interest of any state is survival, and it is for this that reason that states develop militaries to increase their relative power, and due to an inability for states to trust one another due to uncertainty in the future actions of other states, they must guard against losses of relative power. This is the security dilemma<sup>11</sup>, in which states balance each other through growing their own capabilities and entering into alliances to check the power of other states and alliances. Neorealists also believe that an international system containing two great powers, a bipolar world, is more stable than a multipolar one, due to the fact that in a bipolar world, only internal balancing can occur in the smaller states, with no other great powers other than the two hegemonic powers to ally with.<sup>12</sup> This framework allows us to study the international system from a structural point of view, from the macro level, looking at states as singular actors in an anarchic system, and gives us the ability to make observations as to the more basic reasons behind the decisions states make. This is useful as it gives us a base upon which to build a more complex, constructivist theory for the decisions states make on top of the realist explanation.

10 Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014. 3.

11 Ibid.

12 Waltz, Kenneth. *Theory of International Politics*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1979. 132-3.

Constructivism, unlike neorealism, does not believe in a basic structure of the international system, rather that the international system and relations between states are socially constructed, formed by the interactions between states and people.<sup>13</sup> The anarchy neorealists argue is an inherent part of the structure of the system is not a given to constructivists, but the anarchy is created by social interaction, and neorealist structure is actually not able to tell how two states will interact, without assuming that the nature of states is the same as the nature of humans, and that the interests of states are set in stone.<sup>14</sup>

Constructivist idealism, unlike the materialism of neorealism, allows for the identity of states to shine through and be considered.<sup>15</sup> Despite this, neorealist conclusions can form a basis for constructivist arguments to expand upon. In constructivism, international relations are able to change, and changes in the interactions and in the social structures of and between states can fundamentally change the international system as a whole. The Constructivist framework allows for a more micro view of international relations, with each state and the internal structures like political culture and the actual politics of states, down to the individual level through the authoritative speech acts of political leaders, and the effects of these on international relations can effectively be analyzed and examined.

13     Wendt, *Social Theory of International Relations*. 1.

14     Wendt, Alexander. "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 396. Accessed July 11, 2018. JSTOR. Keyword: constructivism.

15     Finnemore, Martha. *National Interests in International Society*. New York, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996. p. 2.

### **Other Frameworks – Why Neorealism and Constructivism?**

Neorealism and constructivism are as far apart as two theories can be in international relations, yet the Ukraine crisis cannot be fully explained without both of them. With the basic knowledge neorealism can give us, constructivism can fill in holes and create a fuller picture. Although there may be other frameworks, for example neoliberalism's explanations based on absolute gains and cooperative behavior or historical materialism's Marxist viewpoint, that can be used to explain the situation in Ukraine. However, in my opinion, these two seem to be the most effective. The other frameworks, historical materialism, classical realism and liberalism, and neoliberalism, have their own flaws and inadequacies in explanatory power here, and in order to show that, their effectiveness must be compared and contrasted with the two frameworks chosen in this thesis.

### **Economy First: Neoliberalism and Historical Materialism**

To begin, we will look at Keohane and Nye's neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is a framework in international relations which does not deny the anarchic nature of international relations from neorealism but emphasizes that it is not as important as realists and neorealists make it, and that cooperative behavior is capable of existing in an anarchic system. This cooperation is possible through a building of trust through an increase in the interdependence of states and an expansion of what the interests of states are.<sup>16</sup> The main way this happens is through economic interdependence through free trade in an open global market. The problem with neoliberalism as with neorealism on its

16 Keohane, Robert O., and Joseph S. Nye. *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1977. p. 23-24.

own, is the state-centric focus. Neoliberalism and neorealism on their own focus on the state system and on a purely materialistic view of the international system, assuming that it is anarchic due to its very nature, and that states are the main actors in it.<sup>17</sup>

This framework, on its own, as with neorealism, does not give enough credence to the social nature of humans, and focuses on the state and its interests as a unit instead of human interests and the interaction of societies as a whole. Even if combined with constructivism, neoliberalism then dilutes the focus away from what Russia and Ukraine are actually engaged in in this crisis, which is a fight for survival. This is a situation which neorealism explains more effectively through its focus on security as the main interest of states. Russia is fighting for the survival of its sphere of influence and its great power status against perceived Western aggression in Ukraine, and Ukraine is fighting for the survival of itself as a united state and its territorial integrity against Russian aggression. Neorealism and constructivism combined are more effective due to its focus on the human aspect and security as the main interest of states and societies when explaining the Ukraine crisis.

Another view, contrasting with neoliberalism, and as discussed in the University of Greenwich Professor Yuliya Yurchenko's *Ukraine and the Empire of Capital*, is historical materialism. In her book, Yurchenko attempts to explain the Ukraine crisis through an analysis of its political economy and claims that the influence of a "authoritarian neoliberal kleptocracy with fascicisation tendencies" is the source of the current conflict, with the austerity measures that have had to be applied and the increase of Ukraine's sovereign debt during Ukraine's adoption of the Western neoliberal ideals of

17 Keohane, Robert O., and Joseph S. Nye. *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1977. p. 23-24.

free trade and the free market as the basis for “another Maidan”, as dispossessed workers gain ire for their situation, and the inability of the “kleptocracy” to produce even the basic necessities for social interaction.<sup>18</sup> This viewpoint, influenced by Marx, assumes a world where economic factors are the source of all other circumstances, and where the adoption of neoliberal institutions and norms will inevitably lead to an ascendant right-wing and disillusionment of the working class with its leadership.

This theory, in my opinion, does not have enough explanatory power for the analysis of the crisis as it stands. It totally ignores the political, social, and cultural reasons for the current crisis in all the state actors, including Ukraine. It makes a crisis that, in my opinion, formed from a clash of cultures and a political need from the Ukrainian people to have a democratic political system they can control into a purely economic issue, dictated by external factors instead of internal ones. It also ignores the baser factor mentioned before, that Ukraine and Russia are engaged in a struggle for survival, which neorealism is more effectively able to explain on the surface level. This framework, even if combined with either of two frameworks applied in this thesis, remains too limited to create a full understanding of the crisis as a whole, unable to reconcile the cultural issues internal to Ukraine and Russia with its own interpretation of the international system as a system purely influenced by economics and capital.

18 Yurchenko, Yuliya. *Ukraine and the Empire of Capital: From Marketisation to Armed Conflict*. London, UK: Pluto Press, 2018. p. 1-24.

### **Why Combine Neorealism and Constructivism, How Does It Apply to the Ukraine Crisis?**

Neorealism, as explained before is a version of realism focused on the anarchic structure of the international system as a cause of the violent nature of international relations. This is a theory with much explanatory power for the surface-level questions in the Ukraine Crisis. It explains why Russia has attacked Ukraine, why Ukraine has now pulled closer to the West, it explains why the United States in specific has begun to sell weapons to Ukraine, and it even explains the basic reasons behind the West in general's ambivalence towards the conflict. In the case of neorealism, as said before in this chapter, Russia and Ukraine are in a struggle for survival, Russia as a great power, and Ukraine as an independent state. The West, knowing conflict with Russia to be the start of a possibly nuclear conflict, does not want to fully commit to Ukraine. The United States, however, seeing an advantage in wasting Russian resources in a war in Ukraine, as well as wanting to endear and ingratiate themselves with Ukraine, has begun to sell arms to Ukraine. This is a bid to add another member into its alliance against Russia to externally balance against Russia in an increasingly multipolar world. All of this is well explained by neorealism, but it is of course not the full picture. Neorealism tells us the reason why a decision was made, but it does not tell us the full thought process behind that reasoning.

To fill in those details, constructivism can be used, as aforementioned, to explain the thought process behind the reasons states make certain realist decisions. The political culture of Ukraine and Russia affects their decisions greatly in this, and they can be explained through their historical memories as societies, the past interactions with other states and peoples, and the traumas and successes that have remained part of collective

memory. Russians see the common past of the Kievan Rus', the unification of Ukraine and Russia since the seventeenth century, the two world wars fought by Ukrainians alongside Russians to liberate and maintain their shared state's independence, the common traditions and cultural artifacts as example that they are the same people, that Ukrainians and Russians are the same. Vladimir Putin himself has said that although Ukraine is an independent state, when it comes to Ukrainians and Russians, "...we are one people."<sup>19</sup>

Ukrainians do not agree with this sentiment, and this, according to constructivism is all that is needed. The Russian nation and the Ukrainian nation and their identities are socially constructed, and a distinct Ukrainian identity, which has evolved and grown since created by Ukrainian scholars in nineteenth century to be universal among nearly the entire Ukrainian population, was constructed.<sup>20</sup> This attempt at cultural and linguistic separation finally bore fruit in 1992 after many false starts, but any extra autonomy or any courting of the West has been opposed by Moscow at every turn. This is the true source of the conflict in Ukraine, both internally in its civil war and externally in its conflict with Russia over Crimea, the clash between national identities, although it cannot be denied that Russia will indeed gain power if they succeed in their goals. This extends the fight for survival seen in the neorealist interpretation not only from the survival of great power status or of sovereignty, but to the survival of an entire world view in the case of Russia, where Ukrainians and Byelorussians are the same as Russians, and the Ukrainian people's need to be seen as separate.

19 Mankoff, Jeffrey. "Ukraine: Out of the Shadow of the Bear." Center for Strategic & International Studies. December 20, 2013. Accessed June 11, 2018. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/ukraine-out-shadow-bear>.

20 Ibid.

As for the West, they are in an awkward position. The interactions between the EU and Russia in specific are those of two interdependent actors, one looking to profit off of its mineral and oil wealth, and a group of states dependent on said oil wealth to heat their homes and produce electricity. The EU, despite its ideological need to help Ukraine, is afraid of losing their supply of petroleum and natural gas products from Russia. The US does not have such fears, but it has a history of respecting the concept of mutually assured destruction, and of not engaging Russia directly from the Cold War. Constructivism allows us to engage all these smaller details that neorealism does not cover. This is why, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, neorealism and constructivism, are the most effective frameworks with which to view the Ukraine crisis.

### **Chapter 3 – Method: Searching for Answers in Secondary Literature**

“If I have seen further than other men, it is because

I have stood on the shoulders of giants.”

Isaac Newton

In this chapter, the methodology used to write this thesis will be considered. This thesis uses a theory-driven systematic literature review as its research method as used by Ray Pawson and Mary Dixon-Woods and her colleagues, applying and analyzing the secondary literature in the context of the eclectic framework set up in Chapter 2. This method is used because as said by Pawson, “statistical meta-analysis and the experimental, controlled research studies upon which it is based cannot adequately consider the diverse, contingent, and socially constructed nature of the social world.”<sup>21</sup>

This thesis is a study of the Ukrainian Crisis, relating to questions involving Russia’s world view, the West’s inability to commit to Ukraine’s defense, and the nature of the Ukrainian civil war, the War in Donbass. This thesis uses qualitative data gathering methods and provides a qualitative analysis of empirical findings to explain these various phenomena that make up the situation currently found surrounding Ukraine. It inductively generates new hypotheses as well as refines others found in secondary literature and identifies certain events in the crisis and the effects they have had. These events include things like the changes in political freedom in Ukraine, the regime changes both in Kiev and throughout Ukraine, the economic performance of Ukraine and Russia,

21 Victor, Liz. "Systematic Reviewing in the Social Sciences: Outcomes and Explanation." *Enquire* 1, no. 1 (2008): 32-46. 2008. Accessed November 12, 2018. <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sociology/research/enquire/journal/vol-1/index.aspx>.

as well as foreign policy actions from the various actors. It is a descriptive thesis based on secondary literature that attempts to identify possible explanations and their explanatory power in answering the questions presented in Chapter 1.

This thesis uses an empirically-supported argument to analyze the complex situation in Ukraine using a unique eclectic theoretical framework. The research questions are unique as they present a tight and coherent narrative which incorporates domestic issues within Ukraine as well as international aspects of the crisis. It uses Russia's opinion on Ukraine and their relationship to Russia, and how it fights against the norms of the international community and the status quo, the internal conflict between the Russian and Ukrainian communities in Ukraine, and the greater East-West conflict of the past eighty-three years. Through all this, this thesis promotes hypotheses-generating conclusions for the literature on the Ukraine Crisis.

This method has allowed for greater analytical power in describing and examining the ontological underpinnings of both Russia and Ukraine's decisions throughout the crisis, as done by fellow University of Miami graduate students Dina Moulioukova<sup>22</sup> and Suzanne Loftus<sup>23</sup> in their dissertations on the region, both focusing on Putin's Russia. Using the eclectic theoretical framework of constructivism and neorealism combined with a review of secondary literature allows for new conclusions to be drawn with a new

22 Moulioukova, Dina. "Decoding Russian Foreign Policy." Master's thesis, University of Miami, 2017. May 15, 2017. Accessed November 12, 2018.

[https://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2899&context=oa\\_dissertations](https://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2899&context=oa_dissertations).

23 Loftus, Suzanne. "Insecurity and the Rise of Nationalism: The Case of Putin's Russia - Keeper of Traditional Values." Master's thesis, University of Miami, 2018. May 2, 2018. Accessed November 12, 2018. [https://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3036&context=oa\\_dissertations](https://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3036&context=oa_dissertations).

perspective while building on the work of those who came before me such as Kuzio, Kushnir, Plokhii, and Menon and Rumer, through the theory-driven approach to systematic review methodology aforementioned.

In this thesis, a variety of sources will be used, from books and journal articles to newspapers and government reports. These articles were searched for using the University of Miami library catalog and the database resources available to University of Miami students such as JSTOR and WorldCAT, as well as mainstream search engines like Google. There were also specific criteria used to decide on the inclusion of resources. This systematic process ensured both topical and theoretical relevance when it came to the secondary literature.

To begin with the how as it refers to my resources, where the resources that have been used in this thesis have been found is very important. The search began with the University of Miami library. In order to begin, the University of Miami librarian for political science assisted in creating systematic search terms and criteria for what would be included in this thesis. The search terms used were “Ukraine AND Russia”, “Ukraine Crisis”, “War in Donbass”, “EU AND Ukraine”, and “United States AND Ukraine”. These terms were used to search both for books on the University of Miami library catalog, the database resources such as JSTOR and WorldCAT, as well as search engines such as Google.

The results of these searches were filtered in order to make sure that they were relevant and academic. The inclusion criteria included relevance, so the resources must be directly about or related directly to the current situation in Ukraine, must be related to one of the actors being investigated (Russia, Ukraine, the European Union, or the United

States). Resources used in the thesis also had to be from a constructivist or neorealist perspective to be included in the analytical sections of this thesis. Resources for this thesis had to be less than five years old, as the Ukraine crisis is itself only five years old, so any relevant literature would only exist after this point. However, information in this thesis can be from a time frame before 2013, as evidence from periods leading all the way back to the Medieval era can provide background knowledge for the research questions, as will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Books had to be directly related to the Ukraine crisis or its effect on one of the state actors and had to fill all the other criteria listed above. Books from noted Ukraine scholars Taras Kuzio (*Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism*), Ostap Kushnir (*Ukraine and Russian Neo-Imperialism: The Divergent Break*), Serhii Plokhii (*The Gates of Europe*), and Eugene Menon and Rajan Rumer (*Conflict in Ukraine: The Unwinding of the Post-Cold War Order*) were included using these criteria. Journal articles had to be peer reviewed to be included in the thesis and had to be published in an international relations-focused journal such as *Foreign Affairs*, *Connections*, and *World Affairs*. When it came to newspaper articles, any reputable newspaper of record or news agency was considered for inclusion, with examples from the introduction chapter being *The Washington Post*, *Interfax-Ukraine*, *Izvestia*, and *Die Welt*. The authoritative speech acts from leaders such as Angela Merkel, Barack Obama, Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Viktor Yanukovich, and Petro Poroshenko would also be included as primary sources from states involved in the Ukraine crisis as long as the topic of the speech act is relevant. These speech acts are a sign of the cultural and political stance of a nation through their most prominent leaders and can give insight into the

thought process behind the decisions of states. These speech acts are also a source of evidence of the ontological reasoning behind the decisions of the states involved. All resources for this thesis had to have been obtained through legal means, using the authorized catalogs, databases, and outlets, and the information contained within resources must have been reported accurately.

Using a theory-driven approach like Pawson and Dixon-Woods in this thesis has allowed for more nuanced and powerful explanations of the research questions. When combined with a systematic search of secondary literature, the findings of this thesis are lent even more explanatory power, and an empirically-supported argument can be formed which explains the various actions of actors involved in this crisis. This method has also allowed for a more complex examination of the ontological underpinnings of both Russia and Ukraine's decisions throughout the crisis and has created a new perspective on this crisis through the eclectic framework.

## **Chapter 4 – Ukraine: The Evolution of Political Culture**

"When I am dead, bury me in a grave amongst the broad steppe  
in my beloved Ukraine. That the wide-extending meadows  
and the Dnieper and its banks I may see and hear,  
as it rushes on roaring."

Taras Shevchenko

### **Why is the History of Ukraine Important?**

Ukraine as a nation and culture in its modern sense has only existed since the Nineteenth Century after the partition of Poland-Lithuania in the last decade of the Eighteenth Century. It built itself up in the Austrian-controlled Galicia and Bukovyna through the encouragement of Emperor Joseph II of Austria<sup>24</sup>, who allowed not only for the teaching of Ukrainian in schools but for the native religion of the Ukrainians to be worshiped in Ukrainian. This led to a Ukrainian national renaissance within the sphere of which the Supreme Ruthenian Council, the first organization for the Ukrainian minority in Austria declared that all fifteen million Ukrainians in both Galicia and Russia were of the same people with the same language.<sup>25</sup> This idea of separate Ukrainian culture and language had always been there, but Ukrainians did not have a state of their own, nor a united political entity that was purely Ukrainian. However, the Ukrainian culture did not die out nor did it lose its collective memory, and this memory, beyond even the basic cultural

24 Doroshenko, Dmytro. A Survey of Ukrainian History. Winnipeg, MB: Humeniuk Publication Foundation, 1984.

25 Wilson, Andrew. The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation. 4th ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015.

factors such as religion and language, of which Ukrainians are diverse, is the most important factor in the Ukrainian cultural fabric today, it informs all decisions made by Ukraine's cultural leaders and by the people of Ukraine during times of crisis. This memory begins with the Kievan Rus' and especially the Cossack Hetmanate, the entity which created the dichotomy of Ukrainian culture that exists to this day between "Cossacks" and "dwellers", a dichotomy that has led both to the cultural ascendancy of Ukraine within its borders as opposed to the Russian cultural triad, and the continued ability of outside occupiers to attempt and sometimes succeed (to an extent) to integrate Ukraine into their empires. To truly understand this mindset, we must examine modern Ukraine's, and in the case of the Rus', Russia's predecessor states.

### **Ancient and Medieval Ukraine: The Origins of Ukrainian Political Culture**

#### *The Rus'*

The territory currently known as the state of Ukraine has a history stretching back to the times of Ancient Greece, with early Indo-Europeans likely domesticating the horse in the area of Ukraine<sup>26</sup>, the Scythians taking over in antiquity, and later the region is taken over by early Slavic groups<sup>27</sup>. Ukraine and especially the Crimea were colonized by the Greeks and Romans throughout their predominant eras, and the various Roman states had some tentative control over the area as well<sup>28</sup>. A state formed in the area of Ukraine does not enter into history until the formation of the

26 Matossian, Mary Kilbourne. *Shaping World History*. Abingdon, Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge, 1997. 43.

27 Szmoniewski, Bartłomiej Szymon. "The Antes: Eastern 'Brothers' of the Slaves?" Edited by Florin Curta. In *Neglected Barbarians*, 62. 1st ed. Vol. 32. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2010.

28 Karyshkovskij, Petr O., and Isaac B. Kleiman. *The City of Tyras: A Historical and Archaeological Essay*. Odessa, Ukraine: Polis Press, 1994.

powerful but decentralized Kievan Rus' in the ninth Century. This is the beginning of Ukraine's unique political culture, radically different from its much larger, much more centralized neighbor to the northeast.

The Kievan Rus' controlled much of European Russia until it was destroyed by the Mongol invasion of Europe in the 1240s<sup>29</sup>. This state, known in the old Slavic language as Rus', was ruled by a dynasty of Scandinavian princes (the Rurikids), who eventually assimilated into the Slavic population and later formed both Muscovy and the Tsardom of Russia, the first modern Russian state<sup>30</sup>. This state, the Rus', is still held as the basis of Russian claims on Ukraine, as the Rus' was based in modern Ukraine. However, unlike Muscovy and the later Russian empires, the Kievan Rus' was a much more decentralized and politically open society, with four separate central cities in Kiev, Novgorod, Chernihiv, and Volodymyr, uniting the loose Slavic and Finnish tribes of Eastern Europe and European Russia.<sup>31</sup> This forms the core of what would become Ukrainian political culture, and led to the opposite occurring in the northern areas of what was the Rus' (later the Russian Empire), due to the unique traumas of the people of the region under Mongol subordination.<sup>32</sup> Speaking of the Mongol subordination, due to its decentralization, the area of the Kievan Rus', and of modern Ukraine in specific, eventually split into multiple princedoms and eventually came under the rule of the

29 Bushkovitz, Paul. *A Concise History of Russia*. Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

30 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Rurik Dynasty." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. April 11, 2016. Accessed May 6, 2018. <https://global.britannica.com/topic/Rurik-dynasty>

31 Kushnir, Ostap. "Ukraine's Interrupted Searches for Justice and Order." In *Ukraine and Russian Neo-Imperialism: The Divergent Break*, 113-48. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018.

32 Ibid.

Mongol Golden Horde, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the Islamic Crimean Khanate from the fourteenth Century till the seventeenth Century.<sup>33</sup>

### *The Cossack Hetmanate*

A truly local state would not form until the Cossack Hetmanate rebelled against Poland-Lithuania in 1648, ruled by Cossack lords from East of the Dnieper river. The Hetmanate is characterized by Kushnir as one of the failed attempts of Ukrainian nation-creation, and the genesis of modern Ukrainian historical memory.<sup>34</sup> This period is also where many historical Ukrainian heroes such as originate from. The most prominent of these is the first Hetman, Bohdan Khmelnytsky, who led the Ukrainian population, such as it was, to independence from Poland.<sup>35</sup>

The Cossack heritage of the modern Ukrainian state has led it to be included in modern Ukrainian political culture. Unlike the triad of Russian political culture, which includes the leader, Church, and nationality as its pillars, Ukrainian national identity has “Cossacks” on one side, reformers and nationalists who have a more open and accepting political concept of “a self-governed movement of free people in the wild steppe”.<sup>36</sup> This political concept, although it leads to the long-term stability of the idea of Ukrainianism, it also allows for the acceptance of ideas such as the Russian triad by the more passive members of society, the “dwellers”, when influenced by oppressor states or by foreign

33 Subtelny, Orest. "The Cossack Era." In *Ukraine: A History*, 105-38. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2000.

34 Kushnir, *Ukraine and Russian Neo-Imperialism: The Divergent Break*, 113-48.

35 Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 105-38.

36 Kushnir, Ostap. "Ukraine: The Divergent." In *Ukraine and Russian Neo-Imperialism: The Divergent Break*, 113-48. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018.

propaganda. These dwellers have always made up the majority of Ukrainian society throughout its history, and their ability to be influenced by foreign ideas has made it very easy for Ukraine as a nation to accept foreign influence time and time again, first with the Poles, later the Russians and Soviets, and has led to the current cultural problems in Ukraine.<sup>37</sup>

### *Foreign Control*

Despite the nominal independence of the Hetmanate in its earliest days, the state Khmelnytsky led to independence would then be led to sign a protection treaty with the Tsardom of Russia against Poland-Lithuania by him, bringing the area under Russian (in the modern sense) control<sup>38</sup>. This treaty restored an area lost by the Rus' four centuries earlier to a state ruled by the descendants of the original Rus'. The Cossack Hetmanate would then slowly be integrated into the Russian Empire as "Little Russia" and Russified over the next century until it was totally into the Russian state, although Ukrainian culture never died out completely<sup>39</sup>. The remaining Polish-controlled territory in Ukraine was later made part of the Austrian Empire after the Partitions of Poland in the late eighteenth Century, and was left mostly alone, leading to the area being a strong proponent of Ukrainian nationalism in the years to come, with such leaders and

37 Kushnir, Ostap. "Ukraine: The Divergent." In *Ukraine and Russian Neo-Imperialism: The Divergent Break*, 113-48. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018.

38 Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 105-38

39 Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 105-38

philosophers as author Ivan Franko and, more controversially, Stepan Bandera and Yaroslav Stetsko, men whose crimes while working with Nazi Germany during World War II are still being argued about today, and who today are still the inspiration for the ultra-right wing in Ukrainian politics, the Banderites.

## **Chapter 5: Ukraine in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Stateless Nation and the Seven Cycles of Modern Ukrainian Politics**

*“Nowhere did restrictions, purges, repressions and in general all forms of bureaucratic hooliganism assume such murderous sweep as they did in the Ukraine in the struggle against the powerful, deeply-rooted longings of the Ukrainian masses for greater freedom and independence.”*

Leon Trotsky

### **The Civil War and Stalin**

The modern idea of the Ukrainian state did not appear really until the nineteenth Century, and during the First World War, the Ukrainians were split between supporting the Central Powers and the Russian Empire<sup>40</sup>. The end of the First World War also was the end of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires. In this chaos, the first modern Ukrainian state, and the first state to call itself Ukraine is formed from the Russian Empire’s corpse, the Ukrainian People’s Republic, an internationally recognized state which fought in the Russian Civil War and had its own civil war against a pro-German, anti-Communist government<sup>41</sup>. This state was eventually defeated, however, at the hands of Soviet Russia, formed into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (UkSSR), and ultimately admitted into the USSR<sup>42</sup>.

40 Subtelny, Orest. "Twentieth-Century Ukraine" In *Ukraine: A History*, 340-44. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2000.

41 Yekelchuk, Serhy. *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation*. Oxford, Oxfordshire, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007.

42 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Ukraine in the Interwar Period." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. April 18, 2008. Accessed May 6, 2018. <https://web.archive.org/web/20080418030322/http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-30078/Ukraine>.

This era of Ukrainian government and thought at this time is known to be quite “Ukrainophile”, and the beginning of what has been called by Ukraine scholar Taras Kuzio as the beginning of the “Seven Cycles of Contemporary Ukrainian History”, where Ukrainian culture and identity was growing. This localist streak was not only allowed, but supported by the Soviet government, with a policy of “indigenization”, where local language, culture, and a separate UkSSR sovereignty within the USSR were encouraged under Lenin’s New Economic Policy (NEP)<sup>43</sup>. However, early in Stalin’s reign, Stalinist economic and social policies started to greatly favor Russians and Russian cities, and also censured and repressed the Ukrainian language in educational and government use.

Stalin’s regime led to a Russo/Sovietophile era in Ukrainian government. Of greatest note in this period is the famine known as the Holodomor. This, alongside the accompanying Great Purge led to the deaths of over ten million Ukrainians. The famine in specific is seen by many in Ukraine as well as many in the international community as a genocide of the Ukrainian people<sup>44</sup>. During the same period, many people who were representatives of the culture of Ukraine were killed in purges or in simple Stalinist fashion<sup>45</sup>.

43 Kuzio, Taras. "Seven Cycles of Ukrainian History, Borders, and Identities." In *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism*, 1-20. Praeger Security International. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2015.

44 United Nations. General Assembly. Secretary General. *Joint Statement by the Delegations of Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Egypt, Georgia, Guatemala, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Nauru, Pakistan, Qatar, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates and the United States of America on the Seventieth Anniversary of the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine (Holodomor)*. By The Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations. New York, NY: United Nations General Assembly, 2003.

45 Wheatcroft, Stephen G. "Agency and Terror: Evdokimov and Mass Killing in Stalin's Great Terror." *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 53, no. 1 (2007): 20-43. Accessed May 6, 2018. [https://www.worldcat.org/title/agency-and-terror-evdokimov-and-mass-killing-in-stalins-great-terror/oclc/440332953&referer=brief\\_results](https://www.worldcat.org/title/agency-and-terror-evdokimov-and-mass-killing-in-stalins-great-terror/oclc/440332953&referer=brief_results).

After this tragedy, Ukraine was devastated by the Second World War, with eighty-five percent of Kiev and seventy percent of Kharkov totally destroyed, with nineteen million people homeless and millions dead<sup>46</sup>. Ukraine however, did gain territory, taking parts of Poland and Romania for itself, as well as the Carpathian Mountain region of Ruthenia from Czechoslovakia<sup>47</sup>. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, although part of the USSR, was invited after the war as a founding member of the United Nations with the Soviet Union itself and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic<sup>48</sup>.

### **Rehabilitation and Re-Sovietization of Soviet Ukraine**

Once Stalin's regime ended, the Khrushchev era begins, with a turn back towards Ukrainophile government, no surprise considering Khrushchev, the liberal reformer (as liberal as was possible in the Soviet Union of the time), was in power. In de-Stalinization, history was written back closer to reality. Ukrainian cultural figures were rehabilitated, and the UkSSR was given back some of its sovereignty, and the Crimean Peninsula is given to Ukraine, despite only having a twenty-two percent Ukrainian population<sup>49</sup>. Under Khrushchev's government, Ukrainians were the majority in both the

46 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Ukraine: World War II and Its Aftermath." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. September 29, 2007. Accessed May 6, 2018. <https://web.archive.org/web/20070929133150/http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-30082/Ukraine>.

47 Subtelny, Orest. "Twentieth-Century Ukraine" In *Ukraine: A History*, 487. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2000.

48 United States. U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Public Affairs. *United Nations*. By U.S. Department of State. March 03, 2003. Accessed May 6, 2018. <https://web.archive.org/web/20030303022458/http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/wwii/17604.htm>.

49 Magocsi, Paul Robert. "From Stalin to Brezhnev." In *A History of Ukraine*, 653-55. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1996.

government of the UkSSR and the ranks of the Communist Party of Ukraine. These policies were part of the Khrushchev Thaw, which unfortunately for Soviet Ukraine, did not last long<sup>50</sup>.

Khrushchev was deposed in 1964, and replaced with Leonid Brezhnev, a hardline member of the Communist Party born in Ukraine, who started to rehabilitate and reform some of the Stalinist structures. In the first two years of the Brezhnev-appointed UkSSR government, more Ukrainian cultural icons and Soviet opponents and dissidents were arrested than any year since the Stalinist era. This regime reintroduced and reinforced Russification through a policy of “fusion”, where Brezhnev tried to create a Russian-dominated Soviet nationality<sup>51</sup>. This era was also characterized by a stagnation and repression in both political and cultural terms of Ukrainians by Moscow. There was however, hope on the horizon. With the rise of Gorbachev, perestroika (restructuring), and glasnost (openness), Ukraine’s government, and even the Communist Party of Ukraine, was facing a split.

### **Independent Ukraine: Split on the Same Lines**

This split is the same we saw until the end of the Euromaidan, between Eurasianist Russophile elements, known as “imperial communists” at the time, a Europeanist Ukrainophile element made up of “sovereign communists”, and the group that would quickly come to be called the Democratic Bloc<sup>52</sup>. This Democratic Bloc would become the opposition force in Soviet Ukraine’s politics, and would lead Ukraine

50 Kuzio, *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism*, 1-20.

51 Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, 662-65.

52 Ibid.

into its independence in 1991, only three weeks before the Soviet Union fell. This stable, centrist, and Ukrainophile government, albeit still cooperative with the Russian government, only once rocked by a major incident of election interference just before 2004's Orange Revolution, would lead Ukraine until the presidency of Yushchenko.

Yushchenko's government was the freest and most democratic of any in independent Ukraine's history. In fact, Ukraine was rated as "free" by Freedom House during the Yushchenko presidency, similarly to its EU neighbors<sup>53</sup>. The Orange Revolution and the increase in national pride led to an expansion of Ukrainianism and Ukrainian nationalism from Western Ukraine to Central Ukraine, a more diverse, generally "Eastern Slavic" (mixed Russian/Ukrainian) area, rather than generally native Ukrainian area. The Euromaidan and Russian conflict later on then expanded Ukrainian nationalism to the mostly Russian-speaking Eastern and Southern regions and created a (mostly) united Ukraine in their opposition to Russian invasion and rejection of Eurasianism<sup>54</sup>. However, Ukraine's cycles would take it back on the road to Moscow-style repression.

Following the election of Yanukovich, Ukraine went back towards Moscow, and Eurasianism over time. The gains in freedom and liberal ideals were rolled back, and the Eurasianists in the Party of Regions went back to a similar ideology of the Communist Party in Soviet Ukraine during the Brezhnev and Gorbachev eras, as Yanukovich, similarly to those communist leaders, appeared to expect to rule indefinitely<sup>55</sup>. The communists in Ukraine however, unlike Yanukovich's Party of Regions, were frugal,

53 Kuzio, *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism*, 1-20.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

their leader Shcherbytsky was not openly extravagant, did not control a large portion of the Ukrainian economy, was not a billionaire with his money in Caribbean tax havens, and did not have two penthouses in One Hyde Park<sup>56</sup>.

The CPSU in Ukraine during the Brezhnev and Gorbachev eras were Soviet nationalists with an interest in the economic improvement of Ukraine and left an economy in 1989 larger than the current Ukrainian economy, and larger than any time in the history of post-Soviet Ukraine<sup>57</sup>. At the same time, although there were atrocities and corruption during the late Soviet era, this is nothing when compared to the corruption under Yanukovych and the bloodshed in Eastern Ukraine from where the Party of Regions comes from in the 80s and 90s. Despite the claims of moderation by the Yanukovych government, the Party of Regions attempted to do everything they could to return Ukraine to Soviet-era Eurasianism, equating Ukrainian nationalism to fascism, upgraded Russian to an official language of Ukraine, while at the same time undermined Ukrainian language education and changed the historical and cultural curriculum in schools<sup>58</sup>. This Eurasianism, however, was not to last, at least not in the majority of the nation.

The Euromaidan protests and the following crisis in Crimea and the whole of Ukraine was the beginning of the seventh, and possibly last cycle in Ukrainian politics<sup>59</sup>. Ukraine is no longer unsure about its position in world affairs, with the Europhile, Ukrainianist Poroshenko being elected in a landslide, the rebellions in the far Eastern

56 Kuzio, *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism*, 1-20.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

regions making the Party of Regions and even their members personae non gratae in the eyes of the people and discrediting their Russophile, Eurasianist ideology, and with the Communist Party, the only other Eurasianist party, unpopular, the Eurasian ideology is unlikely to revive itself in the future<sup>60</sup>. Now the possible end of the political cycles in Ukraine does not mean that there will not be different identities and that diversity is gone, but that these are likely to be less divisive in the future. With the government and people moving back towards the centrist, integrative policies of the Kuchma and Yushchenko eras, Ukraine will be able to grow into a stronger, stabler, and less volatile Ukraine going into the future, despite Russia's interference.

60 Kuzio, *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism*, 1-20.

## **Chapter 6: The Ukraine Crisis Analyzed**

“Putin wants to restore the Old Russian Empire and cannot stand free democratic prospects in Ukraine, because sooner or later the people of Russia would want to have that kind of lifestyle as well”

Senator John McCain

### **The EU and Euromaidan**

This section will be focusing mostly on the final two cycles of Ukrainian political history, from the election of Victor Yanukovich in 2010 to the present under Petro Poroshenko<sup>61</sup>, and more specifically on the issues which led to The Ukraine Crisis, a global diplomatic and military crisis that began with the removal of Viktor Yanukovich from power in 2014, the annexation of Crimea, and the ongoing War in Donbass pitting the Russian Federation and Russian-backed rebel groups in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts against the West and the Ukrainian government under Petro Poroshenko. This first section will focus on the source of the crisis, Ukraine’s relationship with the EU and the following Euromaidan protests in 2013-14.

As mentioned before, Ukraine had been under a quite free and democratic government for the years 2004 to 2010, under the Ukrainianist Yushchenko government. This government was pro-NATO and supported anti-corruption efforts; as well it called the Russia-Georgia War of 2008 a threat that the West had not yet addressed

61 Kuzio, *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism*, 1-20.

sufficiently<sup>62</sup>. This antagonistic relationship with Russia was not appreciated by Moscow, nor was the idea of Ukraine joining NATO very popular at the time among Ukrainians, although joining the EU was increasing in popularity by the end of Yushchenko's administration, and Ukraine joined the EU Eastern Partnership in 2009, bringing its goal of joining the EU closer to a reality<sup>63</sup>. This would appear to be the first step to joining the EU, even with the election of Yanukovich in 2010.

Under Yanukovich, although he was seen as a pro-Russia president, the goals seemed to be similar, with both Yanukovich and his allies in the Rada (Parliament) stating that European integration remained Ukraine's priority in both a domestic and foreign policy sense. The EU and Ukraine began the creation of an EU Association Agreement for Ukraine in 2012<sup>64</sup>, although the likely politically-motivated jailing of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and former Minister of Internal Affairs Yuriy Lutsenko strained relations. By early 2013, Ukraine was still affirming that they would and were doing their best to satisfy the EU and join the EU, but at the same time they were negotiating with Russia to keep the option for a relationship with the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia open<sup>65</sup>.

The Rada of Ukraine was in agreement that the EU's requests should be met, but by November 2013, they had failed to pass any of the necessary reforms and laws

62 Yushchenko, Viktor. "The Next Big Step: Fairness and Prosperity for All Ukraine." Viktor Yushchenko 2010. April 9, 2009. Accessed May 7, 2018. <https://web.archive.org/web/20090409161037/http://www.nashkrok.org.ua/en/>.

63 European Union. Council of the European Union. Eastern Partnership. *Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit Prague, 7 May 2009*. By Council of the European Union. Brussels, Belgium: Council of the European Union, 2009. 1-11.

64 European Union. Council of the European Union. *Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and Their Member States, of the One Part, and Ukraine, of the Other Part*. Brussels, Belgium: European Council, 2017.

65 Associated Press. "EU to Ukraine: Reforms Necessary for Trade Pact." *Kyiv Post*, February 25, 2013. Accessed May 7, 2018. <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/eu-ukraine-relations/eu-to-ukraine-reforms-necessary-for-trade-pact-320910.html>.

necessary to sign the Association Agreement, and the Yanukovich government suspended preparations for the signing of the agreement in favor of a trade commission to be formed between Ukraine, Russia, and the EU<sup>66</sup>. This led to the beginning of the Euromaidan protests on November 21<sup>st</sup> 2013.

The Euromaidan was a wave of civil unrest in Ukraine's capital Kiev against the Yanukovich government's decision to suspend the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement. The protests began in Kiev's Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti), and later were also associated with a perception by the Ukrainian public of high levels of government corruption and were expanded due to the violent response from Berkut police forces on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November<sup>67</sup>. This led to riots throughout December in Kiev and a crackdown on protesters in January through a set of anti-protest laws passed by the Rada in January of 2014, increasing the tensions and conflict across the nation, and eventually after a short cooling down of tensions<sup>68</sup>, the Euromaidan culminated in February with the so-called "Ukrainian Revolution" of 2014, again mostly in Kiev. This series of riots, protests, and heavy conflict between Berkut police and protesters finally overthrew the government of Viktor Yanukovich, restored the Ukrainian Constitution to its pre-Yanukovich state, and put in a pro-EU government after snap elections in May 2014<sup>69</sup>.

The protests in Kiev were not the only ones to occur during Euromaidan, however. There

66 Interfax-Ukraine. "Ukrainian Government Issues Decree to Suspend Preparations for Signing of Association Agreement with EU." Interfax-Ukraine. November 21, 2013. Accessed May 7, 2018. <https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/176073.html>.

67 Kyiv Post. "EuroMaidan Rallies in Ukraine – Nov. 21-23 Coverage." *Kyiv Post*, November 25, 2013. Accessed May 7, 2018. <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/euromaidan/euromaidan-rallies-in-ukraine-nov-21-23-coverage-332423.html>.

68 Snyder, Timothy. "Ukraine: The New Dictatorship." *The New York Review of Books*, January 18, 2014. Accessed May 7, 2018. <http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2014/01/18/ukraine-new-dictatorship/?insrc=wbl>.

69 Alexander, Harriet. "Ukraine Revolution: Tuesday February 25 as It Happened." *The Telegraph*, February 25, 2014. Accessed May 7, 2018. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/10659755/Ukraine-revolution-live>.

were protests across Ukraine, with communist symbols toppled and destroyed as they were seen as symbols of Russian hegemony over Ukraine, and an almost nation-wide occupation of government administrative buildings by protesters during January and February<sup>70</sup>.

The new parliamentary government under Yatsenyuk signed the political provisions of the Association Agreement as one of its first actions only a month after the ouster of Yanukovich and left the economic sections to the new government to be elected in May<sup>71</sup>. Ukraine was given a temporary free trade area with the EU in April 2014 along with financial help in the form of a one billion Euro loan in May<sup>72</sup>. Once the Poroshenko administration was elected, President Poroshenko signed the economic provisions of the Association Agreement, two years from its inception, and Euromaidan's ultimate goal of a closer relationship between Ukraine and the EU was finally achieved<sup>73</sup>. Through the next few years under Poroshenko, the EU would agree to loan Ukraine another nearly two billion Euro (1.8bn)<sup>74</sup>, and the full ratification of the Association agreement was obtained in May 2017, alongside the accession of Ukraine into a Deep and

70 Boldyrev, Oleg. "Ukraine Protests 'spread' into Russia-influenced East." BBC News. January 27, 2014. Accessed May 7, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25905031>.

71 Croft, Adrian. "European Union Signs Landmark Association Agreement with Ukraine." Reuters. March 21, 2014. Accessed May 7, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-eu-agreement/european-union-signs-landmark-association-agreement-with-ukraine-idUSBREA2K0JY20140321>.

72 Interfax-Ukraine. "Ukraine, EU Sign Documents Required for Paying 1 Bln Euro to Kyiv." Interfax-Ukraine. May 13, 2014. Accessed May 7, 2018. <https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/economic/204654.html>.

73 BBC News. "EU Signs Pacts with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova." BBC News. June 27, 2014. Accessed May 7, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28052645>.

74 BBC News. "EU Agrees 1.8bn-euro Loan to Cash-strapped Ukraine." BBC News. May 22, 2015. Accessed May 7, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32843610>.

Comprehensive Free Trade Area with the EU in September of 2017 and a visa-free regime in June 2017, it seems that Ukraine is on a path to EU membership within the next decade or two if it can survive the current crisis.

*Euromaidan: The West*

The West's response to Euromaidan and the conflict between Yanukovich's government and protesters was a very liberal institutionalist one, with the UN, through the Secretary General, stating that "all parties" should act with restraint and with the principles of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in mind<sup>75</sup>, and some of the most prominent EU states (Germany, the UK), repeating similar statements, as well as German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier stating that Germany was considering the use of sanctions against Yanukovich's government<sup>76</sup>. The United States' response was similarly disapproving, and was the most focused on the ability of international institutions to stabilize and grow Ukraine into a strong economy with a stable democratic system of government, with Secretary of State John Kerry saying that "Average citizens of each member country – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Ukraine and Georgia – play a prominent role in the continuing integration with the international community and this is very important"<sup>77</sup>, and that "European integration is the surest course to economic growth and to strengthening Ukraine's democracy"<sup>78</sup>.

75 Euronews. "The UN and Washington Condemn Violence in Ukraine." Euronews. December 3, 2013. Accessed May 7, 2018. <http://www.euronews.com/2013/12/03/the-un-and-washington-condemn-violence-in-ukraine>.

76 Interfax-Ukraine. "German Foreign Minister Threatens Sanctions against Ukraine." Interfax-Ukraine. February 04, 2014. Accessed May 7, 2018. <https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/188657.html>.

77 Interfax-Ukraine. "Kerry: Most Eastern Partnership States Make Tangible Progress, Yet Challenges Remain." Interfax-Ukraine. November 28, 2013. Accessed May 7, 2018. <https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/177437.html>.

This response makes sense, as the West is focused on not only liberal democratic values, but sees international institutions and international cooperation, especially while the Obama Administration led the world with its doctrine, as the great peace-making force in the world, with economic and political freedom at its most great when liberal democracies work together and influence each other. Despite this ideology, with Ukraine as only one of two remaining post-Soviet states which was aligned with Russia, the US more than likely had some realist thought in mind as well when giving support to the Euromaidan's ideals. Taking the only remaining major member of the former Soviet Union other than Russia itself out of the Russian sphere, in essence, castrates the Russian Federation and limits its power projection to Central Asia, and keeps Putin's irredentism and expansionism trapped in areas the United States and by extension the West has little real interest in<sup>79</sup>. Also, bringing Ukraine into closer cooperation with the West also gives the West access to Ukraine's huge natural resources and its market.

The response of the West once Yanukovich was out of power was supportive of the change in government, with the UK being one of the first nations to recognize the new government and to call for financial aid for Ukraine. The United States criticized Russian support of Yanukovich's government<sup>80</sup> and was cautiously optimistic until the election of Petro Poroshenko, with President Obama congratulating President Poroshenko two days after his election. The EU's decision to almost immediately allow Ukraine to

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78 Euronews. "The UN and Washington Condemn Violence in Ukraine." Euronews. December 3, 2013. Accessed May 7, 2018. <http://www.euronews.com/2013/12/03/the-un-and-washington-condemn-violence-in-ukraine>.

79 The Editors of the Weekly Standard. "What to Do About Putin." The Weekly Standard. March 23, 2018. Accessed May 8, 2018. <https://www.weeklystandard.com/the-editors/what-to-do-about-putin>.

80 Roberts, Dan. "Ukraine Crisis: Obama Attacks Putin over Russia's Role." *The Guardian*, February 19, 2014. Accessed May 7, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/20/ukraine-crisis-obama-attacks-putin-over-russias-role>.

sign their Association Agreement clearly shows the support the EU has towards the new government, and although this also comes from a place of idealism and a want for democracy to spread, it also comes from a security perspective, as having Ukraine more closely integrated into Europe gives them more bargaining power when negotiating pipeline deals with oil-producers farther East and with the pipelines that flow through Ukraine into Europe, and provides a large, friendly buffer in Southeastern Europe against Russia.

#### *Euromaidan: Russia*

Russia's response to Euromaidan was, of course, diametrically opposed to the West's, and had its own security in mind. Their responses blamed the West for making "radical forces in Ukraine stronger" and "encouraging them to escalate and provoke the legitimate authority."<sup>81</sup> President Putin himself claimed the West and the EU in specific blackmailed Ukraine to sign the Association Agreement by promoting the Euromaidan protests, and compared the protests to a pogrom that had nothing to do with Ukraine's relations with the EU<sup>82</sup>. This is in line with Putin's deflection of blame towards the West of issues that could cause issues for his regime, and it is in his interest to discredit the Maidan and firm up the friendly government of Yanukovych across the border. When it came time to elect a new president in Ukraine, Putin's government flip-flopped between

81 The Insider. "Insider." Russia Believes the West Is Guilty of Escalating the Conflict in Ukraine. February 19, 2014. Accessed May 8, 2018. <http://www.theinsider.ua/politics/5303f85aee66/>.

82 Marszal, Andrew. "Ukraine Protests 'more like a Pogrom than a Revolution', Says Putin." *The Telegraph*, December 2, 2013. Accessed May 8, 2018. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/10489133/Ukraine-protests-more-like-a-pogrom-than-a-revolution-says-Putin.html>.

calling the successors to President Yanukovich an “illegitimate junta”<sup>83</sup>, and accepting the outcome and working with whoever won<sup>84</sup>. This isn’t surprising considering that the Western powers had threatened further sanctions on entire sectors of the Russian economy if they disputed the election<sup>85</sup>, and Putin had already been under pressure for the Russian financial crisis that had begun due to the sanctions that began after the annexation of Crimea<sup>86</sup>. The Russian relationship with Ukraine, as Ukraine integrates with Europe more, will only get worse, with both nations closing their borders to visa free travel to and from each nation<sup>87</sup>, and banning exports in many sectors from each nation due to the tensions and outright conflict between the nations.

### **The Annexation of Crimea and Russian Intervention in Ukraine**

Ukraine, after its independence, was close to Russia both economically and militarily, and Romanian Russia scholar Iulian Chifu has claimed that Russia used a modern Brezhnev Doctrine where Russia attempts to limit Ukraine’s independence to the level of autonomy that the Warsaw Pact nations had during the Cold War<sup>88</sup>. Despite this

83 Ponomarev, Sergey. "As Ukrainian Election Looms, Western Powers and Russia Campaign for Influence." *The New York Times*, May 6, 2014. Accessed May 8, 2018.

[https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/07/world/europe/ukraine.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/07/world/europe/ukraine.html?_r=0).

84 BBC News. "Russia's Vladimir Putin 'to Respect' Ukraine Vote." BBC News. May 23, 2014.

Accessed May 8, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27542057>.

85 Lamarque, Kevin. "Obama, Merkel: More Sanctions If Russia Disrupts Election." NBC News.

May 2, 2014. Accessed May 8, 2018. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/daniels-lawyer-cohen-got-500k-russian-oligarch-viktor-vekselberg-n872481>.

86 The Moscow Times. "Third Wave of Sanctions Slams Russian Stocks." *The Moscow Times*, July 17, 2014. Accessed May 8, 2018. <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/third-wave-of-sanctions-slams-russian-stocks-37409>.

87 The Moscow Times. "Russians Will Need Passport to Enter Ukraine." *The Moscow Times*, February 3, 2015. Accessed May 9, 2018. <https://themoscowtimes.com/news/russians-will-need-passport-to-enter-ukraine-43531>.

88 Chifu, Iulian, Oazu Nantoi, and Oleksandr Sushko. *The Russian Georgian War A Trilateral Cognitive Institutional Approach of the Crisis Decision-making Process*. Bucharest, Romania: Center for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning, 2009. 2009. Accessed May 9, 2018. [http://www.cpc-ew.ro/pdfs/the\\_russian\\_georgian\\_war.pdf](http://www.cpc-ew.ro/pdfs/the_russian_georgian_war.pdf).

closeness, there were some issues, the first of which was the stockpile of Soviet nuclear weapons that Ukraine inherited, the third-largest in the world. Ukraine did not want to keep these weapons but needed assurances that their largest neighbor would not attack them in the future, leading to the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances that assured Russia would not use force or threaten force against Ukraine<sup>89</sup>. These assurances were proved to be totally worthless in 2014.

The Russian intervention in Ukraine began with political actions in February 2014, with Russian presidential adviser Sergey Glazyev giving instructions to pro-Russian groups in Eastern Ukraine to create Antimaidan unrest<sup>90</sup>, and on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February, members of the Crimean population reported “little green men”, which would later be confirmed to be unmarked Russian special forces, invaded Crimea and took over its parliament building, immediately after which Crimea’s government declared independence from Ukraine and set up a referendum to join the Russian Federation<sup>91</sup>. This extremely provocative action against Ukraine’s sovereignty and the largest territory grab by a great power since World War II, although it has made Russia’s economy worse than it has been since Putin became leader of the nation, and it has lowered Russia’s stature on the world stage, the benefits for Russia are much greater than the negatives. Russia’s security actually counts on the possession of Crimea and its vital port of

89 Vasylenko, Volodymyr. "On Assurances without Guarantees in a “shelved Document”." *Day.kyiv.ua*, December 15, 2009. Accessed May 9, 2018. <http://day.kyiv.ua/en/article/close/assurances-without-guarantees-shelved-document>.

90 Glazyev, Sergey. *English Translation of Audio Evidence of Putin’s Adviser Glazyev Involvement in War in Ukraine*. UA Position. Recorded 2014. Security Service of Ukraine, 2016, YouTube.

91 Shevchenko, Vitaly. ""Little Green Men" or "Russian Invaders"?" "Little Green Men" or "Russian Invaders"?" March 11, 2014. Accessed May 9, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26532154>.

Sevastopol, which Russia had been leasing from Ukraine for the stationing of its Black Sea Fleet since Ukraine's independence, due to it being the only warm water port Russia has easy access to<sup>92</sup>.

The annexation of Crimea was seen as not a spontaneous action by a scared Russia by most, with the planning necessary needing months to work out at the bare minimum, but according to Andrey Illarionov, a former Putin advisor, at a NATO session in Lithuania, a conflict over Crimea with Ukraine had been planned for since 2003, with a war plan projecting the war to begin in 2015, and that Maidan was only accelerating the confrontation to its current point<sup>93</sup>. The Russians have since kept Crimea as a part of the Russian Federation and have supported, supplied, and allied themselves with pro-Russian separatists in the East of Ukraine, causing the War on Donbass.

#### *Crimea and Russian Intervention in Ukraine: The West*

The West has completely and totally condemned all actions by the Russian government and rejected the Crimean referendum on joining the Russian Federation, and in the words of the government of the United Kingdom, the entire referendum was “farfical, illegal, and illegitimate”<sup>94</sup>, and a UNSC resolution supporting Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity was passed with thirteen members voting in favor,

92 Yuhas, Alan, and Raya Jalabi. "Ukraine Crisis: Why Russia Sees Crimea as Its Naval Stronghold." *The Guardian*, March 7, 2014. Accessed May 9, 2018.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/07/ukraine-russia-crimea-naval-base-tatars-explainer>.

93 Illarionov, Andrei. "Speech by Andrei Illarionov at NATO PA Session in Vilnius." Speech, NATO PA Spring Session, Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius, Lithuania, May 31, 2014.

94 Bloomberg. "Putin's Stance on Ukraine Supported by Minority of Nations." Bloomberg Visual Data. March 14, 2014. Accessed May 9, 2018.  
<https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/infographics/countries-react-to-russian-intervention-in-crimea.html>.

with only China abstaining<sup>95</sup>. As would be expected, this resolution was vetoed by Russia, and the General Assembly resolution passed later was largely symbolic and non-binding<sup>96</sup>. The United States, Canada, Japan, and the European Union sent three rounds of sanctions in response to the annexation, targeting larger and larger amounts of people and later companies. This led to a financial crisis in 2014 that would not recover until 2017, and a collapse of the ruble<sup>97</sup>. Western powers have continued to apply these sanctions up until today, and it is a continuing cause of tensions between the West and Russia.

The West's response comes from a realist as well as liberal perspective, as the West knows allowing Russia to keep their gains only makes them weaker, and creates an even more daring Russian state, but the Western powers also cannot involve themselves, with the threat of Russian nuclear retaliation unfortunately having to be kept in mind. However, economic damage could be done to discourage and possibly force Russia to cooperate and conform to Western demands and the call for Ukrainian territorial integrity. This idea assumes that the Russian government sees economic security just as important as military security, which by its actions in the past and the actions they have taken with Ukraine since the initial invasion, they do not. In this case, we cannot assume

95 AP. "Russia Vetoes U.N. Resolution on Crimea's Future." USA Today. March 15, 2014. Accessed May 9, 2018. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/03/15/russia-vetoes-un-resolution-crimea/6456495/>

96 United Nations. General Assembly. Plenary. *General Assembly Adopts Resolution Calling upon States Not to Recognize Changes in Status of Crimea Region*. By United Nations General Assembly. New York, NY: United Nations General Assembly, 2014.

97 Kitroeff, Natalie, and Joe Weisenthal. "Here's Why the Russian Ruble Is Collapsing." Bloomberg. December 16, 2014. Accessed May 9, 2018. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-12-16/no-caviar-is-not-getting-cheaper-everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-russian-ruble-collapse>.

Russia will be willing to make a change unless either more economic pressure is placed upon them (sanctions from China, entire sectors boycotted, loss of oil and gas monopoly over East and Central Europe), or military force is placed upon them.

*Crimea and Russian Intervention in Ukraine: Ukraine*

Ukraine, as the affected party in the invasion, have accused Russia of provoking the conflict and having Crimea declare independence and join Russia, similarly to how the Russo-Georgian War of 2008 created two unrecognized states de facto independent from Georgia with Russian backing. The government under Interim President Turchynov also declared that the Russian invasion of Crimea would be fought, and that Ukraine's independence would be defended<sup>98</sup>. Ukraine adopted several laws and set up a ministry in the following months protecting their citizens in the temporarily Russian or rebel-occupied territory, as well as those internally displaced by the conflict<sup>99</sup>. The Ukrainian government also cut normal diplomatic ties with Russia, as mentioned before, removing visa free travel, banning flights to Russia from Ukrainian airports, and closing off Ukrainian airspace to Russian military and commercial flights. Besides these diplomatic actions, Ukraine is still fighting a war in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, fighting against sixty-four thousand rebel and Russian troops, with casualties over thirty-five thousand injured and killed and over twenty-seven hundred Ukrainians captured by

98 Gorchinskaya, Katya. "Turchynov: Russia Starts Aggression in Crimea." *Kyiv Post*, February 28, 2014. Accessed May 9, 2018. <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/war-against-ukraine/turchynov-russia-waging-war-of-aggression-in-crimea-337972.html>.

99 Ukrayinska Pravda. "The Cabinet Decided to Create the Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons." *Ukrayinska Pravda*, April 20, 2016. Accessed May 9, 2018. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2016/04/20/7106169/>.

Russian-backed forces<sup>100</sup>.

In the Crimean annexation crisis, Ukraine has appealed to international institutions, although they have not been able to help them the way Ukraine hoped, and in the end, Ukraine has had to mostly go it alone in the military ventures that have been necessary to defend its sovereignty. However, this does not mean a Ukraine which shies away from cooperation, as Ukraine under Poroshenko has made it its priority to become part of the EU within the next twenty years and begin the application process by 2020<sup>101</sup>.

### **The War in Donbass**

The Donbass region is the far-Eastern region of Ukraine, forming the basin of the Donets River which flows through it. It is traditionally defined as the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts in Ukraine. This region is a resource-rich area, with coal mining, smelting, and heavy industry making up most of the region's economy, and before the war, thirty percent of Ukraine's exports were produced in the Donbass region.<sup>102</sup> In similar fashion to the invasion of Crimea, unmarked militants seized Donetsk's administrative buildings in April 2015, and by May 4<sup>th</sup> 2014, had raised the flag of the separatist Donetsk People's Republic over the city<sup>103</sup>, and quickly took other major cities in the oblast. Similar incidents occurred in Luhansk Oblast, and the flag of the Luhansk

100 United Nations. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Ukraine Situation Update No. 7 as of 14 August 2015*. By Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. New York, NY: United Nations OCHA, 2015.

101 Balmforth, Richard, and Natalia Zinets. "Ukraine President Sets 2020 as EU Target Date, Defends Peace Plan." Reuters. September 25, 2014. Accessed May 9, 2018. <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-ukraine-crisis-president/ukraine-president-sets-2020-as-eu-target-date-defends-peace-plan-idUKKCN0HK0OE20140925>.

102 Schmidtke, Oliver, and Serhy Yekelchuk. "The Donbas - The Last Frontier of Europe?" In *Europe's Last Frontier?: Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine between Russia and the European Union*, 97-132. New York, NY: Springer, 2016.

103 BBC News. "Ukraine Crisis: Protesters Declare Donetsk 'republic'." BBC News. April 7, 2014. Accessed May 9, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26919928>.

People's Republic was raised over Luhansk on April 29<sup>th</sup> 2014, and territory expanded to the other Russian-speaking territories in Luhansk Oblast<sup>104</sup>.

After these initial gains, the Ukrainian government regained much of the territory they had lost, but with Russian assistance, the insurgents were able to regain much of their territory back from government forces. Thus far, there have been ten ceasefires, most recent of which was signed in March 2018, and each were immediately broken by both sides<sup>105</sup>. There have also been two frameworks for peace signed in Minsk, neither of which have ended the fighting either. Many are calling this the latest in a great many post-Soviet "frozen conflicts", wherein Russia uses the conflict, usually involving an unrecognized state or two to throw a nation into mild chaos and unable to join any of the Western organizations like the EU, as many times, the issues that arise around these conflicts preclude post-Soviet nations from joining them<sup>106</sup>. The war in Donbass is an ongoing stalemate, with neither side wanting to end the conflict, and the human cost in increasing, with one Ukrainian soldier dying every three days in the conflict as of 2017<sup>107</sup>. Ukraine has tried to ensure the security of its citizens and displaced persons within its territory as said before in my section in Crimea<sup>108</sup>, and they have ensured that

104 Stern, David. "Ukraine Crisis: Pro-Russia Activists Take Luhansk Offices." BBC News. April 29, 2014. Accessed May 10, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27206280>.

105 Reuters. "'Easter Ceasefire' in Donbas Fails on Its First Day with Attacks on Ukrainian Positions Unian. March 30, 2018. Accessed May 9, 2018. <https://www.unian.info/war/10062323-easter-ceasefire-in-donbas-fails-on-its-first-day-with-attacks-on-ukrainian-positions.html>"

106 Tsvetkova, Maria. "Ceasefire Brings Limited Respite for East Ukrainians." Euronews. July 21, 2015. Accessed May 9, 2018. <https://web.archive.org/web/20150725132924/http://www.euronews.com/newswires/3041823-ceasefire-brings-limited-respite-for-east-ukrainians/>.

107 Peterson, Nolan. "In Ukraine It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas, and a Lot Less Like Russia." The Daily Signal. November 2017. Accessed May 9, 2018. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2017/12/04/ukraine-beginning-look-lot-like-christmas-lot-less-like-russia/amp/>.

108 Ukrayinska Pravda. "The Cabinet Decided to Create the Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons." *Ukrayinska Pravda*, April 20, 2016. Accessed May 9, 2018. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2016/04/20/7106169/>.

the rest of the country can continue with business as usual, while limiting resources and supplies to rebel-held territory. They have also passed the necessary laws to comply with the Minsk II protocol, albeit they have not been accepted by the rebels or Russia.

#### *The War in Donbass: The West*

The West responded to the conflict by noting the backing of Russia to the rebel republics, and the similarities to the action in Crimea, and have denounced and called on Russia to stop the destabilization of Ukraine. They have also classified all the rebels in Eastern Ukraine as terrorists. The United States in specific, sent military advisors, a seven million dollar shipment of non-lethal military equipment to Ukraine, another eight million in military equipment in August 2014, and another nineteen million dollars to train the Ukrainian National Guard<sup>109</sup>. This reaction is one the US has had before with many wars caused by the USSR or Russia in the past, with limited help and aid packages being sent first, and the overall reaction is the only one the Western powers could have, as the situation has elements of the other two times Russia has manipulated a country in their former sphere, as in Moldova and Georgia with Transnistria and South Ossetia and Abkhazia, respectively. It seems that the West has finally woken up however and is putting much firmer pressure and more support into the Ukrainian cause than in the other two conflicts.

#### *The War in Donbass: Russia*

Russia, as with Crimea, suggests they have no forces in either of the rebel republics, and accuses Ukraine of blaming their government for all the troubles they have

109 United States. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy*. By Vincent L. Morelli. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2017.

had since Euromaidan, and that they support the people of Ukraine, who simply want a “clear answer from Kiev to all their questions”<sup>110</sup>, and called for constitutional reform to federalize Ukraine. Hilariously at the same time, Sergei Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Minister, claims that “Russia is doing all it can to promote early stabilisation in Ukraine”<sup>111</sup>. With all the talk of wanting a stable Ukraine, Russia has still condemned Ukraine for attacking Donetsk and Luhansk, by claiming that the authorities in Kiev are “self-proclaimed as the result of a coup” and have no authority to do what they are doing, and at the same time, President Putin compared the attacks from Ukraine on the rebel republics to the Siege of Leningrad during World War II<sup>112</sup>.

This combination of presenting a face of democracy and support for self-determination alongside the reflection of blame onto another party is part and parcel for the Russian regime, as it is effective propaganda for the native population, and this propaganda combined with their cooperation in the peace frameworks gives them plausible deniability and a high ground to speak from in the discussion. This is vital to the safety of the Russian regime and for their ability to convince and influence others that they are in the right. It also is part of the idea that Putin has of a Neo-Soviet Union which he believes can save Russia from stagnation, and of course can keep the Russian public on his side.

110 BBC News. "Ukraine Crisis: Protesters Declare Donetsk 'republic'." BBC News. April 7, 2014. Accessed May 9, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26919928>.

111 Lavrov, Sergey. "It's Not Russia That Is Destabilising Ukraine." *The Guardian*, April 7, 2014. Accessed May 9, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/07/sergei-lavrov-russia-stabilise-ukraine-west>.

112 White, Gregory L. "Ukraine Retreats in Effort to Isolate Rebel Stronghold." *The Wall Street Journal*, August 29, 2014. Accessed May 9, 2018. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/putin-lashes-out-at-ukraine-over-failure-of-talks-1409312151>.

## **Chapter 7: The Crisis as It Stands**

The empirical and analytical findings of this thesis explain much as to why the Ukraine crisis has stagnated in the current form it has been in since the stabilization of the front in the War in Donbass. These findings will be split into subsections on each of the actors involved in the crisis being examined.

### **The Facts on the Ground: Empirical Findings**

#### *Russia*

The foremost of my findings when related to Russia is that due to the ability of Russia to project power using its military and nuclear arsenals, the Western powers can do little to help Ukraine beyond the diplomatic level, with sanctions against Russia being the action affecting Russia most, with the ruble collapsing since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, and its value not having recovered since. This combined with the fall in crude oil prices due to American shale oil production created a recession that Russia has only just come out of.<sup>113</sup> Despite this however, Russia has been able to continue its supply and front line support of Ukrainian rebels, and through this, maintain not only the status quo in the civil war, but continue to inflict casualties on Ukrainian forces in the region, maintain control over Crimea, and ultimately keep Ukraine from furthering its goal of aligning itself with Europe and the West while its frozen conflict continues.

113 Lahart, Justin. "Yield Seekers Prone to Russia's Disease." The Wall Street Journal, December 16, 2014. Accessed September 30, 2018. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/yield-seekers-prone-to-russias-disease-heard-on-the-street-1418767459>.

The Russians have also maintained a diplomatic position which refuses to recognize the authorities in Kiev as the result of a coup and attempts to delegitimize the government of Petro Poroshenko and its efforts to reintegrate the Donbass region. The capture of Crimea has also more firmly secured Russia's claim to the Black Sea and a safe warm water port for the Russian Navy, a goal Russia has maintained for hundreds of years. Crimea's transfer to Ukraine has been called by prominent Russian officials like former Vice President Alexander Rutskoy as far back as independence, as illegitimate<sup>114</sup> and as a "harebrained scheme" of Khrushchev's that was signed by people who "must have been suffering from sunstroke or hangovers".<sup>115</sup>

Capture of the region has been a point of pride for current President Vladimir Putin, who even has had commemorative coins made with his face on them after the annexation claiming him to be "The Gatherer of Russian Lands".<sup>116</sup> All of this coming from a man who has called the fall of the Soviet Union "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century", and who has had Neo-Soviet imperialism as his number one goal since his term as President began, with this, the War in Donbass and annexation of Crimea starts to look as part of a plan to maintain Ukraine under Russian influence and a possible annexation of the Donbass region. This however, has backfired, with the Euromaidan movement pushing Ukraine ever closer to the Western powers and the EU despite Russia's efforts, and the West embracing Ukraine as it fights off Russian invasion.

114 Lukin, Vladimir P. "Our Security Predicament." *Foreign Policy*, no. 88 (Autumn 1992): 57-75. doi:10.2307/1149318.

115 Drohobycky, Maria. *Crimea: Dynamics, Challenges, and Prospects*. Boston: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999.

116 Kelley, Michael B. "Putin's Coin Marking The Annexation Of Crimea Is Ominous." *Business Insider*. May 09, 2014. Accessed October 03, 2018. <https://www.businessinsider.com/putin-arrived-in-crimea-and-he-has-a-commemorative-coin-2014-5>.

*Ukraine*

Ukraine, for its own part, has moved towards the EU, with an Association Agreement and now membership in a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with the EU and EFTA. Ukraine's political system has suffered due to the crisis as well. The Euromaidan and the subsequent change of regime from the Yanukovich government has led to instability and a reduction of rights, with its once "Free" political environment by Freedom House having been downgraded to "Partly Free", with freedom of the press limited especially when it comes to Russian-speaking communities, and corruption rising throughout the country, with oligarch Petro Poroshenko as president of the country.<sup>117</sup>

The crisis has also caused similar economic issues for Ukraine as Russia, not for lack of IMF assistance loans totaling seventeen billion dollars in 2014. Its economy has crashed, with the Ukrainian Hryvnia losing value from a high of eight hryvnia per dollar to a value of twenty-eight hryvnia per dollar today, and they have lost over ten thousand citizens due to the fighting in Donbass, a quarter of which are civilians.<sup>118</sup> Ukraine has, with the loss of Crimea, lost a crucial port for their navy, as well as fifteen thousand members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Ukraine has also suffered the loss of its industrial heartland of Donetsk and Luhansk, as well as Crimea, and with it nearly twenty percent of its GDP and twenty-five percent of its exports, industrial goods, and service economy.<sup>119</sup>

117 Freedom House. *Freedom in the World 2017: Ukraine Profile*. Washington, DC: Freedom House, 2017. Accessed July 6<sup>th</sup> 2018. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/ukraine>

118 Wigglesworth, Robin, and Roman Olearchyk. "Ukraine's Economy: Broken down." *Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/content/63e0a202-26fb-11e4-a46a-00144feabdc0>.

119 Ibid.

It has, as with Russia, been able to maintain the status quo in the civil war using over sixty thousand troops on the front lines against an estimated forty thousand rebels and ten thousand Russian regulars. This military effort has the support of an international coalition made up of NATO, the OSCE, the EU, GUAM Organization, the UN, Council of Europe, IMF, World Bank, the G7, G20 (excluding Russia), the Visegrad Group, EBRD, the Holy See, and thirty-five individual countries, including three of the five permanent UN Security Council members who have given both military and diplomatic support to Ukraine, including military training teams from the US and UK, as well as non-lethal weapons, and from the US in particular, lethal weapons.<sup>120</sup> This outpouring of support for Ukraine has transformed the crisis there and the War in Donbass from a local, post-Soviet frozen conflict into a potential tinderbox for the first full-on proxy war between Russia and NATO since the end of the Cold War, and the first conflict on the European continent since the Yugoslav Wars. The crisis has also created over two million Ukrainian refugees, with 1.4 million internally displaced within Ukrainian territory. This has led to a huge shortage in the Donbass of food and water, with up to 1.3 million civilians unable to access fresh water, and barely over a third of the needed supplies and money to fund support efforts in Donetsk and Luhansk having been set aside for the UN.<sup>121</sup>

120 United Kingdom. House of Commons. Library. UK Military Assistance to Ukraine. By Claire Mills. 1-12.

121 United Nations. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. UKRAINE Situation Update No. 7 as of 14 August 2015. By UNOCHA.

*The West*

The West, as a response to the annexation of Crimea and the attack by Russian-backed forces in Donbass has diplomatically and economically isolated Russia and sent aid, both lethal and non-lethal weaponry, and diplomatic and financial support to Ukraine. This has allowed Ukraine to maintain a stable front line and maintain its economy in a semi-stable state, but it has also put the Ukrainian economy in jeopardy, with the IMF lending it almost eighteen billion IMF SDRs (about twenty-four billion US dollars) since 2014. This loan program has increased the ratio of debt to GDP steadily since 2014, from seventy to eighty-five percent and forced Ukraine to face its corruption problems, despite continued dragging of its feet. The West, diplomatically, has isolated Russia's economy with multiple series of sanctions against Russian companies, officials, and individuals, limiting travel, business transactions, economic transactions (such as sales of bonds), embargoing dual-use goods, and freezing Russian funds held outside the country. They have also isolated Russia diplomatically, suspending them from the Group of 8, reverting it to the Group of 7, and excluding them from all meetings until Russia itself left the group. The West has only been negligibly affected economically by the situation in Ukraine, and benefits from access to Ukraine's market through the DCFTA, however, these benefits have not been enough to commit it fully to the support of Ukraine in the face of Russian military power in Eastern Europe.

As aforementioned, the West, despite its limited support of Ukraine, has not been able to commit to full support of Ukraine militarily due to Russia's military power, of which it still has a great amount despite its setbacks, especially in terms of its nuclear arsenal. Russia still has the largest stockpile of nuclear warheads in the world, with 7850

warheads, although only sixteen hundred are ready for strategic use.<sup>122</sup> Although use of nuclear weapons would be unlikely in a conflict over Ukraine, the threat of Russian ground troops being in combat against American or European ground troops is still not a reality the Western powers are willing to face at the current moment.

### **Analytical Findings: What Does It All Lead To?**

#### *Russia*

The Ukraine crisis, in all its forms, is something that cannot be solved simply. It involves a neo-imperialist Russia who needs Ukraine and the other post-Soviet states to remain in its sphere, even if by force. It must do this to keep its prestige abroad with those who support it, and for the Putin regime to survive at home. This situation is best explained through a constructivist, ontological argument focused on Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose focus on neo-imperialist efforts in the former Soviet sphere are at the core of his view of Russian identity on the world stage.

The maintenance of the perception of Russian power and prestige, at the very least among the Russian people, is crucial to Putin's maintenance of power in Russia despite his mismanagement of many industries and the restructuring of the economy towards one based primarily on oil exports. Putin has called himself "The Gatherer of Russian Lands", after Ivan the Great of fifteenth Century Muscovy. He has also flopped between tolerating the Poroshenko administration and delegitimizing it by calling it "self-proclaimed as the result of a coup" and a legitimate government to negotiate with. In other wars with former states, the Russian position has been to legitimize separatist

122 Kristensen, Hans M., and Robert S. Norris. "Status of World Nuclear Forces." Federation of American Scientists. June 2018. Accessed October 8, 2018. <https://fas.org/issues/nuclear-weapons/status-world-nuclear-forces/>.

movements by propping them up at gunpoint, with any attempt to retake territory responded to with direct military action and invasion as in the Russo-Georgian War over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and the Transnistria War, where former Soviet troops of the 14<sup>th</sup> Guards Army defended the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic from Moldovan forces across the Dniester River. These “frozen conflicts” allow Russia to use their hard power to force its former satellites and constituent republics to stay within their sphere and limit their ability to join Western organizations such as NATO and the European Union. This is an example of offensive realism, using hard power to maximize its own relative power to maintain regional hegemony. Maintaining these conflicts and the conflict against the Western powers is a key part of Putin’s ability to keep his hold on Russian society.

Of course, Russian military intervention is justified by Russia through claims of “supporting self-determination” in the regions which they support, usurping the neoliberal idea of self-determination to their own ends. In actuality however, Putin’s Russia must keep instability at the forefront in its most reform-minded neighbors’ minds in order to support the idea that no state has a successful democratic alternative to Putin’s authoritarianism, and the instability brought about by Russia’s actions in their borderlands have made it impossible for Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine in specific, especially Ukraine, to reform their government and civil society away from the corrupt mafia and oligarch-based system it is currently controlled by and make the alterations needed to not just pay back its IMF loans, but match the *acquis generis* of the European Union.

*Ukraine*

Ukraine's initial reaction to Euromaidan has its roots in the Cossack/Dweller divide of Ukrainian society. The minority "Cossack" members of the country, involved in the Euromaidan protests, who were and are mostly pro-Ukrainian and support reform-minded, Europe-focused leaders started the fight to separate Ukraine from the Russian sphere. The majority "dweller" population, however, attempts to maintain the status quo or even oppose any changes to it, and were mostly pro-Russian, conservative, and established leaders similar to Russian style leaders which fit into the "Russian triad" structure of Leader, Church, and Nation, and who are expected to maintain whatever the socio-political system is at the time.

In the initial crisis of Euromaidan, Yanukovich's government was a dweller government, maintaining the status quo of having Russia as an ally and maintained and prioritized relationships with the Russian sphere against the wants of the Cossack minority of Western Ukraine. Of course, this angered the Cossack minority, which being an activist population, revolted in the streets. Yanukovich was counting on the dweller population to come to his aid, but they are slow to react and unwilling to fight offensively unlike the Cossack minority, which has a quickness, adaptability, and willingness to fight that the dwellers cannot keep up with. This means they can spread whatever agenda they wish to spread over time, with the dwellers adapting slowly to the new status quo brought about by the Cossack revolution. This is how the primarily Russian-speaking South and East has begun to accept and spread a pro-Ukrainian political culture, as the Cossack-preferred leaders become more established and fit more and more into the established, status quo-friendly, dweller-preferred role. This is best shown in the fact that, according

to Kuzio, two-thirds of Ukrainian soldiers combating the Donbass separatists are Russian-speaking.<sup>123</sup> The ability of the Cossack minority to adapt to changing times and convert the dweller majority to its side over time has allowed Ukraine to evolve as a state, but Russian neo-imperialism and their offensive realist slant has hindered it in the past few years in its goals, as the Ukrainian state has had to focus the majority of its resources on a civil war.

### *The West*

The West's response to the Ukraine crisis is based in an ontological need to further the goals of neoliberal ideology by the United States and the European Union, as well as a want to maintain the balance of power through defensive realism. The United States, in order to maintain its power and to maintain its status as the sole superpower of the world, feels it must spread its version of neoliberal institutionalism across the world, regardless of whether or not the state in question would have its situation improved by said spread. This can best be shown through the words of former US Ambassador to Ukraine, Steven Pifer, speaking of a "fundamental challenge to the post-war order in Europe"<sup>124</sup>, an order which has been based in neoliberal institutions and the all-powerful influence of the United States of America. President Obama made similar statements, calling the invasion of Crimea a "breach of international law"<sup>125</sup>, norms which are built upon international institutions like the United Nations, again dominated by the United

123 Kuzio, Taras. *Putin's War Against Ukraine: Revolution, Nationalism, and Crime*. North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017. 322.

124 Pifer, Steven. "Ukraine, Russia and the U.S. Policy Response." Brookings. March 03, 2017. Accessed October 09, 2018. <https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/ukraine-russia-and-the-u-s-policy-response/>.

125 United States of America. White House. Office of the Press Secretary. *Statement by the President on Ukraine*. By Barack H. Obama, Jr.

States, Western powers, and their allies. The European Union has also brought similar comments supporting the rules of neoliberal institutions and international law, with High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton calling for “all sides to decrease the tensions immediately through dialogue, in full respect of Ukrainian and international law”, and that the EU supported the “united sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine”.<sup>126</sup> The United States in particular has also focused on a lack of focus on maintaining the balance of power and containing Russian ambition, a lack of resources put towards defensive realist policy in the Post-Soviet republics, as stated by Former US Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul “We are enduring a drift of disengagement in world affairs. As we pull back, Russia is pushing forward. I worry about the new nationalism that Putin has unleashed and understand that many young Russians also embrace these extremist ideas”.<sup>127</sup>

126 European Union. Council of the European Union. "PRESS RELEASE 3304th Council Meeting Foreign Affairs Brussels, 17 March 2014." News release, March 17, 2014. Accessed October 9, 2018. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/28722/141614.pdf>.

127 Remnick, David. "Watching the Eclipse." *The New Yorker*, August 11 & 18, 2014. Accessed October 9, 2018. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/08/11/watching-eclipse>.

## **Chapter 8: Conclusion**

This thesis has set out to answer some important questions on the Ukrainian Crisis. The first is why Russia maintains the idea that an imperial state is the most effective way to govern itself and influence the states around it. Also, how has this mentality led to their role in Ukraine, and for what reason has Russia, despite the huge economic disadvantages inflicted upon itself because of their actions, pursued and maintained their occupation of Crimea. Secondly, why has the West been so ambivalent in its support of Ukraine in the crisis, seemingly opposed to their own values, and why have the economic sanctions placed on Russia by it not been effective. Lastly, how has the War in Donbass, initiated by Euromaidan and the later counter-protests, been formed from the internal struggle between the Russian and Ukrainian identities of the citizens of Ukraine.

To answer these questions, I systematically studied secondary literature on the topic and focused in on the constructivist and neorealist arguments of various books and other resources written on the topic of the Ukrainian Crisis or region of Ukraine and Russia. I used neorealism and constructivism together because neorealism can inform us on the reasons why a decision was made, but it does not tell us the full thought process behind that reasoning. To fill in those details, constructivism can be used to explain the thought process behind the reasons states make the specific realist decisions they do in a given situation. The use of a systematic and theory-driven review of secondary literature as a method was one that allowed for more explanatory power as inductively created

arguments on the various questions involved in the crisis could be better formed when combined with empirical evidence found in the secondary literature, as well as a refinement on the various arguments already made.

In order to place context on the actions of the two main actors examined, Russia and Ukraine, focus was placed on the historical connections between Russia and Ukraine under the Kievan Rus' and the later Russian-dominated Russian Empire and Soviet Union, with special emphasis on the Cossack Hetmanate and the later Ruthenian period under Austria-Hungary for Ukraine as the two points which began the independentist movement in what would become Ukraine, with scholars like Taras Shevchenko and the Cossack leader Bohdan Khmelnytsky igniting nationalism among the Ruthenian people.

Focus was also placed on what Kuzio calls "The Seven Cycles of Ukraine's History", a historical model which splits the last one hundred years of Ukrainian history into Eurasianist or Ukrainianist periods, with Russophile and Ukrainophile leaders directing change towards or away from Russia and Europe in each, with the Euromaidan occurring right at the beginning of the seventh, and possibly final, cycle of Ukrainian history, as the annexation of Crimea and counter-protests that led to the War in Donbass have turned much of the former Russophile population of Ukraine away from Russia's influence in recent years, breaking the cycle, at least currently.

In my analysis of Russia's involvement in the Ukraine Crisis, I focused in on the Neo-Soviet imperialism that Russian foreign policy has been steeped in since the beginnings of the Putin presidency. The Putinist ideology exalts the great power status of Russia, a status contingent on its control over their borderlands, especially the former Soviet republics. This ideology has led to, if anything, a shot in the foot for Russia, at

least internationally. However, the Putin regime has successfully taken the traditional Russian “triad” of Leader, Church, and Nation and used it to justify an invasion of Crimea and their support of separatists by invoking historical beliefs that Ukrainians are Russian, if “Little Russians”, that they are part of the larger Russian nation. Russian actions in Ukraine are then seen as a glorious reunification, as exemplified with the naming of Putin as the “Gatherer of Russian Lands”. These gains in territory and prestige, at least within Russia, are worth the economic and diplomatic downturn internationally, as the regime can simply place blame for the downturn on the Western powers applying sanctions on them for protecting their own in Crimea and ride any repercussions out. The annexation of Crimea also provides Russia with a warm-water port for their Black Sea Fleet, as well as a forward base to maintain their support of the Assad regime in Syria, and a region which they can show their defiance towards the West with. For these reasons, the sanctions on Russia applied on it by the West are, at least in the short and medium-term, seeming to be ineffective, and Russia’s maintenance of the Crimean annexation worth the effort.

Speaking of the West, the Western powers, despite their ideological and idealistic support of self-determination for the Ukrainian people and their support for Ukraine in NATO and the EU, they have not fully committed to a plan to support Ukraine militarily, although they have committed billions in IMF loans to stabilize their economy. The risk of meeting Russian troops head-on in battle has limited the West’s appetite to fight on behalf of Ukraine, as well as the well-founded fear of Russia’s nuclear arsenal. The West however, has, as aforementioned, given billions in IMF loans as well as diplomatically and economically isolated Russia through sanctions and its removal from various

international groupings such as the G8, now G7. Their reluctance is also informed by the fact that they do not have much more to gain from changing the situation in Ukraine. The DCFTA with the EU along with an Association Agreement already opens up Ukrainian markets and trade with the EU to about a percent of the former customs and tariff barriers on the majority of markets and allows Europe to take advantage of the cheap labor, large market, and vast resources of Ukraine, at least in government-controlled areas.

Ukraine, although it is in a stable position now, has a long way to go until it will fully join the EU or other Western organizations. The crisis has created millions of refugees, the majority of which are internally displaced, the major industrial centers in the East as well as their most major civilian and military port have been occupied by Russian-backed forces or by Russia itself, causing an economic crash similar to that of Russia's. However, Ukraine, with the support of billions in IMF loans and military and diplomatic support from NATO, the OSCE, EU, the United States, and many of the other major Western nations, have been able to withstand the invasion and keep the civil war at a stalemate. The War in Donbass, Ukraine's civil war, continues to smolder, however. This war, caused by the tensions between Russophile and Ukrainophile populations in Ukraine, is based in a divide as old as Ukraine itself, between so-called "Cossacks" and "dwellers", the former being made up today of usually Ukrainophile, reform-minded, Europe-focused members of Ukraine's population, with the latter generally being conservative, status quo-minded, Russophile and Russian-speaking. These two populations, one wishing to maintain closeness to what they consider their homeland and brothers, the Russians, and those wishing to wrest control away from Russia, were sparked into conflict by the Euromaidan, whose aftermath convinced much of the dweller

population that the Cossack ideas of full independence from Russia were not so radical. Those regions which were firmly Russophile however, were encouraged by Russian forces to fight against Ukraine and declared independent “people’s republics”. This has led to a five year civil war in which ten thousand Ukrainian citizens have died and millions were driven from their homes.

Currently, the crisis in Ukraine involves a Ukraine which is stable, but who is still feeling the effects of Euromaidan’s unrest, and attempting for the first time in its history to pull away from Russian influence and facing stiff resistance from Russophile elements and the effects of a neo-imperialist Russia with no intention of letting Ukraine join the Western world while Putin is still around. It also features a West mostly unable to commit to supporting Ukraine in more than a limited sense due to the fact it would bring the West into direct conflict with Russia, although it has gotten closer in the past few years, with US sales of lethal weaponry and UK and US military advisors. Russia suffers economically under the pressure of Western sanctions, while still maintaining a powerful force to project power in its immediate surroundings in its quest to regain regional hegemony and maintain its great power status. Ukraine will need to navigate rough waters and work intelligently with its newfound European allies and the US to make a difference as it moves into the future, avoiding all-out war with Russia. It must also retake the Donbass using Western aid, convince those who live in rebel-held territory that the ideas of the Euromaidan Cossacks are not so radical, as it has slowly done in its other Russian-speaking territories. Throughout this process, it must also make sure to make the

necessary economic and political reforms to integrate fully with Europe and pay off its increasingly large debt to the IMF. Through a combination of these things, Ukraine can ensure that Russia cannot attempt to invade or violate its territorial integrity again.

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