THE DONBAS CONFLICT AS A FORM OF HYBRID WARFARE: A
NEOCLASSICAL REALIST ANALYSIS

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IBRAHIM MURADOV

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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Prof. Dr. Yaşar Kondakçı
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

———————————————

Prof. Dr. Oktay F. Tanrısever
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

———————————————

Prof. Dr. Oktay F. Tanrısever
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Prof. Dr. Nuri Yurdusev	(METU, IR)	———————————
Prof. Dr. Oktay F. Tanrısever	(METU, IR)	———————————
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Name, Last name : IBRAHIM MURADOV

Signature   :

ABSTRACT

THE DONBAS CONFLICT AS A FORM OF HYBRID WARFARE: A
NEOCLASSICAL REALIST ANALYSIS

Muradov, Ibrahim

Ph.D., Department of International Relations

Supervisor   : Prof. Dr. Oktay F. Tanrısever

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The Euromaidan demonstrations in Ukraine which occurred at the end of 2013 provoked destabilization of Donbas region. Despite several initiatives there has been no lasting solution to the conflict in Donbas for the past 5 years. This research seeks to answer the question, that which factors could explain the outbreak and the conduct of the war in Donbas territory of Ukraine? In this context, this work broadens our understanding on the Donbas Conflict by revealing the internal factors of Ukraine as well as Russia's involvement in the conflict through hybrid war method. Contrary to the current views of some researchers who point out either domestic dynamics of Ukraine or international factors to explain the conflict in Donbas, this thesis argues that Russia as an external actor should be taken into consideration along with the domestic factors of Ukraine to provide holistic standpoint in studying the conflict.

Keywords: Ukraine, Donbas Conflict, Russia, Hybrid Warfare, Neoclassical Realism.

ÖZ

HİBRİD SAVAŞ ÖRNEĞİ OLARAK DONBAS ÇATIŞMASI: NEOKLASİK REALİST BİR ANALİZ

Muradov, İbrahim

Doktora, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

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Ukrayna'da 2013 yılının sonlarına doğru gerçekleşen Euromaidan gösterileri Donbas bölgesinin istikrarsızlaştırılmasını tetiklemiştir. Birkaç girişime rağmen, son 5 yıl boyunca Donbas'ta yaşanan çatışmaya kalıcı bir çözüm bulunamamıştır. Bu araştırma, Ukrayna'nın Donbas bölgesindeki savaşın ortaya çıkmasını ve yürütülmesini açıklayabilecek hangi faktörlerin olduğu sorusuna cevap vermeye çalışıyor. Bu bağlamda, çalışma, Rusya'nın hibrit savaş yöntemiyle çatışmaya dahil olmasının yanı sıra Ukrayna'nın iç faktörlerini de ortaya koyarak Donbas Çatışması konusundaki anlayışımızı genişletiyor. Ukrayna'nın yerel dinamikleri veya uluslararası faktörlerle Donbas'taki çatışmayı açıklamaya çalışan bazı araştırmacıların mevcut görüşlerinin aksine, bu tez, soruna bütünsel bir yaklaşım sağlamak için Rusya'nın bir dış aktör olarak Ukrayna'nın yerel faktörleriyle birlikte göz önüne alınması gerektiğini savunuyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ukrayna, Donbas Çatışması, Rusya, Hibrit Savaş, Neoklasik Realizm.

To my nieces and nephews

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Association Agreement with the European Union
ARC	Autonomous Republic of Crimea
ATO	Anti-terrorist Operation
CEC	Central Election Commission
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CU	Customs Union
DDoS	Distributed Denial of Service
Donbas	Donets Basin
DPR	Donetsk People's Republic
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EP	Euromaidan Press
EU	European Union
FSB	Federal Security Service
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSSR	Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic
ICCA	International Council Commercial Arbitration
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
IR	Information Resistance
JCCC	Joint Monitoring and Coordination Center
KhPR	Kharkov People's Republic
LPR	Lugansk People's Republic
MANPADS	Man-portable Air-defense Systems
MDF	Media Development Foundation
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

OUN	Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists
RCC	Russian Community of Crimea
RF	Russian Federation
RPG	Rocket-propelled Grenade
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
SBU	Security Service of Ukraine
SMM	Special Monitoring Mission
UAH	Ukrainian Hryvnia
UCMC	Ukraine Crisis Media Center
UN	United Nations Organization
UNR	Ukrainian National Republic
UOC	Ukrainian Orthodox Church
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II
WTO	Warsaw Treaty Organization
4GW	Fourth Generation Warfare

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Scope and Objective: Significance of the Research

It was expected a radical transformation in political, cultural and social structures of post-Soviet countries right after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. In this regard, by leaving Soviet heritage behind, transition to free market economy and developing democracy were the major prospects in early 1990s in these countries. After the observations of political transformations of post-Soviet countries, the EU has started its own initiatives to integrate these countries into Western world. In this context, Ukraine is particularly in the spotlight since Orange Revolution and Euromaidan events. Even though the EU has made substantial effort for this project, anticipated developments have not occurred yet in Ukraine. In contrast, political structure of the country went from bad to worse after destabilization of the eastern part of the country.

Researchers tend to explain the conflict in Ukraine either from the point of international systemic view or from internal dynamics of Ukraine. The former group mainly focus on the impact of Russia's attitude on the conflict in Eastern Ukraine while the latter concentrates historical and sociological developments to reveal the causes of the crisis. The significance of this research appears in this stage that it broadens our understanding by combining two perspectives. On one hand, the study clarifies the origin of Donbas conflict by scrutinizing historical developments and the reconstructing of the 'Donbas exclusiveness' since the independence of Ukraine. On the other hand, the research pays attention to the external factors to grab the origin of the conflict in Donbas. In this sense, the thesis concentrates on the concepts of hybrid war which is conducted by Russia against Ukraine. Hence, this dissertation aims to provide a comprehensive research on Donbas Conflict. Particularly the research aims to clarify the reasons behind the conflict and evaluates it within new war debates.

1.2. Research Question

The Euromaidan demonstrations which occurred at the end of 2013 provoked destabilization of Eastern Ukraine. After annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation, the Donbas territory became new focal point of the crisis in Ukraine. Since 2014, the war in Donbas constitutes one of the main political, economic and social problems in the country. Despite several initiatives there has been no lasting solution to the conflict in Donbas for the past 5 years. In this period, two self-proclaimed 'republics' have been established in the territory that Ukraine blames Russia in supporting those 'republics'. Moscow however does not acknowledge its involvement in the conflict. The experts who aim to analyze the causes of the conflict in Donbas mainly focus on the conflict either from the international systemic level or attempt to explain it by merely investigating the political dynamics of Ukraine. However, this thesis finds a research gap in both approaches and seeks to reveal the origin of the war in Donbas and attempts to answer the question, that which factors could explain the outbreak and the conduct of the war in Donbas?

By investigating the factors which had impact on the destabilization of Donbas in connection to the form of war chosen to fight in the territory, this research seeks to response how the conflict in Donbas revealed and how it is being conducted? Questioning the form of war in Donbas helps us to understand external dimension of the war. Therefore, this thesis first seeks to answer how the war in Donbas is being conducted? Subsequently it questions the factors which paved the way for the war in Eastern Ukraine. This study particularly questions the milestones in the history of Ukraine which had a great impact on the formulation of Donbas regional identity.

The thesis also answers that which political developments in Ukraine from 1991 to 2004 including Orange Revolution played critical role in preparing the basis for outbreak of the war in Donbas. Besides, scrutinizing the Euromaidan events and their contribution on the destabilization of Eastern Ukraine is another central question which has been attempted to be answered. In this sense, revealing the impact of anti-Russian Euromaidan demonstrations particularly after the seizure of Crimea is significant to comprehend the beginning of the conflict in Donbas. This thesis further aims to explore non-military aspects of the war in Donbas. Questioning these aspects

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ensure to understand whole dimensions of the conflict in Ukraine. The research also attempts to inquire which obstacles the Donbas territory is experiencing to achieve resolution of the conflict.

In order to put the subject in further perspective, a similar conflict to Donbas in post-Soviet space has been taken as a unit for comparison to clarify the origin of the Donbas conflict. This is important to understand the reasons which kept the conflict last so long and exploring this will enlighten us about the gaps left by previous research in this area of study.

1.3. Literature Review

Ukraine's crisis which began with the Euromaidan demonstrations at the end of 2013 and sparked off the annexation of Crimea and the destabilization of Eastern regions of the country has been explained from numerous angles. As a protracted war, ongoing conflict in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine (Donbas) constitute the main sources of the Ukraine's crisis. Besides, along with the impact of the conflict on internal politics of Ukraine the influence of the conflict in Donetsk and Lugansk regions goes beyond the borders of the country. Therefore, it can be seen that scholars' approaches in evaluating the subject are becoming increasingly various. In this regard, scholars can be divided mainly into three camps. The first group includes scholars who consider the issue as a Russia's war against Ukraine. The second group approaches to the subject from the view of internal politics of Ukraine. The last group argues that the conflict in the Eastern regions of Ukraine originates from the developments in international order.

Andrew Wilson is one of the prominent scholars who discusses the origin of Donbas conflict in relation with Russia's involvement. In his book titled 'Ukraine Crisis: What It Means for the West'[1] Wilson claims that contrary to what Russian propaganda labeled the ousting of Yanukovych as a coup d'état in Kyiv in 2014, the actual coup was taken place in Crimea conducted by Kremlin. However, Moscow's

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[1] Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis: What It Means for the West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014).

calculation about Donbas was a misadventure which caused the destabilization of the region. In the book, the author explains Russia's involvement in Donbas conflict through numerous factors such as Putin's personality, 'humiliation' of Russia due to the collapse of Soviet Union or enlargement policy of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In an article named 'The Donbas in 2014: Explaining Civil Conflict Perhaps, but not Civil War'[2] Andrew Wilson emphasizes the role of Russia in ongoing conflict in Eastern Ukraine. For Wilson, 'accomplishments' of separatists in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine could not be possible without Russia's support. In their co-authored work, 'What will Happen with Eastern Ukraine?'[3] Andrew Wilson and Kadri Liik argue that Moscow aims to overhaul the post-Cold War order in Europe and tend to decide the fate of Ukraine in order to achieve this aim.

Taras Kuzio is another leading scholar who productively contributes the literature on Ukraine and thereby Donbas conflict. Kuzio also links the source of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine to Russian federation (RF). However, he claims that Moscow's attitude against Ukraine arises from national identity issue. In his book, 'Putin's War Against Ukraine: Revolution, Nationalism, and Crime'[4] Kuzio claims that identity relations between Russians and Ukrainians as well as Russian chauvinism towards Ukraine lie at the heart of Donbas conflict. In particular, the scholar underlines that the revival of Russian nationalism and Moscow's refusal of recognizing Ukraine as a sovereign state are the main reasons behind Russia's war against Ukraine. Along with Kuzio, Timothy Snyder is another scholar who explains the Ukraine crisis in relation with ideology. In the article 'The Battle in Ukraine Means Everything'[5] Snyder draws attention to the rise of fascism in Russia based on the hatred against the 'Western values' and also refusal of the recognition of Ukraine as a sovereign country. For example, Russian propagandists during and after the Euromaidan

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[2] Andrew Wilson, "The Donbas in 2014: Explaining Civil Conflict Perhaps, but Not Civil War," *Europe-Asia Studies* 68, no. 4 (2016): 631–52, https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2016.1176994.

[3] Kadri Liik and Andrew Wilson, "What Will Happen With Eastern?," *Policy Memo*, vol. 119, 2014.

[4] Taras Kuzio, *Putin's War Against Ukraine: Revolution, Nationalism, and Crime* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017).

[5] Timothy Snyder, "The Battle in Ukraine Means Everything," *The New Republic*, 2014, accessed July 23, 2019, https://newrepublic.com/article/117692/fascism-returns-ukraine.

demonstrations, were emphasizing the argument 'Ukraine has never existed' or 'Ukraine was always a part of Great Russia'. Thus, for Snyder, the main reason of the conflict in Donbas lies at the rising fascism in Russia.

In his book titled 'The Conflict in Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know'[6] Serhy Yekelchyk also explains conflict in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine in relation with Russia. According to Yekelchyk, the main reasons behind Russia's involvement in war with Ukraine are Russians' unwillingness to recognize Ukraine as a separate country out of their sphere of influence and the ideology of the Putin regime which promises to protect Russian speakers or ethnic Russians abroad. Another scholar is Sabine Fischer who pays attention to the role of Russia's foreign policy in destabilization of Donbas region. For Fischer, conflict in Eastern Ukraine is the last circle of unresolved conflicts in post-Soviet space. In her work, 'Russian Policy in the Unresolved Conflicts'[7] Fischer agrees with the argument that Russia is a revisionist actor to the European order established after ending the Cold War. Additionally, she points out that Moscow follows 'selective revisionism' in terms of post-Soviet conflicts since the dynamics of the conflicts vary from each other.

In searching the origin of the conflict in Donbas, Ihor Todorov also takes Russia as a main actor which supports the separatist forces in Eastern Ukraine. In his article named 'Sources of Modern Russian-Ukraine War: Donetsk Dimension'[8] Todorov argues that Moscow is not merely organizer but also the executer of the conflict in Donbas. For Todorov, Russia had two options either to follow a system provides social welfare or to become an imperialist power. The author points out that Russia decided to adopt the latter option with Putin, and this is the main reason behind war against Ukraine.

Stefan Meister is also among the scholars who associates the conflict in Ukraine to Russian Federation. Meister directly sees the Putin regime as a main source of the

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[6] Serhy Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[7] Sabine Fischer, "Russian Policy in the Unresolved Conflicts," *SWP-Studie* 13 (2016): 9–24, accessed July 23, 2019, https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/not-frozen-conflicts-in-the-post-soviet-area/.

[8] Ihor Todorov, "Sources of Modern Russian-Ukraine War: Donetsk Dimension," *Zeszyty Naukowe Aon* 3, no. 100 (2015): 27–31.

Russian aggression in Ukraine. In his article 'Fünf Illusionen über das System Putin'[9] (Five Illusions about the Putin System) Meister states that the war in Donbas originates from the legitimacy deficit of the Putin system. The author emphasizes that Putin aims to rise his regime's popularity and the legitimacy through the challenging the will of the West in Ukraine. In this context, Michael McFaul is another prominent scholar who refers to the internal politics of Russia to explain the aggression in Ukraine. In particular, McFaul narrows his explanation of Ukraine crisis down to the Putin regime rather than general politics of Russian Federation. In an article named 'Faulty Powers: Who Started the Ukraine Crisis?'[10] McFaul points out that the crisis in Ukraine is about unlimited adventurism of Putin, nothing else.

In short, scholars who think that the conflict in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine links to Russian Federation consist of the first group in explaining the origin of the issue. They refer to numerous reasons of why Russia launched a war against Ukraine. Some of scholars argue that internal politics of Russian Federation plays the most critical role about Kremlin's aggression in Ukraine. These thinkers underline the rise of nationalism and fascism in Russia to support their viewpoints. Some other authors bring the argument of 'humiliation of Russia at the end of Cold War' to the fore in order to put the Russian behavior towards Ukraine into perspective. The last but not the least, scholars also see Putin's regime which tries to surpass its futileness through seizure of Crimea and supporting the ethnic Russians or Russian speakers as a main source of the war in Donbas. As a result, the idea of Russia's involvement in the Donbas Conflict band together all of these scholars.

In contrast to the first group of scholars who connect the conflict in Donbas to Russian Federation, the second group of the thinkers approach to the issue from different perspective. According to these scholars, Russia should not be blamed for the war in Ukraine. In other word, they assert that the main sources of the crisis should be sought in Ukraine place rather than Russia. This group of scholars argue that the reasons behind the Ukraine crisis are internal dynamics of the country. In

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[9] Stefan Meister, "Fünf Illusionen Über Das System Putin," *Bundesakademie Für Sicherheitspolitik* 6 (2015), accessed July 23, 2019, https://dgap.org/de/think-tank/publikationen/weitere-publikationen/fuenf-illusionen-ueber-das-system-putin.

[10] Michael Mcfaul, "Faulty Powers: Who Started the Ukraine Crisis?," *Foreign Affairs*, 2014, 167–71.

short, they mainly use the term 'civil war' to describe ongoing conflict in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine.

One of the leading scholars from this category is Serhiy Kudelia. In his article 'The Donbas Rift'[11] Kudelia, presents three developments which paved the way for the war in Donbas. The first was the Euromaidan demonstrations. For the author, Euromaidan supporters failed to ensure a non-violent revolution when they adopted brute force approach to overthrow Yanukovych's regime. The second was the resort to the use of force by the new government in Kyiv to disactivate the separatist movements in Donbas. The last factor which increased the tension in Donbas was the Kyiv's decision to integrate nationalist groups in fighting as well as allowing the Ukrainian army to use unlimited force in areas where people densely located. Kudelia points out that all these factors composed the resistance of the local people against the new government. For the author, the new Kyiv authorities were experiencing the lack of legitimacy in Donbas and they were illegitimate in the eyes of Donbas people because for them, new government was formed as a result of coup d'état. Therefore, resistance against the new Kyiv authorities were fundamental rights of the Donbas people. This evaluation led Serhiy Kudelia to argue that the war in Donbas originates from the internal developments of Ukraine following the Euromaidan events.

Another scholar is Elise Giuliano who indicates the internal dynamics of Ukraine as a main source of the Donbas Conflict. For Giuliano, Donbas residents never accepted the collapse of the Soviet Union and today's Russia always reminds them Soviet times. Thus, local people of the Donbas always sympathize with Russian Federation. However, the author also points out some other factors which triggered the separatism in the region apart from their pro-Russian tendency. In the article titled 'The Origins of Separatism: Popular Grievances in Donetsk And Luhansk'[12] Giuliano classifies the grievances of Donbas people into two categories. The first category is mainly about the economic concerns. For Donbas people, there was an unfair

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[11] Serhiy Kudelia, "The Donbas Rift," *Russian Politics and Law* 54, no. 1 (2016): 5–27, https://doi.org/10.1080/10611940.2015.1160707.

[12] Elise Giuliano, "The Origins of Separatism: Popular Grievances in Donetsk And Luhansk," *PONARS Eurasia*, no. 396 (2015): 1–9.

redistribution within Ukraine. Another economic anxiety was the perception of economic disadvantage due to Ukraine's potential EU membership. The other category is related to Kyiv's betrayal against Donbas people. Kyiv's condemnation of *Berkut* special police group, majority of whom were composed of Donbas people, was unacceptable. Another Kyiv's betrayal was about involving nationalist groups in fighting. The last event which paved the way for the dissatisfaction of Donbas people was the attempt of new parliament to abolish the law on Russian Language. The author concludes that all these factors contributed to the uprising of Donbas residents against Kyiv authorities and thereby he defenses the argument that the ongoing conflict in Donbas stemmed from internal factors of Ukraine.

Anna Matveeva is another writer who refuses to link the destabilization of Eastern Ukraine solely to President Putin. Matveeva follows a bottom-up movement and replaces the internal factors at the heart of the separatist movement in Donbas. In her book titled 'Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine Explained from Within'[13] Matveeva argues that the rebellion in Eastern Ukraine was a pro-Russian rebels (from Ukraine and Russia) who aimed to disintegrate Donbas from Ukraine in order to either become an independent country or to unite with Russian Federation.

Another scholar is Jesse Driscol who also undermines the connection between the war in Donbas and Russian Federation. Driscol, different from other scholars, distinctly describes the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine as 'civil war'. For Driscol, basis of the crisis was formed as a result of the Euromaidan demonstrations. Collapse of Yanukovych's government in Ukraine created a power vacuum in the country. In his article 'Ukraine's Civil War: Would Accepting This Terminology Help Resolve the Conflict?'[14] Driscol argues that the annexation of Crimea by Russian special forces was a clear indication of power vacuum in Kyiv. The author claims that as a result of the collapse of Yanukovych government two groups, pro and anti-newly

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[13] Anna Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within* (New York: Lexington Books, 2018).

[14] Jesse Driscoll, "Ukraine's Civil War: Would Accepting This Terminology Help Resolve the Conflict?," *PONARS Eurasia*, no. 572 (2019), accessed July 23, 2019, http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/ukraines-civil-war-would-accepting-terminology-help-resolve-conflict.

formed regime, were formed in Ukraine. According to Driscol, two groups had clashes throughout Ukraine but none of the sides was strong enough to prevail one another. However, the situation was different in the homeland of the former president. In Donbas the anti-newly formed government forces were much stronger. Driscol valorously claims that two sides were consolidated under the names of 'the Ukrainian army' and 'the secessionist rebels'. In short, Jesse Driscol defines the war in Donbas as a 'civil war' rather than referring to the external actors.

As presented, the second group of scholars consider the issue from a different angle to provide an explanation for the cause of war in Donbas. Different from the first group, these scholars do not associate the Ukraine crisis directly to Russian Federation. They mainly place the internal dynamics of Ukraine at the center of the causes of war in Donetsk and Lugansk regions. These thinkers indicate the Euromaidan events and ousting of Yanukovych as a main source of the conflict. For them, collapse of the Yanukovych government created a power vacuum and newly formed government did not find legitimacy in certain parts of Ukraine, particularly in Donbas. They claim this illegitimacy stalemate faced two groups, anti and pro-new government, against each other which led a civil war in Ukraine.

The third group of scholars ignore the first and second level of analysis (leaders and states) and concentrate on the third level to come up with a reason for the Donbas conflict or Ukraine crisis in general. Different from the first and the second groups who draw attention to Russia or Putin regime and the internal factors of Ukraine to explain the developments in Ukraine, the third group of scholars observer developments which take place in international system and their impacts on Ukraine. For them, neither internal dynamics of Ukraine nor Putin regime play a decisive role in Ukraine crisis. However, changing international order causes the war in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine.

One of the leading scholars in this paradigm is John J. Mearsheimer, a well-known neorealist thinker in international relations. In his article titled 'Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault'[15], Mearsheimer evaluates the developments in

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[15] John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault," *Foreign Affairs*, no. February (2014): 1–21, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004.

international relations from the point of systemic approach. Different from abovementioned scholars who tend to investigate internal affairs of states to reveal the causes of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, Mearsheimer concentrates on the impact of the Western policies towards the post-Soviet space to provide an explanation for the crisis. For the thinker, in order to understand Ukraine crisis, one should go back to the decision of NATO expansion policy in early 1990s. Mearsheimer emphasizes that despite all the warnings of Moscow, NATO followed its enlargement policy in post-Soviet space and the Western leaders were stubborn to understand that Ukraine was a buffer zone for Russia and undermining its concern about penetrating of the buffer zone could be a 'misbegotten' policy of the West.

In the article, Mearsheimer also blames the EU policies towards the post-Soviet countries for the consequences of Ukraine crisis. For the scholar, expansion of the EU eastward as well as supporting the pro-democracy movements since the Orange Revolution set the stage for destabilization of Eastern Ukraine. In this regard, Mearsheimer finds fault with what liberal principles propose about democracy, economic interdependency or the rule of law. Mearsheimer states that the officials from the United States and the European Union (EU) ignored the logic of realism. For them realism was lost its relevance in post-Cold War period and the European Union could be strengthen if it adopts the principles of liberalism. Therefore, Mearsheimer asserts that Russia should not be blamed on the Ukraine crisis since it just reacted to the developments which international system imposed on it. From this point of view, the author blames the West rather than Moscow in causing the war in Donbas region.

Tom Saur is one of the other scholars who argues that the crisis in Ukraine is the only a part of consequences which the West caused. For Saur, the West had lack of understanding of the Russia's position in post-Cold War period. The author thinks that the West did not follow a blindness liberal path as many scholars claims, rather it was very prudent. In the article, 'The Origins of the Ukraine Crisis and the Need for Collective Security between Russia and the West'[16] Saur points out that the West kept expanding its sphere of influence while isolating Russia from the Western

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[16] Tom Sauer, "The Origins of the Ukraine Crisis and the Need for Collective Security between Russia and the West," *Global Policy*, 2016, 1–10, https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12374.

security organization. Enlargement of NATO and the EU as well as installation of defense system close to Russian Federation was a clear provocation of the West let alone integrating Moscow to post-Cold War security order of Europe. In this context, the author points out, the penetrations of the Western organizations into the post-Soviet space touched on their limits in the cases of Georgia and Ukraine. According to Saur, by crossing the red lines, the West actually forced Russia to react. Therefore, the author concludes that it was the miscalculations or the lack of empathy of the West towards Russian Federation which caused the war in Donbas and in fact Ukraine crisis is only a symptom of a wider international security problematic in Europe continues since the collapse of the Cold War.

Hall Gardner also draws attention to NATO enlargement and the EU eastward policy in explaining the conflict in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine. In an article named 'From Berlin to Ukraine/Russia: Definitely there are things that do not love Wall'[17] Gardner asserts that NATO's out of area mission was a great mistake because it did not follow inclusive policy towards Russia, instead NATO preferred to undermine Kremlin's interest in post-Soviet countries. Along with the NATO, the EU's Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative towards Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia was also posing threat on Russia's interest in the regions because the initiative clearly aimed to isolate these countries from Russian political-economic sphere of influence while excluding the latter one.

Therefore, Gardener argues that the West failed to build a post-Cold War European security order which includes Russia or takes Moscow's security interests into account and thereby, the West bears the responsibilities for the consequences in Eastern Ukraine. A similar approach to Hall Gardner was introduced by well-known scholar Richard Sakwa. In his book 'Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands'[18] Sakwa also brings the failure of the West to fore in explaining the Ukraine crisis. Drawing our attention on the changing international order which started to transform with the reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev, Sakwa claims that the West failed to

[17] Hall Gardner, "From Berlin to Ukraine/Russia: Definitely There Are Things That Do Not Love Walls?," *Other News: Voices Against The Tide*, 2014, accessed July 23, 2019, http://www.other-news.info/2014/11/from-berlin-to-ukrainerussia-definitely-there-are-things-that-do-not-love-walls/.

[18] Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2015).

establish an inclusive and equitable international system which paved the way for Donbas Conflict.

Stephen M. Walt is another prominent scholar who do not blame Moscow or do not scrutinize the internal dynamics of Ukraine to present an explanation for the conflict in Donbas. Instead, Walt places NATO expansion policy at the core of the Ukraine crisis and argues that further arming Ukraine to overcome the conflict in Donbas could be a disaster for the future of Ukrainian people. In the article 'Why Arming Kiev Is a Really, Really Bad Idea'[19], Walt responses to the arguments which promote further expansion of NATO eastward. Walt argues that Russia's involvement in Ukraine has nothing to do with Putin regime as many claims. Instead, he asserts that Russia is a declining power in international relations which tries to halt further enlargement of the Western influence in post-Soviet space. Therefore, for the author, the causes of the Donbas Conflict should be sought in the West's eastward policies rather than blaming Russian Federation.

Samuel Charap and Jeremy Shapiro refer a potential new Cold War between the West and Russian Federation in explaining the conflict in Donbas. For authors, in new world order, the USA cannot maintain its current coexisted policy. In their co-authored article 'Consequences of a New Cold War'[20] Charap and Shapiro define Washington's policy with Kremlin as a middle way, between responding Russia's actions decisively and to avoid involving in a new Cold War with Moscow. According to the authors, condemning and imposing sanctions against Russia and cooperating with Moscow on global issues simultaneously is unsustainable policy of Washington. Charap and Shapiro emphasize that the USA should adopt more constructive policy towards Russia. The authors suggest that in order to end the conflict in Donbas, the West should recognize the Russia's sphere of influence and should end the NATO and the EU eastward enlargement. In short, these scholars also see the West's irresponsible policy which undermine international system as a main reason behind the conflict in Eastern Ukraine and propose the West to review its

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[19] Stephen M. Walt, "Why Arming Kiev Is a Really, Really Bad Idea," *Foreign Policy*, 2015, accessed July 23, 2019, https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/09/how-not-to-save-ukraine-arming-kiev-is-a-bad-idea/.

[20] Samuel Charap and Jeremy Shapiro, "Consequences of a New Cold War," *Survival* 57, no. 2 (2015): 37–46, https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2015.1026058.

policy in relation with Kremlin for avoiding the new Cold War and for the sake of Ukrainians.

Nadezhda K. Arbatova and Alexander A. Dynkin place changing world order at the center of the Ukraine crisis. Just like Saura and Mearshimer, these scholars also see the war in Donbas as a symptom which origins from the systemic level. However, Arbatova and Dynkin do not directly pay attention to the NATO or the EU eastward expansion as a main source of the Ukraine crisis. Instead they claim that the crisis stems 'from the tension of a polycentric world order' where the hierarchy of power is very dynamic in new world order. For the authors, world order is experiencing a new bipolarity which is dissimilar from the one in Cold War period. In their co-authored article, 'World Order after Ukraine'[21] Arbatova and Dynkin point out that the new bipolarity continues to be shaped via two trends. In the article, the writers underline that there is a trend towards 'multilateral cooperation and global governance' on one hand, 'new bipolarity and confrontation' on the other hand.

According to Arbatova and Dynkin, the new bipolarity is formed around two kinds of capitalism which are liberal and illiberal. In the article, the authors claim that Ukraine crisis is the illustration of the confrontation between these two trends of capitalism. They clarify that though illiberal variant is not welcomed by the Western authorities, it has already found places such as Russia and China to grow. In short, Arbatova and Dynkin describe the war in Donbas as a result of new bipolarity, composed of mainly by the Western countries on one hand, Russia and China on the other hand.

In conclusion, it can be said that the literature on the ongoing conflict in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine is varied and rich. Scholars adopt different approaches to provide meaningful explanations for the Donbas Conflict. One of group of scholars links the crisis directly to Russian Federation. For them, it is the Moscow's ambitious or imperialist foreign policy causes the war in Ukraine's Donbas territory. These scholars who frame a Russia-centric explanation in order to understand the conflict argue that Putin regime is the one which particularly should

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[21] Nadezhda K. Arbatova and Alexander A. Dynkin, "World Order after Ukraine," *Survival* 58, no. 1 (2016): 71–90, https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2016.1142140.

be blamed.

Another group of scholars do not agree with the first one and thereby approach to the issue from different point of view. For this group domestic factors of Ukraine set the stage for destabilization of Eastern Ukraine. Scholars who pursue this perspective label the Ukraine crisis as a civil war let alone blaming Russia. Therefore, scholars who name the Donbas Conflict as a civil war indicate Euromaidan demonstrations and overthrowing of Yanukovych government as the main sources of the conflict because the advocates of this group claim that Ukrainian society divided into two camps as a result of the collapse of legitimate government which led them to arm against each other.

The third group avoid paying attention to the first and the second level and concentrate on third level of analysis to comprehend the conflict. According to this group, it is the international system which forces Russia to react the developments take place in its sphere of influence. They do not consider that Russia is responsible for ongoing war in Donbas, they rather argue that it is the West's fault which paved the way for crisis in the Ukraine. Scholars with this mindset mainly place enlargement of NATO and the EU eastward at the core of tension between the West and Russian Federation and for them, the conflict in Donbas is merely a symptom of this wider confrontation between two great powers in international order.

Although the literature on this subject is quite rich it still requires further examination because merely adopting one dimensional explanation leaves the issue incomplete. Rather than treating Ukraine as a 'black box' as the neorealists or the abovementioned third group argue it is essential to scrutinize internal dynamics of Ukraine starting from historical perspective to be able to ensure a whole picture in the Donbas Conflict. Just like the works which recognize Russia's involvement in Ukraine crisis, this dissertation also portraits Russia as one of the actors in Donbas conflict. However, different from those works, this thesis shows how Russia is conducting the war in Donbas. It claims that Russia does conduct war in Donbas in frame of hybrid methods. Therefore, by showing how Russia maintains its existence as a part of the conflict this work contributes to the current literature on the Donbas Conflict. To do this, the work investigates domestic affairs of Ukraine to find out

how they provide conditions to be used by Russia along with its own sources.

1.4. Main Argument

The main argument of the research is the origin of separatist tendency of Donbas region should be sought in historical developments of Ukraine; in political structure since independency of the country; and in the local dynamics of the eastern Ukraine along with the external impact on the region. In this context, this study argues that status of the current situation in Donbas cannot be explained merely through domestic dynamics of Ukraine. Instead, it is claimed that continuation of the war in Donbas is possible only due to Russia's role which carries out a hybrid war in the region. In other word, this study claims that in order to explain the current war in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine one should first focus on the internal dynamics of Ukraine. In this sense, historical background plays significant role in creating binary structure of Ukrainian society. Besides, political actors and media discourses before 2014 contributed the isolation of Donbas people from rest of the country. Thus, this thesis argues that Russia as an external actor should be taken into consideration along with the domestic factors of Ukraine to provide holistic standpoint for understanding the Donbas conflict. In this context, the dissertation adopts hybrid war concept to describe Russia's involvement in Donbas conflict.

1.5. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The topic of this dissertation contains a broad informative perspective; hence the data being collected is tested through qualitative research methodology. The sources for the data collection are composed of electronic and printed books, relevant journals, and published and unpublished works. Along with the secondary sources, official statistics and legal documents of Ukraine and Russian Federation are used in this study. Besides, laws of Ukrainian parliament, special decrees as well as resolutions of presidents are used in this research. Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, State Archival Service of Ukraine, The Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, The Ministry of

Information Policy of Ukraine, Central Election Commission of Ukraine and the official website of Russian President are among the other legal institutions which provides primary sources for this research. The languages used in these legal documents are mainly Ukrainian and Russian. Furthermore, official documents of international organizations such as Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) constitute the other primary sources of this work.

Apart from legal documents, Ukrainian local, national, and Russian newspapers available have been used in this research work. In addition to this, online English newspapers deliver materials for this thesis. The data collection is primarily done through the available research works; on internet and in the accessible libraries. Proper referencing is done, and sources is maintained as per the prescribed format of The Middle East Technical University.

This study adopts a comparative methodology to provide a better understanding for the research by taking a similar case study from post-Soviet space which resembles Donbas conflict. This methodological way enriches the research and broaden our horizon about the study.

Neoclassical realism is adopted as a theoretical framework, which has been explained in detail, because for this approach various factors or different level of analysis are as important as international systemic level. The Neoclassical realism pays attention to the interests of domestic groups and decisions of individuals in formulating a state's policy. Nevertheless, the theory does not reject systemic analysis. Instead, it associates the systemic understanding with the domestic level analysis and thereby enriches the parsimonious characteristic of structural realism. In this context, examining the historical developments and political landscape of Ukraine as well as local dynamics of Donbas territory and reconstruction of Donbas exclusiveness along with the role of external factors are critical to study Donbas Conflict. Methodologically, investigating the war in Donbas from one level of analysis could be incomplete. Therefore, neoclassical realism is chosen as a method to provide the theoretical framework for this study.

1.6. Plan of the Thesis

The structure of this thesis composed of nine chapters. The first chapter designs the scope and objective of the research and explains the significance of the work. Besides, the chapter clarifies research question, literature review, main argument as well as research design and methodology. The second chapter provides the most suitable theoretical framework to study conflict in Donbas. In this sense, this thesis discusses hybrid war concept in the frame of the new war debates and then introduces neoclassical realism as the best theory of international relations after examining the irrelevance of classical realism, structural realism and liberal approach to study the conflict. The third chapter, presents a brief history of Ukraine and the formulation of Donbas regional characteristic. In this part, historical milestones which had the great impact on the construction of Donbas exclusiveness are investigated.

The fourth chapter investigates political developments in Ukraine from 1991 to Orange Revolution. In this part, it is argued that despite the fact that Ukraine did not face any serious threat against its unitary state system or territorial integrity until 2004, the political landscape was changed with Orange Revolution. The fragile structure of Ukrainian society come to the light during the 2004 presidential election. Besides, the chapter explores the impact of Orange Revolution on contributing the isolation of Donbas from the rest of the country. At the end, the chapter scrutinizes post-Orange Revolution period which prepared the basis for the Euromaidan Revolution. In this respect, the chapter analyses the seizure of Crimea as one of side effects of the Euromaidan Revolution.

The fifth chapter begins with the destabilization process of Eastern Ukraine. It scrutinizes how the anti-Maidan demonstrations turned to a full-fledged war. In this part, developments in other pro-Russian regions of Ukraine is also detailed along with Donetsk and Lugansk regions. The chapter continues with the most critical battle in Donbas which took place in August 2014. The section helps us to comprehend how Russia played role to balance between Ukrainian army and separatists forces to prolong the war for its own sake. Subsequently, the research analyzes the battles which took place between two ceasefire agreements, Minsk-I and

Minsk-II. Thereafter, clashes which occurred albeit the ceasefire agreements are detailed. At the end, the crisis in Kerch Strait which began with the capturing of two Ukrainian artillery armored boats along with 24 soldiers by Russian security forces is examined.

The sixth chapter of the thesis aims to investigate non-military aspect of the hybrid war in Donbas. The chapter consisted of four non-military elements of hybrid war conducted in Donbas. To do this, the first section focuses on the political development in Kyiv after the ousting of Yanukovych in February 2014. Examining the reconstruction of political system in Ukraine after Euromaidan Revolution is vital because the decisions which were taken in this period had certain consequences in Donbas. Subsequently, the governance of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics are presented. After political landscape of Donbas crisis the chapter aims to question economic dimension of the war in Donbas. In this part, the structure of Donbas economy is primarily scrutinized. The third part of the chapter pays attention to information component of the hybrid war in Donbas. First, it aims to show how media discourses in pre-war period contributed for the isolation of Donbas territory and then it explains how Russia used the narratives which were formed before the war as one of the tools of its hybrid war in Ukraine. The final part of chapter focuses on the cyber dimension of the hybrid war. It shows that cyber-attacks are not only aims to discredit the Ukraine's image but also directly contributes harming the country's economy.

The seventh chapter details the peace process on Donbas stalemate. In this context, first, it examines the peace initiatives between Russia and Ukraine throughout the Summer 2014. These initiatives culminate in September 2014 when the sides reach a ceasefire agreement in Minsk. Subsequently, the conditions which leads to the Minsk II agreement are studied. In that part, the agreement is also analyzed in connection with the Minsk I. Thereafter, pros and cons of the Minsk Agreements for Ukraine and Russia are evaluated, respectively. At the end, the UN peacekeeping mission to Donbas is examined as an alternative approach to the resolution of Donbas crisis.

The eighth chapter introduces another post-Soviet case study to compare with the Donbas case. In this respect, the chapter analyzes Russia's hybrid war in Georgia in

order to enrich the understanding of Ukraine case. In this sense, just like in Ukraine case, the chapter presents historical developments in Georgia which led the secession of its two provinces from Tbilisi. Subsequently, the chapter focuses on military dimension of the Russia's hybrid war in Georgia. It particularly pays attention on how Russia deployed its troops in Georgia in 1990s before scrutinizing the August 2008 war. Thereafter, the chapter concentrates on non-military components of the Russia's hybrid war in Georgia. Concluding chapter summarizes the research and provides concluding remarks about the conflict in Donbas.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

Undoubtedly, explaining, understanding and constructing a social occasion in international relations through a specific theoretical framework leaves inevitably certain shortcomings or causes to limitations for comprehending the situation. Each theory of international relations may have a viewpoint in any occasion which takes place in international relations. Therefore, each paradigm has its validity to explain, understand and construct a social reality in international relations. If one tries to picture the shape of existing theories of international relations overall it would probably be spherical, it would be grueling to see all of them at the same time through one angle because each of the standpoints would bring different visibilities. Nevertheless, these shortcomings or limitations do not necessarily mean that a particular theory of international relations cannot be preferred to appraise a certain case in international politics.

In this research, ongoing war in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine is evaluated as a hybrid war which is conducted by Russian Federation. Therefore, this chapter of the research begins with the discussions of hybrid war concept in relation with the new war discussions. By presenting the hybrid war as one of the variants of fighting to achieve intended goal, this work examines the concepts which pioneered the hybrid war term. After clarifying the hybrid war concept, the work assesses some of the leading theories of international relations, such as classical realism, structural realism and liberal approach, in order to find out their applicability in studying the war in Eastern Ukraine. In this context, the research adopts neoclassical realism as a basis of theoretical framework which provides the best lenses to understand ongoing hybrid war in Ukraine. Neoclassical realism is preferred as the most suitable framework due to due to its strength in combining the levels of analysis. By attaching

importance to the influence of international system on state along with its internal dynamics rather than merely focusing on one of them, neoclassical realism has an edge over the other paradigms.

2.2. The Concept of Hybrid War

In the war literature, hybrid wars are discussed within the framework of the 'new war' debates. These debates are usually based on the masterpiece of German philosopher Carl von Clausewitz, 'On War'[22]. Therefore, this section, first, examines the new wars debates as an introduction to the hybrid war concept. Second, the part concentrates on the terms which are used to describe new wars different than hybrid war. After clarifying the hybrid war concept, the research investigates how the sphere of influence of hybrid war concept evolved by the time of progress.

2.2.1. Origin of New War Debate and Hybrid War

Mary Kaldor divides wars into two categories: old wars which consolidated state's monopoly on violence and new wars which appeared as a result of disintegration of states. For Kaldor, old war refers to the wars took place between the late eighteenth and the mid-twentieth century. She describes old war such as the "war between states fought by armed forces in uniform, where the decisive encounter was battle."[23] Old wars were fought, at least in theory, according to rules which supposed to minimize civil losses or to treat prisoner of war well and so on. These rules were significant to legalize the wars. In other words, there were clear distinction between criminals and national heroes or murder and legitimate killing.[24] By flirting with Charles Tilly's argument, Kaldor claims that old wars caused the rise of nation-states. "Old wars

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[22] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

[23] Mary Kaldor, "Old Wars, Cold Wars, New Wars, and the War on Terror," *International Politics* 42, no. 4 (2005): 492, doi:10.1057/palgrave.ip.8800126.

[24] Kaldor, "Old Wars, Cold Wars, New Wars, and the War on Terror,".

were of wars state-building."[25] However, new wars are just the opposite of old wars. They stem from disintegration of state structure. This causes the erosion of state's monopoly of violence. While the influence of army and police formations decrease para-military and organized crime groups arise.[26]

Based on Bosnia-Hercegovina war between 1992 and 1995, Kaldor came up with a reason that new wars involve criminals, non-state actors and war lords of whom goal are economic as much as political. In new wars, there are groups who aim to prolong the conflicts along with the actors who intend to end it.[27]

Along with Mary Kaldor, several other scholars also assessed Clausewitz's theory as an outdated work. One of those scholars was John E. Shephard. Shephard emphasizes three factors which make On War irrelevant for contemporary world. First one of them is the age of nuclear weaponry, the second one is 'transnational constabulary warfare' and final one is the transformation of statecraft.[28] Although, Shepherd draws attention to the irrelevance of Clausewitz for modern world, he does not specify any new version of war. Another, well known scholar is Martin van Creveld who tries to refute On War based on 'trinitarian war' concept. In this part, van Creveld argues that Clausewitz's trinity consists of three elements: people, government and army. Starting from this point of view, van Creveld claimed that Clausewitz's understanding of war is the one which only involves state actors. [29]

Kalevi J. Holsti asserts that since 1945, most of the wars are within the states rather that between. "Almost 77 percent of the 164 wars were internal, where armed combat was not against another state but against the authorities within the state or between armed communities."[30] For Creveld the transformation of war associated with the

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[25] Mary Kaldor, "Elaborating The 'New War' Thesis," in *Rethinking The Nature of War*, ed. Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Jan Angstrom (New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 212.

[26] Mary Kaldor, "A Cosmopolitan Response to New Wars," *Peace Review* 8, no. 4 (1996): 506, doi:10.1080/10402659608426003.

[27] Hew Strachan and Andreas Herberg-Rothe, *Clausewitz in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Hew Strachan and Andreas Herberg-Rothe (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 9.

[28] John E., Jr. Sheppard, "On War: Is Clausewitz Still Relevant?," *Parameters* 20, no. 3 (1990): 85.

[29] Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991). 33-63

[30] Kalevi J. Holsti, *The State, War, and the Sate of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 21.

decline of state structure. Eroding of state structure transform war from being a rational activity into an irrational one. This process also influence the war to be continuation of policy. Instead, the new wars will be driven by technology, culture, religious fanaticism etc. According to Creveld, the diminishing influence of states in international relations has accelerated the aging process of the Clausewitzian view.[31]

Thus, van Creveld argued that "if any part of our intellectual baggage deserves to be thrown overboard, surely it is not the historical record but the Clausewitzian definition of war that prevents us from coming to grips with it."[32] John Keegan, another critics of On War, also thinks that Clausewitzian thought cannot helps us to understand new wars. Referring to the conflicts in Balkan and in South Caucasus Keegan claimed that these wars are no longer rational. They are 'primitive wars' which are the research field of anthropologists. Therefore, he claimed that Clausewitzian definition of war is not applicable to these apolitical wars.[33]

Scholar such as Heidi Toffler or Admiral William Owens expressed that new technological developments in military affairs provides new opportunities that makes Clausewitzian theory of war invalid. In this sense, Owens wrote 'Lifting the Fog of War' based on 'Revolution in Military Affairs' (RMA). For him, advance technology in US military refuted 'friction' or 'chance' factors in wars.[34] Moreover, William S. Lind et al proposed another form of war concept. According to them, modern human history has witnessed three war generations and current world has experiencing 'fourth generation warfare', (4GW). In this era, though Western countries obtain advance military technology they are unable to resist the threats come from the combination of terrorists and guerilla warfare because Western countries still use military methods which belong to previous generations of warfare.[35]

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[31] Colin M. Fleming, "New or Old Wars? Debating A Clausewitzian Future," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 2 (2009): 217, doi:10.1080/01402390902743175.

[32] Creveld, *The Transformation of War*. 57-58.

[33] John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 58.

[34] Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 47-48.

[35] William S. Lind et al., "The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation," *Marine Corps Gazette*, 1989, 22–26, accessed December 12, 2018, http://www.lesc.net/system/files/4GW+Original+Article+1989.pdf.

Emile Simpson is another scholar who investigates the relevance of Clausewitzian thought in contemporary wars. He argues that three concepts of war from Clausewitz's definition makes clear that On War is not relevant to all wars. Simpson points out that Clausewitz depicted war as a duel action. However, contemporary multiplayer wars such as the war in Syria are excluded. Second, Clausewitz assumes that enemy is a unified entity. Thus, he has no explanation for networked terrorist groups, where a military operation may not necessarily affect whole parts of the network. Third, for Clausewitz, wars are combat-centered, fighting is the only tool of war. In this case, Clausewitz is inadequate to interpret hybrid wars which composed of elements such as cyber-attacks or economic sanctions.[36] Following General Stanley McChrystal's distinction between networked and hierarchical enemies Simpson argues that Clausewitzian definition of war fits hierarchical one which represents 'old wars'.[37]

By approaching from different perspective, Kaldor also claims that Clausewitzian theory of war represents the wars took place in Europe during 19th and 20th century. She refers to Clausewitz's 'absolute war' definition to shore up her argument.[38] 'Absolute war' for Clausewitz takes place when one side forces the other hits back. In this case each of the sides will eventually force its rival toward extremes.[39] Kaldor argues that, even though this is Clausewitz's absolute war definition, the inner nature of old wars has similar tendency. However, she claims, new wars have different inner nature. Unlike the old wars, new wars are "inconclusive, long lasting and have a tendency to spread."[40]

In brief, scholars, who thinks that Clausewitz's theory of war is outdated, claim that new theories are required to comprehend new wars. They mainly argue that characteristics of wars are not duel anymore, they do not take place among states but mainly within the states. Instead, non-state groups such as terrorists, or 'war lords'

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[36] Emile Simpson, "Clausewitz's Theory of War and Victory in Contemporary Conflict," *Parameters* 47, no. 4 (2018): 10–11.

[37] Simpson., 15.

[38] Mary Kaldor, "Inconclusive Wars: Is Clausewitz Still Relevant in These Global Times?," *Global Policy* 1, no. 3 (2010): 271.

[39] Clausewitz, *On War*, 75-76.

[40] Kaldor, "Inconclusive Wars: Is Clausewitz Still Relevant in These Global Times?," 271.

benefit from new wars. Such groups do not even aim to end the wars rather they try to prolong it as much as they can to maintain their economic profits. In the lights of these arguments, hybrid war is new type of wars preferred by non-state actors. For them, due to the composition of several elements, hybrid wars can be distinguished from old wars which used to focus on military power. However, as it will be seen in following paragraphs, neither Clausewitz's theory outdated, nor the hybrid wars are new in the history of war.

Adherents of Clausewitzian paradigm refuse each of those abovementioned arguments. Hew Strachan and Andreas Herberg-Rothe writes that van Creveld misinterpreted the notion 'trinity'. He assessed war composed of 'trinitarian' which of its elements are people, army and government. Actually, the trinity "consists of primordial violence, hatred and enmity; the play of chance and probability; and war's element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone."[41] To identify each of these elements, Clausewitz referred mainly people, army and government respectively. Bart Schuurman specifies that misperception arises from the word 'mainly'. In other word, people, army and government are example of the elements of the trinity. However, for Schuurman, pursuing misinterpretation, van Creveld claimed that Clausewitz's theory of war obsoleted because it is only applicable between states, it cannot explain war against non-state groups.[42]

One of the most comprehensive critics against 'new war' trend comes from M.L.R Smith. For Smith, it can be different tactics within war but there is only one nature of war. Criticizing Mary Kaldor, he pursues Clausewitz's concept that war is continuation of politics. It has its own grammar to fight but it does not have its own logic, war is the means while political aim is the end. Citing from Kaldor that war "entails the regulation of certain types of social relationship and has its own particular logic"[43] Smith shows how she misrepresents Clausewitz's basic argument. He also presents how Kaldor self-contradicts when she asserts, different from

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[41] Strachan and Herberg-Rothe, *Clausewitz in the Twenty-First Century*, 7-8.

[42] Bart Schuurman, "Clausewitz and the New Wars," *Parameters*, 2010, 94.

[43] Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Orginsed Violence in A Global Era*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 15.

'Clausewitzian old wars', new wars are formulated by ethnic conflict. However, Kaldor recognizes that ethnic conflicts indeed can serve in political end which is exactly compatible with Clausewitz's thought.[44]

Furthermore, Smith claims that constituting new concepts such as ethnic war, low-intensity war, the war on terrorism are meaningless because "there is only one meaningful category of war, and that is war itself."[45] He deconstructs each of these notions and emphasizes the elusiveness of their characteristics. For example, Smith presents vague character of low-intensity war by referring the United States' war in Vietnam. For much of Americans, this involvement can be evaluated as low-intensity war but for Vietnamese the war constituted a massive disaster. In this case, Smith asks, "how does one objectively distinguish between high and low intensity war?" [46]

Christopher Bassford argues, in response to 'trinitarian war' concept, there is a clear misunderstanding among scholars in interpreting the concept of 'paradoxical trinity'. He explains it as:

> Clausewitz's famous line that *war is merely a continuation of politic*, while accurate as far as it goes, was not intended as a statement of fact. It is the antithesis in a dialectical argument whose thesis is the point…*that war is nothing but a duel…on a larger scale*. His synthesis lies in his *fascinating trinity*. This synthesis resolves the deficiencies of the two earlier bald statements, indicating that war is neither *nothing but* an act of brute force nor *merely* a rational act of politics or policy. Rather, it is a dynamic, inherently unstable interaction of the forces of violent emotion, chance, and rational calculation on all sides.[47]

Bassford's interpretation of the 'trinitarian war' is quite interesting. By bringing 'absolute war' and 'ration' together with the synthesis he actually summarizes Clausewitz's theory of war. This interpretation completely frees Clausewitz's conception of war from the criticisms against him. Hence, the criticisms claiming that On War defined a war only 'between states' or 'merely the continuation of

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[44] M. L. R. Smith, "Strategy In an Age of 'Low-Intensity' Warfare: Why Clausewitz Is Still More Relevant Than His Critics," in *Rethinking The Nature of War*, ed. Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Jan Angstrom (New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004), 39-40.

[45] Smith., 52.

[46] Smith., 33.

[47] Christopher Bassford, "Clausewitz and His Works," 2016, accessed December 13, 2018, http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Bassford/Cworks/Works.htm#Competitors.

politics' have lost their meaning in the face of Bassford's thesis, antithesis and synthesis interpretation. In this context, it can be asserted that Bassford 'lifts the fog of misperceptions' about Clausewitz's trinity which plays vital role to comprehend On War. For Bassford, Clausewitz shows us that war is neither an act of force or merely the means for politics, but a dynamic force of act composed of violence, chance and rational calculations.[48]

Thus, a detailed analysis shows that Clausewitz's theses on wars are still valid. In this context, exclusiveness of the nature of new wars as well as hybrid wars are questionable. However, this does not mean that there is nothing new about hybrid wars. Instead, it is claimed that contemporary hybrid wars contain new elements and they are in constant progress due to its compatibility with the frame of given space and time.

Clausewitz uses similar statement:

> Every age had its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions, and its own peculiar preconceptions. Each period, therefore, would have held to its own theory of war, even if the urge had always and universally existed to work things out on scientific principles. It follows that the events of every age must be judged in the light of its own peculiarities.[49]

Analyzing the wars throughout the world history shows that the constant character of war does not exist. Sun Tzu portraits war as a shape of water which reformulates itself according to the given conditions.[50] Besides, this does not imply that each age necessarily will produce its own unique character of war. Similar features of war can show up in different time and space depend on the given conditions. Therefore, hybrid war phenomenon will not be appraised as a new type of war in this thesis, instead it will be presented as a war tactic which is used according to certain circumstances throughout history.

The elements of hybrid war appears in well-known war, the Battle of Troy, where Trojan Horse were used as a tactic to surprise enemy. However, more complicated

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[48] Bassford.

[49] Clausewitz, *On War*., 593.

[50] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 101.

war is observable between Athens and Spartans. Thucydides, in his famous work, known as Peloponnesian War, gathers wars which spanned more than twenty years. First time in 431 BC these two powers encountered. Spartans, who were stronger part in the battle, expected victory in a very short time period. However, Athenians did not engage Spartans in a direct battle, instead, they preferred to stay behind the walls and prolong the war. This was the tactic provided an advantage to Athenians and made the first lesson for Spartans that there is no one way of fighting.[51]

In modern time, hybrid war appears in American Revolution. In other words, United States of America (USA) born as a result of hybrid war. British conventional forces had been sent to disarm the angry colonists when economic protests of Americans in 1770s turned to a political uprising. At that time, Americans had no chance against British regular troops. Thus, they adopted different method to face United Kingdom. The first strategy was political that Americans succeeded to convince colonists to revolt against United Kingdom. The second one was diplomatic when they got French support during the revolution. The third component was guerilla tactic to exhaust British forces.[52] For Robert Johnson, to defeat a belligerent in hybrid war, an actor should concentrate on enemy's 'ends' rather than its 'ways and means'. To overcome a hybrid threat, one must comprehend the challenger's intention.[53]

In this case, Britain failed to cope with the situation because it focused on 'ways and means' that colonists adopted rather than their political 'ends'. Another example is the Peninsular Wars (1807-1814) where British regular troops challenged French army in Spain while Spanish guerillas attacked French communication lines.[54] Arab Revolt against Ottoman Empire during the First World War (WWI) is another example of hybrid war. The Arabs assisted General Edmund Allenby rather than

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[51] Frank G. Hoffman, "Hybrid Warfare and Challenges," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 52 (2009): 34, doi:10.1016/j.ijcard.2016.10.016.

[52] John Ferris, "Small Wars and Great Games: The British Empire and Hybrid Warfare, 1700–1970," in *Hybrid Warfare: Fighting Complex Opponents from the Ancient World to the Present*, ed. Peter R. Mansoor and Williamson Murray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 206.

[53] Robert Johnson, "The Evolution of Hybrid Threats Through History," in *Shifting Paradigm of War: Hybrid Warfare*, ed. Yücel Özel and Ertan İnaltekin (İstanbul: Turkish National Defense University Printing House, 2017), 3.

[54] Richard Hart Sinnreich, "That Accursed Spanish War," in *Hybrid Warfare: Fighting Complex Opponents from the Ancient World to the Present*, ed. Williamson Murray and Peter R Mansoor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 126.

responding the Caliph's (The Sultan of the Ottoman Empire) call to arms.[55] T.E. Lawrence as an advisor to the revolt, writes: "Final victory seemed certain, if the war lasted long enough for us to work it out."[56] These are some of wars from history that frequently given as example for hybrid wars by scholars.

Existence of hybrid wars in history does not mean that contemporary hybrid wars do not have any distinctive characteristic. For Demian Shevko, hybrid elements of war in the past played critical role to support regular troops in wars but they never played central role in fighting.[57] For Frank G. Hoffman, the most distinctive feature of modern war lies at the blurred or blended nature of battle. He remarks that "hybrid wars blend the lethality of state conflict with the fanatical and protracted fervor of irregular warfare."[58] However, it is worth to examine which concepts were used before to describe wars which are alike to hybrid wars.

Although scholars do not pay enough attention to his work, one of the most interesting and path-breaking interpretation about future wars comes from the Colonel of the Tsarist Army, Evgeniy Messner who fought in the First World War and against Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War. Messner, the most renowned Russian military theorists of the twentieth century moved to South America after Second World War (WWII). He published a work called 'The Face of Modern War' in Buenos Aires in 1959. In this work Messner concentrated to analyze covert characteristic of the Cold War. More importantly, Messner formulated his hybrid war theory (Myatezh Voina) when he noticed the emergence of this new phenomenon.[59]

According to the Russian military strategist, the borders between regular troops and citizens lose its meaning in rebellion wars. In other words, Messner points out that conventional forces lose their monopoly on new form of warfare which ignores the

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[55] Johnson, "The Evolution of Hybrid Threats Through History.", 4.

[56] T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Adelaide: The University of Adelaide Library, 2008), 146.

[57] Demian Shevko, "Why the Conflict between Russia and Ukraine Is a Hybrid Agression against the West and Nothing Else," in *Multicultural Societies and Their Threats*, ed. Nazarii Gutsul and Kristina Khrul (Zürich: LIT Verlag, 2017), 81-82.

[58] Hoffman, "Hybrid Warfare and Challenges.", 37.

[59] Abibok, "The Construction of Donbas Regional Identity in Political and Media Discourses: Implications of the Conflict.", 83.

law of war and ethics.[60] Moreover, he underlines the psychological aspect of the new war form. For Messner, rebellion wars ensure to fill the lower social status of irregular groups such as terrorists, guerillas or criminal groups. They need constant motivation to fight and at this point information actions gain value. The rulers of irregular groups underline the dissatisfaction of social groups and they also discredit the reputation of the targeted state to influence the opinion of international community. Messner remarks that while regular armies lean on self-disciple the action of irregular groups depends on mental moods of their members.[61] This factor is critical because it makes the attack of irregular groups unpredictable. For Leszek Sykulski, Messner's theory is a pioneer to the concepts such as asymmetric or hybrid wars which gained popularity after 1990s.[62] His findings and observations contain alike elements of contemporary hybrid wars. In his work, Messner states:

> One should stop thinking that war is when they fight, and peace is when they do not fight. States can be in the state of war without obvious fighting…Modern form of war is rebellion. It is a deviation of from dogmas of classical art of war…Violence (intimidation and terror) and guerilla warfare is the main arms in this war…using in the war of guerillas, wreckers, terrorists, saboteurs, propagandists will acquire immense sizes…In the past wars annexation of territory was considered as most important. In future wars, annexation of souls of the enemy-state will be considered more important.[63]

In fact, Evgeniy Messner precisely provides the elements of contemporary hybrid wars long ago. This meticulously written work shows that Hoffman's description of Hybrid War had been clarified by the Russian military theorists decades ago. The similarity between Messner and Hoffman occurs in their description of hybrid war. Indistinctiveness of peace and war time presented by Messner is very alike to Hoffman's description of blended nature of battle.

William S. Lind and his co-authors participated in the new war discussions with the article titled "The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation." The article

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[60] Mirosław Banasik, "How to Understand the Hybrid War," *Securitologia* 21, no. 1 (2015): 22-23, doi:10.5604/18984509.1184214.

[61] Banasik., 23.

[62] Leszek Sykulski, "Wojny Buntownicze – Wprowadzenie Do Koncepcji Jewgienija Messnera," *Geopoliytka.Net*, 2014, accessed December 23, 2018, http://geopolityka.net/leszek-sykulski-wojny-buntownicze-cz-1/.

[63] Abibok, "The Construction of Donbas Regional Identity in Political and Media Discourses: Implications of the Conflict.", 82-84.

which published in 1989 introduce 4GW. This new generation is built apparently upon previous three generations of warfare. According to the authors first generation warfare represented the tactics of column and line together with the smoothbore musket. For them, these tactics were partly response to technological developments and partly to social conditions which were developed during the French Revolution.[64]

The second-generation warfare, Lind et al argues, reflects qualitative and quantitative development in weapons and based on concentrated firepower. Second generation of warfare culminated during the First World War. The driving force behind the third generation of warfare was, however, ideas. In 1939, Germans raised with radically new tactics. Third generation, the authors assert, based primarily on maneuver which were the first example of nonlinear methods. Interesting point of this article appears in description of 4GW. Lind and his co-authors consider that 4GW is not about destroying the enemy physically but collapsing it internally.[65]

In 4GW, identifying the center of gravity is highly important. The target in the war goes beyond the military and includes the belligerent's culture as well as the support of population for the war. The authors underline:

> The distinction between war and peace will be blurred to the vanishing point. It will be nonlinear, possibly to the point of having no definable battlefields or fronts. The distinction between 'civilian' and 'military' may disappear…Success will depend heavily on effectiveness in joint operations as lines between responsibility and mission become very blurred.[66]

Additionally, Lind et al draw our attention to the psychological aspect of the 4GW in terms of information/media intervention. Emphasizing technological developments, they also mention about future possibly vulnerabilities of states. In this case, the article puts emphasize on computer viruses as a new form of weapon which can be translated as cyber security in contemporary world. These are the main arguments of the authors made in 1989 which are clear indications of the elements of hybrid war.[67]

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[64] Lind et al., "The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation.", 1.

[65] Lind et al., 2.

[66] Lind et al., 2-3.

[67] Lind et al.

Another work which holds similar elements of hybrid war appeared in 1999. Two Chinese Colonels Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, published their work under the name of 'Unrestricted Warfare'. Liang and Xiangsui draw attention to technological development and global economic interconnectedness. [68]   Their work defines war beyond its traditional domain. Liang and Xiangsui claimed that the principles of war are "using all means, including armed forces or nonarmed forces, military and non-military, and lethal and non-lethal means to compel the enemy to accept one's interests."[69] They presented this type of war as a completely new phenomenon. According to Liang and Xiangsui, in the past, war was conducted merely by military. To win the battle, tactic and strategies were planned in realm of military thinking. In other words, the aim of war destroying enemy for an absolute victory was the main goal in the past. However, this is an obsolete idea in contemporary world and must be corrected. The Chinese military theorists state:

> The great fusion of technologies is impelling the domains of politics, economics, the military, culture, diplomacy, and religion to overlap each other...All of these things are rendering more and more obsolete the idea of confining warfare to the military domain and of using the number of casualties as a means of the intensity of a war. Warfare is now escaping from the boundaries of bloody massacre, and exhibiting a trend towards low casualties, or even none at all, and yet high intensity. This is information warfare, financial warfare, trade warfare, and other entirely new forms of war, new areas opened up in the domain of warfare. In this sense, there is now no domain which warfare cannot use, and there is almost no domain which does not have warfare's offensive pattern.[70]

Diversification of war affairs from military to 'information warfare', 'financial warfare', 'trade warfare' and many other realms arises a critical question: How to respond or how to deal with this new unrestricted war type? Unrestricted warfare has been translated by Ronald R. Luman as "there are no rules; no measure is forbidden."[71] For Robert Johnson, this translation is compatible with the 'ways' and 'means' of unrestricted warfare. However, political objectives in these wars remain

[68] Frank G Hoffman, "Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars," *Potomac Institute for Policy Studies*, 2007, 22.

[69] Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare* (Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999), 7.

[70] Liang and Xiangsui., 189.

[71] Ronald R. Luman, "Introduction," in *Unrestricted Warfare Symposium 2006: Proceedings On Strategy, Anaysis, and Technology*, ed. Ronald R. Luman (Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, 2006), 2.

immutable. Therefore, for Johnson, to counter unrestricted wars one should concentrate not to enemy's 'means' but its 'ends' which is political goal.[72]

Apart from 'unrestricted warfare', 'compound warfare' is another war concept that contains elements in line with hybrid war. Thomas M. Huber is the one who coined the term 'compound warfare'. Different from Frank G. Hoffman who emphasizes the distinctive characteristics of new form of war Huber presents compound warfare as a war type existed throughout war history. According to Huber: "compound warfare is the simultaneous use of a regular or main force and an irregular or guerrilla force against an enemy."[73] For Huber, conventional and unconventional forces together create a harmony that enemy which obtains solely regular forces can hardly cope with. Compound warfare is a combination of these two forces that is conducted under a unified direction by a single command and control center to accomplish same end.[74]

For some scholars, compound warfare is the precursor which provides an intellectual basis for hybrid war concept. Timothy McCulloh and Richard Johnson believe that Hoffman constructed his definition of hybrid war based on compound warfare by including "a synergistic fusion of the elements with the inclusion of terrorism and criminal behavior."[75] Similar argument has been introduced by Brian P. Fleming who explicitly emphasizes compound warfare ensures intellectual framework of "the interest-based hybrid threat concept."[76] Frank Hoffman himself admits that he benefited from the work of Thomas Huber. For Hoffman, Huber's work, 'Compound Wars: That Fatal Knot', is not a well appreciated gem.[77] However, Frank Hoffman clarifies how hybrid war concept is different from compound warfare.

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[72] Robert Johnson, "Hybrid War and Its Countermeasures: A Critique of the Literature," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 29, no. 1 (2018): 152, doi:10.1080/09592318.2018.1404770.

[73] Thomas M. Huber, "Compound Warfare: A Conceptual Framework," in *Compound Warfare: That Fatal Knot*, ed. Thomas M. Huber (Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 2004), 1.

[74] Huber., 91.

[75] Timothy Mcculloh and Richard Johnson, "Hybrid Warfare" (Florida, 2013), 9.

[76] Brian P. Fleming, "The Hybrid Threat Concept: Contemporary War, Military Planning and the Advent of Unrestricted Operational Art" (Kansas, 2011), 13.

[77] Frank G. Hoffman, "Hybrid vs. Compound War-The Janus Choice: Defining Today's Multifaceted Conflict," *Armed Forces Journal* October (2009), accessed 24, 2018, http://armedforcesjournal.com/hybrid-vs-compound-war/.

For Hoffman, irregular forces in compound wars are merely "second-rate conventional forces. This theory offered synergy and combination at the strategic level but not the complexity, fusion and simultaneity we foresaw at the operational and even tactical level."[78] By agreeing with Hoffman's opinion Joseph Dvorak considers that despite the similarities between compound war and hybrid war, they are different from each other. In the case of compound warfare, for Dvorak, coordination is restricted to strategic level. Conventional and unconventional forces operate in different parts of the battle rather than waging the battle together. However, hybrid war appears as a fusion of regular and irregular forces in the war.[79]

According to Hoffman, in compound war there are two separate forces which are applied in accommodation. Hoffman comments that in compound wars, irregular forces attack the enemy's conventional forces to compel them to diverse their units while regular units force the belligerent to focus on defense or to reach critical mass for final offensive maneuvers.[80] Responding Hoffman's understanding of compound war, Huber claims that Hoffman does not describe it properly. Huber considers that the dynamics which Hoffman describes are not historically new.[81] In response to Huber, Hoffman underlines one more time that compound war is composed of two different forces while hybrid war can be consist of a single force or it can be constituted distinctive forces which of serve to the same end.[82]

In short, hybrid war is a war concept discussed within new war debate. Some of scholars argue humankind experiences new war in contemporary world which is completely different from traditional wars. In contrast, other group of thinkers claim that the wars which are defined as a new, in particular hybrid wars, existed throughout history. However, both sides admit the fact that twenty first century witnesses new war methods in line with particularly technological and economic developments. The next section explains which type of wars are described through

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[78] Hoffman, "Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars.", 21.

[79] Joseph Dvorak, "Complexity In Modern War: Examining Hybrid War And Future U.S. Security Challenges" (Missouri State University, 2016), 20.

[80] Hoffman, "Hybrid Warfare and Challenges.", 36.

[81] Fleming, "The Hybrid Threat Concept: Contemporary War, Military Planning and the Advent of Unrestricted Operational Art.", 15.

[82] Fleming., 15-16.

hybrid war concept previously and how the context of the concept broadens.

2.2.2. Hybrid War and Its Evolution

According to Clausewitz 'surprise' or 'deception' in war affairs are the methods preferred by weak sides.[83] However, for Sun Tzu, war based on these tactics and thereby victory without battle is the best scenario for a military leader.[84] These arguments in mind, one can observe hybrid wars, particularly after the Cold War, had grown in frame of Clausewitz's assumption. Holding advanced military technology, the West became undefeatable in the way of conventional war. In this case, asymmetric war came to the forefront for groups which are unsatisfied of the West's superiority in international arena. Hence, the September 11 terrorist attacks which were coordinated by the Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda against the United States on September 11, 2001 can be considered within Clausewitz's hypothesis that 'surprise' or 'deception' are the method used by weak side during the war.[85]

Hybrid Warfare as a term first coined by William J. Nemeth in his master thesis titled "Future War and Chechnya: A Case for Hybrid Warfare". While describing Chechen war tactic against Russia, Nemeth states:

> The strengths of hybrid forces do not match the Western conceptions of military strength and are mainly discounted by the west. [However], hybrid forces can effectively incorporate technologically advanced systems into their force structure and strategy and use these systems in ways that are beyond the intended employment parameters…Operationally, hybrid military forces are superior to Western forces within their limited operational spectrum.[86]

Nemeth's description of hybrid war is compatible with Clausewitz's thought about *deception* or *surprise* in battle. As mentioned before, Clausewitz assesses implementation of 'deception' or 'surprise' methods in war are the sign of weakness

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[83] Clausewitz, *On War*, 198-203.

[84] Tzu, *The Art of War*, 23.

[85] "September 11 Terror Attacks Fast Facts," *CNN*, 2019, accessed August 13, 2019, https://www.cnn.com/2013/07/27/us/september-11-anniversary-fast-facts/index.html.

[86] William Nemeth, "Future War and Chechnya : A Case for Hybrid Warfare" (Naval Postgraduate School, 2002), 70-74.

which weak sides adopt. Therefore, in the case of Chechen-Russian war, though Chechens had no chance against Russia's conventional troops they challenged Russia thanks to hybrid war tactics.[87]

Hybrid War literature gained popularity after the Second Lebanon War in 2006. According to Hoffman, the war between Hezbollah and Israel Defense Forces which lasted 34 days in southern Lebanon in 2006 is an excellent example of hybrid war. In 2006, Israel launched 'Operation Change of Direction' to destroy Hezbollah in response to Hezbollah's attack when they killed three and kidnapped two Israeli soldiers. With the support of Iran, Hezbollah's military wing was well trained and equipped just like a regular army and was also equipped with well-directed ammunition and unmanned aerial vehicles. Hezbollah forces also used radar systems very well and they developed optical fiber as well as cellular networks which provided them a versatile movement.[88]

Nevertheless, Hezbollah had no chance against Israel Defense Forces in terms of resources or capabilities. Thus, Hezbollah adapted a mixed way which combined its regular units with irregular forces. Conducting guerilla tactic (hit and hide) in urban areas by formation of defensive points; using urban infrastructure for mobility and flexibility; and the well-planned and crafted weapons storage areas, provided a great advantage to Hezbollah. Referring to the war, an observer states: "this was a very good lesson in asymmetric warfare. This was not Israel imposing its battle on Hizballah but Hizballah imposing its battle on Israel."[89] Moreover, Hezbollah also used psychological dimension of war very well. Producing television programmers in Hebrew and using photographers to highlight the circumstances of the war helped Hezbollah to create a perception of victory against Israel.[90]

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[87] Michael Specter, "How the Chechen Guerrillas Shocked Their Russian Foes," *The New York Times*, 1996, accessed August 13, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/1996/08/18/world/how-the-chechen-guerrillas-shocked-their-russian-foes.html.

[88] Kishore Kumar Khera, "Marathon, Lebanon-Yemen Hezbollah Head and Houthi Legs," in *Hybrid Warfare: The Changing Character of War*, ed. Vikrant Deshpande, vol. 162 (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2018), 101-102.

[89] Andrew Exum, "Hizballah at War: A Military Assessment," *Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, no. December (2006), 10.

[90] Mansoor, "Introduction: Hybrid Warfare in History.", 15.

In these examples, it is observable that hybrid wars took place between states and non-state groups. In other words, weak sides implement combined method of regular and irregular means to fight against *militarily superior conventional armies*. However, this view has dramatically changed particularly after 2014 when Russia seized Crimea and destabilized Eastern Ukraine. Since then, the concept of hybrid war has been understood not only to define asymmetric wars where weak side or non-state groups prefer, but also a technique which advantageous sides apply in the wars.[91] This is a critical point because it refutes Clausewitz's assumption about 'surprise' and 'deception' in war.

One of the most widely cited studies on the hybrid war is the article entitled 'The Value of Science is in the Foresight' written by the Chief of the Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, General Valery Gerasimov. Writing the article in 2013, Gerasimov begins as: "In the 21st century, there is a tendency to erase the differences between the state of war and peace. Wars are no longer declared and, having begun, they do not follow our usual template."[92] He calls the new type war *non-linear* or *new generation wars* and makes a list to distinct it from conventional wars which is indicated in Table 1.

Defining the Arab Spring as an example of such wars Gerasimov argues that in terms of the scale of casualties and destruction, the catastrophic social, economic and political consequences of such new conflicts are comparable to the consequences of the real war itself. For the author, there are two methods to implement these new wars: covert and overt forces. On one hand, using political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other non-military measures implemented using the protest potential of the population along with the implementation of information confrontation measures and the actions of special operations forces are the samples for covert method. On the other hand, the forces often under the guise of peacekeeping and crisis management are the overt forces of new wars.[93]

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[91] Erik Reichborn-Kjennerud and Patrick Cullen, "What Is Hybrid Warfare?," *NUPI Policy Brief* 1 (2016), 1-2.

[92] Герасимов Валерий, "Ценность Науки в Предвидении Новые Вызовы Требуют Переосмыслить Формы и Способы Ведения Боевых Действий," *Военно-Промышленный Курьер*, 2013, accessed March 10, 2019, https://www.vpk-news.ru/articles/14632.

[93] Валерий.

Table 1. Gerasimov's Definition of Traditional and New Military Methods

Traditional forms and methods	New forms and ways
The military action takes place after a strategic deployment	The beginning of military operations by groups of troops (forces) takes place during peacetime
Frontal clashes of large groups of troops based on ground forces	Highly maneuverable contactless combat operations of interspecific fighting groups
Defeat of manpower and firefighting, taking control of borders and areas in order to seize territory	Reducing the military-economic potential of the state by defeating the critical objects of its military and civilian infrastructure in a short time
The defeat of the enemy, the destruction of economic potential and the seizure of its territory	Massive use of high-precision weapons, large-scale use of special operations forces, as well as robotic complexes and weapons on new physical principles, participation in military operations of the civilian component
Fighting on land, in the air and at sea	Simultaneous impact on enemy troops and objects throughout its entire territory
Management of groups of troops (forces) within a strictly hierarchical structure of governing bodies	Simultaneous battle in all physical areas and in the information space
Use of political, diplomatic, economic and other non-military measures in combination with the use of military force	The use of asymmetric and indirect methods
	Managing forces and means in a single information space

Source: Герасимов Валерий, "Ценность Науки в Предвидении Новые Вызовы Требуют Переосмыслить Формы и Способы Ведения Боевых Действий," *Военно-Промышленный Курьер*, 2013, accessed March 10, 2019, https://www.vpk-news.ru/articles/14632, Translated by the author.

Gerasimov claims that asymmetric actions have become widespread, which in some cases greatly exceeded the force of weapons, providing the enemy superiority in the armed struggle. These include the use of special operations forces and internal opposition to create a permanent front throughout the territory of the opposing state, as well as informational influence, the forms and methods of which are constantly being improved. For Gerasimov, these transformation in military issue has already reflected on military doctrines of leading countries in the world. For Russia, he reminds to learn lessons from domestic wars such as the fight against irregular

formations in Afghanistan and the North Caucasus.[94]

Gerasimov suggests that the only way to cope with this new challenge is 'holistic approach'. In this case, the author claims that it is necessary to conduct joint works with scientific organizations of interested ministries and departments of the state. He particularly draws attention to the relations between the Academy of Military Sciences and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.[95]

To assess Gerasimov's article, scholars divided into two camps: one groups claim that the work is *descriptive*. For them, Gerasimov described the new Western methods which implemented in North Africa and in Middle East and it was a 'wakeup call' for Russian military thinkers to accept the new situation in order to update their works. The other group asserts that the work is *prescriptive*, mirroring Russia's new war method conducting in Ukraine.[96] This group of scholars call the article as 'Gerasimov Doctrine' to highlight its prescriptive manner. Assessing the article from former, *descriptive*, perspective it could be a naive claim to argue that Russian military is unfamiliar with the hybrid war concept. As it will be seen in following sections, Russian military had experienced wars with hybrid features before Gerasimov's article published. Russia's Wartime Doctrine in 2010 mentioned to use military and non-military tools to achieve political objectives. It emphasizes the significance of the cosmic and information war which allow to achieve political ends without using military troops or to shape the situation into more favorable conditions.[97] This issue reflected on the Military Doctrine of The Russian Federation in 2014. In the section of "Military Risks and Military Threats Encountered by The Russian Federation" the doctrine broadly presents the characteristic current conflicts such as:

> The integrated employment of military force and political, economic, informational or other non-military measures implemented with a wide use of the protest potential of the population and of special operations forces; exerting

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[94] Валерий.

[95] Валерий.

[96] Andrew J Duncan, "New 'Hybrid War' or Old 'Dirty Tricks'? The Gerasimov Debate and Russia's Response to the Contemporary Operating Environment," *Canadian Military Journal* 17, no. 3 (2017), 8.

[97] Banasik, "How to Understand the Hybrid War.", 26-27.

simultaneous pressure on the enemy throughout the enemy's territory in the global information space, airspace and outer space, on land and sea; use of indirect and asymmetric methods of operations; employment of political forces and public associations financed and guided from abroad.[98]

Consequently, Gerasimov's article should be assessed as a *descriptive* work which clarifies the contemporary wars and emphasizing the significance of the ties between science and Russian military, a multi-departmental way to prepare Russia for contemporary threats. However, it is also a fact that Russia already experiencing hybrid war models. Since there is not any template of hybrid war, the new methods constantly are discovered according to new circumstances. This is what Gerasimov underlines in his article. For him Russia should not follow the methods which already implemented by the West. Instead, Russia needs to be innovative to counter the threats on its national interests.[99]

Hence, it is apparent from this section that hybrid war concept developed in the context of fight between non-state actors and state actors. In other word, it was emerged as a war method that weak side adopts in order to compensate its shortcomings in military capabilities and gain advantage to fight against strong regular armies. However, this understanding faded away with Russia's annexation of Crimea and destabilization of Eastern Ukraine to achieve its political objectives. This section particularly emphasizes that in contemporary world, states also adopt non-military tools along with regular armies. Russia's adoption of hybrid war method is not a new phenomenon in post-Soviet space as it will be shown in comparison with Georgia case, but the one which is implemented in Ukraine is the most sophisticated one. The following section scrutinizes numerous approaches in international relations in order to clarify which one of them explain best the ongoing hybrid war in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine.

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[98] "Military Doctrine of The Russian Federation," *The Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Northern Ierland*, 2015, accessed March 11, 2019, https://rusemb.org.uk/press/2029.

[99] Валерий, "Ценность Науки в Предвидении Новые Вызовы Требуют Переосмыслить Формы и Способы Ведения Боевых Действий."

2.3. Alternative Approaches to Hybrid War

As clarified in previous section, hybrid warfare composed of several elements which constantly tend to change. Just like Hoffman states, hybrid wars combine the mortalities of states' traditionally preferred conflicts with the fanatic and long-lasting tendency of irregular warfare. Therefore, hybrid war concept requires a theoretical approach which is capable to blend different dimensional dynamics. In this part, the research aims to explore the best theoretical lenses which can obtain diverse factors in line with hybrid war concept. Thus, this section investigates classical realism, structural realism, liberal approach and finally neoclassical realism and argues that the latter viewpoint is the most applicable theoretical paradigm which ensures a basis to study ongoing hybrid war in Eastern Ukraine.

2.3.1. Classical Realism

At first glance, it looks the 'real' part of the name provides an advantage to realism and therefore, it gets the whip hand of other theories of international relations. Straightforward logic may tell us that if realism is about the 'reality' then the rest of theories should be unrealistic. However, as emphasized above, each approach in international relations has its own validity which are constrained by time and space factors. It would be fanciful to claim that there is a theory independent from time and space. In this context, if political realism is the reality of international politics then it is unnecessary to describe it. For instance, if the nature of international relations is anarchic and states seek for survival in this ontological circumstance then realism as a theory of international relations is unneeded to be exist. In other words, states in international relations would not act in a different way than pursuing power or survival if realist arguments could be an indisputable fact.[100] Notwithstanding, realism is one of the central theories of international relations and it provides significant understandings for international relations. In this sense, classical realism will be briefly clarified in this part through the mainstream realist thinkers from the ancient Greek philosophers to well-known realist thinkers of twentieth

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[100] Paul R. Viotti and Mark. V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 2010), 74.

century in International Relations (IR).

Although the thoughts of Athenian general Thucydides are arguable in terms of being a theorist of international relations, he will be considered in this part as a political realist thinker.[101] Thucydides who lived between 460 B.C. and 400 B.C. was one of secular thinkers in his age.[102] Around fifth century B.C., distinguishing history from its mythological style was new way of thinking and Thucydides was apparently part of that school.[103] It was the birth of political science the way how Thucydides appraised the History of Peloponnesian War which provides range of details of warfare between Athens and Sparta started in 431 B.C. The main hallmark of Thucydides in explanation of the war was to distinguish his writing style from storytelling tradition. He was aware of his approach being unorthodox and his way of writing history could be boring due to spiriting off the uniqueness of stories. He was trying to find connections or similarities between various narratives and was aiming to develop certain rules of their causes.[104]

Thucydides emphasizes the significance of power politics, in his work of the History of Peloponnesian Wars, which is the central point in all forms of political realism. Thucydides presents an excellent sample of power politics in his work by pointing the dialogue between the generals of Athenian forces and the spokesmen of Melos. The dialogue is quite interesting in terms of power politics, justice and morality. Athenians offer a peaceful surrender by emphasizing their apparent power under the condition of promising to leave Melos intact but Melian desires to protect their independence by underling the justice. Athenians abstracts the situation by depicting power as a natural status, not of solely their claim. In this regard, Thucydides emphasizes: "As the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while

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[101] Annette Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 20.

[102] V. Spike Peterson, "The Gender of Rhetoric, Reason, and Realism," in *Post-Realism: The Rhetorical Turn in International Relations*, ed. Francis A. Beer and Robert Hariman (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1996), 263.

[103] Annette Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 19.

[104] Freyberg-Inan., 20.

the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must."[105] Moreover, in the context of this dialogue Athenians summon opponents not to act emotional to decide for self-defense but to be rational. This way will bring benefit not only for Athenians but Melians too, according to Athenians generals.

> Melians: And how, pray, could it turn out as good for us to serve as for you to rule? Athenians: Because you would have the advantage of submitting before suffering the worst, and we should gain by not destroying you…Melians: Well then, if you risk so much to retain your empire, and your subjects to get rid of it, it were surely great baseness and cowardice in us who are still free not to try everything that can be tried, before submitting to your yoke. Athenians: Not if you are well advised, the contest not being an equal one, with honor as the prize and shame as the penalty, but a question of self-preservation and of not resisting those who are far stronger than you are.[106]

The quotation shows that Thucydides urges not to be unrealistic or emotional in the case of obvious inequality between two sides. Different from both traditional and mythological style, secular way of thinking is quite preponderate in the context of the dialogues and it indicates the birth of political science or realist theory of international relations. Therefore, power politics, which is one of the most pivotal point in political realism, plays significant role in the works of Thucydides which makes him a realist. However, apart from power politics, he also points out the role of human nature which distinguishes his approach from the other forms of realism and makes him a classical realist.[107] According to Thucydides, it is the human nature which enhance timelessness among various stories. If one event happened in the past, analogous may appear now or in the future due to the action of human being.[108]

> Of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they rule wherever they can. And it is not as if we were the first to make this law, or to act upon it when made: we found it existing before us, and shall leave it to exist for ever after us; all we do is to make use of it, knowing that you and everybody else, having the same power as we have, would do the same as we do.[109]

At first appearance, it may be seen that insights of Thucydides are compatible with

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[105] Thucydides, *The History of The Peloponnesian War*, tran. Richard Crawley, 1974, 64.

[106] Thucydides., 264-265.

[107] Stephanie Lawson, *Theories of International Relations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 62.

[108] Lawson., 63

[109] Thucydides, *The History of The Peloponnesian War*., 266.

neorealist approach in relation with unchangeability. However, it is the level of analysis which makes his approach classical realist since he pays attention to human nature to explain the occasion. As it will be mentioned in the following section, neorealist paradigm ignores the unit level of analyses and privileges the system level to comprehend international politics.

Another prominent thinker who holds significant position in theory of international relations is Niccolò Machiavelli, lived between 1469-1527. Like the Athenian thesis, Machiavellian approaches rely on the concept of human nature as fixed and stable. Machiavelli makes himself clear, in his well-known book 'The Prince', to be one of political realist where he suggests to rulers to be pragmatic while commanding and avoid being emotional which can cause destructions. He is well-aware of distinction between what a man 'ought to do' and what a man do. Human being, in terms of politics, behaves differently than how Christian morality, in general, suggests and that is the key understanding way of human nature for Machiavelli.[110]

In this case, secular thinking method is also observable in the work of Machiavelli. Indeed, he neither denies values in this world nor tries to create world that contain certain values. Machiavelli admits that civilizations or imperativeness of common life in human nature require to have certain values in societies. Thus, he is not against all kind of moralities in politics.[111] According to William Ebenstein Machiavelli's "amorality implies therefore, not denial of moral values in all situations, but the affirmation that, in the specific situation of the statesman, the rules of power have priority over those of ethics and morality."[112]

In the section where Machiavelli advises a prince whether being loved or feared should be the priority for a ruler, he clearly gives credit to the latter. He acknowledges that being loved may be the eager or desire of any leader, but this characteristic may be also perceived as a weakness of him. This is explained by Machiavelli as:

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[110] Lawson, *Theories of International Relations*, 65.

[111] William Ebenstein, *Great Political Thinkers: Plato to the Present*, 4th ed. (Illinois: Dryden Press, 1969).

[112] William Ebenstein, *Great Political Thinkers: Plato to the Present*, 4th ed. (Illinois: Dryden Press, 1969), 285.

> At this point a question arises: is it better to be loved than feared, or to be feared than loved? The answer is that a prince would like to be both. But since it is difficult to reconcile these two, it is much safer to be feared than loved, if the one must cede to the other… For it can be said about men in general that they are ungrateful, fickle, dissembling, hypocritical, a cowardly, and greedy. As long as you treat them well, they are all yours. When the need is far off, they will offer you their blood, their property, their lives, and their children.[113]

As shown in quotation Machiavelli also explains the reason behind preferring being feared rather than loved in relation with human nature which is infernal. For Machiavelli, human can cause for a trouble for someone whom he/she loves taking advantage of his/her goodwill but people afraid of bringing distress to someone whom they are feared. By favoring fear, Machiavelli suggests pragmatism to rulers instead of focusing on to gain sympathy for him/herself. He adopts human nature as a starting point for politics and this is clear indication of his position in classical realism.

Along with Thucydides and Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) is another prominent political theorist whom work lies at the heart of political realist approach. His standpoint of state of nature holds pivotal point in realist theory of international relations. Alike other reformist thinkers of his period, Hobbes was one of the most radical secular thinkers that forced him to leave France in 1651 being afraid of the French clergy. To protect the authority of the state, Hobbes proposes sovereign to interdict the intervening groups or institutions between state and individuals. Different from traditional understanding of Christianity, Hobbes appraises churches as a danger to state due to their interference to the activities of the state.[114] He reminds to the clergy that the safety of the state does not depend on churches but in the contrary, churches' survival depends on the state and for the doctrine of Hobbes, church is an institution within the state not an institution at the center of it.[115]

Secularism is significant because it annihilates the correlations between civil law and natural law. The belief or perceptions on civil law in Europe was different than how

[113] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. James B. Atkinson (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008)., 271-273

[114] Edgar Straehle, "Thomas Hobbes and the Secularization of Authority Edgar," in *The Sources of Secularism: Enlightenment and Beyond*, ed. Anna Tomaszewska and Hasse Hämäläinen (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 101-120.

[115] Ebenstein, *Great Political Thinkers: Plato to the Present*, 366.

Hobbes portraited it. For Stoic-Jewish-Christian tradition, civil law is derived from a higher (natural) law and it is inferior to it. As indicated in Bible, the laws of kings or princes are secondary and are supplements of the law of God.[116] Hobbes rejects this approach and describes the law of sovereign as an ultimate authority. Hobbes had no religion and this condition is apparently reflected his interpretations on state of nature. He assesses people in the state of nature as in a constant fear and competition where they try first to survive. Accordance to Hobbes, *glory* and *hono*r are also other realities that people seek but survival is the main action for individuals that can be achieved only by power. In these circumstances, pursuing power is the only way to avoid the danger and ensure the security.[117] Hobbes describes the condition beyond the boundaries of civil states as

> Without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a Warre, as is of every man, against every man… In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.[118]

In order to escape from this anarchic condition Hobbes proposes to have accumulated power which can be only remedy for violence and can bring peace for states. "The only way to erect such a Common Power ... is to conferre all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their Wills ... unto one Will ... This is the Generation of that Great Leviathan, or rather (to speak more reverently) of that Mortall God, to which we owe under the Immortall God, our peace and defense ...."[119] These quotations show clearly that human in its origin tends to violence in the eyes of Hobbes and creating one sovereign is the only solution for this anarchic condition. Hobbes's depiction of civil state is vital for theorists especially who assess international relations as anarchic, without any higher authority which govern all states. Although Hobbes does not intent to apply the anarchic condition among states contemporary realist thinkers see international

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[116] Ebenstein., 367.

[117] Lawson, *Theories of International Relations*, 71.

[118] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edward White and David Widger, 2009, 88-89.

[119] Hobbes., 116.

relations as Hobbesian description among individuals.[120]

Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831) is another theorist who holds significant spot among the classical philosophers of realist school. Clausewitz was among the first who theorized war in a systematic way in his celebrated work called On War. First, he attempts to scrutinize the relation between war and other human interests and for Clausewitz there is a clear contradiction between these two. Although they look paradoxical Clausewitz finds the cause of war in human nature. He states: "the incompatibility between war and every other human interest, individual or social-a difference that derives from human nature, and that therefore no philosophy can resolve."[121] It is clearly understood that human nature plays critical role for wars. Indeed, because of its close relations with human nature and politics war is not an independent event for Clausewitz. Wars are part of humanity just like politics. Human beings cannot maintain their species alone since they need each other to survive. Living together oblige existence of politics and Clausewitz points out that the war is a part of politics which embodied in human nature.[122] He maintains the discussion such as:

> Do political relations between peoples and between their governments stop when diplomatic notes are no longer exchanged? Is war not just another expression of their thoughts, another form of speech or writing? Its grammar, indeed, may be its own, but not its logic. If that is so, then war cannot be divorced from political life; and whenever this occurs in our thinking about war, the many links that connect the two elements are destroyed and we are left with something pointless and devoid of sense.[123]

If the war is inseparable part of politics, then there is no any way for progress in terms of eliminating the war as a strategy of politics.[124] From this point of view, cooperation among people or societies may last to the certain point but when dialogues end between communities then the war occurs as a continuation of politics. The connection between human nature and the war as a branch of politics make

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[120] Michael C. Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 20.

[121] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 864.

[122] Clausewitz.

[123] Clausewitz.

[124] Lawson, *Theories of International Relations*, 76.

Clausewitz one of classical realist thinker.

Along with Clausewitz, German philosopher Max Weber (1864–1920) also makes connection between politics and violence but while the former pays attention particularly on war as mentioned in previous paragraph, the latter explains the relations between states and anarchical condition. Weber appraises communities without a state as an anarchic condition where everyone can use violence against each other. Violence is a vital issue for societies that without it no states even could be exist and people could live in an anarchical system.[125] States are based on force and their existence is to manage, control and use violence when it is needed. Weber states:

> We must say that the state is the form of human community that (successfully) lays claim to the monopoly of legitimate physical violence within a particular territory… The state is regarded as the sole source of the 'right' to use violence. Hence, what 'politics' means for us is to strive for a share of power or to influence the distribution of power, whether between states or between the groups of people contained within a state.[126]

Weber is pessimistic about politics that he urges people who wishes to become politician not to expect remain pure in politics.[127] In other word, violence is a part of humanity and it causes to pursue power politics. To remind Hobbes, people constantly feel threats in anarchical condition and the security can be obtained merely by pursuit of power "till he see no other power great enough to endanger him".[128] Weber extends the eagerness of people in the sense of seeking power and concludes that using violence or power accumulated in modern states and it holds the right of the legitimacy of using coercive power in certain territory.[129]

Right after the World War I international relations as a separate discipline from history, law and study of politics has started to rise with the effect of the catastrophe of the war. Seeking remedies to prevent any prospective wars was the

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[125] Lawson.

[126] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *Classics of Moral and Political Theory*, ed. Michael Morgan, Fifth (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), 1324-1325.

[127] Lawson, *Theories of International Relations*, 76.

[128] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 77.

[129] Weber, "Politics as a Vocation.", 1324.

main goal of the infant discipline. Post-war conditions with emergence of League of Nations created optimist atmosphere in international relations. One of the most prominent work of inter-war period that criticized utopianism was, British historian, E. H. Carr's The Twenty Years' Crisis. Distinctive feature of Carr from previous classical realist thinkers was his great effort to develop theory of international politics.[130]

Although he was criticizing optimism in terms of seeking a remedy for collective security through international institutions Carr also was condemning realist approach. Indeed, he was attempting to find via media between idealism and realism. Undoubtedly, Carr had been influenced by the developments of inter-wars period. His position in the Left and Right political dichotomy leaded to criticize the emergence of newly independent states in international arena. Foreseeing that the sovereignty would become "more blurred and indistinct than it is at present" Carr was praising multinational states.[131]

Carr was aware of difficulties to reach a common ground between power and morality in politics. Robert M.A. Crawford claims that for Carr optimism and pessimism, both are part of international relations in terms of progress. Politics "must be based on elements of both utopia and reality, since elements of both utopia and reality are inextricably blended in human nature".[132] In Twenty Years' Crisis, Carr explicitly claim that "Political science must be based on a recognition of the interdependence of theory and practice, which can be attained only through a combination of utopia and reality".[133] In this case, E. H. Carr does not achieve a satisfactory synthesis of optimism and pessimism in international politics. In theoretical level the Twenty Years' Crisis remain mostly at the side of realist view.[134]

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[130] Lawson, *Theories of International Relations*, 78.

[131] Charles Jones, "E. H. Carr: Ambivalent Realist," in *Post-Realism: The Rhetorical Turn in International Relations*, ed. Francis A. Beer and Robert Hariman (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1996), 97.

[132] Robert M.A. Crawford, *Idealism and Realism in International Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 44.

[133] Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, 2nd ed. (Hong Kong: The Macmillian Press, 1981), 13.

[134] Graham Evans, "E. H. Carr and International Relations," *British Journal of International Studies* 1, no. 2 (1975): 77–78, doi:10.1017/S09526757.

Like other classical realist thinker Carr was also, though not directly, winking at human nature to criticize utopianism in his works. E.H. Carr without human nature, Robert Schuett argues, cannot be understood.[135] Schuett claims that Carr's theory of international politics, like other realist thinkers, is based on human nature. In this sense, Schuett points out: "in the early pages of his classic Twenty Years' Crisis, he has already pointed to a major reason why utopians have failed: because they have made unverified assumptions about human behavior."[136] In the preface to the second edition of his book, Carr points out the importance of 'power' in international relations in order to prevent wars. He clarifies the main goal of the book as:

> With the deliberate aim of counteracting the glaring and dangerous defect of nearly all thinking, both academic and popular, about international politics in English-speaking countries from 1919 to 1939- the almost total neglect of the factor of power.[137]

E. H. Carr, like the other realist scholars, is quite skeptical against the assumption of 'natural harmony of interests'. Carr admonishes that unmasking the hypothesizes of idealists must be the first duty of realist paradigm. International institutions which claim to protect or build global peace based on 'universal values' may serve to the interests of some countries. From this point of view, Carr goes further and claims that 'power' creates its own morality and presents as global values in international relations.[138] In this case, Carr does not share Adam Smith's fundamental assumption of 'harmony of interests' that pursuing of an interest individually turns out to be compatible with the interests of community.[139]

Obviously, developments in international relations affects the mindsets in general and in specific it has great influence on the theories of international politics. Post-World War II conduce to the rise of realist paradigm in international relations just like how the destruction of World War I created an idealist atmosphere and caused new trend of liberal international institutionalism. Hans Morgenthau is one of the

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[135] Robert Schuett, *Political Realism, Freud, and Human Nature in International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 43.

[136] Schuett., 43-44

[137] Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, IX.

[138] Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature*, 69.

[139] Lawson, *Theories of International Relations*, 78.

most prominent scholars who attempted to settle the disciple of international relations in a *scientific* framework. Morgenthau claimed that the science of international politics should be studied through positivist methodology of natural science. Therefore, not surprisingly, he frequently referred to the laws, principles, objectivity and science in his celebrated book 'Politics Among Nations'.[140]

The style of positivist methodological studying of international politics reverberated Morgenthau's definition of theory too. Morgenthau assumes that there is a knowable reality in politics and the duty of theories is to reveal them. He considers the reality as factual, retrospective and independent from theorists.[141] For Morgenthau, states behaviors can be understood best by following the most feasible and rational probabilities. He states:

> The best scholar can do, then, is to trace the different tendencies which, as potentialities, are inherent in a certain international situation. He can point out the different conditions which make it more likely for one tendency to prevail than for another, and, assess the probabilities for the different conditions and tendencies to prevail in actuality.[142]

Morgenthau becomes more explicit in following editions of the 'Politics Among Nations'. He points out that politics is "governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature".[143]

For Morgenthau, modern political thought has been divided into two opposite groups which are constantly in competition to disproof one another. The first camp believes that moral political order can be achieved based on abstract universal values. Morgenthau describes this schools as:

> It assumes the essential goodness and infinite malleability of human nature and blames the failure of the social order to measure up to the rational standards on [a] lack of knowledge and understanding, obsolescent social institutions, or the depravity of certain isolated individuals or groups. It trusts in education, reform,

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[140] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle For Power and Peace*, 5th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), 4.

[141] Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle For Power and Peace*, 4.

[142] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations the Struggle for Power and Peace*, 1st ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), 6-7.

[143] Freyberg-Inan, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature*, 67.

and the sporadic use of force to remedy these defects.[144]

The thinker points out that this school believes in the perfectibility of human nature and assumes that world politics did not experienced such social order yet due to the lack of development in institutionalism. Morgenthau, apparently, refers to liberal utopianism by the first group of school in political thought and it shows that he, from the starting point, sees the world politics as dichotomy, one which is positivistic about human condition the other is pessimistic.

The second group of intellectual thought in social world presumes that "the world, imperfect as it is from the rational point of view, is the result of forces inherent in human nature. To improve the world, one must work with those forces, not against them."[145] From this point of view, due to the problems embedded in human nature constant clash of interests are inescapable and moral principles can never be fully realized in such circumstances. Theory which rest on these assumptions aims to accomplish less evil instead of absolute good and balancing the conflicts of interest. For Morgenthau, though this political thought is less optimistic about human nature and progress it is much more realistic than the first school.[146]

In his book, 'Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace', Morgenthau adopts latter school of political thought and calls it realism. "Theoretical concern with human nature as it actually is, and with the historic processes as they actually take place, has earned for the theory presented here the name of realism".[147] Morgenthau adds six principles of political realism to the book in following editions to make clear what is political realism and how it distinguishes itself from the other approaches.[148]

First principles of political realism for Morgenthau is the relation between human nature and politics. In this sense, the author points out: "politics is governed by

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[144] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Amnog Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th ed. (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1993), 3.

[145] Morgenthau, *Politics Amnog Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*.

[146] Morgenthau, *Politics Amnog Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*.

[147] Morgenthau., 4.

[148] Jonathan Cristol, "Morgenthau vs. Morgenthau? 'The Six Principles of Political Realism' in Context," *American Foreign Policy Interests* 31, no. 4 (2009), 238, doi:10.1080/10803920903136247.

objective laws that have their roots in human nature."[149] Second principle of political realism the concept of interest. Morgenthau claims that the concept of interest, with its connection to power, distinguish political sphere from other fields such as ethics, aesthetics, or religion and gives autonomy to politics. Third principle assumes that the concept of interest defined in terms of power is objective category that is globally valid. Fourth one is related to the connection between morality and successful political move. Morgenthau points out that political realism does not deny the significance of morality, but it also does not underestimate inevitable tension between moral principles and the requirements of successful political action. Fifth principle of it is about application of universally valid morality by certain nation(s). The thinker stressed that political realism refuses the aspirations of one nation to present certain moral principles as a universal valid morality. The final principle of political realism is about the demarcation between political realism and the other schools. For example, Morgenthau expresses that while other intellectuals such as lawyer, moralists, economists ask the question "how this policy is compatible with the rules of law, with moral principles, with the wealth of society" respectively the political realist asks: "how this policy affects the power of the nation".[150]

Briefly, classical realism is a rich traditional intellectual approach which contains range of philosophers from ancient Greeks to modern-day with its strong arguments about social world and international politics. Desiring to possess power, which is inherited in human nature, is the most central assumption of political realism. For realists, common interests of individuals cause to rivalry among people and only holding the power guarantees to achieve those interests. States are not different than individuals in pursuing power. Realists refuse the validity of universal moral principles and believe that those principles merely serve to conceal certain states' interest in international politics.

Although classical realism as a theory of international relations have made progress in twentieth century its main hypothesis remains identical. In this context, classical realism is insufficient to explain Hybrid Wars. Classical realism, which bases its

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[149] Morgenthau, *Politics Amnog Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 4.

[150] Morgenthau., 4-12.

foundation mainly on power and human nature, does not adequately clarify the complexity of hybrid wars. For example, through the concepts of 'power' or 'human nature' it is hard to explain why Russia did not occupy Eastern part of Ukraine following the annexation Crimea since it was strong enough to do so. Therefore, it can be concluded that despite its validity as a theory of international relations, classical realism remains unsatisfactory to comprehend ongoing hybrid war in Ukraine. From classical realist point of view, Russia as a strong part in the Donbas conflict should have already invade the territory by relying on its power. However, Moscow prefers a hybrid war to conceal its presence in Donbas and aims to prolong the conflict as much as possible. The next section scrutinizes structural realism to find out whether it is capable of explaining the conflict in Donbas or not.

2.3.2. Structural Realism

Post-World War II period has shifted the discipline of International Relations from Eurocentrism to the USA. Different from early years of World War I, political realism became a dominant paradigm among the students of International Relations. As mentioned in previous section, classical realism was the most prominent theory in the field during that time. However, the economic recovery of European Union and acceleration of globalism caused to criticism of political realism and study of liberalism in the sense of interdependence became a challenge approach to power politics. Under these circumstances, structural realism as a new branch of political realism, emerged with the influence of Kenneth Waltz. In fact, structural realism just like classical realism, pays attention to the significance of power in international relations. However, structural realism answers the following question in a different way than classical realism: 'Why do states pursue power?' Apparently, classical realists answer the question by linking it to the human nature. In other word, they claim that human nature is the main reason of why states pursue power.[151]

In contrast to classical realism, structural realism, does not pay attention to human

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[151] John J. Mearsheimer, "Sturctrual Realism," in *International Relations Theories Discipline and Diversity*, ed. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 77.

nature in explaining states-power relationship. For the latter, the structure of international system is the main driving forces behind states' power desire. The advocates of structural realists argue that the anarchic nature of international system which does not guarantee one state will not follow aggressive policy towards another, leaves no choice for states but to pursue power for their survival. Hence, for structural realism, pursuing power for survival is the most distinctive feature of structural realism different from classical realism. Moreover, since the main purpose of states are survival for structural realists, they argue that though states' domestic policies can be various they have alike aim in international politics.

In classical realism, status of great powers matter in international order. One of the prominent scholars of realism, Henry Kissinger, divides great powers into two categories: on one hand, *legitimate* order if it is accepted by all great powers and on the other hand *revolutionary* when one or more than one state seek an opportunity to change the order of international system.

> Stability, then, has commonly resulted not from a quest for peace but from a generally accepted legitimacy…A legitimate order does not, make conflicts impossible, but it limits their scope. Wars may occur, but they will be fought in the name of the existing structure and the peace which follows will be justified as a better expression of the 'legitimate', general consensus…Whenever there exists a power which considers the international order or the manner of legitimizing it oppressive, relations between it and other powers will be revolutionary. In such cases, it is not the 'adjustment of differences within a given system which will be at issue, but the system itself.[152]

It is clear from the quotation that for Kissinger, the fate of international system depends on the behaviors of states, either they change it, or they preserve it according to certain conditions. However, for Kissinger, domestic politics has great influence on structure of international system. Therefore, inside-out approach (from domestic to international) makes Kissinger also one of classical realists in this case. Kenneth N. Waltz calls some political scientists such as Morgenthau or Kissinger traditionalist scholars who turned toward history and particularly focus on policy rather than theory or scientific techniques. Criticizing Kissinger's assumption that instabilities in international order are caused by revolutionary states or warlike states,

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[152] Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Castlereagh, Metternich, and the Problem of Peace, 1812-22* (Boston: The Riverside Press, 1957), 1-2.

Waltz assumes that due to the constraints of international system on capabilities of revolutionist states, they may prefer peace or may endorse the continuity of order and vice versa.

> It is not possible to understand world politics by looking inside of states. If the aims, policies, and actions of states become the matters of exclusive attention or even of central concern, then we are forced back to the descriptive level; and from simple descriptions no valid generalizations can logically be drawn. We can say what we see, but we cannot know what it may mean. Every time we think that we think that we see something different or new, we will have to designate another unit-level 'variable' as its cause…Variables, then have to be added subjectively, according to the good or bad judgement of the author. This makes endless arguments that are doomed to being inconclusive.[153]

Waltz criticizes political scientists who follow inside-out explanations of international politics. For Waltz, scholars are being reductions by attempting to clarify international politics merely looking inside of the state. He argues that theory should not be lost in detail at the national level but should simplify international developments by focusing on systemic level and its influence on the units. Therefore, for structural realism, cultural differences or regime types do not make any difference in international politics, states actions resemble one to another: their main aim is to survive. In this context, Waltz emphasizes:

> In defining international-political structures we take states with whatever traditions, habits, objectives, desires and forms of government they may have. We do not ask whether states are revolutionary or legitimate, authoritarian or democratic, ideological or pragmatic. We abstract from every attribute of states except their capabilities.[154]

Kenneth Waltz is quite parsimonious in theorizing international politics. Instead of focusing details in domestic level, he develops theory which concentrates on international systemic level to explain international politics. For Waltz, anarchic structure of international system is the main compelling reason behind the states which make them to seek power due to the lack of trust to each other. The thinker expresses: "international structure emerges from the interaction of states and then constrains them from taking certain actions while propelling them toward others."[155]

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[153] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979), 65.

[154] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 99.

[155] Kenneth N. Waltz, "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory," *Journal of International Affairs* 44, no. 1 (1990): 29.

From this point of view, despite extreme variations between states in domestic level there is a striking sameness among them in international level throughout the millennia.[156] Waltz emphasizes that states are unlike not in terms of their function but according to their capabilities.[157] Hence, if anarchy is the main feature of all international orders and if it brings minimal differentiation in the sense of their functions, then structures of international politics vary merely according to distributions of capabilities. Changing characteristics of great powers define international orders. In other word, international orders vary in compliance with the number of great powers.[158]

In another well-known book named 'Man, the State and War', Waltz explains the causes of war through the lenses of structural realism. He criticizes previous political scientists who attempted to search the causes of war and peace by solely focusing on human nature. However, for Waltz, the reason had to be searched in elsewhere. International system leaves no guarantee for states that one state will not attack another in the condition of anarchy. Even in peace time, states must take preventive war into account because in case of shift in balance of power the state may find itself vulnerably. These are the results of neither individuals nor the domestic affairs of a state, but the consequences of international system.[159]

In order to develop his theory, Waltz uses three images (previously he used 'level of analysis').[160] The first image represents individual level that focuses on human nature to explain international politics. For example, realist thinkers see human nature as flawed while for liberals or socialists human can change for better. The characteristics of states belong to second image that scientists try to shed light on international politics. The third image pay attention merely to international system to illuminate causes of wars or peace in international politics. Waltz emphasizes that scholars should focus on international system because the causes of war lies at the

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[156] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*., 66.

[157] Waltz., 96.

[158] Jack Donnelly, "Realism," in *Theories of International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 35.

[159] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 6-7.

[160] Waltz., ix.

heart of anarchic structure of international system rather than at the unit level.[161]

Nevertheless, structural realism also contain different approaches within the paradigm. As explained, in answering the question, 'why states pursue power?' structural realists distinguish themselves from the classical realists. In this context, the continuation of the question creates a dispute among the structural realists. For example, advocates of this theory disaccord with each other in explaining the problem of 'how much power is enough for states?' In this case, Kenneth Waltz claims states must have limits in pursuing the power. For, the thinker, any state which underestimates this principle will be eventually punished by the anarchic structure of international system. Therefore, Waltz argue that aiming to achieve hegemony in international relations are especially dangerous and even foolhardy for states. For this reason, John J. Mearsheimer describes the realism which Waltz defines as a 'defensive realism'.[162]

As a 'defensive' realist, Kenneth Waltz criticizes the maintenance of NATO in post-Cold War period. In his article 'Structural Realism after the Cold War', Waltz emphasizes the durability of structural realism.[163] For the thinker the transformations of international order does not mean a change within the system. In this sense, Waltz clarifies the differences between 'changes in the system' and 'changes of the system'. In order to prevent 'misunderstanding' Wlatz states: "within-system changes take place all the time, some important, some not. Big changes in the means of transportation, communication, and war fighting, for example, strongly affect how states and other agents interact."[164]

According to Waltz the collapse of the Soviet Union which ended the Cold War or bipolar world order in general was the transformation took place at the unit level which should not be confused systemic change. For the thinker, anarchic nature of international politics remains unchanged in post-Cold War period. In this regard,

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[161] Lawson, *Theories of International Relations*, 98.

[162] Mearsheimer, "Sturctrual Realism.", 78.

[163] Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 5–41, https://doi.org/10.1162/016228800560372.

[164] Waltz., 5.

Waltz expresses that whosoever describes the international politics as 'world politics' or 'global politics' then he or she claims the transformation of the nature of international politics. However, he argues that the collapse of bipolar world order did not change the anarchic nature of international politics.[165]

Mearsheimer explains the reasons why the defensive realists find the states' desire of achieving hegemony in international relations is very dangerous.[166] According to Mearsheimer the first reason stems from the balance of power principle. For example if one state attempts to attain hegemony, other states automatically creates an ally against it. In this regard, Napoleon's France or Nazi Germany which were punished by the balancing principle of international system are good examples for the first reason.[167] Second reason for Mearsheimer is that *offence–defence balance* during an attack to conquer new territories. For Mearsheimer, defensive realists argue that an attack to gain more territory ends up in favor of the defender in long term because usually the attacking side find itself in a constant war with the occupied land.[168] Finally, Mearsheimer claims that defensive realists underline the importance of *nationalism* after an occupation. For defensive realists, even one state successfully conquer a new territory, the local people of the occupied territory will rise against the attacking state in long period.[169]

Therefore, due to abovementioned scenarios, being greedy for power bring disaster for states in international politics from defensive realists' point of view. In this context, Kenneth Waltz's approach is clear in terms of NATO's expansionist policy. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was a product of the bipolar world order during Cold War period.[170] Firstly, Waltz underlines the weakness of liberal paradigm. For Walz, the existence of NATO in post-Cold War period is the prove of invalidity of liberal approach. According to thinker, the advocates of liberal approach are stubborn to understand that international organizations do not have autonomous,

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[165] Waltz., 6.

[166] Mearsheimer, "Sturctrual Realism.", 81.

[167] Mearsheimer.

[168] Mearsheimer.

[169] Mearsheimer.

[170] Lawson, *Theories of International Relations*, 100.

they are merely tools for state to achieve their interests.[171]

In brief, Kenneth Waltz, as a defensive realist, is not the proponent of NATO's expansion even though its existence is understandable within the frame of political realism. In other word, while the existence of NATO in post-Cold War period approves the strengths of structural realism its expansion policy is very risky for Waltz. According to Waltz the effects of NATO's enlargement policy on Russia should not be underestimated. In this sense, Waltz argues that Russia which has been attacked several times by the Western countries naturally does not trust NATO's expansion policy.[172]

Nevertheless, offensive realists do not agree with arguments of defensive realists. In this regard, Mearsheimer introduces the most pessimist form of structural realism. He accuses defensive realists which cover certain optimism. In fact, Mearsheimer claims that the version which he proposes is more realistic form of structural realism. Mearsheimer points out that although states which perceive threats creates coalition against aggressive one, this alliance is mostly inadequate to defeat the revisionist power. In this context, Mearsheimer states:

> Furthermore, threatened states sometimes opt for buck-passing rather than joining a balancing coalition. In other words, they attempt to get other states to assume the burden of checking a powerful opponent while they remain on the sidelines. This kind of behavior, which is commonplace among great powers, also creates opportunities for aggression.[173]

Mearsheimer also rejects the assumption of defender's advantage over the invader. As an offensive realist, Mearsheimer emphasizes that history shows us that states which launches war gain more than defenders. Moreover, the thinker points out the hegemony of the USA which accomplished in the western hemisphere in 19th century was not punished by international system.[174] In terms of *nationalism* factor, offensive realists do not deny the impact of the ideology but they do not think that nationalist attitude of local people is an obstacle for aggressor state. Mearsheimer gives

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[171] Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War", 20.

[172] Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War", 22.

[173] Mearsheimer, "Sturctrual Realism.", 81.

[174] Mearsheimer, 80.

occupation of France by Germany during the WW II as an example for this situation.[175]

> My theory of offensive realism is also a structural theory of international politics. As with defensive realism, my theory sees great powers as concerned mainly with figuring out how to survive in a world where there is no agency to protect them from each other; they quickly realize that power is the key to their survival... For defensive realists, the international structure provides states with little incentive to seek additional increments of power; instead it pushes them to maintain the existing balance of power… Offensive realists, on the other hand, believe that status quo powers are rarely found in world politics, because the international system creates powerful incentives for states to look for opportunities to gain power at the expense of rivals, and to take advantage of those situations when the benefits outweigh the costs. A state's ultimate goal is to be the hegemon in the system.[176]

According to Mearsheimer there are mainly five reasons for 'why states pursue power'. The first of them is connected to the anarchic structure of international system. The second reason stems from the fact that great powers in anarchy possess great military capabilities which pose great dangers to each other. The third reason is about the unpredictable intentions of international actors. For the thinker, states in anarchic system cannot rely each other. The fourth reason arises from the main goal of states (survival) in international relations. The last reason for Mearsheimer is linked to the rational characteristics of states. In other word, international actors observes the developments in international arena and takes their position in order to survive.[177]

Mearsheimer's realism was a particular response to the general liberal assumptions after the Cold War. According to the liberal thinkers, the war was unlikely after the collapse of Eastern bloc where free market economic system became dominant in international economy. For Mearsheimer, however, more instability was expecting international relations after bipolar world order. In his article called "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe" Mearsheimer, emphasizes that multipolar world order tends to more instability than bipolar one. For him, peace can be achieved more

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[175] Mearsheimer., 82-83.

[176] John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), 23-24.

[177] Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 29-30.

easily between two great powers rather than more than two.[178]

It should be noted that though Mearsheimer introduce himself as an offensive realist in terms of answering the question 'how much power is enough' he condemns the enlargement of the Western institutions in the case of Ukraine crisis. As mentioned in previous chapter, in his article "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault" Mearsheimer claims that the crisis in Ukraine originates from the NATO's expansion policy and the EU's eastward policy.[179] In this case, Mearsheimer's standpoint contains a contradiction with his previous assessments. As pointed, Mearsheimer proposes offensive realist view in contrast to Waltz's defensive realism in terms of the pursuing of power. Different from Waltz, Mearsheimer claimed that states should gain power as much as power and they should attain hegemony if it is possible. However, he blames the offensive policy of the Western countries towards post-Soviet space and claims that maintenance this policy can be a greater fault of the West.

To sum up, structural realism appraises international politics through international systemic level different from classical realism. Although structural realism has various versions such as defensive and offensive realism both branches of it emphasizes the effect of international system on states. Anarchy is the main feature of international system which forces states to pursue power in order to survive. Structural realists distinguish themselves from classical realists in answering the question: Why states pursue power? Different from classical realists, they argue that power is not an end for states but means for survival. In this context, structural realist thinkers argue that the war in Donbas stems from the changes in international order. They mainly refer to the impact of NATO's enlargement policy to shed light on the Ukraine crisis.[180] For structural realists, end of the Cold War transformed international order from bipolar to multipolar one. They claim that multipolar world

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[178] John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (1990): 5, https://doi.org/10.2307/2538981.

[179] John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault," *Foreign Affairs*, no. February (2014): 2, doi:10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004.

[180] Ibrahim Muradov, "The Impact of NATO Enlargement On Ukraine Crisis: Neorealist Perspective," *Epistemological Studies in Philosophy, Social and Political Sciences* 1, no. 1–2 (2018): 107–14, accessed July 8, 2019, https://visnukpfs.dp.ua/index.php/PFS.

order is much more unstable than bipolar one which is safer due to balance of power between two major actors.

In brief, structural realists indicate the effect of international system on Ukraine and argue that the Donbas Conflict is the result of multipolar world order. In this regard, NATO's expansion poses threat on Russian Federation. For them, Moscow had to react due to perceiving threat from Western world. Thereby, structural realists blame NATO as well as the EU policies in post-Soviet space for the ongoing conflict in Donbas. However, the weakness of Structural Realism in explaining Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine lies at the level of analysis. As it is presented, structural realists explain international developments through the lenses of systemic level, thereby they ignore the domestic structure of states. Structural Realists depict the states as a 'black box' where internal factors of it are inconsiderable. In this context, it can be said that Structural Realists have had difficulty in explaining the position of pro-Russian groups about the Donbas conflict or their reactions to the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan events in Ukraine. Next section pays attention to Liberal approach to find out if it is capable of explaining the war in Eastern Ukraine.

2.3.3. Liberal Approach

Liberal approach is another traditional view in international politics which linked to classical philosophers like Hugo Grotius, John Lock and Immanuel Kant. The basic difference between realist and liberal approach is that liberalists looks to the world from more positive angle than realists do. While realists assess the states as the only actors in international arena which constantly seek for power and thereby create more insecure environment, liberalists give attention to other actors in international relations along with states. For liberalists, international politics does not base on zero-sum-game as realist thinkers portrait. In other word, they underline the possible common interests among states on what they can cooperate.

According to the enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant, states can be divided as

'good states' and 'bad states' in terms of their governance method.[181] He argues that behaviors of 'good states' will also affect international relations which will cause to the proliferation of peace in international order. For Kant, the only justifiable form of governance is republican government which allows only constitutional rule. When a state governed by constitutional laws it will bring more justice to not only for citizens of that state but also for the other states. The laws are universal, thereby they can be applied to any other states in the world. Even monarchs should have been ruled by those laws. Kant claims that thanks to constitution, republican governments are 'peace producers', they are programmed to peaceful behavior than the any other kind of states.[182]

Nevertheless, Kant is aware of the problem that having some republican governments does not enough to provide perpetual peace in world order. He also sees the international relations as a lawless arena and any possible war can endanger the republican state and it may bring difficulties to maintain liberal political order. Therefore, Kant argues that it is inadequate to be a republican state in order to spread peace in world order and so, it has responsibility to struggle for international peace relaying on international law.[183] Proliferation of republican governments would ensure a collective security and it would result with global hospitability.[184]

Kant believes in individuals and progress in social life. Therefore, despite their own interests, people can cooperate each other in order to achieve a more harmonious society. In modern era, Michael Doyle is one of the most well-known advocates of Kant who provides a detailed empirical work to prove democratic peace theory. In his masterpiece, 'Ways of War and Peace'[185], Doyle lists numerous wars throughout history which liberal states involved. According to Doyle's findings, states which are ruled by constitution do not engage in war with each other. Doyle calls the territory

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[181] Cornelia Navari, "Liberalisms," in *Security Studies: An Introduction*, ed. Paul D. Williams, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 33.

[182] Kimberly Hutchings, "Immanuel Kant," in *Critical Theorists and International Relations*, ed. Jenny Edkins and Nick Vaughan-Williams (New York: Routledge, 2009), 219.

[183] Navari, "Liberalisms," 34.

[184] Navari, 34.

[185] Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997).

where liberal states locate as a 'zone of peace'.[186] However, liberal states can involve in war with non-liberal states. This situation can be stemmed from what he calls 'liberal imperialism' in order to 'export' liberal democratic values.[187]

Alike arguments were asserted by several other liberal thinkers. John Rawl is among them who shares the democratic peace thought. For Rawl, not only the liberal states do not declare war against each other, but they also tend to not engage in war with illiberal states. The author states: "above, all are less likely to engage in war with non-liberal outlaw states, except on grounds of legitimate self-defense (or in the defense of their legitimate allies), or intervention in severe cases to protect human rights."[188] John Mueller is another scholar who thinks that wars in international relations can be decreased. By criticizing realist paradigm, Mueller argues: "War is merely an idea. It is not a trick of fate, a thunderbolt from hell, a natural necessity or a desperate plot device dreamed up by some sadistic puppeteer on high."[189] For Mueller, major wars among developed countries are already becoming obsolete and it is the evidence for the preventability of wars in international relations. For the thinker, the war can be supplanted if people embrace alternative ideas such as institutionalism.[190]

Prevalence of liberal peace ideology paved the way in believing international peace in early 1900s. In this context, two international peace conferences were held; the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 at the Hague, in Netherlands. These Conventions, which were among the first formal declarations on international peace, aimed to set the laws of war as a part of secular international law. However, First World War forced liberal scholars to rethink their values on how wars can be abolished from international relations.[191]

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[186] Doyle., 213.

[187] Michael W. Doyle, "Liberal Internationalism: Peace, War and Democracy," The Nobel Prize, 2004, accessed August 5, 2019, https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/themes/liberal-internationalism-peace-war-and-democracy.

[188] John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples, with "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited,"* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 49.

[189] John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), I.

[190] Mueller.

[191] Lawson, *Theories of International Relations*, 94.

The First World War showed that rudimentary international peace conventions are insufficient to prevent the catastrophic events in international relations. According to liberalists, there was a need for international institutions to ensure the order and peace in international relations. That idea was behind the establishment of the League of Nations right after the world war. Moreover, first time International Relations as a new disciple showed up in 1919, to find the causes of wars and to search conditions for peace. League of Nations indicated the rise of institutions in international relations. Although Second World War wiped the League of Nations out, it paved the way for establishment of even stronger international institutions such as United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF).[192]

Another dimension of liberal approach is commercial interaction which contributes international arena to become more peaceful place. To describe the commercial interaction, Andrew Moravcsik states: "commercial liberalism focuses on incentives created by opportunities for trans-border economic transactions."[193] He claims that trade is generally a less costly means of accumulating wealth than war, sanctions or other means. In this regard, liberal approach distinguishes itself from realist view. Realism does not see any cooperation which brings benefit equally to both sides. For them, in any cooperation one always gains more than the other. However, liberalism sees non-mercantilism or open trading orders benefiting for both sides and make international environment more peaceful. Adam Smith argues, in his well-known work 'The Wealth of Nations', that "the hidden hand besides increasing wealth also promoted a lessening of economic hostility."[194] John Stuart Mill, writing in 1848, also made similar statement that free trade has great potential to end wars. Mill asserts: "it is commerce, which is rapidly rendering war obsolete, by strengthening and multiplying the personal interests which act in natural opposition to it."[195]

Liberalists argue that sustained commercial interaction provides to develop empathy

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[192] Lawson., 98.

[193] Andrew Moravcsik, "Liberal International Relations Theory: A Social Scientific Assessment," *Weatherhead Center for International Affairs Working Paper*, no. 01 (2001): 10.

[194] Navari, "Liberalisms," 35.

[195] Scott Burchill, "Liberalism," in *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 63.

among international actors and promotes mutual understanding as well as mutual identity. For them, commerce and conflict are antonymous terms in international arena where trading partners try to avoid the latter one. Conflicts increase the risk to access market and endanger the capital. Therefore, from liberalist point of view, states which try to develop international trade, tend to promote peace and international law in order to preserve their mutual interests. As a result, commercial interaction among states reduces the international conflicts while promoting the maintenance of peace in international order.[196]

Nevertheless, the literature of international politics by following the international developments ignored Kant's optimism on social progress and focused on realist paradigm after the World War II. This trend began to be challenged after few decades, at the end of 1960s and 1970s. At that time pluralism prevailed social sciences. In this regard, liberalists being influenced by pluralism, started to question realists assumptions about states to be as unitary and rational actors. In other word, pluralism, challenging realists, claimed that it was "no longer possible to understand international relations simply by studying the interactions among governments."[197]

To describe increasing cross-national relations among states, Joseph S. Nye and Robert O. Keohane used 'transnational relations' instead of international in their early work. This trend paved way for the emergence of neoliberalism as a variant of liberalism. Neoliberalist drew attention to the growing importance of intergovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, pressure groups and non-governmental organizations (NGO) to show that there were other actors along with states in international relations.[198]

Jennifer Sterling-Folker argues that actually neoliberalism is compatible with structural realism about cooperation in international relations, both of them agree that achieving cooperation among states in anarchic international arena which provides

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[196] Burchill.

[197] Jennifer Sterling-Folker, "Neoliberalism," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, ed. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 136.

[198] Joseph S. Nye and Robert O. Keohane, "Transnational Relations and World Politics: An Introduction," *International Organization* 25, no. 3 (1971): 329–49.

uncertainty and distrust.[199] However, the author points out, neoliberalism, different from structural realism, obtain the idea that due to certain developments in international relations throughout the twentieth century, cooperation among states increased relatively. Neoliberal paradigm sees international institutions behind the reason of relative increase in cooperation among international actors. Due to its belief in international institutions, neoliberalism is also called 'neoliberal institutionalism'.[200]

In fact, structural realists are also aware of the increasing influence of international institutions in international relations, but they think that neoliberalists exaggerate their role in mitigating the conflict in global affairs.[201] However, neoliberalists separate themselves from the realists and pay attention to the role of institutions. In this sense, just like structural realism, neoliberalism also behaves state as a unitary and rational actor which concentrates on utility-maximizing for their sake.[202] Nevertheless, neoliberalism is a branch of liberal thought and thereby based of basic liberal principles about progress in human social life. Neoliberalists believe that a cumulative social progress is possible through human reasoning. In this regard, they think that international institutions set rules for states in certain international areas such as International Air Law or Law of the Sea.[203]

In general, neoliberalism accepts the frame of structural realism, but it refuses to accept the refractoriness of international anarchic system. For liberal institutionalists, dominance of anarchy on states can be mitigated via certain regimes and thereby, international cooperation can be achieved among international actors. Indeed, neoliberalism advocates that the impact of major powers in international relations can be decreased through promoting formal institutions. In this regard, neorealists claim that the rules which the regimes impose on states can restrain their aggressive behavior and can create a predictability and promote trust in international relations.

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[199] Sterling-Folker, "Neoliberalism.", 114.

[200] David Allen Baldwin, "Neoliberalism, Neorealism, and World Politics," in *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, ed. David Allen Baldwin, 1993, 5-8.

[201] David Allen Baldwin, "Neoliberalism, Neorealism, and World Politics," in *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, ed. David Allen Baldwin, 1993, 8.

[202] Sterling-Folker, "Neoliberalism.", 115.

[203] Sterling-Folker.

Therefore, neoliberalists put institutionalism at the center of international affairs.[204]

Comparing liberalism with structural realism is significant to comprehend the latter one. In this case, David A. Baldwin concentrates on six points to reveal the characteristics of neoliberalism. These points are consisted of 'the nature and consequences of anarchy', 'international cooperation', 'relative versus absolute gains', 'priority of state goals', 'intentions versus capabilities' and 'institutions and regimes.'[205] Obviously both of the paradigm recognize the importance of anarchy in international relations. However, as Charles Lipson claims, structural realists exaggerate the role of anarchy to undermine the principles of neoliberalism about the emergence of interdependence within international anarchy.[206]

Robert Axelrod and Robert O. Keohane asserts that cooperation under anarchy is possible to achieve.[207] Indeed, Axelrod and Keohane also emphasize the difficulties of cooperation under the absence of a central governance but they underline that this situation is not something which states admire for. For them, states constantly search for conditions to cooperate in certain areas under anarchy and this standpoint separates neoliberalism from structural realism. In the case of international cooperation, structural realists think that it is hard to achieve and more difficult to sustain while their feasibility depend on state power. However, neoliberalists are optimistic about obtaining international cooperation among states despite its certain difficulties.[208]

Intentions and capabilities are other concepts that define the characteristics of neoliberalism. According to classical realists the intention of a state is to seek for power while for structural realists states act in line with their capabilities in order to survive under international anarchy. However, neoliberals argue that states' intention depends on their capability perceptions against each other. According to Keohane,

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[204] Burchill, "Liberalism.", 65.

[205] Baldwin, "Neoliberalism, Neorealism, and World Politics.", 4-8.

[206] Charles Lipson, "International Cooperation in Economic and Security Affairs," *World Politics* 37, no. 1 (1984), 22, https://doi.org/10.2307/2010304.

[207] Robert Axelrod and Robert Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy : Strategies and Institutions," *World Politics* 38, no. 1 (1985): 226–54.

[208] Axelrod and Keohane, 226.

sensitivity of states connected to their perception of other states. For instance, the author claims that states are alarmed at perceiving relative gains of enemies than of their partners states. [209]

Another concept on which neoliberalism is not in accord with neorealism is 'relative vs. absolute gains' about international cooperation. According to neorealists, international cooperation provides relative gains for states. In this sense, they consider that one side always benefit more from the cooperation which means the other sides loose relatively. In contrast, neoliberals emphasize mutual benefit from the cooperation.[210] In this context, Lipson argues that relative and absolute gains vary from areas to areas in cooperation. For example, cooperation in economy is more likely than cooperation in security issue for Lipson. In short, neoliberalism sees the glass as half full in terms of benefit from the cooperation among states in contrast to neorealism.[211]

As for the ongoing hybrid war in Ukraine, liberalist thinkers deal with the issue differently from realists. Believing in progress in social life and thereby democracy based on constitutional law liberal paradigm directly blames Russian Federation in causing the crisis in Ukraine. For liberals, Orange Revolution or Euromaidan events were the attempts of Ukrainians to develop their democracy. However, from Kremlin's point of view, proliferation of democratic values posed threat directly against its authoritarian regime. Therefore, Russia annexed Crimea and destabilized Eastern part of Ukraine in order to sabotage the relations between Ukraine and the EU. In short, from the point of liberal approach, proliferation of liberal states was perceived as a threat by Russian authorities and this is the origin of Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine. In this sense, Russia's aim in preferring hybrid war method in Donbas is to maintain the conflict in order to undermine Ukraine's integration to the EU rather than invading the territory through its hard power.

Despite its substantial contribution to understand the ongoing hybrid war in Donbas, liberalism contains several shortcomings too. First of all, it ignores domestic factors

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[209] Baldwin, "Neoliberalism, Neorealism, and World Politics.", 7.

[210] Baldwin, 5.

[211] Lipson, "International Cooperation in Economic and Security Affairs.", 12.

which played critical role for the destabilization of the eastern regions of Ukraine particularly Donbas territory. For example, liberal view would suffer to explain previous pro-Russian domestic formations in Donbas which were mainly developed independently from Moscow. Second liberalism suffers to explain why war in Donbas did not occur during the Orange Revolution, but it erupted right after the Euromaidan events in 2014. Third weakness of liberalism in providing an understanding to Donbas conflict lies at the level of analysis. Liberalism bypasses the impact of international system on the hybrid war in Ukraine. In this regard, Russia's reaction to the proliferations of the Western institutions like the European Union or NATO cannot be underestimated. Therefore, Liberalism as a traditional theory of International Relations faces difficulties in explaining the war in Donbas and for this reason it is not preferred to be used in this work. Following part investigates Neoclassical Realism which is thought to be the most suitable paradigm in supplying an explanation for ongoing war in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine.

2.3.4. Neoclassical Realism and Its Strength

In the previous sections it has been summarized the main concepts of two variants of realism and liberal approach in order to see their applicability in explaining the ongoing hybrid war in Donbas. Classical and structural realism compose an excellent starting point for neoclassical realism since together they enrich the concept of political realism. As explained above, while classical realism indicates 'power' as an end for state, structural realism interprets it as a tool for survival. Human nature plays central role for the former to comprehend state behaviors in international relations while the latter emphasizes the impact of international system on states where they try to survive in it. From this point of view, neoclassical realism finds both versions insufficient and criticizes particularly structural realism.

Neoclassical realism as a term first coined by Gideon Rose. It incorporates both internal and external factors to understand international politics, particularly in foreign policy analysis. Accepting certain insights from classical realism as well as admitting international systemic pressure on state behaviors make neoclassic realism

as a branch of political realism. Besides neoclassical theorists agree that the scope of a country's foreign policy is driven specifically by its relative material power capabilities. However, they argue that "the impact of such power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex, because systemic pressures must be translated through intervening variables at the unit level. This is why they are neoclassical."[212] In other word, neoclassical realism attempts to open 'black box' of Kenneth Waltz. In contrast to structural realists, they do not concentrate solely on third image but pay attention first and second image too.

For neoclassical realists, various factors or different level of analysis are as important as international systemic level. The "factors such as interests of domestic groups, interests of states, or attitudes of elites all participate in shaping foreign policy of a state."[213] For Randall Schweller, "neoclassical realism does not reject systemic theory but instead combines it with domestic-level theorizing, exploring the internal processes by which states arrive at policies and decide on actions in response to pressures and opportunities in their external environment."[214] Remaining in the context of neoclassical realism, it is worth to point out fourth image variables that added by John M. Hobson. Hobson captures those theories which take developments in national or sub-national level into account while explaining international outcomes and theories which pay attention to the effect of systemic level which shapes the national realm.[215]

Neoclassical realism broadens the parsimonious characteristic of structural realism through bringing back the unit level variables. As an intermediate variable Jeffrey W. Taliaferro points out the significance of ideology which can moderate the efforts of

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[212] Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 146.

[213] Jalal Dehghani Firoozabadi and Mojtaba Zare Ashkezari, "Neo-Classical Realism in International Relations," *Asian Social Science* 12, no. 6 (2016): 96, doi:10.5539/ass.v12n6p95.

[214] Randall Schweller, "Opposite but Compatible Nationalisms: A Neoclassical Realist Approach to the Future of US–China Relations," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 11, no. 1 (2018): 28, doi:10.1093/cjip/poy003.

[215] John M. Hobson, *The State and International Relations*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 11-12.

leaders to mobile resources.[216] In this sense, to understand foreign policy directions of China and the USA Schweller emphasizes 'nationalism' as a second image. For Schweller, ideology plays critical role in backing up leaders to "extract resources and mobilize domestic support for novel and expensive grand strategies."[217] He argues that revisionist countries or rising powers use ideology, which is second image variable, for expansionist foreign policies while for declining powers ideology serves for inwards policy.[218]

Moreover, Schweller criticizes Waltz's argument, that states balance or make coalition against accumulated power, by presenting various options to choose for states when they face challenged power in international arena. Indeed, Schweller does not refute Waltz's assumptions but enriches his parsimonious balance of power argument.[219] Rose states:

> Foreign policy choices are made by actual political leaders and elites, and so it is their perceptions of relative power that matter, not simply relative quantities of physical resources or forces in being…Furthermore, those leaders and elites do not always have complete freedom to extract and direct national resources as they might wish. Power analysis must therefore also examine the strength and structure of states relative to their societies, because these affect the proportion of national resources that can be allocated to foreign policy. This means that countries with comparable gross capabilities, but different state structures are likely to act differently.[220]

Political leaders compare the possible domestic costs of balancing with alternative means available to them such as inaction, appeasement, buck-passing, bandwagoning, etc. Schweller argues that "structural imperatives rarely, if ever, compel leaders to adopt one policy over another; decisionmakers are not

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[216] Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State," *Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (2006): 493, doi:10.1080/09636410601028370.

[217] Randall L. Shweller, "Neoclassical Realism and State Mobilization: Expansionist Ideology in the Age of Mass Politics," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy Neoclassical*, ed. Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 227-229.

[218] Shweller, "Neoclassical Realism and State Mobilization: Expansionist Ideology in the Age of Mass Politics,".

[219] Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "Conclusion: The State of Neoclassical Realism," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy Neoclassical*, ed. Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 299.

[220] Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy.", 147.

sleepwalkers buffeted about by inexorable forces beyond their control."[221] For him, bandwagoning also occurs frequently in international relations along with balance of power or coalitions against great power. Unthreatened revisionist states often prefer to bandwagon with the other states which have stronger revisionist intentions and capabilities to do so.[222] This is mostly due to taking advantage of opportunities which take place in certain conditions.

As pointed, Schweller's aim is not to refute balancing proposition but he tries to show that the decisions whether to choose bandwagoning or other alternatives depends partly on domestic variables. In general, works by Randall Schweller, William Wohlforth, Thomas Christensen, Aaron Friedberg, Fareed Zakaria, and Jack Snyder, all show that states calculate and adopt changes in international order partly because of their peculiar internal factors and political conditions. In other word, "complex domestic political processes act as transmission belts that channel, mediate, and (re)direct policy outputs in response to external forces (primarily changes in relative power)."[223] Schweller underlines that structural realism draws lines and brings limitations to realism and contrast to Waltz, he suggests that "realism suffers not from proliferating emendations but rather from underspecified scope conditions."[224]

Another scholar Brian Rathbun agrees the idea that neoclassical realism do not reject Waltzian realism but rather enriches the structural realism. As explained before, Schweller sees necessity of proliferation of structural realism instead of dwelling solely on systemic level of analysis. For Rathbun, neoclassical realism is a logical extension and essential part of structural realism. He does not imply simply that neoclassical realism is an ad hoc theory filling the gaps of structural realism but

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[221] Randall L Schweller, "Unanswered Threats : A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing," *International Security* 29, no. 2 (2004): 164.

[222] Randall L. Schweller, "New Realist Research on Alliances: Refining, Not Refuting, Waltz's Balancing Proposition," *American Political Science Review* 91, no. 4 (1997), 928.

[223] Schweller, "Unanswered Threats : A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing.", 164.

[224] Schweller, "New Realist Research on Alliances: Refining, Not Refuting, Waltz's Balancing Proposition.", 927.

advancing it.[225]

Rathbun also criticizes Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, in terms of their attempt to challenge the principles of neoclassical realism. He is against the idea that realism should stay in its frame and should not refer to domestic variables or ideas. In other words, Rathbun rejects the idea that state must remain as a 'black box' in explaining international politics. Legro and Moravcsik claim that by referring to internal factors or ideology realist scholars cross the line of realism into liberalism, constructivism and epistemic paradigms.[226] Like Schweller, Rathbun suggests that there is nothing wrong with expansion of the scope of realism. In contrast, he argues that considering domestic factors in analyzing foreign policy of a state is a progress of the paradigm which neoclassical realism provides.[227]

Despite the fact that neoclassical realism holds the idea of imperatives of international structure on the state, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro argues that structural and neoclassical realism focus on two different phenomena to explain. The former one attempts to clarify the patterns of international outcomes but is silent to provide possibilities in foreign policy of individual states. However, the latter seeks to explain variation in foreign policies of individual actors over time or tries to light on diverse behaviors of states when they face conditions alike external constraints.[228] Waltz's theory highlights systemic outcomes such as the absence of sustained hegemonic systems across the history by emphasizing the significance of the recurrence of balance of power. It is indeterminate about how and why states prefer among various types of internal balancing strategies, namely "emulation, innovation, or the continuation of existing strategies."[229] Clarification of this situation requires a theory which integrates the variables of systemic level and unit level.[230]

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[225] Brian Rathbun, "A Rose by Any Other Name : Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008), 94.

[226] Andrew Moravcsik and Jeffrey Legro, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?," *International Security* 24, no. 2 (1999): 10-11.

[227] Rathbun, "A Rose by Any Other Name : Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism.", 311.

[228] Taliaferro, "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State," 480.

[229] Taliaferro., 466.

[230] Taliaferro.

Adam Quinn, on the other hand, considers neoclassical realism from a different angle in his article called "Kenneth Waltz, Adam Smith and the Limits of Science: Hard Choices for Neoclassical Realism".[231] For Quinn, neoclassical realists need to make decision about their standpoint whether to accept a complementary position of structural realism or to depart from it as a reaction to the limitations of structural realism. In case of preferring former status, neoclassical realism recognizes the dominance of systemic imperatives over state behavior and focuses on the causes of anomalous state behaviors against the imperatives of international order that in long term will be punished by international system. Neoclassical thinkers, however, in condition of the latter possibility, need to contextualize those anomalous state behaviors not merely as irregular demeanors but consistent behaviors of states in long term despite systemic pressures.[232]

Quinn remarks that this choose will leave neoclassical realists at odds with the limitations of Waltz's definition on what theory of international politics should contain and what it should exclude.[233] To be straightforward, Quinn argues that domestic and ideological variables which neoclassical realism takes into account are considered by Waltz as reductionist style of theorizing international politics. Quinn finds unrealistic to defend the assumption of neoclassical realism not being reductionist. He claims that on one hand, neoclassical theorists emphasize state-level attributes to explain system-level outcomes, on the other hand they argue that they do not seek for such outcomes but merely use internal factors to comprehend national reaction to international constraints.[234]

Quinn responds the assertions of neoclassical realism by preemptive defense of Waltz. He points out that Waltz was aware that he may be criticized for ignoring the first and second images and therefore he spent enough time to define what theory of international politics should contain. In this sense, he quotes Waltz's work:

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[231] Adam Quinn, "Kenneth Waltz, Adam Smith and the Limits of Science: Hard Choices for Neoclassical Realism," *International Politics* 50, no. 2 (2013): 159–82, https://doi.org/10.1057/ip.2013.5.

[232] Quinn., 160.

[233] Quinn.

[234] Quinn., 161.

> To construct a theory, we have to abstract from reality, that is, to leave aside most of what we see and experience. Students of international politics have tried to get closer to the reality of international practice and to increase the empirical content of their studies... Students of international politics complicate their studies and claim to locate more and more variables.[235]

Social sciences contain endless variables and each time when we face something new, we have to add another unit-level variable. This condition leaves us with "endless arguments that are doomed to being inconclusive."[236] For Quinn, these are the responses of structural realism to the arguments of Neoclassical Realists which has been written even before the birth of the arguments. He expresses as: "for a neoclassical realist, this sounds uncomfortably like a targeted criticism of research agenda of neoclassical realism written almost two decades before the term neoclassical realism first appeared."[237]

Although these critics made by Quinn are very valuable to comprehend Waltz's preemptive defense of structural realism, they do not trivialize the significance of neoclassical realism. One can agree with Quinn only by accepting the definition of theory of international politics proclaimed by Kenneth Waltz. In other word, assessing the assumptions of neoclassical realism from the point of Waltz's description makes neoclassical realism one of 'reductionist' theory. However, it seems unfair to refute approach *A* by being restricted to the frame of approach *A*. In fact, definition of theory *A* about what a theory can or should contain can not necessarily draw lines for theory *B*. As pointed above, Schweller underlines that realism particularly suffer from underspecified scope conditions rather than proliferating emendations which indeed enrich the political Realism.

In this case, neoclassical realism is the most appropriate approach to comprehend ongoing hybrid war in Donbas due to its attention to the domestic dynamics of Ukraine. To understand the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, one has to pay attention to the internal factors which developed throughout the history as well as after the independence of Ukraine. The impact of historical developments which presented in

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[235] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics.*, 68.

[236] Waltz., 65.

[237] Quinn, "Kenneth Waltz, Adam Smith and the Limits of Science: Hard Choices for Neoclassical Realism.", 169.

following chapter is tremendous on the state structure of Ukraine. Being under two different empires paved the way for a binary political, economic as well as culture developments in Ukraine. This reality has not changed during the independence years of Ukraine. Dual characteristic of Ukrainian society reflected on each of presidential elections in Ukraine until the war erupted in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine.

Therefore, picturing hybrid war in Ukraine without paying attention to the domestic factors is superficial and inadequate. In this sense, without having support from the local people, Russia could not maintain its hybrid war against Ukraine or could not destabilize the eastern regions of country in the first place. Besides, international order as structural realists claim also played a vital role in initiating the war in Ukraine. For example, improving relations with the European Union turned out badly for Ukraine. Thus, by benefiting from both domestic and systemic level of analysis neoclassical realism provides the best lenses to grasp the whole picture of Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine.

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter aimed to explore a theoretical framework to study ongoing hybrid war in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine. To do this, first, hybrid war concept is investigated in relation with the new war debate. In this context, arguments of scholars who think that humankind experiences new war in contemporary world different than traditional wars presented on one hand. The ideas of thinkers who tend to define hybrid war as a variant of war which existed throughout history were discussed on the other hand. The research part concluded that both sides admit the fact that twenty first century witnesses new war methods in line with particularly technological and economic developments. However, the latter groups' arguments seem more consistent due to their historically existed examples which can be assessed as hybrid war. Moreover, the research also shows for which reasons modern hybrid war concept gained popularity and how its context broaden from a fight only which non-state actors used to implement to a war type which also preferred by state

actors.

The chapter also introduced several theories of international relations in order to see which one of them is the most suitable one in studying the hybrid war in Donbas territory of Ukraine. In this regard, classical realism, which bases its foundation mainly on power and human nature, is scrutinized. However, it is argued that the approach is inadequate to clarify the complexity of hybrid wars. For example, through the concepts of 'power' or 'human nature' classical realism faces difficulties to explain why Russia did not occupy Donbas right after completing of the annexation of Crimea despite its sufficient capacity to do so. Subsequently, the pros and cons of structural realism was weighed in connection to ongoing hybrid war in Donbas. Despite its strengths in presenting the role of international system about the war in Eastern Ukraine, it is claimed that structural realism also fails provide whole picture in this issue due to its principle of ignoring the internal factors in the war.

Liberal approach was discussed as a third paradigm for the same purpose. It is also understood that although liberalism helps us partially attribute a meaning to the reactions of Moscow towards Euromaidan events in Ukraine, it fails to enlighten certain occasions which took place before the crisis in Ukraine began. For example, liberalism ensures lack of understanding about pro-Russian formations which occurred long before the Euromaidan demonstrations. Finally, neoclassical realism and its strengths in framing the hybrid war in Donbas territory were introduced. Combining domestic factors which played a critical role with the impact of international system on Ukraine, it is decided that neoclassical realism provides the best standpoint in studying ongoing hybrid war in Donbas. In other word, by opening the 'black box' (state) to see the effect of internal dynamics of Ukraine on the crisis, neoclassical realism is the most compatible approach with ongoing hybrid war in Donbas. The next chapter investigates historical processes of Ukraine which had influenced in formulation of Donetsk and Lugansk regions which are also known as 'Donbas' territory.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF UKRAINE AND DONBAS

3.1. Introduction

At the first glance, history seems as a branch of knowledge that concerns about the past. However, this viewpoint is very superficial and obscures its connection with the present and its influence on the future. In this regard, there are blurred demarcation lines between the past, present and future. In fact, historians interest the past due to it is association with the present. In this regard, Nuri Yurdusev states: "history cannot be confined to a mere past; it is concerned with the present, as many admit, and has references to, and cannot be separated from, the future."[238] Similarly, Collingwood argues that to know what a person can do, it is necessary to understand what a person has done in the past.[239] Therefore, this chapter scrutinizes the milestones in the history of Ukraine to comprehend the current social structure of Ukraine and their effects on the formulation of Donbas region. In this context, first, Kievan Rus' which is the first known state in the current territory of Ukraine is presented with various interpretations. Second, the period from the Treaty of Pereyaslav to the absorption of Hetmanate into Ukraine is described including different explanations. Third, the emergence of Donbas as an exclusive region will be investigated to understand the structure of the ongoing hybrid war in the region.

3.2. Kievan Rus'

Kievan Rus' as a first and the strongest state which was established in the territory of current Ukraine has great influence on the debate of national identity of Ukraine. To

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[238] A. Nuri Yurdusev, *International Relations and the Philosophy of History: A Civilizational Approach* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 26.

[239] R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, ed. Jan Van Der Dussen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 10.

understand the significance of Kievan Rus' first we should investigate different approaches or interpretations of the state. Along with Ukrainian interpretation of Kievan Rus' there is also Russian version of the story. Indeed, Russian historians were who first claimed the heritage of Kievan Rus', and Ukrainian historical viewpoint revealed as a reaction to Russian argument.

Taras Kuzio argues that there are four main schools which allege different interpretations on this issue: "Russophile (traditionally known as Russian imperial), Sovietophile (Soviet), Eastern Slavic, and Ukrainophile (Ukrainian National)".[240] As noted, first scholars who attempted to seek the legacy of Kievan Rus' were Russian historians. This is not a coincidence because when historians first showed up to write the histories of eastern Europe in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Tsarist Empire was the only East Slavic state which existed. Not surprisingly, Russian imperial state encouraged history publications to justify its existence. In this sense, one of the most prominent Russian historians was Nikolai M. Karamzin who believed in the unification of all the East Slavic nations. For Karamzin, these people were Russian, and their first political center were Kyiv. Kyiv was the mother of all Russian cities and since Muscovite princes was the inheritor of Kievan Rus', its survival had been secured. Moreover, for most of Russian historians, when Constantinople fell to Turks in 1453 Muscovite did not remain merely as a center of new Slavic kingdom but became 'Third Rome', a center of orthodox Christianity.[241] The duty of Muscovite princes was to unite 'Great Russia' (Russia), 'White Russia' (Belarus) and 'Little Russia' (Ukraine).[242]

Although Karamzin claimed that all these three entities constituted single Russian people later researches uncovered that there were great differences among them, especially between the Great Russia and Little Russia. Confirmation of such varieties were not only falsifying the theory of single Russian people but also were threating the link between Kievan Rus' and Moscow. Therefore, new explanation was required

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[240] Taras Kuzio, "National Identity and History Writing in Ukraine," *Nationalities Papers* 34, no. 4 (2006): 407, doi:10.1080/00905990600842080.

[241] Paul Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine*. (London: Greenwood Press, 2008), 27-28.

[242] Paul Robert Magocsi, *History of Ukraine: The Land Its Peoples*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 15.

which came from Mikhail D. Pogodin. According to Pogodin the ancestors of the Muscovites lived in the reign of Kievan Rus'. However, they fled to north when Mongols invaded Kievan Rus' in mid-thirteenth century. After this event, peasants from Poland and Lithuania migrated to Ukraine who constituted the current Ukrainians.[243]

In brief, the school of Russophile argues that after the fall of the Kievan Rus' in 1240, its legacy moved to Vladimir Suzdal principality, then to Muscovite and finally to the Russian empire in the eighteenth century. Ukrainians appeared only in mid-seventieth century with a purpose to reunite with Russia. This approach cannot be underestimated because it does not only admit Ukraine as a separate state but also refuses Ukrainians as a nation. The latter emphasized by Vladimir Putin as follow:

> Regarding Ukraine. Ukraine, without a doubt, is an independent state. That is how history has unfolded. But let's not forget that today's Russian statehood has roots in the Dnieper; as we say, we have a common Dnieper baptistery. Kievan Rus' started out as the foundation of the enormous future Russian state. We have common traditions, a common mentality, a common history and a common culture. We have very similar languages. In that respect, I want to repeat again, we are one people. [244]

Sovietophile viewpoint was ostensible objective to the study of Kievan Rus', since it argued that Kievan Rus' was the origin of all Eastern Slavic states. However, Kuzio argues, Russian approaches was still dominant during Soviet period. In Ukraine, any connection that linked Ukrainians with Kievan Rus' perceived as a nationalist interpretation, whilst Russians were free to use *Rus'ky* as an alternative word to *drevnerusskiy* (old Russian).[245] In other word, Russia was understood as primus inter pares to claim legacy of Kievan Rus'. In the Sovietophile historiography school, Ukraine showed up in the fourteenth century only for a short-term period and it disappeared after 'reuniting' with Russia in 1654.[246]

These arguments caused to a reaction in Ukraine. The most prominent Ukrainian historian Michael Hrushevsky claimed an alternative history for Kievan Rus'

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[243] Magocsi.

[244] Putin Vladimir, "Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club," 2013, accessed June 22, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/page/304.

[245] Kuzio, "National Identity and History Writing in Ukraine", 410.

[246] Kuzio.

focusing on ethnicity rather than state-building. For Hrushevsky, Polianians who consisted the population of Kievan Rus' was a ditinct tribe from people who lived in north.

> The Polians, had proper customs, lived peacefully and modestly, and had regular marriages, the bride being brought to the bridegroom and her dowry delivered~on the day following the wedding. Other tribes, he declated, lived like beasts, the Derevlians, the Siverians, andt others having no regular wedding ceremonies but kidnaping their wives at watering places or at games arranged among the villages.[247]

The Polianians remained in central Ukraine that comprise the ethnic stock for current Ukrainians. Furthermore, different from Russian historians, Hrushevsky believed that the direct successors of Kyivan political and cultrural traditions was Galicia-Volhynia principalities rather than Vladimir-Suzdal.[248]

Hrushevsky not only attempted to refute the interpretation of Russian historians about Kievan Rus' but he went further while repudiating some arguments that come up with the idea that Varangians were called 'Rus' who was invited by Kyiv and the name of Kievan Rus' stem from Varangians (Normanist Theory). To transcend this discussion Hrushevsky argues that the History of Ukraine goes beyond Kievan Rus'. Indeed, before the two brothers of Varangians (Askold and Dir) arrived in Kyiv, Polianians were ruling the dynasty of Kyiv. Therefore, for Hrushevsky, Varangians did not established Kievan-Rus' but replaced the ruler of the reign.[249]

The significance of claiming the heritage of Kievan Rus' is undeniable and it seems the discussion will last parallel to the political relations between Russian Federation and Ukraine. However, Mark von Hagen, in his article titled "Does Ukraine Have a History?" draws attention to different aspect rather than approaches which stuck in the issue of proving historical heritage to Kievan Rus'.[250] He argues that the nation-building period based on distinctiveness of identity period has already gone. Instead of struggling to emphasize the uniqueness of Ukrainians identity, the feature of

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[247] Michael Hrushevsky, *A History of Ukraine*, ed. O. J. Frederiksen, 2nd ed. (Yale University Press, 1970), 31-32.

[248] Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 4th ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 57.

[249] Hrushevsky, *A History of Ukraine*, 40-41.

[250] Mark Von Hagen, "For Discussion Does Ukraine Have a History?," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 3 (1995): 658–73.

cultural diversity should be appreciated. Hagen claims:

> What has been perceived as the 'weakness' of Ukrainian history or its 'defects' when measured against the putative standards of west European states such as France and Britain, ought to be turned into 'strengths' for a new historiography. Precisely the fluidity of frontiers, the permeability of cultures, the historic multi-ethnic society is what could make Ukrainian history a very 'modern' field of inquiry.[251]

Nevertheless, it seems that as long as the conflict in Donbas continues to be exist, the historians from both countries will claim the legacy of Kievan Rus'. This literature 'war' on Kievan Rus' can be seen as a part of hybrid war in Ukraine. In short, starting their histories from Kievan Rus' period is vital for both countries. From Russia's point of view, this process potentially shows the continuity of statehood tradition. On the contrary, Kievan Rus' provide opportunity for Ukrainians to distinguish themselves from Russians.

Next section discusses the period from The Treaty of Pereyaslav until the annexation of Crimea in 1783. The significance of the treaty is tremendous because it paved the way for the division of Ukraine and leaved permanent influence on the structure of Ukrainian society. Therefore, the year 1654 in Ukrainian history plays a vital role in understanding the binary structure of modern Ukraine which contributed to the separation of certain areas of Donbas from Ukraine. Besides, the developments which led to the Treaty of Pereyaslav will be also mentioned in order to maintain the chronicle of the history.

3.3. The Treaty of Pereyaslav and the Division of Ukraine

In this part, Treaty of Pereyaslav will be our aim to examine which has significant influence in terms of shaping the current state structure of Ukraine. The consequences which paved the way for the division of Ukraine between Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Tsardom of Muscovy is the reason behind the preference of this treaty for the research. Furthermore, 1654 is the beginning of

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[251] Mark Von Hagen, "For Discussion Does Ukraine Have a History ?," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 3 (1995): 670.

Ukraine's absorption into the imperial Russian state.[252]

After thirteen years of war between those great powers of the time in 1667 eastern part of the Ukraine ceded from Poland to Tsarist Empire. From this moment on, Ukraine has consisted of two different political and cultural phenomena. In this case, the former President Kravchuk complained once: "we have no nation, because after the 1654 Treaty of Pereyaslav with Muscovy Ukraine had lost the love for its land, language and culture while forgetting its own history."[253]

After the treaty Russophones has dominated the left bank of Dnieper river. Treaty of Pereyaslav has been seen from two different perspective for a long time in Ukraine. On one hand, the East Ukrainians who were ruled by Tsarist empire celebrates the day as a reunification of three Slavic nations (Russia, Ukraine and Belarus) on the other hand, it has been assessed as a losing sovereignty of Ukraine by the West Ukrainians. Scholars also divided to interpret the Treaty of Pereyaslav. While some of them celebrate the treaty, some of others accuse Tsarist Empire. For this topic, the treaty is crucial because still it has effects on the structure of political and cultural life in Ukraine.[254]

The Pereyaslav Agreement was a turning point not only for Ukraine but also for Russia and for all eastern Europe. At the end of the agreement Cossack controlled territory of Ukraine became a part of Muscovite. As it is expected, Pereyaslav Agreement caused disputes between the Commonwealth and Muscovite and after a prolonged war which is ended in 1667 with the Treaty of Andrusovo which partitioned the Ukraine into two spheres of influence: Right Bank of Dnieper became a part of Poland and the Left Bank of it remained under the rule of the Tsar. By obtaining a part of land from the Commonwealth, Moscow has got a giant step to become a great power in international arena. From that moment on, for better or

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[252] Stephen Velychenko et al., *Ukraine, the EU and Russia: History, Culture and International Relations*, ed. Stephen Velychenko (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2007), 91-92.

[253] Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building* (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002), 46.

[254] Serhii Plokhy, "The Ghosts of Pereyaslav: Russo-Ukrainian Historical Debates in the Post-Soviet Era," *Europe - Asia Studies* 53, no. 3 (2001): 489–505, https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130120045906.

worse, the fate of Ukraine fell into the hands of Russia.[255]

The interpretation of Pereyaslav Agreement varies according to historical periods and political developments. Particularly politicians, time to time, change their position in terms of interpreting Pereyaslav Agreement and thereby their opinions shift about the Cossack Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky. In general, three major viewpoints can be observed in this case: Russian, Ukrainian and Soviet approach.

Russians consider the agreement as a reunification of Ukraine and Russia. The term 'reunification' is critical which was dubbed during the three hundredth anniversary celebration of the agreement in 1954. First time it was coined by historian Panteleimon Kulish who was against Western orientations in Ukraine.[256] Russian historian Vasilii Sergeevich argues that Pereyaslav Agreement was a *personal union* of two sides which had communal sovereignty but hold separate governments. Nikolai Diakonov a specialist in Russian law pointed out that 1654 was a 'personal subjugation' when Ukrainians accepted protection of Muscovite unconditionally and for this reason it can be called as a *real union*.[257]

The head of the department of the Russian Academy's Institute of Canada, Sergei Samuilov holds more radical view. By praising Mykola Kostomarov a 19th century Ukrainian historian, Samuilov believes that Ukrainians and Russians belong to one Rus'. For Samuilov, The Great Revolt in 1648 stemmed from Ukrainians' desire to protect their Russian Slavic Orthodox identity from Polish Catholic repression. Moreover, he does not see Bohdan Khmelnytsky as a great leader who united two branches of the Eastern Slavs but Samuilov argues that it was the popular masses who forced Khmelnytsky for unification.[258]

By underestimating and questioning the independence of the Khmelnytsky's state Samuilov emphasizes that Ukraine integrated to Russia voluntarily. Samuilov also

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[255] Ivan Katchanovski et al., *Historical Dictionary of Ukraine*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: The Scarecrow Press, 2013), 3.

[256] Serhii Plokhy, "The Ghosts of Pereyaslav: Russo-Ukrainian Historical Debates in the Post-Soviet Era," *Europe - Asia Studies* 53, no. 3 (2001): 491-492.

[257] Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 135.

[258] Plokhy, "The Ghosts of Pereyaslav: Russo-Ukrainian Historical Debates in the Post-Soviet Era.", 493.

rejects "the existence of a separate Ukrainian nation and revives the 19th-century imperial paradigm, which treated Ukrainians as a sub-division of the Russian nation".[259] In brief, Russian viewpoint in terms of Pereyaslav Agreement can be summarized by Samuilov's expression when he states: "the Little Russians (Ukrainians) were saved by Orthodox Russia, as a Russian, Slavic and Orthodox ethnos, from the threat of complete assimilation according to the Polish Catholic model".[260]

 As noted, Mykola Kostomarov believed that Ukrainians and Russians are two branches of the same Rus'. However, his position (believing in Khmelnytsky's aim was to unite two branches of the Rus') changed later, when new sources emerged about Khmelnytsky's contacts with Ottoman Turks. For Kostomarov, these contacts were the proof which shows the Hetman's main intention was not unification with Muscovy by Pereyaslav Agreement but to protect his state.[261] Another prominent Ukrainian historian, Volodymyr Antonovych evaluates that though Khmelnytsky was a great Ukrainian Cossack leader who won stunning victories he 'lacked refined sense of politics'. Obviously Antonovych referred to the 1649 Zboriv Treaty as a great mistake where Khmelnytsky could attack Polish king but preferred to negotiate.[262]

Viacheslav Lypynsky, a well-known Ukrainian historian, argues:

> the Cossack revolt evolved from a class-oriented movement within the commonwealth to a national movement to create a separate state… The goals of the hetman matured from a desire to avenge a personal wrong to a national concept of liberating *the entire Ruthenian people from Polish slavery.*[263]

According to Lypynsky, Khmelnytsky hoped to establish Western-type institutions in the state by guaranteeing the security of Ukraine with Pereyaslav Agreement. However, after 1654 Ukraine became a battleground between the powers of the West and the East. In sum, for Lypynsky the agreement was merely military alliance

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[259] Plokhy., 494

[260] Plokhy.

[261] John Basarab, *Pereyaslav 1654: A Historiographical Study* (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1982), 105.

[262] Basarab., 112.

[263] Basarab., 138.

between Ukrainians and Muscovites.[264]

Mykhailo Hrushevsky who attempted to deconstruct Russian national historiography by launching an alternative trend in the history of Ukraine obtained a different perspective. For Hrushevsky, Pereyaslav Agreement was a kind of vassalage that the Tsar promised to protect Ukrainians but not to interfere in their internal affairs, whereas Ukrainians were expected pay tribute and provide military assistance.[265] Different from Russian viewpoint he did not approve the idea that Khmelnytsky had an intention for union with the Tsar. Hrushevsky points out: "what they had wanted was aid in their struggle for independence from Poland and freedom from the landlords, but Muscovy appeared to look upon Ukraine as a new territorial acquisition for herself, over which she wished to gain complete control".[266] In other word, Khmelnytsky's attempt was to protect Ukraine but the circumstances linked Ukraine to Russia. This situation could not be more accurately summarized than Taras Shevchenko, one of the greatest Ukrainian poets.

> You boast that we once
> Brought Poland to its ruin.
> You were right: Poland fell,
> But you were crushed by her fall as well.[267]

Soviet historians adapted midcourse between Russian national histographies and Ukrainian dissidents. Soviet officials, in 300th anniversary of the Pereyaslav Agreement in 1954, announced that the treaty was culmination of age-old desire of Ukrainians and Russians for unification. The main distinctive feature of Soviet scholar from their Russian counterparts was their recognition of Ukraine as a sovereign state.[268]

To sum up, the Treaty of Pereyaslav played a turning point in the history of Ukrainians. It caused a division within the country which still has its effects on the social structure of Ukraine. West Bank of Ukraine remained under the rule of

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[264] Basarab., 139.

[265] Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 135.

[266] Hrushevsky, *A History of Ukraine*.

[267] Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine*, 43.

[268] Plokhy, "The Ghosts of Pereyaslav: Russo-Ukrainian Historical Debates in the Post-Soviet Era.", 492-493.

Habsburg empire for a long time while the Left Bank of the country inextricable linked to Russian empire. The partition which was continued almost 300 years formulated two different Ukrainians with two separate mindsets.

Great Revolt which began in 1648 ended in 1657 when Khmelnitsky dead. After 1657, Ukraine had experienced several battles and civil wars in its territory. This timeframe which is called *ruin* in the history of Ukraine ended in 1686 when an agreement signed between Poland and Muscovite. Roughly to say, with the agreement (called eternal peace) the sides agreed once again on what they promised during Treaty of Andrusovo in 1667.[269] At the end of the *ruin* Ukraine was divided among three major powers of the eastern Europe: Muscovite, Poland and Ottoman Empire. The West Bank remained under the control of Poland and Moscow strengthened its power in the Left Bank while Zaporozhians became autonomous. Ottoman Empire maintained its power till the end of the century in the palatinates of Podolia, southern Kyiv and Bratslav while the southern part of the country together with the Crimea remained under the control of the empire even longer.[270] Hence, the period which started in 1648 completed with the division of Ukraine.

If one looks on the bright side of the period of pre-1648 for Ukraine it can be said that at least Ukraine was intact under the rule of the Commonwealth. The desires for independence or full autonomy has been vanished and became more and more difficult to comeback in divided Ukraine. In this new era, the Left Bank of Ukraine became political center of Ukraine. Ukrainians under the control of Muscovite hoped more autonomy from Moscow by showing their loyalty to the Tsar. However, believing the strength of the centralized government the tsar did not give to Ukrainians what they wished from him.

Another serious attempt for liberation after Khmelnitsky, took place during the period of Ivan Stepanovych Mazepa who initially followed pro-Moscow policy. When the young and dynamic Tsar, Peter I, came to power in 1689 Mazepa became one of the best advisors of him. Mazepa assisted the Tsar in his campaigns against Ottomans and Tatars. He became one of the most trustworthy hetmans ever that

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[269] Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 139.

[270] Magocsi, *History of Ukraine: The Land Its Peoples*, 242.

Russian officials described him as: "there has never been a hetman so helpful and beneficial to the tsar as Ivan Stepanovych Mazepa".[271]

Hence, two decades Mazepa sustained good relationship with Moscow. However, the pleasant relations between Mazepa and Peter I came to an end and the signs of tension showed up. After series defeats against Sweden the Tsar accelerated the centralization of his power and this policy put him at odds with Ukrainians Cossacks. Peter I, began to assign Russian or German officers to Cossack troops and send to the north to fight against Swedes. Demoralized Cossacks faced with Swedes' advanced technological weapons and what is worse the Cossacks were used as cannon fodder. From the view of Mazepa, there were rumors that the Tsar will replace him by a Russian general.[272]

The turning point appeared when Stanislaw Leszczyriski, Polish ally of Charles XII threatened to occupy Ukraine. In this regard, Mazepa asked help from the Tsar by reminding him Pereyaslav Agreement, Moscow's promise to protect Ukraine. However, the Tsar was busy struggling against Swedes' invasion and therefore did not send aid for Mazepa. In response, Mazepa joined Charles XII to protect Ukraine from devastation when he directed his army from Moscow to Ukraine in 1708.[273] After this event, Mazepa became 'new Judas' in the eyes of Tsar Peter I. In the end, Russian forces defeated Swedes at the Battle of Poltava in 1709, one of the most critical victory in Europe that prevented Swedes to become major power in Northern Europe and set forward Russia to dominate Baltic coast. For Ukrainians, once again, attempt for liberation caused to more absorption into Russian Empire.[274]

After the failure revolt of Mazepa, the Hetmanate became completely under the control of the Russian Empire. A Russian had been appointed to the top commander of the Cossack army. The victory over Ottoman Empire which forced the sultan to renounce the Ottomans claims over Tatars. After the victory over Turks, Zaporizhian Sich was demolished by Russian army as a part of centralization policy of Catherine

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[271] Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 161.

[272] Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine*, 48-49.

[273] Hrushevsky, *A History of Ukraine*, 365.

[274] Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine*, 49.

II in 1775. In 1783, Crimean Khanate had been annexed by the Russian Empire. However, the Hetmanate as an entity maintained its existence until 1785 when the tsar abolished the autonomy of Hetmanate.[275] Under these circumstances, the next section investigates how the Donbas territory of Ukraine gained its distinctive characteristics which resulted with the destabilization of the territory in 2014.

3.4. The Emergence of Donbas Region

Russia's victory over the Ottomans and the destruction of Zaporizhian Sich by Russian army along with the decline of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth created a suitable environment to absorb Zaporozhia into New Russia. New Russia was a new province of Russian Empire established in 1764. Tsar government eliminated the Serbian and Sloboda border regions and incorporated fifteen southern districts from Hetmanate to create an imperial region called New Russia (Novorosiiskaia Guberniya).[276] The province covered entire territory between Azov and Black sea.[277] The new conquered region was sparsely settled. Therefore, to encourage migration to the region "Catherine II gave attractive inducements of 4,000 acres of land for Russians (mostly nobles and army officers) who settled there."[278] Along with Russians Moldavians and Germans also moved into the new province. In 1796, the population of the region had already reached 554,000 males, 80 percent of them composed of Ukrainians and Russians.[279]

Donbas area mainly was located within the province of New Russia.[280] "The Donets Basin [Donbas] stretches from the Donets Hills in the north towards the Don River, and in the south across the low Azov Upland and the coastal plain to the Sea of Azov. It is thus surrounded by the middle and lower Donets River (a tributary of the

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[275] Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine*, 50-51.

[276] Magocsi, *History of Ukraine: The Land Its Peoples*, 284.

[277] Charters Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms: The Sonbass-Dneprs Bend in Late Imperial Russia, 1870-1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 25.

[278] Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine*, 52.

[279] Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 187.

[280] Hiroaki Kuromiya, "How to Make Sense of the Donbas in the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict in the 21st Century," *Nowy Prometeusz*, 2016, 11.

Don River) and the Sea of Azov."[281] Donbas or Donbass are the byname of *Donets'kyi Basein* or *Donetskii Bassein* in Ukrainian and Russian, respectively. Before being occupied by the Russian Empire, the Donbas was known as a 'wild field' (дике поле).[282]

Although newcomers were encouraged to Donbas under the rule of Russian Empire it took time until the industrialization period for the intense population growth in the region. Industrialization had begun earlier in Russia rather than Ukraine. In fact, Tsarist Russia considered Ukraine as source of raw materials and encouraged the development of the industry in Russia. Therefore, relationship between Russia and Ukraine before the Soviet Union had been described as a colonial relationship by the Soviet historians.[283]

At the end of the 18th century, Russia became the world's biggest iron producer and exporter. Russia's success in metallurgy until the beginning of the nineteenth century was due to the cheap labor force in the Ural Mountains not because of advanced technology.[284] Thus, widening the gap between the West in terms of technological developments and the absence of coal in the Ural Mountains have directed Russian authorities to seek for new places. In fact, coal in Donbas was discovered in 1721, but due to lack of transport and the priority given to the Ural Mountains, there was no industrial development in the region. As a result of attempts to establish heavy industry in Donbas, in the 1860s and 1870s, there were improvements in the sectors of ironworks, coal mines, and railways. This development continued with the revival of capitalism during the period of Alexander II.[285] The fast-growing industry in Donbas also began to reflect on the statistics. By 1900, 56.3 percent of iron and 68.1 percent of coal in the empire were produced in the Donbas region.[286]

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[281] Vlad Mykhnenko, "From Exit to Take-Over : The Evolution of the Donbas as an Intentional Community" (Sweden, 2004)., 3.

[282] Mykhnenko., 5.

[283] Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*., 180.

[284] Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms: The Sonbass-Dneprs Bend in Late Imperial Russia, 1870-1905*, 16.

[285] Mykhnenko, "From Exit to Take-Over : The Evolution of the Donbas as an Intentional Community.", 9.

[286] Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms: The Sonbass-Dneprs Bend in Late Imperial Russia, 1870-1905*, 18-19.

These developments in Donbas triggered intense migration to the region. Skilled workforce influx began from Urals to Donbas. Imperial policy of that time encouraged foreign capital investments to Donbas. Besides, Donbas region attracted a massive migration from various groups such as freedom seekers, seasonal workers as well as all kinds of criminals from the rest of the empire which turned the Donbas once again into a 'wild field'.[287] Although growing industry of Donbas attracted Russians workers to find job in mines and factories local Ukrainians preferred to work in farms.[288] Only 37% of migrant workers were from other provinces of Ukraine, and the rest of the workers came from different parts of Russia. In 1900, over 55% of metallurgical, railway and colliers workers in Donbas region were consisted of Russians.[289] Thus, this situation contributed the balance of population between Ukrainians and Russians to change in favor of the later.

For various social groups from all over the empire, Donbas meant an 'exit' or freedom. This does not mean that the conditions of the employees were good in Donbas. Even in other parts of the empire, while bargaining between workers and employers took place, such consciousness did not develop in Donbas. Exploitation often took wild forms. In this regard, Hiroaki Kuromiya states that the Donbas began to signify 'wild exploitation' (дика эксплуатация), along with liberty.[290] In this sense, 'liberty' refers to resistance against external interference. Therefore, neither 'class' nor 'nation' ideologies were compatible with the community of Donbas. Kuromiya expresses this situation as: "The Marxists had a very difficult time in the Donbas even at the time of 'proletarian revolution' and civil war (or 'class war') in 1917-1920, so did nationalist parties at a time when they thrived elsewhere in the wake of the collapse of both Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union."[291] Everybody and every political party including Marxists and nationalists from Moscow to Kyiv

[287] Mykhnenko, "From Exit to Take-Over : The Evolution of the Donbas as an Intentional Community.", 9-10.

[288] Andrew Wilson, "The Donbas between Ukraine and Russia: The Use of History in Political Disputes," *Journal of Contemporary History* 30, no. 2 (1995): 279.

[289] Mykhnenko, "From Exit to Take-Over : The Evolution of the Donbas as an Intentional Community.", 12.

[290] Kuromiya, "How to Make Sense of the Donbas in the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict in the 21st Century.", 14.

[291] Hiroaki Kuromiya, "Ukraine, Russia, and the Donbas in Historical Perspective" (Indiana University, 1996), 1-2.

have experienced difficulty in Donbas. Once, Leon Trotsky stated, "one cannot go to the Donbas without a gas mask," which describes best the political life of Donbas.[292]

It is quite interesting that during the civil war after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, Donbas region did not support the Ukrainian nationalists who wanted to take advantage of the situation and establish independent Ukraine. The Ukrainian National Republic (UNR) which proclaimed in January 1918, claimed Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia and Mariupol. However, let alone to accept the authority of Kyiv, the Donbas region reacted to Kyiv with Donets'k-Kryvyi Rih republic though it lasted very short time of period. Although Ukrainian historians claim that Donets'k-Kryvyi Rih republic was an artificial creation of the Bolsheviks, it shows that the support to Ukrainian independence in Donbas was not very strong.[293]

Right after Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, Donbas became the center of a violent and constant conflict among the supporters of Ukraine's independence, Bolsheviks, the Whites, Blacks (Anarchists), the Greens (self-defense of free peasants) and external powers (German-Austrian and British-French troops). During this period, Donbas changed hands many times among these forces. Eventually, in 1921, when the borders between Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) and Soviet Ukrainian government finalized, Donbas included within the territory of later one. Indeed, the Shakty and Tahanrih (Taganrog) regions, which are the part of Rostov province of Russia today, were also included in the territory of Ukraine until the borders were readjusted in 1924.[294]

To prove their claims in the Donbas region, Ukrainian and Russian nationalist historians consider the issue in two different ways. Mostly, Ukrainian historians prefer to write history about Donbas starting from Kievan Rus' period. They emphasize that the Donbas region was primarily within the borders of Kievan Rus' and after the disintegration of Kievan Rus' the area was captured by the Lithuanians. However, Ukrainians enjoyed autonomy under Lithuanians rule. More importantly,

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[292] Kuromiya.

[293] Wilson, "The Donbas between Ukraine and Russia: The Use of History in Political Disputes.", 274.

[294] Wilson.

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during the Cossacks period from sixteenth to eighteenth century, the historians claim that the Donbas region was under the control of Zaporozhian Cossacks rather than Don Cossacks. They argue that despite the fact that these two groups resemble each other Zaporozhian Cossacks were loyal to Kyiv, not Moscow.[295]

For Ukrainian historians, "it was only with mass industrialization and urbanization from the 1860s onwards that the region began to take on a pronounced Russian character."[296] In fact, according to Ukrainian historians, the increase of Russians in the region can be attributed to the aftermath of World War II. While, 31.4% of the total population of the region were consisted of Russians in 1926 (60% of them were Ukrainians), this percentage grew to 44 by 1989 (Ukrainians decreased to 51.1%).[297]

Unlike the Ukrainian version, the Russians argue that there is not any prove which shows that Donbas located within Kievan Rus'.[298] They assert that "Kievan Rus' was in any case only a loose agglomeration of princely fiefdoms that had nothing more than expeditionary contact with the largely uninhabited Donbas region"[299] which was sort of no man's land between Tatars and Slav civilizations. In Cossacks period, Russian historians such as Mykola Karamzin or Sergei Soloviov claimed that the lower parts of the river Don belonged to the Don Cossacks. The Don Cossacks, who acted as an advance guard of the Russian Empire, settled in the regions including the current Donbas region. Apart from emphasizing early Russian settlers in Donbas, Russian historians also advocate that the region's ethnocultural characteristics were always multinational not Ukrainian.[300]

According to a Russophile group:

> The Donbas has since antiquity served as home to dozens of peoples. The territory of what is now the Donbass has been part of the Khazar Khanate, the Golden Horde, the Crimean Khanate, the Russian empire, the Donetsk-Krivoy

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[295] Wilson., 271-272.

[296] Wilson.

[297] Wilson., 275.

[298] Владимир Корнилов, "Донецко-Криворожская Республика: Расстрелянная Мечта," 2012, accessed February 2 2019, http://kornilov.name/pro-obgorelyiy-pen-i-srednego-brata/.

[299] Wilson, "The Donbas between Ukraine and Russia: The Use of History in Political Disputes.", 276.

[300] Петро Лаврів, *Історія Південно-Східної України* (Львів: Слово, 1992), 52.

Rog Republic and [finally] the Ukrainian state...the Donbass is the center of a unique multinational culture."[301]

In this sense, Valentin Mamutov, another Russophile historian, claims that coastal region and Donbas territory are the lands of New Ukraine. In this sense, for Mamutov, one should not invent fictions or engage in falsification of history in order to create an impression that the region is 'native' Ukrainian land.[302] In general, they point out that it is Galicia (former Habsburg province in the west of Ukraine) not Donbas follows an exceptional path. Therefore, Ukraine, particularly Donbas does not suffer from Russification instead Donbas is aggrieved of 'Galicianization'.[303] Evgeny F. Krinko and Igor E. Tatarinov in their provocative titled article "We Are Russia and You Are Ukraine and We Don't Care about You...: Territorial Disputes within the Priazov Area and Donbas in 1920s" emphasize that the Donbas region was handed to Ukraine by Soviet leaders. For the authors, the new border between Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was not compatible with the ethnically homogeneous population of the region.[304]

In short, Ukrainian side emphasize that today's Donbas was part of Kievan Rus' and then though Ukraine were under different empires, it was autonomy region and Donbas was within its territory. Therefore, they argue that Ukrainians were the first settlers of Donbas while Russification of the region is quite new phenomenon took place particularly in twentieth century. In contrast, Russian historians make counter arguments to Ukrainian version. By excluding Donbas from Kievan Rus' territory, they claim that Donbas was no man's land between Tatars and Slavs. Moreover, for Russian historians, Don Cossacks penetrated the region during the Cossack period and Donbas included within the territory of Ukraine because merely it was given to Ukraine 'as a gift' by Lenin in 1921.

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[301] Wilson, "The Donbas between Ukraine and Russia: The Use of History in Political Disputes.", 278-279.

[302] Валентин Мамутов, "Дикое Поле – Не Терра-Инкогнита," Donbass.Name, 2010, accessed February 22, 2019, http://donbass.name/2541-dikoe-pole-ne-terra-inkognita.html.

[303] Wilson, "The Donbas between Ukraine and Russia: The Use of History in Political Disputes.", 281.

[304] Evgeniy F. Krinko and Igor E. Tatarinov, "We Are Russia and You Are Ukraine and We Don't Care about You...": Territorial Disputes within the Priazov Area and Donbas in 1920s," *Bylye Gody* 34, no. 4 (2014): 642-643.

It is obvious that there are two groups of scholars who try to refute each other's arguments about Donbas. In fact, even though allegations of both groups can be justified partly, it would not be fair to adopt the arguments of one party and completely ignore the others'. Regardless of the above-mentioned claims there was an obvious reality during the independence movement that Eastern part of Ukraine was not so eager for the idea of Ukraine's independence. While pro-independence demonstrations were common in Western Ukraine, south eastern part of the country were silent. This situation showed the limits of national movements in Ukraine. Pro-independence demonstrations culminated when the formation of human chain stretching from L'viv to Kyiv took place in January 1990. Ilya Prizel expresses the movement as: "As impressive as this mobilization was, albeit with some logistical support from the Kyiv government, the chain did not go beyond the Dnieper river."[305] In this regard, Andrew Wilson labeled Ukrainian nationalist movement as a 'minority faith' to show how nationalism in Western Ukraine is exceptional in comparison with the rest of the country.[306]

Although the influx of Russians to Donbas started with the development of industry during the imperial period, this region was subjected to Russification policies in Soviet times which had impact on the shape of Donbas identity. The school education reform which began in 1959 resulted in the closure of almost all Ukrainian schools in the region by the mid-1970s. In his article titled "Internationalization or Russification", Ukrainian dissident, Ivan Dziuba called this Soviet policy as 'de-Ukrainization process'.[307] In this context, Vasyl Stus (poet and university lecturer) and Oleksa Tykhyi (teacher), two well-known opponents of the Russification policy were imprisoned in 1970s where they died in 1985 and 1984 respectively.[308]

Despite Russification policy during Soviet time, the shape of Donbas identity did not

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[305] Ilya Prizel, "Ukraine between Proto-Democracy and 'Soft' Authoritarianism," in *Democratic Changes and Authoritarian Reactions in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova*, ed. Dawisha Karen and Bruce Parrott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 338-339.

[306] Andrew Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s: A Minority Faith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 117.

[307] Abibok, "The Construction of Donbas Regional Identity in Political and Media Discourses: Implications of the Conflict.", 55-58.

[308] Mykhnenko, "From Exit to Take-Over : The Evolution of the Donbas as an Intentional Community.", 21.

develop based on Russian ethnicity. Indeed, for some scholars such as Kerstin Zimmer rather than describing the region as multiethnic, Donbas can be best viewed as 'nonethnic'. The constant flow of workers to Donbas has prevented the emergence of a certain identity in the region based on any ethnic group. Instead, Donbas has strong regional identity which had been shaped during Soviet period and strengthened during the independence years. [309]

Karachsonyi et al argue that the division of Ukrainian society as West and East stems from an interaction of factors of the historical, social and political processes.[310] Indeed, most of the Donbas researchers who try to find out the reason behind its exceptionality focus on historical conditions since the region was under the rule of different empires and state, subjected to different political and social culture.[311] However, these explanations are insufficient to understand why separatists movements took place in Donbas. To comprehend the identity of Donbas one needs to pay attention political discourse in Ukraine after the independence period along with the historical factors. In this regard, scholar such as Kerstin Zimmer[312] or Tatiana Zhurzhenko[313] point out the role of national leaders in shaping the Donbas identity. In addition, Ararat L. Osipian and Alexandr L. Osipian indicate the media's great contribution to the formation of the Donbass identity.[314] Besides, Yulia Abibok investigates what role media (local and national) played in pre-war time that contributed the secession of Donbas.[315]

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[309] Abibok, "The Construction of Donbas Regional Identity in Political and Media Discourses: Implications of the Conflict.", 58.

[310] Dávid Karácsonyi et al., "East-West Dichotomy and Political Conflict in Ukraine-Was Huntington Right?," *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin* 63, no. 2 (2014): 130, https://doi.org/10.15201/hungeobull.63.2.1.

[311] Abibok, "The Construction of Donbas Regional Identity in Political and Media Discourses: Implications of the Conflict.", 57.

[312] Kerstin Zimmer, "Trapped in Past Glory: Self-Identification and Self-Symbolisation in the Donbas," in *Re-Constructing the Post-Soviet Industrial Region: The Donbas in Transition*, ed. Adam Swain (London: Routledge, 2007), 1–4, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203328262.

[313] Tatiana Zhurzhenko, "A Divided Nation? Reconsidering the Role of Identity Politics in the Ukraine Crisis," in *Die Friedens-Warte*, vol. 89, 2014, 249–267.

[314] Ararat L. Osipian and Alexandr L. Osipian, "Why Donbass Votes for Yanukovych: Confronting the Ukrainian Orange Revolution," *Demokratizatsiya* 14, no. 4 (2006): 503.

[315] Abibok, "The Construction of Donbas Regional Identity in Political and Media Discourses: Implications of the Conflict."

In fact, it is critical to note that majority of Donbas region voted for the independence of Ukraine in 1991. On December 1, 1991, 83% of Donetsk and Luhansk voters said 'yes' to Ukraine's independence. Well-known historian Orest Subtenly points out that most of the Ukrainian elites except national-democrats favored independence of Ukraine because it gave them opportunity to control Ukraine's affair bypassing Moscow or to avoid competition of Russian oligarchs.[316] However, the independence period did not satisfy the region and soon after the referendum Donbas people started thinking that the disintegration of Soviet Union was an unfortunate event. This way of thinking reflected on surveys conducted in L'viv and Donetsk in 1994. Participates were asked to choose preferred identity which were Ukrainian, Russian, Soviet and Other. While 25.9% of participates from Donetsk choose Ukrainian and 22.9% of Russian 45.4% of respondents preferred Soviet identity.[317]

3.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, once again it is shown that the history is not merely about past, but it is strictly connected to the present as well as constantly shapes the future. The History of Ukraine is also not exceptional in this sense. As presented, claims over the legacy of Kievan Rus' is discussed extensively by numerous scholars in literature. In fact, debates over Kievan Rus' links not only to the current hybrid war in Donbas territory but also causes to the disputes about the right for the sovereignty of Ukraine. This point cannot be underestimated because denial of Ukraine as a sovereign state paves the way for destabilization of more regions in Ukraine let alone Donbas territories. Connecting the legacy of Kievan Rus' to today's Russia ignores the history of Ukraine and thereby, forms excuse to occupy even further Ukrainian lands. In terms of Donbas, claiming the legacy of Kievan Rus' by Russian Federation contributes justification of its secession from Ukraine.

The chapter also discussed the impact of the Treaty of Pereyaslav on the current structure of Ukrainian society. It is claimed that this historical milestone shaped the

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[316] Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 611.

[317] Yaroslav Hrytsak, "National Identities Ukraine: The Case of Lviv and Donetsk," *Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute* 22 (1998): 266.

binary characteristic of the nation: The Western Ukrainians on one hand and the Eastern Ukrainians on the other hand. This was the result of living under two different empires for a long time. The last part of the chapter explored the formulation of Donbas territorial identity. It is presented that industrialization of Donbas and influx of migrants from various regions created a distinctive character of Donbas people. However, the historical developments are not enough to explain Donbas's secession from Ukraine in 2014. Therefore, the next section scrutinizes the political developments in Ukraine after the independence to understand which other dynamics lie behind the destabilization of Donbas.

CHAPTER 4

**POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN UKRAINE AFTER THE
INDEPENDECE AND THEIR IMPACT ON DONBAS**

4.1. Introduction

Unlike some states which found themselves in civil or inter-state wars right after the
disintegration of the Soviet Union, Ukraine managed to avoid such clashes. In fact,
Ukrainian identity as shown in previous chapter, was not a consolidated due to its
dual characteristics. However, Ukraine established as a unitary state except granting
autonomy to Crimean Peninsula where ethnic Russian composed the majority of the
population. Thanks to intimate relations with Russian Federation nation-building
policies of Kyiv did not cause any major problem in Eastern Ukraine where political
culture was not fitting for such policies. Nevertheless, this situation began to change
in relation with pro and anti-Russian policy directions in Ukraine.

This chapter first investigates political developments in Ukraine from 1991 to
Orange Revolution. In this part, it is argued that despite the fact that Ukraine did not
face any serious threat against its unitary state system or territorial integrity until
2004, the political landscape was changed with Orange Revolution. The fragile
structure of Ukrainian society come to light once again during the 2004 presidential
election. The second part explores the impact of Orange Revolution on contributing
the isolation of Donbas from rest of the country. The third part aims to present
background which prepared the basis for next revolution, Euromaidan which began
at the end of 2013. Finally, the chapter analyses the seizure of Crimea as one of side
effects of the Euromaidan Revolution.

4.2. Politics in Ukraine from Independence to Orange Revolution

Right after independence, one of the greatest achievements of Ukraine was to
preserve the territorial integrity of the country. Considering the ethnic conflicts and

wars that broke out in most of the other former Soviet republics, it was a great achievement for Ukraine to prevent such separatism. Remaining intact different from most of the other post-Soviet states did not mean that in Ukraine there were not any separatist groups which threatened the territorial integrity of the country. Indeed, the presidency years of Kravchuk can be called 'uncertainty years'. It was not even agreed on the structure of the new state whether to be a unitary or federative country because the Constitution was not adopted yet.

This ambiguous environment caused the separatists in Donbas, Transcarpathia and Crimea to raise their voices. Crimea was the biggest threat for Kyiv among these regions. As known, in 1954, the Soviet authorities handed the Crimea to the Ukrainian SSR. Moreover, 65 percent of its population were consisted of Russians. Under these circumstances, Russian ethnic groups reacted negatively to the inclusion of the peninsula within the borders of Ukraine after the disintegration of Soviet Union. Therefore, Crimea declared independence and made clear its intention to join Russian Federation and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in May 1992.[318] After the declaration of independence tensions with Kyiv have risen, but the peninsula had to remain within Ukraine when Yuri Meshkov, the leader of separatism, could not find support from Russia. At that moment, Russia was unable to support Crimea due to separatist movements in Chechnya. The threat which posed on the territorial integrity of Ukraine ended with the ratification of constitution in the Crimean parliament in May 1996.[319] Although the constitution granted autonomy to the peninsula, it remained as an integral part of Ukraine.

According to a sociological analysis made by Volodymyr Zviglyanich during the initial years of the independence, majority of Ukrainians did not favor independence of Ukraine. For Zyiglynavich's research in 1996, Most of Ukrainians wished to see a confederation formed by post-Soviet countries. Zyiglynavich's research shows that only 31 percent of Ukrainians thought that Ukraine's independence is the best option for their country.[320] Most of the population who wish such confederation is where

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[318] Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 609.

[319] Subtelny., 610.

[320] Volodymyr Zviglyanich, "Ukrainian Reforms: A Sociological Analysis," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 1996, 2.

Russians are densely populated. Although scholars such as Taras Kuzio find the tendency of confederation at the beginning of independence years very exaggerated. For them, economic decline along with the Ukrainization policy of Kravchuk prepared such political environment in Ukraine. In this issue, the collapse of economy was a great opportunity to blame Ukraine's independence for that.[321]

Instead of economic and political reforms Leonid Kravchuk gave importance to the question of national identity in order to ensure unity and solidarity in the country. In this respect, he attached importance to the use of the Ukrainian language. Besides, he promoted the use of the yellow and blue flag, the state emblem and the anthem. Although the Ukrainization process was welcomed in Western Ukraine, it caused a dissatisfaction in Russified Donbas region.[322] Kravchuk, who could not implement economic reforms, was prepared for the 1994 elections by adopting nationalist narratives. However, his rival Leonid Kuchma, promising to make the economic and political reforms, elected president with the intense support of eastern and southern voters. Despite regional difference in terms of political culture between Eastern and Western Ukraine, Kyiv's cautious policy towards Donbas and the election of Kuchma, the favorite candidate of the region, prevented possible separatism in Ukraine.[323]

Although Kravchuk attempted to create Ukrainian identity, politics in the post-independence Ukraine was developed according to the regional identities. In other words, the regional identity was the most decisive factor for voters during the elections. Generally, Western Ukrainians supported the right-wing parties, while Eastern Ukrainians favored region-based left-wing parties. Thus, almost all the scopes of Ukrainian parties were formulated according to regional demands rather than national requirements.[324]

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[321] Kuzio, *Ukraine : State and Nation Building*, 69.

[322] Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine.*, 142-143.

[323] Taras Kuzio, "Kravchuk to Kuchma: The Ukrainian Presidential Elections of 1994," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 12, no. 2 (1996): 138, https://doi.org/10.1080/13523279608415306.

[324] Sarah Birch, "Interpreting the Regional Effect in Ukrainian Politics," *Europe - Asia Studies* 52, no. 6 (2000): 1017.

In the presidential elections of 1994, Kuchma, who seemed indifferent to Kravchuk's Ukrainianization policy, was perceived by the nationalists as a leader who would surrender the sovereignty of Ukraine to Russia. However, Kuchma followed state-building policy and strengthened the sovereignty of the country. During the first presidency, Kuchma pioneered the creation of a new constitution and the adoption of the new currency of Ukraine, the *hryvnia* in 1996. According to the new constitution, Ukraine was described as a unitary state and announced the Ukrainian as an only official language of the country. In foreign affairs, Kuchma agreed on denuclearization of Ukraine, succeed to divide Black Sea Fleet and achieved to conclude a Treaty of Friendship with Russia in May 1997.[325]

Kuchma's state-building policy and his support of free market reforms has changed the political landscape in the country. It led to gain the support of Western voters who were skeptical of Kuchma's presidency at the beginning and caused dissatisfaction among the Eastern Ukrainians who expected from Kuchma to abandon free market reforms.[326] In these circumstances, dichotomy between the West and East which came to light in 1994 continued during 1999 presidential election. Region-based political landscape in Ukraine was transmitted to 2000s which became evident in 2004.[327]

From the early 2000s, Kuchma became a more oppressive leader. The Ukrainian people were polarized according to the region in terms of foreign policy direction. In this context, the western part favored closer ties with European Union, while the eastern and southern part of the country attached more importance to ties with Russia. Concerns about the rule of law and the increasing corruption in the country discouraged Western investors. In addition, when the EU did not promise full membership in relation with Ukraine, Kuchma turned its foreign policy direction to Russia.[328]

Oligarchs started dominating parties in the parliament who were developing close

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[325] Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History.*, 599-600.

[326] Subtelny., 616.

[327] Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine.*, 155.

[328] Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine*, 158.

relations with the president. In this regard, Deputy Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko who turned to be reformer began to push oligarchs in order to pay requested taxes, particularly groups which controlled the coal and gas industry in January 2001. Following this action, which was perceived as a threat to the existing political order, Tymoshenko was dismissed and even imprisoned for a short time.[329]

In addition, Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko who were also known as reformist, was unseated. Moreover, the tape scandal, also known as Kuchmagate, was added to these developments. On the tape, Kuchma was ordering security service to 'take care' of opposition journalist, Georgii Gongadze whose dead body was found in a forest outside of Kyiv.[330] The reluctance of the government to investigate this event caused public concern and raised doubts against the Kuchma administration. These developments have affected the March 2002 parliamentary elections. Despite the political pressures of the Kuchma government, the opposition succeeded in achieving a certain success (Our Ukraine 112 and Tymoshenko's bloc 21 seats).[331]

Kuchma improved relations with Russia. He met with the President Putin eight times within a year and declared 2002 the Year of Russia in Ukraine. Besides, the president made a great effort for Ukraine's membership in Eurasian Economic Union. In these circumstances, Kuchma decided to retire and thereby began to search a reliable successor for presidency. Among other powerful oligarchs he favored to support Viktor Yanukovych, the head of Donetsk clan, in 2004 presidency elections. The opposition supported Yushchenko, whom they considered reformist and pro-Western. [332]

The first round of the elections took place on October 31, 2004 and none of the candidates won the majority (Yushchenko 39.87% and Yanukovych 39.32%).[333]

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[329] Tatiana Zhurzhenko, "Yulia Tymoshenko's Two Bodies," *EUROZINE*, 2013, accessed August 5, 2019, https://www.eurozine.com/yulia-tymoshenkos-two-bodies/.

[330] Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine.*, 159.

[331] "Ukraine Election Observation Report" *International Republican Institute*, (Washington, DC, 2002), 10.

[332] Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 634-635.

[333] Steven Woehrel, "Ukraine's Presidential Elections and U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service*, 2004, 2.

Therefore, a run-off election was declared for 21 November. This time Yanukovych was claimed to have 49.4% votes while Yushchenko 46.7% of them. However, election observers reported a large number of electoral frauds. International election observers found the election unfair and declared that the it did not match with the democratic standards.[334] According to the OSCE observers, the elections in Ukraine were involved in fraudulent practices such as abuse of absentee ballots, inaccurate voter lists, or official pressure on government workers and students to vote for Yanukovych. Besides, in some regions, such as Donetsk, highly improbable turnout was recorded.[335] Consequently, next day massive orange-clad protesters appeared on Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) to protest the election results.[336]

Although the election results were officially announced and declared Yanukovych as the new president of Ukraine, numerous demonstrations appeared in Kyiv. In contrast, Yanukovych supporters held demonstrations to support their candidate. Furthermore, local councilors gathered in Severodonetsk and threatened Kyiv by demanding autonomy. Some of local politicians even made statements which undermined territorial integrity of Ukraine.[337] On November 28, 2004 Donetsk region Council voted 115 to 1 for organizing a regional referendum on transforming the country into a federal state and to declare the autonomy of the region within that state. Yanukovych also accused Yushchenko and his supporters of launching coup d'état.[338]

To solve the stalemate a roundtable was held among Kuchma, Yushchenko, Yanukovych, Javier Solana (high representative for foreign affairs of the EU) and Alexander Kwaśniewski, the president of Poland. On December 8, by accepting substantial amendments in constitution which transformed the presidential political

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[334] Timm Beichelt and Rostyslav Pavlenko, "The Presidential Election and Constitutional Reform," in *Presidential Election and Orange Revolution Implications for Ukraine's Transition*, ed. Helmut Kurth and Iris Kempe (Kyiv: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2005), 65.

[335] Woehrel, "Ukraine's Presidential Elections and U.S. Policy.", 3.

[336] Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine.*, 170.

[337] Beichelt and Pavlenko, "The Presidential Election and Constitutional Reform.", 66.

[338] Ivan Katchanovski, *Cleft Countries: Regional Political Divisions and Cultures in Post-Soviet Ukraine and Moldova*, ed. Andreas Umland (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2006), 99.

system to parliamentary-presidential system, the parties agreed for a rerun election.[339] Moreover, the tension between the two poles declined when the Supreme Court canceled the election results due to widespread fraud during the election. As a result, the third round of election was announced to be held on December 26. The elections, which attracted the attention of the whole world, were held in a transparent environment with the participation of more international observers. Yushchenko received 51.99% of the votes and became the new president.[340]

To sum up, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine emerged as a sovereign country. Different from many other post-Soviet countries, Ukraine protected its territorial integrity thanks to friendly relations with Russian Federation. Although nation-building process displeased the Eastern Ukrainians, it did not cause any sociological problem in the country. However, Orange Revolution changed political landscape in Ukraine. First time pro-European leader came to power in Ukraine. This development was not anticipated because president Kuchma was supporting Yanukovych, a Donbas candidate. Yanukovych, with the support of the government in an environment where state institutions were fragile, would not be expected to lose. The next section analyses the consequences of Orange Revolution and its contribution to the Donbas isolation.

4.3. Evaluation of Orange Revolution In Connection with Donbas Territory

Seeing as a democratic movement many scholars were excited about the Orange Revolution. In this regard Adrian Karatnycky claimed that benefiting from the support of the European countries and the United States as well as private institutions such as George Soros, Ukraine has made great progress in the democratization process in a very short time. For, Karatnycky, in this process, the democratic values in Ukraine were reinforced and the people's belief in fair elections increased. He argued that the values which developed during the Orange Revolution will be

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[339] Beichelt and Pavlenko, "The Presidential Election and Constitutional Reform.", 67.

[340] "Presidential Election, 31 October, 21 November and 26 December 2004 Ukraine" *OSCE/ODIHR Final Report* (Warsaw, 2005), 37.

consolidated with the growing new generation.[341]

To emphasize the significance of the event, Karatnycky linked the Orange Revolution with the revolutions took place in Eastern Europe at the end of 1980s. For Karatnycky, Orange Revolution was the people's victory against autocratic regimes just like revolutions took place in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia at the end of 1980s or Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003.[342] In the case of Donbas, Karatnycky asserts that the ideological difference between Western and Eastern Ukrainians which came to light during the election was merely due to government controlled media. According to the author, portraying Yushchenko as an ultranationalist and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agent, media created and propagated stereotypes about the president. He claimed that the polarization of the society will be gradually disappeared as soon as Eastern Ukrainians access to more balanced information.[343]

Considering from more positive angle Taras Kuzio points out that the Orange Revolution was the second and final stage of Ukraine's revolution which began in last years of Soviet Union. For Kuzio, Ukraine achieved "three revolutions in one: national, democratic and anti-corruption."[344] The author drew attention to the relation between nationalism and democratic revolution which at the final stage will eradicate the corruption. For Kuzio, Ukrainian national identity which developed under the rule of Austria-Habsburg empire led democratic movement in Ukraine while the Eastern part which could not develop such identity under the rule of Russian Empire opposed democratic revolutions.[345]

At the same time, Kuzio did not take regionalism in the country seriously. He pointed that researches on the dividedness of Ukraine's regions does not reflect the reality, they are mostly exaggerated works.[346] Hence, right after the incident, most of

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[341] Adrian Karatnycky, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 2 (2005): 43.

[342] Karatnycky., 35.

[343] Karatnycky., 48.

[344] Taras Kuzio, "From Kuchma to Yushchenko Ukraine's 2004 Presidential Elections and the Orange Revolution," *Problems of Post-Communism* 52, no. 2 (2005): 42.

[345] Taras Kuzio, "Nationalism, Identity and Civil Society in Ukraine: Understanding the Orange Revolution," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 43, no. 3 (2010): 286-289.

[346] Kuzio, "From Kuchma to Yushchenko Ukraine's 2004 Presidential Elections and the Orange Revolution.", 38.

the scientists in the West have anticipated that the Orange Revolution, which was backed by the West and Central Ukraine, will strengthen democracy in the country, and also will accelerate Ukraine's EU integration process.[347]

However, after the 'honeymoon effect' of the Orange Revolution, scholars began to approach the event more critically. For instance, Ivan Katchanovski argued that contrary to what some researchers described, the event took place during 2004 presidential election in Ukraine, was an 'evolution' in the political structure of Ukraine rather than a 'revolution'. By evolution, Katchanovski meant a gradual change in areas such as leadership, political institutions, parties and values. Moreover, he warned that such gradual evolution may not necessarily lead the country towards more democratic pattern.[348]

In this regard, Paul D'Anieri claims that change of leaders does not mean that the process will result with radical political changes in the country. For him, changing institutions is more important than changing the leaders. In this context, he points out: "Ukraine underwent a tweaking of its constitution, not a *revolution*… there has been only modest institutional change, and some of it has arguably been for the worse."[349] Adam Eberhardt is another scholar who critically approach to Orange Revolution in terms of whether it brought democracy to Ukraine or not. For the author, Orange Revolution was far away bringing any revolutionary transformation in functioning state structure.[350]

Indeed, opinion polls lifted the lid on the status of the Orange Revolution. According to a survey conducted in 2005, participants were asked to answer the statement: "what was the Orange Revolution, in your opinion?" 36.3 percent of attenders marked that it was a coup d'état organized by the West or opposition leaders while only 33.3 percent of them pointed out that it was a conscious struggle of the united

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[347] David Lane, "The Orange Revolution: 'People's Revolution' or Revolutionary Coup?," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 10, no. 4 (2008): 529.

[348] Ivan Katchanovski, "The Orange Evolution? The 'Orange Revolution' and Political Changes in Ukraine," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 24, no. 4 (2008): 380.

[349] Paul D'Anieri, "What Has Changed in Ukrainian Politics?: Assessing the Implications of the Orange Revolution," *Problems of Post-Communism* 52, no. 5 (2005): 82-83.

[350] Adam Eberhardt, "The Revolution That Never Was : Five Years of 'Orange' Ukraine," *Centre for Eastern Studies*, 2009, 44.

people to protect their rights. This poll, which was made shortly after the event, revealed that Yanukovych's votes could not be explained only by fraud in election.[351]

In short, mostly scholars first evaluated the Orange Revolution as a democratic revolution which supposed to change political landscape of Ukraine towards a democratic state. However, the end of 'honeymoon' of the event caused a disillusion and scholars working on this field began to focus on the reasons behind the failure of Orange Revolution.

However, only a few researchers aimed to question how the 2004 elections have marginalized a segment of society in Ukraine. As noted, the tension during the congress in Severodentsk in Lugansk reached to the point of threats for declaration of autonomy in Eastern and Southern of Ukraine. In this context, it is critical to assess the impact of Orange Revolution on polarization of Ukrainian people. David Lane expresses his opinion as: "the events of the Orange Revolution did not initiate, and the consequences did not effect, integrating mechanisms creating solidarity (the formation of a 'civic Ukraine') but led to greater division between East and West Ukraine."[352] For Lane, Orange Revolution caused more polarization between Ukrainians when Donbas people defined the supporter of the revolution as 'Others'. On one hand, they associated the 'Others', West Ukrainians, with the EU and on the other hand 'Us', East Ukrainians, with Russia.[353]

Scholars such as Joanna Koniecza did not think that the division of Ukrainians in terms of identity issue could pave the way for disintegration of the country. Even though, Koniecza accepted the fact that such polarization bears the risk of constant social conflict she stated: "the issue of a possible splitting of Ukraine into the 'pro-Russian' east and the 'pro-European' west is not a real problem that anyone in Ukraine would seriously consider."[354] Notwithstanding, this perception of the Eastern Ukrainians signaled serious threats to the territorial integrity of Ukraine during the

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[351] Viktor Stepanenko, "How Ukrainians View Their Orange Revolution: Public Opinion and the National Peculiarities of Citizenry Political Activities," *Demokratizatsiya* 13, no. 4 (2005): 597.

[352] Lane, "The Orange Revolution: 'People's Revolution' or Revolutionary Coup?", 545.

[353] Lane.

[354] Joanna Konieczna, "The Orange Revolution in Ukraine. An Attempt to Understand the Reasons," *Centre for Eastern Studies*, no. 18 (2005), 23-24.

Orange Revolution. According to Vicki L. Hesli, there were two critical issues to be resolved in Ukraine after 2004 election: the first was to fulfill the high expectations from Orange Revolution and the other one was to heal the division of society.[355]

In this context, Ararat L. Osipian and Alexandr L. Osipian attempted to reveal the risk which lies at the root of Ukrainian society. Investigating the reasons behind why Donbas voted for Yanukovych during 2004 presidential election Ararat and Alexandr assert several reasons such as different culture, characteristic of Donbas identity and the mass media. For the authors, these are the main reasons which contributed to the constitution of the Donbas identity. Going beyond merely accusation of fraud in elections the authors take the supporters of Yanukovych into consideration and warn that anti-Orange movement should be studied more seriously.[356]

In brief, political landscape of Ukraine from 1991 to Orange Revolution gradually contributed for the isolation of Donbas from Ukraine. In this regard, 2004 presidential election campaign particularly played a critical role. Two presidential candidates represented two poles of Ukraine which occurred throughout the history since the Treaty of Pereyaslav. This polarization was maintained in first decade of Ukraine's independence but deepened during the Orange Revolution. First time, Donbas people threatened Kyiv with the federalization of Ukraine and even threatened territorial integrity of the country with the secession. The following section clarifies political developments in Ukraine between the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan demonstrations which prepared the basis of war in Donbas.

4.4. Developments Towards Euromaidan

As explained in previous section, after the third round of presidential election Yushchenko became the new president of Ukraine while Tymoshenko, the favorite of the Maidan masses, was installed as prime minister. Although the two leaders

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[355] Vicki L. Hesli, "The Orange Revolution: 2004 Presidential Election(s) in Ukraine," *Electoral Studies* 25, no. 1 (2006), 176.

[356] Osipian and Osipian, "Why Donbass Votes for Yanukovych: Confronting the Ukrainian Orange Revolution.", 495.

proved to unite against Kuchma and bring him down, they could not work together due to their different priorities. In this new period, the Prime Minister Tymoshenko adopted more populist policy by raising pensions, wages and student stipends. Furthermore, contrary to expectations, she tried to impose state control on prices. This was a critical issue since businessmen anticipated liberal market economy rather than state controlled one. Hence, the growth of the economy slowed.[357]

The main differences between Yushchenko and Tymoshenko appeared in dealing with the issue of unfair privatization took place in 1990s. Tymoshenko appealed for redoing those corrupt privatizations. Indeed, during the presidential election campaign Yushchenko promised for redoing the privatization of steelworks 'Kryvorizhstal' but in February 2005, he stated that the illegal privatization in the early 1990s will be reconsidered. Nevertheless, Yushchenko tried to keep the number limited to 20-30 while Tymoshenko demanded around 3000 re-privatizations.[358]

However, the situation was much more complicated than it seemed. Behind each of political leaders strong businessmen was standing, and while re-privatization could develop in favor of one group it could create a disadvantage for another group. For instance, Yanukovych was receiving the strongest supports from Rinat Akhmetov, the king of metallurgy and mining from Donetsk, Andriy Kliuev, a businessman from Donetsk, and gas trader Dmytro Firtash. Yushchenko took advantage of the support of four major businessmen: chocolate giant Petro Poroshenko, two nuclear power companions Mykola Martynenko and David Zhvania and trucker Yevhen Chervonenko. Donbas Industrial Union, a rival of Akhmetov in Donetsk region, supported the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc.[359]

Under such circumstances, Yushchenko, as a former head of Ukraine's National Bank, switched his opinion on this issue and started promoting more free-market policy and acted unwillingly to deal with the 'oligarchs' who acquired wealth as a result of the unfair privatization. In this context, he stated: "it is time to bury the war

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[357] Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 640.

[358] Anders Åslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It* (Washington, DC: Versa Press, 2015), 72.

[359] Åslund., 71.

hatchet and forget where it lies."[360] Besides, except few cases the members of corrupt Kuchma government were not brought to trial. Particularly Kuchma's right-hand man, Medvedchuk who was thought to be critical player of engineering election fraud was never brought to justice. These developments paved the way for a disillusion among the 'pro-Orangists'. Meanwhile, by adopting more populist discourse Tymoshenko used Yushchenko's policies to gain more popularity.[361]

The tension in the Orange Coalition has reached to another dimension when the President Yushchenko dismissed the Prime Minister, Tymoshenko in September 2005. Moreover, by appointing Yuriy Yekhanurov as a new Prime Minister, Yushchenko made a deal with his former rival, Yanukovych. In terms of Yanukovych, Yushchenko agreed on an amnesty against election fraud charges. Let alone redoing the privatization Yekhanurov praised the oligarchs by naming them 'national bourgeoisie'.[362] In these circumstances, the new political landscape of Ukraine could not be described more accurately than Peter Lavelle who stated: "Kuchma must be laughing up his sleeve. His successor is endorsing out of weakness, the corrupt political and economic system that he created--after all that was what Viktor Yanukovych was supposed to do."[363] All these developments pawed the way for the failure of the Orange Coalition which made its supporters to feel as deceived.

In these premises, Tymoshenko did not support the 'Our Ukraine' party in the next parliamentary elections and formed a new alliance led by her own party. The election which held on March 26, 2006, revealed a new situation. Yanukovych's Party of Regions won the most votes in the elections while Tymoshenko Bloc came in second place, ahead of Yushchenko's Our Ukraine. Tymoshenko hoped to be prime minister but Yushchenko was reluctant to appoint her as a new prime minister. At this time, by accepting to be speaker of the parliament, Oleksandr Moroz, the leader of Socialist Party, switched the side and joined Yanukovych's camp.[364]

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[360] Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine.*, 174.

[361] Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History.*, 640.

[362] Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine.*, 175.

[363] Kubicek.

[364] Taras Kuzio, "The Orange Revolution at the Crossroads," *Demokratizatsiya* 14, no. 4 (2006), 482.

Consequently, Yushchenko had to appoint Yanukovych as a new prime minister of Ukraine because Yanukovych's side consisted new majority in the parliament. Soon, 40 of 54 the deputy minsters posts were given to leaders from the Donbas region.[365] Moreover, the parliament unconstitutionally dismissed pro-Western foreign minister Borys Tarasiuk. It was unconstitutional because dismissing the foreign minister was a presidential prerogative. On 3 April 2007, Yushchenko, whose authority was under threat, ordered the re-election by dissolving the Assembly. Although Yanukovych's camp refused to accept the president's decision and dubbed the action as a coup d'état two leaders had reached an agreement in May for new election in September 2007.[366]

Yanukovych's Party of Regions again won most of the votes in 2007 parliamentary elections. While his party was the first with 34.37 percent, Tymoshenko's Bloc won 30.71 percent of the votes. Our Ukraine 14.15, Communist Party 5.39 and Lytvyn Bloc gained 3.96 percent of the votes.[367] Hoping to bring all sides together Yushchenko offered to form a National Unity Government, comprise of all major political parties. However, Tymoshenko refused to work together with Yanukovych. Ultimately, Our Ukraine and Tymoshenko's Bloc, two Orangist parties, created a coalition to form the government. On December 18, Yuliya Tymoshenko became Prime Minister once again.[368]

Being afraid of the growing popularity of Timoshenko, Yushchenko began to use his veto to block almost all steps of Timoshenko as he did during the period of Yanukovych's government. Obviously, Yushchenko's concern was due to the fear of losing the next presidential elections to Timoshenko. However, as it will be presented, these dissidences and personal rivalry between Timoshenko and Yushchenko led the politics of Ukraine completely opposite direction of Orange

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[365] Bohdan Harasymiw, "Ukraine's 'Orange Revolution' and Why It Fizzled" (Saskatoon, 2007), 17.

[366] Nathaniel Copsey, "The Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections of 2006," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 24, no. 2 (2006), 299.

[367] Copsey, 300.

[368] "Timeline: Ukraine's Politics since Orange Revolution," *REUTERS*, 2008, accessed August 6, 2019, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-coalition-chronology/timeline-ukraines-politics-since-orange-revolution-idUSTRE497A6W20081008.

Revolution.[369]

In sum, the period from 2005 to 2010 did not produce any revolutionary changes in the country. The country's division as Western and Eastern part (particularly Donetsk and Lugansk) was announced once again and consolidated even more. Orange coalition proved not able to work in harmony and conditions served in favor of Yanukovych. Thus, Yanukovych won the presidential election held on 7 February 2010, in a runoff election with 48.95 percent of the votes against Timoshenko's 45.47 percent.[370]

Yanukovych's election as president was an interesting phenomenon because he was considered being involved in election fraud in 2004. Anders Åslund lists five major reasons for why Ukrainians elected Yanukovych in 2010 election.[371] First reason for Åslund stemmed from Ukraine's division in elections. The author argues that all elections in Ukraine take place between the West and Center against South and East. This dichotomy mobilizes one group against the other and 2010 election was the turn of East and South to win. The second reason was the failure of Yushchenko administration where Timoshenko was the prime minister for the half of that period. Thus, people also blamed Timoshenko for this failure. Third reason was the economic crisis of 2008-2009 in Ukraine which had dramatic impact on living standard. Fourth reason was Yushchenko's attitude during the election campaign. He aimed to attract nationalist votes from Timoshenko and forced her to further in the direction of nationalism which startled centrist voters in favor of Yanukovych. The last reason was the oligarchs' decisive support to Yanukovych. He was the favorite candidate of Rinat Akhmetov, Dmytro Firtash, and Andriy Kliuev, the most notable oligarchs of the country. Thus, Yanukovych had much more financial and thereby media back up than his rival.[372]

Yanukovych quickly consolidated his power in the country. He formed new

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[369] Anders Åslund, *How Ukraine Became a Market Economy and Democracy* (New York: Peter G. Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2009), 231-232.

[370] Nathaniel Copsey and Natalia Shapovalova, "The Ukrainian Presidential Election of 2010," *Representation* 46, no. 2 (2010), 220.

[371] Åslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It*, 81.

[372] Åslund., 81.

administration which composed of the communists, the Lytvyn Bloc and 20 deputies who switched side from Timoshenko Bloc and Our Ukraine to join Yanukovych's coalition. In essence, the new government was consisted of oligarchs based on regions which could also be named as the coalition of nine oligarchic groups, and the cabinet was made up of several large businessmen from Donetsk.[373]

In short, Yanukovych enjoyed great support not only from his voters but also from the most notable oligarchs of the country. However, this power was not enough for him. Apart from presidential administration, he began to dominate the government, the parliament as well as the courts. In addition, the Constitutional Court reinstated the presidential system of 1996 which was modified to parliamentary-presidential political system in 2004.[374] Moreover, in August 2011, Timoshenko was arrested and charged with abuse of power and sentenced to seven years in prison. Consequently, Yanukovych eliminated all possible opposition groups along with state institutions and became sole power in Ukraine.[375]

Despite these developments, Yanukovych presented himself as an economic reformer. He adopted an economic reform called 'Stability and Reform' and established a Reform Committee where himself became a chairman.[376] He also introduced an economic reform program covering the period between 2010 and 2014.[377] However, the 'reforms' that Yanukovych attempted to implement neither created a transparent nor competitive economy but only benefited certain big businessmen. In other word, he created his own version of market economy which Åslund called 'capitalism in one family'. In this context, Åslund states: "Yanukovych was concentrating power in the hands of his family. Increasingly, he

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[373] Åslund.

[374] Tadeusz A. Olszański, "Ukraine's Constitutional Court Reinstates Presidential System," *OSW*, 2010, accessed August 6, 2019, https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2010-10-06/ukraines-constitutional-court-reinstates-presidential-system.

[375] "Ukraine's Ex-PM Tymoshenko Arrested," *Russia Today*, 2011, accessed August, https://www.rt.com/news/tymoshenko-prime-minister-arrest-ukraine/.

[376] "Янукович Нашел Себе Новую Должность," *Українська Правда*, 2010, accessed March 19, 2019, https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2010/03/17/4870605/.

[377] "Prosperous Society, Competitive Economy, Effective State: Program of Economic Reform for 2010-2014," Committee of Economic Reform of the President of Ukraine, accessed March 19, 2019, https://www.president.gov.ua/docs/Programa_reform_FINAL_2.pdf.

appointed family loyalists from Donetsk to many national and regional posts, especially friends of his son Oleksandr, who were called *the family*."[378] In December 2010, the president reduced the number of ministries and dismissed 15 of them. As a result, Yanukovych gained full control of state power in Ukraine.[379]

On October 28, 2012, ordinary parliamentary election was held in Ukraine. In this election, opposition did quite well. In total, the opposition gathered 50 percent of the votes, among them 'Fatherland' of Timoshenko and Arseniy Yatsenyuk received 25.5 percent, Vitaliy Klitschko's party 'Punch' 14 percent and the nationalist 'Freedom' party got 10.4 percent. Party of Regions and its traditional ally Communist Party obtained 30 and 13 percent of the votes, respectively.[380]

On December 24, 2012, Yanukovych appointed new government favoring only small group of people. To describe the new cabinet V. Dymchenko state:

> On the whole, new government emanates family warmth. A small circle of close friends and relatives. Great company to meet the Christmas and New Year holidays in. And most importantly Viktor Yanukovych found a gift for each one to put under the Christmas tree.[381]

Meanwhile, the number of oligarchs in the government also constantly reduced from nine in 2010 to only two names, the Firtash and Akhmetov groups in 2013. Marginalizing the big businessmen and narrowing the base of competent leaders in the cabinet Yanukovych took a great risk to be able to maintain the power without strong back up.[382]

Under these conditions, negotiations with the European Union was the only hope for people to believe in positive future of the country. However, Russia was also very

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[378] Åslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It*., 88.

[379] "Янукович Уволил 15 Министров, Но Часть Переназначил," *UNIAN*, 2010, accessed March 20, 2019, https://www.unian.net/politics/435775-yanukovich-uvolil-15-ministrov-no-chast-perenaznachil.html.

[380] Tadeusz A. Olszański, "After the Parliamentary Elections in Ukraine: A Tough Victory for the Party of Regions," *OSW*, 2012, accessed August 6, 2019, https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2012-11-07/after-parliamentary-elections-ukraine-a-tough-victory-party-regions.

[381] V. Dymchenko, "Family Cabinet, Holiday Prices," *Censor*, 2012, accessed March 20, 2019, https://censor.net.ua/en/resonance/228291/family_cabinet_holiday_prices.

[382] Åslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It*., 89.

enthusiastic about Ukraine to join the Customs Union (CU) while Yanukovych was hoping to get cheaper gas from Russia. He achieved an agreement with Russia to reduce gas prices by 30 percent in exchange of extending Russian naval base in Sevastopol until 2042. However, estranging Ukraine away from European Union and making it a member of Eurasian Customs Union was the be-all and end-all of Russia.[383]

In this context, Russia took more offensive view to pressure Ukraine. In February 2013, Putin stated that integration processes in the post-Soviet sphere is inevitable. He argued: "tight integration is an objective global process. No rude shouting or screaming can stop it on our territories."[384] Sergey Glazyev, Putin's special advisor, pointed out that Ukraine must choose between the Customs Union and the European Union. He stated: "we are preparing to tighten customs procedures if Ukraine makes the suicidal step to sign the Association Agreement with the EU."[385] In this sense, it can be said that Russia launched a trade war against Ukraine to dissuade it from signing Association Agreement (AA) with the European Union.

Russia's intimidation had opposite impact on Yanukovych. Rather than favoring the relations with Customs Union he pursued pro-European policy. In his speech, Yanukovych stated:

> For Ukraine, association with the European Union must become an important stimulus for forming a modern European state. At the same time, we must preserve and continue deepening our relations and processes of integration with Russia, countries of the Eurasian community.[386]

On November 6, the president expressed: "By choosing to get closer to the European

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[383] Shaun Walker, "Vladimir Putin Offers Ukraine Financial Incentives to Stick with Russia," *The Guardian*, 2013, accessed August 6, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/17/ukraine-russia-leaders-talks-kremlin-loan-deal.

[384] Anders Åslund, "Ukraine's Choice: European Association Agreement or Eurasian Union?," *Policy Brief*, no. September (2013), 8.

[385] Åslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It*., 96.

[386] "Ukraine Defiant in Face of Russian Pressure over EU Path," *Moscow Times*, 2013, March 20, 2019, https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/08/25/ukraine-defiant-in-face-of-russian-pressure-over-eu-path-a27058

Union, we are making a pragmatic choice for optimal and rational modernization."[387] Yanukovych repeatedly remarked that he would sign the Association Agreement with the EU and Ukrainians started believing in him. However, on November 21, Yanukovych announced that even though he plans to participate in the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius on November 28-29, he refuses to sign the deal with the EU.[388] In an interview, he pointed out:

> Do we have to go blindfolded and run anywhere? We already were running very fast. We overcame in a short period a very big distance. We may get problems…As soon as we reach a level that is comfortable for us, when it meets our interests, when we agree on normal terms, then we will talk about signing.[389]

The U-turn of Yanukovych from his pro-Western policy caused great dissatisfaction among Ukrainian people. The same evening Mustafa Nayem, an independent journalist appealed people on Facebook: "Come on guys, let's be serious. If you really want to do something, don not just 'like' this post. Write that you are ready, and we can try to start something... Let's meet at 10:30 p.m. near the monument to independence in the middle of the Maidan."[390] At that night, about a thousand protesters showed up in the Maidan and following days it was swarmed by demonstrators. Most of them called him two-faced president who first tantalized the people and then betrayed them. World boxing champion and a well-known opposition figure Vitaly Klitschko addressed the crowd: "Today they stole our dream, our dream of living in a normal country."[391]

On November 30, 2013, Ukrainian riot police used violence against population to

[387] James M. Gomez and Kateryna Choursina, "Yanukovych Defends Ukraine EU Trade Pact as Competitiveness Lags," *Bloomberg*, 2013, accessed March 20, 2019, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-11-06/yanukovych-defends-ukraine-eu-trade-pact-as-competitiveness-lags.

[388] Oksana Grytsenko, "Yanukovych Confirms Refusal to Sign Deal with EU," Kyiv Post, 2013, accessed August 6, 2019, https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/yanukovych-confirms-refusal-to-sign-deal-with-eu-332493.html.

[389] Oksana Grytsenko, "Yanukovych Confirms Refusal to Sign Deal with EU," *Kyiv Post*, 2013, accessed March 20, 2019, https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/yanukovych-confirms-refusal-to-sign-deal-with-eu-332493.html.

[390] Mustafa Nayem, "Uprising in Ukraine: How It All Began," *Open Society Foundations*, 2014, accessed March 21, 2019, https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/uprising-ukraine-how-it-all-began.

[391] "Ukraine Protests after Yanukovych EU Deal Rejection," *BBC News*, 2013, accessed March 21, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25162563.

clear out the Maidan from demonstrations. Their excuse was to install Christmas tree. As a result of police violence, 35 demonstrators were injured and 31 of them were detained. This was a turning point for the masses because police's pressure even escalated the situation into worse. Before the police attack on protestors, Maidan demonstrations were composed of mainly by students which explains the reason why initially it was called 'Student Maidan'. Oksana Forostyna explains the beginning of Euromaidan demonstrations as: "the morning straight after that night, and the next day, Maidan changed: people who had never been politically active before, came to Maidan. It was not about signing the agreement with the EU, it was about being against the regime and its brutality." [392]

For Åslund, three developments occurred simultaneously which changed the landscape of politic in Ukraine. The first one was the opposition's appeal for massive peaceful demonstrations on December 1. Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators showed up in the streets and reoccupied the Independence Square. To support the protestors, the EU ambassador and nine ambassadors of the other EU countries walked together with the people in Maidan. The second development was the defections in Yanukovych's camp. Serhiy Lyovochkin, the chief of his staff, resigned though Yanukovych rejected his resignation. Some of deputies from the Party of Regions began to switch their side and join opposition. In L'viv, the special forces of the Ministry of Interior refused to obey directives to attack on the demonstrators and soon other regions followed his attitude. The third development was the *titushki* phenomenon in the Maidan.[393] The so-called *titushki* group was paid hooligans with sportswear and masks brought by the authorities for provocation. Their attacks on peaceful demonstrators and riot police changed the nature of demonstrations which became a violent incident.[394]

Of course, there were some other reasons that made the demonstrators even more angry. The main of them was the deal between Yanukovych and Putin. After several

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[392] Oksana Forostyna, "How to Oust a Dictator in 93 Days," *Eurozine*, 2014, accessed March 21, 2019, https://www.eurozine.com/how-to-oust-a-dictator-in-93-days/.

[393] Åslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It*, 101-102.

[394] "Львовский 'Беркут' Отказался Выполнять Приказы Киева," *Украинская Правда*, 2013, accessed March 22, 2019, https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2013/11/30/7003801/.

meetings of these two leaders an agreement concluded on December 17. Prime minister of Ukraine, Mykola Azarov claimed that the President Yanukovych had reached an extremely beneficial agreement that will bring the Ukrainian economy to its feet. In addition, under this agreement, from January 1, gas prices in Ukraine will be reduced to more reasonable levels.[395] Russian president announced that Russia would invest 15 billion USD in Ukraine's Eurobonds. Besides, Anton Siluanov, the Russian finance minister added after the meeting: "Russia would acquire Ukrainian bonds to a value of 3 billion USD for two years at a 5% interest rate which can start at the end of 2013. Possible further acquisitions will be made if needed."[396] According the agreement Russia also eased some of trade sanctions on Ukrainian exports to Russia that implemented due to Yanukovych's previous intention to sign the deal with the EU.[397]

However, the leaders announced that no deal was made in terms of Ukraine's integration with Customs Union. Since this was a sensitive issue for that time, both sides avoided to bring the integration case bring to the fore. Indeed, in some way or another Yanukovych and Putin obtained what they wanted the most. In short term, Putin secured Kyiv's possible cooperation with Brussel and in long term Ukraine's gradual integration with Customs Union was inevitable due to the growing economic dependence of Kyiv on Moscow. On the other side, Yanukovych guaranteed lower gas prices and Russia's economic support to Ukraine. For Yanukovych the deal with Kremlin would save Ukraine from financial bankruptcy.[398]

Moreover, the deal was a personnel success for Yanukovych. During the negotiations for the Association Agreement with the EU, Brussel was pressurizing Yanukovych to strength the rule of law and promote democracy in the country which was directly a threat on his family-based administration. In contrast, Moscow did not demand any

[395] Shaun Walker, "Vladimir Putin Offers Ukraine Financial Incentives to Stick with Russia," *The Guardian*, 2013, accessed March 22, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/17/ukraine-russia-leaders-talks-kremlin-loan-deal.

[396] Arkadiusz Sarna and Agata Wierzbowska-Miazga, "The Moscow Deals: Russia Offers Yanukovych Conditional Support," *Center for Eastern Studies*, 2013, accessed March 22, 2019, https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2013-12-18/moscow-deals-russia-offers-yanukovych-conditional-support.

[397] Sarna and Wierzbowska-Miazga.

[398] Sarna and Wierzbowska-Miazga.

such reforms from Ukraine and thereby Yanukovych could pursue his authoritarian regime in the country. Moreover, Russia's financial support could increase the possibility of re-election of Yanukovych in 2015 presidential election.[399]

Although the deal did not mention about Ukraine's integration with Russian led Customs Union, demonstrators perceived that Yanukovych 'sold the future of Ukraine'. Hence, after Yanukovych's deal with Putin the stalemate between opposition and the government reinforced. On January 16, 2014, Yanukovych made a new step which was a great mistake of him to be able to stay in power. The president forced the parliament to adopt new anti-protest law. According to the new laws, any unauthorized tent, stage or amplifier installation at the Independence Square of Kyiv for protesting was banned. Moreover, whosoever provides facilities or equipment for such demonstrations shall be fined or detained. In fact, the law provides for up to 15 years of imprisonment for a mass violation of public order.[400] This dictatorial law did not solve the problem rather it triggered the violence in Maidan when three people were killed. Moreover, between February 18-20 more people were killed by snipers. The opposition named those people the "Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred."[401]

The massacre of February 18-20 had a great impact on parliamentarians that a mass defection took place from the Party of Regions to opposition camp. Seventy-seven deputies under the influence of oligarchs Akhmetov and Firtash switched their side. This was an important development which brought the majority of parliament to opposition camp.[402]

Meanwhile, the foreign ministers of Germany, Poland and France came for

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[399] Sarna and Wierzbowska-Miazga.

[400] "Ukraine's President Signs Anti-Protest Bill into Law," *BBC News*, 2014, accessed August 6, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25771595.

[401] "Ukraine Marks Day of Heroes of Heavenly Hundred," *Ukrinform*, 2018, accessed March 22, 2019, https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-society/2406440-ukraine-marks-day-of-heroes-of-heavenly-hundred.html.

[402] "Party of Regions Faction Becomes Opposition," *Kyiv Post*, 2014, March 22, 2019, https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/party-of-regions-faction-becomes-opposition-337488.html.

mediation between the government and the opposition.[403] During the negotiations Yanukovych asked for a pause to take a phone call from Russian president. After the phone call with Putin, Yanukovych made considerable concessions concerning the negotiations. At the same time, the last loyal presidential guards started to abandon their post. It was a tragic moment for Yanukovych to watch how the security guards were leaving the presidential administration building from his office window.[404]

Agreement between Yanukovych and the opposition composed of six points. The first, the constitution of 2004 will be restored. The second, the constitution will be improved in September 2014. The third, new presidential election will be held until the end of 2014. The fourth, a joint group from oppositions, authorities and the Council of Europe will be organized to investigate the recent massacre. The fifth, the president was guaranteeing not to implement a state of emergency. Finally, the parliament was asked to adopt a new amnesty law for demonstrators.[405]

Apparently, the call from Putin was the most determinant to end the negotiations because it already made clear the guidelines of following days for Yanukovych. The next day he departed to Kharkov, a city in the east of Ukraine and stayed there for a few days before fleeing to Russia. The head of parliament Aleksandr Turchynov, one of the former leaders of Fatherland party, became interim president while Arseniy Yatsenyuk was appointed the new prime minister of Ukraine.[406]

Consequently, Euromaidan different from almost bloodless Orange Revolution, involved in violence and became a turning point in Ukraine. The following part analyzes political formations in Donbas before the war erupted in the region. The section is critical in terms of seeing whether if there were any 'freedom' or pro-Russian movements in Donbas before 2014 or the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Lugansk People's Republic (LPR) came out from nowhere but

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[403] Serhy Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 110.

[404] Yekelchyk.

[405] Åslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It*., 108.

[406] Shaun Walker, "Ousted Ukrainian Leader Viktor Yanukovych Reported to Be in Russia," *The Guardian*, 2014, accessed August 6, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/27/viktor-yanukovych-russia-ukrainian-president-moscow.

created merely by Russia.

4.5. Political Formations in Donbas before the 'DPR' and the 'LPR'

Since 2014, a certain part of Donetsk and Lugansk are de-facto ruled by separatist forces during last five years sustainable peace could not be achieved by Ukrainian government and Russia-backed separatist in Donbas. Therefore, it is worth to get a closer look at political system of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. In other word, it is significant to clarify which kind of governance system these two de-facto entities in Eastern Ukraine which can help us to deepen our understanding of Donbas conflict. In this respect, this part of the thesis concentrates on political landscape of so-called 'DPR' and 'LPR'.

In general, newly established states scrutinize history to find certain materials or even to create some which help to legalize their existence. This process demands more effort in the case of self-proclaimed entities which does not get support from international communities. In this regard, to justify their entities, the separatists in Donbas link 'DPR' and 'LPR' with the short-lived Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Republic. Lasting not more than few months in 1918, Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Republic had been organized by Bolsheviks to balance the Ukrainian People's Republic and the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic. In order to emphasize its existence throughout history, the DPR adopted the tricolor flag of the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Republic by adding two-headed eagle to it.[407] Besides, it is worth to investigate other political formations or narratives that took place in the region before Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics.

Scholars, who explain the Donbas separation entirely as a result of local unrest against Kyiv's policies since 1990s, argue that grassroots irredentism was existed in Donbas before pro-Western Maidan demonstrations in Ukraine. In this regard, in her celebrated book, Anna Matveeva states:

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[407] Roman Solchanyk, "The Politics of State Building: Centre-Periphery Relations in Post-Soviet," *Europe-Asia Studies* 46, no. 1 (1994), 59.

> One [of] grassroots movement with a nascent irredentist agenda was *Interdvijenie* (International Movement of Donbas) in Donetsk, which was pressing for Donbas autonomy throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. In the 2000s the idea that southeast was distinct from Kyiv and the rest of Ukraine started to be discussed in pro-Russia intellectual circles of Odesa, Dnipro, Donetsk, and Kharkiv. This did not imply breaking away from Ukraine but sought to maintain cultural and historical connectedness with Russia.[408]

In fact, at the end of 1989 a Popular Movement of Donbas had been formed in Lugansk which opposed 'nationalist' and 'extremist' movements in the country. However, the movement supported issues such as democratization or Ukraine's sovereignty. In contrast, holding its founding meeting in December 1990 Donbas International Movement aimed to organize a local referendum not to support independence of Ukraine. Following the independence of Ukraine, the movement called for a referendum for an autonomy status within Ukraine. Likewise, the Democratic Movement of Donbas, which was established in Lugansk, urged Donbas people not to vote in favor of Ukrainian independence in the referendum. Instead, called a referendum on the establishment of Donetsk-Krivoy Rog as an autonomous region of federated Ukraine within the Soviet Union.[409]

Another region-based movement in southern Ukraine was so-called Novorossiya movement, appeared in Odessa in 1990. It's one of the main leaders was Oleksii Surylov, a professor at Odessa State University. For Surylov, the inhabitants of southern Ukraine were a separate ethnos composed by the descendants of people from Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Poland, Yugoslavia, France and Germany and thereby, this region should have autonomous status. "In November 1991 it was reported that representatives from the Odessa, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Crimean oblast had met in Odessa to discuss the question of forming a new state formation, *Novorossiya*."[410] Similarly, the representatives aimed to achieve an autonomous status within a federated Ukraine rather than independence. Therefore, they supported Ukraine's independence. To sum up, such formations

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[408] Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, 79.

[409] Solchanyk, "The Politics of State Building: Centre-Periphery Relations in Post-Soviet.": 59-60.

[410] Solchanyk, 60.

during the independence period of Ukraine wished to have autonomy within sovereign Ukraine.[411]

Actually, a region, with Russian ethnic minority groups, was natural to have some intellectual formations demanding autonomy at the beginning of 1990s or wishing more advance relations with Russian Federation after the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In this respect, these grassroot movements in Donbas should not be exaggerated to form a basis for current 'DPR' and 'LPR' because those movements did not have much impact on Donbas people. This issue well reflected on the results of the referendum on independence of Ukraine in Donetsk, Lugansk or Odessa with 83.90%, 83.86% and 85.38% of votes, respectively.[412]

Apart from the abovementioned grassroot movements in early 1990s, there was not any distinctive political formation in Eastern Ukraine until Orange Revolution. The Party of Regions was the main entity for Donbas residents to express themselves politically. At the end of 2004, during the presidential election turbulence in Ukraine, the voices for autonomous status raised again in Donbas as a result of Yanukovych's decomposer method throughout his election campaign.

In picture 1, Yanukovych's election campaign tried to convince Donbas people that how Viktor Yuschenko actually see Ukrainians. According to the campaign, there were three classes of Ukrainians in the eyes of Yushchenko and Donbas people represents the third class which was the most 'inferior' one. Obviously deepening the narratives of dividedness of Ukrainian population according to regions were insignificant for Yanukovych for the sake of victory in the election.

As a counter-reaction to 'Orange' demonstrations Yanukovych's supporters held a conference in Severodonetsk (Lugansk oblast) to discuss the formation of South-Eastern Ukrainian Autonomous Republic.[413]

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[411] Solchanyk, 60.

[412] "Results of the All-Ukrainian Referendum, December 1, 1991," State Archival Service of Ukraine, 1991, accessed August 6, 2019, https://archives.gov.ua/Sections/15r-V_Ref/index.php?11.

[413] Beichelt and Pavlenko, "The Presidential Election and Constitutional Reform.", 66.

Picture 1. An Election Campaign Poster during 2004 Presidential Election in Ukraine
Source: Antikor, 2014, accessed April 30, 2019, https://antikor.com.ua/articles/8483-medvedchuk_gotovil_separatistskij_bunt_s_2004_goda

Again, for Yanukovych such activities were kind of tool to win the election through posing a threat on territorial integrity of the country. However, Yanukovych's election campaign encouraged some other separatist movements in Donbas during and after the Orange Revolution. One of such political initiative was the "Union of the Born by Revolution" remembered by a tent camp composed of five tents which was installed on the night of February 22-23, 2005 at the Lenin Square in Donetsk. The participants of the action issued 12 demands, among them were the federalization of Ukraine and giving the Russian language the status of the second state. In response, on March 1, the Voroshilov District Court of Donetsk ordered the members of the organization to remove the tents. After the liquidation of the tent camp, chairman of the union, Anderi Purgin, stated that there were 300-400 people registered in the organization and 50 of them were active members.[414]

In 2005, Andrei Purgin became co-founder of another political organization called 'Donetsk Republic', as a heritage of the Donetsk–Krivoy Rog Soviet Republic of 1918. The main goal of the members of the association was to grant a special status

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[414] Анна Курцановская, "Союз Рожденных Революцией: 'Пора' - Терроризирует Донецк," *Новости Донбасса*, 2005, accessed May 1, 2019, http://novosti.dn.ua/article/34-soyuz-rozhdennykh-revolyucyey-pora-terroryzyruet-doneck.

to the eastern regions of Ukraine.[415] On December 6, 2005, fighting against the 'orange plague' of President Yushchenko was announced as one of the aims of the organization. In 2006, three political initiatives, the 'Union of the Born by the Revolution', 'Vigilant Movement' (Рух пыльных), 'Donetsk Republic' united into one political force.[416]

On February 9, 2006, in Donetsk, the Interregional Federation of Public Organizations 'Donetsk Federal Republic' was established, headed by Alexander Turcan. The federation included the regional political networks such as 'Donetsk Republic', 'Dnipropetrovsk Republic', 'Lugansk Republic', 'Zaporozhye Republic', 'Kharkov Republic', 'Kherson Republic'. The organizers of the 'federation' called themselves the successors of the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog republic and determined to recreate the original, but only 'Ukrainian' borders of the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog.[417]

Moskovsky Komsomolets reports that on April 11, 2007, the flags of the 'Donetsk Republic' appeared on the Maidan in Kyiv. In November 2007, the Donetsk Regional Administrative Court banned the activities of the 'Donetsk Republic'. The leaders of the 'Donetsk Republic', Alexander Turcan, Andrei Purgin and Tatyana Dvoryadkina were accused of separatism. In summer 2008, the justice department of the Donetsk oblast of Ukraine filed a lawsuit with the district administrative court of the city to force the dissolution of the 'Donetsk Republic.' Nevertheless, the ban and the dissolution did not prevent the appearance of the black-red-blue tricolor of the 'Donetsk Republic' on the central square of Donetsk in 2010.[418] It is clear that separatist movements in 2005 showed up mainly in Eastern Ukraine as a reaction to the Orange Revolution by taking courage from the abovementioned conference of Severodonetsk, on December 28, 2004 with the support of Party of Regions.

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[415] "Пургин Андрей Евгеньевич," *Politrada*, accessed May 1, 2019, http://politrada.com/dossier/Andrey-Evgenevich-Purgin/.

[416] "Andrei Purgin," *Revolvy*, accessed May 1, 2019, https://www.revolvy.com/page/Andrei-Purgin.

[417] Инна Бессонова, "Проект 'ДНР': 'Республика' Десять Лет Назад," *112.UA*, 2015, accessed May 5, https://112.ua/statji/proekt-dnr-respublika-desyat-let-nazad-223313.html.

[418] "Проект «Донецкой Республики» На Украине Существовал Давно – Еще При Ющенко," *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, 2014, accessed May 1, 2019, https://www.mk.ru/politics/article/2014/04/07/1010242-proekt-donetskoy-respubliki-na-ukraine-suschestvoval-davno-esche-pri-yuschenko.html.

In 2011, the Director of the Institute of CIS Countries in Ukraine, Vladimir Kornilov published a book called 'Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Republic: A dream shot dead'. In his book Kornilov challenged mainstream Ukraine's history by trying to prove that the Donbas was historically not a part of Ukraine, but it belonged to the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Republic. It should be noted that separatist political formation though did not welcome in Ukraine they have got external support. The movements such as the 'Donetsk Republic', the 'United Donbas', the 'Donbas for Eurasian Union', in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts were promoted by Moscow. Kremlin particularly emphasized that the Donbas's economy would grow if Ukraine integrates with the Russian-led Customs Union rather than the signing the Association Agreement with the EU.[419]

The above-mentioned political formations appeared after Orange Revolution, resurfaced during Euromaidan Revolution which lasted from late 2013 to February 2014. In February 2014, before the ousting of Yanukovych, another meeting held in Kharkov to discuss the status of eastern parts of Ukraine. According to journalist Alexander Chalenko, the former governor of the Kharkov oblast, Mykhailo Dobkin, hosted a round table in his city. For Chalenko, he himself suggested to create an association of the south-eastern lands of Ukraine called 'Novorossiysk League' with the capital in Kharkov, a similar model of the North Italian League. Besides, Dobkin offered to form an autonomous association of the regions of the South-East within Ukraine. Chalenko claimed that his proposal was federalism, which did not encroach on the territorial integrity of Ukraine.[420]

The political narratives about the Eastern Ukraine culminated when Vladimir Putin commented about the region. On April 17, 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin called south-eastern Ukraine 'Novorossiya' and demanded to ensure the rights of the Russians in these regions. Putin stated:

> The [problem] is to ensure the legitimate rights and interests of Russian and Russian-speaking citizens in the south-east of Ukraine. Let me remind you that using the terminology of tsarist times - this is "Novorossiya", and this Kharkov,

[419] Balaban et al., *Guide to the Conflict Zone*, 28.

[420] Александр Чаленко, "Что Такое Новороссия?," *Izvestia*, 2014, accessed May 1, 2019, https://iz.ru/news/567843.

Lugansk, Donetsk, Kherson, Nikolaev, and Odessa were not part of Ukraine in tsarist times. These are all the territories that were transferred to Ukraine in the 20s by the Soviet government. Why did they do it, God knows![421]

Picture 2. Putin's Novorossiya
Source: Mykola Balaban et al., Guide to the Conflict Zone, ed. Alina Maiorova (Lviv: prometheus.ngo, 2017)

As it can be seen on the map, Putin further expanded the territory of historical Novorossiya Governorate by mainly including Kharkov oblast in it. For Putin, these oblasts which consists Novorossiya were never belonged to Ukraine. They were given to Ukraine unlawfully for some reasons which are unclear today. Putin's Novorossiya explanation sparked and encouraged the separatist formations in Eastern Ukraine. In this regard, a new political entity was announced by the separatists under the name of the 'Confederate Alliance of People's Republics of Novorossiya' on

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[421] "Путин Назвал Юго-Восток Украины 'Новороссией' и Потребовал Соблюдения Прав Русских," *Glavred*, 2014, accessed May 1, 2019, https://glavred.info/politics/277269-putin-nazval-yugo-vostok-ukrainy-novorossiey-i-potreboval-soblyudeniya-prav-russkih.html.

May 24, 2014.[422] By this project, separatist leaders hoped to access all Eastern Ukrainians. However, anticipated support could not be received from the other Ukrainian oblasts.

In brief, some political formations like pro-Russian, pro-autonomous or pro-federalist emerged in south-eastern regions of Ukraine before and after the independence of Ukraine. Short-lived Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Republic of 1918 was the main one before independence which was established by the Bolsheviks' support. Last years of the USSR and after the independence years of Ukraine also witnessed some political voices raised in Donbas region. However, the region remained apolitical for a long time. Until Orange Revolution, there was not any serious separation movement in Donbas. Thanks to the Party of Regions and Yanukovych's region-based policies with little help of nationalist parties along with external support the separatists movement resurfaced in Donbas. Nevertheless, these movements did not pose a significant threat on the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Hence, Ukraine land remained intact until 2014. The main differences between Euromaidan Revolution and the Orange Revolution were the annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation and the protracted war Donbas territory. In other word, the latter one paved the way for a stalemate which Ukraine will have to deal for a long time. In this regard, one can argue that Crimea's secession in a very short time encouraged the separatists in Donbas and thus the annexation of Crimea became the main inspiration source behind the Donbas 'freedom' movements. Thus, the next part shed lights on one of the side effects of Euromaidan, the annexation of Crimea before focusing on Donbas crisis.

4.5. Annexation of Crimea

As explained in previous part, Ukraine's political landscape experienced another revolution but this time, different from 2004, it involved in violence and also left

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[422] "Donetsk, Lugansk People's Republics Unite in Novorossiya," *The Voice of Russia*, 2014, accessed August 6, 2019,
https://web.archive.org/web/20140607011548/http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2014_05_24/Donetsk-Lugansk-Peoples-Republics-unite-in-Novorossiya-1012/.

impacts which Ukraine will have to suffer with its consequences for a long time. This section aims to investigate repercussions of Euromaidan in Crimea. In general, Taras Kuzio describes the involvement of Russian speakers in Ukraine politics as: "domestic and foreign factors served to change the dynamics of Russian speakers in Ukraine from one of passivity in the late 1980s through to the 2004 Orange Revolution; low-level mobilization from 2005 to 2013; and high-level mobilization, crystallization of pro- and anti-Ukrainian camps, and violent conflict from 2014."[423] In fact, the Russians in Crimea were not as passive as Kuzio argued.

As mentioned above there was a political tension between Simferopol and Kyiv at the first half of 1990s. In May 1992, Crimean parliament declared independence of the autonomous republic and adopted a constitution. Although Kyiv dismissed the both acts that the Crimean parliament issued the tension discordance between the sides grew until Russia's attitude. Experiencing internal separatist tendency, the president Yeltsin chose to place importance on territorial integrity of Ukraine. Accordingly, Yeltsin refused to meet with the 'Crimean President' Yuri Meshkov and refrained from a major dispute with Ukraine.[424] However, if one matches the political activism of Russian speakers in Ukraine with the accomplishment of separatism then Kuzio's argument can be approved because despite political discrepancies of its regions Ukraine managed to preserve its territorial integrity until 2014.

Since most of Russian authors (including President Putin) emphasize the term *historical justice* in terms of annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation, it is worth to note a brief historical background of Crimea. Roughly, from fifteenth to eighteenth century, Crimea was ruled by Crimean Khanate, a vassal province of Ottoman Empire. In 1774, The region became an independent entity apart from Ottoman Empire and it annexed by the Russian Empire in 1783. In October 1921, Crimea, under the name of Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialistic Republic became one of the members of Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and incorporated into the Union of Soviet Socialistic Republics in 1922. During the Second World War from 1941 to

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[423] Taras Kuzio, "Competing Nationalisms, Euromaidan, and the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 15, no. 1 (2015), 157.

[424] Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know.*, 125.

1944, Crimea was occupied by Germany and "administered as *Generalbezirk Krim* and *Teilbezirk Taurien*."[425] After the Second World War, the Crimea lost its autonomous status and became an ordinary province of Soviet Union within Russian SFSR.[426]

Crimea was transferred from Russian SFSR to Ukrainian SSR in February 1954 by Nikita Khrushchev, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) from 1953 to 1964. There are some arguments for what reasons Khrushchev decided to transfer Crimea to Ukraine. The first and also one of official reasons behind the transferring Crimea to Ukraine was symbolizing the Ukrainian-Russian friendship. According to this claim, Crimea's transfer to Ukraine was the tercentenary of the Treaty of Pereyaslav signed in 1654 between Ukrainian Cossacks and Tsarist Russia which enhanced tsar's protection of the Cossacks. Thus, the transfer symbolized eternal friendship of Ukraine and Russia.[427] This reason was included in the document of the Meeting of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet on February 19, 1954. The document states:

> The issue of the transfer of the Crimean Oblast' to the Ukrainian Republic is being examined in days when the peoples of the Soviet Union are marking a notable event, the 300th anniversary of the reunion of Ukraine with Russia, which played an enormous progressive role in the political, economic, and cultural development of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples.[428]

Apart from this reason, political motivation is shown as an alternative reason behind separation of Crimea from Russia in 1954. For this motive, Khrushchev was an enthusiastic leader who sought to increase his popularity and to guarantee his chairmanship by pleasing the Ukrainian elites. The Communist Party of Ukraine was the second largest party in the Soviet Union and hence a powerful political. As a former Ukrainian politician who started his political career in Ukraine, Khrushchev

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[425] Jan Matzek, "Annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation," *Policy Paper*, no. January (2016), 2.

[426] Matzek.

[427] "Meeting of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic," *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* 1, no. 1 (1992), accessed August 7, 2019, https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119638.

[428] "Meeting of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic."

considered Ukraine as his power base. Therefore, he attempted to enlarge the domain of Ukrainian elites by transferring of Crimea.[429]

However, the third argument and also the second official reason, seems to be the most explanatory motivation behind Khrushchev's decision for transferring the peninsula from Russian SSR to Ukrainian SSR. The establishment of compact economic regions in the 1950s was much more important than emphasizing and strengthening the boundaries between the republics within the USSR. In this case, it was a pragmatic decision to hand over the Crimea to Ukraine because Russia does not have a land connection with the peninsula whereas Ukraine connected with it through the Isthmus of Perekop, 5-7 km wide strip of land. Along with various other resources, the peninsula received its fresh water and electricity from Ukraine.[430] The abovementioned document of the Meeting of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet also emphasizes this reason. The document points out:

> Considering the commonality of the economy, the territorial proximity, and the close economic and cultural ties between the Crimean Oblast' and the Ukrainian SSR, and also bearing in mind the agreement of the Presidium of the Ukrainian SSR Supreme Soviet, the Presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet considers it advisable to transfer the Crimean Oblast' to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.[431]

Comments of Khrushchev's son, Sergei Khrushchev on this issue support the idea of economic burden behind Crimea's transfer to Ukraine. He stated:

> As the Dnieper and the hydro-electric dam is on Ukrainian territory, let's transfer the rest of the territory of Crimea under the Ukrainian supervision so they will be responsible for everything...And they did it. It was not a political move; it was not an ideological move - it was just business.[432]

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[429] Krishnadev Calamur, "Crimea: A Gift To Ukraine Becomes A Political Flash Point," *Npr*, 2014, https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2014/02/27/283481587/crimea-a-gift-to-ukraine-becomes-a-political-flash-point.

[430] "Чому Україні Не Варто Відновлювати Поставки Води і Світла в Крим: Заява Чубарова," *24tv*, 2019, accessed August 18, 2019, https://24tv.ua/chomu_ukrayini_ne_varto_vidnovlyuvati_postavki_vodi_i_svitla_v_krim_zayava_chubarova_n1191349.

[431] "Meeting of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic."

[432] Andre de Nesnera, "Khrushchev's Son: Giving Crimea Back to Russia Not an Option," *Voice of America*, 2014, accessed March 25, 2019, https://www.voanews.com/a/khrushchevs-son-giving-crimea-back-to-russia-not-an-option/1865752.html.

The fourth argument which connected with the third one is the consequences of Second World War and Stalin's decision about deportation of Crimea's residents. As it is known, Stalin deported almost all the local population from the peninsula in 1944. In May he deported Crimean Tatars and in June, Armenians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Czechs. On the devastated land merely the Russian ethnic population of the RSFSR left. Moreover, it should be noted that in February 1954 when Crimea transferred to Ukraine Khrushchev was only completing his five months in administration. At that time, he even did not consolidate his power yet. He alone began to rule the country after 1957, when he removes the main rivals, 'Stalin's Guard' from the power.[433]

During that time condemning Stalin's policy of deportation and mismanagement of Crimea was unthinkable. It was not time for criticizing him yet, which will be done in following years at the 20th Congress of the CPSU.[434] Instead, transferring the Crimea to Ukraine and resolving economic issues with its resources was a way out. Hence, it can be claimed that along with the other motives the most critical reason behind Khrushchev's decision to transfer the Crimean Peninsula to Ukrainian SSR was economic factors which occurred after the Second World War along with the deportation of its residents.

Consequently since 1954, Crimea became an integral part of Ukrainian SSR and remained within Ukraine after the disintegration of Soviet Union. However, Euromaidan insurgency against Yanukovych's corrupt administration, had side effect in Crimea which ended with the illegal absorption of the peninsula by Russia. In fact, Crimean population did not have a strong desire to join Russia just a year before the annexation. According to Gallup poll conducted in 2011 and 2013 showed different results of referendum which held in March 16, 2014. For the poll, 33 percent of respondents from Crimea in 2011 showed their desire to join Russia while 49 percent of them stated that Crimea should remain within Ukraine. The poll which conducted in 2013 is more surprising by comparing the referendum result. In May

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[433] Станіслав Цалик, "Блог Історика: 1954 Рік. Чому Крим Перейшов До України," *BBC News*, 2018, accessed March 25, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/amp/blogs-43109792.

[434] John Rettie, "The Secret Speech That Changed World History," *The Guardian*, 2006, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/feb/26/russia.theobserver.

2013, only 23 percent of participants tended for separation from Ukraine and join to Russia whereas 53 percent of them support territorial integrity of Ukraine.[435]

In general, new government in Kyiv perceived as a threat by Crimea's Russian community. Viktoriia Demydova summaries the possible losses of Crimea facing the new government in Kyiv as:

> Turchynov-Yatsenyuk tandem was seen as the surrender of the Party of Regions and Eastern interest groups in the control over the agenda. The losses of the Crimea in case of the establishment of the pro-Western government would be significant - the lack of the regional language law, the association agreement, the education and administrative reforms. The living standards level was also expected to decrease [due to instability] in the gas sector [because of the] rivalry with Russia. The Crimean elites chose the most pay off promising option that was the unification with Russia.[436]

To these concerns of Crimea's Russian community, the relations between the political parties of Ukraine and Crimean Tatars can also be added. For the Russian majority, Crimean Tatars were the main rival group and their alliance with the Ukrainian political parties perceived as a threat. For Yekelchyk, even with Yanukovych government Crimean political elites had superficial alliance.[437] Therefore, new government did not have much to offer Russian ethnic groups in Crimea.

Nevertheless, this generalization is partly correct, since the Crimean population is not homogeneous. According to the data of the last Ukrainian census provided by the Ukrainian State Statistics Committee (2001), the ethnic make-up of the Crimean population is as follows: Russians: 58.5%, Ukrainians: 24.4% and Crimean Tatars: 12.1%. Moreover, the concerns what Demydova presents were not necessarily the matched with the problems of Crimean population. Yekelchyk argues that the revolutionary government in Kyiv was perceived as a threat by elite groups in the Crimea because this government could make new appointments in the peninsula and

[435] David Kashi, "This Gallup Poll Shows Crimeans Had Very Different Ideas About Russia Last Year," *International Business Time*, 2014, accessed March 25, 2019, https://www.ibtimes.com/gallup-poll-shows-crimeans-had-very-different-ideas-about-russia-last-year-1561821.

[436] Viktoriia Demydova, "Internal and External Dimensions of The Crimean Crisis Before and after 2014" (Middle East Technical University, 2017), 160.

[437] Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 129.

carry out new reforms which could threaten their authorities.[438] It seems that there have been some occasions internally developed in Ukraine which escalated the political tension in Crimea. Therefore, it is critical to find out the reasons which had impact on the secession of Crimea from its motherland.

First it should be noted that opposition group in Euromaidan was impatient and made a strategic mistake. As detailed in previous section, an agreement was signed between the opposition group and the government under the mediation of the representators from the EU, Poland, France, German and Russia on February 21, 2014. By literally accepting all the demands of the opposition group from the government, Yanukovych signed the agreement. Although Russian special envoy, Vladimir Lukin did not sign the deal. However, on his return to Warsaw the Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikors stated that Russia has made a significant contribution to reach the agreement. He also tweeted that the result of the deal was a 'good compromise for Ukraine'.[439]

Besides, the US government also welcomed the agreement by praising "the courageous opposition leaders who recognized the need for compromise."[440] The similar attitude was adopted by the UK government. UK Prime Minister David Cameron stated that it is time "get behind this deal and deliver it according to the timetable set out."[441] In other word, the sides in the negotiation were agreed on the need of transitional period of Ukrainian political system. This agreement was a great compromise of the government which was thought to end the political crisis in Ukraine.

However, impatient opposition leaders under the pressure of Maidan protesters defaulted on their commitments. They initiated the process to oust Yanukovych and form self-appointed interim government. Thus, the agreement which was accepted under difficult conditions and could be described as a victory of the opposition forces

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[438] Yekelchyk., 130.

[439] "Ukrainian President and Opposition Sign Early Poll Deal," *BBC News*, 2014, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26289318.

[440] "Ukrainian President and Opposition Sign Early Poll Deal."

[441] "Ukrainian President and Opposition Sign Early Poll Deal."

lost its the value and the West remained silent towards the development. The decision to oust the president Yanukovych was adopted impetuously by the deputies of the Ukrainian parliament which violated the existing constitution.

Speaking from Kharkov, Yanukovych denounced the parliament's act and called it as a coup d'état by comparing it with the Nazis' revolution of 1930s. He stated: "I am a legitimately elected president. I have been given guarantees by all the international mediators with whom I worked, they have given security guarantees."[442] Hence, it was a kind of irresponsible strategy that the opposition forces followed which could perceived in a different way by Yanukovych's proponents. According to Sergey Saluschev, the parliament's act to oust the president was a political coup d'état. This decision also prevented the chances of a gradual and balanced political transition in Ukraine. Although the decision was taken by the parliament, it was a strategic mistake which escalated the tension in Crimea as well as the Eastern part of Ukraine.[443]

Following day, another occasion which developed internally took place in the parliamentary session when Vyacheslav Kyrylenko a deputy from Fatherland party proposed a bill to repeal the law "On the Principles of the State Language Policy" which came into force in 2012.[444] The parliament abolished the law on the bases of the state language policy. During the session 232 out of 450 deputies voted for the acceptance of the bill. The previous version of the law, which was accepted in 2012, provided the possibility of official bilingualism in regions where the number of national minorities exceeds 10%. After the adoption of this law in 2012, Ukraine experienced a wave of rallies and protests both in favor of law and against of it. However, after the entry into force of August 10, several regional and local councils

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[442] "Ukrainian MPs Vote to Oust the President," *Channel 4 News*, 2014, https://www.channel4.com/news/ukraine-protest-president-leave-watch-live-video.

[443] Sergey Saluschev, "Annexation of Crimea: Causes, Analysis and Global Implications," *Global Societies Journal* 2 (2014), 42.

[444] Viktoriia Demydova, "Internal and External Dimensions of The Crimean Crisis Before and after 2014" (Middle East Technical University, 2017), 158.

have decided to recognize the Russian language as a regional one. Hungarian, Moldavian and Romanian were also recognized as regional in the western regions.[445]

The decision taken by the parliament right after the overthrowing of Yanukovych was interpreted by the Crimean Russians and Russian-speaking Ukrainians as a grim harbinger under the rule of new administration. Although the law vetoed by the acting president Oleksandr Turchynov, a week after the law adapted as a result of the rebuke of European partners it had already damaged any possibly trust between many Russian speakers and new government.[446] Hence, in a politically sensitive period of Ukraine let alone to repeal of the bill, it was not very ingenious idea to bring it into forefront in the first place.

Another internal factor which strengthened the separatist tendency in Crimea was the Ukrainian far right group in Maidan. Of course, Russian controlled media exacerbated the situation by depicting the Euromaidan revolution as a coup d'état by Ukrainian Neo-Nazi groups who are a threat to Russian ethnic population in Ukraine. In fact, two main nationalist groups could be observed in Maidan. The first was Freedom party which received remarkable vote during the parliamentary election of 2012. Although the party obtained 10.43 percent vote in total, it performed very poor in Eastern part of Ukraine.[447] The second nationalist party was Right Sector which was established in 2013. Unlike Freedom, the Right Sector has clearly used red and black color of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) as its official flag. The widespread hostility and highly provocative speeches made by the leaders of the far-right organizations helped to create more anxiety among the Russian ethnic population of Ukraine. Although they consisted of few proportions of Maidan demonstrations their exiting in the digital world played a significant role to appall separatist groups in Crimea because images and videos of these limited groups provided enough materials for propagandists.[448]

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[445] "Рада Скасувала Мовний Закон Колесніченка," *Ukrainskaya Pravda*, 2014, accessed March 25, 2019, https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/02/23/7015948/.

[446] Saluschev, "Annexation of Crimea: Causes, Analysis and Global Implications.", 42.

[447] Olszański, "After the Parliamentary Elections in Ukraine: A Tough Victory for the Party of Regions."

[448] "Ukraine's Revolution and the Far Right," *BBC News*, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26468720.

In brief, the opposition forces first violated the agreement which could initiate a gradual and balanced political transition period in Ukraine. However, ousting the president and forming a self-appointed government interpreted differently in Crimea. According to Russian ethnic groups in Crimea, Maidan forces made a coup, and therefore the new government does not have legitimacy. Second, vote of the bill to abolish the law which allowed Russian to be used as a second language in region had no point in such a politically chaotic period. For the Russian ethnic citizens in Crimea, this bill was a grim harbinger of the new government's future policy towards them. The third was that the far-right groups had overshadowed the peaceful demonstrations in the name of democracy in Maidan. The attitude those limited groups were quite useful for separatist groups in Crimea to mobilize the masses against new government and demand secession.

Under these circumstances, right after the resignation of Yanukovych, the Supreme Council of the Crimea convened to assess new political reality. At the same time, there was a scuffle between supporters of Euromaidan and their opponents at the Crimean Parliament building in Simferopol.[449] The opponents of Maidan were demanding separation of Crimea from Ukraine to establish an independent state. On February 21, Anatoliy Mogilev, chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC), claimed that Crimean people who participated in a pro-government rally in Kyiv were attacked in the Cherkasy region. Mogilov stated:

> Buses carrying peaceful Crimean activists who were returning home from Kyiv were attacked last night. There is information that a total of 320 people was on the buses. In the Cherkasy region, the buses were stopped by armed extremists. There is precise information that three buses were burned, and the people were taken off the buses, and some of them were subjected to violence. Seven of them are in hospital.[450]

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[449] "У Здания Крымского Парламента Произошла Потасовка," Lenta.ru, 2014, https://lenta.ru/news/2014/02/21/fight/.

[450] "Crimean PM Reports Attack on Crimean Activists' Buses in Cherkasy," Interfax, accessed March 25, 2019, http://interfax.com/newsinf.asp?id=482757.

However, this news was disclaimed by several newspapers by arguing that the Cherkasy event was a fabrication of Russian propagandists.[451] Regardless of the event was truly happened exactly how Mogilev described or not, the dissemination of such news further contributed to the rise of voices of separatist groups. Following days, the tension between Anti-Maidan groups and Anti-Separatists groups has raised. On February 26, the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people decided to organize a demonstration at Simferopol. The purpose of the rally was to prevent any possible decision of the Crimean Supreme Council to connect the peninsula to Russia. Simultaneously, Russian Community of Crimea (RCC) was also in front of the Crimean parliament building. The atmosphere was strained by the confrontation of two opposing groups, halted the extraordinary session of the Supreme Council of Crimea. The session was anticipated to come up with the status of Russian language and extending the autonomy rights of the peninsula.[452] Although the tension between the two groups raised, the event was managed to elude without violence.[453]

On February 27, 2014 appeared as a special day for the fate of Crimean Peninsula when numerous armed groups showed up in Simferopol. They were mainly consisted of two groups. On one hand, there were self-defense units included the local volunteers, Russian community representatives of various NGOs, *Berkut* and Cossacks who came to the capital of Crimea voluntarily to 'protect the fellows'. On the other hand, there was another group who were acting in a more professional way. They were well-equipped groups in uniforms without insignias and were acting autonomously not obeying local authorities.[454] The military forces in unmarked uniforms seized strategically important positions on Crimea such as airports, military facilities, media and they blocked Isthmus of Perekop which connect the peninsula to Ukraine. Ukrainian soldiers in Crimea barricaded themselves at their military bases

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[451] Darya Bunyakina, "Cherkasy: 'Korsunsky Pogrom' Is a Fabrication of Russian Propagandists," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 2015, accessed March 25, 2019, https://www.radiosvoboda.org/amp/26904323.html.

[452] Demydova, "Internal and External Dimensions of The Crimean Crisis Before and after 2014.", 166.

[453] After the annexation of the peninsula, seven people from the number of supporters of the territorial integrity of Ukraine were arrested for participating in the rally. In Crimea, courts are continued on Crimean Tatar activists who participated in the rally, they are called "the case on February 26".

[454] "Crimea Parliament Announces Referendum on Ukrainian Region's Future," *Russia Today*, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.rt.com/news/ukraine-crimea-referendum-future-014/.

and proposed passive resistance. By virtue of political uncertainty in Kyiv, none of the Ukrainian commanders were brave enough to take over responsibility for the use of weapons.[455]

Early in the morning, those unknown armed men captured the building of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea as well as the building of the Council of Ministers and hoisted the Russian flags on the top of the buildings. At the entrance of the Supreme Council barricades were stationed with a flag reading 'Crimea Russia'. [456] The Prime Minister of Crimea tried to negotiate with the group to get information about their demands, but the armed men told him that they do not have the authority to claim any political demand.[457] On the same day, Thursday afternoon at 2 p.m., a Crimean government official told that the parliament will held an extraordinary session to discuss greater autonomy for the region.[458]

The Presidium of the Parliament assessed the latest political development in Ukraine and stated that the country had "an unconstitutional seizure of power by radical nationalists with the support of armed gangs. In this situation, as stated by the deputies, the regional parliament assumes full responsibility for the fate of the Crimea."[459] They also appointed a referendum in the Crimea "on improving the status and powers of the region". During session the parliament decided to dismiss the government of Anatoly Mogilev, [appointed Sergey Aksyonov instead] and hold a referendum in the Crimea "on the issues of improving the status and powers" of the region. The referendum is scheduled to be held on May 25 (on the same day, extraordinary presidential elections will be held in Ukraine).[460]

[455] Геннадій Борисенко, "Військові з Криму: Чому Ми Тоді Не Стріляли," *Radio Liberty*, 2015, accessed August 7, 2019, https://ua.krymr.com/a/26955216.html.

[456] Aisulu Aldasheva, "Armed Men Seize Government Buildings in Crimea," *The Moscow Times*, 2014, accessed March 27, 2019, https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/02/27/armed-men-seize-government-buildings-in-crimea-a32524.

[457] "Armed Men Seize Crimea Parliament, Raising Tensions in Ukraine," *Sputnik News*, n.d., https://sputniknews.com/world/20140227187934760-Armed-Men-Seize-Crimea-Parliament-Raising-Tensions-in-Ukraine/.

[458] Aldasheva, "Armed Men Seize Government Buildings in Crimea."

[459] "Премьером Крыма Избрали Лидера «Русского Единства»," *Lenta.Ru*, 2014, accessed March 27, 2019, https://lenta.ru/news/2014/02/27/crimea4/.

[460] "Премьером Крыма Избрали Лидера «Русского Единства»."

Following day Ukrainian President Turchynov issued a decree in which he stated that the decision of Supreme Council to appoint Sergey Aksyonov instead Anatoly Mogilev is a clear violence of Ukraine's Constitution as well as the Crimean one. Therefore, he expressed, the Supreme Council should cancel the decision.[461] In response, the parliament announced that the decision was taken in concert with President Yanukovych. On February 28, Crimean News, the newspaper of the Supreme Council published a news on the decision of the Council to clarify the intention of the Council. According to the Crimean News:

> The issue submitted to the referendum does not contain provisions on violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The aim of the referendum is to improve the status of the ARC so that the rights of autonomy are guaranteed in case of any changes in the central government or the Constitution of Ukraine. All steps taken are aimed at ensuring that autonomy is considered, talked and agreed upon decisions of central authorities.[462]

As noted, the Supreme Council of Crimea did not officially announce independence declaration or separation from Ukraine. However, at this time new developed connected with the political crisis in Ukraine occurred in Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin submitted an appeal to the Council of Federation "on the use of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on the territory and Ukraine before the normalization of the socio-political situation in this country."[463] In an extraordinary session, the Council of Federation allowed Russian troops to be used in Ukraine. In contrast, after meeting with the Council of National Security and Defense of Ukraine the acting president of Ukraine Oleksandr Turchynov has decided to bring the Armed Forces of Ukraine on full alert.[464]

Apparently, Putin's act further encouraged the Crimean elites to stand against new government in Kyiv because the same day when Putin asked permission form the

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[461]"Турчинов Издал Указ о Незаконности Избрания Нового Премьера Крыма," *Obozrevatel*, 2014, accessed March 27, 2019, https://www.obozrevatel.com/politics/08249-turchinov-izdal-ukaz-o-nezakonnosti-izbraniya-novogo-premera-kryima.htm.

[462] "В Крымском Парламенте Разъяснили Суть Вопроса, Вынесенного На Референдум," *Kianews*, 2014, http://www.kianews.com.ua/news/v-krymskom-parlamente-razyasnili-sut-voprosa-vynesennogo-na-referendum.

[463] "Владимир Путин Внёс Обращение в Совет Федерации," *Kremlin.Ru*, 2014, accessed March 27, 2019, http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20353.

[464] "Украинская Армия Приведена в Режим Полной Боеготовности," *NTV.Ru*, 2014, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.ntv.ru/novosti/849956/.

Federation Council to use Russian troops in Ukraine the Council of Sevastopol city voted to disobey the orders of Kyiv authorities.[465] Less than a week after that decision of the City Council of Sevastopol on March 6, Supreme Council of Crimea made a decision to join Russian Federation through a referendum which announced to be held on March 16 and the Council appealed Russia to start annexation process.[466] The Supreme Council also announced the two questions which will be asked to voters on referendum: 1) "Do you support the reunification of Crimea with Russia as a subject of the Russian Federation?" or "Do you support the restoration of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Crimea and the status of Crimea as part of Ukraine?"[467]

Following days Senior representatives of Crimea met with Russian authorities in Moscow. Chairman of the State Duma Sergey Naryshkin during a meeting of deputies with a delegation of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea said that Russia would support the "free and democratic choice of the population of Crimea and Sevastopol."[468] The head of the Crimean parliament Vladimir Konstantinov told the rally participants about the results of the visit of the delegation of autonomy to Moscow. He stated: "We came from Moscow with good news. Our fraternal people take us into their composition, we will become a subject of the Russian Federation. For this we must come on March 16 and vote as it should. We return home on March 16."[469]

On March 14, 2014, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine declared the decision of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea on Crimean Referendum is

[465] "Депутаты Горсовета Севастополя Проголосовали За Неподчинение Киевским Властям," *Tass.Ru*, 2014, accessed March 28, 2019, https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1014091.

[466] "Парламент Крыма Принял Решение о Вхождении Автономии в Состав России," *Gazete.Ru*, 2014, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2014/03/06/n_5995413.shtml.

[467] "Парламент Крыма Принял Решение о Вхождении Автономии в Состав России."

[468] "Нарышкин: 'Россия Поддержит Выбор Населения Крыма и Севастополя,'" *Point.Md*, 2014, accessed March 28, 2019, https://point.md/ru/novosti/v-mire/narishkin58-quotrossiya-podderzhit-vibor-naseleniya-krima-i-sevastopolyaquot.

[469] "В Центре Симферополя Проходит Митинг За Присоединение к России," *Tass.Ru*, 2014, accessed March 28, 2019, https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1032682.

unconstitutional.[470] Nevertheless, the referendum in Crimea held on March 16 and 96.77% of residents who took part in the referendum voted for reunification with the Russian Federation. In Sevastopol, 95.6% of those who voted were in favor of joining the Crimea to the Russian Federation. Thus, on March 18, 2014 Russian President Putin initiated the adaptation process of the peninsula.[471]

To conclude, it can be said that the political developments in Kyiv paved the way for Crimea's separation. Since the beginning of negotiation with the EU, Yanukovych could not be a determinant leader. First, he tantalized the Ukrainians who saw the EU integration process as a sole remedy for the future of the country. Yanukovych promised to sign the deal with the EU. However, he abandoned his pro-Western policy and started negotiations with Russia which caused great dissatisfaction among Ukrainian people. Subsequently, numerous strategic bungles of the opposition front fueled the separatist process in the Crimea.

Instead of sticking to the agreement which could initiate a gradual transition period for political structure of Ukraine, opposition forces decided to oust President Yanukovych. Self-appointed government of impatient Euromaidan proponents created a situation which called a coup d'état by the separatists groups in Crimea and set a ground for the peninsula's secession. Moreover, voting for the bill to abolish the law which allowed to use Russian as an official language in regional level along with the occurrence of far-right groups in Maidan served in favor of separatists groups in Crimea. These developments in Kyiv crystallized the 'Other' in the eyes of Crimean Russians. Hence, they swiftly became estranged to newly installed government in Kyiv.

Besides, the political dynamics in Crimea was in favor of separation. In this context, the composition of Crimean population played a critical role in the secession. Since Russian ethnic group consisted the majority in the peninsula, their elites had advantage to mobilize the masses. However, as explained, even under the conditions of the capture of Supreme Council by unknown armed men, the parliament

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[470] "КС Признал Сепаратистский Референдум в Крыму Неконституционным," *Ukrainskaya Pravda*, 2014, accessed, March 28, 2019, https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/03/14/7018815/.

[471] "В Севастополе 95,6% Проголосовавших Высказались За Вступление Крыма в РФ," *Tass.Ru*, 2014, https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1052517.

announced that the referendum of 25 May did not aim for independence or incorporating to another state but to strengthen the autonomous status of Crimea, thereby, it does not pose a threat to the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The separation decision came after Putin's appeal to Federation Council for the use of Russian troops in Ukraine.

In brief, Ukraine for a long time managed to protect its territorial integrity. However, Euromaidan demonstrations sparked a crisis in Ukraine which threatened its international borders. In March 2014, Crimea was annexed by Russian Federation. Crimean people which the majority composed of ethnic Russians achieved their wishes in their second request. The first attempt which made in early 1990s was unsuccessful due to lack of support from Moscow. Therefore, it can be concluded that the compatibility of internal dynamics with the interests of external factors paved the way for the annexation of Crimea by Russian federation.

4.6. Conclusion

Ukraine has experienced two major revolutions since the disintegration of Soviet Union. However, despite its fragile society, which was composed of mainly by Western and Eastern Ukrainians, the country managed to remain intact when it became an independent state. Although separatist tendencies emerged initially, they could not gain sufficient support from outside. For example, due to its own separatist groups Russia did not support Crimea's desire for secession from Ukraine. Moreover, positive relations of Kuchma government with Kremlin surpassed any potential separation from Kyiv.

Nevertheless, 2004 presidential election uncovered the binary structure of Ukrainian society once again. In this regard, 2004 presidential campaigns even deepened the polarization of the West and the Central Ukraine on one side, the East and the South on the other side. First time since the independence of Ukraine, Donbas territory raised its voice to federalize Ukraine and even threatened Kyiv by separation. However, Orange Revolution which completed almost bloodless did not cause an insurgence in Donbas. Moreover, incompetence of Orange Coalition to work in

harmony and Yushchenko's deal with Yanukovych appeased anti-Orangist Donbas people. Sharing the power with Yushchenko first and then becoming the president of Ukraine in 2010, Yanukovych who were the candidate from Donbas pleased its region.

However, the Euromaidan Revolution, which could not avoid violence, confronted pro-Western and pro-Russian groups. Ousting of Yanukovych from the presidential post was the final straw in issue. As the final part of the chapter discusses, the first side effect of Euromaidan took place in Crimea. After seizing the administration buildings, the separatists announced the referendum on the fate of peninsula. In March 2014, Crimea was absorbed by Russian Federation and then the second side effect of the Euromaidan erupted in Donbas. In this context, the next chapter pays full attention to the war in Donbas.

CHAPTER 5

MILITARY ASPECT OF THE DONBAS WAR

5.1. Introduction

So far, this research detailed internal dynamics of Ukraine in relation with its Donbas territory. As clarified in theory chapter, this work adopted neoclassical realism as a viewpoint to study ongoing war in Donbas. Therefore, domestic factors are significant to examine current developments in the territory. It is also noted that the war in Donbas is analyzed as a hybrid war conducted by Russian Federation. As explained, the hybrid war combines the lethality of state conflict with irregular elements in order to achieve intended goals. In this regard, this chapter investigates the lethality aspect of the hybrid war in Donbas. Meanwhile detailing the war in Donbas, this study shows how the local dynamics are used by Russian Federation as an element of hybrid war to serve in its favor.

The chapter begins with the destabilization of Eastern Ukraine. It scrutinizes how the anti-Maidan demonstrations turned to a full-fledged war. In this part, developments in other pro-Russian regions of Ukraine also detailed along with Donetsk and Lugansk regions. The chapter continues with the most critical battle in Donbas which took place in August 2014. The section helps us to comprehend how Russia played role to balance between Ukrainian army and separatists forces to prolong the war for its own sake. Subsequently, the research analyzes the war period between two ceasefire agreements, Minsk-I and Minsk-II. Thereafter, clashes which occurred albeit the ceasefire agreements are detailed. At the end, the crisis in Kerch Strait which began with the capturing of two Ukrainian artillery armored boats along with 24 soldiers by Russian security forces is examined.

5.2. From Seizing the Buildings to Full-Fledged War

In February 2014, the political developments in Kyiv led to a dissatisfaction in Eastern Ukraine, especially in the regions which could be considered as Yanukovych's power base. However, such discontent in the region against Kyiv was not a new phenomenon. As noted earlier, during the Orange Revolution pro-Yanukovych voices aroused in Donbas by threatening Kyiv to subdivide the country into federation or even to establish an independent entity apart from Ukraine. Although the reactions in Donbas against the political transformation in Kyiv in February 2014 were similar to those of the Orange Revolution in 2004, the former event different from the later one caused full-fledged war in the region.

Pro-Euromaidan and pro-Yanukovych demonstrations in eastern cities such as Kharkov, Odessa, Donetsk, Lugansk co-existed during political turbulence in Kyiv. Those rallies were natural since Yanukovych's supporters located mainly in these cities and ousting the president in Kyiv and installing new government in Kyiv was illegitimate in the eyes of anti-Maidan protestors. However, throughout February, small demonstrations in Eastern Ukraine were growing in parallel with the events in Crimea and were inspired by the developments there.[472]

While the annexation of Crimea continued, 'political tourists' from Belgorod and Rostov provinces of Russia and Transnistria together with local anti-Maidan demonstrators attempted to seize administrative buildings in Kharkov, Odesa, Donetsk and Luhansk. On March 1, 2014, nearly 7000 demonstrators gathered in the central square of Donetsk with Russian flags in their hands.[473] The next day, bloody clashes took place between two camps; pro-Maidan activists on one side, and pro-Russian groups on the other side, when they installed a Russian flag on the top of Kharkov regional state building. Including the city's Oplot Fight Club fighters who also known as *titushky*. The number of pro-Russian protestors was about 4000.[474]

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[472] Andrii Portnov, "How 'Eastern Ukraine' Was Lost," *Open Democracy*, 2016, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/how-eastern-ukraine-was-lost/.

[473] Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands*, 148.

[474] Natalia Shapovalova and Balázs Jarábik, "How Eastern Ukraine Is Adapting and Surviving: The Case of Kharkiv," *Carnegie Europe*, 2018, 2.

The same day, on March 2, about 200 people hold a rally in front of the building of the Odessa Regional State Administration with Russian flags. The leader of the organization 'Youth Unity' Anton Davidchenko, who headed the rally, demanded to take part at an extraordinary session of the Odessa Regional Council and thereby to let his supporters into the hall. However, the chairman of the regional council Nikolay Tindyuk refused to do this. The rally participants in response went to the assault, as a result of which the glass was broken at the entrance of the building, but the protesters failed to get inside.[475]

On March 2, most of the deputies of the Lugansk Regional Council announced the new leadership of the country as illegitimate. They also demanded that the Russian language be given the status of a second state language, disarm the Maidan self-defense units, stop persecuting the Berkut fighters, and prevent the restriction of television and radio broadcasting to foreign channels on the territory of Ukraine. More or less these demands were expressed in all anti-Maidan demonstrations. However, in March 2014, anti-Maidan demonstrators could not achieve their aim due to the loyal law enforcement officers in the regions.[476]

At the beginning of April, after the annexation of Crimea, Eastern Ukraine became a new crisis center. The region became the new focal point of the militants who helped Russia to annex the Crimea. On April 6-7, a great unrest occurred and after fighting with the police, protesters occupied Donetsk and Kharkov Regional State Administration buildings and proclaimed the 'Kharkov People's Republic' (KhPR) and 'Donetsk People's Republic' (DPR). In Lugansk, a group of armed gangs seized the building of the Ukrainian Security Service and shared an ultimatum on the internet to new government authorities on behalf of the 'United Army of the South-East'.[477]

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[475] "Митингующие Под Флагами России Штурмуют Одесскую ОГА," *Gazete.Ua*, 2014, accessed March 3 2019, https://gazeta.ua/ru/articles/politics/_mitinguyuschie-pod-flagami-rossii-shturmuyut-odesskuyu-oga/545208.

[476] "Облсовет Луганска Угрожает Разоружить Майдан Руками 'Братской' России," *Gazete.Ua*, 2014, accessed March 3, 2019, https://gazeta.ua/ru/articles/politics/_oblsovet-luganska-ugrozhaet-razoruzhit-majdan-rukami-bratskoj-rossii/545140.

[477] "Объединенная Армия Юго-Востока: Ультиматум Хунте," *Rusvesna.Su*, April 26, 2014, accessed April 3, 2019, https://rusvesna.su/news/1398526601.

Police prevented an attempt to seize the administration building in Mykolaiv province. Special forces of the Ukraine's Ministry of Internal Affairs under the guidance of Arsen Avakov and Stepan Poltorak recaptured Kharkov's administration building and arrested some of the leaders of so-called KhPR but some of them fled to Russia, Crimea and Transnistria. Another critical factor to re-establish the order in Kharkov was the allegiance of Kharkov's mayor, Hennadiy Kernes, to new cabinet in Kyiv. In fact, he was the member of the Party of Regions and according to allegations Kernes sponsored the *titushky* against Euromaidan demonstrations. However, his adherence to the new government by changing sides at the right time played an important role in keeping Kharkov as part of Ukraine.[478]

Thus, the Ukrainian government, except Donetsk and Lugansk, managed to restore order in all regions. For some analysts such as Eugene Chausovsky, Kharkov still remains as a potential threat to the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Chausovsky states:

> Today, Kharkov is a city of contradictions. There are legitimate pro-Ukraine sentiments in the city, but many also feel substantial skepticism about defining this Ukrainian solidarity in terms of opposition to Russia…As the conflict continues, with Kyiv trying to get closer to the West and the separatists resisting Kyiv's control with aid from Moscow, Kharkov will be an important bellwether of the Ukraine crisis.[479]

However, it should be noted that preventing the separatist movement in Kharkov from the beginning was critical for the fate of city. In this context, it can be claimed that the future status of Kharkov depends on Ukraine's success on resolving the current situation in Donetsk and Lugansk oblast.

On April 12, 2014 pro-Russian militants seized the administration buildings of Slavyansk and Kramatorsk, two cities in Donetsk oblast. The attackers were well armed and equipped group led by Igor Vsevolodovich Girkin who were known as Strelkov (shooter). Strelkov was a former colonel in Russian army who had played an important role in the annexation of Crimea, in Chechnya, Transnistria and in

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[478] Shapovalova and Jarábik, "How Eastern Ukraine Is Adapting and Surviving: The Case of Kharkiv."

[479] Eugene Chausovsky, "On Kharkiv's Streets, Ukraine's Contradictions Stand Out," *Stratfor*, May 17, 2017, accessed November 25, 2018, https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/kharkivs-streets-ukraines-contradictions-stand-out.

Bosnia with the Serbs.[480] Under the guidance of Girkin, militants engaged a heavy fight with the forces of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) near Sloviansk and during the fight Gennady Bilichenko, captain of the SBU was killed.[481] On April 14, acting President of Ukraine, the speaker of the Verkhovna Rada, Oleksandr Turchynov, signed a decree on launching the anti-terrorist operation (ATO) in the east of Ukraine to enact the decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine on "urgent measures to overcome the terrorist threat and preserve the territorial integrity of Ukraine."[482] Subsequently "the ATO zone was divided into sectors: A (northern part of Luhansk Oblast), C (northern part of Donetsk Oblast), B (western part of Donetsk Oblast), M (areas close to Mariupol) and D (along the state border with Russia)."[483]

In contrast, Igor Girkin appointed himself as commander of the DPR militant units who called themselves 'Donbas People's Militia' in Slovyansk. In this case, Piotr Andrusieczko, a journalist asked the gunmen in Slovyansk: "who are you and are you all locals?" The militants answered: "we are Donbas militia and we all came from Crimea."[484] Such conversations clearly show that armed militants in Donbas were not consisted of merely local people but also, they arrived in Donbas from various regions of Russia, Transnistria and occupied Crimea.[485]

The Ukrainian military forces fought against Girkin's militants throughout April 2014. However, attempts to recapture the Slavyansk region, especially on April 13 and April 24, were unsuccessful. In fact, the war was carried out in much more difficult conditions because during the war, the separatist forces often used civilians as a shield. Towards the end of April, the militants managed to conquer a number of

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[480] Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands*. 150-151.

[481] "Полтавский Капитан СБУ Погиб, Как Герой," *News.Rambler.Ru*, 2014, accessed April 3, 2019, https://news.rambler.ru/world/24620299-poltavskiy-kapitan-sbu-pogib-kak-geroy-yarema/.

[482] "Турчинов Подписал Указ о Начале Антитеррористической Операции На Востоке Украины," *Sud.Ua*, 2014, accessed April 3, 2019, https://sud.ua/ru/news/sud-info/62845-tyrchinov-podpisal-ykaz-o-nachale-antiterroristicheskoj-operatsii-na-vostoke-ykraini-video.

[483] Mykola Balaban et al., *Guide to the Conflict Zone*, ed. Alina Maiorova (Lviv: prometheus.ngo, 2017), 35, accessed April 3, 2018, https://prometheus.ngo/donbas-v-ogni.

[484] Balaban et al., 34.

[485] Sabine Fischer, "The Donbas Conflict," *Stiftung Wissenschaft Und Politik*, 2019, 24. https://doi.org/doi:10.18449/2019RP05.

regions of Lugansk and Lugansk oblast. On April 28, the People's Republic of Lugansk was proclaimed, and the forces affiliated to the LPR presented themselves as the 'United Army of the South-East'.[486]
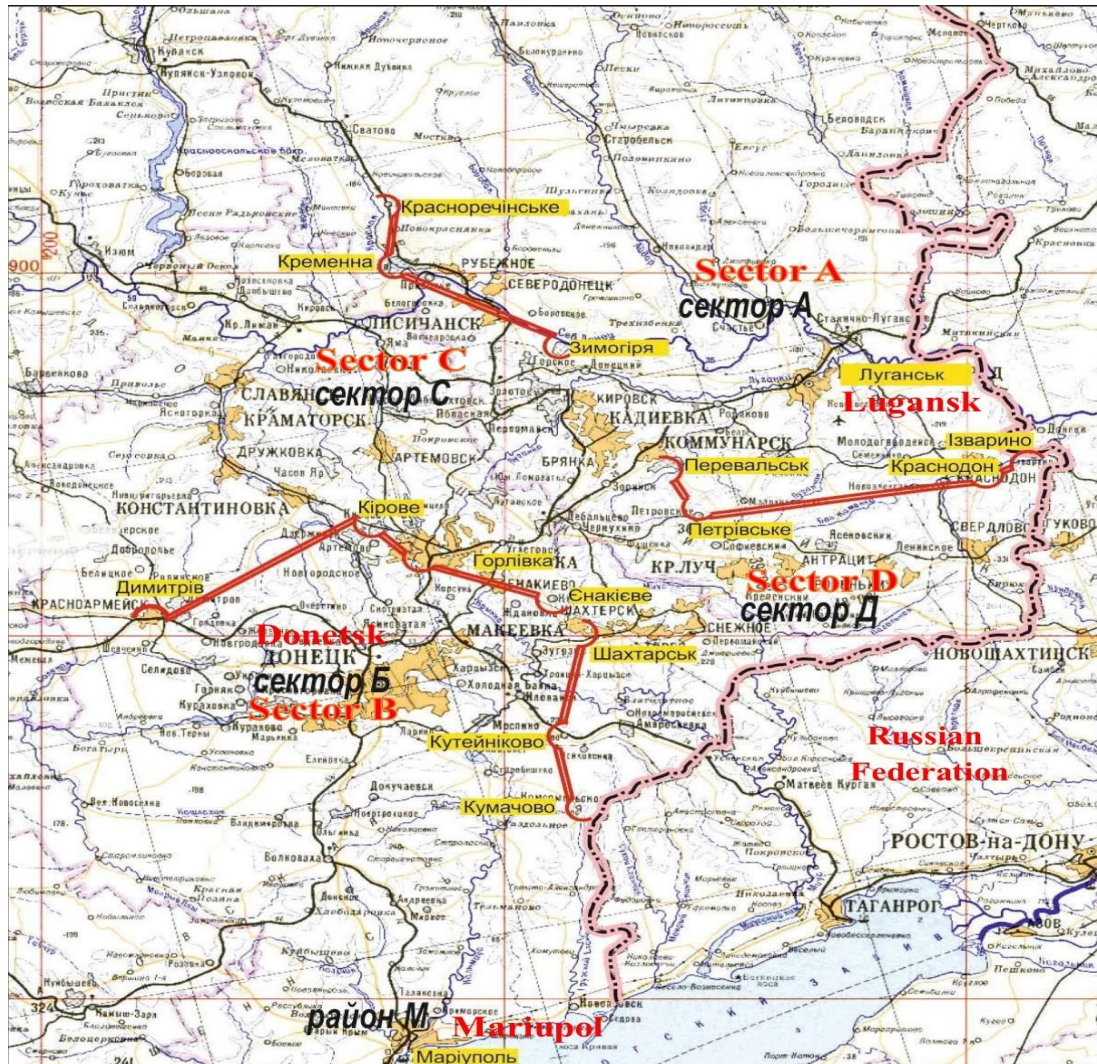
Picture 3 Anti-terrorist Operation by Sectors.
 Source: Ministry of Defense of Ukraine: Analysis of the anti-terrorist operation and the consequences of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine in August-September 2014, August 13, 2015, (Translations by author).

Meanwhile, a bloody clash occurred in Odessa between proponents of united Ukraine and separatist groups at the beginning of May. The parties were in the streets of Odessa with slogans such as: 'Hands off Ukraine', 'Odessa is Ukraine', 'No war

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[486] "Luhansk People's Republic," *Global Security*, accessed April 4, 2019, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/lnr.htm.

in Ukraine', on one hand, and 'Odessa is a Russian city', 'Russia, help!', 'Putin save us!' on the other hand.[487] On May 2, supporters of Euromaidan, together with football fans, organized a march called 'For the Unity of Ukraine' on the Cathedral Square in the center of the city. It was noted that the supporters of Euromaidan were in masks, armed with chains, clubs, stones. Soon a convoy of armed anti-Maidan troops arrived from the Kulikovo field, and clashes began.[488]

Anti-Maidan activists barricaded themselves in the building of the local House of Trade Unions to where supporters of the Unity of Ukraine threw smoke grenades and Molotov cocktails which started a fire in the building.[489] As a result of the clashes and a fire in the House of Trade Unions, 48 people died, and more than two hundred people were injured.[490] What happened on May 2 deeply affected the public and offered the government an opportunity to re-establish order in the city. The new government replaced some elites in Odessa, made deal with anti-Maidan activists and consolidated its control over the city. However, separatist groups used the event in Odessa as a propaganda tool to attract more militants from Russia to Donbas. One of militant (*Prince*) who fought in Donbas described the situation with an interview with Anna Matveeva as: "This was a shock for many of us. We were very emotional, terribly upset those days. Many just ran amok to Donbas after 2 May."[491]

On May 2, Ukrainian forces attacked Girkin's militants near Slovyansk and captured Karachun, the main hill between Kramatorsk and Sloviansk. The Ukrainian army started to use helicopters, but that was not very effective because soon they were

[487] Tanya Richardson, "Odessa's Two Big Differences (and a Few Small Ones)," *EUROZINE*, 2014, accessed April 4, 2019, https://www.eurozine.com/odessas-two-big-differences-and-a-few-small-ones/.

[488] Howard Amos and Harriet Salem, "Ukraine Clashes: Dozens Dead after Odessa Building Fire," *The Guardian*, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/02/ukraine-dead-odessa-building-fire.

[489] "Бойня в Одессе: Пожар в Доме Профсоюзов Унёс Жизни 46 Человек," *Topor.Od.Ua*, May 3, 2014, accessed April 4, 2019, https://topor.od.ua/boynya-v-odesse-pozhar-v-dome-profsoyuzov-uns-zhizni-46-tchelovek-foto/.

[490] Richardson, "Odessa's Two Big Differences (and a Few Small Ones)."

[491] Anna Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 100.

downed by Man-portable Air-defense Systems (MANPADS).[492] At the same time militants seized Mariupol along with some other parts of Donetsk and Lugansk oblast. Meanwhile, the militants were forming new combat troops to fight the ATO forces in Donbas. As such, the Vostok battalion in Donetsk oblast and The Cossack National Guard of the Great Don Cossacks, Prizrak and Zarya battalions were established in Lugansk oblast.[493] Moreover, on May 27, the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine informed that the border guards noticed a column consisting of several trucks, passenger cars and minibuses, moving from Russia towards the state border of Ukraine. As a result of fighting, the border guards damaged and captured one minibus and two cars, one militant was seriously injured. The detained cars were filled with Kalashnikov rifles, Rocket-propelled Grenade (RPG) and explosives.[494]

Although on May 7, Putin called for the postponement for it, the rebels held a referendum on the self-determination of Donbas people on May 11. A question was asked in the referendum: "Do you agree with the Act on *самостоятельность* of the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR)/ Lugansk People's Republic (LNR)?"[495] The chosen notion for the referendum was vague because it could imply both, 'self-rule' as well as 'sovereignty'. The turnout of the referendum was reported to be 75 percent while the result was announced to be 89 percent and 96 percent vote for of the independence respectively.[496] Consequently, the referendum in Donbas was held under the circumstances unlike Crimea where Russia had desire to seize.

The passive attitudes of government officials and the ineffectiveness of military operations helped the militants to expand their territories in a short time. Controlling main roads became an important target in the struggle. Both sides of the war, checkpoints were established in cities and highways. The militants sought to take

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[492] Harriet Salem, "Ukraine Military Attacks Pro-Russia Rebels Near Slavyansk," *The Guardian*, May 2, 2014, accessed April 4, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/02/ukraine-military-attacks-rebels-russia-helicopters.

[493] Balaban et al., *Guide to the Conflict Zone*., 37.

[494] "Через Кордон у Луганщині Прорвалася Колона Зі Зброєю, Був Бій," *Ukrainskaya Pravda*, May 27, 2014, accessed April 4, 2019, https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/05/27/7026880/.

[495] Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, 112.

[496] Matveeva.

control of the Route H20 which linked Donetsk, Sloviansk, and Mariupol. One of the clashes between militants and ATO forces occurred in the Donetsk oblast near Volnovakha where eight Ukrainian soldiers were killed.[497] The militants moved along the M03 highway and attacked Izium, a city close to the Kharkov oblast.[498] The separatist groups also ambushed the Ukrainian voluntary group on the M04 Route, nearby Karlivka city. The war continued in the Lugansk oblast as well. The militants moved to north and captured Lysychansk, Severodonetsk, and Rubizhne. They were stationed on route H21 and attacked Novoaidar. However, they could not reach the western part of Donetsk region and the northern part of the Luhansk region.[499]

The commander of the militia and the Minister of Defense of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic, Igor Strelkov, addressed the inhabitants of the region and urged them to 'stand up for their homeland.' He stated: "we are a small group of volunteers from Russia and Ukraine who are struggling against the entire Ukrainian army."[500] Obviously Strelkov needed to attract more militants to Donbas and to do so the leaders of the 'LPR' and 'DPR' declared their unification under the name of Confederate Alliance of People's Republics of Novorossiya on May 24.[501] Timing of the association of DPR and LPR should be noted too because presidential election in Ukraine was going to be held on May 25. As noted, since the beginning of uprising the militants claimed the illegitimacy of Kyiv government and by announcing the Confederate Alliance of People's Republics of Novorossiya their regional claims over other territories of the Southern and Eastern Ukraine came to the fore. In fact, the separatists hoped to get Moscow's attention by the unification, and they expected

[497] "Поблизу Волновахи Пройшли Бої, Загинули 8 Українських Військових - ЗМІ," *Ukrainskaya Pravda*, May 22, 2014, accessed April 4, 2019, https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/05/22/7026074/.

[498] "Силовики Відбили Атаки Бойовиків На Блокпост і Колону Військовослужбовців," *Ukrainskaya Pravda*, May 21, 2014, accessed April 4, 2019, https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/05/21/7025944/.
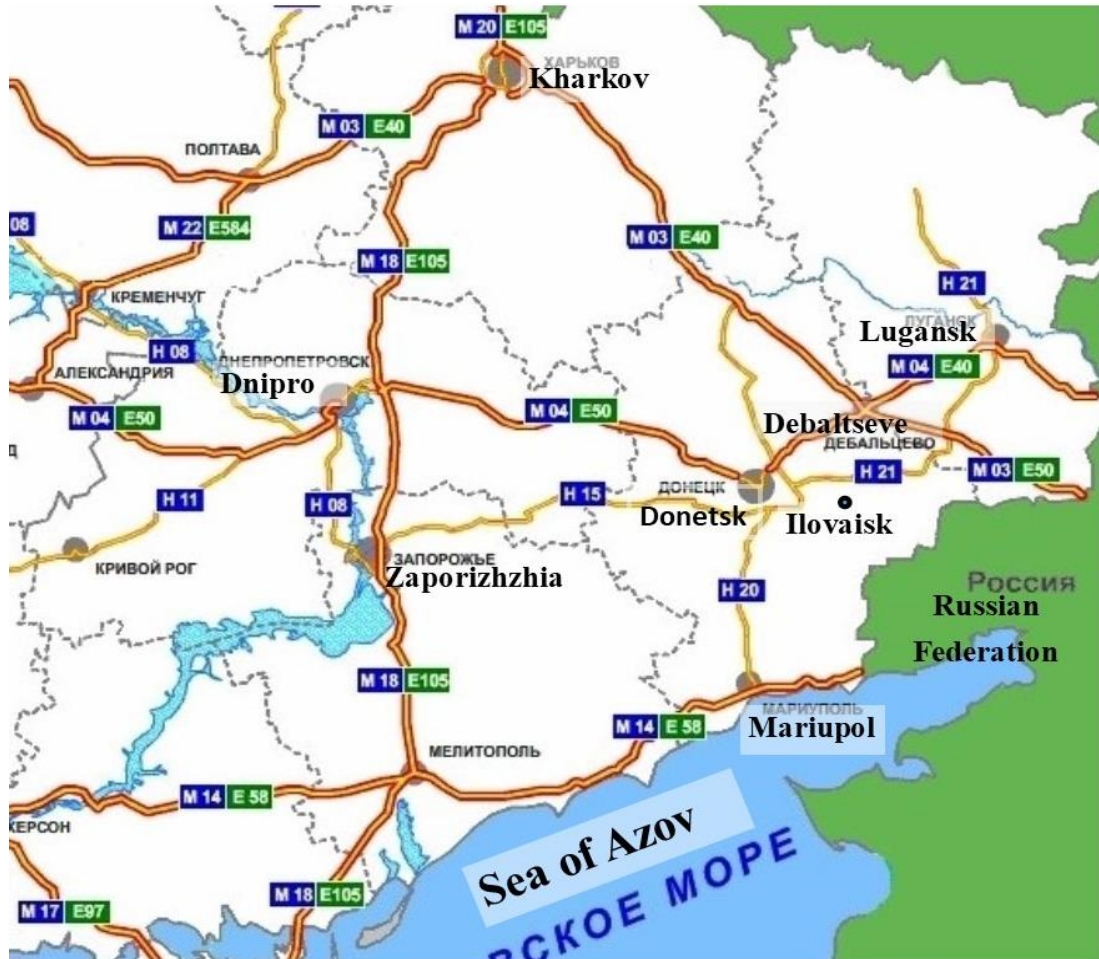
[499] Balaban et al., *Guide to the Conflict Zone*, 38.

[500] "Стрелков Призвал Граждан ДНР Встать На Защиту Родины," *Vz.Ru*, May 18, 2014, accessed April 4, 2019, https://vz.ru/news/2014/5/18/687248.html.

[501] Balaban et al., *Guide to the Conflict Zone*, 38.

the territory to be absorbed by Russian Federation. However, this move of the separatists did not produce any results.[502]

Picture 4. Highway Map of Ukraine
Source: http://routes.in.ua/maps-ukraine/ (Translations by author)

Another battle occurred to take control over the Donetsk airport. On the night of May 26, 2014, a group of pro-Russian separatists occupied a part of the airport's buildings. Militants demanded that the Ukrainian military, who were in the old airport terminal, lay down their arms and surrender. The government, instead, issued an ultimatum on the laying down of weapons and the release of administrative buildings by the separatists. When the demands of both sides remained unresponsive,

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[502] Anna Dolgov, "Russia's Igor Strelkov: I Am Responsible for War in Eastern Ukraine," *The Moscow Times*, 2014, accessed April 5, 2019, https://www.themoscowtimes.com/archive/russias-igor-strelkov-i-am-responsible-for-war-in-eastern-ukraine.

the battle began. On May 26, units of army special forces with the support of combat aviation attacked terrorists who tried to take control of Donetsk International Airport. Ukrainian units acted quickly and efficiently where about 45 militants were killed and several dozens of them injured. One third of the militants' Vostok battalion was destroyed by the ATO forces. Panic broke out in the ranks of the militants and even some of their leaders hurriedly left the city.[503] Consequently, Ukrainian units secured the airport area at the end of the battle.

In June 2014, both sides of the conflict were busy with increasing their military capabilities. In this case, militants were receiving significant amount of military equipment including tanks, from across the border.[504] Nevertheless, Ukrainian Army managed to liberate some important areas such as Krasnyi Lyman, Mariupol, Schastya. The militants settled in urban areas along Donets Ridge and took control of Torez / Chystiakove and Shakhtarsk on the H21 route. After the liberation of Mariupol, the Ukrainian forces maintained their operations at the state border to cut off the separatists' communications with Russia because the military equipment from Russia through Izvaryne was increasing. According to Mykola Balaban et al. Russian military equipment in Donbas was documented when the ATO forces captured a BM-21 'Grad' MLRS on June 13, near Dobropillya. They claim that the acquired documents showed that "the MLRS belonged to the 18th Motorized Rifle Brigade of the 58th Army of Russia."[505]

On June 6, 2014, an An-30B reconnaissance aircraft was shot down by MANPADS in Nikolaevka village near Slovyansk. The plane was carried out eight crew members, three were able to leave the jet, five of them died.[506] On June 14, a military transport aircraft departed from Dnipropetrovsk was fired from MANPADS during the landing at the airport of Lugansk. There were 9 crew members and 40 Ukrainian soldiers on board and all of them died. Soon after the event the leader of the self-

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[503] Валерий Ширяев, "Как Обороняли Донецкий Аэропорт," *BBC Украина*, 2015, https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/ukraine_in_russian/2015/01/150123_ru_s_donetsk_airport_review.

[504] Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 147.

[505] Balaban et al., *Guide to the Conflict Zone*, 38.

[506] "Відвели Літак Від Слов'янська Ціною Власного Життя: Подвиг Екіпажу," *Gazete.Ua*, 2018, April 5, 2019, https://gazeta.ua/articles/donbas/_vidveli-litak-vid-slovyanska-cinoyu-vlasnogo-zhittya-podvig-ekipazhu/840977.

proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic, Valery Bolotov claimed that the Ukrainian transport aircraft IL-76 near Lugansk was shot by representatives of his organization.[507]

A ceasefire was concluded on June 20 by the Ukrainian authorities and pro-Russian separatists which lasted until June 30. Both sides repeatedly blamed each other for violating the ceasefire. President Poroshenko stated: "we will step in and liberate our land. Non-renewal of the cease-fire regime is our answer to the terrorists, militants, marauders, all those who mock at the peaceful population."[508] Nevertheless, both sides used the short time ceasefire to strengthen their military capabilities. At the beginning of July, the clashes intensified again. On July 5, Ukrainian troops took control over Slovyansk, Druzhkivka, Kramatorsk, Artemivsk and Kostyantynivka. Militants under the command of Strelkov retreated to Donetsk to organize the city's defense.[509]

In the meantime, Sector D which tried to cut off the communication line between militants and Russia continued its operations. However, Ukrainian troops gradually squeezed into the narrow corridor between the border and separatists groups. On July 11, missile launched to the Armed Forces and the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine in Sector D of the ATO zone near the village of Zelenopillya of the Lugansk region. The attack occurred on the night of July 10 to July 11, 2014, Russian rocket artillery bombed Ukrainian troops from their territory. This was the first direct massive use of regular Russian troops against the Ukrainian forces. As a result of the fire, 6 border guards and 30 military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine died. Subsequently, such shelling from Russian territory became systematic.[510]

[507] "Катастрофа Іл-76: Суд Арештував Генерала Назарова," *BBC News Україна*, 2014, April 5, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/entertainment/2014/11/141125_il_crush_arrest_rl.

[508] "Петр Порошенко Не Продлил Перемирие На Востоке Украины," *BBC Russkaya Sluzhba*, 2014, accessed April 5, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2014/06/140625_ukraine_ceasfire_ends.

[509] "Терористи Заявили Про Початок Організації 'Оборони Донецька,'" *24tv.Ua*, 2014, accessed April 5, 2019, https://24tv.ua/teroristi_zayavili_pro_pochatok_organizatsiyi_oboroni_donetska_n461305.

[510] Євгеній Захаров, *Насильницькі Злочини, Скоєні в Ході Збройного Конфлікту На Сході України у 2014–2018 Рр* (Kharkiv: ТОВ «Видавництво „Права людини"», 2018), 99, accessed April 5, 2019, http://khpg.org/files/docs/1544986499.pdf.

The conflict continued on the outskirts of Lugansk and Donetsk region and the airports of Lugansk and Donetsk which controlled by the Ukrainian army. Ukrainian forces almost surrounded Horlivka city and attempted to disconnect the routes from Alchevsk and Izvaryne to Lugansk. Ukrainian air force and artillery troops have caused heavy losses to the separatists and the armed convoys which were coming from Russia on the Route M04. However, The Ukrainian Air Force suffered as well. In total, four Ukrainian military aircraft were targeted by militants, two of which were shot down by air-to-air missiles from directly Russian territory in July.[511]

Meanwhile, militants shot down the Boeing 777 plane belonged to Malaysian Airlines on July 17. The MH17 flight from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur flew over the conflict zone in the Donbas, when it suddenly disappeared from the radar. The plane crashed in the territory of Torez,[512] a mining town within Donetsk oblast. There were 283 passengers on board, 80 of them were children, as well as 15 crew members. Unfortunately, all of them died.[513]

The Ukrainian army expelled the separatist forces from Lysychansk and Severodonetsk. The separatists withdrew to the Kadiivka areas. The next siege attempts of the Ukrainian Army and attacks on major cities were not very successful. Meanwhile, the ATO decision makers have begun to implement the tactic of separating militant-controlled zones. Ukrainian Sector C forces entered into Debaltseve region from the north in order to block the routes M04, M03, and H21 and thus to disconnect the link between the DPR and LPR troops.[514] The ATO headquarters assigned the task of commanding the Brigade to hide the nomination of the 95th brigade to break through the corridor to disburden the troops of Sector D which were locked in the Dmitrovka, Stepanivka and Marinovka districts. However, the troops were surrounded by the militants and massive shelling from Russian territory continued. Under these circumstances, Ukrainian forces in Sector D could

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[511] Balaban et al., *Guide to the Conflict Zone*, 40.

[512] The *Torez* name was given to the town in Soviet time, after the death of Maurice Thorez, leader of the French Communist Party.

[513] "Катастрофа МН17 Рік По Тому: Що Ми Знаємо," *BBC News Україна*, 2015, accessed, April 5, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/society/2015/07/150715_mh17_vj_facts_what_we_know_it.

[514] Balaban et al., *Guide to the Conflict Zone*, 40.

not defend their position along the border. Moreover, the ATO forces failed to hold Shakhtarsk and thereby could not to dominate Route H21.[515]

In early August, the ATO forces changed tactic once again and launched new offensive. Ilovaisk in the South and Debaltseve in the North were chosen as new targets. By the new move Ukrainian army aimed to cut off the militants' communication with Russia and also to apart the Donetsk and Lugansk militants from each other. This task was conducted by the Sector B branch of the ATO forces. Approximately 60% of the territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblast dominated by the ATO forces and the oblasts were blocked from the north, west and south. Only from the eastern direction, from the territory of Russia, the militants could receive weapons and reinforcements.[516] The ATO forces took control over the critical routes connecting Donetsk and Luhansk. Moreover, the major population centers which controlled by the militants were isolated by checkpoints and many cities and towns were retaken from separatists forces.[517]

Ukrainian forces managed to take control over Ilovaisk and Miusynsk. Holding Miusynsk was particularly critical to control the Route H21. ATO headquarters assumed that an assault from Miusynsk towards Khrustalny along the Route H21 would help to cut the communication lines between Donetsk and Lugansk militants.[518] After several failed attempts, the Ukrainian troops seized the height of Savur-Mohyla which was also critical position close to Russian border. Meanwhile, clashes to dominate the strategic routes continued. The Route M04 was one of them in the Novosvitlivka and Khryushuvaty areas which locates between Lugansk and the Russian border. Sector A forces of the Ukrainian Army were assigned to this mission.[519]

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[515] Balaban et al., *Guide to the Conflict Zone*, 40-41

[516] "Аналіз Ведення Антитерористичної Операції Та Наслідків Вторгнення Російської Федерації в Україну у Серпні-Вересні 2014 Року," *Міністерство Оборони України*, 2015, 2. accessed April 6, 2019, http://www.mil.gov.ua/content/other/anliz_rf.pdf.

[517] Michael Cohen, "Ukraine's Battle at Ilovaisk, August 2014: The Tyranny of Means," *Army Press Online Journal* 16, no. 25 (2016), 4.

[518] Balaban et al., *Guide to the Conflict Zone*, 41.

[519] "Аналіз Ведення АТО Та Наслідків Вторгнення РФ у Серпні-Вересні 2014 Року(ч.2)," *Republic.Com.Ua*, 2015, accessed August 7, 2019, https://republic.com.ua/article/38460-analiz-vedennya-ato-ta-naslidkiv-vtorgnennya-rf-u-serpni-veresni-2014-rokuch2.html.

5.3. August 2014: The Hottest Month of the Donbas War

August 2014 was very critical moment for the fate of the war in Donbas. The leaders of the separatists had disagreed about whether they could continue to resist or not because they were not receiving direct help from Russia yet. Anna Matveeva describes the situation for separatists as: "combatants got calls from their parents urging them to come home before they were all killed."[520] In his interview with Matveeva, one of the separatist commanders (*Prince*) supports the idea of militants' desperation as:

> The rebels were in such grave situation through their own fault because people were badly organized. Military conscript points in each town were answerable to their own field commanders and did not send individuals with appropriate military experience to where they were needed. Preparation and intelligence collection were non-existent.[521]

Strelkov himself depicts the conditions as:

> At the beginning of August, the only hope was for a miracle. The rebels' spirits were very high, but I was aware of the overall situation and didn't know how to get out of it. Retreat is the most difficult technical moment in military planning. I thought that we'd have to prepare for street fighting in Donetsk and then make a corridor to Russia's border in order to withdraw with the fighters, their families and our supporters.[522]

At that moment, Igor Strelkov, the 'defense minister' of the 'DPR', ordered his forces to withdraw from Donetsk, but Vladimir Antyufeyev denied obeying the order. Moreover, local commanders Alexander Zakharchenko, Alexander Khodakovsky and former Donetsk police chief Alexei Dikiy also refused to leave the city. Following the disputes between the leaders, Igor Strelkov and Alexandr Borodai, the first 'prime minister' of DPR, they were recalled from Donetsk to

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[520] Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, 162.

[521] Matveeva.

[522] Matveeva.

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Russia.[523] Alexander Zakharchenko was appointed to the decision-making position in Donetsk and Valery Bolotov was replaced by Igor Plotnitsky.[524]

In August, the militants were increasingly receiving assistance from across the border. According to Zakharchenko at the so-called DPR Council of Ministers meeting, the 'Novorossiya army' included of 120 armored vehicles, 30 tanks and 1,200 soldiers who trained in Russia.[525] The militants, especially when the Ukrainian army and border guards failed to protect their positions between the separatists and Russian border began to receive more and more military equipment from Russia. On August 24, the situation was completely out of control when Ukraine was celebrating the Independence Day. The same day, Russian paratroops between 2000-4000 were crossing the border to support separatist groups against Ukrainian Army.[526]

In fact, on the eve of the parade in Kyiv, on August 23, the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine received information of armored vehicles, which was being pushed out of the territory of the Russian Federation towards the settlements of Amvrosievka and Kuteinik in the territory of Sector D columns. However, the report of the Head of the Sector D of General Mykola Lytvyn was ignored by the ATO headquarters. The detected columns of Russian armored vehicles of August 23, were considered as a panic of Sector D commanders and thereby left unattended.[527] The conditions were very critical for the Sector D troops because they were going to be encircled by the Russian army. Therefore, they were waiting order from the ATO headquarters whether to withdraw or wait for reinforcement.

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[523] Glenn Kates, "The Rebel Leaders Dropping Out of the Fight in Eastern Ukraine," *The Guardian*, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/20/rebel-leaders-replaced-eastern-ukraine.

[524] Christopher Miller, "Russian Resigns to Make Way for Ukrainian as New Head of 'Donetsk People's Republic,'" *The Guardian*, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/08/russian-resigns-ukrainian-head-donetsk-peoples-republic.

[525] Balaban et al., *Guide to the Conflict Zone*, 42.

[526] Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, 163.

[527] "Проміжний Звіт ТСК з Розслідування Трагічних Подій Під Іловайськом. Повний Текст," *Pravda.Com.Ua*, 2014, accessed April 8, 2019, https://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2014/10/20/7041381/.

Picture 5. The Situation in Donbas on August 13, 2019
Source: Information and Analytical Center of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, accessed August 13, 2019, http://mediarnbo.org/2019/08/13/jfo-map-13-08-2019/?lang=en

Approximately at 10.30 a.m. on August 24, during the parade in Kyiv, officers of the headquarters of the Sector D headed by Colonel Petro Romygailo from the advanced command post in the forest plantation on the Amvrosievka-Kuteinik highway saw a column of armored vehicles of the Russian army with a total number of more than 100 units, consisting of landing combat vehicles, tanks, self-propelled artillery guns, as well as a large number of tented KAMAZs with ammunition and personnel at high speeds moved deep into the territory of Ukraine. The information on the Column of Russian Armored Vehicles by Colonel Romygailo was immediately passed to the Chief of Staff of the ATO General Victor Nazarov. Nazarov in response said: "Cowards! I will make you to be arrested!"[528]

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[528] "Проміжний Звіт ТСК з Розслідування Трагічних Подій Під Іловайськом. Повний Текст."

Despite all these reports on the Column of Russian Armored Vehicles in Ukraine, the military leaders of Ukraine did not believe that Russia could launch a direct offense to assist the separatists and invade the Ukraine's land. In this context, Ukrainian Ministry of Defense claimed that the ministry became aware of the direct invasion of Ukraine's territory by Russian army only after two days, on August 25.[529] Indeed, the operation of the Russian army in Ukraine was conducted swiftly that even the separatists were not understanding what was happing. In this issue, one of the separatists commander states:

> The counter-offensive was kept a deep secret, we knew nothing. It came suddenly. One minute, Blagodatnoye and Novoazovsk were taken, and the next, the units were already approaching Mariupol. We never saw the Russian forces and did not have any joint operations with them but could see that something was going on. The artillery shelled precisely on target and then we attacked, but we did not realize that this was a part of a plan. Orders were given from time to time to attack here and there, but who was giving them and why was not clear. Everybody was surprised, wondering who could have organized this, because rebel detachments were disconnected and a lot of them did not know each other.[530]

Ukrainian forces were surrounded at Ilovaisk where the most tragic part of the war in Donbas took place. Ukrainian Lt. general Ruslan Khomchak asked the ATO headquarters several times but the only answer he received was to 'hold tight and wait for reinforcements.' Under such circumstances two groups engaged in fighting between August 25-27. Sector B troops (Sector D ceased to exist) began to fight with Russian troops around the Ilovaisk town. Ukrainian units who were fighting first to capture Ilovaisk trapped in the city when Russian troops surrounded the town. The only option for General Khomchak was to negotiate for a peaceful withdrawal from the city.[531]

Russians agreed Khomchak's proposal but demanded Ukrainian forces to lay down their arms when they withdraw. Khomchak did not order his soldiers to lay down their weapons just in case.[532] When the Ukrainian forces were moving out according to the agreement, Russian troops ambushed them, and a slaughter unfolded. On the contrary,

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[529] Cohen, "Ukraine's Battle at Ilovaisk, August 2014: The Tyranny of Means.", 6.

[530] Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, 163.

[531] Юрій Бутусов, "Подвиг і Трагедія Іловайська," *ZN,UA*, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://dt.ua/internal/podvig-i-tragediya-ilovayska-_.html.

[532] Cohen, "Ukraine's Battle at Ilovaisk, August 2014: The Tyranny of Means.", 7.

for the rebel version, Ukrainian forces did not act according to the deal which was made with Khomchak. For this version, Russian commanders paused the process to consult their superiors when they noticed that Ukrainian forces are reluctant to give up their weapons. At that moment, Khomchak said "I have no time to wait. This is the order: engage in combat. We will dash through and attack the Russians.' The first machine went on an attack. Russians returned fire."[533]

The battle in Ilovaisk, which according for official estimations 366 Ukrainian soldiers died, were a turning point of the war in Donbas. As noted, before the Russian direct invasion the militants were in a crucial point which could end the crisis in Donbas from the Ukraine's point of view. Most probably Russian authorities perceived the risk of militants losing the war. Therefore, instead of indirectly supporting the militants in Donbas, Russia directly engaged in the war against Ukrainian forces. Consequently, in Ilovaisk between August 25-29, Ukrainian army encountered the heaviest losses of the war in Donbas since its beginning.[534]

Following days war continued in Lugansk and also in the territory between Donetsk and the Sea of Azov. On August 19, new leadership in Lugansk launched new counteroffensive. However, Ukrainian forces were holding the Lugansk airport and also Lutuhyne. The direction of the war in Lugansk also changed dramatically when Russian troops joined the militants. On August 31, 2014 after an intense clashes Ukrainian troops withdrew from the airport and retreated to Schastya. Subsequently, the war's center of focus shifted to the south.[535] Although the 95th and 79th Airborne Brigades conducted raids towards Boikivske and Kalmiuske and damaged the separatists and Russian forces they could not change the course of the war.[536]

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[533] Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, 165.

[534] "Матіос Оприлюднив Імена Бійців, Загиблих Під Іловайськом," *112.UA*, 2015, https://ua.112.ua/ato/matios-opryliudnyv-imena-biitsiv-zahyblykh-pid-ilovaiskom-253157.html.

[535] Howard Amos and Damien McElroy, "Ukraine Withdraws from Luhansk Airport after 'Russian Tank Column' Attack," *The Telegraph*, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11067351/Ukraine-battles-Russian-tank-column-near-Luhansk-ahead-of-Minsk-peace-talks.html.

[536] Balaban et al., *Guide to the Conflict Zone*, 42.

United forces of Russia and militants moved in the direction to the Sea of Azov and seized Novoazovsk which provided an access for them to the seaport.[537] At the same time, a volunteer battalion of Ukraine (Aidar) in the north was ambushed on the Route H21, between Schastya and Lugansk. As a result of this incident the Ukrainian army lost dozens of soldiers.[538] On September 5, 2014 the Minsk trilateral group meeting (OSCE, Ukraine and Russia) concluded a protocol (Minsk I) and ensured a bilateral ceasefire.[539] However, at the end of the ceasefire agreement, none of the fighting sides satisfied. On one side, from Ukraine's point of view, the first half of the August was gainful, but the month ended as a nightmare. On the other side, having a direct assistance from Russian military, the militant's morale boosted, and thereby they wanted to gain more territory.

5.4. Second Stage of the War: After the Minsk-I Protocol

As noted in previous part, Ukrainian side was dissatisfied by the developments which occurred in favor of the militants in the second half of August 2014, particularly after Russia's direct intervention in Ukraine. However, the Minsk protocol was a kind of relief for Kyiv because it faced with a threat to lose more territories in Donbas and also the separatists together with Russian troops were moving forward towards Mariupol, the main industrial city in the south. The main target of the Russian and militants combined forces were expected to attack Mariupol and then establish a land bridge to connect the city with occupied Crimea throughout the Route M14. This scenario could be a disaster for Ukraine and could be impossible to obstruct such operation.

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[537] "Боевики ДНР Захватили Новотроицкое Донецкой Обл," *RBC-Ukraine*, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/boeviki-dnr-zahvatili-novotroitskoe-donetskoy-obl---smi-01092014181100.

[538] "Подробности Засады Под Луганском: Погибли 33 Украинских Бойца," *LIGA.Net*, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://news.liga.net/politics/news/podrobnosti_zasady_pod_luganskom_pogibli_33_ukrainskikh_boytsa.

[539] "Memorandum of 19 September 2014 Outlining the Parameters for the Implementation of Commitments of the Minsk Protocol of 5 September 2014," Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.osce.org/home/123806

Therefore, the ceasefire at the beginning of the September was exactly what Ukrainian government needed. On the contrary, using the advantage of fighting with the Russian army, militants were eager to obtain more territories. Many separatist commanders did not approve the Minsk protocol and they were willing to fight forward. However, militants' leader Zakharchenko halted the offensive when they were about to enter the suburbs of Mariupol. He explained that the reason behind his decision was the lack of equipment and manpower to seize the city. However, ceasefire agreement despite small-scale clashes stabilized the contact line between Ukrainian forces and the militants during the fall of 2014 and ensured Ukraine's control over Mariupol.[540]

Toward the end of November, hostilities revealed once again. Moreover, the ceasefire period did not develop in favor of the Ukrainian army because the separatist forces were further strengthening. During the fall and winter, the militia began to resemble a regular army. Thanks to the Russian military trade system - *Военторг* separatists filled their equipment needs. Andrei Morozov, chief of communications of the Lugansk battalion 'August' writes:

> This situation allowed us to achieve results that were unthinkable in the summer and autumn. The [Armed Forces of New Russia] had the opportunity to crush the enemy with a mass of fire and equipment. The technical superiority of the enemy, the terrible scourge of the militia in the summer battles, evaporated.[541]

Moreover, since summer the number of militants has increased significantly. A lot of people who did not participate in the summer battles and not smelled gunpowder, joined to the militants. Under these circumstances, the conflict re-escalated on Donetsk airport. The authorities of the self-proclaimed DPR and the Russian Foreign Ministry stated: "the airport of the city of Donetsk according to Minsk agreements should be transferred to the control of the militias." This argument was denied by the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "There are no words about Donetsk airport in the Minsk agreements," said the spokesman of the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign

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[540] Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, 170.

[541] Евгений Норин, "Сражение Года: Взятие Дебальцево," sputnikipogrom.com, 2015, accessed April 7, 2019, https://sputnikipogrom.com/2015-in-review/48901/battle-of-2015/#.V_jJlFQrK70.

Affairs Yevhen Perebyinis on January 19.[542] The main aim of seizing the Donetsk airport was to halt shelling the Donetsk city, Debaltseve, Volnovakha and Schastya.[543]

Among these territories Kyiv controlled Schastya was particularly significant for its power generation capacity for the separatists because Lugansk and environs were getting electricity from Schasyta in exchange of coal.[544] Heavy fight on Donetsk airport lasted until January 21, 2015. Ukrainian security forces who were called 'cyborgs' for the heroic confrontation with their enemies moved out of the new terminal towards the village of Piski. When the clash in Donetsk airport over Debaltseve became the new battleground 200 soldiers were killed and almost five hundred wounded.[545]

Debaltseve, a small town somewhat east of Gorlovka was doomed to become the scene of fighting. This town is a junction of railways and highways, the most important railway between Donetsk and Lugansk passes through it, so control over this area is significant for both parties. Debaltseve and adjacent settlements were liberated in the summer of 2014 during the active offensive of the Armed Forces. Then the boundaries of Debaltseve bridgehead reached almost Makiyivka in the east of Donetsk. However, after the intervention of the Russian Army under Ilovaisk, the offensive was stopped.[546]

After the famous battles of the late summer, the situation in the area stabilized. Debaltseve bridgehead deeply issued to the south, covering from the east Gorlovka and cutting the road between Lugansk and Donetsk. The Armed Forces of Ukraine

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[542] В'ячеслав Шрамович, "Як Обороняли Донецький Аеропорт," *BBC News Україна*, 2015, accessed April 9, 2019,
https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/politics/2015/01/150122_donetsk_airport_review_vs.

[543] Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, 170.

[544] Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, 171.

[545] "У Києві Та Інших Містах Пройдуть Поминальні Служби," *Tsn.Ua*, 2017, April 9, 2019, https://tsn.ua/ato/podvig-kiborgiv-v-ukrayini-vshanovuyut-geroyiv-doneckogo-aeroportu-867123.html.

[546] Оксана Коваленко, "Дебальцівський Плацдарм. Невідомі Подробиці Операції Та Переговорів у Мінську," *Українська Правда*, 2016, accessed April 10, 2019, https://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2016/02/18/7099435/.

went on the defensive, the militants needed to cut a wedge driven into the position of the so called 'Armed Forces of New Russia'. There were not particularly intense positional battles around the city. However, sitting in the trenches was interrupted in the second half of January 2015 by the general offensive of the separatists forces.[547]

As noted, since the Russian troops directly involved in war in August the separatist forces were reinforced and redesigned by the Russian military trade system – *Военторг*. On the contrary, there were several problems on the other side of the front. Back in the fall, the Ukrainian side was well aware that the Debaltseve protrusion could be attacked. Moreover, even specific locations of the strike were not a special secret: Ukrainians discussed the possibility of a militant strike from Gorlovka and Yenakievo to Vuglegirsk not only in headquarters, but even in the media. The balance of forces between the ATO units and the Russian and separatists combined army on the Debaltseve bridgehead was in favor of the later.[548]

According to the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the personnel of the militants was twice, as large (1: 2.1), tanks tripled (1: 3.5), armored combat vehicles almost equaled (1: 1.3), but artillery systems and rocket fire systems were 7 times more than ATO forces (1: 7,1).[549] Moreover, the General Staff believed that the militants used the Donetsk airport to divert attention and strength in Debaltseve.[550] Indeed, the weak point of the Ukrainian redoubts was Vuglegirsk, a town to the west of Debaltseve, closest to the militants' positions. The positions of engineering equipment were very bad. Ukrainian troops also suffered due to the general awkwardness and weakness of command. Already in the course of the battle, the commanders were regularly late in their decisions.[551]

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[547] Норин, "Сражение Года: Взятие Дебальцево."

[548] Норин.

[549] "Дебальцеве Врятувало Україну, Ворог Не Пішов Далі, - Учасники Котла," *Hromadske.Radio*, 2016, accessed April 10, 2019, https://hromadske.radio/news/2016/02/04/debalceve-vryatuvalo-ukrayinu-vorog-ne-pishov-dali-uchasnyky-kotla.

[550] Коваленко, "Дебальцівський Плацдарм. Невідомі Подробиці Операції Та Переговорів у Мінську."

[551] Норин, "Сражение Года: Взятие Дебальцево."

Vuglegirsk, surprisingly poorly prepared for the defense, the militant forces attacked to the town by using this weakness. The basis of the attackers was Gorlovska with the support of the Special Forces of the self-proclaimed DPR, reinforced by armored vehicles. The ATO checkpoint at the entrance of the city was taken by surprise, the militant groups literally demolished it. The assault turned out to be bloody, but short. Leaving several tanks on mines in front of the outskirts, the militants broke into the city. In the midst of fighting in Vuglegirsk, Alexander Zakharchenko, the leader of the separatists, arrived in town.[552] The appearance of the leader on the battlefield encouraged the militants forces. On the contrary, Ukrainian forces were insufficient in Vuglegirsk. Volodymyr Nazarenko, one of Ukrainian war veterans describes the war in the town as:

> I remember how Vuglegirsk was given. The forces that were there were clearly not enough to keep it. But the guys were young men, the battles lasted about five days. Throwing different forces there, but very chaotic. The impression was that there was no single decision-making center, there was no single command. The boys incurred a lot of losses because of this disorganization, respectively, the city failed to take.[553]

Consequently, by early February, Vuglegirsk had completely passed into the hands of the insurgents. After the fall of Vuglegirsk, the separatist forces moved to Debaltseve from three sides. The main battles were Kalynivka to the west of Debaltseve, Novohryhorivka to the north and Chornukhyne to the south-east. All these villages are very close to Debaltseve what could pave the way for a possible surrounding of the city. Separatist units developed their success after the invasion of Vuglegirsk and Kalinovka. Artillery became the main tool of the militants. They managed to achieve a serious advantage in terms of the density of fire where Ukrainian forces were gradually suppressed by the fire though their main means of struggle was also artillery. In general, Debaltseve battle became the 'battle of technology' to a large extent, when tasks were solved primarily by superior firepower.[554]

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[552] Норин.

[553] Тетяна Курманова, "Ми Би Могли Втримати Дебальцеве, - Події Трирічної Давнини Пригадує Ветеран АТО," *Громадське Радіо*, 2018, accessed April 11, 2019, https://hromadske.radio/podcasts/kyiv-donbas/my-by-mogly-vtrymaty-debalceve-podiyi-tryrichnoyi-davnyny-prygaduye-veteran-ato.

[554] Норин, "Сражение Года: Взятие Дебальцево."

On February 9, the self-proclaimed DPR reconnaissance group, which came from Kalinovka, broke into Lohvynove and intercepted the main supply route of the Ukrainian Armed Forces to Debaltseve. After the key loss of the strategically important Lohvynove, it was impossible to move along the route Artemivsk-Debaltseve.[555] Interception of the main supply artery of the Ukrainian Armed Forces had dramatically changed the situation. If until now the operation was not too successful for the separatist forces, after losing Lohvynove, Ukrainian troops in this sector became on the edge of the abyss. During these days, apart from the militants, a small fighting group from the 5th Tank Brigade of the Russian Army (Ulan-Ude) appeared in the area of Lohvynove. The number of 'Combat Buryats' amounted to 200-300 people with three dozen tanks.[556]

While the battle was raging around Lohvynove, an international group met in Minsk trying to agree on the terms of the ceasefire. Merkel, Hollande, Poroshenko and Putin flew to Minsk on February 11. The next day, Alexander Zakharchenko and Igor Plotnitsky, heads of the DPR and LPR arrived respectively. On February 12, the negotiators worked out a document that provided for the fulfillment of a number of conditions. However, the ceasefire was not put into effect immediately, as in the Minsk-1 protocol. It was noted that the agreement will be effective as of February 15th. Therefore, the battle in Debaltseve was even escalated instead of smoothing down by the impact of the ceasefire agreement. Right after signing the agreement Zakharchenko went directly to frontline where he wounded during the combat.[557]

Ukrainian side were experiencing difficulties to maintain the battle. Observing the battle, a Ukrainian serviceman states:

> If they do not make any decision immediately, the team may disappear within 24 hours… There will be a repetition of the Ilovaisk 'boiler'. It has been almost five days since Debaltsevo is surrounded. When they took the Donetsk airport, they lied to people for five days that it was under control. Actually, it was the opposite. Debaltseve has actually been surrounded for five days.[558]

[555] Коваленко, "Дебальцівський Плацдарм. Невідомі Подробиці Операції Та Переговорів у Мінську."

[556] Норин, "Сражение Года: Взятие Дебальцево."

[557] Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, 173.

[558] Норин, "Сражение Года: Взятие Дебальцево."

Inside the circle, Ukrainian forces began to develop a rescue plan on their own: outside, they did not give the order for withdrawal. The 128th brigade headed by Colonel Sergey Shaptaloy was the basis of the surrounded forces. Shaptaloy perfectly remembered the fate of the previous 'cauldrons' and understood that the expectation of a successful breakthrough from the outside would be catastrophic, so he decided to break through on his own. At this time, the militants moved forward. On February 17, the rebels defeated part of the strongholds of the Kryvbas battalion on the outskirts of Debaltseve.[559]

In the last hours of defense, the Separatists' armored vehicles shot down the strongholds of the Ukrainian forces and 72 people surrendered. On the night of February 18, the Ukrainian troops broke through the encirclement. All the forces of the 128th Brigade, retained by the command, came out of the 'boiler'.[560] On February 18, 2015, more than 2.5 thousand Ukrainian soldiers left the bridgehead and this particular date is considered to be the end of the battle in Debaltseve.[561] Besides, the leader of the self-proclaimed DPR, Alexander Zakharchenko stressed:

> I spoke in Minsk and now say that the territory of the DPR is the territory of the Donetsk oblast. If our demands of de facto independence are not accepted, we will declare that the whole territory of Donetsk region belongs to us. If it does not turn out to be political, we have shown that it can be done differently.[562]

According to the Ministry of Defense, during the fighting in Debaltseve, from January 15 to February 18, 2015, 110 soldiers died, 270 were injured, 7 were taken into captivity and 18 were missing. After a long defense of Debaltseve, on February 20, 2015, Ukrainian troops completely left the city and stationed at the so-called Svitlodarsk bulge.[563] The loss of military property ATO forces were considerable.

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[559] Норин.

[560] Норин.

[561] "Річниця Боїв За Дебальцеве: Український Захисник Згадав Нагарячіші Події Війни," *24tv.Ua*, 2016, accessed April 10, 2019, https://24tv.ua/richnitsya_boyiv_za_debaltseve_ukrayinskiy_zahisnik_zgadav_nagaryachishi_podiyi_viyni_n1113701.

[562] Иван Комаров, "Дебальцевский Исход: Украинские Войска Отступают Из Дебальцево," *Газета.Ру*, 2015, accessed April 11, 2019, https://www.gazeta.ru/social/2015/02/18/6416829.shtml?updated.

[563] "Пам'яті Загиблих Захисників Дебальцевого," *Dsvv.Gov.Ua*, 2018, accessed April 10, 2019, http://dsvv.gov.ua/top-novyny/pam-yati-zahyblyh-zahysnykiv-debaltsevoho.html.

According to the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, 30% of equipment was lost when the troops left Debaltseve.[564]

Obviously, the fate of the war in Debaltseve was determined by Russian regulars troops. Militants were dramatically reinforced and redesigned by Russian army which motivated the separatist forces. In this context, Maximilian Chuperski, head of the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab noted that the militants would not have won the battle of Debaltseve if it were not Russian troops.[565]

On the contrary, Russian authorities prefer to deny involving in Donbas war. However, Elena Kostychenko, a journasilst of Novaya Gazeta, interviewed one of the Russian soldiers, Dorzhi Batomkunuev who wounded during the war in Debaltseve. Batomkunuev argued that Russia sent only contract soldiers to Donetsk. He stated:

> [Toward] October [Russian military] started gathering contract soldiers from all battalions of our unit to make one battalion out of them. We did not have enough contract soldiers to make a tank battalion, that's why we also had contract soldiers transferred from Kyakhta. We all were gathered together, we got acquainted, lived about four days together and we left.[566]

In February 2015 clashes between Ukrainian army and the militant forces occurred in the South frontline. On February 10, while the war was continuing in Debaltseve, another fight took place in the area of Shyrokyne. On February 16, Shyrokyne divided into two parts: the west of the village Shyrokyne controlled by the Azov battalion while the east of it remained under the militants' rule and the center of the village defined as a buffer zone. The Minsk II ceasefire could not prevent the clashes in Shyrokyne.[567]

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[564] "Три Роки По Тому: Російська Армія Та Бої За Дебальцеве," *Radio Svoboda*, 2018, accessed April 10, 2019, https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/donbass-realii/29033643.html.

[565] "Три Роки По Тому: Російська Армія Та Бої За Дебальцеве."

[566] "The Story of a Russian Soldier's War in Ukraine: 'We All Knew What We Had to Do and What Could Happen,'" *Euromaidan Press*, 2015, accessed April 10, 2019, http://euromaidanpress.com/2015/03/02/the-story-of-a-russian-soldiers-war-in-ukraine-we-all-knew-what-we-had-to-do-and-what-could-happen/.

[567] "Бої За Широкине: Хроніка Подій," *Tyzhden.Ua*, May 2015, accessed April 11, 2019, https://tyzhden.ua/News/130526.

On February 22, in the morning, Russian-backed militant forces, contrary to peace accords, began another attempt to capture the Shyrokyne village, near Mariupol. Reciprocal clashes between Ukrainian troops and separatist forces in Shyrokyne lasted until July 2015. On July 2, 2015, the militants of the self-proclaimed DPR were completely expelled by Ukrainian forces from the village. According to the Minsk agreements, Shyrokyne falls into demilitarization zone, and on July 26, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine decided to withdraw Azov and Donbas volunteer battalions from the village. Instead, the Marine Corps battalion stationed the region.[568]

According to some scholars like Anna Matveeva, Ukrainian troops attacked Shyrokyne to distract the enemy forces.[569] As noted, in February 2015, the war in Debaltseve had reached its peak and Ukrainian side was going to be surrounded. Therefore, Azov battalion in the south attempted to divert militants' attention away from Debaltseve. At first glance, the argument can make sense but the continuation of the clashes in Syhrokyne showed that the distraction of enemy's concentration was not the only reason behind the conflict. The village is in the vicinity of Mariupol, an industrial port city in the south which is also critical to pave the way for connection between Crimea and Donbas.

Since August 2014 war when Ukrainian units were defeated by Russian and militants combined forces, the most expected scenario was the new offensive of militants to Mariupol to connect the DPR with occupied Crimea. Obviously, the militants' hand reinforced particularly after Russia's direct involvement in war. They won two major battles: the one in Ilovaisk and the other one in Debaltseve. Especially the former one can be defined as a turning point in Donbas war. It should not be missed out that on January 24, 2015 artillery of the DPR militants shelled a residential territory of Mariupol where 30 civilians were killed while 128 of them injured.[570] Therefore, it should be noted that the region around Mariupol and the city itself was carrying the

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[568] "Порошенко Відвідав Широкине На Передовій," *Ukr.Lb.Ua*, 2018, accessed April 11, 2019, https://ukr.lb.ua/society/2018/10/12/409876_poroshenko_vidvidav_shirokine.html.

[569] Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, 174.

[570] Balaban et al., *Guide to the Conflict Zone*, 43.

risk of clashes. In this sense, from Kyiv's point of view it was critical to push the frontline away from Mariupol. Indeed, it can be claimed that the demilitarization of Syhrokyne was in favor of Ukraine, at least for a short time.

5.5. The Clashes after the Minsk-II

In general, the battle in Debaltseve was the last major war took place between ATO troops and Russian-backed separatists groups in February 2015. However, small-scale wars occurred time to time. The ceasefire of Minsk II lasted around four months until late May when the fighting erupted in the vicinity of Donetsk airport, Krasnohorivka, Dzerzhynsk, Bakhmut, Mariinka, in Donetsk region, and at Schastia and Stanitsa Luganska in Lugansk region.[571] Particularly among these clashes the attack in Mariinka can be noted when 30 militants were killed and around hundreds of them injured. The failed assault on Mariinka was organized by Zakharchenko in early June 2015. In fact, since the summer 2015, the Ukrainian army has gradually gained strength, along with the line of demarcation a layered infrastructure has been built for future military operations.[572]

The reformation of the self-proclaimed DPR and LNR forces also continued in 2015. The head of the Security Service of Ukraine Vasyl Hrytsak announced that the separatist forces were reorganized under the guidance of Russian officers. Hrytsak stated: "On the basis of the so-called Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics two army corps were created, the first army corps is DPR and the second army corps is LPR. We know the personnel that heads these units and the corps."[573] In general, on a permanent basis in Ukraine there are 6 to 9 thousand officers and soldiers of the

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[571] Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, 174.

[572] Валерий Ширяев, "Это Война," *Novaya Gazeta*, 2016, accessed April 12, 2019, https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2016/08/08/69482-eto-voyna.

[573] Юлія Поліковська, "Росія Створила На Базі Так Званих «ДНР» Та «ЛНР» Два Армійські Корпуси," *Zaxid.Net*, 2015, https://zaxid.net/sbu_rosiya_stvorila_na_bazi_tak_zvanih_dnr_ta_lnr_dva_armiyski_korpusi_n13687 99.

Russian army. Another about 50 thousand troops are on the border with Ukraine said the head of the special services.[574]

In this issue, the Commander-in-chief of the Joint Operational Headquarters of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Lieutenant-General Sergey Nayev argued that the Army Corps of the so-called 'DNR' and 'LNR' are not classical Russian units in terms of statutes. For him, these units are subordinated and under the control of the command of the Southern Military District of Russia's armed forces. Nayev points out: "both corps are part of the 8th Army and from there [they] receive weapons, ammunition, fuel and lubricants, and foodstuffs."[575] According to an article of Novaya Gazeta written by Valeriy Shiryev the First and Second Army Corps the DPR and LPR forces in total consist of 30-32 thousand soldiers. In contrast, on the other side of the line of demarcation, they are now confronted by up to 90 Ukrainian battalion tactical groups (about 100 thousand people).[576]

On December 18, 2016, another fight erupted at the Svitlodarsk bulge when the militants launched an offensive and launched a provocative attack. On the evening of December 23, the settlement of Novolugansk, located in the Svitlodarsk bulge area, became under the control of the Ukrainian Army.[577] Apart from Svitlodarsk clash, another fight took place in Avdiivka, a town located less than 10 kilometers away from Donetsk in January-February 2017. Avdiivka is adjacent to the road which connects to Donetsk. This was an important supply line for Russian army corps in the Donbas. Besides, the separatists do not want to retreat from Avdiivka, because the departure from Avdiivka mean paving the way for the Ukrainian units to reach

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[574] Юлія Поліковська, "Росія Створила На Базі Так Званих «ДНР» Та «ЛНР» Два Армійські Корпуси,"

[575] "Наєв: Армійські Корпуси 'ДНР' Та 'ЛНР' - Це Класичні Підрозділи ЗС РФ," *Ukrinform.Ua*, May 2018, accessed April 12, 2019, https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/2452326-naev-armijski-korpusi-dnr-ta-lnr-ce-klasicni-pidrozdili-zs-rf.html.

[576] Ширяев, "Это Война."

[577] "Перемога ЗСУ На Світлодарській Дузі, Промова Путіна Та Нова Бійка в Раді, Головне За День," *24tv.Ua*, 2016, accessed April 12, 2019, https://24tv.ua/peremoga_zsu_na_svitlodarskiy_duzi_promova_putina_ta_nova_biyka_v_radi__golovne_za_den_n763847.

Yasynuvata, a town where railway junction concentrated.[578] Moreover, a water filtering station locates in Avdiivka which provides clean water to Donetsk.

The industrial zone of Avdiivka was a neutral zone, but the Ukrainian military succeeded in taking positions there in February 2016. On January 29, 2017 insurgents began new assault to seize the strategic town. However, the militants attempted to capture Avdiivka did not bring any result. Instead, the ATO fighters captured new positions and positioned themselves there.[579] Escalation in Avdiivka was the latest episode of the war in Donbas between the Ukrainian troops and the separatists forces. Currently, large-scale war does not benefit for both camps. In this issue, the head of the self-proclaimed DPR, Alexander Zakharchenko stated: "if Kyiv again attacks us, I can say one thing: Minsk-3 will not be!"[580] In contrast, for Kyiv, strengthening the Ukraine's Army can only ensure the sovereignty of Ukraine. Secretary of National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine Oleksandr Turchynov stressed:

> The war against Ukraine becomes an important step in the preparation of the Russian Federation to the great war and demonstration of the claims for global leadership and redistribution of influence in the world…Despite sanctions and economic turmoil, the Russian Federation will long remain a source of military aggression, security threats and generator of instability…Only a strong national state can ensure the survival and development of independent Ukraine, and such state is based on the powerful Armed Forces, other military formations, reliable and efficient security sector.[581]

In brief, ceasefire agreements on Donbas war could not help to bring peace for the region. The small-scale of clashes arises time to time. However, the agreements are the only signed documents among the sides. In this sense, their importance cannot be denied. In long term, preserving the statuesque in Donbas weigh against the national

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[578] "Це Війна На Виснаження– Бутусов Про Події Під Авдіївкою," *Radio Svoboda*, 2017, accessed April 12, 2019, https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/28273658.html.

[579] Богдан Амінов, "Війна в Авдіївці. Чому Так Багато Втрат і Що Відбувається Зараз," *ФАКТИ*, 2017, accessed April 12, https://fakty.com.ua/ua/ukraine/20170130-vijna-v-avdiyivtsi-chomu-tak-bagato-vtrat-i-shho-vidbuvayetsya-zaraz/.

[580] Ширяев, "Это Война."

[581] "Oleksandr Turchynov: Only a Strong National State Can Ensure the Survival and Development of Independent Ukraine," *Information Analysis Center*, 2017, accessed April 13, 2019, http://mediarnbo.org/2017/02/22/oleksandr-turchynov-only-a-strong-national-state-can-ensure-the-survival-and-development-of-independent-ukraine/?lang=en.

interest of Ukraine due to its economic burden. In contrast, time works in favor of separatists because they consolidate their power in the territory.

5.6. The Crisis of Kerch Strait

The tension between Ukraine and Russian Federation re-escalated on November 25, 2018. Russian security forces captured two small artillery armored boats named 'Berdyansk' and 'Nikopol' and a tugboat, called 'Yany Kapu' along with 24 soldiers of the Navy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the Kerch Strait during their transition from the port of Odessa to the port of Mariupol Azov Sea. As a result of the ram of the Russian border ship, the tugboat of the Ukrainian Navy was damaged and some of Ukrainian sailors were injured. Russia insists that Ukrainian warships violated the state border when they attempted to cross from the Black Sea to the Azov Sea.[582] According to the command of the Ukrainian navy, the Russian side had been informed in advance about the transition. In contrast, the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB), which also controls the state borders, claimed that Ukrainian ships violated international rules by entering Russian waters. The Russian side incriminates them 'illegal crossing of the state border', for which they face up to six years of imprisonment. However, Ukrainian officials consider them prisoners of war. According to the Ministry for Temporary Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons of Ukraine, Russia attacked and captured Ukrainian warships in the international waters of the Black Sea.[583]
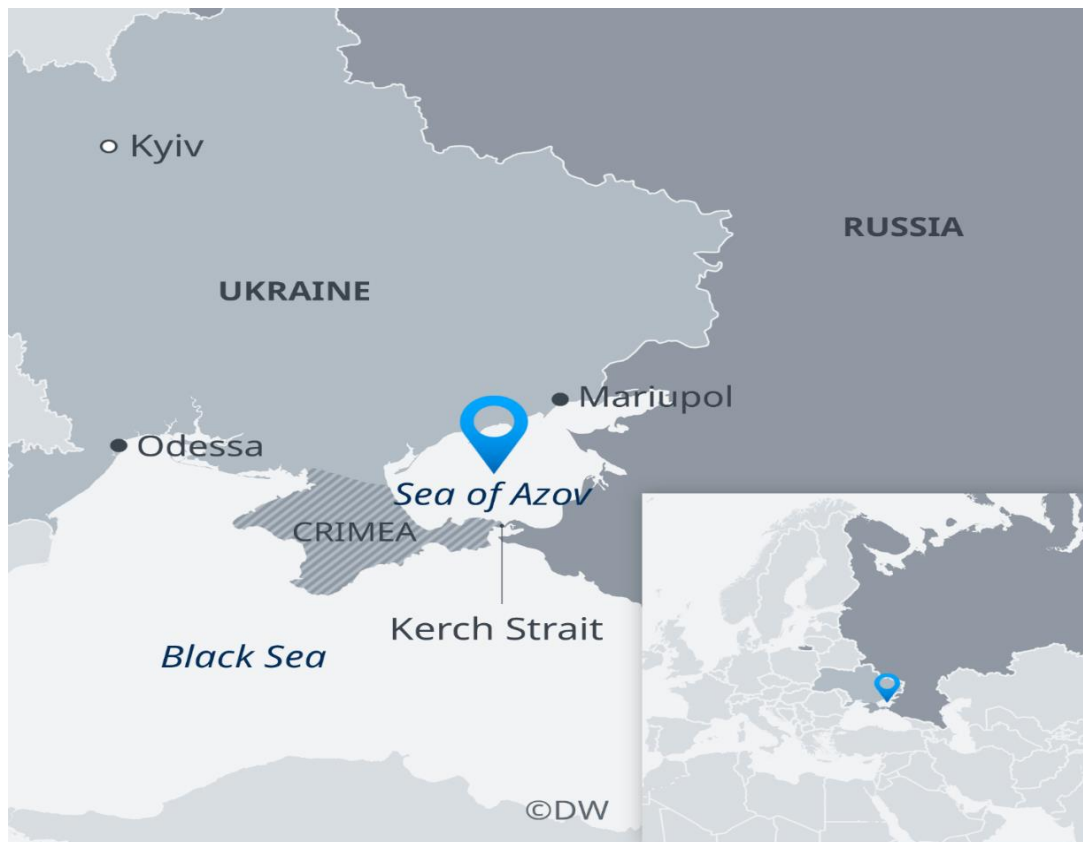
Although Moscow insists that the Kerch Strait is the territorial waters of Russia, which is why Russian border guards detained Ukrainian ships on November 25, Kyiv disagrees Kremlin's argument. Not recognizing the annexation of the Crimea, Ukraine asserts that the Kerch Strait continues to be the internal waters of the two countries. In fact, Leonid Kuchma and Vladimir Putin signed an agreement between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on cooperation in the use of the Azov Sea and

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[582] Danylo Bilyk, "What You Need to Know about the Conflict in the Sea of Azov," *Deutsche Welle*, 2018, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.dw.com/en/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-conflict-in-the-sea-of-azov/a-46461361.

[583] "Russia-Ukraine Tensions Rise after Kerch Strait Ship Capture," *BBC News*, 2018, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46340283.

the Kerch Strait in 2003 and the two countries' parliaments ratified the document synchronously, in April 2004.[584]

Picture 6. Kerch Strait
Source: Deutsche Welle, November, 2018, accessed April 19, 2019, https://www.dw.com/en/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-conflict-in-the-sea-of-azov/a-46461361

The agreement is the legal declaration that "the water to be, historically, the internal waters of both states."[585] In short, the agreement provided for the free passage of trade and military vessels of the two countries through the Kerch Strait and free access to the ports of Russia and Ukraine. However, after four years of the annexation of Crimean Peninsula, Moscow claimed that the Kerch Strait is part of the territorial waters of Russia. In response, President Poroshenko declared martial

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[584] Wavell Room, "Welcome to Russia's Hybrid War in the Sea of Azov," *The National Interest*, 2018, accessed April 18, 2019, https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/welcome-russias-hybrid-war-sea-azov-40122.

[585] Room.

law in the 10 regions of Ukraine fearing a new invasion operation of Moscow against Ukraine.[586]

Experts interpret the reason behind the escalation in Kerch Strait in different ways. German political analyst Andreas Umland, declining popularity of Putin's is one of the possible reasons behind the crisis in Kerch Strait.[587] In other words, it is an attempt to cover the socio-economic problems in the country through power demonstration. Second possible reason for Umland is the existence project to turn the Sea of Azov into inner Russian water and hereby to weaken the Ukrainian economy. Besides, the director of the Centre for Global Studies 'Strategy XXI', Mikhail Gonchar explains the escalation from a wider perspective. For Gonchar, Ukraine is just a victim country between the West and Russian Federation. He points out that Ukraine "is just an element of a more global policy of Russia's aggression against the West."[588]

In fact, though Russian restrictions against Ukrainian ships has started since the beginning of the Crimean Bridge construction in 2016, they have reinforced particularly after the completion of the bridge in May 2018. The newly completed bridge is vital because it links the annexed peninsula to Russian mainland.[589] It seems, Russia tries not only to turn the Sea of Azov into an inner Russian sea but also forces Kyiv to recognize the annexation of Crimea. Moreover, it is important to note that Russia increases its naval presence in the Sea of Azov. According to Ihor Voronchenko, the chief of the Ukrainian military fleet, "there are around 120 Russian

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[586] Tadeusz Iwański, Sławomir Matuszak, and Piotr Żochowski, "Martial Law in Ten Regions of Ukraine," *OSW*, 2018, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2018-11-28/martial-law-ten-regions-ukraine.

[587] Palina Brodik and Vladimir Zhbankov, "Azov Sea Conflict: What Happened and How to React," *Free Russia*, 2018, accessed April 19, 2019, https://www.4freerussia.org/azov-sea-conflict-what-happened-and-how-to-react/.

[588] Brodik and Zhbankov.

[589] Andrei Illarionov, "Russia Built Crimean Bridge to Close Sea of Azov for Ukraine," *112.UA*, 2018, accessed August 7, 2019, https://112.international/opinion/russia-built-crimean-bridge-to-close-sea-of-azov-for-ukraine-35093.html.

naval vessels patrolling or on standby, 36 of which are equipped for military action. On October 24, two more Russian border guard cutters joined this group."[590]

To counter the Russian military presence in the region, Ukraine tries to reinforce its forces in the Sea of Azov. On September 25, 2018, two Ukrainian naval ships - 'Donbas' and 'Korets', as well as two auxiliary vessels entered Mariupol, where they amalgamated by a pair of Ukrainian armored gunboats of the type Gyurza-M, 'Kremenchuk' and 'Lubny'. Soon, it is expected that the two 110-foot armed cutters, which were decommissioned by the US Coast Guard, to join the group.[591] Moreover, Ukraine has begun to construct new military base near Berdyansk. In October 2018, the Ukrainian Army and Navy conducted special military exercises to test the readiness to confront possible assaults on the Ukrainian coasts. Serhiy Naev, the commander of the Joint Forces operations of Ukraine, described the situation as a possible Russia's attempt to create a land corridor [from self-proclaimed DPR] to Crimea which concerns Kyiv most.[592] In this context, the Kerch Strait continues to be a critical point in terms of possible future escalations between Ukraine and Russian Federation as well as separatist forces in DPR and LPR.

The dialogues between the camps continue in the frame of Minsk negotiations. However, as long as self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics exist in the territory of Ukraine there will be always a risk for new battles because the presence of these entities is against the principle of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Besides, since Kyiv does not recognize the annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation the transit from Kerch Strait can cause new escalations. Accepting the argument that Kerch Strait belongs to Russian Federation means the recognition of the Crimea's annexation which Kyiv rejects to do. Therefore, new conflicts are highly likely unless the crisis in Donbas settle through peace process.

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[590] Mykhailo Minakov, "Mounting Security Challenges in Southeastern Ukraine: Fresh Developments in the Sea of Azov and the Donbas," *Wilson Center*, 2018, accessed April 19, 2019, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/mounting-security-challenges-southeastern-ukraine-fresh-developments-the-sea-azov-and-the.

[591] "Kyiv: Ukraine to Reinforce Its Azov Sea Flotilla with American Boats," *Uawire*, 2018, accessed August 7, 2019, https://uawire.org/ukraine-to-send-american-boats-to-its-navy-in-azov-sea.

[592] Minakov, "Mounting Security Challenges in Southeastern Ukraine: Fresh Developments in the Sea of Azov and the Donbas."

5.7. Conclusion

The military dimension of the Donbas Conflict, which is one of the most important components of the hybrid war, is obviously the most damaging to Ukraine. Along with human loses, the war created serious socio-economic problems for Ukraine. The clashes in Donbas are likely to arise time to time in relations with Russian Federation as well as the internal dynamics of Ukraine. As pointed, Kremlin conducts a hybrid war in Donbas territory through exploiting the domestic conditions of Ukraine. In this regard, destabilization of Eastern Ukraine began with anti-Maidan demonstrations and continued with the seizure of administration buildings in the region. However, local insurgence was insufficient to dissociate Donbas from the rest of Ukraine. Therefore, Moscow implicitly sent its irregular forces. These forces mainly composed of Russian retired soldiers and separatist fighters from Transnistria. At this stage, Russia was content with supplying military equipment to separatist forces. However, in case these forces were not powerful enough to take stand against Ukrainian army, Russian regular troops were used to ensure the balance between Ukrainian army and the separatists in Donbas. This was seen during the August 2014 war when separatists were about to give up but thanks to Russian regular troops, they have got a second chance.

Meanwhile, Russia constantly denies its involvement in Donbas war which is consistent with the principles of hybrid warfare. Russia, which uses the fragile structure of Ukrainian society as one of the components of the hybrid war, claims that the war in Donbas was the result of the coup in Kyiv and a revolt against the illegal government which was established thereafter. However, Kremlin's refusal of allowing Ukrainian army to be stationed at the border between Ukraine and Russian Federation is sufficient to reveal its malicious intentions against Ukraine.

As pointed, military aspect of the war in Donbas is only one of components of Russia's hybrid war in Donbas. Therefore, the next chapter investigates other elements of the hybrid war in Donbas which helps Russia to achieve its interests in Ukraine.

CHAPTER 6

NON-MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE DONBAS CONFLICT

6.1. Introduction

This chapter of the thesis aims to investigate non-military aspect of the hybrid war in Donbas. The chapter composed of four non-military elements of hybrid war conducted in Donbas. To do this, the first section focuses on the political development in Kyiv after the ouster of Yanukovych in February 2014. Examining the reconstruction of political system in Ukraine after Euromaidan Revolution is vital because the decisions which were taken in this period had certain consequences in Donbas. For example, newly formed government in Kyiv had difficulties with managing the crisis in Crimea. Besides, the absorption of Crimea by Russia was inspiring Donbas separatists. Therefore, political landscape of Kyiv after February 2014 is primarily examined in this part. Subsequently, the governance of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics are presented. In second section of the chapter, economic dimension of the war in Donbas is examined. In this part, the structure of Donbas economy is primarily scrutinized. Subsequently, the impact of the conflict on Ukraine's economy and thereby on the Donbas territory is detailed. Finally, Russia's direct economic restrictions on Ukraine's economy is presented.

The third part of the chapter pays attention to information component of the hybrid war in Donbas. First, it aims to show how media discourses in pre-war period contributed for the isolation of Donbas territory and then it explains how Russia used the narratives which were formed before the war as one of the tools of its hybrid war in Ukraine. The final part of chapter focuses on the cyber dimension of the hybrid war. It shows that cyber-attacks are not only aims to discredit the Ukraine's image but also directly contributes harming the country's economy. It total, non-military

aspects the war in Ukraine reveals how deep and comprehensive is the Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine.

6.2. Political Developments after Euromaidan

As noted in previous chapters protests at the end of 2013 in Kyiv occurred as a reaction to Yanukovych's U-turn in foreign policy. The demonstrators' demand from the government was to sign the deal with the EU. However, Yanukovych went back on his word and thereby disappointed pro-Western minded population who saw the agreement with the EU as a last hope for developing democratic values in Ukraine. Naturally, the expectation of the Euromaidan supports was high from new government. Those expectations were mainly: access to justice, national emancipation, responsible governance, economic reforms and representative parliament. Nevertheless, Euromaidan which ended with the overthrowing of Yanukovych's government was not perceived the same way by all Ukrainians. It paved the way secession of Crimea first and then the declaration of so-called Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics.

6.2.1 Post-Euromaidan Developments in Ukraine

Euromaidan was a reaction against corrupt and injustice political system in Ukraine. However, right after the Euromaidan revolution, Kyiv officials found themselves in a contradictory situation. On one hand, they were anticipated to implement the demands of Euromaidan supports. On the other hand, separatists movement in Eastern Ukraine and in Crimea were threatening the territorial integrity of the country which obliged to postpone the political and economic liberties. Hence, the interim government in Kyiv was faced with dilemma of giving priority between these two agendas. For Mikhail Minakov, the countries which involved in wars tend to

form an authoritarian government because decision makers can easily use the security issue as an excuse to pressure opposition groups.[593]

The interim post-Maidan government was formed which was headed by Oleksandr Turchynov (acting president and the speaker of the parliament) and Arseniy Yatsenyuk (acting prime minister). In fact, on February 26, 2014, a day before the parliament's approval of new cabinet, the ministers went to Maidan to seek symbolic public support for their new positions.[594] However, in any case, the government was formed in the frame of a revolutionary process. The new government composed of numerous new names but from the parties only Timoshenko's Fatherland and nationalist Freedom had members in the coalition government. Six ministers came from Timoshenko's Fatherland Party, which was controlled by Arseniy Yatsenyuk while three of them were the members of the radical nationalist Freedom party. The rest of the ministers in the new cabinet had no party affiliation.[595]

In the conditions of inheritance of a bankrupt country, acting prime minister, Yatsenyuk called the task of his cabinet as a 'kamikaze mission.'[596] By this mission, he referred the political cost of painful reforms which the International Monetary Fund had demanded in return for a substantial financial assistance. The new government did not have enough time to implement its program, improving closer relations with the European Union, lunching economic reforms, restructuring of the corrupt justice system, before Russia's annexation of Crimea which followed by the war in Donbas.[597]

Deepening and spreading the separatist movement in Eastern Ukraine were the main challenge for the coalition cabinet. Indeed, the new authorities in Kyiv were not only facing the threat against the territorial integrity of Ukraine but also somehow, they

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[593] Mikhail Minakov, *Development and Dystopia: Studies in Post-Soviet Ukraine and Eastern Europe* (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2018), 194.

[594] "Ukraine Crisis: Yatsenyuk Is PM-Designate, Kyiv Maidan Told," *BBC News*, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26359150.

[595] Сергей Рюмочкин, "Рада Назначила Новый Кабмин," *Segodnya*, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.segodnya.ua/politics/yacenyuk-nazval-novyy-sostav-kabmina-499253.html.

[596] Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 161.

[597] "Ukraine Names Pro-West Cabinet," *China.Org.Cn*, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, http://www.china.org.cn/world/2014-02-28/content_31623751.htm.

were causing to instability in Eastern Ukraine. As noted, separatists did not recognize the new government in Kyiv instead they referred it as a coup d'état from the beginning. Therefore, paradoxical relation occurred between the new government in Kyiv and separatists in the East. Under these circumstances, it was a vital issue to hold new elections to obtain a legitimate political ground. Therefore, on February 21, 2014, parliament reconstituted the 2004 constitution which guaranteed the parliamentary-presidential system and also it arranged the date for presidential election.[598]

The anticipated extraordinary presidential elections took place on May 25, 2014. The race among the candidates ended in the first round of the election. Gaining almost 54.70 % of the vote, the former opposition leader Petro Poroshenko who was not even considered as candidate for president a few months ago, won the election easily.[599] He led the 'Solidarity' party, which did not take participation in any national elections after 2002. Poroshenko's victory became possible, first of all, due to the fact that the three key opposition leaders Yatsenyuk, Vitali Klitschko and Oleh Tyahnybok lost their popularity during the Euromaidan revolution, taking over the lion's share of dissatisfaction of citizens through the passive conduct of the opposition during the period of the popular uprising. Poroshenko, who was in the background during the revolution, instead, managed to accumulate support from the disappointed voters.[600]

Timoshenko, who was released from the prison, where she was a result of a politically motivated sentence issued under the Yanukovych presidency, won the second place in the election with a result of 12.8%. Another former oppositional Oleh Lyashko took third place, gaining 8.3% of the votes. The fourth and fifth places were Anatoliy Hrytsenko (5.5%) and Serhiy Tihipko (5.25%), who headed the 'Civic

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[598] "Ukrainian Parliament Reinstates 2004 Constitution," *Interfax-Ukraine*, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/191727.html.

[599] Алекс Киреев, "Украина. Президентские Выборы 2014," *Электоральная География*, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://www.electoralgeography.com/new/ru/countries/u/ukraine/ukraina-prezidentskie-vybory-2014.html.

[600] Олексій Сидорчук and Ірина Бекешкіна, "Трансформація Партійної Системи Після Євромайдану," in *Україна Після Євромайдану: Досягнення Та Виклики*, ed. Максим Яковлєв and Олексій Гарань (Київ: Фонд Демократичні ініціативи імені Ілька Кучеріва УКРАЇ, 2015), 29, accessed August 7, 2019, https://dif.org.ua/uploads/pdf/23979972759e8f27cea41a5.67738027.pdf.

Position' and 'Strong Ukraine' parties, respectively. These political forces regularly participated in parliamentary elections; however, they never overcame the electoral barrier. Mykhailo Dobkin, a candidate from the Party of Regions, won only 3% of the vote, which witnessed the deepening crisis of the former ruling party.[601]

The elections took place under the conditions of war in the east of the country, which greatly weakened the confrontational nature of the election narratives and behavior of the main candidates and reduced the polarization of electoral moods. In this case, Poroshenko was supported by a significant part of the voters as a symbol of preserving the unity of the country. Moreover, many former supporters of the Party of Regions and the Communist Party simply could not vote in the elections because they remained in Russia-annexed Crimea and the regions of Donetsk and Lugansk that occupied by pro-Russian militants. Obviously, Ukrainians elected the president as soon as possible which completed in the first round to ensure the unity and integrity of the country. All these circumstances made the presidential elections in May 2014 unique in the history of Ukraine.

After the presidential election in May, an early parliamentary election also was inevitable in Ukraine because the parliament was becoming dysfunctional day by day and was already politically obsolete. In fact, as noted before, Euromaidan forces formed a new government majority with the assistance of defectors from the former Party of Regions. The defectors who left the Yanukovych's party were not idealists politicians but mainly businessmen who seek political back up in the parliament to conduct their business benefits. Dmytro Firtash and Rinat Akhmetov were the two businessmen who controlled the defectors after the ouster of Yanukovych.[602]

These defectors had left the Party of Regions because Yanukovych was no longer president and they had to change side to guarantee their business interests in new period. However, when the revolutionary atmosphere appeased, they began not to support reforms and once again concentrating on their own business interests. Hence, after June 2014, the post-Euromaidan parliament became dysfunctional to enact any

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[601] Киреев, "Украина. Президентские Выборы 2014."

[602] Åslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It*, 115.

sensible economic reforms which caused the early parliamentary elections to be unavoidable.[603]

On July 4, 2014, the prime minister of Ukraine, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, said that the parliament has rendered the government ineffective and this run out of his patience. Yatsenyuk said the parliament did not support two dozen draft laws submitted by the Cabinet of Ministers, instead, it adopted a number of populist laws. He claimed in the parliament that the current parliament is busy with populism rather than adopting really important bills. Yatsenyuk stated:

> Only in the last 4 months the parliament have passed eight laws, which the state budget unable to fulfill… As the head of government, I declare that in such a situation, the government is too difficult to work…If there is no common vision and joint work to save the country and to get rid of from the state of emergency in the country then the parliament will reformulate the government.[604]

On July 24, 2014, the broad coalition government dissolved and the two parties, Vitali Klitschko's party, the Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for the Reform and the nationalist Freedom party, announced their official withdrawal from the ruling government coalition.[605] Under such conditions, Ukraine's Constitution allows a month to parliament to form a new government and if the parliament is not able to form it within the projected period then the Article 77 of the constitution states "special elections to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine are designated by the President of Ukraine and are held within sixty days from the day of the publication of the decision on the pre-term termination of authority of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine."[606] Since the parliament failed to form a new government within the period

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[603] Åslund.

[604] "Яценюк Пригрозив Раді Розпуском," *LB.Ua*, 2014, accessed April 22, 2019, https://ukr.lb.ua/news/2014/07/04/271840_yatsenyuk_prigrozil_rade_rospuskom.html.

[605] "Yatsenyuk Resigns as Parliament Elections Likely to Be Held in Fall," *Kyiv Post*, 2014,accessed April 22, 2019, https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/yatsenyuk-resigns-as-parliament-elections-likely-to-be-held-in-fall-357836.html.

[606] "Ukraine's Constitution of 1996 with Amendments through 2014," constituteproject.org, 2018, accessed April 23, 2019, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Ukraine_2014.pdf?lang=en.

prescribed by the constitution, on August 25, 2014, President Poroshenko dissolved the parliament and called for early parliamentary elections on October 26, 2014.[607]

Both leaders, the president Poroshenko and the prime minister Yatsenyuk, hoped to strengthen their position in the upcoming parliamentary election. In fact, as mentioned above, the first two half of the August 2014 were quite successful for the Ukrainian forces in the Donbas War and being responsible from the foreign affairs and the military according to the constitution, the president Poroshenko hoped to increase his power. Poroshenko has renewed his party, 'Solidarity' and changed its name to 'Petro Poroshenko Bloc', to link the future election result to his personal popularity. The new political force included newcomers such as some of former members of Vitali Klitschko's party, some former deputies of Timoshenko's Fatherland, as well as individual civil society representatives, journalists and combatants.[608]

In this context, Petro Poroshenko Bloc seemed to have a great opportunity to consolidate its power in the upcoming parliamentary election. However, Russia's direct involvement in the battle at the end of August 2014, changed the dynamics of the war which weakened the president's position. In contrast, prime minister Yatsenyuk, departing from Timoshenko's Fatherland party, established his own party called 'People's Front.' Considering the military defeats in August and September, Yatsenyuk's new party claimed to strengthen Ukrainian army and promised to build a 'European Wall' at the border between Russia and Ukraine.[609]

The Petro Poroshenko Bloc and the People's Front were able to hold the first two places in the election. The Petro Poroshenko Bloc, as Poroshenko predicted, succeeded above all due to the high personal rating of the president, and the People's

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[607] "President Poroshenko Dissolved the Parliament. Early Elections Due on October 26, 2014," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, 2014, accessed August 7, 2019, https://mfa.gov.ua/en/press-center/news/27062-prezident-pripiniv-povnovazhennya-verkhovnoji-radi-dostrokovi-vibori-priznacheni-na-26-zhovtnya-2014-roku.

[608] "Блок Петра Порошенка І Удар Підуть На Вибори Разом," *Програми ТВІ*, 2014, accessed August 9, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20140905001832/http://tvi.ua/new/2014/09/02/blok_petra_poroshenka_i_udar_pidut_na_vybory_razom.

[609] Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know*., 159.

Front was able to rapidly increase its popularity on the eve of voting because of adapting military rhetoric as well as an active political advertising on television, radio and billboards.[610]

The People's Front won first place in the election, gaining 22.17% of the votes and the Petro Poroshenko Bloc came in took the second place with the result of 21.82% votes. The third in the election was taken by 'Self-Reliance' party which created by L'viv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi. The Self-Reliance received 11% of the votes in the 2014 parliamentary elections. Self-Reliance followed by Opposition Bloc, formed by the former members of the Party of Regions, gaining 9.36% of the votes. On the eve of the election, representatives of various groups within the Party of Regions were looking for ways to reformat their political force, whose fame has been completely discredited since the Euromaidan revolution.[611]

In the end, a part of the Party of Regions formed the Opposition Bloc to regain some seats in the parliament. Meanwhile, Opposition Bloc as a successor of the Party of Regions, remained the only party based on rigidly geographical support: it accounted for more than 22% in all eastern regions (38.7% and 36.6% of voters supported it in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, respectively), whereas in the center and west of the country, its electoral index ranged between 1% and 7%.[612] The Radical Party of Oleh Liashko received 7.4% of the votes and ranked fifth on elections. Timoshenko's Fatherland, losing its popularity, was able to barely overcome the average of the election to have seat in the parliament by gaining 5.7% votes.[613]

It should be also noted that the parliamentary elections could not be conducted in several districts of Ukraine due to the war in Donbas and Russian annexation of Crimea. Therefore, elections could not be held in all 12 electoral districts of Crimea,

[610] "Ukraine Elections: Pro-Western Parties Set for Victory," *BBC News*, 2014, accessed August 9, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29782513.

[611] Tadeusz A. Olszański, "A Strong Vote for Reform: Ukraine after the Parliamentary Elections," *OSW*, 2014, accessed August 9, 2019, https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2014-10-29/a-strong-vote-reform-ukraine-after-parliamentary-elections.

[612] Сидорчук and Бекешкіна, "Трансформація Партійної Системи Після Євромайдану.", 38.

[613] "Позачергові Вибори Народних Депутатів України: 26 Жовтня 2014 Року," Central Election Commission, 2014, accessed April 23, 2019, https://www.cvk.gov.ua/info/protokol_bmvo_ndu_26102014.pdf.

9 out of 21 electoral districts in Donetsk region, and 6 out of 11 districts in Lugansk region. Since 27 seats were missing, the parliament consisted of 423 deputies. It was also conspicuous that only Timoshenko's Fatherland party which received seats in the parliament existed before, the rest of the other parties were new. Besides, for the first time, the first three parties in the parliament were like-minded, pro-Western parties.[614]

All parties with the exception of Opposition Bloc agreed to form a broad coalition government. The prime minister Yatsenyuk was reappointed to the office by president Poroshenko and he was approved by the coalition as the prime minister on November 27, 2014. Yatsenyuk's new cabinet was formed on December 2 which mainly consisted of People's Front and Petro Poroshenko Bloc. The new cabinet witnessed new faces. Only 5 of 20 ministers in the new coalition government had been served as ministers before.[615] The Ukrainian officials also took an unusual decision of giving three ministers to foreigners to cope with the corruption in the country. Three foreigners awarded Ukrainian citizenship to became ministers in the new cabinet. Natalie Jaresko, a citizen of the USA became new minister of finance in Ukraine. Aivaras Abromavičius, a Lithuanian banker, was appointed as minister of economy and trade. Aleksandre Kvitashvili, the former Georgia's health minister was confirmed as the new minister of healthcare in Ukraine.[616]

A week after the formation of the new cabinet, on December 9, Yatsenyuk concentrated on developing a new and more functional government program, that he submitted to the government and also to the parliament. Yatsenyuk's new government program offered almost everything which the pro-Western supports would have asked from the government. For the prime minister pro-European path was the sole remedy to achieve democratic Ukraine and this aim could be attained only through radical reforms: "Our basic course is a European course… Our final aim is Ukraine's membership of the European Union. But to achieve that goal it is

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[614] Oxana Shevel, "The Parliamentary Elections in Ukraine, October 2014," *Electoral Studies* 39, no. October 2014 (2015), 160.

[615] "Ukraine Parliament Approves New Government," *China Daily*, 2014, accessed August 9, 2019, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2014-12/03/content_19015602.htm.

[616] "Foreign-Born Ministers in Ukraine's New Cabinet," *BBC News*, 2014, accessed August 9, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30348945.

necessary to go through a serious test, to carry out radical changes and to make Ukraine European."[617] Yatsenyuk remarked two major threats to the national security: The one which stems from external threats and the other arises from within. By external threat he meant Russia's annexation of Crimea and the ongoing war in Donbas which is also backed by Russia. For the prime minister, the main internal threat was the corruption in the country which had to be solved as soon as possible.[618]

Yatsenyuk's program mainly aimed to achieve decentralization and liberalization as well as to avoid bureaucratic barriers. These were also key demands of Euromaidan protestors in order to abandon old Soviet political standards for European standards in the context of the Association Agreement signed with the EU. As it noted, the new program included plenty of reforms which refer to the 'deregulation' and also new cabinet consisted of new bureaucrats including three foreigners. Decentralization was the promise of new government which had to be done to share Kyiv's power with the local councils. Decentralization of power was also a sign of development in terms of democracy that composed of main grievances of the separatist movements.[619]

At the end of negotiations which took place from May to August 2015, Ukrainian parliament presented a package of constitutional amendments related to decentralization. However, these amendments have made it clear that the authorities were reluctant to share the power gathered in Kyiv with local communities. The intention of the amendments reflected on the issue which allowed the president to appoint prefects who was capable of vetoing the decision of local councils or even to dissolve them. The aim of this regulation was justified in terms of preventing any further separatist movements at the local level which could be also perceived as a threat or repression by the local councils.[620]

Apart from the presidential and parliamentary elections which held in May and October 2014 respectively, it is also critical to mention about the power competition between the president and the prime minister. The situation was stemmed mainly

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[617] Åslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It*, 119.

[618] Åslund.

[619] Aslund.

[620] Minakov, *Development and Dystopia: Studies in Post-Soviet Ukraine and Eastern Europe*, 235.

from the constitutional duties and responsibilities of the president and prime minister. The competition within the executive branch in Ukraine became clear in July 2014 when president Poroshenko and prime minister Yatsenyuk was supportive for early parliamentary election from what they hoped to increase their powers.[621] The rivalry for power was not entirely new in Ukraine. Alike process also appeared after the Orange Revolution among Yushchenko, Timoshenko and Yanukovych triangle. In this respect, Mikhail Minakov states: "competition between the president and the prime minister has been one of the gravest threats to democratic consolidation in Ukraine and was repeated in 2006-2010 and 2014-2016."[622]

The competition between the president Poroshenko and prime minister Yatsenyuk had over at the beginning of 2016 in favor of the former one. In February 2016, Yatsenyuk's downfall as a prime minister of Ukraine began when Aivaras Abromavičius, the minister of economy resigned by claiming that the government had no genuine fight against corruption.[623] President Poroshenko who did not want to miss the opportunity, asked Yatsenyuk for resignation on February 16, 2016. Following hours on the same day, Yatsenyuk survived with the inadequate vote of no-confidence in the parliament. By law, the no-confidence motion required 226 votes to be approved in the parliament. Although 196 deputies voted in this direction which guaranteed the Yatsenyuk's office following days two parties left the coalition government on February 17-18, 2016.[624] Fatherland and Self Reliance parties left the Yatsenyuk's coalition government, and thereby coalition government became inadequate in terms of deputies to sustain the government.[625]

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[621] Roman Goncharenko, "Kyiv's Crisis Continues Its Spiral," *Deutsche Welle*, 2016, accessed August 9, 2019, https://www.dw.com/en/kyivs-crisis-continues-its-spiral/a-19061948.

[622] Minakov, "Mounting Security Challenges in Southeastern Ukraine: Fresh Developments in the Sea of Azov and the Donbas.", 230.

[623] Alec Luhn, "Economic Minister's Resignation Plunges Ukraine into New Crisis," *The Guardian*, 2016, accessed August 9, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/04/economic-minister-resignation-ukraine-crisis-aivaras-abromavicius.

[624] "Ukraine Crisis: PM Yatsenyuk Survives No-Confidence Vote," *BBC News*, 2016, accessed April 24, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35591605.

[625] "Ukraine Samopomich Party Quits Coalition Leaving Ruling Alliance without Majority," *Deutsche Welle*, February 18, 2016, accessed August 9, 2019, https://www.dw.com/en/ukraine-samopomich-party-quits-coalition-leaving-ruling-alliance-without-majority/a-19056418.

On April 10, the head of government Arseniy Yatsenyuk announced his resignation as prime minister. Yatsenyuk stated that on Tuesday, April 12, the resignation will be submitted to the Verkhovna Rada. He stated: "My decision is triggered by several reasons: the political crisis in the state is artificial, the desire to change one person has blinded the politicians and paralyzed their will for real change in the state. The process of changing the government has become thoughtless [move]."[626] As it can be understood from his statement, Yatsenyuk was not very eager to resign but the rivalry between President Poroshenko ended with such way. On February 14, 2016 Ukrainian parliament voted for the new prime minister and Volodymyr Groisman replaced Arseniy Yatsenyuk as the new prime minister of Ukraine.[627]

In fact, the president, Petro Poroshenko, had succeeded in creating a de facto presidential system. His financial and political groups (clans) began to control most of the Ukrainian institutions such as the executive, the legislative and judicial branches of power, the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the media. After a long struggle for power with former prime minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, President Poroshenko succeeded to replace him with Vladymyr Groisman, a younger partner from his home region, Vinnytsia. The decision on the appointment of Groisman was reached after months of discussions in the presidential administration between different clans and political groups. According to Minakov, the appointment of Groisman meant the end of post-Euromaidan Ukraine which guaranteed the balance between the ruling classes.[628]

The judicial system of Ukraine cannot be considered an independent branch from government. Shortly after the Euromaidan, the judiciary became one of the first victims of the increasing power of the president. After defeating Yatsenyuk in April 2016, the presidential group made incredible efforts, forcing parliamentarians to

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[626] "Яценюк Заявив Про Відставку: 'Мої Завдання Ширше,'" *Ukranian News*, 2016, accessed April 24, 2019, https://ukranews.com/ua/news/421370-yacenyuk-zayavyv-pro-vidstavku-moi-zavdannya-shyrshe.

[627] Jacob Alexander, "Ukraine Appoints Groysman New Prime Minister," *Deutsche Welle*, 2016, accessed August 9, 2019, https://www.dw.com/en/ukraine-appoints-groysman-new-prime-minister/a-19185978.

[628] Mikhail Minakov, "Reconstructing the Power Vertical: The Authoritarian Threat in Ukraine," Open Democracy, 2017, accessed April 24, 2019, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/reconstructing-power-vertical-authoritarian-threat-in-ukraine/.

approve constitutional changes regarding the judiciary. Ideally, this reform would make Ukrainian courts independent and capable of guaranteeing fair justice. However, the first consequence of the reform was the growing dependence of judges on the president. Presidential faction positioned itself as the only source of security for individual judges.[629] Minakov defines the period after the honeymoon of the post-Euromaidan such as:

> Ukraine is a battleground in the struggle between clans and formal political institutions. The reforms of 2014–15 aimed to support the institutional development of the government, parliament, judiciary, local communities and political parties. In 2016, the danger of a return of the 'republic of clans' emerged.[630]

Although the influence of oligarchs in political landscape of Ukraine has diminished after the Euromaidan revolution de-oligarchization has never completely perished from the ground. Obviously, the war in Eastern Ukraine, depreciation of hryvnia, and the seizure of their properties in Donbas and Crimea had impact on their fortunes but reform efforts after the Euromaidan revolution did not really affect the oligarchs. The only exception in this issue was Ihor Kolomoisky's PrivatBank which was nationalized. Even in this case, the personal feud between Poroshenko and Kolomoisky should be noted.[631] By funding the election campaigns of the opposition candidate Kolomoiskiy became the main rival of president Poroshenko during 2019 presidential election of Ukraine. Oligarchs not only maintain their presence in Ukraine's politic ground through funding the political campaigns, but through being the media owners. Despite the fact that by law the ownership of media should be disclosed major media are still owned by offshore companies in Ukraine. For example, Ukraine's ten largest national TV channels owned by four oligarchs: Ihor Kolomoiskiy, Dmytro Firtash, Rinat Akhmetov, Viktor Pinchuk. Even three of the Ukraine's TV channels are owned by President Poroshenko.[632]

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[629] Minakov, "Reconstructing the Power Vertical: The Authoritarian Threat in Ukraine,".

[630] Mikhail Minakov, "Republic of Clans: The Evolution of the Ukrainian Political System," in *Stubborn Structures: Reconceptualizing Post-Communist Regimes*, ed. Bálint Magyar (Budapest: CEU Press, 2019), 241.

[631] Arkady Moshes and Ryhor Nizhnikau, "Ukraine's Stalled Transformation," *FIIA Briefing Paper*, no. April (2019), 5-6.

[632] Moshes and Nizhnikau, 6.

The increasing power of president Poroshenko continued after the ousting of the prime minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk and replacing him with Vladymyr Groisman who was known loyal to the president. From April 2016, the president Poroshenko began to control 19 of the 24 members of the Cabinet of Ministers.[633] In addition to prime minister, he also gradually managed to secure the appointment of his loyalists to the positions of, head of the Central Bank and prosecutor general, among others. Vis-à-vis the executive Ukrainian parliament became weak and also vulnerable to manipulations and pressure.[634]

Nevertheless, Ukraine's stalled transformation which stemmed from the return of oligarchs to Ukraine's political landscape and weakening of the prime minister who was balancing the power within executive branch by the effort of president Poroshenko reflected on Razumkov Center poll. According to the poll most of Ukrainians have lack of trust towards the state apparatus of their country. The lack of confidence is most often following institutions: the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (82%), the judicial system (78%), political parties (77%),), the National Bank of Ukraine (68%), the Supreme Court (65%), the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (65%), the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (64%), the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption (NACC) (64%), the Anti-Corruption Court (62%), the Constitutional Court (62%), trade unions (58%). In contrast, they prefer to trust mostly volunteer organizations (67%), the Armed Forces of Ukraine (62%), the State Emergency Services (61%), the Church (61%), volunteer battalions (57%).[635]

In short, despite Euromaidan revolution, corruption is still widespread in Ukraine which reduces the trust of Ukrainians towards government. According to a Gallup poll, by March 2019, only 9% of Ukrainians have confidence in government which is the lowest in the world in this issue. Besides, 91% of residents believe that corruption is widespread in the government of Ukraine. Ukrainians' distrust of the

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[633] Minakov, "Reconstructing the Power Vertical: The Authoritarian Threat in Ukraine."

[634] Moshes and Nizhnikau, "Ukraine's Stalled Transformation.", 4.

[635] "Рівень Довіри До Суспільних Інститутів Та Електоральні Орієнтації Громадян України," *Razumkov Center*, 2019, accessed April 25, 2019, http://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/riven-doviry-do-suspilnykh-instytutiv-ta-elektoralni-oriientatsii-gromadian-ukrainy.

state apparatus and the authorities reflected on 2019 presidential election of Ukraine.[636]

Under such circumstances, Ukrainians were indecisive about whom to choose as the next president which were scheduled on March 31, 2019 throughout 2018. Therefore, opinion polls presented inconstant reports related to the results of the election. According to opinion polls in August 2018, Yuliya Timoshenko, the former prime minister, had the most support (17.7 %) for being the next president of Ukraine. Anatoliy Hrytsenko, the former defense minister, was following Timoshenko with 10.7% of the support. For the polls Yuriy Boyko, the head of Opposition Bloc which mainly consisted of the members of former Yanukovych's Party of Regions, came in third place with 8.9% of support while Oleh Lyashko, the head of Radical Party, took the fourth place with 8.5% of backing. It should be noted that Lyashko was funded by the media oligarchs such as Rinat Akhmetov who are close to the former president Yanukovych. The president Poroshenko came in fifth place for the opinion polls with 8.4% of support.[637]

The results of opinion polls of August 2018, showed that incumbent Poroshenko did not have much chance to be re-elected from the beginning of the election campaigns. In other word, the outcomes of the polls revealed that the expectations of Ukrainians were not fulfilled by the Euromaidan government. The former politicians mostly lost Ukrainians' trust and at least for the 2019 presidential elections they had barely chance to achieve their goal.

According to December 2018 poll, among the candidates for a presidential post, Yulia Tymoshenko was still at the top with 16.1% of support among those who intended to take part in the elections. The following candidates were incumbent Petro Poroshenko - 13.8%, Volodymyr Zelensky - 8.8%, Yuriy Boyko - 8.4%, Anatoly Hrytsenko - 6.8%, Oleg Lyashko - 6.9%, Evgeny Muraev - 3.1%, Oleksandr

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[636] Zach Bikus, "World-Low 9% of Ukrainians Confident in Government," *Gallup*, 2019, accessed April 25, 2019, https://news.gallup.com/poll/247976/world-low-ukrainians-confident-government.aspx.

[637] Tadeusz Iwański and Krzysztof Nieczypor, "Ukraine's Presidential Elections, 2019: The Main Candidates" (Warsaw, 2018), 21, accessed April 25, 2019, https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-report/2018-09-11/ukraines-presidential-elections-2019-main-candidates.

Shevchenko - 2,9%, Svyatoslav Vakarchuk - 2,6%, Andriy Sadovy - 2,4%.[638] The situation was summarized by the Latvian newspaper, Latvijas avīze, as:

> It's strange and incomprehensible: five years after the Maidan protests in one of the largest countries in Europe, with 45 million inhabitants, there is still no new, convincing politician. And this in a country where political life thrives. Where on a hot summer afternoon man in light grey suits and white hats discuss the latest developments in Ukraine and the world. But in election campaigns all we see is the old guards; Poroshenko, Tymoshenko, Lyashko... And of course, a few second and third-row figures. That's it.[639]

Therefore, Ukraine's voters began to seek fresh names in the politics, the names who previously did not involve in the structure of the old political system. In fact, as the December Polls showed, Yuliya Timoshenko was in the first place among the other candidates in the competition for the presidency post. However, as it is noted, Ukrainians were reluctant to vote for former politicians or authorities who had connection with the old political structure. This argument became clearer when Volodymyr Zelensky, a showman with no political background, announced his nomination to the presidency in the last minute of 2018.[640]

Afterwards of his nomination, Zelenskiy's ratings increased dramatically which showed how eager Ukrainians were to choose fresh name as president of Ukraine. According to public polls, within a month after his announcement for the nomination, the ratings of Volodymyr Zelenskiy increased from 8.8% to 17.3% following Yuliya Timoshenko who obtained 22.1% of public support. Moreover, Zelenskiy's rating continued to rise on the eve of the presidential election. In February 2019, according to results of opinion poll, he took the lead in the presidential election race surpassing Timoshenko as well as president Poroshenko.[641]

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[638] "Підсумки-2018: Громадська Думка," Ilko Kucheriv «Democratic Initiatives» foundation, 2018, accessed April 26, 2019, https://dif.org.ua/article/pidsumki-2018-gromadska-dumka.

[639] "No Good Candidates in Sight," *Euro Topics*, 2019, accessed April 26, 2019, https://www.eurotopics.net/en/214520/#.

[640] "Зеленський Оголосив Про Висунення в Президенти," *LB.Ua*, 2019, accessed April 26, 2019, https://ukr.lb.ua/news/2019/01/01/416224_zelenskiy_ogolosiv_pro_visunennya.html.

[641] Ruslan Kermach, "Comedian Volodymyr Zelenskiy Leads Presidential Campaign Polls in Ukraine," *New Eastern Europe*, 2019, accessed August 9, 2019, http://neweasterneurope.eu/2019/02/12/comedian-volodymyr-zelenskiy-leads-presidential-campaign-polls-in-ukraine/.

Dynamics of leaders ratings (May 2018 — February 2019)
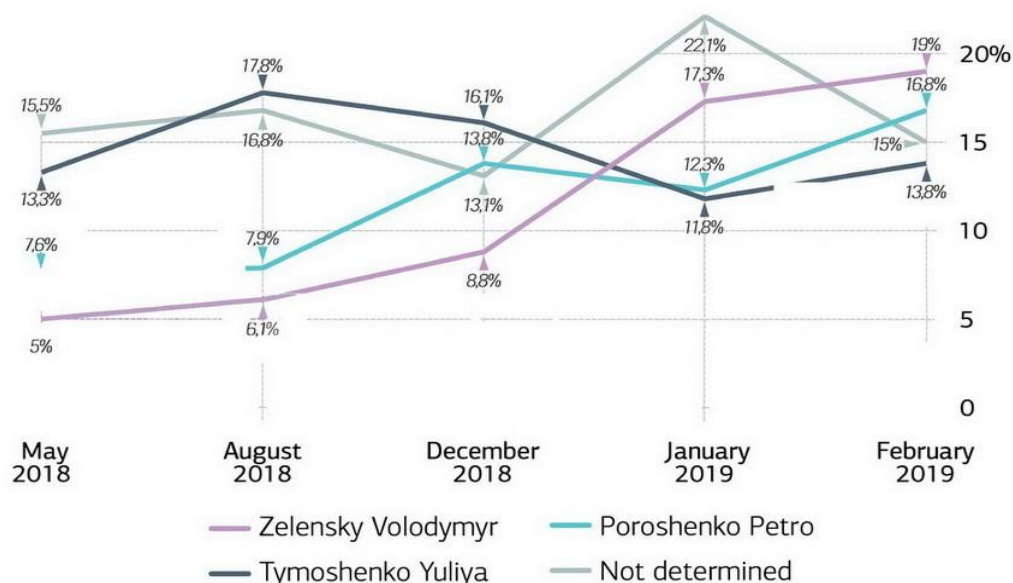
Picture 7. Dynamics of Leaders Ratings (May 2018-February 2019)
Source: The survey was conducted by Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiative Foundation and Razumkov Center, accessed April 26, 2019, https://dif.org.ua/en/article/presidential-election-2019

Under the circumstances of growing popularity of Volodymyr Zelenskiy presidential election held in Ukraine on March 31, 2019. 39 candidates were registered for the election and the number narrowed down to 2 contenders in the first round. As the opinion polls presumed Volodymyr Zelenskiy came in first place with over 30.02% and he was followed by the incumbent President Poroshenko receiving almost 16% of the votes. Yuliya Timoshenko with 13.4% of votes came in third place. Yuriy Boyko and Anatoly Hrytsenko took third and fifth places gaining 11.7% and 6.9% of support, respectively.[642]

The proportion of the votes which Yuriy Boyko received was an interesting fact in 2019 presidential election in Ukraine. As a Russia-friendly political candidate he increased his votes dramatically in comparison with the 2014 presidential election in Ukraine. In 2014, Boyko only gained 0.19 percent of the votes while in 2019 he

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[642] "First Round of Ukrainian Presidential Elections Overall Fair but Issues in Donetsk Oblast, Statistics Show," *Euromaidan Press*, 2019, accessed April 26, 2019, http://euromaidanpress.com/2019/04/09/first-round-of-ukrainian-presidential-elections-overall-fair-but-issues-in-donetsk-oblast-statistics-show/.

positioned in third place among the other candidates.[643] As a chairman of the Opposition Bloc and a former member of the Yanukovych's Party of Regions support for Yuriy Boyko is significant.[644] It shows one more time how domestic dynamics of Ukraine is important to understand the conflict in Donbas. As this study presents, explaining the Donbas Conflict as a Russia's hybrid war without comprehending the dual character of Ukrainian society will be incomplete.

The second round of the election held on April 21, 2019. According to the Central Election Commission, Volodymyr Zelenskiy receiving 73.22% of votes elected as the new president of Ukraine while Petro Poroshenko gained 24.45% of votes. Turnout was 61.37% and around 18.5 million Ukrainians voted in the election.[645] It is still early to evaluate the new president's policy but, in any case, 2019 presidential election showed that Ukrainians achieved enough democratic standards to elect their president under free and transparent conditions. In this issue, face to face debate between Petro Poroshenko and Volodymyr Zelenskiy was an historic moment for Ukraine's political life. Two days before the election on April 19, 2019 in Kyiv, Petro Poroshenko and Volodymyr Zelenskiy met at the National Sports Complex 'Olympic' stadium for a great debate in front of 22 thousand spectators.[646]

During the debate, Poroshenko drew attention to mainly two issues regarding his opponent. The first was Zelenskiy's inexpertness in politic which pose threat to the national security of Ukraine. The second major point of Poroshenko was connected to the relations between well-known oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky and Zelenskiy. Poroshenko urged Ukrainians that by voting Zelenskiy they can return the oligarchs to Ukraine's politic. He stated: "we will not allow you to return the oligarch and the

[643] "Повідомлення Центральної Виборчої Комісії Про Результати Позачергових Виборів Президента України 25 Травня 2014 Року," *Законодавство України*, 2014, accessed August 25, 2019, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/n0001359-14?lang=uk.

[644] "'Опозиційний Блок' Оприлюднив Першу Десятку Виборчого Списку," *UNIAN*, 2014, accessed August 25, 2019, https://www.unian.ua/politics/987428-opozitsiyniy-blok-oprilyudniv-pershu-desyatku-viborchogo-spisku.html

[645] "Вибори Президента України 2019," Central Election Commission, 2019, accessed May 1, 2019, https://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vp2019/wp300pt001f01=720.html.

[646] "Poroshenko versus Selensky: Heated Debate in Stadium in Kiev before Presidential Election," *Teller Report*, 2019, accessed August 9, 2019, https://www.tellerreport.com/news/--poroshenko-versus-selensky--heated-debate-in-stadium-in-kiev-before-presidential-election-.HkUDGcP5E.html.

return of the fugitives to Ukraine."[647] On the other hand, Volodymyr Zelenskiy did not deny Poroshenko's argument about his inexperience in politic. Indeed, Poroshenko's claim was one of the key issues which was providing support to Zelenskiy. As noted, most of Ukrainians had already lost their faith in former politicians and thereby they were seeking for new candidates who had no connection with 'old system' which was perceived as a corrupted system needed to be avoided. From this point of view, inexperience of Zelenskiy was in favor of him rather than a weakness as incumbent president Poroshenko stressed.

To convince Ukrainians that he is one of ordinary citizens, Zelenskiy emphasized that even he himself voted for Petro Poroshenko five years ago which was a mistake. Zelenskiy well introduced himself as a presidential candidate who does not have links with the corrupt old political system and that was the key factor of his victory. Zelenskiy stated: "I am not a politician; I am a simple person who came to break this system. Petro Alekseevich, I am the result of your mistakes."[648]

Following the March 2019 presidential election in Ukraine, parliamentary election was held in July 2019. In fact, 2019 Parliamentary Elections in Ukraine which were held on July 21, 2019 was a snap elections. Originally the elections were supposed to be held on October 27, 2019, but during his inauguration on May 20, newly elected President Zelensky announced his intention to dissolve the parliament, and issued a decree on this purpose next day. On June 20 2019, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine declared the decree of the President "On early termination of powers of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and appointment of snap elections" constitutional and recognized the early elections.[649]

The result of the elections were as: Servant of the People (Volodymyr Zelenskiy)-43.16%, Opposition Platform for Life (Yuriy Boyko)-13.5%, Fatherland (Yuliya

[647] "Зеленський vs Порошенко: Дебати На Стадіоні Та в Студії Суспільного," *Hromadske*, 2019, accessed April 27, 2019, https://hromadske.ua/posts/zelenskij-vs-poroshenko-debati-na-stadioni-olimpijskij-nazhivo.

[648] "Зеленський vs Порошенко: Дебати На Стадіоні Та в Студії Суспільного."

[649] "КСУ Визнав Конституційним Указ Президента «Про Дострокове Припинення Повноважень Верховної Ради України Та Призначення Позачергових Виборів»," *Конституційний Суд України*, 2019, accessed August 26, 2019, http://www.ccu.gov.ua/novyna/ksu-vyznav-konstytuciynym-ukaz-prezydenta-pro-dostrokove-prypynennya-povnovazhen-verhovnoyi.

Timoshenko)-8.18%, European Solidarity (Petro Poroshenko)- 8.10% and Voice (Sviatoslav Vakarchuk)-5.82%.[650] In this election, the performance of the pro-Russian party, Opposition Platform for Life, is a remarkable development. Viktor Medvedchuk, one of the leaders of the party, is known as a close ally of Vladimir Putin. By positioning in second place in the election, Opposition Platform for Life showed one more time how seriously the domestic politics of Ukraine which provides opportunities for Russia to conduct its hybrid war in Ukraine should be taken into consideration while studying the conflict in Donbas.[651]

To conclude, it can be said that Euromaidan revolution, which began toward the end of 2013 and finished with the ousting of president Viktor Yanukovych in February 2014, was not merely an act of Yanukovych's opponents who aimed to overthrow the president, but it was a civil insurrection against old and corrupt political and judicial system. The riot was a reaction against oligarchic order which surrender Ukraine for a long time. However, oligarchy and widespread corruption was not the only problem of Ukraine since its independence. As presented in previous sections, East and West of Ukraine obtained different tended identities which is shaped throughout the history and also by reproducing the narratives about each other after the independence. Annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation and Russian backed separatist movements in Donbas blurred the aim of 'Revolution of Dignity' and slowed down the implementation of expected Euromaidan reforms. Euromaidan government has spent its energy on fighting against militants in Donbas rather than on the reforms. Moreover, after ousting prime minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Poroshenko began to consolidate his power which brought high risks for democracy in Ukraine.

It is also worth to mention that despite Poroshenko's achievements such as obtaining of a visa-free travel regime to the countries of Schengen Area in June 2017; entering

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[650] "Позачергові Вибори Народних Депутатів України 21 Липня 2019 Року," *Центральну Виборчу Комісію*, 2019, accessed August 26, 2019, https://www.cvk.gov.ua/vnd_2019/.

[651] Orysia Lutsevych and Alyona Getmanchuk, "What to Know About Ukraine's Parliamentary Elections," *Chatham House*, 2019, accessed August 26, 2019, https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/what-know-about-ukraine-s-parliamentary-elections?gclid=CjwKCAjw44jrBRAHEiwAZ9igKOoOYeq1THS3D5Or7SP7Wv5ChLlKlem4TeD6OKi1gSku3uzU1VnV-BoChUIQAvD_BwE.

into full effect of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement on September 1, 2017 and leading the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) officially to grant the 'deed of autocephaly' which meant to cease three centuries of ecclesiastical domination of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine he could not fulfill his major promises. Petro Poroshenko when he became president in May 2014, promised to end the war in Donbas in very short period. However, loosing around 13000 lives so far, he could not finish the war in Donbas. Besides, economy worsened in his presidency duration though it could be unfair to blame only Poroshenko for collapse of economic in Ukraine. Moreover, corruption in Ukraine maintained its widespread existence which is a sensitive issue in Ukraine which of Euromaidan government promised to end off.[652]

Apparently, so far, none of Ukrainian government since independence of the country could cope with the corruption and built a sustainable democratic order in Ukraine and this is the main reason why Ukrainian presidents experience difficulties to be re-selected as the president. Thus, it can be argued that most of Ukrainians strongly desire to see an actual change in their country and for this reason they keep changing their presidents. Indeed, it is clear that *Ukrainians did not tolerate any president who did not follow anticipated reforms which could eradicate 'old system'* and for this reason they showed how far they can go by electing a comedian who does not have experience in politics but does not have political background of 'old system.'

Last but not least, the performances of pro-Russian parties are a striking development which should be taken seriously. As this research argues, without considering the domestic factors in Ukraine it is hard to understand the war in Donbas. In this sense, local dynamics ensure excellent opportunities for Russia to conduct a hybrid war in Donbas in order to achieve its goal in the region. The next part examines the governing structure of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk People's Republic.

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[652] Bohdan Ben, "Five Years of Poroshenko's Presidency: Main Achievements and Failures," *Euromaidan Press*, 2019, accessed August 9, 2019, http://euromaidanpress.com/2019/04/19/five-years-of-ukraine-poroshenko-main-achievements-and-failures/.

6.2.2 Governance of the 'DPR' and the 'LPR'

At the beginning of anti-government movements, which occurred after the ousting of president Yanukovych, the leaders of former pro-Russian or pro-federalization of Ukraine political formations came to the forefront. Protests against the actions of the new leadership of the country began in early March 2014, in the south-eastern regions of Ukraine. The protesters refused to recognize the new Ukrainian authorities, advocated the federalization of Ukraine and against the new governors, whose appointment was considered illegitimate and thereby 'elected the people's leaders' of their regions. In Donetsk, the pro-Russian forces chose a 'people's governor', the commander of the 'Donbas People's Militia', Pavel Gubarev. In other word, by disobeying the Ukraine's new officials and neglecting Sergiy Taruta who was the governor appointed by Kyiv, Gubarev announced himself as a new governor of the city.[653]

On March 6, Ukrainian police detained him due to his participation in the storming of the building of the Donetsk Regional State Administration on March 3 and 5.[654] Previously, Gubarev the member of the 'Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine', whose program was against 'pro-Western world' and advocates to join Russian Federation. He and two other pro-Russian separatists were released in exchange of the members of Security Service of Ukraine who were detained by the militants on May 7, 2014.[655] Andrei Purgin, co-founder of 'Donetsk Republic' network back in 2005, also took part in the events of March 3 and 5 in Donetsk. According to Donbass News, Purgin was detained by the Ukrainian police because of separatist

[653] "Pro-Russian Gubarev, a Symbol of East Ukraine Separatism," *Globalpost*, 2014, accessed May 3, 2019,
https://web.archive.org/web/20140311065542/http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140309/pro-russian-gubarev-symbol-east-ukraine-separatism.

[654] Damien McElroy, "Pro-Russian Leader Arrested in Donetsk as Kiev Hits Back," *Telegraph*, 2014, accessed May 3, 2019, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/10681786/Pro-Russian-leader-arrested-in-Donetsk-as-Kiev-hits-back.html.

[655] "Пленных Сотрудников Альфы Обменяли На Трех Лидеров Сепаратистов - СБУ," *UNIAN*, May 2014, accessed May 3, 2019, https://www.unian.net/politics/915617-plennyih-sotrudnikov-alfyi-obmenyali-na-treh-liderov-separatistov-sbu.html.

activities on Mach 19, 2014.[656] However, after three days, on March 22, he was already freed.[657]

Similar to Donetsk, on March 5, 2014, a group of people gathered in front of the State Administration building of Luhansk oblast and Aleksandr Kharitonov proclaimed himself as 'people's governor' in Lugansk. After a month, on April 6, 2014, building of Lugansk Security Service of Ukraine was seized by the pro-Russian separatists. Rebels demanded amnesty for all anti-maidan forces such as 'Alpha', 'Berkut', 'Falcon' who involved in the events on the Maidan. Besides, they demanded to hold a referendum on secession from Ukraine.[658] On April 21, 2014, separatists forces elected Valery Bolotov, commanders of the 'Army of the Southeast', as 'people's governor' of the Luhansk region. Demonstrations gradually continued to increase. Although on April 24, Yuliya Timoshenko arrived in Lugansk to negotiate with the invaders of the SBU building after three days the separatist forces proclaimed the independence of Lugansk People's Republic.[659]

On April 6 2014, after a regular protest, the participants seized the building of the Donetsk Regional Council and the regional state administration and on April 7 they formed the People's Council, which adopted the Declaration on the sovereignty of the DPR and the Act on the Proclamation of State Independence of Donetsk People's Republic. Besides, they appealed to Vladimir Putin with a request to send a 'temporary peacekeeping force.' The separatists also decided to hold a referendum on self-determination of the DPR no later than May 11, 2014, while it was stated that this date was agreed with the Luhansk and Kharkov oblasts.[660]

[656] "В Донецке Задержали Лидера «Донецкой Республики»," *Donbass News*, 2014, accessed May 3, 2019, https://novosti.dn.ua/news/203628-v-donecke-zaderzhaly-lydera-doneckoy-respublyky#.

[657] "Жители Донецка Пикетируют Ворошиловский Отдел Милиции," *Life News*, 2014, accessed May 3, 2019, https://life.ru/t/новости/129708.

[658] "Захватчики Здания СБУ в Луганске Выдвинули Требования," *Fraza*, 2014, accessed May 6, 2019, https://fraza.ua/news/192963-zahvatchiki_zdanija_sbu_v_luganske_vydvinuli_trebovanija.

[659] "В Луганске Объявлена Народная Республика," *Lenta*, 2014, accessed May 6, 2019, https://lenta.ru/news/2014/04/28/lugansk/.

[660] "'Утка' Дня. Донецкая Народная Республика," *Radio Svoboda*, 2014, accessed May 3, 2019, https://www.svoboda.org/a/25324238.html.

During the pro-Russian separatists insurgency in Donetsk Denis Pushilin became deputy governor of Donetsk region on April 5 and when 'Donetsk People's Republic' was proclaimed on April 7, Pushilin became the co-chairman of the interim government of the self-proclaimed DPR. Right after the referendum on May 12, 2014, Pushilin stated:

> We, the people of the Donetsk People's Republic, according to the results of the referendum held on May 11, 2014 and based on the declaration of the sovereignty of the DPR, declare that henceforth the DPR is a sovereign state. Based on the will of the people of the Donetsk People's Republic and for the restoration of historical justice, we ask the Russian Federation to consider the question of the entry of the Donetsk People's Republic into the Russian Federation.[661]

The same day, self-proclaimed Lugansk People's republic was also held referendum. Turnout in in Lugansk was 81%. According to the final data of the electoral commission, 96.2% of the participants supported the independence of the Luhansk region in a referendum.[662] On May 18, 2014, at the first session of the Supreme Council of the self-proclaimed 'Lugansk People's Republic', Valery Bolotov was elected as the head of the 'LPR'.[663]

On May 15, 2014 Denis Pushilin became the chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Donetsk People's Republic. After the referendum, Andrei Purgin became first Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the 'DPR'. These pro-Russian leaders were the main local activists who involved in separatist movements before 2014 as well. However, they were not the only actors who played critical role to resist Kyiv authorities. Among the local separatists Russian citizens also showed up in Donetsk. Some of them were "Igor Girkin, Alexander Borodai, Marat Bashirov, Vladimir Antyufeev, Igor Bezler, Arseny Pavlov, Alexander Mozhayev and others. Some of them had previously participated in other armed

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[661] "ДНР Провозгласила Себя Суверенным Государством," *Ria Novisti*, May 2014, accessed May 3, 2019, https://ria.ru/20140512/1007507367.html.

[662] "Луганская Республика Обратится в ООН с Просьбой о Независимости," *Ria Novisti*, May 12, 2014, accessed May 6, 2019, https://ria.ru/20140512/1007467838.html.

[663] "Self-Proclaimed Lugansk People's Republic Elects Head, Passes Constitution," *Russia Today*, 2014, accessed August 9, 2019, https://www.rt.com/news/159840-lugansk-elects-head-constitution/.

conflicts (Chechnya, the Balkans, Transnistria) and have long-standing ties with the Russian special services."[664]

On May 16, 2014, Alexander Borodai, a Russian citizen, was appointed as a Prime Minister of the Donetsk People's Republic.[665] Before arriving in Donetsk he played a critical role in Crimea's secession by being political advisor to Sergey Aksyanov, thee 'prime minister of the Republic of Crimea'. Igor Girkin, a Russian army artillery veteran, were among the other Russian citizens who had great impact on the fate of Donbas. Girkin also took part in the separatist movements in Crimea and he was also sent to Donetsk by Sergey Aksyanov. On May 12, he declared himself as a Supreme Commander of the self-proclaimed DPR and issued his first decree. Distributing in the form of leaflets in Slovyansk and Kramatorsk Girkin announced:

> As a supreme commander-in-chief of the DPR, I bring all military formations constantly stationed in the republic, security agencies, police, customs, border guards, prosecutors, and other paramilitary structures under my control. Commanders from now on carry out only my orders and instructions.[666]

The motivations and experiences of these Russian militants were much higher due to their 'success' in Crimea as well as in Transnistria. In an interview, Borodai confirmed that he and Igor Girkin participated in Transnistria War.[667] Mostly scholars agree that if Alexander Borodai and Igor Girkin had not arrived in Donbas the region's fate would hardly have developed as it did.[668]

The period of Russian citizens at the decision maker positions of the governance of self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic came to an end in August 2014. The first half of August 2014 witnessed constant defeats of the separatists which paved the way for the 'minister of defense' Igor Girkin to order his units to retreat Donetsk

[664] Balaban et al., *Guide to the Conflict Zone*, 55.

[665] "Ukraine: Donetsk People's Republic Elects PM," *TurkishPress*, May 16, 2014, accessed May 3, 2019, http://www.turkishpress.com/news/406653/.

[666] "Днр Объявила Войну Украине и Призвала На Помощь Россию," *Donbass News*, May 2014, accessed May 5, 2019, http://novosti.dn.ua/news/207600-dnr-obyavyla-voynu-ukrayne-y-pryzvala-na-pomoshh-rossyyu#.

[667] Павел Каныгин, "Александр Бородай: «Заключать Мир На Условиях Капитуляции Мы Никак Не Готовы»," *Новая Газета*, 2014, accessed May 5, 2019, http://www.novayagazeta.ru/politics/64812.html.

[668] Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, 95.

city.[669] Nevertheless, on August 14, 2014, it was announced that Igor Girkin was dismissed from his position by his own will.[670] In fact, Kremlin played a key role in discharging Girkin because due to the downing MH17 flight by pro-Russian separatists in Donbas in July 2014, Russia already attracted world attention. Besides, the Supreme Commander of those militants was a Russian citizen. Therefore, Moscow had to get rid of Russian citizens who were in decision making positions in Donbas.[671]

Girkin was replaced by Vladimir Kononov, a Donbas local militant. Apart from Igor Girkin, the self-appointed prime minister of the DPR, Alexander Borodai also was replaced by Alexander Zakharchenko, another local separatist leader of Donetsk. In mid-August, there was also change in leadership in Lugansk oblast. On August 14, 2014, the leader of the self-proclaimed Lugansk People's Republic, Valery Bolotov, announced that he was temporarily resigning due to his injury.[672] Bolotov was replaced by the 'Minister of Defense of the Luhansk People's Republic', Igor Plotnitsky.[673]

On November 2, 2014, General election was held in Donetsk and Lugansk to elect deputies to the People's Council and the head of the republic. In the 'DPR', two political organizations 'Donetsk Republic' and 'Free Donbas' competed in the election and received 68.35% and 31.65% of votes respectively. As a result, 100 deputies (68 of them from 'Donetsk Republic' and rest of it from 'Free Donbas') were elected to the Council of the DPR. As for the presidency office, Alexander Vladimirovich Zakharchenko elected as a head of the Donetsk People's Republic.

[669] Jaroslav Koshiw, "Donetsk Separatists in Dispute – Khodakovsky vs Strelkov," *Open Democracy*, 2014, accessed August 9, 2019, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/donetsk-separatists-in-disputekhodakovsky-vs-strelkov/.

[670] "Leading Military Commander of Pro-Russian Rebels Quits," *Deutsche Welle*, 2014, accessed August 9, 2019, https://www.dw.com/en/leading-military-commander-of-pro-russian-rebels-quits/a-17855322.

[671] "MH17 Ukraine Plane Crash: What We Know," BBC News, 2019, accessed August 10, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28357880.

[672] Руслан Мельников, accessed May 7, 2019, "Глава ЛНР Ушел в Отставку Из-За Ранения," *Российская Газета*, 2014, https://rg.ru/2014/08/14/bolotov-site.html.

[673] Kates, "The Rebel Leaders Dropping Out of the Fight in Eastern Ukraine."

Zakharchenko was supported by 78, 93% of voters.[674] In Lugansk, two political movements, 'Peace to Lugansk Region' and 'Lugansk Economic Union' were competed in the election. Igor Plotnitsky, the incumbent leader and head of the former movement, won the election by receiving 69,42% of votes, while the latter one gained 22% of votes.[675]

Ukraine and also the West, not surprisingly, criticized the elections in Donbas and found them illegitimate while Russia welcomed the election and evaluated as a legitimate base for the separatist leaders. The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Swiss President Didier Burkhalter expressed the elections which were held in the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (DPR and LPR) are the violation of the content of the Minsk agreements which undermine the peace process in Donbas.[676] In this regard, Sergey Lavrov, ministry of foreign affairs of Russian Federation, stated that the elections in the territory of the proclaimed Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics is critical in terms of legitimizing power.[677]

By holding general election pro-Russian militants tried to present their power as a legitimate and democratic. On November 14, Andrei Purgin appointed as the 'Chairman of the People's Soviet of the Donetsk People's Republic' while Denis Pushilin became the Vice Chairman of it. In fact, by the localization of the leaders in Donetsk, Kremlin facilitated itself to manage the region easier except Andrei Purgin. He was considered as a hard-liner among the other rebel leaders. Purgin was involved Minsk process and he opposed some of critical points in Minsk II. On September 4, 2015, he was dismissed from his post and detained four days.[678]

[674] "ЦИК ДНР Огласил Итоговые Цифры Результатов Выборов 2 Ноября," *DNR Today*, 2014, accessed May 5, 2019, http://web.archive.org/web/20141104053933/http://dnr.today/news/cik-dnr-oglasil-itogovye-cifry-rezultatov-vyborov-2-noyabrya/.

[675] "Incumbent Donbass Leaders Zakharchenko and Plotnitsky Win Elections - Final Results," *Russia Today*, 2014, accessed May 7, 2019, https://www.rt.com/news/201711-donetsk-lugansk-republics-elections/.

[676] "США и ОБСЕ Заявили, Что Выборы в ДНР и ЛНР Нарушают Минские Договоренности," *NEWS.Ru*, 2014, accessed May 5, 2019, https://www.newsru.com/world/01nov2014/usaoscelgndn.html.

[677] Александр Потапов and Элина Тихонова, "Сергей Лавров: «Нам Будет с Кем Разговаривать в Раде и Правительстве»," *Izvestia*, 2014, accessed May 7, 2019, https://iz.ru/news/578603.

[678] "Ukrainian Separatist Leader Released By Rebels After Four-Day Detention," *Radio Liberty*, 2015, accessed May 5, 2019, https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-donetsk-rebel-purgin-released/27233740.html.

Instead, Denis Pushilin was appointed as a new chairman of the DPR. Nevertheless, Purgin, in an interview, stated that his dismissal from the position was not connected with the Minsk process rather it was linked with power struggle or political disputes among the leaders of the separatists. He even claimed that there is a potential risk for civil war in Donetsk.[679]

Between 2016 and 2017 couple of political developments which undermined the peace process of the region occurred in the DPR. One of them was issuing its own passport. On March 16, 2016 the head of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, Alexander Zakharchenko, stated that the DPR started issuing the first passports of their own type. "We have officially started issuing a DPR passport to our citizens. This is another serious and important step towards state-building, towards the development of the republic,"[680] he said at the official presentation of the first passports.

On February 27, 2017, Alexander Zakharchenko, issued another decree granting the current line of demarcation in about the status of the DPR state border. To establish for the line of contact between the Donetsk People's Republic and Ukraine, the status of the state border, the document says that while moving across the contact line, it is imperative for individuals to register at the border control points.[681] The decree of Alexander Zakharchenko contradicted the Minsk agreements on the settlement of the conflict in the Donbas. According to Minsk agreements the territories of two self-proclaimed republics are defined as 'separate districts of Donetsk and Lugansk regions' of Ukraine.[682]

In 2017, a political crisis occurred in the self-proclaimed Lugansk People's Republic too. On October 21, 2017, the deputy of the People's Council of the self-proclaimed

[679] "Пургин о Своем Аресте," *Live Journal*, 2015, accessed May 5, 2019, https://colonelcassad.livejournal.com/2379280.html.

[680] "В ДНР Приступили к Выдаче Собственных Паспортов," *Interfax*, 2016, accessed May 6, 2019, https://www.interfax.ru/world/498707.

[681] "Буквы, Отлитые в Границе Указ Лидера ДНР Присвоил Линии Фронта Новый Статус," *Kommersant*, March 13, 2017, accessed May 6, 2019, https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3241358?from=doc_vrez.

[682] "Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements," United Nations: Peacemaker, 2015, accessed August 9, 2019, https://peacemaker.un.org/ukraine-minsk-implementation15.

LNR, Vladimir Sankin, accused Interior Minister, Igor Kornet of seizing someone else's house in Lugansk. Sankin stated that in the summer of 2014, when the war was most intense, residents of Lugansk were forced to leave their homes. Returning to their homes after the ceasefire, some of the inhabitants of Lugansk noticed that their homes were occupied by unknown people. One of these situations happened to Nina Vasilyevna, a resident of the city of Lugansk Kvirtsova. When Vasilyevna returned home, she saw that her house was occupied by the 'Minister of the Interior' Kornet.[683]

After this accusation, on November 9, the Interior Minister was evicted from the house he had occupied for three years. On November 20, a court of the Leninsky district, decided for dismissal of Igor Kornet from the post of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the 'LPR'. However, Kornet did not intend to resign. On November 21, the units of the Ministry of the Interior loyal to him with several units of armored vehicles blocked the center of Lugansk and concentrated near the building of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Kornet issued a statement in which he accused Plotnitsky's closest associates: The Head of the Government Security Service of the 'LPR', Yevgeny Silvorstov; the Head of the administration the 'LPR', Irina Teytsman.[684]

In response, Igor Plotnitsky confirmed that Igor Kornet was removed from office and appointed a new Acting Minister of the Interior of the LPR Vladimir Cherkov. Nevertheless, Kornet refused to obey his removal from the post and continued to act as Minister of Interior. He stated that a group of saboteurs attempted to destabilize the situation in the Lugansk People's Republic and the Donetsk People's Republic.[685] Besides, armed people with white armbands strengthened surveillance of the buildings of the administration of the head of the 'LPR', where Igor Plotnitsky was

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[683] "В Самопровозглашенной ЛНР Министра МВД Обвинили в Захвате Чужого Дома в Луганске," *Cxid*, 2017, accessed May 7, 2019, http://cxid.info/v-samoprovozglashennoy-lnr-ministra-mvd-obvinili-v-zahvate-chujogo-doma-v-luganske-video-n139785.

[684] "Внутриполитический Кризис в ЛНР Подошел к Концу," *Regnum*, 2017, accessed May 7, 2019, https://regnum.ru/news/2349733.html.

[685] "Хто Такий Ігор Корнет і Що Він Не Поділив з Плотницьким?," *NV*, 2017, accessed August 10, 2019, https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/hto-takij-igor-kornet-i-shcho-vin-ne-podiliv-z-tesljarski-2248061.html.

located, as well as the Lugansk 24 TV company and the building of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.[686]

On November 23, the head of the 'LPR', Igor Plotnitsky left his post and went to Moscow. Next day, he announced his resignation and appointed Leonid Pasechnik the Minister of State Security of the 'LPR', as the head of the 'republic' until the order in the 'LPR' was restored.[687] The political crisis in self-proclaimed Lugansk People's republic was a power struggle among the separatist leaders of the 'LPR'. In this period, while Plotnitsky accused Kornet for attempting coup d'état, the latter called the former as 'Ukrainian fifth column.'[688] The crisis that came to an end with the resignation of the Igor Plotnitsky, showed that the separatist leaders in Donbas can easily use 'Ukraine' as an excuse in favor of their own power struggle.

On August 31, 2018, the head of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic Alexander Zakharchenko dead. In the center of Donetsk at a restaurant called 'Separ' an explosion occurred, which resulted in the death of the head of the DPR. Following Zakharchenko's death, the Deputy Prime Minister, Dmitry Trapeznikov became Acting Head of the DPR. However, in the Prosecutor General's Office of the DPR, the appointment of Trapeznikov was called illegal. On September 7, Denis Pushilin, Chairman of the DPR People's Council, replaced Trapeznikov on this post.[689] On December 1, 2018, the People's Council of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic approved the new prime minister. The acting deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, Alexander Ananchenko became the prime minister of the DPR. Previously, the responsibilities of prime minister were partly performed by the head of the DPR.[690]

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[686] "Внутриполитический Кризис в ЛНР Подошел к Концу."

[687] "Внутриполитический Кризис в ЛНР Подошел к Концу."

[688] Даниил Раскольников, "Кризис «Народных Республик»: Что Происходит?," *Socialist News*, 2017, accessed May 7, 2019, https://socialist.news/read/article/lnr-dnr-crisis/.

[689] "Пушилин Стал Исполняющим Обязанности Главы ДНР," *RBC*, 2018, accessed May 6, 2019, https://www.rbc.ru/politics/07/09/2018/5b92444c9a7947372fce4d64.

[690] "Парламент ДНР Утвердил Нового Премьер-Министра," *Kommersant*, 2018, accessed May 6, 2019, https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3818814.

On November 11, 2018, second elections were held in Donetsk to elect the head and deputies of the Donetsk People's Republics. Two same public movements 'Donetsk Republic' and the 'Free Donbas' registered and competed in the election while the former received 72.5%, the latter gained 26.0% of votes. Denis Pushilin was elected for the post of the Head of the DPR by receiving 60.85% of support.[691] In Lugansk, incumbent Leonid Pasechnik, the head of the 'LPR' won the election by gaining 68.3% of the votes. In the parliamentary elections, the movement 'Peace to the Luhansk region' won with 74.13% voter support while the 'Lugansk Economic Union' received 25.16% of the vote.[692] Similar to 2014 elections, international reactions to 2018 elections in Donbas was various. In Ukraine, a criminal case initiated in connection with the organization of the electoral process in Donbas. The EU and NATO did not recognize elections in the Eastern Ukraine. The US State Department special representative for Ukraine Kurt Volker pointed out that such actions (elections) not only increase the level of security in Donbas, but also undermine the implementation of the Minsk agreements.[693]

According to the constitution of self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (adopted on May 14, 2014 by the Supreme Council) the state power in the DPR is composed of legislative, executive, and judicial. The power is exercised by the Head of the Donetsk People's Republic, the People's Council of the Donetsk People's Republic (the Parliament of the Donetsk People's Republic), the Government of the Donetsk People's Republic and the courts of the Donetsk People's Republic.[694] The form of government is characterized as a presidential republic. The head of the DPR is elected for five years and the same person cannot hold this post for more than two terms.

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[691] "Свободный Донбасс Набрал 26% Избирательских Голосов," *Free Donbas*, 2018, accessed May 6, 2019, http://odsd.ru/news/svobodnyi-donbass-nabral-26-izbiratelskih-golosov-0.

[692] "Central Election Commission," *Tsiklnr.Su*, 2018, accessed May 7, 2019, https://tsiklnr.su/news/552-itogovye-rezultaty-golosovaniya-na-vyborah-glavy-luganskoy-narodnoy-respubliki-11-noyabrya-2018-goda.html.

[693] "Донбасс Переизбрался На Прежние Сложности," *Kommersant*, 2018, accessed May 6, 2019, https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3797548#id1670980.

[694] "Constitution of the Donetsk People's Republic," *Dnrsovet.Su*, accessed May 6, 2019, https://dnrsovet.su/konstitutsiya/.

The highest legislative body is the People's Council of the Donetsk People's Republic. The quantitative composition of the Council, regulated by current legislation, is 100 people and the current chairman of the People's Council is Vladimir Bidenyov. Currently, the head of the executive branch of government is Alexander E. Ananchenko. The Supreme Court holds the highest judicial power.[695] On August 17, 2014, at the first meeting, the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the DPR adopted two resolutions: On the approval of the Regulations on the Military Courts of Donetsk People's Republic and On the Approval of the Criminal Code of the Donetsk People's Republic, the latter is based on the regulatory framework of the Russian Federation. In the adopted document, as one of the penalties for assault on a murder, as well as for certain crimes committed during wartime or in combat, the death penalty is specified. The legislation provides death penalty for particularly serious crimes. "When we end the war, we will follow the path of humanizing our criminal law," said Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Karaman.[696]

In brief, state-building process is observable in Donbas (particularly in the 'DPR'). This process stems from two main reasons. The first reason behind the state-building process of the self-proclaimed DPR is the disappointments of the leaders of the separatist forces. As noted in previous part, right after the referendum of May 2014, Denis Pushilin stated that in order to restore historical justice, "we (the people of the DPR) ask the Russian Federation to consider the question of the entry of the Donetsk People's Republic into the Russian Federation."[697] The separatists hoped to follow in the footsteps of pro-Russians in Crimea. However, similar process did not develop in Donbas. Instead, Russia first guaranteed the existence of the DPR and the LPR in August 2014 and then gave the appearance of the separatists as a grassroot movement by dismissing the Russian citizens at the top positions. The second reason of why the state-building process develops in Donbas arises from the failure of

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[695] "People's Council of the Donetsk People's Republic," People's Council of the Donetsk People's Republic, 2019, accessed August 10, 2019, https://dnrsovet.su/leadership-of-people-s-council/.

[696] "Президиум Совмина ДНР Принял Положение о Военных Судах и Уголовный Кодекс," *DNR Today*, 2014, accessed May 6, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20141130003408/http://dnr.today/news/prezidium-soveta-ministrov-prinyal-polozhenie-o-voennyx-sudax-i-ugolovnyj-kodeks/.

[697] "ДНР Провозгласила Себя Суверенным Государством."

Minsk process so far. Obviously, Ukraine's final aim is to restore the territorial integrity of the country. However, it contradicts the 'foreign policy' of the DPR. According to O. V. Onopko, foreign policy of the DPR "based on principles such as the priority of the Russian vector of further development, inadmissibility of the reintegration of Donbas to Ukraine."[698]

It should be also noted as long as the political resolution for Donbas crisis were not achieved, the region's people will be continued to rule by the military separatists leaders which means deprivation of their basic rights. Achieving democratic political system is impossible under these conditions. Maintenance of the stalemate of the Donbas crisis does not benefit for any residents of the region but militants who are in charge and Moscow to use it as a political leverage against Kyiv. The next section examines economic consequences of the Donbas conflict. The part shows how Ukraine's economy influenced from the destabilization of Donbas territory in connection with economic component of Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine.

6.3. Economic Dimension

Economy is one the most critical elements of the Russia's ongoing hybrid war against Ukraine. In this context, Donbas region is the most affected region of Ukraine. Donbas, one of the most developed industrial zones in Ukraine, was the region that contributed the most to the Ukrainian economy before the conflict began. In order to understand Donbas economy and its importance for the country, first, this section examines the structure of Donbas economy. Second, the work draws attention to the impact of Donbas conflict on the region's economy. Besides, the section investigates how Russia used its gas against Ukraine to influence the country's economy as another formation of ongoing hybrid war.

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[698] O. V. Onopko, "The Foreign Policy of the Donetsk People's Republic: Interets and Ideology," *Topical Issues of the Political Science* 45, no. 2 (2018), 1, accessed May 7, https://cyberleninka.ru/article/v/vneshnyaya-politika-donetskoy-narodnoy-respubliki-interesy-i-ideologiya

6.3.1 Structure of Donbas Economy

Until the conflict began in early 2014, the Donbas was one of the most developed industrial territories of Ukraine. Structure of industrial production in the Donetsk region, before the onset of armed conflict, were dominated by the metallurgical and chemical industry, the fuel and energy complex, and machine-building sectors. The region was the main producer of metal products, products of mechanical engineering and chemical industry. A characteristic feature of the regional economic complex was the combination of a powerful industry with diversified agriculture, the development of which has been a major focus in recent years, with a further prospect of output on world markets.[699] Industrial sectors in Lugansk region were similar of Donetsk though they were not as large as Donetsk. The industrial potential of the Lugansk region was characterized by a range of industry, where mining, heavy engineering and oil refining took the leading position.[700]

Favorable geographical location, proximity of sources of raw materials and markets of products, multi-branch industry, developed network of transport communications and high population density distinguished Donbas from other economic regions of the country. Donetsk economic region had a developed network of automobile and railways which were part of the international transport corridors from Transcaucasia, Central Asia and Russia to Europe. Important transit gas pipelines 'Soyuz', Stavropol-Moscow, oil pipelines Samara-Slavyansk and Grozny-Lisichansk, lines of electricity and communication passed throughout Donbas territory before the conflict. In the Donetsk region, the transport complex included railroad, aviation, urban land transport and seaport in Mariupol.[701]

Coal mining was one of the most critical industrial sectors in Donbas which was the leading region among the other parts of Ukraine in this issue. The coal output of Donbas was 37.8 million tons (in Ukraine in total, 83.6 million tons) in 2013. In the

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[699] "Donetsk Region," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, accessed August 10, 2019, https://mfa.gov.ua/en/about-ukraine/info/regions/25-doneck.

[700] "Luhans'k Region," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, accessed August 10, 2019, https://mfa.gov.ua/en/about-ukraine/info/regions/26-lugansk.

[701] "Donetsk Economic Region," Geomap, accessed August 10, 2019, https://geomap.com.ua/en-g9/935.html.

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territory of Donbas there were 24 state coal companies and 20 private mines and mine administrations. The main centers of coal mining (Donetsk coal basin) are Donetsk, Krasnoarmeysk, Makeevka, Lisichansk, Gorlovka, Rovenki, Krasny Luch.[702]

Nevertheless, the technologies which were used in the industrial complex in Donbas were outdated. The state of the coal industry and thermal energy, which were leading for the Donbas, were particularly defined as archaic. In fact, the state of coal mining in the Donbas seemed completely catastrophic even in Soviet time. It is no coincidence that during the Soviet times, for the first time, single voices were heard about the expediency of stopping coal mining. Scientists, who pondered over what awaits the coal mining in Donbas a few decades ago, drew attention to many factors such as: high level of injury during coal mining; a big burden for the budget of Soviet Union; negative environmental impacts of coal mining and consumption in comparison with other types of fuel; unprofitable indicators of economic efficiency of coal mining compared to the efficiency of oil and gas extraction etc.[703] These developments in coal mining paved the way to question the convenience of maintaining this industry.

The plans for the development of the energy sector of the USSR included the closure of almost all Ukrainian mines, with the exception of those extracting particularly valuable coking raw materials, and the introduction of a 'gas pause' regime, which was to increase natural gas consumption. Therefore, the moral and physical depreciation of the mine fund and coal-fired power plants were influenced by those policies. The state-owned part of the coal industry covered 70% of the mines which were generally unprofitable.[704] In short, their existence without budget support was impossible.

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[702] Анастасия Анушевская, "Экономика Донбасса. Инфографика," *Аргументы и Факты*, 2014, http://www.aif.ru/dontknows/infographics/ekonomika_donbassa_infografika.

[703] Валерій Смолій, Станіслав Кульчицький, and Лариса Якубова, "Донбас і Крим в Економічному, Суспільно-Політичному Та Етнокультурному Просторі України" (Kyiv, 2016), 223, accessed July 14, 2019, http://lib.rada.gov.ua/LibRada/static/about/text/Donbas_i_Krym_v_ekonomichnomu_suspilno-politychnomu_ta_etnokulturnomu_prostori_Ukrainy_istorychnyi_d.pdf.

[704] Амоша О. I. et al., "Відродження Донбасу: Оцінка Соціально-Економічних Втрат I Пріоритетні Напрями Державної Політики" (Kyiv, 2015)., 17.

In the pre-crisis period, the metallurgical industry played one of the leading roles in the economic development of the Donbas. Metallurgical industry was mainly represented by ferrous metallurgy enterprises, most of which were characterized by a full cycle of production (iron-steel-rolling). The products of ferrous metallurgy were dominant in the metallurgical industry of Donbas and provided almost 100% of exports of non-precious metals and their products.[705] In 2013, 12.9 million tons of pig iron, 13.3 million tons of steel and 7.5 million tons of rolled products were produced (total in Ukraine - 29.1 million tons of pig iron, 32.7 million tons of steel and 29.1 million tons rolled) in the Donbas. The metallurgy sector is the main exporter, accounting for 3/4 of the volume of all operations. Metal products are supplied to 50 countries in the world. The basis for the development of ferrous metallurgy is the coking industry. Metallurgical enterprises are located in Donetsk, Mariupol, Yenakievo, Makeyevka, Alchevsk. Non-ferrous metallurgy is represented by the production of zinc (Konstantinovka), mercury (Nikitovka), copper and brass rolled products (Artemovsk).[706]

Metallurgical enterprises of Donbas, where the overwhelming majority of them located in Donetsk region, provided job for almost 90 thousand people, which was the one fifth of all industrial workers in 2013. The share of metallurgy in the total volume of industrial products sold in the region amounted to 33% while commodity exports and foreign direct investment were 64.2% and 16.4% respectively.[707] In comparison to Donetsk the metallurgy industry in the Luhansk region during this period were much more modest in nature, however, the industry provided 30.9% of sold industrial products and 45.2% of commodity exports. The share of Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the total volume of sold metallurgical production in 2013 constituted 42.6%, in steel production 42.5% and in the export of steel products was 54.9%.[708]

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[705] Амоша О. I. et al., "Відродження Донбасу: Оцінка Соціально-Економічних Втрат I Пріоритетні Напрями Державної Політики" (Kyiv, 2015), 17.

[706] Анастасия Анушевская, "Экономика Донбасса. Инфографика," *Аргументы и Факты*, 2014, accessed July 13, 2019, http://www.aif.ru/dontknows/infographics/ekonomika_donbassa_infografika.

[707] O. I. et al., "Відродження Донбасу: Оцінка Соціально-Економічних Втрат I Пріоритетні Напрями Державної Політики.", 18.

[708] O. I. et al.

Mechanical engineering is another branch of industry in Donbas where the enterprises were producing products for the industrial sectors such as: mining equipment, machinery and equipment for the metallurgical and chemical industry, lifting-transport equipment and mechanisms, locomotives and railway cars. The center of mechanical engineering in Donbas is Mariupol. The centers of production of mining equipment are Donetsk, Lugansk, Gorlovka, Yasinovataya; lifting and transport are located in Kramatorsk; car building and tank production, as well as metallurgical and mining equipment, lifting and transport vehicles are concentrated in Mariupol (Azovmash). [709] Mechanical engineering in Donbas region is vital. For instance, the region produced UAH 78.43 billion (total in Ukraine - UAH 179 billion) worth metallurgical products in 2013. The mechanical engineering enterprises of the Donetsk region employed more than 60 thousand people, it provided about 10% of all regional industrial products and 11% of regional exports of goods. The share of mechanical engineering of Donbas consisted 17% of the machine building complex of Ukraine.[710]

Chemical industry is another branch of Donbas industry. In 2013, the share of Donbas chemical enterprises in the total volume of basic chemical products sold constituted 27.9% (Donetsk region - 15.1%, Luhansk region - 12.8%). Export of chemical products and related industries of the Donbas provided 21.6% of foreign exchange earnings from the sale of Ukrainian chemical products on world markets (Donetsk region - 12.8%, Lugansk region - 8.8%).[711] The chemical-industrial complex of Donbass includes enterprises producing nitrogen (Severodonetsk, Gorlovka) and phosphate fertilizers (Konstantinovka), soda (Lisichansk, Slavyansk), products of chemistry of organic synthesis (Severodonetsk, Donetsk, Lisichansk, Stakhanov, Rubizhne).[712] Severodonetsk Azot Association, Konstantinovsky State Chemical Plant, Dzerzhinsky Phenolic Plant, Donetsk State Chemical Plant, Kramatorsk Enamel Plant, Mariupol Insulation Material Plant were the main

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[709] Анушевская, "Экономика Донбасса. Инфографика."

[710] О. I. et al., "Відродження Донбасу: Оцінка Соціально-Економічних Втрат І Пріоритетні Напрями Державної Політики.,", 19.

[711] О. I. et al.

[712] Анушевская, "Экономика Донбасса. Инфографика."

manufacturers of chemical products in the Donbas before the conflict erupted in the region.[713]

In short, Donbas region is the most industrialized region of Ukraine. Its diverse industry mainly composed of coal mining, metallurgical industry, mechanical engineering and chemical industry. In this regard, Donbas region constitute the main part of the Ukrainian economy. The economic importance of the Donbas region can be easily understood by looking at the export figures of Ukraine. Donbas, the most densely industrialized region of the country, was the most exporting region in Ukraine. This can be better explained if one looks at the ten years of Donbas export between 2004 and 2013. For example, in this period, the Donetsk region accounted for an average of 23 percent of Ukrainian exports. In the period, Lugansk accounted for 7 percent of the exports.[714] Although this figure seems small in comparison with Donetsk, it is quite high according to other regions of Ukraine. In total, these two regions together accounted for an average of 30% of total Ukrainian exports.[715]

Despite the fact that Donbas is the most industrialized region of Ukraine the local population suffering from a low standard of living and social problems. Local people are convinced that their poor living standards stems from the unfair distribution of incomes and resources available in the country. This situation often expressed as 'Донбас годує Україну' (Donbas feeds Ukraine). Interestingly, this mass consciousness was formed and established contrary to the statistics. According to statistics, the share of Donetsk region in Ukraine's gross domestic product (GDP) was 12% while the total share of subsidies to the region were reached 20.9% in 2010. In 2011, this figure was already 27%. With a share of 4% of Ukraine's GDP, expenditures for the Lugansk region amounted to 7.8% in 2010 and 11% in 2011.[716]

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[713] O. I. et al., "Відродження Донбасу: Оцінка Соціально-Економічних Втрат І Пріоритетні Напрями Державної Політики.", 19.

[714] "Розподіл Обсягів Експорту-Імпорту Товарів За Регіонами України," State Statistics Service of Ukraine, accessed July 13, 2019, http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2004/zd/oet/oet_u/arh_oet2004.html.

[715] "Розподіл Обсягів Експорту-Імпорту Товарів За Регіонами України."

[716] Смолій, Кульчицький, and Якубова, "Донбас і Крим в Економічному, Суспільно-Політичному Та Етнокультурному Просторі України.", 232.

According to some experts such as Eric Naiman, Donbas was becoming a burden for the budget of Ukraine due to its unprofitable industry. In this case, Ukrainian metallurgy which used to have 'golden times', when it used to bring billions to its owners, as well as certain revenues to the budget, the situation has changed in time. Metallurgy sector brings a small 'plus' for the budget. Moreover, sectors such as the coal mining let alone making profit causes huge 'minuses' for the state budget.[717] Going a step further, Naiman states: "As far as the economy as a whole is concerned, the worst consequences, first of all, will be for the East itself. From the point of view of Ukraine's economy, separation of the East, paradoxically, will ease the situation, because a certain socio-political and economic ballast will disappear."[718]

In fact, monopoly in Donbas industry is the main reason for low living standards of Donbas people along with its outdated technologies. Ukraine's economy in general but particularly Donbas region dominated by monopolized economy. The richest oligarchs of Ukraine dominate the business in the region. Among the others, Rinat Akhmetov is the wealthiest businessman in Ukraine. His wealth is estimated about 6.23 billion dollars. Rinat Akhmetov owns SCM holding, which includes a number of Ukrainian business assets, including Metinvest Metallurgical Corporation, DTEK Energy Holdings and a number of smaller ones. He owns the lion's share of mines in Donbas and Dnipropetrovsk, a number of metallurgical combines in Donetsk Oblast, power generating companies, Ukrtelecom and Kyivenergo.[719]

Moreover, he owns FC Shakhtar and media business (TV channel 'Ukraine' and the newspaper 'Segodnya') but for experts, these businesses are unprofitable and are used only for political and image influence. Rinat Akhmetov was one of the closest businessmen to former President Viktor Yanukovych, and his head office was in Donetsk.[720] Igor Kolomoisky is another influential oligarch in Ukraine who controls

[717] Анастасія Зануда, "Україна і Донбас: Економічні Наслідки Конфлікту," *BBC Україна*, 2014, https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/business/2014/05/140512_eastern_ukraine_economy_az.

[718] Зануда, "Україна і Донбас: Економічні Наслідки Конфлікту,".

[719] Іван Верстюк, "Олігарх Плюс. Як і Чому Рінат Ахметов Збільшив Свої Статки Всупереч Окупації Донбасу," *NV*, 2019, accessed July 14, 2019, https://biz.nv.ua/ukr/economics/oligarh-plyus-yak-i-chomu-rinat-ahmetov-zbilshiv-svoji-statki-vsuperech-okupaciji-donbasu-50013500.html.

[720] "Карта Олігархів України Та Їхній Вплив На Владу," *ANTIKOR*, 2015, https://antikor.com.ua/articles/53272-karta_oligarhiv_ukrajini_ta_jihnij_vpliv_na_vladu.

the oil assets, 'Ukrtatnafta', 'Neftekhimik Carpathians' and refineries 'Galicia' and the network of filling stations 'Ukrnafta' and 'Avias.' He also controls a number of mining companies and metallurgical assets.[721] Apart from Akhmetov and Kolomoisky, Viktor Pinchuk is another oligarch who gets the main the profit of metallurgy industry. The largest asset of Victor Pinchuk is EastOne Group, a metallurgical company, which mainly specializes in the production of pipes (Interpipe) and a number of mining in Dnipropetrovsk region.[722]

Another oligarch who dominates the Ukrainian economy and thereby the business in Donbas is Dmitry Firtash. As one of the most prominent businessmen in Ukraine, Firtash was considered to be a key player in the gas market not only in Ukraine but also in Eastern Europe. He was one of the participants of RosUkrEnergo, which was engaged in supplying Russian gas to Ukraine. He currently manages a group of DF Group companies that owns a number of chemical companies in Rivne, Cherkassy, Sumy, Severodonetsk and Horlivka. He also has significant assets in the mining industry.[723]

Abovementioned oligarchs are the most influential businessmen in Ukraine who are dominating a range of main economic sectors including heavy industry, agriculture as well as media groups and sports. Being against the competitive market they monopolize most of the major economic sectors of Ukraine which have great impact on Donbas people since the region hosts the main volume of industrial complex of Ukraine. The oligarchs are not only dominating the economy of Ukraine but also political landscape of the country. Their influence in political and economic sphere of Ukraine continue throughout decades regardless of changing political figures in the country. This situation has been once again proven when the newly elected president Volodymyr Zelensky met with three of those oligarchs to discuss Donbas reconstruction process. According to Zelensky, he had already met with Victor Pinchuk, Igor Kolomoisky and Rinat Akhmetov and the president stated that these

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[721] "Карта Олігархів України Та Їхній Вплив На Владу."

[722] Ольга Кутишенко, "Дослідження: Як Олігархи Впливають На Економіку України," *LB.Ua*, 2017, accessed July 14, 2019,
https://lb.ua/economics/2017/03/27/362142_doslidzhennya_yak_oligarhi_vplivayut.html.

[723] "Карта Олігархів України Та Їхній Вплив На Владу."

businessmen will deal with military, infrastructure and health sector of certain areas of Donbas respectively.[724]

To sum up, Donbas is one of the most important territory for the Ukrainian economy. Until 2014, Donbas was the region which contributed the most to the national economy with its diverse industry. Coal mining, metallurgical industry, mechanical engineering and chemical industry are the leading industrial sectors in the region and at the same time are the most producing sectors in the country. However, industrilization of Donbas did not help to rise living standards of the local people due to outdated technology of the industrial sectors and oligarchs who monopolized the Ukrainian economy and tehreby Donbas industrial complex. The next section investigates how the conflict affected the Ukraine's economy and thereby Donbas territory. Besides, the following part also pays attention to economic sanctions of Russian Federation against Ukraine as another element of ongoing hybrid war.

6.3.2 Economic Consequences of Donbas Conflict

Before the war, Donetsk and Luhansk regions were one of the largest industrial regions of Ukraine. In 2013, they accounted for about 25% of all Ukrainian exports ($ 17 billion). Seizure of property by separatists led to a sharp fall in the region's economy. The industry of the occupied Donbass began to deteriorate by leaps and bounds.[725] The decline of the Donbas economy along with the burden of war itself automatically reflected on Ukrainian economy. In fact, Ukraine's GDP growth in 2013 was zero. Later, Ukrainian government predicted that in 2014 the economy of Ukraine should be reduced by 3%. Since mid-2014, the new Ukrainian government, international financial organizations and experts began to worsen their forecasts,

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[724] "Зеленський Розповів, Як Олігархи Допомагатимуть У Розбудові Донбасу," *TSN*, 2019, accessed July 14, 2019, https://tsn.ua/groshi/pinchuk-zaymatimetsya-viyskovimi-ahmetov-infrastrukturoyu-zelenskiy-rozpoviv-yak-oligarhi-dopomagatimut-rozbudovi-donbasu-1365711.html.

[725] Евгений Головатюк, "Экономика Оккупированного Донбасса: Игроки, Схемы, Объемы," *LIGA.Net*, 2017, accessed July 15, 2019, https://project.liga.net/projects/ekonomika_donbass/.

predicting Ukraine's GDP to be fell by 8-10%. Nevertheless, in the fall of 2014, forecasts became more optimistic between 6% and 6.5% of GDP decline.[726]

According to the State Statistics Service, the fall of Ukraine's GDP in the third quarter of 2014 was 5.1% compared to the same period last year. Moreover, declining in industry was even higher than the other sectors, it fell by 9.4%. However, it should be noted that it is impossible to calculate how much Ukraine has lost as a result of Donbas conflict. To estimate actual losses, it is not enough to determine the value of assets in the region and the volume of production there. In this context, the claims of the representative of the president in the Rada, deputy Irina Lutsenko can be considered as a general estimation. According to Lutsenko the damage from occupation for Ukraine is over 50 billion dollars.[727]

Devaluation of Ukrainian currency 'Hryvnia' (UAH) should be first mentioned which influenced dramatically from the Donbas conflict. The first jump in the hryvnia rate took place in February 2014. At the end of the month, during which peaceful protests turned dozens of victims, and the president fled from the country, the rate was already about 10 hryvnia per dollar (it was 8 hryvnia in 2013). Devaluation of hryvnia increased even more following the annexation of Crimea and the destabilization of Donbas. In early November, the official hryvnia exchange rate approached to UAH 16 per dollar. However, devaluation of hryvnia continued in line with the conflict in Donbas. In February 2015, hryvnia reached its historical highest rate, UAH 33.50 per dollar.[728]

Devaluation of the hryvnia cannot be linked to one specific reason; it was the result of the general causes of the worsening economic crisis in Ukraine due to the political instability in the country. For 2014-2015, the volume of real GDP of Ukraine,

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[726] Анастасія Зануда, "Економіка-2014: Не Так Сталося, Як Гадалося," *BBC News Україна*, 2014, accessed July 15, 2019,
https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/business/2014/12/141202_economy_2014_az.

[727] Дар'я Проказа, "Втрати Донбасу: Скільки Коштувала Економіці Окупація Регіону," *Hromadske*, 2019, accessed July 15, 2019, https://hromadske.ua/posts/vtrati-donbasu-skilki-koshtuvala-ekonomici-okupaciya-regionu.

[728] "Ukrainian Hryvnia," Trading Economics, 2019, accessed July 15, 2019,https://tradingeconomics.com/ukraine/currency.

together with the inflation, decreased by 15.9%.[729] However, this decline was accompanied by uneven worsening in various sectors of the country's economy. As a result of numerous external and internal factors, significant changes occurred at the level of entire industries. The main internal factor was the occupation of certain areas of Donbas region.

Due to the conflict in the Lugansk and Donetsk regions, the destruction of transport and energy infrastructure, many enterprises were forced to suspend or stop production processes. Since significant proportion of enterprises is located in certain areas of Donbas which are out of government control, sectors such as mechanical engineering, heavy and mining industry, including coal, were inevitably affected from the conditions. According to the information the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, economic activity in territories temporarily uncontrolled by Ukraine has decreased by 5 times. Only between January and July 2015, the volume of industrial production in the Donetsk region decreased by 48.2%.[730] At the same period, there was a catastrophic decline in volumes of industrial production in the Luhansk region, it decreased by 86.0%.[731]

One of the most influenced branch of Donbas industry in relation with the conflict is coal mining. Coal production in Ukraine has decreased by 35% following the destabilization of the eastern Ukraine. In this regard, 115 of the 150 coal mines remained in the occupied areas of Donbas.[732] 66% of state mines and half of private associations remain in the government controlled area of Donbas (Dzerzhinsk coal, Dobropilia coal, Krasnoarmeysk coal, Lisichansk coal, Pavlohrad coal, Selidov coal, mines South-Donbasskaya No. 1, Krasnolimanskaya, etc.). The mines remain in the temporarily uncontrolled territories of Ukraine are the Makiiv coal, Ordzhonikidze

[729] Кравчук Олександр, "Зміни в Українській Економіці Після Майдану," *Commons*, 2016, accessed July 16, 2019, https://commons.com.ua/uk/zmini-v-ukrayinskij-ekonomitsi-pislya-majdanu/.

[730] O. I. et al., "Відродження Донбасу: Оцінка Соціально-Економічних Втрат І Пріоритетні Напрями Державної Політики.", 45.

[731] "Індекси Промислової Продукції За Січень-Червень 2015 Року," Головне управління статистики у Луганській області, 2015, accessed July 16, 2019, http://www.lg.ukrstat.gov.ua/sinf/promis/promis062015.php.htm.

[732] "Чорна Книга Кремля: Війна Росії Проти України," 2015, accessed July 16, 2019, http://www.ucc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/blackbook.pdf.

coal, Shahterskantratsit, Torezantratsit, Snowden anthracite, Donbassanthracit, Anthracite, Lugansk coal, private mine companies DTEK and Metinvest.[733]

In 2013, coal production in Ukraine reached almost 84 million tons, and almost 75% of it was in the Donbas. Due to the occupation, this number reduced to 40 million tons in 2015. In 2018, Ukraine's coal production was only 33 million tons. At the same time, coal mining activities are continued in uncontrolled areas of Donbas by self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic through underground methods (one of the basic types of industrial activity of the separatists).[734]

In separatist controlled areas of Donbas there are 37 operating mines and in 2015, the total coal production of them were 11.9 million tons.[735] Their main market became Russian Federation due to particularly the economic blockade of Ukraine in 2016 and 2017 against the 'DPR' and the 'LPR'. However, this blockade badly affected Ukrainian economy because Ukraine needs at least 28 tons of coal annually, half of which is anthracite (a kind of coal). The loss of enterprises that extracted anthracite deactivate half of the country's thermal power plants which needs anthracite to work.[736] To overcome the stalemate, Ukrainian government decided to import coal in the formula 'Rotterdam +' in 2016. The cost of coal was calculated as: the price of coal in the ports of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Antwerp + the cost of its delivery to Ukraine.[737]

Nevertheless, in February 2017, Rotterdam + import formula was accused of shipping anthracite from the occupied territories under the guise of imported coal. According to the National Anti-Corruption Bureau, the profit from the corruption was distributed among DTEK, Donbasenergo and Tsentrenergo. According to expert

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[733] O. I. et al., "Відродження Донбасу: Оцінка Соціально-Економічних Втрат І Пріоритетні Напрями Державної Політики.", 46.

[734] Проказа, "Втрати Донбасу: Скільки Коштувала Економіці Окупація Регіону."

[735] "Экономика Донецкой Народной Республики", Институт экономических исследований, (Donetsk, 2017), 14.

[736] Проказа, "Втрати Донбасу: Скільки Коштувала Економіці Окупація Регіону."

[737] Andriy Gerus, "What's Wrong With the 'Rotterdam Formula'?," *Ukrainskaya Pravda*, 2016, accessed August 10, 2019, https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/columns/2016/06/22/7116844/.

estimates, over 2.5 years Ukrainians overpaid 35 billion hryvnia (935 million USD).[738]

Apart from Rotterdam+ scandal, there is another problem connected to the coal from uncontrolled territories. Experts say that coal enterprises in uncontrolled territories re-brand their products in Russia. For example, coal from the Donetsk and Lugansk mines can be sold as the coal from Rostov (Russia) and via Belarus it can be exported to Poland, and then back to Ukraine. In this context, Belarus, which has no deposits of coal, has exported it to Ukraine by 50.36 million dollars in 2018, which is almost 800 times more than in 2017. Anthracite exports also increased 307 times during the year and amounted to almost nine million dollars. However, Minister of Energy of Ukraine Ihor Nasalyk assured that this coal is not from uncontrolled areas of Donbas.[739]

As a result of the Donbas conflict, Ukrainian metallurgical industry is also far from its best times. According to the statistics of the World Association of Steel Producers (Worldsteel) Ukraine ranked 13th place among 67 countries. However, before the conflict Ukraine's position was 7th in the world in steel production and in metal exports the country was in third place. Even until 2016 Ukraine was among the top ten largest metal producers countries. In 2017, pig iron production amounted to 14.6 million tons, which was 18% less than for the same period of 2016. besides, steel registered 15.8 million tons (14% less), while rolled product production was 13.5 million tons (16% less).[740]

As noted, Lugansk and Donetsk regions consisted a quarter of Ukrainian exports before the conflict. Only metallurgical enterprises in the Donbas were more than 80, and products from them were supplied to 50 countries of the world. However, in 2014, metallurgical industry in Ukraine has fallen to record low levels. Some metallurgical enterprises, particularly oligarch Rinat Akhmetov's Yenakiyeve

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[738] Darya Prokaza, "Ukraine's Economic Losses Due to Russian Occupation of Donbas," *Euromaidan Press*, 2019, accessed July 16, 2019, http://euromaidanpress.com/2019/05/03/what-damage-russian-occupation-of-donbas-caused-to-ukrainian-economy/.

[739] Prokaza, "Ukraine's Economic Losses Due to Russian Occupation of Donbas,".

[740] Olena Holubeva, "Four Years after Maidan: What Happened to the Ukrainian Economy," *112.UA*, 2017, accessed July 16, 2019, https://112.international/article/four-after-maidan-what-happened-to-the-ukrainian-economy-22917.html.

Metallurgy Plant, Donetskstal and Alchevsk Metallurgy Combine, remained within the occupied territory and temporarily stopped functioning.[741] Obviously, the decline in the metallurgical industry of Ukraine also connected to the ongoing Donbas conflict.

Significant volume of the metallurgical industry of Ukraine are concentrated in the Donbas. Even without considering the uncontrolled part of the region, the share of Donetsk region in the volume of sales of metallurgical products in 2014 was 34.6% (in the total volume of industrial production sold in the region 42.4%),[742] and Lugansk region 5.7% (36.2% respectively).[743] Following the destabilization of Donbas, the volume of production of all kinds of metal products decreased in Donetsk region. In the Luhansk region there was also a decrease in the volume of production of major types of metal products. This led to significant losses of metallurgical enterprises, which amounted to about half of all losses of industry in the region. Nevertheless, three years after the war began, metallurgy enterprises from uncontrolled region continued paying taxes to Ukrainian budget. For example, Metinvest Holding reported that in 2017, more than one billion hryvnia (37.4 million USD) as taxes were received from non-controlled region of Ukraine.[744] This situation has changed when the so-called the 'parliament of the LPR' took a decision on the registration of all Ukrainian businesses in the 'tax system of the LPR' in February 2017. Otherwise, they warned that the enterprises will be 'nationalized'. Ukraine responded to these activities with an initiative of the economic blockade of the occupied Donbas.[745]

Besides, the separatists' activities also affected the other enterprises of the industry connected to Metallurgy. The largest railways were under the control of the so-called

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[741] Prokaza, "Ukraine's Economic Losses Due to Russian Occupation of Donbas."

[742] "Обсяг Реалізованої Промислової Продукції (Товарів, Послуг) За Видами Економічної Діяльності у 2014 Році," Головне управління статистики у Донецькій області, 2014, accessed July 17, 2019, http://donetskstat.gov.ua/statinform1/ekonomichna-statystyka/ekonomichna-diialnist/promyslovist/obsiah-realizovanoi-promyslovoi-produktsii-tovariv-posluh-za-vydamy-ekonomichnoi-diialnosti/20140000/.

[743] "Економічна Статистика," Головного управління статистики у Луганській області, 2014, accessed July 17, 2019, http://lg.ukrstat.gov.ua/sinf/promis/rpromis.php.htm.

[744] Проказа, "Втрати Донбасу: Скільки Коштувала Економіці Окупація Регіону."

[745] Prokaza, "Ukraine's Economic Losses Due to Russian Occupation of Donbas."

'Ministry of Transport of the DPR', the terrorist attacks destroyed dozens of bridges and junctions which blocked the routes of cargo transportation. As a result, production volumes at Dnipro Metallurgical Combine Dzerzhinsky and Mariupol Metallurgical Combine, Ilyich and Azovstal were reduced almost twice.[746]

Another industrial branch is mechanical engineering in Donbas dramatically influenced from the ongoing conflict. The share of Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the total volume of sales of machine building products in Ukraine in 2013 was 15.8% and 6.9%. However, machine building production of the Donetsk region has reduced by 37% only in 2014 following the conflict. The total sales of mechanical engineering products between January and July 2014 were 5.5 billion UAH (464 million USD) or 4.7% of the regional volume of sold industrial products against 10.3 billion UAH (1,27 billion USD) or 8.7% of the regional volume for the same period of 2013.[747]

The fall in the production of the machine-building industry stems from such factors: a prohibition on the supply of military and dual-use goods to Russia by Ukrainian enterprises, refusal to cooperate with customers in Russia and the destruction or occupation of many enterprises in the occupied territory of machine-building products, primarily coal-mining enterprises. In this case, relations with Russia is particularly important because engineering products such as trams, locomotives and other industrial equipment which were produced in Donbas predominantly sold on the Russian market. Therefore, deterioration of relations with Russia endangered the mechanical engineering sector of the Donbas industry along with the other branches.[748]

In short, Ukrainian economy in line with the developments in Donbas have been influenced since the beginning of 2014. As the most industrialized territory of Ukraine, Donbas industrial complex was composing the most significant volume of

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[746] O. I. et al., "Відродження Донбасу: Оцінка Соціально-Економічних Втрат І Пріоритетні Напрями Державної Політики.", 47.

[747] "Прес-Бюлетень № 09, 2014р.," Головне управління статистики у Донецькій області, 2014, accessed July 17, 2019, http://donetskstat.gov.ua/pres/presreliz.php?dn=0914&number=2.

[748] Мазуренок Оксана, "Тенденції Розвитку Машинобудівної Галузі України в Аспектах Державної Політики," *Економічні Науки* 2, no. 154 (2018), 22.

Ukrainian economy. However, all sectors of Donbas industry dramatically declined since the war began in the Eastern Ukraine. The impact of the ongoing conflict in Donbas, on Ukrainian economy can be better seen if we compare the periods before and after 2014. According to State Statistics Service of Ukraine, contribution of Donbas to Ukraine's export dramatically declined since the war began. For example, the region's average export volume in total export of Ukraine was more than 25 percent between 2009 and 2013. However, as shown in the Table, the share of Donbas economy in Ukraine's export declined more than twice between 2014 and 2018 in comparison with the period from 2009 to 2013.[749]

Table 2. The Share of Donbas in the Volume of Ukraine's Export

Years	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Donetsk	23,5	25,5	25,1	20,5	19,6	15,6	9,7	9,4	10,2	10,2
Lugansk	4,8	6,5	9,5	6,1	5,6	3,5	0,7	1,2	0,5	0,4
Total	28,3	32,0	34,6	26,6	25,2	19,1	10,4	10,6	10,7	10,6

Table 2 created by the author.
Sources: State Statistics Service of Ukraine

The impact of the Donbas conflict on Donetsk and Lugansk regions presented better in the Table. The share of Lugansk region alone in Ukraine's economy had declined from 6,50 to 1,30 between the periods of 2009-2013 and 2014-2018 respectively. This means, Ukraine's economy lost 80 percent of Lugansk's export contribution. In the same periods, the share of Donetsk export had declined from 22,80 to 11,00 and Ukraine's export volume lost 51,75 percent of Donetsk's share. In comparison of two periods between 2009-2013 and 2014-2018, Ukraine's export lost 58,02 percent of Donbas contribution due to the ongoing conflict.[750]

Apart from the impact of the declining of Donbas industrial complex on Ukrainian economy, Kyiv also experienced direct economic war with Russia. Following Euromaidan events, the Russian authorities launched another wave of gas dispute

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[749] "Обсяги Експорту-Імпорту Товарів За Регіонами України," *State Statistics Service of Ukraine*, 2019, accessed July 18, 2019,
http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2019/zd/oet/oet_u/arh_oet2019_u.html.

[750] "Обсяги Експорту-Імпорту Товарів За Регіонами України."

against Ukraine as a part of its hybrid war in Ukraine. The gas disputes erupted in line with the annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation.

Table 3. Decline of Donbas Export Volume

Periods Regions	Average 2009-2013	Average 2014-2018	Decreased
Lugansk	6,50	1,30	80,00
Donetsk	22,80	11,00	51,75
Total	29,30	12,30	58,02

Table 3 created by the author.
Sources: State Statistics Service of Ukraine

The base of the Russian navy in Crimea was part of the gas agreements between Ukraine and Russia. The Kharkov Agreement which signed on April 17, 2010, by President Yanukovych included gas discount in exchange for an extension of the Russian fleet's stay in Sevastopol. The discount between the sides was updated during the meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych on December 17, 2013 in Moscow. The December agreement allowed to reduce Russian gas price for Ukraine from $ 400 to $ 268.5 per 1,000 cubic meters.[751]

However, annexation of Crimea has changed the conditions for gas agreement. When President Yanukovych fled from Ukraine and Russia declared Crimea as its territory, Russian Duma approved denunciation of Russian-Ukrainian agreements on Black Sea Fleet on March 31, 2014 and thereby gas discount lost its meaning.[752] Since April 2014, Russia has raised its gas price for Ukraine to $ 485 per thousand cubic meters and Kyiv refused to pay the new price.[753]

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[751] "Russia Offers Ukraine Major Economic Assistance," *BBC News*, 2013, accessed July 17, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25411118.

[752] "State Duma Approves Denunciation of Russian-Ukrainian Agreements on Black Sea Fleet," *TASS*, 2014, accessed July 18, 2019, https://tass.com/russia/725964.

[753] Elena Mazneva and Volodymyr Verbyany, "Russia to Charge Ukraine More Than Germany as Gas Discounts End," *Bloomberg*, 2014, accessed July 18, 2019, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-04-03/russia-to-charge-ukraine-more-than-germany-as-gas-discounts-end.

In order to solve the stalemate trilateral talks were arranged among the EU Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger, Russia and Ukraine. However, the meetings failed on June 15, 2014 and Gazprom Chief executive Alexey Miller announced that Ukraine's state gas firm Naftogaz had to pay $1.95 billion of the $4.5 billion debt until June 16. The same day, Gazprom cut gas supply to Ukraine due to not receiving demanded payment[754] and filed lawsuit at the International Council Commercial Arbitration (ICCA) in Stockholm against Kyiv for a $ 4.5 billion debt. In contrast, the Ukrainian Naftogaz also filed lawsuit against Gazprom at the same court, demanding the establishment of a fair market price for Russian gas to Ukraine.[755]

After several trilateral talks among the European Union, Russia and Ukraine an agreement was reached on 30 October 2014. According to the deal, Ukraine agreed to pay (in advance) $378 per 1,000 cubic meters until the end of 2014, while for the first quarter of 2015 the price was agreed for $365. As for its debts to Gazprom, Kyiv agreed to pay of $1.45 billion right away, and $1.65 billion until the end of 2014.[756]

On November 25, 2015 Ukraine ceased to buy Russian gas. According to Gazprom, the gas supply to Ukraine was halted because Kyiv did not pay for the next term. However, Kyiv officials expressed that Ukraine stopped buying Russian gas because it is expensive. The prime minister, Arseniy Yatsenyuk stated: "Today's price from Russian Gazprom is higher than that offered by our European partners."[757] As a result, Ukraine stopped buying Russian gas since November 2015 and supply its fuel need from the European partners.[758]

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[754] Elena Mazneva and Daryna Krasnolutska, "Russia Cuts Gas to Ukraine While Maintaining Flow to EU," *Bloomberg*, 2014, accessed July 18, 2019, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-06-16/ukraine-faces-russian-gas-cutoff-as-payment-talks-fail.

[755] "Ukraine Crisis: Russia Halts Gas Supplies to Kiev," *BBC News*, 2014, accessed July 18, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27862849.

[756] Evan Ostryzniuk, "Ukraine Secures Winter Gas Supplies from Gazprom," *Kyiv Post*, 2014, accessed July 18, 2019, https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/business/ukraine-secures-winter-gas-supplies-from-gazprom-370213.html.

[757] "Україна Перестала Купувати Російський Газ," *Gazete.Ua*, 2015, accessed July 18, 2019, https://gazeta.ua/articles/politics-newspaper/_ukrayina-perestala-kupuvati-rosijskij-gaz/662887.

[758] Оксана Смола, "Україна Перестала Купувати Російський Газ," *Gazete.Ua*, 2015, accessed August 10, 2019, https://gazeta.ua/articles/politics-newspaper/_ukrayina-perestala-kupuvati-rosijskij-gaz/662887.

To sum up, consequences of ongoing Donbas conflict on Ukrainian economy is enormous. In this regard, there are two factors which affected Ukrainian economy. First, the economic losses stemmed from the occupation of certain areas of Donetsk and Lugansk regions following the annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation. As the most industrialized region of Ukraine, destabilization of Donbas decreased the export volume of Ukraine. All major sectors of industry in Donbas such as coal mining, metallurgy, mechanical engineering or chemical industry were significantly damaged due to the conflict. Second factor which had negative impact on Ukraine's economy is because of the risk perception in Ukraine which increased after destabilization of the Eastern Ukraine. Sharp devaluation of hryvnia in 2014 and 2015 was the indication of that risk factor.

Nevertheless, there are some positive effects of the second factor on Ukrainian economy in long term. According to some experts such as Vasyl Yurchyshyn, Director of Economic Programs at Razumkov Center, as a result of the war with Russia, Ukraine finally turned its direction to other markets. For Yurchyshyn, staying away from Russian market, Ukraine not only made room for itself in European markets, but it also paved the way to access Asian markets, in particular, China and Kazakhstan.[759] Besides, Ukraine managed to be independent from Russian gas leverage which had been implemented by Kremlin since 2005. It looks like the worst period of the impact of Donbas conflict on the Ukrainian economy has ended, although the constant burden of the conflict on the Ukrainian economy will continue as long as Russia maintains its hybrid war against Ukraine. The following section investigates information component of the hybrid war in Ukraine.

6.4. Information War

Information is another component of the hybrid war in Donbas. It is a critical tool to manage mass perceptions which is an important factor to direct people for certain goals. In this section, first, media discourses in Ukraine in pre-war period are examined. Understanding this period is vital because it shows us how narratives

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[759] Зануда, "Економіка-2014: Не Так Сталося, Як Гадалося."

about Donbas contributed for the isolation of territory in Ukraine. Subsequently, the part explains how Russia used the narratives which were formed before the war as one of the tools of its hybrid war in Ukraine.

6.4.1 Information War before the Donbas Conflict

Information war about Donbas existed before the war began in the region. Since the independence of Ukraine, region-centric discourses prevailed the political landscape of the country. The main discourses are 'Ukrainian Nationalism' versus 'Patriotism of Donbas' which concentrated in two districts: L'viv and Donetsk respectively. In this context, while 'Ukrainianization' policy is welcomed in the former one, it always goes down like a lead balloon in the later one. Writing before the conflict erupted in Donbas, Sergey Pakhomenko and Maria Podybaylo warned how dangerous could be to reconstruct Donbas to 'general cultural pattern'. The authors pointed out: "one should carefully treat the region's specificity and reject the very idea of imposing such irritating symbols as Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, Bandera[760], the Ukrainian Rebellion Army[761], etc. One should look for the uniting factors in the present time instead of looking for them in the past."[762]

The binary opposition of L'viv and Donetsk also refers two different viewpoints. Representing 'Ukrainianness' L'viv usually symbolizes 'Europeanness' while Donetsk 'patriotism' portraits 'Sovietness' and thereby 'pro-Russian insight'. These antipodes also produced several myths about each other. One side presented itself as a region preserving 'Donbas Soviet identity' and accused the other side as being 'fascists' who forced Ukrainization policy in Donbas. The other side portraited Donbas elites as 'Moscow puppets', 'bandits' and 'mafia' and Donbas residents as

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[760] Stepan Bandera, leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists.

[761] Armed band of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, during the Second World War and the first decade of postwar period.

[762] Sergey Pakhomenko and Maria Podybaylo, "'Ukrainian Nationalism' Vs 'Patriotism of Donbas': The Withstand of The Media Images in the Contemporary Information Space of Donetsk District," *Almanach Via Evrasia*, 2013, 2, accessed June 12, 2019, http://www.viaevrasia.com/en/22-ukrainian-nationalism-vs-patriotism-of-donbas-the-withstand-of-the-media-images-in-the-contemporary-information-space-of-donetsk-district-sergey-pakhomenko-maria-podybylo.html.

'lumpenized' or 'marginalized'.[763]   Moreover, this antinomy could also be seen by the fact that people in L'viv speak mainly in Ukrainian, while Donetsk residents prefer to speak in Russian. The distinctiveness between Donetsk and L'viv also reflected in voters' political preferences. For instance, Viktor Yanukovych, a candidate from Donetsk received 8.6 percent of votes in L'viv district during presidential election in 2010 while the candidate gained more than 90 percent of votes in Donetsk region.[764]

Indeed, political and cultural dichotomy between the West and the East of Ukraine existed even 1994 presidential election and reinforced during and after 2004 presidential campaign. As explained in Chapter 4 of this research, during the 1994 presidential election, Leonid Kuchma who promised to increase relations with the Russian Federation was supported mainly by the East of Ukraine while Leonid Kravchuk received major votes from the West of the country due to his anti-Russian campaign. Of course, it is hard to detect where the East or the West of Ukraine start. In this context, Peter Rogers who attempted to deconstruct the generalization of East and West dichotomy in Ukraine emphasized that there is not a rigid 'border' between these two parts of Ukraine. Instead, distinctiveness of East and the West is fluid and complicated.[765]   Nevertheless, a crystal-clear disparity between Donbas and Halytchina (westernmost territory of Ukraine) is obvious. Therefore, it would not be wrong to compare these two regions of Ukraine.

Media discourses are an important factor which contributed to the construction of dichotomy between the West and the East of Ukraine. Mass media from both sides played a significant role in formation of 'Ukrainian Nationalism' versus 'Patriotism of Donbas' discurse. To understand how media deepened the polarisation between the West and The East of Ukranians, the publications of *Golos Donbassa*, one of Donbas local newspapers, during the 2004 presidential election campaign, can be informative. In general,

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[763] Abibok, "The Construction of Donbas Regional Identity in Political and Media Discourses: Implications of the Conflict.", 61.

[764] Andrii Portnov, "The Arithmetic of Otherness: 'Donbas' in Ukrainian Intellectual Discourse," *Eurozinene*, 2017, accessed June 12, 2019, https://www.eurozine.com/the-myth-of-the-two-ukraines/.

[765] Peter Rogers, "Division, Difference and Diversity: Regionalism in Ukraine," *Україна Модерна* 12, no. 2 (2007), 210, accessed June 13, 2019, http://uamoderna.com/arkhiv/47-122.

the newspaper evaluated the presidential competition between Viktor Yanukovych and Viktor Yushchenko as a zero-sum game.

In their article, Ararat and Alexandr drew attention to the publications of *Golos Donbass* (Voice of Donbas) during 2004 election. This local newspaper was very active which used a separatist language to consolidate 'us' and 'other' profile between the voters. For example, *Golos Donbass* published articles under following titles: "*Ukrainian Fascism-The Terrible Truth*, *The Second Round: The East against the West*, *Ukraine Has Split*, *Who Will Win?... Where Is Your Character, Donbass?*"[766] The newspaper also insulted Western voters of Ukraine in an article by stating: "You have not expected such a result for the first round, dear reader, have you?... The low political literacy of many western Ukrainians played a role. They answered the question, 'why are you giving your vote to Yushchenko?' by saying, 'Well, everyone does."[767] Local media appealed not to trust 'Orange' channels. Indeed, people in the region already had have a distrust of TV channels such as Channel 5, UT-1, 1+1 or Inter just like the way how supporters of Orange Revolution did not trust TRK Ukraine.[768]

In general, Donbas regional media adopted myths and stereotypes about Donbas. Abibok claims that there are Soviet ('hard-working people', 'positive exclusiveness of Donbas identity', 'feeding the entire Ukraine') and modern (mafia or bandit-style) stereotypes connected to Donbas people and local media goes along with these.[769] Besides, national media also contributed in strengthening of the Donbas identity. For instance, the website *Obkom* used frequently the words such as "super suit-Adidas', 'brazing torch', 'yoot', 'gang', 'dons', 'thug', 'tough guy".[770] An article published in Zerkalo Nedeli newspaper also remarked the characteristics of Donbas inhabitants by pointing Yanukovych. In the article, it is stated that "Yanukovych is not afraid of violent motions because they are natural for him. People of this temper, men

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[766] Osipian and Osipian, "Why Donbass Votes for Yanukovych: Confronting the Ukrainian Orange Revolution.", 504-505.

[767] Osipian and Osipian., 509.

[768] Osipian and Osipian.

[769] Abibok, "The Construction of Donbas Regional Identity in Political and Media Discourses: Implications of the Conflict.", 74.

[770] Abibok., 71.

descending from this region do not engage in self-reflection. Many of them have behind them a rough and fairly specific experience of a primitive capital accumulation".[771]

Indeed, before 2004 presidential election, the tendency for separatism among Donbas people was low. According to a research conducted in 2004, 71 percent of participants from Donetsk agreed with the following statement: "The unity of Ukraine is more important than the needs of separate regions".[772] Comparing with the year of 1994 (only 44.5 percent of participant agreed) the idea of remaining intact was quite high which started to change again during the Orange Revolution with the help of mass media.[773]

Throughout the campaign, Golos Donbassa newspaper described Yushchenko as a fascist and compared directly with Adolf Hitler. For instance, on the eve of 2004 presidential elections, an article entitled 'Ukrainian Fascism-Terrible Truth' was published in the newspaper *Golos Donbassa*. After describing the activities of the OUN-UPA, against Polish minority groups between 1943 and 1945, the article draws attention to the current nationalist organizations. The anonymous writer links the today's fascist groups to Yushchenko.[774] As can be seen below, the newspaper, which identifies Yushchenko with Hitler, said, "Does the nation need a new Führer?" he asks readers. As shown in the picture below, the newspaper identifies Yushchenko with Hitler and asks the readers: 'Does the nation need a new Führer?'[775]

Golos Donbassa shares another issue with a split map of Ukraine along Dnieper river and asks: 'Where is Your Character Donbass?' The article points out that mainly the low political literacy of Western Ukrainians had played critical role during the first round of the election. To show the low political literacy of Yushchenko supporters,

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[771] Abibok.

[772] Andrew Wilson, "The Donbas in 2014: Explaining Civil Conflict Perhaps, but Not Civil War," *Europe-Asia Studies* 68, no. 4 (2016): 639.

[773] Wilson, "The Donbas in 2014: Explaining Civil Conflict Perhaps, but Not Civil War,".

[774] Osipian and Osipian, "Why Donbass Votes for Yanukovych: Confronting the Ukrainian Orange Revolution.", 505.

[775] Денис Казанский, "Политическая Агитация — 2004. Донбасс.," Блог Дениса Казанского, 2011, accessed June 14, 2019, http://deniskazansky.com.ua/политическая-агитация-2004-донбасс/.

the article claims that most of the Western Ukrainians answers the question, 'Why are you supporting Yushchenko?' by responding, 'Well, everyone does.'[776]

Picture 8. Defaced Image of Viktor Yushchenko during 2004 Presidential Election in Ukraine
Source: Денис Казанский, Политическая агитация — 2004. Донбасс., accessed June 15, 2019, http://deniskazansky.com.ua/политическая-агитация-2004-донбасс/

After the first-round of 2004 presidential election, another article titled 'The Second Round: The East against the West" appeared in Golos Donbassa. The article states:

> Voting in the first round confirms the development of the events under the scenario: 'candidate of the East against the candidate of the West.' Eastern and most of the central regions of Ukraine gave their votes to Yanukovych while western Ukraine voted for Yushchenko. A clear geographic split takes place based on the principle of distance from Russia and United Europe.[777]

In fact, though the presidential polls revealed that the people from both regions see the other as adversaries and try to impose their own order on each other, the both regions' people acquire knowledge about the other mostly through local media.[778]

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[776] Казанский.

[777] Osipian and Osipian, "Why Donbass Votes for Yanukovych: Confronting the Ukrainian Orange Revolution.", 505.

[778] Abibok, "The Construction of Donbas Regional Identity in Political and Media Discourses: Implications of the Conflict." 61.

Picture 9. A Provocative Headline in Golos Donbassa
Source: Денис Казанский, "Политическая Агитация-2004. Донбасс.," Блог Дениса Казанского, 2011., accessed June 15, 2019, http://deniskazansky.com.ua/политическая-агитация-2004-донбасс/

Writing in the website Obkom, journalist Alexey Mironov claims that local elites and journalists contribute in formation of Donbas identity.[779] In his speech Viktor Yanukovych stated:

> Donetsk region, its wonderful people have long become the embodiment of the best in Ukraine, a brilliant symbol of what we, as a people, are able to achieve...Together we want to see the Donetsk region ... where we are free to celebrate our holidays and celebrate our history, as we understand it, and not in the way that someone dictates.[780]

Obviously, Yanukovych's emphasize on separate holidays and history was merely contributing the exclusiveness of Donbas region. Another Donetsk journalist, Oleg Izmaylov had an interview with editor-in-chief of the 'Newspapers in Donetsk' Yevgeny Yasenov in 2008. Yasenov is one of the most prominent local historians of Donetsk. Comparing people from two regions of Ukraine, Yasenov states:

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[779] Алексей Миронов, "От Пальмы Мерцалова Далеко Не Падают - II," Обком, 2008, accessed June 13, 2019, http://ru.obkom.net.ua/articles/2008-04/23.1254.shtml.

[780] Евгений Косячков, "Янукович Уже Не Считает Народ Донбасса «воплощением Самого Лучшего в Украине». Другие Продолжают Так Думать (Обновлено)," Обком, 2007, accessed June 13, 2019, http://ru.obkom.net.ua/articles/2007-07/06.1430.shtml.

> I was in L'viv last year - people are completely different there. Evil, caustic, though more intelligent. But you don't get the pleasure of communicating with them. There are, of course, exceptions - but we are talking about average values. If we compare it with L'viv, only 'warm' people live in Donetsk. But, for example, in Dnepropetrovsk or Odessa - the same 'warm', if not better.[781]

Mironov, the Obkom correspondent quotes an article of Rimma Fil, a Donetsk journalist who was an editor-in-chief of *The Donetsk News*. In her article Fil writes about her impressions of meeting Western Ukrainians in 2003. According to Obkom correspondent, Fil concludes her article as: "And the country is small but the difference between us, as the classic used to say, is of enormous size. All the power of anger and hatred for us, the Donbas people, I felt every second and every hour. They, intelligent people, just spewed anger when they themselves started talking about you and me."[782] Miranov also takes another quotation from the Donetsk journalist: "We are workers. We need deeds ... Our Donbass, where people mine heat by their sweat and blood for the entire country, where people gnaw out the future for themselves and their children. Calm. Peaceful. Where people are used to work hard, but not to reap someone's harvest."[783]

The Obkom correspondent, Alexey Mironov, draws attention to the texts of Yevgeny Yasenov and Rimma Fil to show how journalists and historians contribute the stereotypes about Donbas people. As seen in the quotation, Yasenov emphasizes how different L'viv and Donetsk people are from each other. According to him the former is 'evil', 'caustic' and 'intelligent' while the latter is 'warm', 'hard working' and 'not reaping someone's harvest' for Rimma Fil. Moreover, Ms. Fil points out that how much Western Ukrainians are hateful to the inhabitants of Donbas. Nevertheless, Rimma Fil is merely one of the journalists who wrote such highly manipulative article about Donetsk people. Nevertheless, it should be noted that during the interview with Yevgeny Yasenov, Izmaylov tries his best to receive a confirmation of 'Donbas exclusiveness'. Yasenov, on the other hand, tries not to be part of or not to reinforce the local myths about Donbas. At the end, Donetsk journalist, Oleg

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[781] Олег Измайлов, "Евгений Ясенов: 'Я Очень Хочу, Чтобы Донецк Был Городом Мира, а Не Столицей Донбасса,'" Live Journal, 2008, accessed June 14, 2019, https://tattarrin.livejournal.com/5554.html.

[782] Миронов, "От Пальмы Мерцалова Далеко Не Падают - II."

[783] Миронов.

Izmaylov had to admit Yasenov's realist view about Donetsk. Yasenov concludes the interview as: "I want Donetsk to be a world city, and not the capital of Donbas. This is my dream."[784]

The Donetsk journalist, Oleg Izmaylov, also asked several Donetsk people including journalists and scientists if they consider Donetsk (Donbas) a special place. Igor Farmazyan, one of the Donetsk journalists who answered Izmaylov's question, said: "With Ukraine's independence, Donetsk (Donbass) did receive the status of a special place. This status was imposed on us, first of all, by Kyiv and Galicia, and then the rest of Ukraine accepted. They began to tell the myths about us and then the creators themselves then willingly believed. In this mythology, the Donbass was the land of 'scared billionaires,' and the land of 'depressed miners,' and the nest of 'domestic separatism,' and, of course, the 'gangster hangout'."[785] Alexander Naumov, a resident of Donetsk answers Izmaylov's question conspicuously:

> Territorially, the Donbass as a partial autonomy should be part of the Russian Federation.Even for historian Orest Subtelny, the Donbas was not a part of the history of Ukraine. I would advise the New Nazi-Ukrainian 'historians' to reflect on this in their attempts to create a common national idea. There will never be a revolution here, because people are used to thinking in terms of money and family, and not the ethnic community. Therefore, yes, I consider Donbass a special place.[786]

Alexander Chalenko, a journalist who left Donetsk and worked in Kyiv before immigrating to Russia, also responds Izmaylov's question in a very radical way. In this context, Chalenko responds as:

> Donetsk is the capital of 'alternative Ukraine', 'another Ukraine', 'Russian Ukraine'... In Donetsk, you need to change everything - first of all, the architectural appearance...It is necessary to sponsor the local culture - writers, artists, philosophers, architects, musicians, and so on. We must create our own mythology, write a story of Donbas.[787]

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[784] Измайлов, "Евгений Ясенов: 'Я Очень Хочу, Чтобы Донецк Был Городом Мира, а Не Столицей Донбасса.'"

[785] Олег Измайлов, "За Родину! За Сталино! Дончане Говорят о Донецке," Live Journal, 2008, accessed June 14, 2019, https://tattarrin.livejournal.com/3730.html#comments.

[786] Измайлов.

[787] Измайлов.

These are among the other respondents of Oleg Izmaylov's question: 'Do they consider Donetsk (Donbas) a special place? And if so, why?' After evaluating the respondents' comments, Izmaylov came up with the conclusion of Donbas's exclusiveness. He emphasizes that respondents "confirmed the reputation of Donbas people, as people accustomed to think critically and somewhere even with healthy European skepticism. Probably, after all, the mining and industrial culture, in the midst of which we all grew up, has a peculiar influence."[788] To show how regional media contribute to the polarization of Ukrainians, Pakhomenko and Podybaylo present some quotes from local newspapers:

> The nationalist propaganda very well prints in Galitchina residents' mentality, which hates half-carved hints, in the mentality which sees things black and white: the friends are all here and the enemies are all there. It is They who is to blame for our poor living standards. Eliminate them! And your life will become better.' 'Galitchina residents direct their energy towards 'national upbringing' of the Ukrainians. They want to see Ukraine as 'a big Galitsia'. They convince others that hate for the Muscovites and for the Russians is the distinctive feature of 'the truly Ukrainian citizen'. They explain to 'the eastern pseudo-Ukrainians' that they are also Ukrainian, spoilt by Russification.[789]

In order to understand historical identity of the West and East Ukrainians, Viktoria Sereda analyses two local news newspapers: *Vysokyi Zamok* and *Donetskiie Novosti*. Sereda investigates articles *Vysokyi Zamok* and *Donetskiie Novosti* published during the period of 1994-2004 focusing on following notions: holidays, personalities, main periods and events and the image of Other.[790] In her research, Sereda finds out huge gap between L'viv and Donetsk people and claims that this difference is unlikely to be closed in the near future. For instance, the newspaper interpreted Soviet holidays from two opposed perspective. The articles published in *Donetskiie Novosti* mostly praised the Victory Day while publications of *Vysokyi Zamok* proclaimed the Victory Day as day of Soviet occupation. One of the articles of *Vysokyi Zamok* comments about the Victory Day as:

> For twenty years, from 1945 to 1965, during Stalin's and Khrushchov's rule 9 May was an average working day. It was not by chance. There was nothing to

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[788] Измайлов.

[789] Pakhomenko and Podybaylo, "'Ukrainian Nationalism' Vs 'Patriotism of Donbas': The Withstand of The Media Images in the Contemporary Information Space of Donetsk District.", 4-5.

[790] Viktoria Sereda, "Regional Historical Identities and Memory Since," *Україна Модерна* 12, no. 2 (2007), June 14, 2019, http://uamoderna.com/arkhiv/47-122.

celebrate. The USSR was heavily defeated and doomed to ruination. Victory Day should be proclaimed a mourning day in memory of the victims of the bloodiest war in a history.[791]

In this context, *Donetskiie Novosti* published articles focusing on the veterans' memories describing the horrors of Nazis while *Vysokyi Zamok* published articles titled 'Liberators or occupiers?', 'I remember not fights in L'viv, but screams of nuns'.[792] Thus, Sereda's research also shows us how regional media reproduce the discourse about historical identity of two regions of Ukraine.

Apart from regional level, it is also interesting how the discourses about Donbas presented at the national level. In this regard, Yulia Abibok compares articles from three newspapers written in 2010, after the presidential election in Ukraine. Abibok elaborates articles from Ukrayinska Pravda, Obkom and Zerkalo Nedeli and claims that for all of these newspapers, Donbas people have a special definition. For instance, 'donetskiye' for Ukrayinska Pravda means people who are pro-Russian or anti-Ukrainian. Some of correspondents from Zerkalo Nedeli agree with these definitions. However, for Obkom journalists, 'donetskiye' means people who involved in criminal affairs and have mafia style behavior and habits.[793]

In general, Donbas regional media adopted myths and stereotypes about Donbas. Abibok claims that there are Soviet ('hard-working people', 'positive exclusiveness of Donbas identity', 'feeding the entire Ukraine') and modern (mafia or bandit-style) stereotypes connected to Donbas people and local media goes along with these. The website *Obkom* clarified the frequently used words in order to describe Donbas people. Those words are: 'super suit-Adidas', 'brazing torch', 'yoot', 'gang', 'dons', 'thug', 'tough guy". The Obkom also drew attention to the Yanukovych's criminal past by referring Donbas characteristic.[794]

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[791] Viktoria Sereda, "Regional Historical Identities and Memory Since," *Україна Модерна* 12, no. 2 (2007), 72, accessed June 16, 2019, http://uamoderna.com/arkhiv/47-122.

[792] Sereda, "Regional Historical Identities and Memory Since,", 73.

[793] Abibok, "The Construction of Donbas Regional Identity in Political and Media Discourses: Implications of the Conflict.", 70.

[794] Abibok., 71.

In their articles, journalists from Ukrayinska Pravda mainly focused on the pro-Russian elites and the division of Ukraine as West and East. The correspondents point out that the elites from both sides deliberately contribute further polarization of the regions. An article from Zerkalo Nedeli newspaper directly remarks the characteristics of Donbas inhabitants by pointing Yanukovych. The article states:

> Yanukovych is not afraid of violent motions because they are natural for him. People of this temper, men descending from this region do not engage in self-reflection. Many of them have behind them a rough and fairly specific experience of a primitive capital accumulation.[795]

Paraphrasing Yulia Abibok, it can be said that not only regional media promoted 'Donbas exclusiveness' but also national media contributed it along with the politicians and other elites. Donbas regional media adopted myths and stereotypes about Donbas and reproduced them. Abibok claims that there are Soviet ('hard-working people', 'positive exclusiveness of Donbas identity', 'feeding the entire Ukraine') and modern (mafia or bandit-style) stereotypes connected to Donbas people and local media goes along with these.[796]

To conclude, it is clear that the information war about Donbas existed in Ukraine before the Donbas conflict erupted. Since the independence of Ukraine, politicians and elites along with local and national media reinforced the myths related Donbas people and Donbas region itself. All these efforts contributed in formation of Donbas exclusiveness. Analyses of pre-Donbas conflict discourses in Ukraine shows us that Information War about Donbas based mainly on the comparison of the West and the East of Ukraine existed before 2014.

In other word, the information war before the conflict began in Donbas was taking place within Ukraine and thereby contributing in polarization of two regions which was also reproducing the myths about Donbas exclusiveness. In this sense, both national and local media played 'quite well' to strength or accelerate the isolation of Donbas people from rest of the Ukraine. On one side, local media of Donbas region used terms such as 'fascists' who force Ukrainization policy in Donbas. On the other side, media in the West of Ukraine described the Donbas as 'bandits', 'mafia' or

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[795] Abibok., 72.

[796] Abibok., 74.

'Moscow puppets'. After all, both sides did nothing but reciprocatively contribute to the region's isolation. As this research argues, domestic factors constructed conditions which are exploited by Russian media during and after the Euromaidan period.

The next section explores the information war that began with the start of the war in the Donbas region. The main difference between these two periods in terms of information war is in the latter one, the war does not occur between the West and the East of Ukrainians. In contrast, the information war took place between Russia and Ukraine in the post-2014 period. Here, Russia acts more aggressively, while Ukraine tries to respond to these attacks.

6.4.2 Russia's Information War against Ukraine

According to Vedomosti newspaper, Vladimir Putin signed a decree awarding orders and medals to a large group of employees of the Russian media. For Vedomosti, Decree No. 269 "On awarding state awards of the Russian Federation", was signed on April 22, but was not publicly announced. According to the decree, media workers were awarded "for high professionalism and objectivity in covering events in the Republic of Crimea," a person who saw this document told Vedomosti. According to him, more than 300 people were awarded, including about 90 correspondents. The scale of the awards is unprecedented, the official says. For example, even after the events of 2008 in South Ossetia, President Dmitry Medvedev awarded only 11 journalists.[797]

In fact, media farming matters a lot in terms of directing the readers and shaping the mindsets of people. In this sense, the importance of the media has increased even more in digital age. According to Tankard et al. media frame can be described as: "the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and

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[797] Ксения Камышев, Дмитрий Болецкая, "За Взятие Крыма," *Ведомости*, 2014, accessed June 16, 2019, https://www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/articles/2014/05/05/za-vzyatie-kryma.

elaboration."[798] Media, which has the power to influence communities and soldiers in wars, emerged as one of the most devastating weapons in Donbas conflict too. For, Ulrik Franke, "information warfare is about achieving goals, e.g. annexing another country, by replacing military force and bloodshed with cleverly crafted and credibly supported messages to win over the minds of the belligerents."[799] According to Chief of the Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, General Valery Gerasimov describes the information warfare as: "Informational confrontation opens up broad asymmetric possibilities for reducing the enemy's combat potential."[800]

As mentioned in previous section, an informational war existed in Ukraine before the conflict erupted in Donbas. Historical myths about Donbas and the Western Ukrainians reproduced and even the polarization between these two camps was deepened particularly presidential elections by politicians, elites and local and national media. In this sense, Russian media adopted and reinforced the narratives about the West and the East of Ukraine which already existed in Ukraine. Olexandr Osipian summarizes the arguments which Russian mass media used to describe the situation in Ukraine after Euromaidan as:

> Since 'neo-Nazis' and 'Russophobes' had seized power in Kyiv, the rights and indeed the lives of Russians in Ukraine were now under threat, and since Ukrainian statehood had ceased to exist, the Russian state and Russian people (both individually and collectively) must do everything possible to defend ethnic Russians, Russian-speakers and 'compatriots', defined in the broadest possible terms, from Ukrainian 'neo-Nazis' ('banderites', 'Right Sector').[801]

Russian media emphasizes a number of different myths and narratives that are mostly related to the Second World War, the Ukrainian nationalists of the 1940s, particularly Stepan Bandera. On the contrary, they magnify the images of Soviet

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[798] Nataliya Roman, Wayne Wanta, and Iuliia Buniak, "Information Wars: Eastern Ukraine Military Conflict Coverage in the Russian, Ukrainian and U.S. Newscasts," *International Communication Gazette* 79, no. 4 (2017): 2-3.

[799] Vladimir Sazonov and Kristiina Müür, "Russian Information Warfare against Ukraine I: Online News and Social Media Analysis," in *Russian Information Campaign against the Ukrainian State and Defence Forces*, ed. Vladimir Sazonov, Kristiina Müür, and Holger Mölder (NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, 2016), 67.

[800] Валерий, "Ценность Науки в Предвидении Новые Вызовы Требуют Переосмыслить Формы и Способы Ведения Боевых Действий."

[801] Olexandr Osipian, "Historical Myths, Enemy Images and Regional Identity in the Donbass Insurgency (Spring 2014)," in *Russian Media and the War in Ukraine*, ed. Julie Fedor (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2015), 113.

period as the 'glorious' years. It should be noted that such propaganda became very common in the Russian media since Vladimir Putin came to power. Russian media aimed particularly to disparage the Kyiv authorities after the ousting of Yanukovych and presented them as illegal, corrupt, and fascist junta.[802] Besides, The Ukrainian military forces and its volunteer troops are "often compared to Einsatztruppen (executions squads), Nazis, killers, terrorists, bandits, and servants of the Kyiv junta. Ukraine is portrayed as a failed state, or a puppet of NATO and Western countries."[803] Terms related to World War II constantly were produced by Russian media. In order to humiliate Ukrainians, they used terms such as Maidanjugend, which is a reformulation of the Hitlerjugend.[804]

In fact, Russian media goes hand in hand with the discourses of the Russian authorities. For example, Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov called the Euromaidan demonstrators as Nazis. For Lavrov, they were Nazis who was marching in Kyiv as well as other Ukrainian cities.[805] Moreover, President Putin define the Ukrainian military operation in Donbas as: "Sadly, this reminds me of the events of the Second World War, when the fascist German troops surrounded our cities, in particular Leningrad, and fired directly on the settlements and their inhabitants." [806] Apart from calling the Euromaidan demonstrators 'fascists', the mainstream Russian media links the Ukrainian Crisis with the external threats. Russian media calls both the USA and the EU as aggressors and fascists. Additionally, Russian media has used the Orthodox Church as a part of information campaigns against Ukraine. Articles about how Ukrainian army looting churches, killing priests, and civilians

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[802] "Пропаганда Кремля. Росія Загострює Зловживання Інформацією," *Радіо Свобода*, 2016, accessed August 11, 2019, https://ua.krymr.com/a/27901740.html.

[803] Sazonov and Müür, "Russian Information Warfare against Ukraine I: Online News and Social Media Analysis.", 69.

[804] "Людей Заставляют Врать, Что Их Бомбили Ополченцы," *Комсомольская Правда*, 2014, accessed June 17, 2019, https://www.kompravda.eu/daily/26278.4/3155601/.

[805] H. Reisinger and A. Golts, "Russia's Hybrid Warfare: Waging War below the Radar of Traditional Collective Defence," *Reseach Paper*, no. 105 (2014), 5.

[806] "Всероссийский Молодёжный Форум «Селигер-2014»," Kremlin.ru, 2014, accessed June 17, 2019, http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46507.

appeared in Russian media.[807] Moreover, the Ukrainian government is depicted as Satanists or servants of evil.[808]

As a matter of fact, Russian leadership is well aware of the power of mass media. In this regard, Foreign Policy Concept of 2013 emphasized the significance of information war. Kremlin declared that it must "create instruments for influencing how it is perceived in the world, develop its own effective means of information influence on public opinion abroad and counteract information threats to its sovereignty and security."[809] In order to convey its perspective to other countries, Russian government heavily supports media resources.

Yevhen Fedchenko, Director of the Mohyla School of Journalism in Kyiv, describes Russia's view on information war:

> For the Kremlin, propaganda has become an integral part of information warfare. Throughout the past decade the Russian propaganda machine has been structured and effectively implemented, reaching a climax during the occupation of Crimea and the subsequent devastating war in Eastern Ukraine. It started in 2005 with the creation of Russia Today (subsequently RT) and every year more 'media' outlets are added to this global network. According to Sputnik International, "Sputnik points the way to a multipolar world that respects every country's national interests, culture, history and traditions" ...In reality, their aim is to influence global public opinion, distort reality and act as a mouthpiece for the Kremlin.[810]

In order to weaken Ukrainian influence, first, all the Ukrainian TV channels were stopped in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea on March 9, 2014. Instead, Russian TV channels began broadcasting in the peninsula. The inhabitants of Crimea were allowed to watch programs of the *First Channel, Russia 24, NTV, TNT, STS* and

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[807] Анастасия Новикова, "Украинские Националисты Планируют Карательную Акцию Против Священников," *Комсомольская Правда*, 2014, accessed June 17, 2019, https://www.kompravda.eu/daily/26294/3172487/.

[808] Николай Варсегов, "В души украинских правителей вселился дьявол," *Комсомольская Правда*, 2014, accessed June 17, 2019, https://www.kompravda.eu/daily/26283/3161165/

[809] Stephen Hutchings and Joanna Szostek, "Dominant Narratives in Russian Political and Media Discourse During The Ukraine Crisis," in *Ukraine and Russia: People, Politics, Propaganda and Perspectives*, ed. Agnieszka Pikulicka-Wilczewska and Richard Sakwa (Bristol: E-International Relations Publishing, 2015), 184.

[810] Yevhen Fedchenko, "Debunking Lies and Stopping Fakes: Lessons from the Frontline," Stop Fake, 2016, accessed June 18, 2019, https://www.stopfake.org/en/debunking-lies-and-stopping-fakes-lessons-from-the-frontline-2/.

Russia 1 along with local channels.[811] Following the annexation of Crimea in conjunction with the Euromaidan events, Donbas became prime target of Russian media. In this case, one of the first acts of Militants in Donbas was to restore the broadcast of Russian TV channels.[812]

Kristiina Müür et al. analyze the publications of Komsomolskaya Pravda, Regnum, and TV Zvezda, online news channels, to reveal how they contribute to Russian information campaign in construction of negative image of Ukraine. As mentioned in following chapter of this thesis, Moscow officials reject the claims that Russia is a party in the Donbass war. In this sense, Komsomolskaya Pravda refers to the Donbas crisis as a local insurgence against post-Euromaidan Ukrainian government. On the other hand, Regnum, and TV Zvezda treat the conflict with geopolitical references. The news channels frequently refereed the USA, NATO, the West, Ukraine and Russia regarding to Donbas conflict.[813]

The study of Kristiina Müür et al. also presents which groups in Ukraine were the main target of Komsomolskaya Pravda, Regnum, and TV Zvezda. According to the research, Regnum, and TV Zvezda focus on Ukrainian government by comparing them with Nazis. Komsomolskaya Pravda, on the other hand, not only associate Ukrainian government with Nazis but also Ukrainian armed forces. The newspaper frequently emphasized violence and terror of Ukrainian government against its people. Furthermore, Ukrainian government was accused of conducting a genocide Russian-speaking population.[814] The journalists of Komsomolskaya Pravda depicted Ukrainian soldiers and volunteers who rape women and kill children as well as drug addicts, criminals, robbers, cowards and alcoholics. Moreover, they often portrayed Ukrainian forces as homosexuals or incapable of fighting. In contrast, the newspaper gushes over Igor Girkin and Alexander Zakharchenko, leaders of the self-proclaimed

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[811] "В Крыму Начали Вещание Российские Телеканалы," *TASS*, 2014, accessed June 18, 2019, https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1033291.

[812] Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands*, 150.

[813] Sazonov and Müür, "Russian Information Warfare against Ukraine I: Online News and Social Media Analysis.", 73-74.

[814] Vladimir Sazonov, 82-83.

People's Republic of Donetsk and Luhansk. They are portraited as heroes fighting against 'fascists Ukrainian forces'.[815]

Picture 10. Stop Fascism! Everybody to Referendum!
Source: The Guardian, accessed June 25, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/17/crimea-crisis-russia-propaganda-media

Sputnik is another influential news agency which contribute Russia's information war against Ukraine. Just like *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Sputnik* also aims to discredit Ukrainian soldiers and calls them neo-Nazis in its publications. For example, some of the headlines of *Sputnik* newspaper are as follows: 'Drunk Ukrainian Soldier Shot His Colleagues in Donbas',[816] 'Ukrainian Soldiers Who Refused to Fight Killed Their Commanders',[817] 'Neo-Nazi Right Sector Connects to the Ukrainian Army',[818] 'The Neo-Nazi Azov Battalion Now Gives the Children a Gun'.[819] As can be seen in the

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[815] Vladimir Sazonov, 95-86.

[816] "Sarhoş Ukrayna Askeri, Donbass'ta Görev Arkadaşlarını Vurdu," *Sputnik*, 2019, accessed June 25, 2019, https://tr.sputniknews.com/avrupa/201906141039368676-sarhos-ukrayna-askeri-donbassta-gorev-arkadaslarini-vurdu/.

[817] "Savaşmayı Reddeden Ukraynalı Askerler Komutanlarını Öldürdü," *Sputnik*, 2019, accessed June 25, 2019, https://tr.sputniknews.com/avrupa/201905121039026643-savasmayi-reddeden-ukraynali-askerler-komutanlarini-oldurdu/.

[818] "Neo-Nazi Sağ Sektör, Ukrayna Ordusuna Bağlanıyor," *Sputnik*, 2015, accessed June 25, 2019, https://tr.sputniknews.com/avrupa/201504031014805556/.

[819] "Neo-Nazi Azov Taburu Şimdi de Çocukların Eline Silah Verdi," *Sputnik*, 2015, accessed June 25, 2019, https://tr.sputniknews.com/foto/201508141017147744/.

headlines, *Sputnik* not only relates Ukrainian soldiers with fascists or Nazis but also emphasizes how the Kyiv officials uses children as soldiers in Donbas war. Moreover, the newspaper belittles the Ukrainian army by pointing out that Ukrainian soldiers are drunk and killing each other.

Along with *Sputnik*, *Russia Today* is another tool of Russian Federation to use as a propaganda means against Ukraine. *Russia Today* frequently matches Ukrainian army with Nazis. Similar to the news of *Sputnik* the publications of *Russia Today* also refers Ukrainian soldiers or Euromaidan supporters as fascists and a simple puppet of the West. In its articles, the newspaper also emphasizes the failure of Euromaidan event. Particularly during the anniversaries of Euromaidan event, *Russia Today* draws attention to widespread corruption in Ukraine. In this regard, one of its news headlines appeared as: 'Four years after 'Euromaidan,' Corruption is Still King in Ukraine.'[820]

As it can be seen, Russia depicts itself as struggler against 'fascist' or 'junta' regime in Ukraine and thereby positions itself as a true defender of 'Western values' or 'liberator of Europe'. because Russian media coverage not only named the Euromaidan as 'fascist' movement but also it frequently connected it with the 'Great Patriotic War'. In general, 'fascism' was a common term for Russian media to describe Euromaidan movement. Another term was 'karateli' which Russian media frequently referred to describe Ukrainian forces. 'Karateli' is a term used for describing Nazis atrocities against civilians. This is another way of Russian media to refer Ukrainian army. In contrast, the Russian mass media praises pro-Russian militants in Donbas by using the term 'militia' which is preferred by the insurgents as well.[821]

Apart from mainstream news channels, Russia also use social media as an effective tool for perception management. The most influential social networks to be used in

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[820] "Four Years after 'Euromaidan,' Corruption Is Still King in Ukraine," *Russia Today*, 2018, accessed June 25, 2019, https://www.rt.com/op-ed/419603-ukraine-maidan-poroshenko-eu/.

[821] Elizaveta Gaufman, "Memory, Media, and Securitization: Russian Media Framing of the Ukrainian Crisis," in *Russian Media and the War in Ukraine*, ed. Julie Fedor (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2015), 151-154.

order to shape the public opinion in Russia are: *Live Journal*, *VKontakte, Twitter* and *Facebook*. These are social networks which are used by people to share their stories, exchange ideas etc. Therefore, it should be clarified how people can contribute Russia's information war against Ukraine. In fact, spreading news in digital world is faster than ever. However, not always people decide what to share in social networks. In today's world, the 'trolls' mostly perform this task. Generally, troll is a person who raises a certain event on social media and directs it to a certain request.[822]

Picture 11. "Make Your Choice"
Source: "Референдумы в ЛДНР: Как уплывал Донбасс," Корреспондент.net, 2016, accessed August 30, 2019, https://korrespondent.net/ukraine/3681653-referendumy-v-ldnr-kak-uplyval-donbass

Describing trolling as: "posting of incendiary comments with the intent of provoking others into conflict"[823] is common among scholars. However, it is not easy to distinguish a troll from ordinary social network users because the abovementioned definition can fit any internet user. According to Robert Szwed, the most distinctive characteristics of trolls are that "these are people acting to order, obtaining remuneration for work done, which, in the case of organized trolling, is posting

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[822] Claire Hardaker, "Trolling in Asynchronous Computer-Mediated Communication: From User Discussions to Academic Definitions," *Journal of Politeness Research* 6, no. 2 (2010), 224.

[823] Hardaker, "Trolling in Asynchronous Computer-Mediated Communication: From User Discussions to Academic Definitions,".

messages and comments portraying certain people and events in a particular light, using selected, modified facts in, to them, suitable contexts."[824]

Szwed separates trolls activities into three phases: luring, taking the bait and hauling in. In the first stage, the troll makes a controversial comment in order to draw the audience's attention. In the second stage, a person is anticipated to response the first comment which is mostly done by another troll. At the last stage, the trolls distort the content of the article and thus the first post, commenting on individual statements, which makes the discussion antagonistic.[825] These are the general characteristics of trolls and their working methods.

Although it is hard to detect who involve in trolling activity who is not, there are strong arguments that Russia uses trolls to manage public perception. According to Alexandra Garmazhapova, a correspondent of *Novaya Gazeta*, internet trolls are operating in specially equipped offices in St. Petersburg and Moscow, who praise Vladimir Putin and discredit certain leaders or their counters.[826] For Garmazhapova, following announcement appeared in social networks in late August 2013:

> Internet operators are required! Work in a luxurious office in OLGINO!!!! (m. Old Village), payment 25 960 per month. Task: posting comments on specialized Internet sites, writing thematic posts, blogs, social networks. Screenshots reports. Work schedule is selected individually < ... >. Payment is weekly, 1180 per shift (from 8.00 to 16.00, from 10.30 to 18.30, from 14.00 to 22.00). PAYMENTS WEEKLY AND FREE FOOD!!! Employment official or under the contract (at will). Learning is possible!"[827]

Viktor Rezunkov, a correspondent of Radio Liberty, explains where Kremlin trolls are sitting and what they are doing. For Rezunkov, in St. Petersburg, in the village of Olgina, and also in the city itself, on Savushkin's street, there is a mysterious organization in the building number 55, which is officially called the Internet

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[824] Robert Szwed, "Framing of the Ukraine-Russia Conflict in Online and Social Media," *NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence*, 2016, 55.

[825] Szwed, "Framing of the Ukraine-Russia Conflict in Online and Social Media," 56-57.

[826] Александра Гармажапова, "Где Живут Тролли. Как Работают Интернет-Провокаторы в Санкт-Петербурге и Кто Ими Заправляет," *Новая Газета*, 2013, accessed June 26, 2019, https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2013/09/09/56265-gde-zhivut-trolli-kak-rabotayut-internet-provokatory-v-sankt-peterburge-i-kto-imi-zapravlyaet.

[827] Гармажапова.

Research Limited Company, and is unofficially nicknamed by its employees, the so-called 'Kremlin trolls', 'the Ministry of Truth'.[828]

In the 'Trust Ministry', there are about 400 people who write in social networks such as 'Live Journal' or 'VKontakte' to create a positive image of Vladimir Putin or other Russian officials and discredit Ukraine, USA, European Union and the Russian opposition.[829] The Kremlin Trolls became overwhelmingly active in July-August 2014. Hashtags such as '#fascism', '#novorossiia', '#junta' or '#SaveDonbassFromUkrainianArmy' were used the most in the context of the crisis in Ukraine. Disinformation was widespread in social networks particularly in 2014-2015. For example, in May 2014, a photo allegedly from Donbas portraying a crying girl sitting in front of 'her murdered mother' was popular in Twitter and VKontakte. In fact, the photo was stolen from a movie titled The Brest Fortress, co-produced by Belarus and Russia in 2010.[830]

When pro-Russian activists died in a fire at the Trade Unions House in Odessa Igor Rozovskiy who claimed to be doctor, posted on Facebook that Ukrainian nationalist groups disallow him to help the wounded people. Rozovskiy's posted shared on Facebook more than two thousand times on Facebook and also was translated into different languages. However, the Facebook account belong to Igor Rozovskiy was created just before the post was shared. Such fake accounts were prevalence during 2014-2015 due to the escalation of the war. It is clear that the mobility of troll accounts changes according to the course of the war. Therefore, Russian trolls published most of their tweets in 2014-2015.[831]

The record of 900 thousand tweets in the second quarter of 2014 coincided with the escalation of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Russian trolls were particularly active during the disaster of the Malaysian Airlines Boeing-777, which performed the MH17 flight from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur. The flight was shot down on July

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[828] Віктор Рєзунков, "«Кремлівські Тролі» Розповіли Про Себе: Де Сидять і Чим Займаються," *Радіо Свобода*, 2015, accessed June 26, 2019, https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/26903778.html.

[829] Рєзунков.

[830] Ulises A. Mejias and Nikolai E. Vokuev, "Disinformation and the Media: The Case of Russia and Ukraine," *Media, Culture and Society* 39, no. 7 (2017) 7.

[831] Mejias and Vokuev, "Disinformation and the Media: The Case of Russia and Ukraine,".

17, 2014 in Donbas. On board there were 298 people, all of them died. According to a study by the Dutch magazine *De Groene Amsterdammer* after the analysis of nine million tweets posted by employees of St. Petersburg 'troll factory', which is officially called 'Internet Research Agency', two days after the MH17 flight was shot down, the Russian 'troll factory' has published more than 65 thousand tweets accusing Ukraine due to the catastrophe.[832]

Picture 12. A Photograph Used by Russian Trolls as A Propaganda Tool
Source: Eric Zuesse, "Ukraine government admits to targeting civilians in Donbass region," accessed June 26, 2019, https://www.sott.net/article/292240-Ukraine-government-admits-to-targeting-civilians-in-Donbass-region

The study shows that right after the crash, troll factory published 40,931 tweets using hashtags such as #KyivSibilBoying, #KyivProvokatsiya and #KyivKkazhiPravdu. Most of the posts were in Russian. According to the magazine, the campaign lasted less than 24 hours.[833]

Euromaidan Press divides the tactics of Russia's information war into two camps: Raising the morale of Russians and demoralizing Russia's opponents.[834] In first case,

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[832] "Катастрофа MH17 На Донбасі: Сплив Гучний Доказ Провини Росії," *Obozrevatel*, May 2019, accessed June 26, 2019, https://www.obozrevatel.com/ukr/crime/katastrofa-mn17-na-donbasi-spliv-guchnij-dokaz-provini-rosii.htm.

[833] "Катастрофа MH17 На Донбасі: Сплив Гучний Доказ Провини Росії."

[834] "A Guide to Russian Propaganda. Part 4: Russian Propaganda Operates by Law of War," *Euromaidan Press*, 2017, accessed August 12, 2019, http://euromaidanpress.com/2017/12/15/a-guide-to-russian-propaganda-part-4-russian-propaganda-operates-by-law-of-war/.

pro-Kremlin mass media and the 'troll factory' emphasize the strength of Russian army while ridiculing the enemy. For example, on one hand, they were emphasizing the superiority of Russian army or Russia's role in security of Ukraine to show the capacity of Russian army and its protective role of Ukraine's sovereignity. On the other hand, they were publishing news about weakness of Ukrainian army or incapability of Ukraine as an independent country to discredit Ukraine. In second case, Russian information tools aim to convince the 'enemy' that it is doomed to fail. Publications with headlines showing some crisis in the relations between Ukraine and the EU or the failure of Eastern Partnership program for Ukraine are the examples of the latter case.[835]

To conclude, it can be said that 'information war' is one of the elements of the hybrid war which Russia conducts against Ukraine. Kremlin backed Russian mass media plays critical role in information war. News channels and newspapers such as *Sputnik, Russia Today*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda, Russia 24, or Russia 1* are among the other media power of Russia. Besides, Moscow also uses social networks effectively in order to manage public perception or to discredit other countries. Russia began to use its 'troll army' particularly after Euromaidan event to justify both its annexation of Crimea and involvement in Donbas though Moscow officially denies its intervention in the war. The next section discusses the measures Ukraine has taken against Russia's information war.

6.4.3. How Ukraine Deals with Russia's Information Campaign

Along with the military war in Donbas Ukraine faces an 'information war' conducting by Kremlin. In order to resist disinformation, some institutions were developed in Ukraine in 2014. These institutions can be divided into two parts: Government moves and citizens' initiatives. Although initially they were passive, Ukrainian officials gradually started to hold press conferences and briefings in order to resist Kremlin propaganda against Ukraine.

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[835] "A Guide to Russian Propaganda. Part 4: Russian Propaganda Operates by Law of War," *Euromaidan Press*, 2017, accessed June 26, 2019, http://euromaidanpress.com/2017/12/15/a-guide-to-russian-propaganda-part-4-russian-propaganda-operates-by-law-of-war/.

In this regard, Ukrainian government decided to establish a specific ministry to fight against Russian propaganda. The Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine was created on December 2, 2014. The main task of the ministry is to repulse information war against Ukraine through working with journalists, carrying out social campaigns and increasing the level of people's media literacy.[836] The initiatives of the government were approved by Ukrainian parliament as well. As a result, Ukraine blocked 77 of 82 Russian television channels from its cable networks. In early 2014, before the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas started, 82 Russian TV channels were broadcasting on cable TV networks in Ukraine. However, 77 of these channels were banned either by the decision of courts or by the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council by September 2014. Channel One, Russia-24, RTR-Planeta, NTV, Russia-1, NTV World, TNT, REN TV and Zvezda were the among other channels which were banned first. They were accused for propagating war and spreading inter-ethnic hatred.[837]

Additionally, most of Russian produced movies and TV series are also banned in Ukraine. It can be said that just before the war in Donbas started, Ukranian channels were 'occupied' by Russian movies, TV shows or TV series glorifying Russian law-enforcement agencies. Some of them were: 'Ulitsy Razbityh Fonarey' (Streets of Broken Lapms), 'Glukhar' (Cold Case), 'Uboynaya Sila' (Destructive Force), 'Grazdhanin Nachalnik' (The Chief), and 'Agent Natsionalniy Bezopasnosti' (National Security Agent).[838] According to a research conducted by *Media Research Management* (MRM) company, the share of Russian television shows in Ukrainian broadcasts was 68 percent in 2014. In order to overcome this situation, Ukrainian officials began to implement restrictions against Russian TV products in Ukraine.[839]

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[836] Vitaliy Moroz, "David Agaisnt Goliath: How Ukraine Resist Kremlin's Information Attacks," in *Words and Wars: Ukraine Facing Kremlin Propaganda*, ed. Volodymyr Yermolenko (Kyiv: internews-ukraine, 2017). 53-55

[837] Vitaliy Moroz, "David Agaisnt Goliath: How Ukraine Resist Kremlin's Information Attacks,".

[838] Moroz, 56.

[839] Лілія Молодецька, "Этот Проблемный Цех Украинских Сценаристов," *Detector Media*, 2017, accessed June 27, 2019, https://detector.media/production/article/127026/2017-06-16-jetot-problemnyi-tsekh-ukrainskikh-stsenaristov/.

At the beginning of 2015, a law was adopted "On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine Concerning the Protection of Information Tele-Radio Space of Ukraine". He effectively banned to broadcast all cinema and television products produced in Russia after January 2014 in Ukraine. In addition, it also became impossible to show previously shot films and serials if they popularize the 'aggressor country' or if they were shot by people representing 'a threat to national security'.[840] The Study of MRM shows that the share of Russian television shows in Ukrainian broadcasts fell from 68% to 33% in two years (16245 hours in 2014, 12623 hours in 2015, 10437 hours in 2016), while the share Ukrainian TV productions increased from 7% to 39%.[841]

Along with the Russian channels as well as Russian TV shows, Ukraine also banned printed materials which were anti-Ukrainian or pro-separatist content. It should be noted that 60% of the shelves of the bookshops were filled up by the printed materials produced in Russian Federation before 2017.[842] In fact, not only those who justified the annexation of Crimea by Russia and supported the militants in Donbas war, but even the books of many writers who argued that 'Ukraine is not even a state' and should be a part of Russian Federation were possible to come across in Ukraine. Sergei Lukyanenko and Zakhar Prilepin were among those writers who glorified 'resistance of militants' in Donbas and discredited Euromaidan events or Kyiv officials who came to power following the ousting of Yanukovych.[843]

At the end of 2016, the President Petro Poroshenko signed Law No. 5114, prohibiting the import of anti-state books to Ukraine . Earlier, by a vote of 237

[840] "В Эфире Все Больше Украинского KVG Research Обнародовала Данные о Производителях Сериалов Для Отечественного ТВ," *RBC*, 2018, accessed June 27, 2019, https://www.rbc.ru/newspaper/2018/03/15/5aa7beb89a7947428ef235ce.

[841] Лілія Зінченко-Апостолова, "Українські Телепродюсери – Про Те, Чому Серіали На Телебаченні Поступилися Телешоу," *Detector Media*, 2017, accessed June 27, 2019, https://detector.media/production/article/126556/2017-06-01-ukrainski-teleprodyuseri-pro-te-chomu-seriali-na-telebachenni-postupilisya-teleshou/.

[842] Лілія Гришко, "До Чого Призвела Заборона На Ввезення в Україну Російських Книг," *Deutsche Welle*, 2017, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.dw.com/uk/до-чого-призвела-заборона-на-ввезення-в-україну-російських-книг/a-39579772.

[843] Юрий Годован and Дарья Ваховская, "Без Печатной Пропаганды: Как Сегодня Действует Запрет На Ввоз Антиукраинской Литературы," *112.UA*, 2017, accessed August 12, 2019, https://112.ua/statji/bez-pechatnoy-propagandy-kak-segodnya-deystvuet-zapret-na-vvoz-antiukrainskoy-literatury-374520.html.

deputies, the document was supported by the Verkhovna Rada.[844] Then deputies voted that the publishing products from the Russian Federation could be imported into the customs territory of Ukraine only subject to the availability of a special permit. Without permission, only 10 copies of Russian literature in hand luggage or luggage can be transported. This law came into force from January 2017. Thus, Kyiv officials are trying to restrict the spread of Russian propaganda through printed materials in Ukraine.[845]

Besides, social networks such as *Odnoklassniki*, *Vkontakte*, Russian search engine *Yandex* and e-mail service Mail.ru were banned in Ukraine. Since May 2017, internet providers in Ukraine were obliged to block these sites due to fine between 1700-3400 UAH. The reason behind the banning Russian sites were their pro-Russian activities and promoting inter-ethnic hatred. The sanctions were aimed to prevent personal data of Ukrainians not to be acquired by Russia's Federal Security Service.[846]

According to the head of the programs of new media Internews-Ukraine, Vitaliy Moroz, there were two reasons behind blocking Russian social networks in Ukraine. The first one was to contribute economic sanctions through reducing social network income of Russia. The second one was to counter Russian information war against Ukraine as well as to protect the personal data of Ukrainian users on those networks.[847] Lyubov Bagatskaya, an expert on social networks, claimed that blocking Russian social networks had dramatic results within a year. Bagatskaya argued that comparing April 2017 and April 2018, one year after the ban, the use of Russian social networks in Ukraine decreased. For her, social network 'VKontakte' moved from second places to fourth while Facebook rose from seventh to third places.

[844] Юрий Годован and Дарья Ваховская, "Без Печатной Пропаганды: Как Сегодня Действует Запрет На Ввоз Антиукраинской Литературы,".

[845] Лілія Гришко, "До Чого Призвела Заборона На Ввезення в Україну Російських Книг," *Deutsche Welle*, 2017, accessed June 28, 2019, https://www.dw.com/uk/до-чого-призвела-заборона-на-ввезення-в-україну-російських-книг/a-39579772.

[846] "Інформаційне Повідомлення До Уваги Операторів, Провайдерів Телекомунікацій," Національна Комісія, Що Здійснює Державне Регулювання У Сфері Зв`Язку Та Інформатизації, 2017, accessed June 27, https://nkrzi.gov.ua/index.php?r=site/index&pg=99&id=1237&language=uk.

[847] Тетяна Якубович, "Заборона «ВКонтакте», «Одноклассники», «Яндекс» Та Mail.Ru – Рік По Тому," *Радіо Свобода*, 2018,accessed June 28, 2019, https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/donbass-realii/29233593.html.

Similarly, 'Odnoklassniki' moved from fifth place to eighth while YouTube rose from third to second position.[848]

Picture 13. Some of Banned Books in Ukraine
Source: https://112.ua/statji/bez-pechatnoy-propagandy-kak-segodnya-deystvuet-zapret-na-vvoz-antiukrainskoy-literatury-374520.html, accessed June 28, 2019.

Thanks to the efforts of the Ministry of Information Policy, the US embassy accepted to fund new TV towers in Donbas to counter Russia's information campaign. The TV towers are built in Kramatorsk, Donetsk oblast; in Chonhar, Kherson region and also in Bakhmutivka, Lugansk oblast during 2016 and 2017. The highest television tower was erected (height of 190 meters) in the town of Girnik in the Donetsk oblast. It is announced that this TV tower is the highest one built since the independence of Ukraine. The new tower will cover the territory of the whole region and even the occupied part of the Donetsk region by Ukrainian-language TV and radio channels.[849] Apart from the TV towers, Ministry of Information Policy also blocked access to 20 websites which were sharing anti-Ukraine news. According to the ministry the

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[848] Якубович, "Заборона «ВКонтакте», «Одноклассники», «Яндекс» Та Mail.Ru – Рік По Тому,".

[849] "На Донеччині Звели Найвищу Телевежу За Часи Незалежності України," *Channel 5*, 2018, accessed June 27, 2019, https://www.5.ua/regiony/na-donechchyni-zvely-naivyshchu-televezhu-za-chasy-nezalezhnosti-ukrainy-178553.html.

websites blocked due to their 'separatist' propaganda.[850] However, such activities of the Ministry of Information Policy were criticized by some journalists. For them such attempts restrict freedom of speech in Ukraine.[851]

The Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine also created an internet project called 'Information Troops of Ukraine' in order to mobilize users of social networks to provide reliable information and fight against Russian propaganda. Due to the limited budget of the ministry, the 'Information Troops' were volunteer basis. However, the project of 'Information Troops of Ukraine' which was launched on February 23, 2015 and operated under the Ministry of Information Policies of Ukraine began functioning as an independent project since August 1, 2017. Currently the project continues to reveal the disinformation campaign of Russian Federation about Ukraine.[852]

Another project called OSINT Academy was created to increase the education level of journalists and bloggers about 'information war'. The project was created by a joint initiative of Institute for Post-Information Society, the Ministry of Information Policies and the European Endowment for Democracy. The director of Institute for Post-Information Society, Dmytro Zolotukhin who is also the Deputy Minister of Information Policy of Ukraine has held free training sessions within the framework of the OSINT Academy and posted on YouTube. OSINT Academy posted 20 courses on YouTube on fact-checking and information search.[853]

The aforementioned actions against Russia's Information war are measures taken at the state level. Nevertheless, those are not the only countermeasures against Russia's propaganda in Ukraine. In this regard, along with the Ukrainian government, civil

[850] "Ministry of Information Policy Published List of Websites Threatening Ukraine's Information Security," *112.UA*, 2017, accessed August 12, 2019, https://112.international/ukraine-top-news/ministry-of-information-policy-published-list-of-websites-threatening-ukraines-information-security-17991.html.

[851] Dmytro Zolotukhin, "Ukraine: FAQ on the Freedom of Speech Issues in Terms of Hybrid War," *Medium*, 2018, accessed August 12, 2019, https://medium.com/@postinformation/ukraine-faq-on-the-freedom-of-speech-issues-in-terms-of-hybrid-war-5370e84139b1.

[852] "МІП: «Інформаційні Війська України» Стають Самостійним Проектом," Міністр інформаційної політики України, 2017, accessed June 27, 2019, https://mip.gov.ua/news/1931.html.

[853] "Training Courses," OSINT Academy, 2018, accessed June 27, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-9OTQQwXf2XuDGO_EIewUOpzUXLDDfcL.

societies are also quite active in Ukraine. One of the first and most effective citizens' initiative is 'The Stopfake.org' verification website.[854] It was launched by teachers, graduates and students of the Mohyla School of Journalism at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and a program for journalists and editors of Digital Future of Journalism on March 2, 2014. At the very beginning, the main goal of the community was to test and refute the misinformed information and propaganda which was distributed in the media about the events in Ukraine. Later, the project turned into an information hub, which not only maintaining the fact-checking mission but also analyzes phenomenon such as Kremlin propaganda in all aspects and manifestations and currently the team of 'Stop Fake' service in 11 languages.[855]

The Stop Fake project has revealed more than a thousand fake news stories about Ukraine between 2014-2018. According to a report of 'Stop Fake', the absolute leader in distributing fake information about Ukraine is the Russian media. Analyzing 919 news / reports for the period from March 2014 to June 2017 'Stop Fake' presented precisely which newspapers or TV channels of Russia spread disinformation about Ukraine. 'Stop Fake' detected the leaders of the Russian media which publish fake news about Ukraine.

The largest number of fake information was generated by 'Zvezda' (79), in the second place was 'Ukraine.ru' (73) and the information agency 'RIA Novosti' positioned in third place (62).[856] Besides, large number of fake news were also observed in the television channels such as 'Russia 24' (48), 'Russia Today' (38), 'LIFE' (38), 'NTV' (32), 'TASS' news agency (31), 'Lenta.ru' (30), 'The First Channel' (25), 'Komsomolskaya Pravda'(20). Thus, it can be argued that findings of independent initiatives such 'Stop Fake' cannot be underestimated to counter fake news about Ukraine.[857]

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[854] "Stop Fake," accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.stopfake.org/en/about-us/.

[855] "Stop Fake."

[856] Daria Orlova et al., "Fakes Debunked by the StopFake Project between 2014-2017: Narratives and Sources," *Stop Fake*, 2018, accessed June 28, 2019, https://www.stopfake.org/en/fakes-debunked-by-the-stopfake-project-between-2014-2017-narratives-and-sources/.

[857] Orlova et al., "Fakes Debunked by the StopFake Project between 2014-2017: Narratives and Sources,".

Apart from 'Stop Fake' project, Ukraine Crisis Media Center (UCMC) became one of the main venues to host press briefings, conferences, round tables and discussions.[858] Ukrainian Crisis Media Center was created in March 2014 by the efforts of leading Ukrainian experts in order to inform world community about events in Ukraine. Since its establishment, more than 3,000 events have been held at the UCMC, with more than 7,500 speakers, including diplomats, state officials, public activists, experts, and public opinion leaders. The influence of the UCMC is huge since about 11,000 journalists and experts receive press releases and materials from the organization.[859]

During the annexation of Crimea, military experts also joined resistance campaign against Russian propaganda. On March 2, 2014 Center of Military-Political Studies launched a project named 'Information Resistance' (IR) to contribute in fighting the external disinformation campaign against Ukraine. 'Information Resistance' is a non-governmental project, aims to counteract the information threats of the external powers in the areas of military, economic and energy, as well as in information security. IR verifies its received materials through at least of two independent sources. In case the information seems controversial, IR tries to access participants or witnesses in the events to verify the information. Thereby, before posting a news item, IR experts scrutinize the event. By this way, the IR attempts to prevent disinformation campaign and to provide healthier information to public.[860]

Additionally, Euromaidan Press (EP) is one of the most important newspapers that have undertaken to inform the international community about what is going on in Ukraine. The EP is an independent English-language newspaper founded in 2014 by Ukrainian volunteers. Focusing on the events in Ukraine, the EP provides independent research as well as translations of Ukrainian news and expert analysis on other platforms. Through its English publications, the EP aims to act as a bridge between Ukraine and the English-speaking world. The newspaper is donated by its readers and supported by the Renaissance Foundation as well as GPD Charitable

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[858] Ukraine Crisis Media Center, 2014, accessed June 26, 2019, http://uacrisis.org/about.

[859] Ukraine Crisis Media Center, 2014.

[860] "Information Resistance," 2014, accessed June 29, 2019, https://en.sprotyv.info/analytics/about-us/.

Trust. As a non-governmental organization, the EP covers news from Ukrainian politics, the war in eastern Ukraine, the peace process, economy, history, to business opportunities and tourism. Just like the abovementioned projects, the EP also concentrate particularly on refuting Russian disinformation campaign against Ukraine.[861]

Last but not least, the 'EU versus Disinformation' campaign is worth to mention in relation to counter Russia's information attacks against Ukraine. The 'EU versus Disinformation' campaign is operated by the European External Action Service East Stratcom Task Force. The project was launched in March 2015, after the EU Heads of State and Government stated the need to respond Russia's ongoing disinformation campaigns. Since 2015, 'EU versus Disinformation' project has identified more than 4500 fake news. Most of the disinformation items in the database of 'EU versus Disinformation' are the news disseminated by Russian media outlets.[862]

In this context, according to 'EU vs Disinformation', Ukraine is the main focus of the Russian media. The statistics of 'EU vs Disinformation' between 2015 and 2018, shows that about 40% (1993 out of 4500) of the Russian disinformation campaign are Ukraine-connected.[863] Nevertheless, 'EU vs Disinformation' came under criticism of some officials. On 6 March 2018, Kajsa Ollongren, the interior minister of Dutch, was ordered by the parliament to convince her European colleagues to close down 'EUvsDisinfo.eu' website. The Dutch parliamentarians even stressed that they would send Mark Rutte, the prime minister, to Brussels in case Ollongren does not perform the task.[864]

According to journalist, Arjen Nijeboer Dutch parliamentarians are right in demanding to close 'EU vs Disinformation'. For Nijeboer, 'EU vs Disinformation' is a project launched by the European heads of state which should not interfere with free media. The journalist points out that 'EU vs Disinformation' should not decide

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[861] "Euromaidan Press," 2014, accessed June 29, 2019, http://euromaidanpress.com/about/.

[862] "EU vs Disinformation," 2015, accessed June 29, 2019, https://euvsdisinfo.eu/about/.

[863] Yuriy Zoria, "Ukraine-Related Narratives Dominate Russian Propaganda-Disinformation Watchdogs," *Euromaidan Press*, 2018, accessed June 29, 2019, http://euromaidanpress.com/2018/12/06/ukraine-related-narratives-dominate-russian-propaganda/.

[864] Arjen Nijeboer, "Why the EU Must Close EUvsDisinfo," *Eu Observer*, 2018, accessed June 29, https://euobserver.com/opinion/141458.

whether a news fake or not. Moreover, Nijeboer draws attention to point that if one "publication ends up in [EU vs Disinformation] database, [its] officially labeled by the EU as a publisher of disinformation and fake news."[865] He states that such activities restrict the principle of freedom of speech.

To sum up, Ukrainian officials and civil society were well aware of Russian information war against their country. Along with the other elements of hybrid warfare which Russia were conducting against Ukraine, information campaign was also quite influential during the Euromaidan events which were followed by the annexation of Crimea and the destabilization of Eastern Ukraine. In this context, the creation of the 'Ministry of Information Policy' shows that the Kyiv authorities aimed to respond to Russia's information attacks at the highest level. Measures taken at state level such as banning the broadcasting of Russian TV channels, blocking Russian social networks or building TV towers in Donbas are some of actions of Kyiv officials to respond the information attacks. Besides, citizens' efforts in information war should not be underestimated. Initiatives of Stop Fake, Euromaidan Press or Information Resistance contribute to refute Russia's disinformation campaign about Ukraine. The Ukrainian Government and NGOs acts simultaneously to prevent the information attacks of the Kremlin to a certain extent. The next part aims to explore cyber dimension of the ongoing hybrid war in Ukraine.

6.5. Cyber Attacks

Cyber space is another field which becomes one of the major battlefields in Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine. Along with the elements of which are mentioned above such as military, information or economy cyber-attacks also play critical role in hybrid warfare. According to Foreign Minister of Ukraine Pavlo Klimkin, Ukraine has become the target of Russian cyber-attacks for about 6 thousand times over the last four years since 2014.[866] Oleh Derevianko, founder of the Information Systems

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[865] Nijeboer, "Why the EU Must Close EUvsDisinfo,".

[866] "Клімкін: Із Початку Конфлікту Україна Зазнала Близько 6 Тисяч Кібернападів Із Боку Росії," *Радіо Свобода*, 2018, accessed July 2, 2019, https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-hacking-russia-klimkin/29546588.html.

Security Partners, a Ukrainian cybersecurity firm, states that cyber-attacks are happening every day.[867] According to their impacts these attacks can be classified into three types: Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS), defacement of websites and malware infection through spear phishing. First two of these cyber-attacks can be called cyber-disruption and the later one can be described as cyber-espionage which enables to collect data for further cyber-attacks.[868]

The prevalence of DDoS attacks was increased during the Euromaidan demonstrations and annexation of Crimea. A DDoS attack consists of a large number of computers infected with a worm or Trojan horse to perform simultaneous attacks on a specific target in a short period of time. For example, a system may expose thousands of emails by Zombie computers to cause denial of service on the Mail server, which could prevent serving legitimate users.[869] Such DDoS attacks were used by pro-Russian hackers targeting Ukrainian media websites in November 2013, when anti-Yanukovych protests began in Kyiv.[870]

Along with the DDoS attacks website defacement is another technique used by the hackers during the Ukrainian crisis. In this technique, hackers attempt to infiltrate a web server via an SQL injection to access administrative position. The method also known as a cyber-type of vandalism. After gaining administrative access, the hackers replace the website pages with different materials or alter the visual appearance of it. Hacktivists use website defacement method to disseminate their messages.[871] In addition to DDoS and website defacement attacks, hackers have published online stolen information and made their own propaganda by sending calls and SMS messages to the mobile phones of the targeted groups. The main targets of the

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[867] Laurens Cerulus, "How Ukraine Became a Test Bed for Cyberweaponry," *Politico*, 2019, accessed July 2, 2019, https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-cyber-war-frontline-russia-malware-attacks/.

[868] Ramberto A. Torruella, "Determining Hostile Intent in Cyberspace," *Joint Force Quarterly*, 2014, 121.

[869] Solange Ghernaouti, *Cyber Power: Crime, Conflict and Security in Cyberspace* (Lausanne: EPFL Press, 2013), 431.

[870] Marie Baezner, "Information Warfare in the Ukrainian Conflict," *Center for Security Studies* Version 2 (2018), 10.

[871] Baezner, "Information Warfare in the Ukrainian Conflict,".

attackers were media organizations, news portals, government agencies, political parties and banks.[872]

Numerous malwares have been also observed to be used by the hackers to contribute Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine. Malware is a general term which describes programs, such as worms, viruses, or Trojan horses that acts more or less independently. According to a security firm, FireEye, parallel to the developments in Ukraine since 2014 an increase in the use of malware related to Russian and Ukrainian servers was detected.[873] In this regard, four malware groups have been observed: BlackEnergy, Snake (also known as Urobouros or Turla), X-Agent and Operation Armageddon.[874]

BlackEnergy is a version of malware essentially used by cybercriminals. This malware was also utilized in a campaign called Sandworm. BlackEnergy malware package first detected in 2007. The first version of BlackEnergy was relatively simple set of bots creation tools to implement distributed denial-of-service attacks. However, two more versions of it were created in time, which acquired new and more sophisticated capabilities. The third version of BlackEnergy was used to carry out the world's first confirmed attack on the power grid which will be detailed in following paragraphs.[875]

Researchers at the British firm BAE Systems Applied Intelligence disclosed cyber espionage toolkit in 2014 which they called it 'Snake'. According to the analysis of BAE Systems the Snake came to the surface in 2008 and in 2011 under the name of Agent.BTZ. This was confirmed by the US Department of Defense that their classified networks had been breached by an initial version of the same malware.[876]

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[872] Piret Pernik, "The Early Days of Cyberattacks: The Cases of Estonia, Georgia and Ukraine," in *Hacks, Leaks and Disruptions: Russian Cyber Strategies*, ed. Nicu Popescu and Stanislav Secrieru (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, 2018), 61.

[873] Kenneth Geers, "Strategic Analysis: As Russia-Ukraine Conflict Continues, Malware Activity Rises," FireEye, 2014, accessed July 3, 2019, https://www.fireeye.com/blog/threat-research/2014/05/strategic-analysis-as-russia-ukraine-conflict-continues-malware-activity-rises.html.

[874] Baezner, "Information Warfare in the Ukrainian Conflict.", 10.

[875] Baezner, 10.

[876] "The Snake Campaign," BAE Systems, 2014, accessed July 3, 2019, https://www.baesystems.com/en/cybersecurity/feature/the-snake-campaign.

Researchers from the German company, GData named this malware 'Uroburos' which is considered a component of the Russian program of cybersecurity. For GData, Uroburos is a rootkit which has been operating since 2011 but remained undiscovered for three years. It is used to infect networks belonging to high-level targets and to steal data by installing malicious P2P networks. The object of attack is both 32-bit and 64-bit Microsoft Windows systems.[877]

G Data researchers have conducted a research on the malware to identify its origin and according to their finding Uroburos links to Russia.[878] Although is hard to know who controls the malware British experts suspect that the cyber-attack was carried out under the auspices of the Russian government. It is interesting that the prevalence of the Snake attacks coincides with the development of the revolutionary movement in Ukraine. Only in January 2014, 22 cases were recorded, while for the entire 2013, Uroburos attacked Ukraine no more than eight times. The malware attacks significantly increased after the overthrow of the power of Viktor Yanukovych.[879]

Operation Armageddon is another malware discovered by Lookingglass, one of the leading computer protection organizations in the world. According to Lookingglass, Operation Armageddon activated at least in the middle of 2013 as one of the means to prevent European integration of Ukraine. Lookingglass clams that Russia's state structures are behind a series of malware attacks against Ukrainian military and political leadership.[880] The targets of the Operation Armageddon attacks are Ukrainian government, police and military officials. Each wave of an attack began with targeted spear phishing, when a potential victim sent an email with a valid reason to open an application or go to a specially created, infected page on the

[877] "Uroburos: Highly Complex Espionage Software with Russian Roots," G Data SecurityLabs, 2014, p.2, accessed July 3, 2019, https://public.gdatasoftware.com/Web/Content/INT/Blog/2014/02_2014/documents/GData_Uroburos _RedPaper_EN_v1.pdf.

[878] П'єрлуїджі Паганіні, "Крим: Російська Кіберстратегія Війни," *Day Kiev*, 2014, accessed July 3, 2019, http://m.day.kyiv.ua/uk/article/ekonomika/krim-rosiyska-kiberstrategiya-viyni.

[879] Майя Яровая, "Британский Эксперт: Россия Развязала Против Украины Кибервойну," *AIN*, 2014, accessed July 3, 2019, https://ain.ua/2014/03/11/britanskij-ekspert-rossiya-razvyazala-protiv-ukrainy-kibervojnu/.

[880] "Операція 'Армагеддон': Росія Розпочала Гібридну Війну Ще в Середині 2013 Року," *Тексти*, 2015, accessed July 3, 2019, http://texty.org.ua/pg/news/devrand/read/59766/Operacija_Armageddon_Rosija_rozpochala_gibrydnu _vijnu_shhe.

network. It used the plausible names and contents of documents that were either stolen before or potentially of great significance for these Ukrainian officials in order to encourage them to open such documents. The purpose of stealing the information is to provide advantages to Russian side while planning countermeasures. A timely analysis of the attacks showed a significant correlation between the cyberwar and the fighting at the front.[881]

Another malware is X-Agent which was discovered in 2016 but believed to be active since 2013. According to a cybersecurity firm, CrowdStrike, Russian hackers probably used the same virus to break the mobile application servers of the Democratic Party of the United States which played a critical role during the presidential election campaign in 2016.[882] CrowdStrike argued that a version of the so-called X-Agent malware had infected an application was developed by a Ukrainian officer, a gunner Yaroslav Sherstyuk for Ukrainian artillery. Sherstyuk amid to contribute D-30 howitzer artillery to fire more rapidly reducing the time from a few minutes to 15 seconds. As Sherstyuk himself noted, about 9,000 troops had this program installed on their mobile devices. The program was functioned on Android devices.[883] CrowdStrike reports that Ukrainian artillery forces have lost more than 50 per cent of their equipment in the first two years of the conflict in Donbas. However, this proportion is over 80 per cent in terms of D-30 howitzers. This is the highest percentage of loss in Ukraine's arsenal among the other artillery tools. This case shows how an abstract malware can directly contributed in Donbas war.[884]

Among the other cyber-attacks, Ukraine had experienced the most serious one on its energy companies of Ukraine. On December 23, 2015, at 3:30 p.m. electricity was disconnected in the central part of Ivano-Frankivsk region, Yaremchschyna zone and

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[881] "Операція 'Армагеддон': Росія Розпочала Гібридну Війну Ще в Середині 2013 Року."

[882] Daniel McLaughlin, "Hackers Believed behind Moscow's 'Hybrid' Attacks on Ukraine," *The Irish Times*, 2016, https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/hackers-believed-behind-moscow-s-hybrid-attacks-on-ukraine-1.2919587.

[883] Дмитро Прокопчук, "Російські Хакери Могли Зламати Мобільний Додаток Української Артилерії - Звіт," *Deutsche Welle*, 2016, accessed July 3, 2019, https://www.dw.com/uk/російські-хакери-могли-зламати-мобільний-додаток-української-артилерії-звіт/a-36871574.

[884] McLaughlin, "Hackers Believed behind Moscow's 'Hybrid' Attacks on Ukraine."

Gorodenkivsky, Kalush, Dolynsky, Kosivsky, Tysmenitsky and Nadvirnyansky districts of the region. The Security Service of Ukraine has reported the detection of malicious software in the networks of certain power companies ('Prykarpattyaoblenergo', 'Kyivoblenergo', and 'Chernivtsioblenergo') and has accused Russian hackers of interfering with power networks.[885] The 'Prykarpattyaoblenergo' power company, being responsible from distribution of power to Ivano-Frankivsk region, admitted that that the outage was likely due to 'interference by outsiders' who gained access to the company's control system.[886]

As a result of the cyberattack on 'Prykarpattyaoblenergo' in the Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, 80 thousand consumers were left without electricity for six hours. The American company iSight Partners, which specializes in the protection of cyberinformation, argued that the Russian hacker group 'Sandworm' was behind the unprecedented December 2014, attack on 'Prykarpattyaoblenergo'.[887] Based on the analysis of malware Black Energy 3 and KillDisk, John Hulkwist, an analyst of the iSight Partners stated that "We believe that Sandworm is responsible for this [attack]… This is a Russian [hacker group] who acts in accordance with the interests of the state."[888] Robert M. Lee, a former Cyber Warfare Operations Officer in the US Air Force and co-founder of Dragos Security, states: "The capabilities used were not particularly sophisticated but the logistics, planning, use of three methods of attack, coordinated strike against key sites, etc. was extremely well sophisticated."[889]

Although December 2015 malware attacks on Ukrainian power companies, which led to the disconnection of the power grid, were considered to be the first known cyberattack, the attack was definitely not the last one in this field. On January 19 and

[885] Дмитро Губенко, "Після Кібератаки На 'Прикарпаттяобленерго' в США Переглянуть Захист Енергомереж," *Deutsche Welle*, 2016, accessed July 3, 2019, https://www.dw.com/uk/після-кібератаки-на-прикарпаттяобленерго-в-сша-переглянуть-захист-енергомереж/a-18964517.

[886] Kim Zetter, "Everything We Know About Ukraine's Power Plant Hack," *Wired*, 2016, accessed July 3, 2019, https://www.wired.com/2016/01/everything-we-know-about-ukraines-power-plant-hack/.

[887] Дмитро Губенко, "Американські Експерти: 'Прикарпаттяобленерго' Атакували Російські Хакери," *Deutsche Welle*, 2016, https://www.dw.com/uk/американські-експерти-прикарпаттяобленерго-атакували-російські-хакери/a-18966574.

[888] Губенко, "Американські Експерти: 'Прикарпаттяобленерго' Атакували Російські Хакери,"

[889] Zetter, "Everything We Know About Ukraine's Power Plant Hack."

20, 2016, unknown intruders carried out 'virus mailing' to the email addresses of a large number of energy enterprises in Ukraine. 'Virus mailing' began at the end of the day on January 19, 2016. [890] Acting systematically, the attackers sent the second wave of malicious emails at the beginning of the working day on January 20. According to UNIAN press-service the hackers used a front-end server to send viral messages on behalf of the national energy company 'Ukrenergo'. It is also claimed that this time, hackers used a new malicious program based on a public backdoor which is hard to suspect intruders sponsored by a particular state.[891]

Another cyber-attack on Ukrainian power company took place in December 2016. On the night of December 17 to 18, the substation 'Severnaya' had a malfunction in the control automation, because of which the consumers of the northern part of the right bank of Kyiv and the surrounding areas of the region were de-energized.[892] The researchers of Cybersecurity firms ESET and Dragos Inc. named this malware 'Industroyer' or 'Crash Override'. According to Robert M. Lee, co-founder of Dragos company the attacks will become much more ambitious. For Lee, if in 2015, 20 people took part in the attack on three power companies of Ukraine, now these 20 people can attack 10-15 power companies.[893] Lee also stated that these attacks are extremely alarming for Ukraine. Similarly, Robert Lipovsky, ESET security researcher referring to the December 2016 cyber-attacks, commented that "if this is not a wakeup call, I don't know what could be."[894]

Apart from attacks on power companies of Ukraine, the country witnessed another devastating ransomware attack on June 27, 2017, on the eve of Constitution Day of

[890] "Атака На Энергетические Объекты 19-20 Января 2016 Года. Постфактум," *CYS-Centrum*, 2016, accessed July 4, 2019, https://cys-centrum.com/ru/news/attack_on_energy_facilities_jan_ps.

[891] "Вірусні Повідомлення Від Імені 'Укренерго': Хакери Використовували Підставний Сервер," *UNIAN*, 2016, accessed July 4, 2019, https://www.unian.ua/economics/other/1245708-virusni-povidomlennya-vid-imeni-ukrenergo-hakeri-vikoristovuvali-pidstavniy-server.html.

[892] Владимир Скрипин, "Основной Версией Недавнего Отключения Электричества в Киеве Названа Кибератака Хакеров," *ITC*, 2016, accessed July 4, 2019, https://itc.ua/news/osnovnoy-versiey-nedavnego-otklyucheniya-elektrichestva-v-kieve-nazvana-kiberataka-hakerov/.

[893] Всеволод Некрасов, "Блекаут По-Київськи: Чим Загрожує Кібератака На Енергомережу Києва і Хто За Нею Стоїть," *Економічна Правда*, 2016, accessed July 4, 2019, https://www.epravda.com.ua/publications/2017/06/15/626036/.

[894] Andy Greenberg, "'Crash Override': The Malware That Took Down A Power Grid," *Wired*, 2017, accessed July 4, 2019, https://www.wired.com/story/crash-override-malware/.

Ukraine. In fact, the attack was not only observed in Ukraine, but Ukraine was the most influenced country. In this case, Kaspersky Lab, a Russian anti-virus firm, claimed that according to its analysis about 2,000 attacks were observed in Italy, France, Germany, UK and the US but mostly in Ukraine, Poland and Russia.[895] Kaspersky Lab argued that the malware was a "new ransomware that has not been seen before" though its similarity to 'Petya'[896]. Therefore, Kaspersky Lab dubbed the ransomware 'NotPetya'.[897] In contrast to Kaspersky Lab, several countries including, Canada, the UK, and the US attributed 'NotPetya' cyber-attack to Russian Federation. As a result of 'NotPetya' attack, 10 percent of computers in Ukraine disabled and the attack cost the loss of 0.5% of Ukraine's GDP.[898]

To conclude, Cyberspace is becoming an indispensable part of hybrid wars, providing more and more space for itself on the battlefield. Russia is among the countries that benefited the most from this development. As we explained above, Russia is trying to discredit Ukraine by cyber-attacks and to degrade the country economically as well as politically. Of course, cyber-attacks are not enough to influence a country seriously, but it does work well as an element of hybrid warfare.

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter examined four non-military components of Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine. As clarified, this research adopted neoclassical realism as a standpoint to study war in Donbas. Therefore, internal dynamics of Ukraine before and after 2014 are scrutinized to show how Russia uses domestic factors as tools for its hybrid war in Donbas Conflict. In this context, first, political developments after Euromaidan Revolution in Ukraine clarified. It this part, it is argued that ousting of Yanukovych and forming of new government were not perceived same way among already

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[895] "Global Ransomware Attack Causes Turmoil," *BBC News*, 2017, accessed July 4, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-40416611.

[896] Petya is a malicious program, network worm and ransomware that encrypts all files in the computer without the user's knowledge. The victim is asked to pay ransom for a system or data recovery.

[897] "Global Ransomware Attack Causes Turmoil."

[898] Pernik, "The Early Days of Cyberattacks: The Cases of Estonia, Georgia and Ukraine.", 62.

polarized Ukrainian society. It is also pointed out that the secession of Crimea encouraged the separatists in Eastern Ukraine. The research presented what role Russian citizens played in forming and governing the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics.

In second section, economic dimension of war in Donbas scrutinized. In order to understand the significance of Donbas territory for Ukraine's economy, the structure of Donetsk and Lugansk economy primarily investigated. Thereafter, the work detailed how the destabilization of Donbas influenced Ukraine's economy. Finally, Russia's direct restrictions on Ukraine's economy are presented to show how Ukraine is influenced by Russia-backed separatists' destabilization of Donbas and also Russia's direct economic war against the country.

The third part concentrated on another aspect of hybrid war in Donbas. To do this, first, the contribution of Ukrainian media in isolating the Donbas territory is expressed. The following section explained how the Russian media used the narratives which were created by the Ukrainian media against Ukraine. The significance of the part is that it shows narratives which constituted for short time political benefit for Ukrainian politicians turned out as one of the major tools for Russian media during the war in Donbas. At the end, the part explained what measures Ukraine has taken against the ongoing information war.

The final part investigated cyber dimension of the Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine. It explored how cyber space became a critical tool for Russia to use as one of its hybrid war components. The cyber space section shows us how Russia improved this element of the war since 2007 attack in Estonia and 2008 in Georgia. In Ukraine case, Russian hackers not only discredited the country's image but also damaged its economy. In brief, the chapter scrutinized non-military elements of Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine. In this context, the chapter emphasized how Ukraine's domestic dynamics are used as a part of the ongoing hybrid war in Ukraine. The next chapter draws attention to the attempts of resolution of Donbas Conflict.

CHAPTER 7

DONBAS CONFLICT AND PEACE PROCESS

7.1. Introduction

When the battles in Donbas began, newly formed government in Kyiv did not anticipate a long-lasting war in the territory. However, developments towards Summer 2014 made it clear for everyone that the war is not going to end soon despite the promises of newly elected president, Petro Poroshenko. August 2014 was a nightmare for Ukrainian army when they faced with Russian regular troops in Donbas. Since then, intensifying the war in Donbas works against the Ukraine's interest. Therefore, finding a peaceful solution for Donbas conflict is one of the main priorities of Kyiv.

This chapter details the peace process on stalemate of Donbas Conflict. In this context, first, the chapter examines the peace initiatives between Russia and Ukraine throughout the Summer 2014. These initiatives culminated in September 2014 when the sides reach a ceasefire agreement in Minsk. Subsequently, the conditions which leads to the Minsk II agreement is studied. In that part, the agreement is also analyzed in connection with the Minsk I. Thereafter, pros and cons of the Minsk Agreements for Ukraine and Russia are evaluated, respectively. At the end, the UN peacekeeping mission to Donbas is examined as an alternative approach to a solution for Donbas war.

7.2. Trilateral Contact Group and Minsk-I Protocol

"My first decisive step will be aimed at ending the war, ending chaos, and bringing peace to a united and free Ukraine,"[899] said Petro Poroshenko before the 2014

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[899] "Ukraine's Petro Poroshenko Pledges 'End to War,'" *BBC News*, May 26, 2014, accessed May 9, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27571612.

presidential election in Ukraine. In the eve of 2014 presidential election in Ukraine, two breakaway provinces held referendum and declared their sovereignty. The political stalemate in Donetsk and Lugansk was growing day by day in May 2014 in Ukraine. Under these circumstances, ending the unrest in Eastern Ukraine and stabilizing the political crisis in the country was one of the main pledges of presidential candidate, Petro Poroshenko. Therefore, right after winning the election, Poroshenko launched his initiative to settle down the insurgency in Donbas.[900]

In this regard, the newly elected president Poroshenko met the Russian President for the first time at the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the allied landings in Normandy (D-Day) on June 6, 2014. Although previously only Russian president was invited to the commemoration in order to represent fifteen republics of Soviet Union, Ukrainian president was added to the invitation list later, to underline the legitimacy of Ukraine's newly elected president and to provide an opportunity for the two presidents to discuss the crisis in eastern Ukraine.[901]

The meeting which brought together the presidents of Russia, Ukraine and France, and the German chancellor called Normandy Format. After this informal meeting in France, Kremlin's spokesman stated that "in a brief discussion, Putin and Poroshenko spoke out for the cessation of bloodshed in the southeast of Ukraine as soon as possible."[902] In this sense, the President Putin expressed on Russian TV channel: "The approach seemed fair to me , I liked it."[903] During the informal meeting at the commemoration of the D-Day in Normandy the sides decided to form

[900] Shaun Walker and Alec Luhn, "New Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko Vows to Stop War," *The Guardian*, 2014, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/26/new-ukraine-president-petro-poroshenko-vows-stop-war.

[901] "Pourquoi l'Ukraine a Finalement Été Invitée Aux Commémorations Du Débarquement," *Le Monde*, 2014, accessed May 9, 2019, https://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2014/06/05/pourquoi-l-ukraine-a-finalement-ete-invitee-aux-commemorations-du-debarquement_4433065_3214.html.

[902] "Poutine et Porochenko Appellent à La Fin de « l'effusion de Sang » En Ukraine," *Le Monde*, 2014, accessed May 9, 2019, https://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2014/06/06/poignee-de-main-historique-entre-les-dirigeants-russe-et-ukrainien-en-normandie_4433620_3214.html.

[903] "Poutine et Porochenko Appellent à La Fin de « l'effusion de Sang » En Ukraine."

a group in order to end the conflicts in Donbas and repair the relations between Ukraine and Russia.[904]

On 21 March 2014, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) was deployed in response to the request of Ukraine's government. The SMM established as an unarmed civilian mission to report the ongoing crisis in eastern Ukraine in impartial and objective way. Besides, the SMM aimed to facilitate dialogues among the sides of the conflict.[905] The first meeting related to the Donbas conflict held in Kyiv, consisted of three sides of representatives which called Trilateral Contact Group on June 8, 2014. Mikhail Zurabov, the Ambassador of Russia to Ukraine, Pavlo Klimkin, the Ambassador of Ukraine to Germany and the Swiss diplomat Heidi Tagliavini, the special representative of OSCE General Secretary participated in the Trilateral Contact Group.[906] On June 8 and 9, three meetings, to negotiate the implementation of the peace plan proposed by President Poroshenko, took place. Although not much progress had been made during the meeting in Kyiv, initiating the peace process was perceived as a positive development.[907]

On June 20, 2014, after telephone conversations with Russian president, Petro Poroshenko announced 'fifteen points' of peaceful plan on the settlement of the conflict in eastern oblasts of Ukraine. The plan included statements such as:

> Amnesty for those who laid down weapons and did not commit serious crimes; Establishment of 10 km long buffer zone on the Ukrainian-Russian border. Withdrawal of illegal armed formations; Decentralization of power (through the election of executive committees, protection of Russian language; draft amendments to the Constitution) et cetera.[908]

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[904] "Putin, Poroshenko Meet Briefly on Sidelines of D-Day Commemoration," *Aljazeera America*, 2014, accessed August 12, 2019, http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/6/6/peroshenko-putinnormandy.html.

[905] "OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine," *OSCE*, 2014, accessed May 18, 2019, https://www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine.

[906] "Швейцарский Дипломат Поможет Переговорам Киева и Москвы," *BBC News*, 2014, https://www.bbc.com/russian/rolling_news/2014/06/140608_rn_swiss_diplomat_ukr.

[907] Аніта Грабська, "Штайнмаєр: В Українській Кризі з'явилось Слабке Світло в Кінці Тунелю," *Deutsche Welle*, 2014, http://www.dw.de/штайнмаєр-в-українській-кризі-зявилось-слабке-світло-в-кінці-тунелю/a-17694258.

[908] Matthew Luxmoore, "Poroshenko Unveils Peace Plan during Visit to Ukraine's Restive East," *Kyiv Post*, 2014, accessed May 10, 2019, https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/petro-poroshenko-unveils-peace-plan-during-visit-to-east-352786.html.

Poroshenko's 'fifteen points' received limited support from Vladimir Putin, and it did not have a conceivable impact on separatist forces in Donbas. Although he welcomed Poroshenko's truce plan, Putin expressed that the plan should not be present as an *ultimatum* to the separatist. He believed that in order to achieve success in the plan two sides (Ukrainian government and rebels) have to initiate direct negotiations. For the president, process should be used wisely, and this can be done only through political compromises between the opposing sides.[909] Besides, Poroshenko's peace plan was not perceived by the separatist groups as an 'honest' proposal. Myroslav Rudenko, a spokesman for self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic stated: "This proposal by Poroshenko to lay down our arms is simply a tactical ploy. If people fall for it, there will be a new mopping-up operation. We will not put our weapons away."[910] It was clear that while Putin was insisting on the rebels' involvement in the peace negotiations the separatist had no trust on Kyiv authorities. Nevertheless, the next meeting on peace process was scheduled on June 23, 2014 in Donetsk.[911]

After the separatists' pledge on ceasefire the representators of the Trilateral Contact Group met in Donetsk. While Russian ambassador to Ukraine, Mikhail Zurabov and the special representative of the OSCE chairman, Heidi Tagliavini remained unchanged, new participants also showed up in the meeting. The 'prime minister' of self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic Alexander Borodai, the member of former Party of Regions and pro-Novorossiya politician Oleg Tsarev, the leader of the 'Ukrainian Choice' movement, Viktor Medvedchuk and the former president of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma became new representators in the meeting.[912]

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[909] Lidia Kelly and Richard Balmforth, "Poroshenko's Ukraine Peace Plan Gets Limited Support from Putin," *REUTERS*, 2014, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis/poroshenkos-ukraine-peace-plan-gets-limited-support-from-putin-idUSKBN0EW0EH20140622.

[910] Luxmoore, "Poroshenko Unveils Peace Plan during Visit to Ukraine's Restive East."

[911] Andrew Roth, "Pro-Russian Rebels in Ukraine Match Government Cease-Fire," *The New York Times*, 2014, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/24/world/europe/ukraine-cease-fire.html.

[912] Владимир Дергачев, "Мирные Переговоры Начались: Стороны Конфликта На Юго-Востоке Украины Объявили о Перемирии," *Газета.Ru*, 2014, accessed May 10, 2019, https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2014/06/23_a_6082437.shtml?updated.

The parties agreed on a ceasefire to last until June 27, in the Donetsk meeting. Besides, the separatist leaders agreed to free observers of OSCE who were captured by the rebels over a month ago.[913] Nevertheless, conflict was continued in Donbas. For instance, the separatist forces shot down the Ukrainian military helicopter Mi-8 and killed nine people around Slavyansk, near Karachun mountains, on July 24, 2014.[914] On June 28, Kuchma, one of the participants in the Trilateral Contact Group stated that the leaders of the separatist forces did not act free. For the former president, their decisions depended on Kremlin's policy. In this regard, Kuchma noted that Ukraine needs a significant support from the EU and the USA.[915]

On July 2, 2014, foreign ministers of Ukraine, Germany, Russia and French announced a joint declaration on the basis of Poroshenko's peace plan. By emphasizing the significance of the peace process, they decided to hold next meeting as soon as possible. In this regard, the representatives of Trilateral Contact Group from Ukraine, the OSCE and the Russian Federation came together on July 6, 2014 in Kyiv.[916] During July 2014, several negotiations took place which one of them was held on the same day of Malaysian airplane was shot down in Donbas on July 17, 2014. However, the peace talks on the resolution of the Donbas conflict were not very fruitful. Describing the peace negotiations Kuchma commented:

> We meet practically every day, but they are like parrots: *we are Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics and do not recognize anything else*. Compositions, it seems to me, they do not offer, but Russia. Rebels demand federalization, and that federalization means, after some period, Ukraine will not exist at all.[917]

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[913] "Ukrainian Rebels Free Four OSCE Hostages, Four Still in Captivity," *REUTERS*, 2014, accessed May 10, 2019, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-hostages/ukrainian-rebels-free-four-osce-hostages-four-still-in-captivity-idUSKBN0F200T20140627.

[914] "Під Слов'янськом Збили Український Вертоліт, 9 Загиблих," *Ukrainskaya Pravda*, 2014, accessed May 12, 2019, https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/06/24/7030008/.

[915] "Кучма Вважає, Що з Терористами Нема Сенсу Вести Переговори," *Ipress*, 2014, accessed May 12, 2019, https://ipress.ua/news/kuchma_zayavyv_shcho_do_ponedilka_rosiya_maie_shans_vgamuvaty_velykyh_diyachiv_na_shodi_72098.html.

[916] "Press Statement by the Trilateral Contact Group," *OSCE*, 2014, accessed May 12, 2019, https://www.osce.org/home/120863.

[917] "Кучма Розповів, Як Тривають Переговори з Сепаратистами," *Tyzhden*, 2014, accessed May 12, 2019, https://tyzhden.ua/News/115154.

On the initiative of President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko and the invitation of President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko the next meeting was held in Minsk on July 31, 2014. The sides mainly discussed the issue of hostages and others who detained in the context of the conflict. Participants agreed to free a certain number of hostages as a first step. Apart from this, representations decided to create monitoring and verification mechanism within the OSCE. By this mechanism Ukrainian side hoped to control its borders with Russian Federation.[918] Nevertheless, peace talks in June and July did not end the conflict for the following month. August 2014 witnessed the most intense battles in Donbas since the beginning of the war. Particularly, Kyiv's attempt to achieve the border control between Russia and Ukraine through Trilateral Contact Group failed to produce peace which had devastating consequences for the Ukrainian army when Russian regular troops directly involved in war at the end of August.[919]

On August 26, 2014, Vladimir Putin and Petro Poroshenko met in Minsk to discuss the Donbas conflict. This meeting was followed by the Trilateral Contact Group on September 1, 2014.[920] The next Minsk meeting was scheduled for September 5, 2014. Before the meeting held in Minsk, Russian and Ukrainian presidents made a phone call. In that conversation, Putin proposed his peace plan and hoped to be approved at the next meeting. To solve the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, Putin presented seven-point plan. As the first step, he called the cessation of active offensive operations of armed formations of South-Eastern Ukraine 'militia' in Donetsk and Lugansk directions. Some of the other points were: to withdraw the armed units of Ukraine's security forces at a distance, which excludes the possibility of shelling of settlements with artillery and all types of volley fire systems; to exclude the use of combat aircraft against civilians and settlements in the conflict zone; to provide for full and

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[918] "Press Statement by the Trilateral Contact Group," *OSCE*, 2014, accessed May 12, 2019, https://www.osce.org/home/122142.

[919] Tim Judah, "Ukraine: A Catastrophic Defeat," *NYR Daily*, 2014, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2014/09/05/ukraine-catastrophic-defeat/.

[920] "Press Statement by the Trilateral Contact Group," *OSCE*, 2014, accessed May 12, 2019, https://www.osce.org/home/123124.

objective international control over observance of the terms of ceasefire and monitoring of the situation.[921]

On September 5, 2014, the negotiations which took place under the Trilateral Contact Group ended up with signing a protocol which also called Minsk Protocol. The title of the agreement was "Protocol on the Results of Consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group with Respect to the Joint Steps Aimed at the Implementation of the Peace Plan of the President of Ukraine, P. Poroshenko, and the Initiatives of the President of Russia, V. Putin."[922] The protocol was signed by the OSCE Representative Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, second president of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma, Russian Ambassador to Ukraine Mikhail Zurabov and representatives of self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk People's Republic, Alexander Zakharchenko and Igor Plotnitsky respectively.[923]

The content of the Minsk Protocol composed of twelve conditions and can be divided into three groups. The first group contains the provisions on the cessation of hostilities, the provisions on the political settlement of the conflict and the provisions on security in the conflict zone. The main points of the first group of provisions are the bilateral ceasefire, the monitoring of the armistice through the OSCE and the exchange of captives and hostages. In the second group, there is a provision on the decentralization of power in Ukraine, in particular through the adoption of a law on the special status of certain districts of the Donbas, the holding of local elections in these areas under the new law, as well as measures to improve the humanitarian and economic situation in the conflict. The third group is the OSCE control of the border, the withdrawal of illegal armed groups, fighters and mercenaries, security guarantees for the parties to the conflict and to ensure an inclusive national dialogue.[924]

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[921] "Путин Представил План Из Семи Пунктов По Урегулированию Ситуации На Украине," *Tass*, 2014, accessed May 12, 2019, https://tass.ru/politika/1418014.

[922] Tim B. Peters and Anastasiia Shapkina, "The Grand Stalemate of the Minsk Agreements" (Kharkiv, 2019), accessed May 21, 2019, https://www.kas.de/documents/252038/4520172/The+Grand+Stalemate+of+the+Minsk+Agreements.pdf/fc13c8d8-d7e3-7041-b959-a94282b3f8af?version=1.0&t=1549899307207.

[923] "Протокол о Результатах Консультаций Трехсторонней Контактной Группы, Минск, 5 Сентября 2014 Г.," *OSCE*, 2014, https://www.osce.org/ru/home/123258.

[924] "Протокол о Результатах Консультаций Трехсторонней Контактной Группы, Минск, 5 Сентября 2014 Г.," *OSCE*, 2014, accessed May 12, 2019, https://www.osce.org/ru/home/123258.

Nevertheless, ceasefire violations occurred frequently after the Minsk Protocol. Therefore, the Trilateral Contact Group held another meeting to clarify the Minsk Protocol which was signed on September 5, 2014. A memorandum on the details of the ceasefire was signed on September 19, 2014.[925] In other word, the memorandum was ensured upon the implementation of the Minsk Protocol. The memorandum composed of nine points and mainly clarified the ceasefire. The first three points of the memorandum were "the cessation of the use of weapons shall be considered as general; stop of units and military formations of the parties on the line of collision as of September 19 and prohibition on the use of all types of weapons and offensive actions."[926] Moreover, the parties agreed for the removal of the weapons with a caliber more than 100 millimeters from the collision line at a distance of not less than 15 kilometers from each side in order to create a security zone not less than 30 kilometers.[927]

As included in Minsk Protocol, the task of the SMM of the OSCE was enriched. Since September 2014, the SMM also monitors the ceasefire in Donbas conflict. In addition to the SMM, after the Minsk Protocol, the Joint Monitoring and Coordination Center (JCCC) as a bilateral group composed of Ukrainian-Russian military officers was established.[928] Different from the SMM the JCCC did not publish their reports related to the ceasefire. Instead, working compatible with the SMM, they were mainly responsible for the safety of the SMM's crew. However, Russia withdrew from the JCCC on December 18, 2017 by claiming that Russian officers were not well treated. In this context, while observers admitted the Russia's complaints, they argued that the real reason behind the withdrawal was to force Ukrainian officials to contact directly with the separatists forces.[929]

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[925] "Меморандум Об Исполнении Положений Протокола," *OSCE*, 2014, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.osce.org/ru/home/123807?download=true.

[926] "Меморандум Об Исполнении Положений Протокола," *OSCE*, 2014, accessed May 12, 2019, https://www.osce.org/ru/home/123807?download=true.

[927] "Меморандум Об Исполнении Положений Протокола."

[928] Fischer, "The Donbas Conflict.", 11.

[929] Sabine Fischer, "The Donbas Conflict," *Stiftung Wissenschaft Und Politik*, 2019, 11, accessed May 20, 2019, https://doi.org/doi:10.18449/2019RP05.

Although the Minsk Memorandum emphasized ceasing the use of weapons in Donbas as a main prerequisite for the peace process the first serious violation of the Minsk Protocol was done in non-military area. As noted, one of the points of the Minsk Protocol was holding early local elections in Donbas in accordance with Ukrainian Law. However, the general elections which were held in self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics on November 2, 2014 were not within the scope of Ukrainian Law.[930]

November 2, 2014, general elections in Donbas was clear violation of the Minsk Protocol. In this regard, Swiss Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Didier Burkhalter also criticized the elections in Donbas and stressed that they were not in line with the Minsk Protocol. He pointed out that so-called elections in Donetsk and Lugansk were not only against the spirit of Minsk Protocol but also would undermine further implementation of the peace process.[931] However, the parties have disagreements on how to implement the Minsk Protocol. Different from Ukraine and the OSCE representators Russia found the elections in Donbas legal and not an act against the will of the Minsk Protocol. In this case, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov stated: "although the elections were held on November 2 exactly within the range in which they had been negotiated in Minsk," Kyiv officials refuse to recognize the elections. Blaming Kyiv authorities Lavrov pointed out that there are several steps which Ukraine should follow but main of them are the recognition of the elections and the security guarantee for the elected bodies of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics and amnesty for all who involved in separatist action. The following section examines the conditions which paved the way for Minsk II Agreement and presents its effectiveness in ensuring the peace in Donbas.[932]

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[930] "Why Are Ukraine Separatist Elections Controversial?," *BBC News*, 2014, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29831028.

[931] "So-Called Elections Not in Line with Minsk Protocol, Says OSCE Chair, Calling for Enhanced Efforts and Dialogue to Implement All Commitments," *OSCE*, 2014, accessed May 18, 2019, https://www.osce.org/cio/126242.

[932] "Too Early to Discuss Broader Monitoring of Ukraine-Russia Border - Lavrov," *Interfax*, 2014, May 20, 2019, https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/238216.html.

7.3. Minsk II Agreement

Despite disagreement among the parties on implementation of the Minsk Protocol and the frequent violation of the ceasefire September 2014 meetings in Minsk considerably reduced the tension of the war in Donbas. However, the low intensity war in Donbas lasted few months and collapsed in January 2015. In January 2015, the conflict escalated on Donetsk airport and continued until January 21.[933] Right after the gaining control over Donetsk airport the separatists forces launched a new offensive to capture Debaltseve bridgehead. The new offensives in January-February 2015 was the complete collapse of the Minsk Protocol. Therefore, re-escalation of the war in Donbas led the parties to hold new meeting in Minsk. In this regard, the leaders of France and Germany, Francois Hollande and Angela Merkel, announced visiting Kyiv and Moscow. On February 5, Hollande and Merkel met with the president Poroshenko in Kyiv to discuss their new proposal for resolving the conflict in Ukraine. Next day, the leaders went to Moscow to meet president Putin to present the proposal which they discussed with the Poroshenko.[934] After meeting Ukrainian and Russian president Hollande stated that the next peace proposal can be the last chance to end the war in Donbas.[935]

On February 10, 2015, a meeting took place in Berlin, with the participation of Deputy Foreign Ministers of the 'Normandy Four' countries. Although no statements were made on the results of the meeting, the Ukrainian Ambassador to Germany, Andrei Melnik, noted that the negotiations ended with 'some tangible results.'[936] After the Berlin talks, a meeting was announced to be held in Minsk. On February 11, Vladimir Putin, Angela Merkel, Francois Hollande and Petro Poroshenko met in Minsk to resolve the situation in Ukraine. At the final stage, Heidi Tagliavini, the special envoy of the OSCE chairperson in the Contact Group, joined them. The

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[933] "Ukraine Conflict: Battles Rage in Donetsk and Luhansk," *BBC News*, 2015, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30878406.

[934] "Встреча с Ангелой Меркель и Франсуа Олландом," Kremlin.ru, 2015, accessed May 20, 2019, http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47635.

[935] "Ukraine Crisis: 'Last Chance' for Peace Says Hollande," *BBC News*, 2015, accessed May 20, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31185027.

[936] "Последний Шанс: Чего Ждать От Встречи «нормандской Четверки» в Минске," *Ros Business Consulting*, 2015, accessed May 20, 2019, https://www.rbc.ru/politics/10/02/2015/54da2c5d9a7947f28c821cd5.

meeting in the 'Normandy Format' lasted for 16 hours and at the end, the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany adopted a declaration in support of a set of measures to implement the Minsk agreements. For Putin, the negotiations lasted so long due to the attitudes of Kyiv officials. He stated: "By the way, why did the negotiations last so long? I think this is due to the fact that, unfortunately, the Kyiv authorities are still refusing direct contacts with representatives of the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics."[937] Putin maintained that despite their unrecognized status the reality in Donbas should not be ignored and for the long-term peace, it is necessary to make direct contact the leaders of the DPR and LPR.[938]

Although the leaders of the 'Normandy Four' countries came together and discussed the peace process, the declaration was adopted at the level of Trilateral Contact Group.[939] Thus, the Minsk II was signed by the OSCE chairperson, Heidi Tagliavini, former Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma, Russian Ambassador to Ukraine Mikhail Zurabov and representatives of self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk People's Republic, Alexander Zakharchenko and Igor Plotnitsky respectively.[940] In other word, just like the Minsk Protocol, The Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements also called Minsk II was not signed by the head of the countries.

The Minsk II aimed to revive the Minsk I which collapsed in January-February 2015. The declaration was more or less the identical of the Minsk I. However, the ceasefire did not come into effect right after the Minsk II. The declaration pointed out that immediate ceasefire in certain regions of Donetsk and Luhansk provinces of Ukraine will be valid from 00:00 AM (Kyiv time) on February 15, 2015.[941] According to the declaration, the parties agreed on ceasefire under following conditions:

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[937] "Переговоры в «нормандском Формате»," *Kremlin.Ru*, 2015, accessed May 20, 2019, http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47664.

[938] "Переговоры в «нормандском Формате»."

[939] "Переговоры в «нормандском Формате»," *Kremlin.Ru*, 2015, accessed May 20, 2019, http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47664.

[940] "Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements," *OSCE*, 2015, accessed May 20, 2019, https://www.osce.org/cio/140156.

[941] Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements," United Nations: Peacemaker, 2015, accessed May 20, 2019, https://peacemaker.un.org/ukraine-minsk-implementation15.

> Withdrawal of heavy weapons by both sides on equal distances in order to create a security zone at least 50 km wide from each other for the artillery systems with caliber greater than 100 millimeters and more, a security zone of 70 km wide for MLRS and 140 km wide for MLRS 'Tornado-C', 'Uragan', 'Smerch' and Tactical missile systems 'Tochka' (Tochka U). For the Ukrainian troops [it will be valid] from the *de facto* line of contact; for the armed formations from certain areas of the Donetsk and Lugansk oblast of Ukraine, from the line of contact according to the Minsk memorandum of September 19, 2014.[942]

As it can be noticed, the security zone between Ukrainian troops and separatist forces extended from 30 km to at least 50 km in the declaration of Minsk II. Besides, the territory which is not under Ukraine's control is specified. To define the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's republics, Minsk II declaration used the term 'certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts'. According to Minsk agreement, the term implies that the territory which de facto not under Ukraine's control remains as a territory of Ukraine but receives a 'special status'.

The agreement also reemphasized the decentralization of power in Ukraine. According to the document, Ukraine will achieve full control of state borders after: "Carrying out constitutional reform in Ukraine with a new Constitution entering into force by the end of 2015, providing for decentralization as a key element (including a reference to the specificities of certain areas in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions, agreed with the representatives of these areas)."[943] Moreover, the separatist leaders included several conditions in the document such as amnesty for all people who involved in the events took place in the conflict or "participation of organs of local self-government in the appointment of heads of public prosecution offices and courts in certain areas pf the Donetsk and Lugansk regions."[944]

Implementation of Minsk agreements seemed unrealistic from the day they were signed. Even participants did not have high expectations from the agreement. After the talks in Minsk, at a European Union summit in Brussels, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that "this is a glimmer of hope, no more no less…It is very

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[942] "Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements,"

[943] "Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements."

[944] Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements."

important that words are followed by actions."[945] In fact, the ceasefire was agreed by the parties to come into effect not right after the agreement. As noted, the ceasefire was expected to enter into force by February 15. Reluctance of the separatist forces to end the war was clear. This became apparent particularly when Zakarchenko, the head of the 'DPR', went directly to the frontline, right after signing the Minsk agreement.[946]

In brief, the Minsk agreements have not been implemented yet and it could be unrealistic to hope for the fulfillment of the accords. Although the meetings in Minsk ceased the fighting for a couple of months, the war in Donbas escalated in summer 2015 in the vicinity of Donetsk airport, Krasnohorivka, Dzerzhynsk, Bakhmut, Mariinka, in Donetsk region, and at Schastia and Stanitsa Luganska in Lugansk region.[947] Apart from low-intensity armed clashes, the ceasefire violated once again when the fighting erupted on Avdiivka, a strategic town near Dontesk city in January-February 2017.[948] Nevertheless, Minsk agreements decreased the tension in Donbas though it could not end the war in the region. In other word, the Minsk agreements converted the war in Donbas into a 'low-intensity war'. The next part searches the meaning of Minsk Agreements for Ukraine.

7.4. Minsk Agreements and Ukraine

Apparently, the Minsk agreements did not provide any benefit to the national interest of Ukraine rather they threatened the unitarity formation of Ukraine by demanding special status for Donbas. After all, the reasons why the Ukrainian government went to negotiations and agreed to the proposed conditions of peace is understandable. The

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[945] Vladimir Soldatkin and Pavel Polityuk, "'Glimmer of Hope' for Ukraine after New Ceasefire Deal," *REUTERS*, 2015, accessed May 21, 2019, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis/glimmer-of-hope-for-ukraine-after-new-ceasefire-deal-idUSKBN0LG0FX20150212.

[946] Matveeva, *Through Times of Trouble: Conflict in Southeastern Ukraine- Eplained from Within*, 173.

[947] "Зараз в АТО Рекордна Кількість Бійців ЗСУ, у Мар'їнці Ворог Реально Злякався, — Бірюков," *24tv.Ua*, 2015, accessed August 12, 2019, https://24tv.ua/zaraz_v_ato_rekordna_kilkist_biytsiv_zsu_u_maryintsi_vorog_realno_zlyakavsya__bi ryukov_n581188.

[948] "Ukraine Conflict: Deadly Flare-up in East," *BBC News*, 2017, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38794679.

military defeat and the threat of the continuation of hostilities with the direct or indirect involvement of Russia, could lead to further territorial losses and internal destabilization up to total the loss of sovereignty.

As mentioned before, Ukrainian army was very close to victory over the separatist forces by first half of August 2014. However, Russia's direct intervention in Donbas war at the end of the August, strengthen the militants. Hence, Ukrainian troops suffered a devastated defeat in Ilovaisk at the end of August 2014. A significant territory loss in the short period forced Ukrainian officials to agree the Minsk Protocol on September 5, 2014. Similarly, collapse of Minsk-I ceasefire in January-February 2015 left no chance but to agree Minsk-II for Kyiv authorities. The clashes in Donetsk International Airport and the heavy fighting in Debaltseve forced Ukrainian officials to negotiate the peace process in second time. Therefore, from Kyiv's point of view, Ukraine had to sign Minsk agreements in order to avoid more territorial and military loose.

In fact, according to Minsk-I and also Minsk-II agreements, Debaltseve and its vicinity were supposed to remain under Ukraine's control. However, by launching new offensive in January-February 2015, the separatist forces aimed to capture these territories and while the negotiations were continuing in Minsk, the separatists were already repelling Ukrainian troops from the transit hub in Debaltseve and this was the main reason why the ceasefire was not becoming effective right after the Minsk-II accord. In fact, the conflict in Debaltseve continued even more three days after February 15.[949] Therefore, although it seemed that the Minsk-II declaration promised a wider security zone in comparison with the Minsk-I in reality it was pushing Ukrainian forces beyond the Debaltseve region. Besides, the agreement was unrealistic because it redrew the contact line according to the Minsk-I. It was clear that the separatists would not retreat to the first contact line because they were about to seize Debaltseve. Nevertheless, Minsk-II achieved to decrease the conflict tension

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[949] Alec Luhn, "Fears for Ukraine's Ceasefire as Clashes with Russia-Backed Rebels Intensify," *The Guardian*, 2015, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/14/ukraine-ceasefire-doubt-clashes-rebels-russia-rockets-shelling.

in Donbas and the ceasefire disburdened Ukraine though it lost more territory in February 2015.[950]

Implementation of the Minsk Agreements promises Ukraine to regain full control on Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Ukraine initiated several attempts to fulfill the agreements. On September 16, 2014, the Ukrainian parliament passed the 'law on introducing a special procedure for self-government in certain regions of Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts for a term of three years. It was shortly called the 'Law on Special Status'.[951] The parliament also adopted a law that releases certain categories of people who committed criminal offenses from February 22, 2014 until the date of entry into force of this law in the territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions where the ATO was conducted. However, the Cabinet of Ministers stated that the law on the 'special status' of the Donbas (certain districts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts) would be fulfilled only under certain conditions.[952] These conditions mainly are: local elections in certain regions of Donetsk and Luhansk are carried out according to Ukrainian law and international standards; All kind of weapons and foreign military formations to be withdrew from the territory of Ukraine.[953]

Additionally, draft law on amendments to the constitution of Ukraine regarding decentralization of power which Kyiv was supposed to enact according to the Minsk agreements by the end of 2015 were approved in the first reading by Ukrainian Parliament on August 31, 2015.[954] However, the draft law on decentralization of power in Ukraine caused dissatisfaction among people particularly nationalist groups. On the same day when the parliament voted for amendments to the

[950] "Kuchma Says Minsk Agreements Helped Prevent Escalation of War in Donbas, More Losses," *Kyiv Post*, 2015, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/kuchma-says-minsk-agreements-helped-prevent-escalation-of-war-in-donbas-more-losses-397236.html.

[951] "Law on Donbass' Special Status Comes into Force," *Global Research*, 2014, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.globalresearch.ca/law-on-donabass-special-status-comes-into-force/5408617.

[952] "Турчинов Підписав Закон Про Особливий Статус Частини Донбасу," *Дзеркало Тижня*, 2014, accessed May 22, 2019, https://dt.ua/POLITICS/turchinov-pidpisav-zakon-pro-osobliviy-status-chastini-donbasu-153751_.html.

[953] Peters and Shapkina, "The Grand Stalemate of the Minsk Agreements.", 4.

[954] "On the Approval of the Draft Law on Amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine on the Decentralization of Power," Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2015, accessed May 23, 2019, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/en/656-19?lang=uk.

Constitution, an assault was carried out against the building of the Verkhovna Rada. During the attack One of the participants of the action threw a military grenade in front of the law enforcement officers who were guarding the building. As a result of the clashes, four fighters of the National Guard died, 141 people were injured (including 131 policemen and a fighter of the National Guard).[955] Following this event, Ukrainian parliament halted to pass the amendments to constitution on decentralization of power. Some of Ukrainian experts urge that the constitutional amendments on the decentralization of power are necessary in order implement the reforms.[956]

However, opinion polls show that there is no consensus among Ukrainians in terms of the constitutional amendments. In the regional context, the provision of the 'special status' to the occupied territories with its consolidation in the Constitution seems to be the most unacceptable for the residents of the Center (59%) and the West (55%), in the Donbass, the gap between those who would agree to such a compromise and those for whom it is unacceptable, minimal: 39% and 41%, respectively, and for the residents of the East this proposal is quite acceptable (44% - for, 32% against), and in particular, the prospect of 'special status' of certain territories of Donetsk and Lugansk regions in the South is supported (47% - for, 29% - against).[957]

The law on 'Special Status' which was adopted by the Ukrainian parliament for 3 three years in 2014 was extended in January 2018 after radical reformulation of the content. The reformulated law titled as "draft law No. 7163 on special aspects of state policy to ensure Ukraine's state sovereignty in temporarily occupied areas in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts."[958]

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[955] "Під Радою Пом'янули Загиблих Від Бойової Гранати Рік Тому Гвардійців," *Ukrainskaya Pravda*, 2016, accessed May 23, 2019, https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2016/08/31/7119174/.

[956] "Експерти Розповіли, Чому Треба Терміново Внести Зміни До Конституції у Частині Про Децентралізацію," *Ukranine Crisis-Media Center*, 2019, accessed May 23, 2019, http://uacrisis.org/ua/70467-decentralization-amendments-to-constitution.

[957] "Мир На Донбасі: Чи За Будь-Яку Ціну? – Громадська Думка," *Ilko Kucheriv «Democratic Initiatives» Foundation*, 2018, accessed May 23, 2019, https://dif.org.ua/article/mir-na-donbasi-chi-za-bud-yaku-tsinu-gromadska-dumka13890.

[958] Alya Shandra, "No Longer ATO, Not yet a War. Ukraine Adopts Controversial 'Donbas Reintegration' Bill," *Euromaidan Press*, 2018, accessed May 23, 2019, http://euromaidanpress.com/2018/01/18/ukraine-adopts-donbas-reintegration-bill-minsk/.

The new law did not mention the Minsk agreements. Instead, it directly referred to Article 51 of the United Nations Charter on right of individual and collective self-defense. Bypassing the separatist rulers in Donbas, the new law positioned Russian Federation directly as an aggressor state against Ukraine. The law neither mentioned 'war' nor 'Anti-Terrorist Operation' but it described the situation as "measures to ensure national security and defense, deterrence and repression of Russian armed aggression."[959] Ukrainian MP Oleksandr Bryhynets remarked that the 'Anti-Terrorist Operation' does not define the war in Donbas. For him, Ukraine is at war with another state, "which is connected to another type of war – a hybrid war."[960] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, criticizing the law, announced that the so-called Donbas Reintegration law is a scandalous and violation of Minsk agreements.[961]

Along with the abovementioned initiatives of Ukraine in order to the fulfillment of the Minsk agreements, there are several concerns of Kyiv officials which hinder the implementation of the agreements. In this process, the main concern of Ukraine appears in security issue. In fact, there is a contradiction in terms of agreeing the sequence of military and political measures. As noted, before, Ukraine may achieve full control in Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts, but this achievement can also undermine the sovereignty of Ukraine. Ensuring security in Donbas particularly at the border with Russian Federation is a vital issue for Kyiv in order to cease further Russian influence in Ukraine. For Ukraine, withdrawal of all military formations from Donbas is the prerequisite for implementation of political measures. In other word, guarantying security in Donbas is particularly important for accomplishing the Minsk agreements. For instance, the local elections specified in the agreement are

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[959] Shandra, "No Longer ATO, Not yet a War. Ukraine Adopts Controversial 'Donbas Reintegration' Bill,"

[960] Shandra.

[961] "Comment by the Information and Press Department on the Signing of the 'Donbass Reintegration' Law by the President of Ukraine," *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*, 2018, May 23, 2019, http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3090905.

impossible to be held unless the public order is restored in separatists controlled for Kyiv.[962]

Besides, to assure the participation of Internally Displaced People (IDP) in the local election, first, it is necessary to secure the public order for their return to Donbas. In addition, for holding the local elections, access of the Ukrainian parties, the media, the Central Election Commission and other officials, including the police and the judiciary to the region are essential. In this case, analysts such as Vasyl Filipchuk et al, state: "the elections in non-controlled territories are impossible without the settlement of security issues, as well as the issue of legal regime in this territory, restoring a minimum level of subordination and setting up infrastructure of interconnections between Kyiv and currently non-controlled territories."[963] Sabine Fischer, another scholar, also emphasizes that Ukraine prioritizes ensuring security in Donbas. For Fischer, Ukraine's argument is that it is not possible to "fulfil the political conditions until the ceasefire was permanent."[964]

In fact, reinstating its full control in Donbas before implementing political obligations of Minsk agreements contains certain risks from Ukraine's perspective. First, amnesty for separatists in Donbas means legalization of their rule in the territory. In such case, all military formations in Donbas can be easily converted to local police. Besides, legalizing the separatists' power in Donbas will halt Ukraine's pro-Western foreign policy because integrating the pro-Russian separatists into Ukraine with legal power will provide Russia an excellent tool to sabotage Ukraine's foreign policy direction. Second, decentralization of power by giving a special status to certain districts of Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts will create injustice in terms of true equal rights for all regions and it will harm the concept of the national unity and social cohesion. Discrimination among regions, most probable, will provoke other regions to demand the identical rights. In other word, decentralization of power as

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[962] Валерій Калиновський, "Переговори у Мінську: «мирний План Сайдіка» Щодо Донбасу Офіційно Не Обговорювали," *Радіо Свобода*, 2019, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/myrnyy-plan-saydika/29742389.html.

[963] Vasyl Filipchuk, Anatoliy Oktysiuk, and Yevgeniy Yaroshenko, "International Interim Administration as a Model for Conflict," *International Centre for Political Studies*, 2017, 7.

[964] Fischer, "The Donbas Conflict.", 12.

Jonathan Brunson emphasizes is an 'olive branch' to rest of the regions in eastern Ukraine such as Odessa or Kharkov which contains pro-Russian groups.[965]

Moreover, going further, some scholars argue that the Ukraine's effort in reintegrating Donbas is not worthy. Alexander J. Motyl, a prominent Ukrainian expert, states:

> Ukrainians must let go of the Donbas enclave and concentrate on the priority that lies plainly ahead-its survival as a democratic and prosperous Western nation. Let the Donbas work itself out at another time-when Ukraine is strong, Putin Russia is weak, and the Donbas population realizes the dreadful mistake it made in siding with the Kremlin's dictator.[966]

For Motyl, the war in Donbas will not come to an end even if Ukraine fulfil the Minsk obligations or other capitulations. The expert argues that the Ukrainians will continue to die as long as Vladimir Putin wants them to die and the war will not end unless he wants to finish. Motyl concludes that "disengaging from the occupied Donbas psychologically, ideologically, and politically is imperative."[967] In this case, Jonathan Brunson claims that neither pro-Russian separatists want to reunify with Ukraine nor Ukraine is reluctant to reintegrate pro-Russian residents of Crimea and Donbas. Additionally, he stresses that Ukraine does not want to win Donbas war because of its reconstraction cost. According to Brunson, 'loser gets Donbas' is a common joke regarding the crisis.[968]

Despite abovmentioned radical views on Donbas War, it should be noted neither the full implemention of political obligations of Minsk agreements nor disengaging Donbas can guarantee ending the war in Ukraine. As noted, in former case Ukraine legalizes the separatist rulers in Donbas and integrating those leaders into Ukraine's politic means halting the pro-Western forein policy. In the later scnerio, separatists

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[965] Jonathan Brunson, "Implementing the Minsk Agreements Might Drive Ukraine to Civil War. That's Been Russia's Plan All Along," *War on the Rocks*, 2019, accessed May 24, 2019, https://warontherocks.com/2019/02/implementing-the-minsk-agreements-might-drive-ukraine-to-civil-war-thats-been-russias-plan-all-along/.

[966] Alexander J. Motyl, "Ukraine's United Future Depends on Leaving Donbas in Its Divided Past," *Uapost*, 2016, accessed May 24, 2019, http://www.uapost.us/en/news/ukraines-united-future-depends-on-leaving-donbas-in-its-divided-past/.

[967] Motyl, "Ukraine's United Future Depends on Leaving Donbas in Its Divided Past."

[968] Brunson, "Implementing the Minsk Agreements Might Drive Ukraine to Civil War. That's Been Russia's Plan All Along."

penetrations towards Ukraine's territories will continue. Simply, first, the separatist leaders will demand the rest of the territories of the Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts or even further destabilization of other regions can be anticipated. Under such stalemate, removal of all military formations from Donbas and controling the border with Russian Federation is particulary vital for Ukraine. Only after securing its borders and re-establising public order in Donbas can Ukraine allow elections in Donbas which is mentioned in Minsk agreements. Otherwise, implementing the agreements mean legitimizing the governance of Donbas by the separartists. Following part questions the Russia's position regarding the Minsk Agreements.

7.5. Minsk Agreements and Russian Federation

Ukraine from the beginning of the crisis aimed to design Russia as a part of the conflict in Donbas. However, Russia, denying its presence in Donbas define the Donbas war as a civil war or internal conflict of Ukraine. Indeed, although Russia is one of the representatives in the Trilateral Contact Group, Minsk agreements do not mention Russia and do not assume any responsibility directly for Russia. Even, Point 10 of the Minsk Protocol only indirectly refers to Russia's obligations. It states "to withdrawal of all illegal armed groups and military equipment as well as fighters and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine" which does not directly points Russian forces.[969]

In general, there are three levels of Donbas conflict: 'Russia versus the West World' (geopolitical conflict); Russia versus Ukraine (bilateral conflict) and Kyiv versus self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (an internal conflict).[970] As it is known, for Russia, the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan events were sponsored by the West. From the Kremlin's point of view those developments were the part of NATO's enlargement project towards Russia which is unacceptible. Therefore, Kremlin officials do not refuse meeting with the US authorities to negotioate the conflict in Donbas. In this level, American-Russian meetings took

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[969] "Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements," 2015.

[970] Jakob Hedenskog, "The Feasibility of a UN Peacekeeping Mission in Donbas: Views from Ukraine and Russia," *Swedish Defence Research Agency*, no. June (2018): 1-4.

place in Volker-Surkov format, headed by Russian President Vladimir Putin's aide Vladislav Surkov and US Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations Kurt Volker.[971]

So far, Kurt Volker and Vladislav Surkov held four meetings. The first talk between two officials took place in August 2017 in Minsk. The Minsk talk was followed by two meetings in October and November 2017 in Belgrade. The last meeting held in January 2018 in Dubai.[972] The next meeting was scheduled in following months of 2018 but the Russian side refused to meet. The represantotars negotioate mainly the ways to implement Minsk agreements and the deployment of UN Peacekeeping mission in Donbas. Regarding the meetings Vladimir Yelchenko, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the US stated that "there is no unity or progress there. Progress depends on the Surkov-Volker track that seems to be 'on the verge of death'. They have not met since January. They haven't made any decisions."[973] According to Kurt Volker, Ukraine must fullfill the obligations of the Minsk agreements but it is not easy due to Russia's attitude. In this case, Volker state:

> The Ukrainian side will have to fulfill its part of the Minsk agreements. Ukrainians must fulfill their part, which implies respecting the ceasefire, although now it is difficult for them to implement it, because Russia is fighting on the other side of the front line.[974]

In contrast, from Kremlin's point of view, the West's delivery of weapons, including lethal arms, to Ukraine makes the situation worse in Donbas. According to Alexei Chesnakov, head of the Russian Center for Current Politics, the consequences of the West military aid is a half-baked step. For Chesnakov, the Ukrainian authorities can think about changing status quo in Donbas reliying on the West aid which can cause

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[971] "Russia's FM Lavrov Announces New Volker-Surkov Meeting Soon," *UNIAN*, 2018, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.unian.info/world/10232919-russia-s-fm-lavrov-announces-new-volker-surkov-meeting-soon.html.

[972] "Permanent Representative of Ukraine to UN: Talks between Volker and Surkov Are 'on the Verge of Death,'" *Uawire*, 2018,accessed May 24, 2019, http://www.uawire.org/permanent-representative-of-ukraine-to-the-un-talks-between-volker-and-surkov-are-on-the-verge-of-death.

[973] "Permanent Representative of Ukraine to UN: Talks between Volker and Surkov Are 'on the Verge of Death.'"

[974] "Volker: Implementation of Minsk Agreements by Russia, Ukraine to Bring Peace in Donbas," *Kyiv Post*, May 2019, accessed May 27, 2019, https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/volker-implementation-of-minsk-agreements-by-russia-ukraine-to-bring-peace-in-donbas.html.

another tragedy in Donbas.[975] On one hand, Chesnakov blames the West on escalating the Donbas crisis. On the other hand he emphasizes that the West's assistant to Kyiv will not change the balance of Power in Donbas. Moreover, Russia sees the Donbas war as a cosequences of United States's war against Russian Federation. Thereby, from Kremlin's perpective, Ukraine is not an independent state but an actor controlled by Washington. Therefore, it can be concluded that so far, the meetings in geopolitical level between Russia and the United States have not produced any result to resolve the conflict in Donbas.[976]

Correspondingly, due to its denial being a part of Donbas war, Moscow refuses bilateral level of the Donbas war. In other word, Moscow different from Kyiv denies the argument of Donbas war as a war between Ukraine and Russia. Instead, Russia prefers to approach the crisis as an internal conflict of Ukraine. Therefore, according to Kremlin, the causes of the war in Donbas lies at heart of internal political and social structure of Ukraine. In this context, Russia pressurizes Kremlin to recognize the so-called leaders of the self-proclaimed the DPR and the LPR as official negotiators in order to resolve the conflict. To response the proofs which shows Russia's military presence in Donbas, Moscow argue that the active Russian soldiers in Donbas are the volunteers not official soldiers.[977]

During the first meeting in Minsk, despite Ukraine's objection, Russia managed to include the heads of the self-proclaimed DPR and LPR, Alexander Zakharchenko and Igor Plotnitsky respectively, in the negotiation. Therefore, along with the representative of the OSCE, Ukraine and Russia the leaders of the separatists signed the Minsk Protocol on September 5, 2014. In fact, at the end of Minsk agreements, Russia was the only winner. Implementation of the Minsk agreements well serves on

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[975] "Three Years of Minsk Agreements on Ukraine Fail to Produce Significant Results — Expert," *TASS*, 2018, accessed May 27, 2019, http://tass.com/world/989646.

[976] Fischer, "The Donbas Conflict.", 22.

[977] "Kremlin Says Only Ukrainians Can and Must Settle Donbass Conflict," *TASS*, 2019, accessed August 12, 2019, https://tass.com/politics/1052591.

the interest of Moscow. From the beginning of the conflict, Russia showed no intention to absorb Donbas as a it did in Crimea.[978]

As noted in previous chapters, right after the so-called referendum in May 2014, separatist leaders showed their desire to be part of Russian federation and they even asked Russia to annex Donbas. However, Russia did not repeat Crimean scenario in Donbas. That was due to the annexation of Donbas run counter to the national interest of Russia. In the case of annexing Donbas Moscow could lose its leverage on Ukraine and could not be able to maintain its influence in Ukrainian political landscape. In such scenario, most probable Ukraine had to stop fighting in Donbas as it did in Crimea. Therefore, Russia's ultimate goal in Donbas was not a direct occupation but transfer the region back to Ukraine but under certain conditions. Those Moscow's preferred conditions are mainly listed in the Minsk agreements. First, Russia aims to federalize Ukraine in order to be able to Ukraine's pro-Western orientations particularly its possible NATO membership.

Moscow can achieve its aim in Donbas in case of fulfillment of the Minsk agreements because the accords include decentralization of power in Ukraine through the constitutional amendments. Hence, implementing the Minsk agreements mean to secure autonomy for Donbas while ensuring amnesty for all separatists who participated in Donbas war. By reintegrating Donbas into Ukraine in the frame of Minsk agreements Russia well achieves its ultimate goal in Ukraine. In fact, Russia insists on the implementation of the Minsk agreements and it is reluctant to accept any alternative to agreements. In this context, Boris Gryzlov, Moscow's chief representative in the Minsk Contact Group, stated that "Russia's position has been consistent, we believe that the path to peace in Donbas is through faithfully implementing the Minsk Agreements."[979] He also implied that Russia is not an actor in Donbas conflict but a mediator helping to resolve the conflict. Hence, Gryzlov noted: "the conflict that the Contact Group is designed to resolve is an internal conflict in Ukraine. The Minsk Package of Measures clearly says that there are two

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[978] Paul Roderick Gregory, "Putin Comes Out On Top In New Minsk Agreement," *Forbes*, 2015, https://www.forbes.com/sites/paulroderickgregory/2015/02/13/putin-comes-out-on-top-in-new-minsk-agreement/#327a505b4ede.

[979] "Russian Envoy Perplexed by OSCE Representative's Initiative on Donbass," *TASS*, 2019, accessed May 25, 2019, http://tass.com/politics/1042204.

parties to the conflict: Ukraine's central government and certain areas of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions."[980]

Even though Russia insists on the implementation of the Minsk agreement, in fact every situation seems reasonable for it. Jonathan Brunson, an expert on asymmetric warfare notes that "Putin's Russia wins all variants: status quo, de-escalation, and escalation [in Donbas conflict]."[981] To investigate Brunson's argument it can be said that status quo in Donbas ensures Moscow's influence in Ukraine and weakens Ukraine's pro-Western integration process while de-escalation of the conflict through Minsk agreements provides Kremlin an opportunity to deploy its tools in Ukraine permanently. An autonomous Donbas in Ukraine can easily work for Moscow's purpose. Besides, escalation of the conflict also would serve very well for Kremlin's aim. Escalation of conflict in Donbas can be compared with the war in South Ossetia in 2008. As known, Russia had directly declared war against Georgia in summer 2008. At that time, Russia had attacked Georgia by using the Tbilisi's offensive in the South Ossetia as an excuse. Alike offensive is probable in the case of escalation in Donbas conflict.[982]

However, Moscow does not prefer neither status quo nor escalation but fulfillment of the Minsk agreements in Donbas conflict for mainly two reasons: Resolving the conflict through Minsk negotiations Russia will be able to present itself as a mediator in Ukraine's crisis and thereby as a peace loving actor in international arena; resolution of Donbas conflict can help Russia to get rid of the sanctions the West is imposing since 2014. In this case, the latter reason is more important than the former one.

As known, in March and July as well as August and September 2014, the EU countries along with the USA, Canada, Japan and Australia were adopted numerous restrictive measures against Russian Federation. These sanctions include areas such

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[980] "Russian Envoy Perplexed by OSCE Representative's Initiative on Donbass."

[981] Brunson, "Implementing the Minsk Agreements Might Drive Ukraine to Civil War. That's Been Russia's Plan All Along."

[982] Tomas Valasek, "Can the West Help Prevent an All-out War between Russia and Georgia?," *The Guardian*, 2008, accessed May 25, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/aug/08/russia.georgia.

as defense cooperation, sensitive technology, export of dual-use products and restrictions on access to capital markets. In addition, visa bans have been imposed on Russian politicians, businessmen, and the 'leaders' of occupied Crimea and Donbas.[983] Although these sanctions are insufficient to change Russia's policy in Donbas the consequences of them along with the low oil prices have a substantial negative impact on Russia's economy. Therefore, Russian authorities aim to lift the sanctions as a result of the resolution of Donbas conflict through the implementation of the Minsk agreements. The next part questions The UN Peacekeeping Mission in Donbas as an alternative approach for assuring the peace in the Eastern Ukraine.

7.6. The UN Peacekeeping Mission in Donbas

Since the conflict erupted in Donbas September 2014 and February 2015 Minsk agreements are the only two and identical agreements in resolving the conflict. As detailed in previous parts, these agreements were not signed by the head of the conflict parties. This was understandable from Moscow's point of view because Russian officials did not see their country as an actor in the Donbas conflict but a mediator to help in finding a resolution to Ukraine's 'internal conflict'. Hence, Moscow appointed Mikhail Zurabov, Russian Ambassador to Ukraine (2009-2016) to represent Russia in Minsk and sign the agreements on behalf of Russian Federation. In fact, the ambassador's signature did not bind Russian Federation legally. According to the Russian legislation, only the President of Russia has right to sign a treaty on behalf of Russian Federation. Thus, the documents which Zurabov signed in Minsk can be seen just a political commitment of Kremlin.[984]

At the same time, Kyiv's perspective was exactly opposite to Moscow's view. First of all, Ukraine gave consent to Minsk negotiations due dramatic defeats first in Ilovaisk and then in Debaltseve. Therefore, for Kyiv authorities Minsk talks were an

[983] Naja Bentzen and Evarts Anosovs, "Briefing Minsk Peace Agreement: Still to Be Consolidated on the Ground," *European Parliamentary Research Service Briefing*, no. February (2015), accessed November 27, 2018, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/EPRS-Briefing-548991-Minsk-peace-summit-FINAL.pdf.

[984] "Federal Law 'On International Treaties of the Russian Federation,'" Consultant Plus, 1995, accassed May 28, 2019, http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_7258/.

obligatory process to stop the war and thereby to prevent further territorial loss. The content of the Minsk agreements was not welcomed by neither Kyiv officials nor Ukrainian society except decreasing the tension of the war in Donbas. Likewise, Zurabov, Leonid Kuchma's signature also did not legally bind Ukraine because despite the fact that President Poroshenko authorized Kuchma to represent Ukraine in Trilateral Contact Group, signing international treaties on behalf of Ukraine demands Ukrainian legislation.[985] In brief, the Minsk agreements were necessary for Ukraine in order to cease the conflict but the accords were not seen by the Ukrainian officials as a process which could genuinely be a solution to Donbas war.

In these premises, Ukraine were looking for an alternative to Minsk agreements. In this context, following month of the Minsk-II agreement, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko proposed another option in order to implement Minsk agreements. The president proposed to launch a UN peacekeeping mission in the East of Ukraine in March 2015. The proposal aimed to broaden the political solution for Donbas conflict by supporting the Minsk agreements. Poroshenko's proposal included following obligations:

> A) overseeing pull-out of all heavy weapons in the Donbas; b) supporting withdrawal of all foreign armed formations and military equipment, as well as mercenaries, from certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions; c) disarming all illegal groups; d) helping Ukraine reinstate full control of its border; e) ensuring the release and exchange of all hostages and unlawfully detained persons; f) supporting the OSCE's SMM; and g) overseeing free and fair elections in the Donbas.[986]

By this proposal, Ukrainian president showed once again that ensuring security in Donbas particularly on the border with Russian Federation is a high priority for Ukraine and political promises of Minsk accords such as conducting election can be fulfilled only after re-establishing public order in the region. However, Poroshenko's initiative was halted by Russia's opposition in the United Nations Security Council. In contrast, Russia offered his own version of UN peacekeeping mission in

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[985] "Analysis of Set of Measures to Implement the Minsk Agreements of March 12, 2015 and Related Acts," Institute of Law and Society, 2017, accessed May 28, 2019, http://ils.ooo/en/proekti/7-analiz-kompleksnikh-zakhodiv-po-vikonannyu-minskikh-ugod-vid-2-bereznya-2015-roku-ta-suputnikh-aktiv.

[986] "Potential UN Mission in the Donbas," *Rasmussen Global*, 2017, accessed May 29, 2019, https://rasmussenglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/UN-Mission-in-the-Donbas.pdf.

Donbas.[987]

On September 5, 2017, Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed a UN mission to Donbas only along the line of contact between Ukrainian troops and separatist forces in order to protect the OSCE SMM and civilians.[988]

Table 4. Russian and Ukrainian Proposals of UN Peacekeeping Mission in Donbas

UN peacekeeping mission in Donbas	Russia	Ukraine
Mandate	Protect OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Donbas	Establish peace and territorial integrity of Ukraine
Strengths	1,000+	20,000+
Contributors	No NATO countries	Neither Russia nor its allies
Equipment	Lightly armed	Combat-grade
Duration	6 months	Up to 3 years
Area	Restricted to Contact Line	Both sides of contact line and along Ukrainian-Russian border

Source: Walter Feichtinger and Hanna Grininger, "UN Mission into The Donbas: New Perspectives for The Ukrainian Crisis and Conflict Management," *IFK Monitor International*, 2018, 2-3.

Putin's proposal was not detailed and included a narrow mandate only for six months. Ukrainian officials and their Western supporters were skeptical about Kremlin's proposal because for them, the small number of UN forces in Donbas along the contact line envisaged in Putin's proposal did not aimed to end the conflict but freeze the conditions as it was. Moreover, Kyiv claimed that a limited UN

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[987] Kostyantyn Honcharov, "What Russian 'Peacekeepers' Want," *UNIAN*, 2017, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.unian.info/politics/2121211-what-russian-peacekeepers-want.html.

[988] Walter Feichtinger and Hanna Grininger, "UN Mission into The Donbas: New Perspectives for The Ukrainian Crisis and Conflict Management," *IFK Monitor International*, 2018, 2-3, accessed May 29, 2019,
http://www.bundesheer.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/ifk_monitor_47_int_feichtinger_grininger_donbass_juni_18_web.pdf.

peacekeeping mission along the contact line would only serve for legitimation of the border between self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics and Ukraine. Walter Feichtinger and Hanna Grininger summarizes the UN peacekeeping mission proposals of Ukraine and Russia as it presented in table 4.

When we look at the proposals of Ukraine and Russian Federation regarding deployment of UN peacekeeping mission in Donbas it can be seen that disagreement of the implementation of the Minsk accords continues by other means. As noted, before, Ukraine demands withdrawal of all illegal military formations from Donbas and reinstate Ukrainian international border in Donbas. Therefore, only after addressing these security concerns, Kyiv is willing to meet the political obligations of the Minsk accords. In contrast, Russia does not propose UN troops to be deployed at the Russian-Ukrainian border. For Kremlin, UN peacekeeping mission should be stationed at the contact line and should secure the OSCE mission. These views are also shared by the Ukrainian and Russian experts. A research conducted by Razumkov Centre together with the Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung compares expert opinions from both countries. According to Ukrainian experts, the sequence of implementing the Minsk accords under the control of UN peacekeeping mission should be:

> First, to ensure a stable security regime; Second, to establish a legal framework for socio-economic activity in the occupied territories in line with Ukrainian legislation; Third, reinstatement of Ukrainian government institutions on the occupied territories, support of justice processes, transitional justice and reconciliation in line with Ukrainian legislation; Fourth, to ensure the functioning of media (television, newspapers, radio, Internet media) in line with Ukrainian legislation; Finally, organizing legitimate elections to local self-government authorities in the occupied territories in line with Ukrainian legislation.[989]

As it is seen in the quotation, Ukrainian experts prioritize security issue in order to re-establish peace in Donbas. In contrast, Russian experts think opposite sequence of Ukrainian thinkers to implement Minsk accords and for them, UN peacekeeping troops should support the fulfillment of the Minsk obligations. For them, to establish peace in Donbas, following steps should be executed: "First, to ensure smooth

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[989] Valeriya Klymenko and Anna Pashkova, eds., *Russian-Ukrainian Conflict: Prospects and Parameters of UN Peacekeeping Mission in Donbass* (Kyiv: Zapovit Publisher, 2018), 128.

operation of the OSCE mission; Second, to help ensure safety of civilian population (the police component); Third, after elections are held and the main provisions of the Minsk agreements are implemented, to assist in mine clearance of the conflict area, withdrawal of heavy weapons, ammunition."[990] Different from their Ukrainian counterparts, Russian experts think that withdrawal of military formations from Donbas can be accomplished after elections are held in Donbas. These overlapping ideas reflect in the proposals of UN Peacekeeping Mission to Donbas and thereby undermine alternative views to find out a resolution for Donbas conflict.[991]

Additionally, international experts are also pessimist about deploying UN peacekeeping mission to Donbas due to Russia's reluctance of abandoning the Russian-Ukrainian border in occupied Donbas. In this regard, Susan Stewart, a German scholar, states: "it is hardly imaginable that the Russian leadership will develop a willingness to return control over the Russian-Ukrainian border in the occupied areas to Ukraine."[992] Richard Gowan, a prominent scholar, examined whether UN peacekeeping mission can unite Ukraine or not. For Gowan, the peacekeeping mission can successfully restore the territorial integrity of Ukraine in Donbas only if the mission's forces are strong enough (around 20,000 troops) and stationed at the Russian border in order to reassure Kyiv against any potential incursions of Russian regular forces.[993]

In brief, it can be said that UN Peacekeeping Mission in Donbas is an alternative view to resolve Donbas conflict proposed by Ukrainian officials in March 2015. Although Ukrainian proposal was vetoed in UN Security Council by Russia, in September 2017, Putin offered his own version of UN mission to Donbas. However, the contents of these two proposals coincide with each other. Indeed, the problem of the implementation Minsk accords reflected in the proposal of UN peacekeeping mission too. While Ukrainian side proposed to deploy UN troops at the border

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[990] Klymenko and Pashkova, 130.

[991] Klymenko and Pashkova, *Russian-Ukrainian Conflict: Prospects and Parameters of UN Peacekeeping Mission in Donbass*, 130.

[992] Klymenko and Pashkova, *Russian-Ukrainian Conflict: Prospects and Parameters of UN Peacekeeping Mission in Donbass*, 151.

[993] Richard Gowan, "Can the United Nations Unite Ukraine?," *Hudson Institute*, 2018, accessed June 3, 2019, https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.hudson.org/files/publications/UkraineJan29.pdf.

between occupied territory of Donbas and Russia, Kremlin aimed to legalize the DPR and LPR borders by deploying UN forces in the contact line. As we noted before, for Ukraine, ensuring security in Donbas is the first condition to resolve the conflict while for Russia, illegal armed formations can withdraw from Donbas only after decentralization of power in Ukraine and holding elections in the oblasts.

7.7. Conclusion

Finding a solution for the protracted war in Donbas is the major problem for Ukraine since 2014. However, the conditions do not only depend on the will of Ukrainian authorities. In this chapter, peace negotiations on Donbas War are scrutinized. In this respect, peace talks from June 2014 to September 2014, are presented. The Minsk I ceasefire agreement particularly are analyzed. Subsequently, violations of the ceasefire agreements are emphasized which pawed the way for to sign a second ceasefire agreement which is also called Minsk II. Thereafter, pros and cons of the Minsk Agreements are examined for Ukraine and Russia. In this case, it is argued that the despite the fact that both countries are eager to implement the articles of the agreements, they are not agreed on the sequence of the implementation of these articles. In this context, the main priority of Kyiv is to ensure security in Donbas and then to work on the political conditions of the Minsk Agreements such as constituting a special status for the territory. Kyiv avoids any action which can legalize the governance of separatists in Donetsk and Lugansk regions.

In contrast, Moscow blames Ukrainian officials for not acting in conjunction with the promises of Minsk Agreements. For Moscow, first, political promises should be fulfilled, and then foreign military formations can be removed from the Donbas territory. The main aim of Kremlin by proposing the implementation of the Minsk Agreements is to achieve the federalization of Ukraine. In this case, Russia not only can be a dominant actor in Donbas but also it can be stationed at the heart of political system of Ukraine. In federalized Ukraine, Kremlin can easily block the Western orientations of Kyiv. Therefore, the sequence of the fulfillment of Minsk Agreements are the main stalemate for achieving peace in Donbas.

In addition, the chapter also analyzed the UN peacekeeping mission to Donbas as an alternative approach to the peace process. In this regard, it is claimed that the UN peacekeeping mission to Donbas is welcomed by both countries, particularly by Ukraine. By the UN peacekeeping mission Ukraine aims to secure its borders with Russian Federation and thereby to cut Russian support to Donbas militants. Therefore, Kyiv support a strong UN peacekeeping mission in Donbas. In contrast, Russia agrees with the peacekeeping mission only to be stationed in the contact line not at the border with Ukraine. In fact, initially, Russia disapproved the UN peacekeeping mission in Donbas. However, Moscow proposed its own version of the UN peacekeeping mission to Donbas. By stationing the UN troops at the contact line, Russia aims to push Ukraine beyond the contact line and thereby, strengthen its presence in Ukraine. As a result, none of countries come to an agreement about the UN peacekeeping mission to be positioned in Donbas. The next chapter studies a similar case to Donbas Conflict in order to achieve better understanding of the conflict.

CHAPTER 8

COMPARING THE UKRAINIAN WAR WITH GEORGIAN WAR

8.1. Introduction

The war in Donbas is not a unique phenomenon in post-Soviet space. The conflicts which Russia somehow plays critical role take place in Transdniestria (Moldova) as well as in Nagorno Karabakh (Azerbaijan). However, the wars in Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Georgia) have much more resemblances with the war in Donbas. In both cases, Russia not only backs the separatists indirectly but also use its regular troops when the circumstances require it. Moreover, Russia conducts a hybrid war method in Georgia too which pioneered the Ukraine case. Therefore, comparing Georgia case to the Ukraine one will help us better understand the hybrid war in Donbas.

As presented in Ukraine case, this chapter, first presents historical developments in Georgia which led the secession of its two territories from Tbilisi. This section is significant because it shows us how Russia uses internal factors as a tool against the parent states of the self-proclaimed republics in Georgia just like in Ukraine. Second part of the chapter focuses on military dimension of the Russia's hybrid war in Georgia. It particularly pays attention on how Russia deployed its troops in Georgia in 1990s before scrutinizing the August 2008 war. Subsequently, political initiatives of Russia to keep Georgia in its sphere of influence are examined. The fourth part investigates economic component of the hybrid war Georgia. In this regard, it is emphasized how Russia uses its economic relations as a leverage against Georgia. Thereafter, information aspect of the war in Georgia is analyzed. The final part draws attention on the cyber component of the Russia's hybrid war in Georgia.

8.2. Georgian-Russian War

On 8 August 2008, a war took place between Russia and Georgia which lasted five days.[994] This war can be shown as an example of Russia's hybrid war tactics before Ukraine case. Along with military tools August War were composed by political, economic, information and cyber-attack. Although physical war continued very short time period, its beginning and finishing dates are unclear. Inconclusive character of the war makes us to think it as a method of hybrid war rather than a conventional battle. Though August War itself contains the elements of hybrid tactic it is critical to consider the pre-August and the post-August period as well to comprehend blended elements of the war. As General Valery Gerasimov postulates: "the use of non-military means should be considered precisely as a component of warfare, which is not disconnected from military means but that can be deployed also in peacetime."[995] Therefore, before analyzing August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia, this chapter overviews how Russia deployed hybrid means in Georgia before the war broke out.

8.2.1 Background of the War

Historically, it would not be wrong to state that the ethnic tensions in Caucasus is parallel to the policy shift in Moscow.[996] End of the 1980s witnessed dramatic changes in Moscow which had great impact on new ethnic strife in Georgia. Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of *perestroika* paved the way for new inter-ethnic conflict within Georgia. In 1918, first time the South Ossetian people were separated from the North Ossetians. During the USSR, South Ossetia was an autonomous region under the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic (GSSR) while North Ossetia remained as an autonomous republic within the Russian SSR. In this case, the idea of unification with the North Ossetia revealed in South Ossetia in 1990. On 20 September, South

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[994] Sergei Goryashko, "South Ossetia: Russia Pushes Roots Deeper into Georgian Land," *BBC News*, 2018, accessed August 12, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-45100160.

[995] Niklas Nilsson, "Russian Hybrid Tactics in Georgia," *Silk Road Paper*, no. January (2018), 18.

[996] Alexandros Petersen, "The 1992-93 Georgia-Abkhazia War: A Forgotton Conflict," *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 2, no. 4 (2008): 192.

Ossetian leaders declared the establishment of the South Ossetian Soviet Democratic Republic separate from Georgian SSR. This decision perceived as an anti-Georgian movement among ethnic Georgians. In October 1990, nationalist leader, Zviad Gamsakhurdia came to power in Georgian Supreme Soviet with the slogan of 'Georgia for Georgians'.[997]

Gamsakhurdia abolished the autonomy of South Ossetia and declared state of emergency in the country. Inter-ethnic tension between Georgians and South Ossetians turned into full-scale war in spring 1991. Along with the election of Eduard Shevardnadze as President of Georgia in March 1992, both sides started to seek a more conciliatory position. As a result, the Dagomys Peace Agreement was signed on June 24, 1992, which prompted the deployment of a Joint Peacekeeping Force in the conflict zone. According to the agreement, the peacekeeping forces consisted of three 'national' battalions from Georgia, South Ossetia and Russia.[998]

Different form South Ossetia, Abkhazia was an independent Soviet Socialist Republic under the Soviet rule until 1931 when its status from being 'independent' turned to 'autonomous' republic within Georgian SSR. During Stalin's period, Georgians had been encouraged to settle in Abkhazia which created imbalance between Georgians and Abkhazians. Thus, by 1989, unlike other ethnic groups which demanded sovereignty, Abkhazians were not the majority in the region. For example, ethnic Georgians made up 46% of Abkhaz population while Abkhazians constituted just 18%.[999]

Nevertheless, Gorbachev's policy triggered separatist movement in Abkhazia as well. In March 1989, 30.000 Abkhaz separatists gathered in Lykhny village, the historical place of Abkhaz Princes. By signing a declaration to restore Abkhazian 1925 Constitution, they upgraded the status of Abkhazia to be 'sovereign' republic within USSR. When the news spread out, mass demonstrations showed up in Tbilisi

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[997] Tracey German, "Russia and South Ossetia: Conferring Statehood or Creeping Annexation?," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 16, no. 1 (2016): 157, doi:10.1080/14683857.2016.1148411.

[998] German, "Russia and South Ossetia: Conferring Statehood or Creeping Annexation?".

[999] Tracey German, "Abkhazia and South Ossetia: Collision of Georgian and Russian Interests," *Russie. Nei. Visions*, no. 11 (2006): 7.

to protest the declaration. Moreover, the aim of protest soon turned to pro-independence of Georgia from USSR. In Response, The Soviet troops harshly intervened in the demonstrations on 9 April 1989.[1000] Exactly after two years on 9 April 1991, Georgia declared its independence. Meanwhile, demonstrations in Abkhazia were pro-Soviet and Abkhaz leaders tried to portrait "an image of loyal Soviet citizens resisting anticommunist Georgian nationalism by lobbying Moscow for support."[1001]

In August 1992, the war between Georgia and Abkhazia broke out. After brutal fighting, Georgian army finally took control of Sukhumi. Russia sponsored the ceasefire between the belligerents, which the agreement was signed in Moscow on 3 September. The parties agreed on the territorial integrity of Georgia and the Georgian army was restricted in the region.[1002] The agreement envisaged not to use armed forces against each other and the deployment of international observers in the region. In addition, the agreement set out the peacekeeping forces, the Georgian, Abkhazian and Russian trio of temporary monitoring groups and the disarming of the conflict zone.[1003] In spite of the signed cease-fire agreement, on 27 September 1993, the Abkhaz forces launched a new offensive in Sukhumi, and in a very short period they almost dominated the whole Abkhazia. Several volunteer groups, "from Transnistrian Russians to Islamist terrorist Shamil Basayev's 'Chechen Battalion', joined the Abkhaz cause".[1004] The war continued for a few more months, and eventually the Georgian army was defeated at the end of 1993. On 14 May 1994, the parties signed a ceasefire agreement in Moscow. According to the agreement, Commonwealth of Independent States peacekeeping forces, composed of 1700 Russian peacekeepers were deployed and the UN observer group was formed to monitor the agreement.[1005]

[1000] Petersen, "The 1992-93 Georgia-Abkhazia War: A Forgotton Conflict.", 192-193.

[1001] Petersen, 193.

[1002] Helsinki Commission Report, "The Russian Occupation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia," 2018, accessed August 2, 2019, https://www.csce.gov/sites/helsinkicommission.house.gov/files/Occupation%20of%20Georgia%20De signed%20FINAL.pdf

[1003] Helsinki Commission Report, "The Russian Occupation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia,".

[1004] Petersen, "The 1992-93 Georgia-Abkhazia War: A Forgotton Conflict.", 196.

[1005] German, "Abkhazia and South Ossetia: Collision of Georgian and Russian Interests.", 7.

At the end of the South Ossetian-Georgian and Abkhazian-Georgian wars, Moscow achieved to deploy its forces in Georgian territory. Russia aimed to keep the region in its sphere of influence and the both ceasefire agreements ensured that goal. At the beginning of 1990s, Moscow's concrete demand from Georgia was to convince Tbilisi to join the CIS. Although Kremlin did not achieve this goal at the end of South Ossetian-Georgian War, it did manage to persuade Georgia to become a member of the CIS just before the ceasefire agreement between Georgia and Abkhazia. Dmitri Trenin summarizes Russia's involvement in these wars such as:

> Russia's aim appears to have been to try to restore its influence throughout the region, on all sides, in every conflict, in order to prevent developments from slipping out of control and so opening the floodgates to outside interference.[1006]

To conclude, it can be said that despite all its internal difficulties in early 1990s, Russia managed to deploy its troops between Georgian army and the separatists forces under the name of peacekeeping forces. In fact, under any name, it was important for Russia to maintain its military presence in Georgia. Therefore, Russia turned out to be profitable in Georgia in early 1990s. The next section pays attention to the military aspect of the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia.

8.2.2. Military Aspect

Military aspect is one the most significant elements of hybrid war which played decisive role during the 2008 Russian-Georgian War. As it is mentioned above, conflicts in Georgia at the beginning of 1990s played significant role to consolidate Russia's military presence in Georgia. Russia's involvement in the conflicts of South Ossetia and Abkhazia became even more critical when Tbilisi began to demand the abolishment of all Russia's military bases from Georgia. Although, Georgia allowed Russia to have four military bases in Abkhazia, Akhalkalaki, Batumi and near Tbilisi (Vaziani) in 1994, Georgia began to express its discomfort about this situation in late

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[1006] Dmitri Trenin, "Russia's Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region," in *Contested Borders In The Caucasus*, ed. Bruno Coppieters (Brussels: Vubpress, 1996), accessed March 21, 2019, http://poli.vub.ac.be/publi/ContBorders/eng/ch0301.htm

1990s.[1007]   As a result of the intensive diplomatic efforts of Georgia at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999, Russia has agreed to close its military bases in Georgia by July 2000. Russian troops left the military bases in Vaziani, Akhalkalaki and Batumi by November 2007. Consequently, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, after August 2008 War, became vital for Russia not only to maintain its military existence in Georgia but also strengthen its presence in the region.[1008]

The war between Georgia and Russia had been triggered by several skirmishes in and around Tskhinvali during the first week of August 2008. On August 1, an explosion took place in South Ossetia, which resulted in five Georgian police being injured. This explosion was assumed to have been made by South Ossetians. The same night, an intense conflict between the Georgians and the South Ossetians caused the death of six Ossetians along with fifteen wounded in Tskhinvali. The clashes that broke out again in August 6 resulted in the wounding of eighteen South Ossetia and two Georgian peacekeepers.[1009] The next day, when the clashes widened, Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili, appealed urgent negotiations and declared a unilateral ceasefire. Nevertheless, when the conflict continued, the Georgian army moved towards Tskhinvali and on August 8, took control over a large part of the city. This news was announced by the President Saakashvili. According to him, Georgian army liberated some parts of South Ossetia such as 'Tsinagari' and 'Znauri', along with the villages of 'Khetagurovo', 'Gromi' and 'Dmenisi'. For the president, the most part of Tskhinvali was under the control of Georgian army and they were moving towards the center of the city. However, the celebration of early victory for Georgia ended in a very short time when Russia involved in the war.[1010]

On August 8, around seven hours after the onset of Georgia's attack on Tskhinvali, Russian troops fell out of the Roki tunnel to engage Georgian forces. For the next 48

[1007] Ömer Kocaman, "Russia's Relations with Georgia Within the Context of the Russian National Interests Towards the South Caucasus in the Post-Soviet Era:1992-2005," *Uluslararası Stratejik Ataştırmalar Kurumu* 2, no. 3 (2007): 6.

[1008] Emmanuel Karagiannis, "The Russian Interventions in South Ossetia and Crimea Compared: Military Performance, Legitimacy and Goals," *Contemporary Security Policy* 35, no. 3 (2014): 404, doi:10.1080/13523260.2014.963965.

[1009] Europe Report No195, "Russia vs Georgia: The Fallout," *Group, International Crisis*, 2008, 2.

[1010] Vicken Cheterian, "The August 2008 War in Georgia: From Ethnic Conflict to Border Wars," *Central Asian Survey* 28, no. 2 (2009): 159, doi:10.1080/02634930903056768.

hours, Russian tank columns attacked Georgian troops in and around Tskhinvali. On 10 August, Russian forces managed to remove Georgian troops from Tskhinvali.[1011] Moreover, "the Russian air force attacked military targets in Gori, Vaziani, Senaki and Poti and destroyed Georgian anti-aircraft defense, communications systems and radars, as well as much of the Georgian naval forces."[1012] Simultaneously, the second front was opened in Upper Kodori Valley with the support of the Abkhaz forces. On August 12, the Abkhaz front launched a ground attack and controlled the Upper Kodori Valley which was under the rule of Abkhazia during the Soviet era.[1013]

The war finished when Russia announced the end of the military operations on 12 August, but the next day Russian troops entered Gori and stayed there until August 22. On August 18, Russia's elite forces occupied Poti city, where the most important port of Georgia was located.[1014] On August 15, the ceasefire agreement, which was prepared thanks to the efforts of French President Nicolas Sarkozy, was signed by Saakashvili. The following day the agreement was also signed by Russian President Medvedev. On October 8, Russia withdrew its troops from the undisputed territories of Georgia.[1015] Approximately 20,000 Russian soldiers took part in the war, with 10,000 of them in South Ossetia and 10,000 in Abkhazia.[1016]

According to scholars such as Ariel Cohen and Robert E. Hamilton Russia achieved its goal at the end of the war. First, Russia has severely weakened the Georgian army by attacking the critical military bases of Georgia. The second, the war was a good example for Russia in terms of testing how serious the West was in its relations with Georgia. Finally, at the end of the war, Russia managed to change the balance in its favor by strengthening the military presence in the region.[1017] Besides, as a result of

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[1011] Helen Womack and Mark Tran, "Russia Takes Control of South Ossetian Capital after Georgian Retreat," *The Guardian*, 2008, accessed August 2, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/aug/10/georgia.russia1.

[1012] Cheterian, "The August 2008 War in Georgia: From Ethnic Conflict to Border Wars."

[1013] Geneva Academy, "Georgia-Abkhazia: The Predominance of Irreconcilable Positions," 2018, 6.

[1014] Karagiannis, "The Russian Interventions in South Ossetia and Crimea Compared: Military Performance, Legitimacy and Goals.", 404.

[1015] Cheterian, "The August 2008 War in Georgia: From Ethnic Conflict to Border Wars.", 160.

[1016] No195, "Russia vs Georgia: The Fallout.", 3.

[1017] Ariel Cohen and Robert E. Hamilton, "The Russian Military and The Georgia War: Lessons And Implications," *The Strategic Studies Institute*, 2011, 21.

the war Russia took Georgia's NATO membership off the table for at least near future.[1018] In his speech to soldiers at a military base in Vladikavkaz, the former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev stated: "if you had faltered back in 2008, the geopolitical situation would be different now…And a number of countries which (NATO) tried to deliberately drag into the alliance, would have most likely already been part of it now."[1019]

On September 17, about a month after the war, Russia signed an 'Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Support' with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. According to the agreements, along with the other things, the parties undertake to defend each other's sovereignty and to give each other the right to build and use a military base in their territory.[1020] Additionally, following the annexation of the Crimea, Russia signed new agreements to advance its relations with South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The treaty on 'Alliance and Strategic Partnership' was signed on 24 November 2014 by Abkhazian 'President' Raul Khajimba and Vladimir Putin. According to the agreement, in case Abkhazia is attacked by any foreign forces, Russia and Abkhazia will respond it under a joint force.[1021]

In fact, even though the South Ossetian army had previously been under a single Russian command structure, the transfer of the South Ossetian armed forces and security institutions to their Russian counterparts was clearly marked by the signed agreement.[1022] The agreement envisions the unification of the armed forces, security agencies and customs authorities of Russia and South Ossetia. According to another agreement which was reached between Russia and South Ossetia, the latter almost absorbed by the former one. The 2015 Treaty on Alliance and Integration between the sides envisages:

[1018] Robert E Hamilton, "August 2008 and Everting After: A Ten-Year Retrospective on the Russia-Georgia War," *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 2008, 22.

[1019] Denis Dyomkin, "Russia Says Georgia War Stopped NATO Expansion," *Reuters*, 2011, accessed March 24, 2019, https://www.reuters.com/article/idININdia-60645720111121

[1020] Andre W. M. Gerrits and Max Bader, "Russian Patronage over Abkhazia and South Ossetia: Implications for Conflict Resolution," *East European Politics* 32, no. 3 (2016): 302.

[1021] Thomas Ambrosio and William A. Lange, "The Architecture of Annexation? Russia's Bilateral Agreements with South Ossetia and Abkhazia," *Nationalities Papers* 44, no. 5 (2016): 684.

[1022] Ambrosio and Lange., 687.

> The individual units of the Armed Forces and security agencies of the Republic of South Ossetia are part of the armed forces and security agencies of the Russian Federation by agreement of the contracting parties … The customs authorities of the Republic of South Ossetia will integrate with the customs authorities of the Russian Federation.[1023]

To sum up, Russia was and still is deploying its military forces in 'disputed' territories of Georgia which blocks Georgia's integration process to the West. Military aspect of hybrid tactic plays vital role for Russia to maintain its presence in its sphere of influence. As clarified, Russia has started to deploy its military forces under the name of 'peacekeepers' in Abkhazia and South Ossetia since 1990s. However, Moscow gradually increased its influence and became protector of these territories. During the 25th anniversary celebrations of its 'independence' in September 2015, South Ossetian President Leonid Tibilov called Russia as 'sole guarantor' of the state's security. South Ossetia celebrated the 25th anniversary of its 'independence', marking the occasion with a four-day holiday, as well as a military parade.[1024] Hence, Russia's military involvement in Georgia should be understood not only in the context of August 2008 war but it should be examined from a wider frame which contains both pre-August and as well as post-August War period. The next part deals with the political activities of Russia against Georgia as another element of hybrid tactics.

8.2.3. Political Aspect

Disintegration of Soviet Union challenged Russia's influence in entire Caucasus. Apparently, Moscow was the sole power throughout the Soviet period. However, this situation, which was in favor of Russia, changed after the collapse of the union and Russia became one of powers in the region along with the USA, the EU, Turkey, the UN and the OSCE.[1025] Therefore, Russia's diplomatic priority was to regain the power it had lost in Georgia. To do this, Russia had to take a strong position in peace

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[1023] German, "Russia and South Ossetia: Conferring Statehood or Creeping Annexation?", 159.

[1024] German., 155-156.

[1025] Tomas Hoch and Emil Souleimanov, "Russia's Role in the Peace Process in Abkhazia," in *Ausgewählte Sicherheitspolitische Fragen Im Südkaukasus*, ed. Martin Malek (Wien: Schriftenreihe der Landesverteidigungsakademie, 2013), 32.

negotiations between Georgia-South Ossetia and Georgia-Abkhazia. More importantly, Russia aimed to deploy its peacekeeper forces at the border between Georgia and its disputed territories. At the beginning, the UN was hesitant to give Russia a favorable position in the conflict but in the end, Russia managed to take an important role in this issue.[1026]

Although Russia succeed to deploy its military troops in secessionist territories of Georgia, its engagement with Georgia's affairs was multiple and inconsistent. This attitude of Moscow stemmed from mainly its internal politics. Even though Kremlin gave up its 'idealist' foreign policy of Euro-Atlanticism in early 1990s and began to consolidate its influence in its 'near abroad' Russia was not able to make decision from a unique center. According to Tomas Hoch and Emil Souleimanov, the multiple power centers of Moscow, related with Georgian issue, were consisted of "the Office of the President of the Russian Federation, the Russian Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, Russian Defense Ministry, the leadership of the political parties represented in State Duma and the regional elites from some parts of Russian Federation."[1027]

Therefore, Russia, on one hand, was supporting Shevardnadze to find out solution for the South Ossetian and Abkhazian wars as well as to suppress civil war in September-November 1993. Indeed, during the war time Russia supported Shevardnadze in response to his acceptance of CIS membership and permission to Russian military forces in Georgian territories.[1028] On the other hand, Moscow was providing unofficial support to Georgia's breakaway provinces. In short, Russia's policy against Georgia during the wartime can be called a 'chaotic involvement', as Dmitri Trenin stated.[1029]

Nevertheless, Moscow's unofficial support to secessionist regions ceased after the mid-1990s and the policy of rapprochement with Tbilisi revealed. The shift in Russia's policy towards Georgia evolved out of two factors. The first was the

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[1026] Hoch and Souleimanov., 26.

[1027] Hoch and Souleimanov. 36.

[1028] Svante E. Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus* (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005): 164-165.

[1029] Trenin, "Russia's Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region.", 101.

Chechen war that took place in 1994-1996, which resulted in the de facto independence of Chechnya, which was likely to spread to other regions in the northern Caucasus. The second was Georgia's membership of the CIS and the fact that it allowed Russia to host Russia's troops in the frame of Collective Security Treaty.[1030] Russia showed its support to Georgia at the CIS meeting on January 19, 1996, with an economic blockade against Abkhazia though it turned out that Russia was not so loyal to this declaration in practice.[1031]

Russia's support to Abkhazia and South Ossetia accelerated at the end of 1990s and at the beginning of 2000s due to its internal developments and because of Georgia's pro-Western orientations. When Putin became the president abovementioned diversification in power centers has vanished in Moscow. Putin suppressed Chechen revolt and ensured the territorial integrity of Russian Federation. These factors that developed in internal policy were the main reason which caused policy transformation of Russia towards Georgia's secessionist regions.[1032]

However, more important developments took place between Georgia and the West which had great impact on Russia's relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. When Georgian authorities realized that the territorial integrity of country will not be ensured through the mediation of Russia, they focused to improve relations with the West. Georgia began to participate in the NATO Partnership for Peace program and in 1996, signed its individual Partnership Plan. After two year, Georgia went one step further and opened a permanent diplomatic mission to NATO.[1033] In 2002, President Shevardnadze announced Georgia's will to join NATO. Besides, Georgia signed the 'Contract of the Century' (the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, which has not only economic but also political benefits). These are the main developments which caused a transformation in Russia's policy in relation with Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[1034]

[1030] Hoch and Souleimanov, "Russia's Role in the Peace Process in Abkhazia.", 34.

[1031] Hoch and Souleimanov., 35.

[1032] Hoch and Souleimanov.

[1033] "NATO-Georgia Cooperation," Ministry Of Defence of Georgia, accessed August 2, 2019, https://mod.gov.ge/en/page/38/nato-georgia-cooperation.

[1034] Ivlian Haindrava, "On The Role of Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-Ossetian Conflicts in Georgian-Russian Relations," *Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies*, 2017, 26.

After abovementioned developments, Russia strengthened its relations with Georgia's secessionist regions along with the disputed territories in post-Soviet space. The Russian authorities held periodic meetings with leaders of the separatist regions of Georgia and held a conference in September 2005 under the name of 'Commonwealth of Unrecognized States' with representatives from South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Transdniestria.[1035] In this regard, Tracey German states: "all of these regions are supported by Russia, and all are 'satellites' that have proved useful to Moscow as it seeks to achieve broader foreign policy objectives."[1036] In addition to Georgia's relations with the West, Kosovo's declaration of independence led to a more intense relationship between Abkhazia and Russia. On March 6, 2008, Russia lifted economic sanctions imposed on Abkhazia under the joint pressure of the CIS in 1996, and the Russian president issued a decree allowing direct links with Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[1037]

Obviously, Georgia improved its relations with the West to balance Russia's influence in the region, but this interaction escalated the relations with Russia and turned out the situation to a stalemate. Georgia's relations with West let alone to balance or deter Russia, increased Russia's support to South Ossetia and Abkhazia. On 26 August 2008, Russia recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. However, Niklas Nilsson argues that Russia's recognition of independence of these two regions weakened its hand to manipulate decision makers in Tbilisi.[1038] As presented, despite Russia's unofficial support to secessionist regions in Georgia, it avoided to recognize their independence before 2008. This political understanding was applied to Georgia to force the country to abandon its pro-Western foreign policy.

Although Nilsson has a point in his comment, Russia continues to sabotage Georgian diplomatic initiatives regarding the issue in the international arena. For example, In December 2008, Russia blocked the OSCE Mission to continue its activities in Georgia. Founded in 1992, the tenure of office was expected to be extended in

[1035] German, "Abkhazia and South Ossetia: Collision of Georgian and Russian Interests.", 11.

[1036] German, "Russia and South Ossetia: Conferring Statehood or Creeping Annexation?", 159.

[1037] Academy, "Georgia-Abkhazia: The Predominance of Irreconcilable Positions.", 5.

[1038] Nilsson, "Russian Hybrid Tactics in Georgia.", 29.

December 2008, but due to Russia's objection the office had to be closed. In June 2009, Russia also blocked the extension of the UN Observer Mission which was established in 1993 to monitor ceasefire agreement signed between Georgia and Abkhazia.[1039] Moreover, the so-called 'integration treaties', signed with Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2014 and 2015 respectively, show that Russia continues to use its relations with the South Ossetia and Abkhazia as a leverage or response to Georgia's Western-oriented foreign policy.[1040]

In addition, it should be noted that Russia's hybrid tactics are not immutable. According to the given circumstances, Russia adopts new tactics to influence Georgian authorities. In fact, Russia looks for every opportunity which can be used against Georgia. For instance, after his retirement, a Georgian soldier, Archil Tatunashvili, who was born and lived in Akhalgori, was captured by the KGB on February 20, 2018 and sent to Tskhinvali prison. According to the allegations, Tatunashvili was tortured to death in the time of the interrogation and his funeral was not deliberately delivered to his family.[1041] As a result of social pressure on the Georgian authorities, the government had to make concessions in foreign policy. In this regard, former Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili addressed the Russian government and asked Tatunashvili's funeral to be given to Georgia in order to ease social conscience. At the same time, he proposed an attempt to revive Russian-Georgian relations that deteriorated with the August 2008 War. Moreover, he signaled that a direct dialogue between Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Tbilisi could begin.[1042]

In this context, a columnist, David Avalishvili argues that it was even unthinkable for Georgia to launch any dialogue with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where it has avoided to recognize their legitimacy for years. However, Tbilisi had to approve a

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[1039] Report, "The Russian Occupation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.", 3.

[1040] Judy Dempsey, "Bye-Bye, Abkhazia, Crimea, South Ossetia!," *Carnegie Europe*, 2015, accessed March 29, 2019, https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/?fa=59550.

[1041] Janna Tarkhanova, "Who Is Moscow's Right-Hand Man in South Ossetia – the Current or Former President?," *JAM-News*, 2018, accessed August 12, 2019, https://jam-news.net/who-is-moscows-right-hand-man-in-south-ossetia-the-current-or-former-president/.

[1042] Giorgi Menabde, "Russia Employs New 'Hybrid War' Methods Against Georgia," *Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume*, 2018, accessed February 13, 2019, https://jamestown.org/program/russia-employs-new-hybrid-war-methods-georgia/.

direct dialogue thanks to the tactic applied by Moscow, which meant indirect recognition of the illegitimate formations Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Moscow turned the arrest and murder of Archil Tatunashvili into a leverage and finally achieved its goal. For Avalishvili, Moscow predicted that Georgian society would react emotionally and exert pressure on the government to make any deal with Moscow to get the funeral back.[1043]

Under such circumstances, it can be said that the next tactic of Kremlin to use as a leverage on Georgia is unpredictable since there are no fixed elements of hybrid war. Any occasion which can be used against Georgia can be adopted by Russia as another component of the hybrid war. However, Russia, most probably, will prefer such indirect and covert tactics to strengthen its power in the region rather than hard power. Kremlin can use such non-military means as long as the conditions does not require hard power. The following section concentrates on economic component of the Russia's hybrid war in Georgia.

8.2.4. Economic Aspect

Along with its military existence in Georgia's breakaway regions and political-diplomatic challenges in international arena Russia uses economic ties with Georgia as another means of hybrid tactics to achieve its goal in Georgia. To reduce its dependence on highly politicized market of Russian Federation Saakashvili launched economic reforms soon after he came to power in Georgia. After the Rose Revolution, the liberalization and pro-market reforms initiated by the Saakashvili government triggered economic growth in Georgia. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index presents the outcomes of Georgia's fight against corruption. In 2002, Georgia was on the 85th place among 102 countries, while in 2008 it was ranked 67th among 180 countries in terms of corruption measurement. In 2017, Georgia rose to 46th place among 180 countries.[1044] In the World Bank's report on Easy of Doing Business, Georgia was ranked 18th among 155 countries in 2008,

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[1043] Menabde, "Russia Employs New 'Hybrid War' Methods Against Georgia,".

[1044] Hamilton, "August 2008 and Everting After: A Ten-Year Retrospective on the Russia-Georgia War.", 16.

while it ranked 100th in 2006. In 2018, Georgia was ranked 6th in this list.[1045]

Although the economy of Georgia, which had been revived by the reforms, slowed down for a short period due to the August 2008 war, the growth continued. In addition to the reforms, Russia's economic embargo in 2006, had, ironically, a positive impact on the Georgian economy. Georgia had to diverse its trade flows due to the embargo, and this situation has reduced its dependence on Russia. Reforms of Saakashvili's United National Movement government and Russia's 2006 embargo, reduced Ukraine's economic dependence on Russia. For example, exports to Russia in 2012, was consisting only 2 percent of Georgia's overall exports. As a result, Russia's economic leverage on Georgia remained limited during Saakashvili period.[1046]

With the change of power in Georgia in 2012, a new opportunity emerged to enable Russia to use its economy as a component of hybrid war. In 2012, the Georgian Dream party took over the government with an agenda of 'normalizing' relations with Russia. The new government focused on reopening Russian markets for Georgian products. The initiatives of Georgian Dream succeed when Russia lifted the embargo in 2013. Right after the lifting of the embargo, which has been in force since 2006, Georgia's exports to Russia have quadrupled. First it increased from 45 million USD to 190.3 million USD in 2013 and further increase was 274 million USD.[1047] Among other agricultural products, exports of wine and mineral water to Russia is crucial economically as well as symbolically. Georgian wine rapidly increased in Russian market in 2013 and consisted 50 percent of its total exports in 2014. Its export to Russia is expected further increase.[1048]

Russia's another tool is Georgian immigrants living in Russia who can be used as a leverage on Georgia. Remittances from top fifteen major countries to Georgia

[1045] The World Bank, "Rankings & Ease of Doing Business Score," 2018. accessed January 17, 2019, http://www.doingbusiness.org/en/rankings

[1046] Grigol Mgaloblishvili et al., "Hybrid Warfare and the Changing Security Landscape In the Euro-Atlantic Area," *Economic NATO*, no. 1 (2016), 17.

[1047] Sergi Kapanadze, "Georgia's Vulnerability to Russian Pressure Points," *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 2014, 3.

[1048] Kapanadze, "Georgia's Vulnerability to Russian Pressure Points,".

between 2010-2015 is 7.65 billion USD. In this case, particularly the remittances from Russia consist a significant proportion. During this period remittance transferred from Russia to Georgia has reached 3.9 billion USD which composed 51 percent of overall remittances to Georgia.[1049] Although there was a decline compared to the previous year, the remittances in 2015 constituted 10 percent of Georgia's GDP.[1050] Almost one million Georgian diaspora are thought to have resided in Russia and this situation leaves Georgia vulnerable against Russia's policies on migrations.[1051]

In this regard, Russia's pressure on the Georgian diaspora increases the problem of unemployment in Georgia. Indeed, Russia already used this leverage in 2006 when Georgian government detained four Russian officers and ten Georgian citizens on espionage. In response to Georgia, Russia deported around 2300 Georgian laborers along with banning Georgian wine import.[1052] Although the deportations in 2006 did not have serious impact, this is still an effective tool for Russia to influence Georgian economy. The effect of remittances revealed when the economic recession in Russia has begun in 2014. While the amount of remittances inflow from Russia to Georgia was 801 million USD in 2013, it decreased to 432 million USD in 2015.[1053]

Another risk for Georgia appears in energy sector which Russia can be potential threat. Establishment of energy independence from Russia was a great success of Saakashvili's government. Construction of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and South Caucasus pipelines for oil and gas was an essential accomplishment for Georgia's national security. For instance, Georgia currently meet around 90 percent of its natural gas needs from Azerbaijan at a reasonable price. Although energy diversification policy is significant for most of the countries, it is not so true in Georgian case. Being independent from Russian energy sector strengthen the position of Georgian government. In other words, it limits Moscow's well-known leverage to use in

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[1049] "Brief Migration Profile: Remittances," *State Commission on Migration Issues* (Tbilisi, 2016), 6-7, accessed January 18, 2019, http://migration.commission.ge/files/eng.pdf

[1050] "Brief Migration Profile: Remittances.", 11.

[1051] Mgaloblishvili et al., "Hybrid Warfare and the Changing Security Landscape In the Euro-Atlantic Area.", 23.

[1052] Kapanadze, "Georgia's Vulnerability to Russian Pressure Points.", 5.

[1053] "Brief Migration Profile: Remittances.", 7.

Georgia.[1054]

Nevertheless, Georgia's energy policy has been questioned during the Georgian Dream period. As noted in previous paragraph, one of main policy of Georgian Dream was 'Russia Reset' or 'normalizing' relations with Russia. In this context, the Georgian Dream began to question whether it was a wise strategy to be dependent on Azerbaijani gas. In 2015, the former energy minister of Georgia, Kakha Kaladze, discussed the issue of cooperation in the gas sector with the CEO of Gazprom, Alexei Miller in Brussels. Former Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Garibashvili stressed that Georgia's economic relations with Russia could be kept separate from political relations.[1055]

Considering the increasing dependence of Georgian exports on highly politicized Russian market, one cannot guarantee that Georgia may not find itself in a vulnerable position in the future. Indeed, Russia already showed that sign in August 4, 2015, when Georgia joined the EU sanctions against products imports from Crimea. At that time, Russia's consumer protection agency (Rospotrebnadzor) warned that 'quality of Georgian wine is low.' The same day, right before Rospotrebnadzor's caveat on Georgian wine, Russian Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev emphasized possibility of 'response measures' against Georgia's support to the sanctions.[1056] Pointing 2006 embargo, former Foreign Minister of Georgia, Tamar Beruchashvili, pointed out that growing economic dependence of Georgia on Russian market is very risky. In this sense, she pointed out: "we see this market as a trap…It is a very unpredictable market…Any moment Russia can enact again an embargo."[1057] However, Foreign Minister's statements quickly repudiated by former Minister of Agriculture of Georgia, Otar Danelia. For Danelia, the minister's statements stemmed from a misunderstanding between Beruchashvili and the journalist. After this comment from

[1054] Nilsson, "Russian Hybrid Tactics in Georgia.", 33.

[1055] Civil Georgia, "PM Condemns New Treaty Between Moscow and Sokhumi," 2014, January 17, 2019, https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27848.

[1056] Giorgi Menabde, "Russia Threatens Georgia With Renewed Trade War," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 12, no. 154 (2015), accessed January 17, 2019, https://jamestown.org/program/russia-threatens-georgia-with-renewed-trade-war/

[1057] Luke Johnson, "South Ossetia Could Be Annexed Like Crimea," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 2015, accessed January 17, 2019, https://www.rferl.org/a/georgia-ossetia-russia-ukraine-annexation-fears-crimea/26820543.html

Tbilisi, Beruchashvili reformulated his previous interpretation.[1058]

In today's world where globalization is gaining momentum, the desire of Georgia to increase its export can be understandable. In this case, scholars such as Tatiana Romanova believe that promoting economic relations can have a positive impact on overall relations between Georgia and Russia.[1059] Although this looks as a win-win relation, it also contains significant risks. Apparently, consolidating economic interdependence between two asymmetrical states is a naive idea because it strengthens Russia's hand to use its economic relations as a weapon against Georgia in the future. Therefore, only promoting its economic ties with other actors can strengthen Georgia's position against Russia. The next part details Russia's information warfare against Georgia as another hybrid war element.

8.2.5. Information Warfare

Another important component of the hybrid war is information which Russia mainly used to justify its occupation of Georgia during August 2008 war. Russian media focused on three main themes to support the idea that Russia's involvement in war was defensive and protective.[1060] First, Russia claimed that Georgia carried out the genocide in South Ossetia. Russian news channels wrote that around 2000 South Ossetians whom were holding Russian passports were killed by Georgian troops.[1061] Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev believed that Tbilisi's action against South Ossetians was a genocide.[1062] In this case, Putin also expressed that people in

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[1058] Mgaloblishvili et al., "Hybrid Warfare and the Changing Security Landscape In the Euro-Atlantic Area.", 17.

[1059] Tatiana Romanova, "Economic Links of Russia and Georgia and Their Potential for Improving Bilateral Relations.", *Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies*, 2017, 31, accessed January 17, http://www.fes-caucasus.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Ways_of_Normalisation__English.pdf

[1060] Petr Zlatohlávek, "Hybrid Warfare: A New Phenomenon in Europe's Security Environment," *Jagello 2000* (Praha, 2015), 11.

[1061] РИА Новости, "Власти России: Грузия Устроила в Южной Осетии Геноцид," 2008, accessed January 1, 2019, https://ria.ru/20080810/150235861.html.

[1062] "Russia Launches Genocide Probe over S.Ossetia Events," *Sputnik*, 2008, РИА Новости, "Власти России: Грузия Устроила в Южной Осетии Геноцид," 2008, accessed January 1, 2019, https://sputniknews.com/russia/20080814116026568/.

South Ossetia may had underwent genocide. Putin stated: "They are mostly women, children and the elderly. Of course, they faced a dramatic tragedy. What they told me is beyond any war rules. I believe there were elements of genocide."[1063]

Second, Georgian government was the aggressor while Russia was forced to intervene to protect South Ossetians. The third narrative which Russian media concentrated on, was the link between the independence declaration of Kosova and Georgian breakaway provinces. Russia accused the West having 'double standards.' Vladimir Putin questioned the West's support on independence of Kosova. At the annual presidential news conference, Putin asked "are you not ashamed, you Europeans, treating the same problems with double standards in different regions of the world?" He added "I would like to underline the fact that we think that support of unilateral announcement of Kosovo is not moral or legal."[1064] By highlighting this issue Russia stressed that the West had no right to criticize Russia. From Moscow's point of view, Russia's involvement in Georgia was alike what the West did in Kosova in 1999. These three themes were essentially what Russian media brought into the forefront during the August War.[1065]

Although Russia was successful to explain military operation in Georgia to its population it could not convince international community particularly the West that its action was within the peacekeeping mission.[1066] In this regard, even though Russia won the physical war, Georgia won the information campaign against Russia by winning the hearts and minds of international society.[1067] Two reasons can be mentioned why did Russia lose information war during the August 2008 War. First

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[1063] "Putin Accuses Georgia of Genocide," *Russia Today*, 2008, РИА Новости, "Власти России: Грузия Устроила в Южной Осетии Геноцид," 2008, accessed January 1, 2019, https://www.rt.com/news/putin-accuses-georgia-of-genocide/.

[1064] "Putin Criticizes European 'Double Standards,'" *CNN*, 2008, РИА Новости, "Власти России: Грузия Устроила в Южной Осетии Геноцид," 2008, accessed January 1, 2019, http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/europe/02/14/putin.conference/index.html.

[1065] Robert Marquand, "Russia's Case on Georgia Territories: Like Kosovo or Not?," *A Christian Science Monitor*, 2008, РИА Новости, "Власти России: Грузия Устроила в Южной Осетии Геноцид," 2008, accessed January 2, 2019, https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2008/0828/p01s01-woeu.html.

[1066] George T. Donovan, "Russian Operational Art in The Russo-Georgian War of 2008" (Pennsylvania, 2009), 21.

[1067] Emilio J Iasiello, "Russia' s Improved Information Operations: From Georgia to Crimea," *Parameters* 47, no. 2 (2017): 51–63, https://doi.org/10.1080/13518049808430328.

one connected to the performance of former Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili. In his speeches, the president frequently stressed that Russia was an occupying country. Showing up in international news channels such as BBC or CNN, Saakashvili repeated the same simple statements with near-perfect English: "Russia is an aggressor. We are a small democratic country. Please help us." [1068] Moreover, the president did not ignore his appearance during the interviews. He always flanked by the flag of the EU to give pro-Western message to the global community.[1069]

On the contrary, Kremlin was quite passive to communicate with global mass media. This situation was expressed by Russian scholar, Aleksei Arbatov. He wrote "You can't fail to notice that Russian leaders are ignoring the opportunity to convey their point of view to the world."[1070] In this sense, it is worth to point that Russia did not allow international press crew into the conflict zone. Along with Russian TV channels, Ukrainian TV 'Inter' was the only international crew broadcasting from the battlefield.[1071] In this case, Andrei Klyuchnikov, Russian Defence Ministry spokesman, said "I agree we lost the information war in the first few days, but we have nothing to hide here."[1072]

To sum up, the first reason why Russia lost information warfare is that while Saakashvili frequently showed up in international media organizations Russian authorities ignored that factor. The second reason is Russia's occupation of Georgia's undisputed territories. At the beginning of the war in Tskhinvali, Russian authorities used the excuse of Georgia's aggression against South Ossetians, thereby it was Russia's duty to protect its people since most of the Ossetians were Russian

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[1068] Yasha Levine, "The CNN Effect: Georgia Schools Russia in Information Warfare," *The Exiled*, 2008, accessed February 6, 2019, http://exiledonline.com/the-cnn-effect-georgia-schools-russia-in-information-warfare/.

[1069] Levine, "The CNN Effect: Georgia Schools Russia in Information Warfare,".

[1070] Ian Traynor, "Plucky Little Georgia: Saakashvili's PR Agency Wins on Second Front," *The Guardian*, 2008, accessed February 6, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/aug/16/georgia.russia.

[1071] Evgeny Pashentsev, "Georgia-Russia Military Conflict: The Experience of Multilevel Psychological Warfare," in *11th International Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security*, ed. Dean Tanya Zlateva and Virginia A. Greiman (Boston: ACPI, 2016), 271.

[1072] Alissa de Carbonnel, "Propaganda Supplants Reality in Russian-Controlled Georgia," *Georgian Daily*, 2008, accessed August 2, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20080820033808/http://georgiandaily.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6237&Itemid=65.

citizens. However, when Russian troops moved into Georgia's undisputed lands Russia lost the chance to justify its action. It strengthened Saakashvili's position in convincing global community that Russia was the occupier.

Although Russia lost the information war during the August War its influence gradually increased in Georgia after 2012. As mentioned before, Georgian Dream party introduced 'Russia Reset' policy right after coming to power. Russian indirect propaganda reflected in Georgia in terms of the emergence of anti-Western narrative. According to a research conducted by Media Development Foundation (MDF) in 2017, the main source of anti-Western propaganda in Georgia is media. Four main media outlets were detected by MDF which spread anti-Western messages. The most important of these four media organizations is online news agency Georgia and the World (geworld.ge) having made 455 anti-Western comments. Another online news agency which obtained anti-Western narratives is Sakinformi. The third and fourth main media outlets which are the source of anti-Western propaganda are TV Obieqtivi and the newspaper Asaval-Dasavali respectively.[1073]

Unlike the previous researchers (2014-2016) of Media Development Foundation, it's report in 2017 shows us the type of anti-Western messages shifted from human identity and human rights to USA and NATO.[1074] According to these media outlets, USA and NATO is the main threat to the country. Although they are still sensitive about "loosing Georgian values or culture" due to Western 'values'. Second source of anti-Western propaganda is political parties in Georgia. Among the other political parties, the United Democratic Movement is the leading party which adopts anti-Western statements (130). The second political party that follows similar discourse is the Alliance of Patriots (91). Georgian Troupe (44) and Socialist Georgia (40) were the other main political parties followed anti-Western propaganda. For the MDF research, NATO joint training in Georgia was the main threat to the country.[1075] The politicians assessed these training as a threat of provoking Russia which results with military escalation in the region. For instance, the head of United Democratic Movement

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[1073] Tamar Kintsurashvili, "Anti-Western Propaganda," *Media Development Foundation*, 2018, 18-19.

[1074] Tamar Kintsurashvili, "Anti-Western Propaganda," *Media Development Foundation,* 2016, 22.

[1075] Kintsurashvili, "Anti-Western Propaganda," 2018, 22.

Nino Burjanadze states:

> I think this conspicuous provocation [the NATO-military training] will cost us dear… I am afraid that this may have dire consequences for us. Valeri Kvaratskhelia, Socialist Georgia: Abkhazia and Tskhinvali will be followed by Samtskhe-Javakheti because Armenians living there will never agree to join NATO. Tamaz Mechiauri, Tamaz Mechiauri for United Georgia: Even if we join [NATO], this will cost us the loss of not only Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, but Adjara too.[1076]

Surprisingly, some of these anti-Western propagandas include Turkey as a threat to Georgia. In this regard, Giorgi Maghlakelidze, Alliance of Patriots, stresses: "NATO for us means the intervention of Turkish NATO into our territory; Belgians and Dutch or Danish will not be stationed here."[1077]

The third source of anti-Western propaganda is civil organizations which main of the are Georgian March, People's Assembly, Eurasian Institute, Union of Human Rights Defenders, the Global Research Center. According to a research, the Eurasian Institute and the Global Research Center are directly linked to Russia. These organizations have connections with the International Eurasian Movement which established by Alexander Dugin.[1078] The last main source of anti-Western propaganda in Georgia is the clergy. The anti-Western comments of religious servants composed of homophobia. Davit Kvlividze, Giorgi Razmadze, Davit Isakadze who represented the Georgian Patriarchate and Basil Mkalavishvili who is defrocked priest are among those who frequently made homophobic statements, "branding homosexuality as a sin of Sodom and Gomorrah imposed by the West".[1079] Religious servant, Grigol Mezvrishvili states: "How can the Orthodox Christian Georgia with its 16 centuries of Christianity and the country of Rustaveli, Aghmashenebeli, Father Tevdore, Ilia the Righteous have any shared values with the hotspot of Sodom and Gomorrah, the EU, which was created by the Satan."[1080] Connecting Georgian breakaway provinces cleric David Kvlividze points:

[1076] Kintsurashvili., 22.

[1077] Kintsurashvili.

[1078] Kintsurashvili.

[1079] Tamar Kintsurashvili, "Hate Speech," *Media Development Foundation*, 2018, 33.

[1080] Kintsurashvili.

> I am asking the government representatives: how do you think, will the Abkhazs and Ossetians want to live together with Georgia that is drowning in the sin of Sodom-Gomorrah?! I repeat, supporters of this filth are enemies of the country's territorial integrity, they support disintegration of the country.[1081]

Apart from homophobic statements, the clergy draws attention to Russia's role as an Orthodox country. Basil Mkalavishvili emphasizes:

> I, a Georgian orthodox priest, who realizes the threats faced by our country, urge President of powerful Russia, Vladimir Putin: Russia is the most powerful Orthodox country and antagonism between us plays into the hands of Masonic, anti-Christian forces![1082]

Blaming the USA, Grigol Mezvrishvili expresses:

> The only power that emerged as the winner from the August war [in 2008] was the United States. By means of heinous operation, planned and implemented by the US, it planted two such time bombs at the border with Russia in the Caucasus that if set off they may not only destabilize Russia but also throw the entire Caucasus into the flames of war.[1083]

To summarize, the structure of Russia's information in Georgia targets three basic narratives. The first is to blame the USA as a main source of the August War in the context of the NATO's activities in the region. The second one is about the loss of territories. In this regard, Kremlin equals Georgia's possibly membership NATO to Turkey's expansion into Georgia.[1084] Moreover, after the expiration of Kars Treaty in 2021 Russia will not be able to protect Adjara against Turkey. The third narrative of Kremlin in Georgian discourse is the loss of Georgian identity. In this regard, 'Russkiy Mir' (Russian World) is often portrayed as a counterweight to the Western lifestyle. The anti-Western media organizations creates 'white and black' thinking techniques as the only two options, to influence the mindsets of the population. For instances, "if the West stands for a perverted lifestyle and the legalization of homosexuality, we do not need the West!", "If the West imposes homosexuality, the Georgian people prefer Russia to the West!"[1085]

[1081] Kintsurashvili.

[1082] Kintsurashvili, "Anti-Western Propaganda," 2018., 25.

[1083] Kintsurashvili.

[1084] Tamar Kintsurashvili, Dali Kurdadze, and Sopho Gelava, "Kremlin Influence Index" (Kyiv, 2017), 18.

[1085] Tamar Kintsurashvili, Dali Kurdadze, and Sopho Gelava, "Kremlin Influence Index" (Kyiv, 2017), 18.

Although some scholars such as Tornike Sharashenidze assesses Russia's propaganda as a useless effort[1086], in the long term these narratives can have impact on Georgian society. Indeed, The 9th of May celebrations with Russian and Soviet flags in the city of Gori reveals the growing influence of Russia in Georgia.[1087] Another indication of Russia's influence in the country is the increase in the number of supporters of the Eurasian Union. According to the NDI polls, the number of supporters of the Eurasian Union has increased up to 31 percent.[1088] In this case, 42 percent of Georgians believe that the disintegration of Soviet Union was a 'bad thing' while 43 percent of them feel it was a 'good thing'.[1089] According to a research of Institute for Development of Freedom of Information the majority of organizations which conduct anti-Western campaign in Georgia are connected to the Russian foundations.[1090]

It is difficult to tackle these organizations in Georgia because repressing them faces the Georgian government with the accusation of restricting free speech.[1091] The rise of Russia's disinformation campaign caused NATO to establish a Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Riga in 2014. Besides, 'EU versus Disinformation' campaign, which is run by the European External Action Service East Stratcom Task Force, has been created. The main task of the campaign is to fight against Russia's ongoing disinformation campaign. EU versus Disinformation, which already has detected over 3800 disinformation case since September 2015, produces weekly Disinformation Review.[1092]

To conclude, it can be said that though Russia lost information war during the

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[1086] Tornike Sharashenidze, "The Russian Soft Power Vs. Russian Propaganda-The Georgian Case," in *Georgia and Russia: In Search of Ways for Normalization*, ed. Kakha Gogolashvili (GFSIS, 2017), 45-49.

[1087] Mgaloblishvili et al., "Hybrid Warfare and the Changing Security Landscape In the Euro-Atlantic Area.", 19.

[1088] Laura Thornton and Davit Sichinava, "Public Attitudes in Georgia Results," *National Democratic Institute,* 2015.

[1089] NDI Poll, "Perception of Disinformation High ; Government Performance Mixed With Citizens Concerned About Corruption , Crime," 2018.

[1090] Kintsurashvili, Kurdadze, and Gelava, "Kremlin Influence Index.", 18.

[1091] Hamilton, "August 2008 and Everting After: A Ten-Year Retrospective on the Russia-Georgia War.", 19.

[1092] "EU vs Disinformation," 2019, accessed February 8, 2019, https://euvsdisinfo.eu/about/.

August 2008 War, it maintains its influence in Georgia through information campaign. Russia's anti-Western narratives finds a strong backing in Georgia, especially among the orthodox Georgians. Russia already had experienced the worst period of relations with Georgia and thereby passing time works in favor of Kremlin.

8.2.6. Cyber Attack

Cyber-attacks are another element of Russia's hybrid war against Georgia. In fact, for the first time in military history, Russia used the cyber-attack coordinated with the conventional military power in Georgia.[1093] The rehearsal of the DDoS attacks against Georgian websites began before the gunfire. In July, United States-based Internet watchdogs recorded DDoS attacks on the official website of Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili.[1094] Although it is not easy to determine the source and purpose of the cyber-attacks it is no coincidence that cyber-attacks intensified when the Russian army entered the South Ossetia. In this context, Richard Weitz observes:

> The techniques used by the Russian attackers suggest they had developed a detailed campaign plan against the Georgian sites well before the conflict. The attackers did not conduct any preliminary surveying or mapping of sites [which might have prematurely alerted Georgian forces], but instead immediately employed specially designed software to attack them. The graphic art used to deface one Georgia Web site was created in March 2006 but saved for use until the August 2008 campaign. The attackers also rapidly registered new domain names and established new Internet sites, further indicating they had already analyzed the target, written attack scripts, and perhaps even rehearsed the information warfare campaign in advance.[1095]

The project Grey Goose 2, led by cyber security expert Jeffrey Carr, has made a study to find the source of the cyber-attacks. According to the project, the centers of the attacks were stopgeorgia.ru and Xakep.ru from where the operation conducted. The stopgeorgia.ru hacker forum was created almost at the same time when Russia

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[1093] Lionel Beehner et al., "Analyzing the Russian Way of War: Evidence from the 2008 Conflict with Georgia," *Modern War Institute*, 2018, 59.

[1094] Alexander Melikishvili, "The Cyber Dimension of Russia's Attack on Georgia," *The Jamestown Foundation* 5, no. 175 (2008), accessed February 8, 2019, https://jamestown.org/program/the-cyber-dimension-of-russias-attack-on-georgia/

[1095] Richard Weitz, "Global Insights: Russia Refines Cyber Warfare Strategies," *World Politics Review*, 2009, accessed February 9, 2019, https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/4218/global-insights-russia-refines-cyber-warfare-strategies.

entered South Ossetia. The list of websites which should be attacked and a software for free were shared in the forum in order to facilitate the work of potential hackers. Stopgeorgia.ru website used an IP address that was linked to the Steadyhost firm registered in New York, but it was originally operated from St. Petersburg. Moreover, it is believed that the Steadyhost to have office in the same building where Russian Centre for Research Military Strength of Foreign Countries (a Ministry of Defense institute) locates.[1096]

Initially the DDoS attacks targeted the websites of main government institutions including the president's official website, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Parliament, Supreme Court, National Bank, online Rustavi 2 channel and online news dailies Civil Georgia and the Messenger to cut off the communication lines between the Georgian authorities and society.[1097] Researchers at the Shadowserver, who voluntarily came together to monitor malicious network activities, informed that during the war between Russia and Georgia, the official website of President Mikheil Saakashvili was heavily blocked by DDoS attacks for 24 hours.[1098] During and the after the war from August 8 to August 19, the National Bank had to suspend its online service.[1099] The list of targets has subsequently expanded to other government websites, media organizations, education and finance institutions. In total, 38 websites were attacked in August 2008.[1100]

In conclusion, considering abovementioned facts, it can be said that Russia applied a hybrid war tactic against Georgia. In order to maintain its dominance in the region, Russia first deployed its troops at the border between Georgia and its disputed territories under the name of peacekeepers. In 2008, the changes in the domestic politics of Georgia and the policy of Saakashvili government against South Ossetian

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[1096] Roland Heickerö, "Emerging Cyber Threats and Russian Views on Information Warfare and Information Operations" (Stockholm, 2010), 45-46.

[1097] Stephen Blank, "Cyber War and Information War à La Russe," in *Understanding Cyber Conflict*, ed. George Perkovich and Ariel E Levite (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017), 89.

[1098] John Markoff, "Before the Gunfire, Cyberattacks," *The Yew York Times*, 2008, accessed February 9, 20199, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/13/technology/13cyber.html?_r=0.

[1099] Beehner et al., "Analyzing the Russian Way of War: Evidence from the 2008 Conflict with Georgia.", 59.

[1100] S Daultrey, "Cyber Warfare : A Primer," 2017, 8.

were considered by Kremlin as an opportunity to show its military power in the region. Immediately after the short-lived August war, by recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia as an independent state, Russia has made it even more difficult for Georgia to achieve its territorial integrity. Moreover, Georgia's economic weaknesses against Russia and Russia's information war in Georgia leave Tbilisi vulnerable against Moscow.

8.9. Conclusion

Presenting another example of Russia's hybrid war in post-Soviet space provides better understanding of the war in Ukraine. In both cases, Russia uses hybrid war methods to achieve its envisioned interest. However, Ukraine and Georgia cases shows us that Moscow uses internal dynamics of both countries in order to implement its war tactics. Alike in Ukraine, this chapter clarified that Russia cooperates with separatists formations against their parents states. By backing the self-proclaimed secessionist actors, Moscow tries to restrain the Western-oriented foreign policy of Ukraine and Georgia and strengthen its influence in these countries.

In this regard, this chapter provided Russia's hybrid war in Georgia in order to have a comparison to Ukraine cases. It aimed to show that Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine is not an accidental or a random action but is a consistent and well-designed policy of Kremlin. Although Russia used directly its regular troops in both countries in certain times, it is also a fact that neoclassical realist approach is valid for both cases. In August 2008 and August 2014, Russian regular forces had fought in Georgia and in Ukraine respectively. However, these wars cannot be explained without taking the domestic factors into consideration. Hence, one has to pay attention to internal dynamics of both countries in order to achieve a better understanding.

Therefore, to have a comparison, this chapter first concentrated on the political developments in Georgia in early 1990s. This period shows us how the inter-ethnic conflicts in Georgia paved the way for Russia to strengthen its influence in the region. Besides, the section provided how Moscow uses diplomatic relations with Georgia's two break away territories as a leverage against Tbilisi. Subsequently,

military aspect of August 2008 war is investigated. In this part, the research explored how Russia used its regular troops together with separatist forces to regain its influence in Georgia. The third part focused on economic component of Russia's hybrid war in Georgia. Just like in Ukraine case, this section explored how Kremlin uses its economic relations as a weapon to punish Georgia's anti-Russian orientations. Thereafter, information as another element of Russia's hybrid war was discussed. In this part, it is argued that during the August 2008 war, Russia lost information war against Georgia due to President Saakashvili's efforts in well-known international TV channels as well as thanks to the movement of Russian army into Georgia's undisputed lands. However, it is also claimed that although Russia lost information war in short time, it gains advantage in long period. Finally, cyber dimension of the war in Georgia is explained. In this context, the link between Russian military troops and cyber forces are presented. It is shown how war in cyber space took place parallel to the military action during the August 2008 war.

In sum, comparing the Georgia case with the Ukraine case provided us better lenses to comprehend the Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine. In both cases, it is clear that Russia conducts hybrid war methods systematically. It also shows that Russia's actions in these countries are not inconsistent or unplanned. Instead, Russia adopts hybrid war method in order to restrain pro-Western foreign policy orientations of Georgia and Ukraine and strengthen its influence in these countries. Besides, this chapter emphasized that just like in Ukraine, Russia exploits domestic dynamics of Georgia to conduct its hybrid war. Therefore, the chapter drew attention to the internal factors of Georgia to provide better lenses in comparing Georgia case with Ukraine case.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

This dissertation analyzed the ongoing conflict in Ukraine's Donbas territory through the lenses of neoclassical realism. The research showed that without taking the domestic dynamics of Ukraine into consideration, explaining Donbas conflict can be incomplete. Therefore, the role of historical background and political developments since the independence of Ukraine scrutinized to comprehend the secessionist movements in Donbas territory. Besides, the research demonstrated that Russian Federation as an external actor should be added to the factors which contributed the conflict in Donbas territory. In this regard, hybrid war method is adopted to show how Russia involved in the Donbas Conflict.

Hence, the first chapter aimed to explore a theoretical framework to study ongoing hybrid war in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine. To do this, first, hybrid war concept is investigated in relation with the new war debate. In this context, arguments of scholars who think that humankind experiences new war in contemporary world which is different than traditional wars presented on one hand. The ideas of thinkers who tend to define hybrid war as a variant of war which existed throughout history were discussed on the other hand. In this sense, this research concluded that both sides admit the fact that twenty first century witnesses new war methods in line with particularly technological and economic developments. However, the latter groups' arguments seem more consistent due to their historically existing examples which can be assessed as hybrid war methods. Moreover, the research also showed for which reasons modern hybrid war concept gained popularity and how its context broaden from being a fight only which non-state actors used to obtain to a war type which also preferred by state actors. In this sense, the research demonstrated that while hybrid war method adapted by non-state actors following the Cold War period due to their incapability to fight against regular forces of developed countries the method began to be preferred by state actors in time to

conduct their implicit wars. Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine and also in Georgia are good examples of showing the evolution of hybrid war concept.

The first chapter also introduced several theories of international relations in order to see which one of them is the most suitable one in studying the hybrid war in Donbas. In this respect, classical realism, which bases its foundation mainly on power and human nature, is scrutinized. However, it is argued that the approach is inadequate to clarify the complexity of hybrid wars. For example, through the concepts of 'power' or 'human nature' classical realism faces difficulties to explain why Russia did not occupy Donbas right after the annexation of Crimea despite its sufficient capacity to do so. Subsequently, the pros and cons of structural realism was weighed in connection to ongoing hybrid war in Donbas. Despite its strengths in presenting the role of international system about the war in Eastern Ukraine, it is claimed that structural realism also fails provide whole picture in Donbas case, due to its principle of ignoring the internal factors in the war.

Liberal approach was discussed as a third paradigm for the same purpose. It is also understood that although liberalism helps us partially attribute a meaning to the reactions of Moscow towards Euromaidan events in Ukraine, it fails to enlighten certain occasions which took place before the crisis in Ukraine began. For example, liberalism has lack of understanding about pro-Russian formations which occurred long before the Euromaidan demonstrations. Finally, neoclassical realism and its strengths in framing the hybrid war in Donbas territory were introduced. Combining domestic factors which played a critical role along with the impact of international system on Ukraine, it was decided that neoclassical realism provides the best standpoint in studying ongoing hybrid war in Donbas. In other word, by opening the 'black box' (state) to see the influence of internal dynamics of Ukraine on the conflict, neoclassical realism is the most compatible approach with ongoing hybrid war in Donbas. Therefore, along with the hybrid war elements, this research paid attention on historical and political developments of Ukraine and their impacts on the isolation of Donbas territory.

The second chapter helped us to be sure that the history is not merely about past, but it is strictly connected to the present as well as constantly shapes the future. The

history of Ukraine is also not exceptional in this sense. In this context, claims over the legacy of Kievan Rus' is discussed extensively by numerous scholars in the literature. In fact, debates over Kievan Rus' links not only to the current hybrid war in Donbas territory but also causes to the disputes about the sovereignty of Ukraine. This point cannot be underestimated because denial of Ukraine as a sovereign state paves the way for destabilization of other regions in Ukraine let alone Donbas territories. Connecting the legacy of Kievan Rus' to today's Russia ignores the history of Ukraine and thereby, forms excuse to occupy even further Ukrainian lands. In terms of Donbas, claiming the legacy of Kievan Rus' by Russian Federation contributes justification of its secession from Ukraine.

The chapter also discussed the impact of the Treaty of Pereyaslav on the current structure of Ukrainian society. It is claimed that this historical milestone shaped the binary characteristic of the nation: The Western Ukrainians on one hand and the Eastern Ukrainians on the other hand. As a result of the Treaty of Pereyaslav Ukrainians remained under the rule of two different empires for a long time and formed dual characteristic of Ukrainian society. The last part of the chapter explored the formulation of Donbas territorial identity. It is presented that industrialization of Donbas and influx of migrants from various regions created a distinctive identity of Donbas people.

In third chapter, the dissertation focused on the political developments of Ukraine from 1991 until the conflict erupted in Eastern Ukraine. Ukraine has experienced two major revolutions since the disintegration of Soviet Union. However, despite its fragile society, which was composed of mainly by Western and Eastern Ukrainians, the country managed to remain intact when it became an independent state. Although separatist tendencies emerged initially, they could not gain sufficient support from outside. For example, due to its own separatist groups Russia did not support Crimea's desire for secession from Ukraine in early 1990s. Moreover, positive relations of Kuchma government with Kremlin surpassed any potential separation from Kyiv.

Nevertheless, 2004 presidential election uncovered the binary structure of Ukrainian society once again. The 2004 presidential election campaigns even deepened the

polarization of the West and the Central Ukraine on one side, the East and the South on the other side. First time since the independence of Ukraine, Donbas territory raised its voice to federalize Ukraine and even threatened Kyiv by separation. However, Orange Revolution which completed almost bloodless did not cause an insurgence in Donbas. Moreover, incompetence of Orange Coalition to work in harmony and Yushchenko's deal with Yanukovych appeased anti-Orangist Donbas people. Sharing the power with Yushchenko first and then becoming the president of Ukraine in 2010, Yanukovych who were the candidate from Donbas pleased its region.

On the contrary, the Euromaidan Revolution, which could not avoid violence, confronted two groups, pro-Western and pro-Russian Ukrainians. Ousting of Yanukovych from the presidential post was the final straw in the eyes of Eastern Ukrainians. In this context, secession of Crimea as a first side effect of Euromaidan is discussed. After seizing the administration buildings, the separatists announced the referendum on the fate of peninsula. In March 2014, Crimea was absorbed by Russian Federation and then the second side effect of the Euromaidan erupted in Donbas.

The fourth chapter detailed the military dimension of the Donbas war as one of the most important components of the hybrid war. It is demonstrated that fighting aspect of the hybrid war in Donbas is the most damaging one to Ukraine. Along with human loses, the war created serious socio-economic problems for Ukraine. The chapter showed that the clashes in Donbas are likely to arise time to time in relations with Russian Federation as well as depending on the internal dynamics of Ukraine. As clarified, Kremlin conducts a hybrid war in Donbas territory through exploiting the domestic circumstances of Ukraine. In this regard, destabilization of Eastern Ukraine began with anti-Maidan demonstrations and continued with the seizure of administration buildings in the region. However, local insurgence was insufficient to dissociate Donbas from the rest of Ukraine. Therefore, Moscow implicitly sent its irregular forces. These forces mainly composed of Russian retired soldiers and separatist fighters from Transnistria. At this stage, Russia was content with supplying military equipment to separatist forces. However, whenever separatist forces were not powerful enough to take stand against Ukrainian army, Russian regular troops

were used to ensure the balance between Ukrainian army and the separatists in Donbas. This was seen during the August 2014 war when separatists were about to give up but thanks to Russian regular troops, they have got a second chance.

Meanwhile, Russia's constant denial of its involvement in the Donbas Conflict demonstrated as an action consistent with the principles of hybrid warfare. Russia, which uses the fragile structure of Ukrainian society as one of the components of the hybrid war, claims that the war in Donbas was the result of the coup in Kyiv and the revolt against the 'illegal government' which was established thereafter. However, Kremlin's refusal of allowing Ukrainian army to be stationed at the border between Ukraine and Russian Federation is sufficient to reveal its malicious intentions against Ukraine.

Apart from fighting dimension of the war the thesis examined four non-military components of Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine in fifth chapter. As shown, this research adopted neoclassical realism as a standpoint to study war in Donbas. Therefore, internal dynamics of Ukraine before and after 2014 are scrutinized to show how Russia uses domestic factors as a tool for its hybrid war in Donbas conflict. In this context, first, political developments after Euromaidan Revolution in Ukraine clarified. It this part, it is argued that ousting of Yanukovych and forming of new government were not perceived same way among already polarized Ukrainian society. It is also pointed out that the secession of Crimea encouraged the separatists in Eastern Ukraine. The research presented what role Russian citizens played in forming and governing the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. Last but not least, it is shown how internal politics of Ukraine is important to comprehend the pro-Russian movements in Ukraine. In this context, the performance of pro-Russian party, Opposition Platform for Life during 2019 local election proved our argument. Opposition Platform for Life, which won the second highest vote in the elections, has shown how pro-Russian groups in Ukraine are important to understand the Donbas Conflict.

Along with the political landscape, economic dimension of the war in Donbas is scrutinized. In order to understand the significance of Donbas territory for Ukraine's economy, the structure of Donetsk and Lugansk economy primarily investigated.

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Thereafter, the study detailed how the destabilization of Donbas influenced Ukraine's economy. Finally, Russia's direct restrictions on Ukraine's economy showed us how the economy as another component of the hybrid war is used by Moscow against Ukraine in order to achieve its interests in the country.

The chapter also concentrated on information aspect of hybrid war in Donbas. To do this, first, the contribution of Ukrainian media in isolating the Donbas territory is explored. The following section explained how the Russian media used the narratives which were created by the Ukrainian media to justify its support to the separatists in Donbas. The significance of this part is that it showed how domestic narratives which constituted for short time political benefit for Ukrainian politicians turned out as one of the major tools for Russian media during the war in Donbas.

The final part of the chapter investigated cyber dimension of the Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine. It explored how cyber space became a critical tool for Russia to use as one of the element of its hybrid war mechanism. The cyber space section showed us how Russia improved this component of the war since 2007 attack in Estonia and 2008 in Georgia. It is demonstrated that in Ukraine case, Russian hackers not only discredited the country's image but also damaged its economy. In brief, the chapter scrutinized non-military elements of Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine. In this context, the chapter emphasized how Ukraine's domestic dynamics are used as a means of the ongoing hybrid war in Ukraine.

In sixth chapter, the approaches in finding resolution for the Donbas conflict is detailed. In this regard, finding a solution for the protracted war in Donbas is the major problem for Ukraine since 2014. However, it is pointed out that the conditions do not only depend on the will of Ukrainian authorities. Therefore, the standpoints of the fighting sides are presented in this chapter. In this context, peace talks from June 2014 to September 2014, are primarily presented. The Minsk I ceasefire agreement is particularly analyzed. Subsequently, violations of the ceasefire agreements are emphasized which pawed the way for signing a second ceasefire agreement which is also called Minsk II. Thereafter, pros and cons of the Minsk Agreements are examined for Ukraine and Russia. In this case, it is argued that the despite the fact that both countries are eager to implement the articles of the agreements, they are not

agreed on the sequence of the implementation of these articles. In this context, the main priority of Kyiv is to ensure security in Donbas and then to work on the political conditions of the Minsk Agreements such as constituting a special status for the territory. Kyiv avoids any action which can legalize the governance of separatists in Donetsk and Lugansk regions.

In contrast, Moscow blames Ukrainian officials for not acting in conjunction with the promises of Minsk Agreements. From Moscow's point of view, first, political promises should be fulfilled, and then foreign military formations can be removed from the Donbas territory. The main aim of Kremlin by proposing the implementation of the Minsk Agreements is to achieve the federalization of Ukraine. In this case, Russia not only can be a dominant actor in Donbas but also it can be stationed at the heart of political system of Ukraine. In federalized Ukraine, Kremlin can easily block the Western orientations of Kyiv. Therefore, the sequence of the fulfillment of Minsk Agreements are the main stalemate for achieving peace in Donbas.

In addition, the chapter also analyzed the UN peacekeeping mission to Donbas as an alternative approach to the peace process. In this regard, it is claimed that the UN peacekeeping mission to Donbas is welcomed by both countries, particularly by Ukraine. By the UN peacekeeping mission Ukraine aims to secure its borders with Russian Federation and thereby to cut Russian support to Donbas militants. Therefore, Kyiv proposes a strong UN peacekeeping mission in Donbas. On the contrary, Russia agrees with the peacekeeping mission to be stationed only in the contact line not at the border with Ukraine. In fact, initially, Russia disapproved the UN peacekeeping mission in Donbas. However, Moscow proposed its own version of the UN peacekeeping mission to Donbas. By stationing the UN troops at the contact line, Russia aims to push Ukraine beyond the contact line and thereby, strengthen its presence in Ukraine. As a result, the countries cannot come to an agreement about the UN peacekeeping mission to be positioned in Donbas.

At the end of this research, Donbas case is compared with another Russia's hybrid war case in post-Soviet space. Presenting another example of Russia's hybrid war in post-Soviet space provides better understanding of the war in Ukraine. In this

respect, Russia's hybrid war in Georgia is presented to broaden our perception about the Donbas Conflict. In both cases, Russia uses hybrid war methods to achieve its planned interests. Ukraine and Georgia cases are alike in the sense that in both cases Moscow uses internal dynamics in order to conduct its hybrid war. Just like in Ukraine, this chapter clarified that Russia cooperates with separatist formations against their parents states. By backing the self-proclaimed secessionist actors, Moscow tries to restrain the Western-oriented foreign policy of Ukraine and Georgia and strengthen its influence in these countries.

In this regard, the final chapter provided Russia's hybrid war in Georgia in order to have a comparison to Ukraine cases. It showed us that Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine is not an accidental or a random action but is a consistent and well-designed policy of Kremlin. Due to Russia's exploitation of local factors in both countries the chapter proved that neoclassical realist approach is the most valid standpoint to study these cases. In August 2008 and August 2014, Russian regular forces had fought in Georgia and in Ukraine respectively. However, these wars cannot be explained without taking the domestic factors into consideration. Hence, in order to have a better understanding on Russia's hybrid war, one has to pay attention to internal dynamics of both countries

Therefore, in order to achieve a comparison, this chapter first concentrated on the political developments in Georgia in early 1990s. This period showed us how the inter-ethnic conflicts in Georgia paved the way for Russia to strengthen its influence in the region. Besides, the section provided how Moscow uses its 'diplomatic' relations with Georgia's two 'breakaway provinces' as a leverage against Tbilisi. Subsequently, military aspect of August 2008 war is investigated. In this part, the research explored how Russia used its regular troops together with separatist forces to declare its influence in Georgia. Just like in Ukraine case, non-military aspects of Russia's hybrid war in Georgia is investigated. In this sense, the chapter focused on how Kremlin uses its economic relations as a weapon to punish Georgia's anti-Russian orientations. Thereafter, information as another element of Russia's hybrid war was discussed. In this part, it is argued that during the August 2008 war, Russia lost information war against Georgia due to President Saakashvili's efforts in well-known international TV channels as well as thanks to the movement of Russian army

into Georgia's undisputed lands. However, it is also claimed that although Russia lost information war in short time, it gains advantage in the long period. Finally, cyber dimension of the war in Georgia is explained. In this context, the link between Russian military troops and cyber forces are presented. It is shown how war in cyber space took place parallel to the military action during the August 2008 war.

In brief, comparing the Georgia case with the Ukraine case provided us better lenses to comprehend the Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine. In both cases, it is clear that Russia conducts hybrid war methods systematically. It also shows that Russia's actions in these countries are not inconsistent or unplanned. Instead, Russia adopted hybrid war method in order to restrain pro-Western foreign policy orientations of Georgia and Ukraine and strengthen its influence in these countries. Besides, this chapter emphasized that just like in Ukraine, Russia exploits domestic dynamics of Georgia to conduct its hybrid war. Therefore, the chapter drew attention to the internal factors of Georgia to provide better lenses in comparing Georgia case with Ukraine case.

To sum up, this dissertation argued that the origin of separatist tendency of Donbas region should be sought in historical developments of Ukraine; in political structure since the independency of the country; and in the local factors of the Eastern Ukraine along with the external impact on the region. In this respect, it is claimed that the status of the current situation in Donbas cannot be explained merely through domestic dynamics of Ukraine. Instead, it is claimed that continuation of the war in Donbas is possible only due to Russia's hybrid war method in the region. In other word, this study demonstrated that in order to explain the current war in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine one should first focus on the internal dynamics of Ukraine. In this sense, historical background played a significant role in creating binary structure of Ukrainian society. Besides, political actors and media discourses before 2014 contributed the isolation of Donbas people from rest of the country. However, this thesis argues that Russia as an external actor should be taken into consideration along with the domestic factors of Ukraine to provide holistic standpoint for understanding the Donbas Conflict. In this context, the dissertation embraces hybrid war concept to describe Russia's involvement in Donbas conflict.

As this research argued, the conflict in Donbas stems from domestic dynamics of Ukraine in connection to the Russia's hybrid war in the country. In this sense, this research claims that Russia conducts the hybrid war in Donbas quite 'successfully'. After dismissing the Russian citizens from the top position of the governance of the self-proclaimed 'DPR' and 'LPR' Moscow tried to conduct the hybrid war implicitly. Despite the fact that Ukraine and the West blame Russia for undermining territorial integrity of Ukraine, Kremlin constantly denies its involvement in the Donbas Conflict. Russia is 'successful' in the sense that it achieved to restrain Ukraine's European integration process and its probable NATO membership. By conducting hybrid war rather than occupying the Donbas territory of Ukraine like Crimean case, Russia achieved its interest to station permanently at the heart of politics in Ukraine.

Although strengthening its capabilities are vital for Ukraine to fight against Russia's hybrid war it seems Kiev has lack of understanding in solving the Donbas Conflict. For example, it is important to restructure the army to defeat the Russian-backed Donbas separatists or to try to deal with Russia's information war, but these countermeasures are not enough to regain control over Donbas. In fact, as pointed previously defeating a hybrid war by concentrating on its elements is extremely challenging. In this context, the suggestion of Robert Johnson is vital to attain peace in Donbas. Johnson states that to defeat a belligerent in hybrid war, an actor needs to find out final goal of the enemy rather than fighting against its hybrid war elements. In other word, to overcome a hybrid threat, one must understand the enemy's 'ends' not 'ways and means' of the war.

Ukraine experiences similar process in the Donbas where Russia conducts hybrid war. However, Kiev officials attempts to overcome the conflict by focusing on the components of the hybrid war which does not provide any lasting solution. Hence, Ukraine tries to defeat the hybrid war through facing its elements, which also tend to change constantly, so far. Therefore, Ukraine is having trouble defeating Russia's hybrid war, which in turn allows the war in Donbas to continue. In this context, Kiev officials should to deal with the main intention of Moscow rather than expecting to win the hybrid war by resisting each of its components and this should be the main focus of subsequent investigations in the studying of the Donbas Conflict.

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APPENDICES

A. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Muradov, Ibrahim
Nationality: Azerbaijani
Date and Place of Birth: 25 December 1989, Zaqatala
Marital Status: Single
Phone: +90 506 931 50 60
email: muradovibrahim@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	METU Eurasian Studies	2015
BS	Ankara Uni., International Relationas	2014
High School	Physics, Math, and Informatics Inclined Republican High School, Baku	2007

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2017-2018	Dnipro National University	Lecturer
2014-Present	International Journal of Russian Studies	Assistant Editor
2015-Present	Spectrum: Journal of Global Studies	Assistant of Referee Coordinators

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Fluent Turkish, Azerbaijani and Russian

PUBLICATIONS

1. Ibrahim, M., "The Impact of NATO Enlargement on Ukraine Crisis: Neorealist Perspective", Epistemological Studies in Philosophy, Social and Political Sciences, 1(1-2), 107-114 (2018)

2. Ibrahim, M., "Finding A Theoretical Approach for Studying post-Soviet 'Frozen' Conflicts", Epistemological Studies in Philosophy, Social and Political Sciences, 6(1), 60-71 (2017)

HOBBIES

Squash, Capoeira

B. TURKISH SUMMARY/ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Sovyetler Birliğinin dağılmasının hemen ardından bu coğrafyada ortaya çıkan yeni ülkelerin siyasi, kültürel ve sosyal yapılarında köklü bir dönüşüm beklenmiştir. Bu bağlamda, Sovyet mirasını geride bırakarak, serbest piyasa ekonomisine geçiş ve demokrasinin gelişmesi, 1990'lı yılların başlarında bu ülkelerdeki en önemli beklentiler olarak ön plana çıkmıştır. Eski Sovyetler Birliği coğrafyasında kurulan ülkelerin siyasi dönüşüm süreçleri izlendikten sonra, AB bu ülkeleri Batı dünyasına entegre etmek için kendi girişimlerini başlatmıştır. Bu bağlamda Ukrayna, Turuncu Devrim ve Euromaidan olaylarıyla özellikle ön plana çıkmıştır. AB bu entegrasyon için büyük çaba sarf etmiş olsa da, Ukrayna'da beklenen gelişmeler henüz gerçekleşmemiştir. Buna karşılık, Kırım, Rusya tarafından ilhak edilmiş ve ülkenin doğu kısmı istikrarsızlaştırılmıştır.

2013 yılının sonunda gerçekleşen Euromaidan gösterileri Doğu Ukrayna'nın istikrarsızlaşmasına neden olmuştur. Kırım'ın Rusya Federasyonu tarafından ilhakının ardından, Donbas bölgesi Ukrayna'daki krizin yeni odak noktası haline gelmiştir. 2014'ten beri Donbas'taki savaş, ülkedeki siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyal sorunların en önemli bileşenlerinden birini oluşturmaktadır. Birkaç girişime rağmen, geçen son 5 yıl boyunca Donbas'ta yaşanan çatışmaya kalıcı bir çözüm bulunamamıştır. Bu dönemde, bölgede iki tane sözde 'cumhuriyet' kurulmuştur ve Ukrayna Rusya'yı bu oluşumları desteklemekle suçlamaktadır. Buna karşılık, Moskova bu oluşumları desteklemediğini ve çatışmada herhangi bir biçimde taraf olmadığını savunuyor. Bu konuda, Donbas'taki çatışmanın nedenlerini analiz etmeyi amaçlayan uzmanlar, çatışmaya ya uluslararası sistemik seviyeden ya da sadece Ukrayna'nın siyasi dinamiklerini araştırarak açıklama çabası içerisindeler. Ne var ki, bu tez her iki yaklaşımın Donbas'taki çatışmayı açıklamada yetersiz kaldığını öne sürüyor. Bu anlamda, Donbas'taki savaşın kökenini ortaya çıkarmayı hedefleyen bu çalışma Donbas'taki savaşın patlak vermesine hangi faktörlerin sebebiyet verdiği ve bu savaşın yürütülme biçiminin ne olduğu sorularını cevaplamaya çalışıyor.

Başka bir deyişle, Donbas çatışması için seçilen savaş biçimiyle bağlantılı olarak

bölgenin istikrarsızlaştırılmasına etki eden faktörleri araştırarak, bu tez Donbas'taki çatışmanın nasıl ortaya çıktığını ve nasıl yapıldığı sorularına cevap aramaktadır. Bu çerçevede, Donbas'taki savaş şeklini sorgulamak savaşın dış boyutunu anlamamıza yardımcı olmaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu tez ilk önce Donbas'taki savaşın nasıl yürütüldüğünü yanıtlamaya çalışıyor. Ardından Doğu Ukrayna'da savaşı tetikleyen faktörleri inceliyor. Bu çalışma özellikle Donbas bölgesel kimliğinin şekillenmesinde büyük etkisi olan Ukrayna tarihinin dönüm noktalarını da analiz ediyor.

Tez ayrıca, 1991'den 2004'e Turuncu Devrimi de dahil olmak üzere Ukrayna'da yaşanan siyasi gelişmelerin Donbas'taki savaşın patlak vermesinde kritik rol oynadığını belirtiyor. Ayrıca, Euromaidan olaylarının Doğu Ukrayna'nın istikrarsızlaştırılmasına olan katkısı, bu tezin cevaplamaya giriştiği diğer ana sorunsaldır. Bu anlamda, özellikle Kırım'ın ilhak edilmesinden sonra Rusya karşıtı Euromaidan gösterilerinin Donbas'taki etkileri çatışmanın başlangıcını kavramak için önemlidir. Bu tez ayrıca Donbas'taki savaşın askeri olmayan yönlerini ortaya koymayı amaçlıyor. Bu yönlerin sorgulanması, Ukrayna'daki çatışmanın tüm boyutlarını anlamamıza yardım etmektedir. Çalışma aynı zamanda Donbas'ta yaşanan çatışmanın çözümlenmesinin önünde hangi engelleri olduğunu da analiz etmektedir.

Konunun daha iyi kavranması adına, eski Sovyet coğrafyasında Donbas'ta yaşanan çatışmaya benzer, başka bir çatışma da analiz ediliyor. Bu karşılaştırma, çatışmanın neden bu kadar uzun sürdüğüne dair anlayışımızı zenginleştirmemizi ve böylelikle bu alandaki önceki araştırmaların bıraktığı boşlukları görmemizi sağlamaktadır.

Bu tez için toplanmış olan veriler nitel araştırma yöntemi ile teste tabi tutulmuştur. Elde edilen veri kaynakları, elektronik ve basılı kitaplardan, ilgili dergilerden ve yayınlanmış ve yayınlanmamış eserlerden oluşmaktadır. Bu verilerde ikincil kaynaklar ile birlikte Ukrayna ve Rusya Federasyonu'nun resmi kurumlarının istatistikleri ve yasal belgeleri kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca, Ukrayna parlamentosu yasaları, özel kararnameler ve cumhurbaşkanı kararları bu araştırmada kullanılmıştır. Ukrayna Yüksek Şurası (Verhovna Rada), Ukrayna Devlet Arşiv Servisi, Ukrayna Savunma Bakanlığı, Ukrayna Bilgi Politikası Bakanlığı, Ukrayna Merkez Seçim Komisyonu ve Rusya Devlet Başkanının resmi internet sitesi bu tez için birincil kaynaklar

sağlayan diğer yasal kurumlar arasında yer almaktadır. Bu yasal belgelerde kullanılan diller çoğunlukla Ukrayna ve Rusçadır. Ayrıca, AGİT gibi uluslararası kuruluşların resmi belgeleri bu çalışmanın diğer birincil kaynaklarını oluşturmaktadır.

Bu araştırmada yasal belgelerin yanı sıra, Ukrayna yerel, ulusal ve Rus gazetelerinden de yoğun bir biçimde istifade edilmiştir. Bunlara ek olarak, çevrimiçi İngilizce yayınlanan çevrimiçi gazeteler de bu tez için materyaller sunmaktadır. Veriler öncelikle literatürdeki mevcut çalışmalardan, internetten ve erişilebilir kütüphanelerden elde edilmiştir. Bu çalışma, aynı zamanda eski Sovyet coğrafyasında Donbas çatışmasına benzer bir başka örneği araştırarak çalışmaya daha iyi bir anlayış sağlamak için karşılaştırmalı bir yöntem benimsemiştir. Bu karşılaştırma yöntemi Donbas'ta yaşanan çatışmaya yönelik araştırmamızı zenginleştirmekte ve de çalışma konusundaki ufkumuzu genişletmektedir.

Neoklasik realizm, bu tez için kuramsal bir çerçeve olarak tercih edilmiştir. Bu kuramın benimsenmesindeki asıl neden bu yaklaşımın uluslararası sistemsel analiz seviyesiyle birlikte çeşitli iç faktörler veya farklı analiz seviyelerini de dikkatte alıyor olmasıdır. Neoklasik realizm, bireylerin, yerel grupların ve devletlerin kendi politikalarını oluşturmadaki rolleri ve bunların uluslararası ilişkilerde etkilerine önem vermektedir. Bununla birlikte, kuram yapısal analizi de reddetmemektedir. Bunun yerine, sistemsel anlayışı bireyler ve devletleri dikkate alan analiz ile ilişkilendirerek yapısal realizmin temel özelliklerini zenginleştiriyor. Bu bağlamda, Donbas Çatışmasını Ukrayna tarihini, siyasi gelişmelerini ve Donbas bölgesinin yerel dinamiklerini dış etkenlerle birlikte ele alarak incelemek bizlere çok daha kapsamlı bir anlayış sunmaktadır. Metodolojik olarak, Donbas'taki savaşı tek bir analiz seviyesinden araştırmak bir takım eksiklikler barındırabileceği için neoklasik realizm, bu çalışma için teorik çerçeve olarak uygun bulunmuştur.

2013 yılının sonlarına doğru Euromaidan gösterileriyle başlayan ve Kırım'ın ilhakına ve ülkenin doğu bölgelerinin istikrarsızlaşmasına yol açan Ukrayna'daki kriz, literatürde birçok açıdan açıklanmaktadır. Ukrayna'nın Donetsk ve Lugansk bölgelerinde (Donbas) devam etmekte olan çatışma, Ukrayna'daki krizin ana kaynağını oluşturmaktadır. Ayrıca, çatışmanın Ukrayna'nın iç siyaseti üzerindeki

etkisiyle birlikte çatışmanın etkileri ülke sınırlarının ötesinde de hissedilmektedir. Bu nedenle, araştırmacıların konuyu değerlendirmedeki yaklaşımları her geçen gün daha da artmaktadır. Bu bakımdan, Donbas'taki çatışmayı araştıranlar genel olarak üç gruba ayrılabilir. İlk grup, konuyu Rusya'nın Ukrayna'ya karşı savaşı olarak değerlendirmektedirler. İkinci grup, konuyu Ukrayna'nın iç dinamikleri çerçevesinde ele almaktadırlar. Son grup ise, Ukrayna'nın Doğu bölgelerinde yaşanan çatışmanın uluslararası düzendeki gelişmelerden kaynaklandığını savunmaktadır.

Andrew Wilson, Donbas çatışmasının kaynağı olarak Rusya Federasyonunu gösteren ve konuyu bu çerçevede değerlendiren düşünürlerin başında gelmektedir. 'Ukrayna Krizi: Batı İçin Ne İfade Ediyor' (Ukraine Crisis: What It Means for the West) adlı kitabında Wilson, Rus propagandasının Yanukoviç'e karşı Kiev'de darbe yapıldı iddialarına karşı asıl darbenin 2014 yılında Kremlin tarafından Kırım'da gerçekleştiğini ileri sürüyor. Bununla birlikte, Wilson Moskova'nın Donbas'la ilgili yaptığı yanlış hesaplamanın, bölgenin istikrarsızlaşmasına neden olan ana faktör olduğunu iddia ediyor. Kitapta, Rusya'nın, Sovyetler Birliği'nin çöküşü ve NATO'nun genişleme politikası nedeniyle Rusya'nın prestij kaybına uğraması veya Putin'in kişiliği gibi sayısız faktörler nedeniyle Rusya'nın Donbas'taki çatışmada rol aldığı vurgulanıyor. '2014 Yılında Donbas: Muhtemel Sivil Çatışma'yı Açıklıyor ama Sivil Savaşı Değil' (The Donbas in 2014: Explaining Civil Conflict Perhaps, but not Civil War) başlıklı bir makalede Andrew Wilson, Rusya'nın Doğu Ukrayna'da devam etmekte olan çatışmadaki rolü üzerinde durmaktadır. Wilson için, Ukrayna'nın Donetsk ve Lugansk bölgelerinde ayrılıkçıların 'başarıları', Rusya'nın desteği olmadan mümkün olamazdı. Andrew Wilson ve Kadri Liik'in birlikte kaleme aldıkları 'Doğu Ukrayna ile Neler Olacak?' (What will Happen with Eastern Ukraine?) çalışmalarında, düşünürler Moskova'nın Avrupa'daki Soğuk Savaş sonrası düzeni gözden geçirmeyi hedeflediğini ve bu amaca ulaşmak için Ukrayna'nın kaderini belirleme eğiliminde olduğunu savunuyorlar.

Kısacası, Ukrayna'nın Donetsk ve Lugansk bölgelerinde yaşanan anlaşmazlığı çalışan ve ilk grubu oluşturan düşünürler çatışmanın Rusya Federasyonu ile bağlantılı olarak açıklanması gerektiğini savunuyorlar. Bu düşünürler Rusya'nın Ukrayna'ya karşı savaş başlatmasının nedenleri hakkında çok sayıda sebep sunmaktadırlar. Araştırmacıların bazıları, Rusya Federasyonu'nun iç siyasetinin

Kremlin'in Ukrayna'ya karşı saldırganlığı konusunda en kritik rolü oynadığını ileri sürüyorlar. Bu düşünürler, görüşlerini desteklemek için Rusya'da milliyetçilik ve faşizmin yükselişinin altını çizmektedirler. Diğer bazı yazarlar, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'ya karşı tutumunu Soğuk Savaşın sonunda Rusya'nın 'küçük düşürülmesi' argümanına bağlamaktadırlar. Bir başka grup ise Putin'in Kırım'ı ilhak ederek ve sınır ötesinde Rus etnik grupları destekleyerek kendi otoriter rejiminin başarısızlıklarını ört bas etme çabası içerisinde olduğunu iddia ediyorlar. Sonuç olarak, Rusya'nın Donbas Çatışmasında taraf olduğu fikri tüm bu araştırmacıları bir araya getiren ana etmen olarak ön plana çıkıyor.

Donbas'taki çatışmanın ana kaynağı olarak Rusya Federasyonu'nu işaret eden araştırmacıların aksine, bir başka grup konuya farklı bir bakış açısıyla yaklaşıyor. Bu düşünürler, Ukrayna'daki savaş için Rusya'nın suçlanmasının yanlış bir yaklaşım olduğunu savunuyorlar. Başka bir deyişle, krizin ana kaynağının Rusya'dan ziyade Ukrayna'da aranması gerektiğini ileri sürüyorlar. Bu grupta yer alan araştırmacılar, Ukrayna krizinin arkasındaki ana nedenin ülkenin iç dinamikleri olduğunu iddia ediyorlar. Kısacası, Ukrayna'nın Donetsk ve Lugansk bölgelerinde devam eden çatışmaları tanımlamak için bu grup çoğunlukla 'iç savaş' terimini kullanmayı tercih ediyor.

Bu kategorideki önde gelen araştırmacılardan biri Serhiy Kudelia'dır. 'Donbas Yarığı' (Donbas Rift) adlı makalesinde Kudelia Donbas'taki çatışmayı tetikleyen üç ana unsurdan söz etmektedir. Yazar bunlardan ilki olarak Euromaidan gösterilerini işaret ediyor. Bu anlamda Kudelia'ya göre, Euromaidan destekçileri, Yanukoviç rejimini devirme sürecinde kaba kuvvette başvurmaktan kaçınamadılar ve bu da karşı gruplarda rahatsızlık yarattı. İkinci unsur olarak yazar, Kiev'deki yeni hükümetin Donbas'taki ayrılıkçı hareketleri etkisiz hale getirmek için şiddet kullanmasını gösteriyor. Kudelia, Donbas'taki gerginliği artıran son faktör olarak, Kiev'in milliyetçi grupları mücadeleye entegre etme ve Ukrayna ordusunun insanların yoğun olarak bulunduğu alanlarda sınırsız güç kullanmalarına izin vermesi olarak yorumluyor. Kudelia, tüm bu faktörlerin yerel halkın yeni hükümete karşı direnişini oluşturduğuna işaret etmektedir. Yazar için, Kiev'de kurulan yeni hükümet darbe sonucunda oluştuğu için Donbas halkının gözünde gayri meşruydular. Bu nedenle, yeni Kiev yetkililerine karşı direniş Donbas halkının doğal hakkıydı. Bu

değerlendirme Serhiy Kudelia'nın Donbas'taki savaşın Euromaidan olayları ile başlayan Ukrayna'nın iç gelişmelerinden kaynaklandığı sonucuna varması için zemin hazırlamaktadır.

Kısacası, ikinci grubu oluşturan araştırmacılar Donbas'taki savaşın nedenini açıklamak için konuyu farklı bir bakış açısından ele alıyorlar. İlk gruptan farklı olarak, bu düşünürler Ukrayna krizini doğrudan Rusya Federasyonu ile ilişkilendirmiyorlar. Genel olarak Ukrayna'nın iç dinamiklerini Donetsk ve Lugansk bölgelerinde yaşanan çatışmanın ana kaynağı olarak gösteriyorlar. Bu düşünürler, Euromaidan olaylarını ve Yanukoviç'in devrilmesini çatışmayı başlatan en önemli faktörler olarak sunuyorlar. Onlar için, Yanukoviç hükümetinin yıkılması bir güç boşluğu yaratmış ve yeni kurulan hükümet, Ukrayna'nın bazı bölgelerinde, özellikle Donbas'ta meşruiyet bulamamıştır. Bu araştırmacılar, Ukrayna'da oluşan çıkmazın hükümet karşıtı ve hükümet yanlısı iki grubu karşı karşıya getirdiğini ve sonucunda da iç savaşa yol açtığını iddia ediyorlar.

Üçüncü bir grup araştırmacı ise, birinci ve ikinci analiz düzeyini (liderler ve devletler) önemsemeyerek Donbas çatışmasını veya genel olarak Ukrayna krizini açıklamak için üçüncü seviyeye (third image) odaklanmaktadırlar. Putin rejimine veya Ukrayna'nın iç faktörlerine dikkat çeken birinci ve ikinci gruplardan farklı olarak, üçüncü grup Donbas'taki çatışmayı açıklamak için uluslararası sistemde meydana gelen gelişmeleri ve bunun Ukrayna üzerindeki etkilerini dikkate alıyorlar. Onlar için ne Ukrayna'nın iç dinamikleri ne de Putin rejimi Ukrayna krizinde belirleyici bir rol oynamaktadır. Buna karşılık, Ukrayna'daki krizin uluslararası düzenin değişiminden kaynaklandığını iddia ediyorlar.

Bu yaklaşımı savunan araştırmacılardan en bilineni, uluslararası ilişkilerde neorealist düşünür olarak bilinen John J. Mearsheimer'dir. 'Ukrayna Krizi Neden Batı'nın Hatasıdır?' (Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault) başlıklı makalesinde Mearsheimer, uluslararası ilişkilerde yaşanan gelişmeleri sistemsel yaklaşım açısından değerlendirmektedir. Doğu Ukrayna'daki çatışmanın nedenlerini ortaya koymak için devletlerin iç dinamiklerini inceleyen diğer bilim adamlarından farklı olarak, Mearsheimer, krizle ilgili kendi bakış açısını sunmak için Batı ülkelerinin Sovyet sonrası alana yönelik politikalarına odaklanıyor. Düşünüre göre, Ukrayna

krizini anlamak için 1990'ların başında NATO'nun genişleme politikası kararına geri dönülmesi gerekmektedir. Mearsheimer'a göre, Moskova'nın bütün uyarılarına rağmen, NATO'nun eski Sovyet coğrafyasında genişlemeye devam etmesi ve Batılı liderlerin Ukrayna'nın Rusya açısında bir tampon bölge olduğunu inatla görmezden gelmeleri Batının bu coğrafyada izlemiş olduğu en korkunç siyaset olmuştur.

Makalede, Mearsheimer, Ukrayna krizinin sonuçları için Sovyet sonrası ülkelere yönelik AB politikalarını da hedef almaktadır. Düşünüre göre, AB'nin doğuya doğru genişlemesi ve Turuncu Devrim'den bu yana demokrasi yanlısı hareketleri desteklemesi Doğu Ukrayna'nın istikrarsızlaştırılmasına zemin hazırlamıştır. Bu bağlamda, Mearsheimer, demokrasi, karşılıklı kazan-kazan yaklaşımı veya hukukun üstünlüğü gibi temel liberal ilkeleri hatalı buluyor. Mearsheimer, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Avrupa Birliği yetkililerinin realizmin temel mantığını göz ardı ettiklerini belirtiyor. Düşünüre göre Batılı devletler realizmin Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde geçerliliğini kaybettiğini ve liberalizmin ilkeleri benimsendiği takdirde Avrupa Birliği'nin daha da güçleneceğini düşünmüşlerdi. Bu nedenle Mearsheimer, Rusya'nın Ukrayna krizinde suçlanmaması gerektiğini ifade ediyor. Ona göre Rusya sadece uluslararası sistemin getirmiş olduğu koşullara tepki vermektedir. Bu açıdan Mearsheimer, Donbas bölgesinde savaşın ana kaynağının Rusya değil, Batı olduğunu savunuyor.

Kısacası Donbas Çatışmasını açıklamaya çalışan üçüncü grup, birinci ve ikinci analiz düzeylerini dikkate almayarak doğrudan üçüncü analiz seviyesine odaklanmaktadırlar. Bu gruba göre, Rusya'yı etki alanındaki uluslararası gelişmeler bu devleti tepki vermeye zorlamaktadır. Bu yüzden Rusya'nın Donbas'ta devam etmekte olan savaştan sorumlu tutmamakla birlikte bu konuda Batı'nın doğuya yönelik politikalarını sorunlu buluyorlar. Bu yaklaşımı benimseyen araştırmacılar, Batı ve Rusya Federasyonu arasındaki gerginliğin ana nedeni olarak NATO ve AB'nin genişlemesini işaret ediyorlar.

Görüldüğü üzere, Donbas Çatışmasıyla ilgili literatür oldukça zengin olsa da konunun daha fazla araştırılmasına ihtiyaç vardır çünkü sadece tek boyutlu açıklamayı benimsemek konunun tam olarak anlaşılmasını engellemektedir. Bu çalışma, Ukrayna'yı neorealistlerin gördüğü gibi 'kara kut' olarak değerlendirmek

yerine, Donbas Çatışmasının ortaya çıkmasında önemli rol oynayan Ukrayna'nın iç dinamiklerini tarihsel açıdan incelemenin şart olduğunu savunuyor. Rusya'nın Ukrayna krizinde taraf olduğunu iddia eden diğer çalışmalar gibi bu tez de Donbas'taki çatışmanın Rusya'nın rolü dikkatte alınmandan açıklanmasının eksik kalacağını iddia ediyor. Ancak, diğer çalışmalardan farklı olarak, bu tez Rusya'nın Donbas'taki savaşı nasıl yürüttüğünü de gösteriyor. Bu anlamda, bu çalışma Rusya'nın Donbas'ta hibrit yöntemler çerçevesinde savaşa dahil olduğunu savunuyor. Bu açıdan, Rusya'nın çatışmanın bir parçası olarak varlığını nasıl sürdürdüğünü göstererek bu çalışma Donbas Çatışması konusundaki güncel literatüre katkıda bulunmaktadır. Bunu yaparken bu tez, kendi kaynaklarıyla birlikte Rusya'nın Ukrayna'nın iç dinamiklerini hibrit savaş malzemesi olarak nasıl kullandığını da açıklıyor.

Bu tez, Ukrayna'nın Donbas bölgesinde devam etmekte olan ihtilafı neoklasik realizm çerçevesinden analiz etmektedir. Araştırma, Ukrayna'nın yerel dinamikleri göz önüne alınmadan, Donbas'ta devam etmekte olan çatışmanın açıklanması girişimlerinin eksik kalacağına vurgu yapmaktadır. Bu eksikliği gidermek adına çalışma, Ukrayna'nın tarihsel arka planının ve bağımsızlığından bu yana siyasi gelişmelerinin Donbas bölgesindeki ayrılıkçı hareketleri tetiklemede ne tür bir rol oynadığını incelenmiştir. Ayrıca, bu araştırma, Rusya Federasyonu'nun dış aktör olarak Donbas'daki çatışmayı tetikleyen iç faktörlerle birlikte ele alınması gerektiğini göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda, Rusya'nın Donbas Çatışmasına nasıl dahil olduğunu göstermek için hibrit (karma) savaş kavramına başvurulmuştur.

Bu tezin ilk bölümünde Ukrayna'nın Donetsk ve Lugansk bölgelerinde devam eden hibrit savaşı incelemek için teorik bir çerçevenin oluşturulması amaçlanmıştır. Bu minvalde öncelikle yeni savaş tartışmalarıyla bağlantılı olarak hibrit savaş kavramı incelenmiştir. Bu bağlamda, bir yandan uluslararası ilişkilerin modern çağda geleneksel savaşlardan farklı olan yeni savaşlara sahne olduğunu düşünen bilim adamlarının argümanları ortaya koyulurken öte yandan, hibrit savaşın tarih boyunca var olan bir savaş çeşidi olarak tanımlama eğiliminde olan düşünürlerin fikirleri tartışılmıştır. Bu anlamda, bu araştırma, aslında her iki görüşü savunanların yirmi birinci yüzyılın özellikle teknolojik ve ekonomik gelişmelere paralel olarak yeni savaş yöntemlerine tanık olduğu gerçeğini itiraf ettiği sonucuna varmıştır. Bununla

birlikte, ikinci grubun argümanları, hibrit savaş yöntemleri olarak değerlendirilebilecek tarihsel örnekler sunmaları nedeniyle daha tutarlı görülmüştür. Dahası, araştırma aynı zamanda modern hibrit savaş kavramının hangi nedenlerle popülerlik kazandığını ve içeriğinin sadece devlet dışı aktörlerin benimsediği savaş yönteminden devletler tarafından da tercih edilen bir savaş türüne doğru nasıl genişlediğini göstermiştir. Bu anlamda, araştırma, Soğuk Savaş dönemini takiben devlet dışı aktörlerin gelişmiş ülkelerin muvazzaf birliklerine karşı mücadele edememeleri nedeniyle baş vurulan hibrit savaş yönteminin zamanla devletler tarafından tercih edilmeye başladığını göstermiştir. Rusya'nın Ukrayna ve ayrıca Gürcistan'da yürütmekte olduğu hibrit savaşı, bu savaş kavramının evrimini gösteren en iyi örnekler olarak ortaya koyulmuştur.

Ayrıca, ilk bölüm, hangi uluslararası ilişkiler kuramının Donbas'ta gözlemlenen hibrit savaşı en iyi şekilde açıkladığını araştırmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, temelini 'güç' ve 'insan doğasına' dayandıran klasik realizm incelenmiştir. Ancak, bu yaklaşımın hibrit savaşların karmaşıklığını anlamak için yetersiz olduğu iddia edilmiştir. Örneğin, 'güç' veya 'insan doğasını' benimseyen klasik realizm, Rusya'nın Kırım'ı ilhak ettikten hemen sonra buna gücü yetebileceği halde neden Donbas'ı da işgal etmediğini açıklamakta yetersiz kalmaktadır. Daha sonra, Donbas'ta devam eden hibrit savaşla bağlantılı olarak yapısal realizmin artıları ve eksileri araştırılmıştır. Uluslararası sistemin Donbas çatışmasının patlak vermesindeki belirli rolüne rağmen, yapısal realizmin çatışmayı açıklamada iç etkenlerin görmezden gelinmesi ilkesi nedeniyle Donbas Çatışmasını tam olarak açıklayamadığı iddia edilmiştir.

Klasik realizm ve yapısal realizmin ardından liberal yaklaşımın Donbas Çatışmasını açıklamada yeterli olup olmadığı incelenmiştir. Liberalizmin, kısmen Moskova'nın Ukrayna'da Euromaidan olaylarına tepkilerine bir anlam atfetmemize yardımcı olmasına rağmen, Ukrayna'da kriz başlamadan önce gerçekleşen bazı olayları aydınlatamadığı anlaşılmaktadır. Örneğin, liberalizm, Euromaidan gösterilerinden çok daha önce ortaya çıkan Rus yanlısı oluşumlar hakkında herhangi bir açıklamaya sahip olmadığı görülmüştür. Son olarak, neoklasik realizmin Donbas bölgesindeki hibrit savaşı kavramamıza nasıl katkı sağladığı incelenmiştir. Uluslararası sistemin Ukrayna üzerindeki etkisini çatışmanın ortaya çıkmasında önemli rol oynayan iç faktörlerle birleştiren neoklasik realizmin Donbas'ta devam etmekte olan hibrit

savaşı incelemede en iyi görüşü sağladığı sonucuna varılmıştır. Başka bir deyişle, Ukrayna'nın iç dinamiğinin çatışma üzerindeki etkisini görmek için 'kara kutuyu' (devlet) açan, neoklasik realizmin Donbas'ta devam eden hibrit savaşı anlamada en uygun yaklaşım olduğu iddia edilmiştir. Dolayısıyla, hibrit savaş unsurlarıyla birlikte, bu araştırmada Ukrayna tarihinin ve siyasi gelişmelerinin Donbas bölgesinin izolasyonunda nasıl bir rol oynadığı üzerinde durulmuştur.

Tezin ikinci bölümü tarihin sadece geçmişle ilgili olmadığını günümüzle yakından bağlantılı olarak aynı zamanda geleceğe sürekli şekil verdiğini gözler önüne sermektedir. Bu bağlamda, Ukrayna tarihinin de istisna teşkil etmediği vurgulanmıştır. Bu iddiayı doğrulamak adına tezin ikinci bölümü Kiev Rus' devletini literatürde yer alan farklı görüşler çerçevesinde değerlendirmiştir. Kiev Rus'la ilgili tartışmaların sadece Donbas bölgesindeki devam etmekte olan hibrit savaşla değil aynı zamanda Ukrayna devletinin egemenliğini sorgulayan tartışmalara yol açtığı gösterilmiştir. Ukrayna'nın egemen bir devlet olmasının sorgulanması hafife alınacak bir durum olmadığı gibi bu konu Donbas bölgesinin yanı sıra Ukrayna'daki diğer bölgelerin de istikrarsızlaştırılması için zemin hazırladığı iddia edilmiştir. Başka bir ifadeyle, bugünkü Rusya'yı Kievan Rus' devletinin günümüzdeki devamcısı olarak göstermek, Ukrayna tarihini görmezden gelerek ve dolayısıyla Ukrayna topraklarını işgal etmek için bahane oluşturuyor. Donbas açısından, Rusya Federasyonunun Kievan Rus'un mirasçısı olduğunu iddia etmek bölgenin Ukrayna'dan ayrılmasının 'haklılığına' katkı sağladığı ifade edilmiştir.

Bu bölümde ayrıca Pereyaslav Antlaşması'nın Ukrayna toplumunun mevcut yapısı üzerindeki etkisi ele alınmıştır. Bu tarihi dönüm noktasının bir yandan Batı Ukraynalılar, diğer yandan Doğu Ukraynalılar olmak üzere ulusun iki farklı anlayışa sahip olma özelliğini şekillendirdiği iddia ediliyor. Pereyaslav Antlaşması'nın bir sonucu olarak Ukraynalıların iki farklı imparatorluğun yönetimi altında uzun süre kalmaları bu toplumun Batı ve Rusya eğilimli anlayışlara sahip olmalarının temelini hazırlamıştır. Bölümün son kısmı Donba'ın bölgesel kimliğinin ortaya çıkmasını incelemektedir. Bu kısımda Donbas'ın sanayileşmesinin ve çeşitli bölgelerden gelen göçmen akınlarının bölge halkının kendine özgü bir kimliğinin şekillenmesine katkı sunduğu ortaya konmuştur.

Üçüncü bölümde, tez 1991 yılından Ukrayna'nın doğusunda çıkan çatışmalara kadarki zaman diliminde yaşanan siyasi gelişmelere ışık tutmaktadır. Bu bölümde özellikle Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından bu yana Ukrayna'da yaşanan iki büyük devrim üzerinde durulmuştur. Turuncu Devrimi de kapsayan bu bölümde Batı ve Doğu yönelimli Ukraynalılardan oluşan kırılgan toplumuna rağmen, Ukrayna'nın bağımsız bir devlet olarak toprak bütünlüğünü korumayı başardığı vurgulanmıştır. Ayrılıkçı hareketler başlangıçta ortaya çıkmış olsa da, dışarıdan yeterli destek alamadıkları için bu tarz grupların başarıya ulaşamadıkları ifade edilmiştir. Örneğin, kendi içinde ayrılıkçı gruplarla mücadelede eden Rusya, Kırım'ın 1990'ların başlarında Ukrayna'dan ayrılma arzusunu desteklemekten kaçınmıştır. Dahası, Leonid Kuçma hükümetinin Kremlin ile olan pozitif ilişkileri, ayrılıkçı grupların başarıya ulaşmalarını engellediği ortaya konmuştur.

Bununla birlikte, 2004 cumhurbaşkanlığı seçimi Ukrayna toplumunun ikili yapısını bir kez daha ortaya çıkarmıştır. 2004 yılındaki cumhurbaşkanlığı seçim kampanyaları bir tarafta Batı ve Orta Ukrayna'nın, diğer tarafta ise Doğu ve Güney'in kutuplaşmasını derinleştirmiştir. Ukrayna'nın bağımsızlığından bu yana ilk kez, Donbas bölgesi Ukrayna'yı federalleştirmek yönünde sesini yükseltmiş ve hatta yöneticileri Kiev'den ayrılmakla tehdit etmiştir. Bununla birlikte, neredeyse şiddette başvurulmadan tamamlanan Turuncu Devrimi, Donbas'ta ciddi bir isyana yol açmamıştır. Dahası, Turuncu Koalisyonun uyum içinde çalışamaması ve Yuşçenko'nun Yanukoviç'le anlaşması, Donbas'taki anti-Turuncu grupları yatıştırmıştır. Donbas'tan aday olan Yanukoviç öncelikle iktidarı Yuşçenko'yla paylaşmış ve ardından 2010 yılında Ukrayna cumhurbaşkanı seçilmiştir. Bu durum ise Donbas bölgesinde memnuniyetle karşılanmıştır.

Turuncu Devrimin aksine, şiddet içeren Euromaidan Devrimi, Batı ve Rus yanlısı Ukraynalılar olmak üzere iki grubu karşı karşıya getirmiştir. Yanukoviç'in cumhurbaşkanlığı görevinden çekilmeye zorlanması ise Doğu Ukraynalıların gözünde bardağı taşıran son damla olmuştur. Bu bağlamda, Euromaidan'ın ilk yan etkisi olarak Kırım'ın ayrılması tartışılmıştır. Bu anlamda bölgedeki idari binaları ele geçiren ayrılıkçı grupların yarımadanın kendi kaderini belirleyecek olan referandumu ilan etme süreci ele alınmıştır. Mart 2014'te, Kırım'ın Rusya Federasyonu tarafından ilhak edilmesinin hemen ardından Euromaidan'ın ikinci yan etkisi olan Donbas'taki

çatışmalara odaklanılmıştır.

Dördüncü bölüm, Donbas savaşının askeri boyutunu hibrit savaşın en önemli bileşenlerinden biri olarak detaylandırmıştır. Bu bölümde, Donbas'taki hibrit savaşın askeri boyutunun Ukrayna için en ağır sonuçlara yol açtığı gösterilmiştir. Savaşta yaşanan can kayıplarıyla birlikte, savaş Ukrayna için ciddi sosyo-ekonomik sorunlar yarattığı ortaya konuşmuştur. Bu bölüm, Donbas'taki çatışmaların Rusya Federasyonuyla ilişkilere ve Ukrayna'nın iç dinamiklerine bağlı olarak zaman zaman artıp-azaldığı iddia edilmiştir. Açıklandığı gibi, Kremlin, Ukrayna'nın iç dinamiklerini kullanarak Donbas bölgesinde hibrit savaşı yürütmektedir. Bu bağlamda tez, Doğu Ukrayna'nın istikrarsızlaştırılmasının, Euromaidan karşıtı gösterilerle başladığını ve bölgedeki idari binalarının ele geçirilmesiyle devam ettiğini açıklamıştır. Fakat yerel ayrılıkçı güçlerin gücünün, Donbas'ı Ukrayna'dan ayırmak için yeterli olmadığının altı çizilmiştir.

Bu nedenle, Moskova savaşın ilk aylarında gayri nizami güçlerini dolaylı olarak Donbas'ta savaşmaya gönderdiği iddia edilmiştir. Bu kuvvetler çoğunlukla Rus emekli askerlerinden ve Transdinyesterli ayrılıkçı savaşçılardan oluştuğu gözlemlenmiştir. Bu aşamada, Rusya ayrılıkçı kuvvetlere askeri teçhizat tedarik etmekle yetinmiştir. Bunwith birlikte, Donbas ayrılıkçı güçlerinin Ukrayna ordusuna karşı koyamadığı durumlarda Ukrayna ordusu ve Donbas'taki ayrılıkçılar arasındaki dengeyi sağlamak adına Rusya kendi muvazzaf birliklerini devreye sokmaktan çekinmemiştir. Bu duruma Ağustos 2014 savaşı sırasında ayrılıkçı güçler pes etmek üzereyken Rus muvazzaf birliklerinin yardıma koşması örnek olarak gösterilmiştir.

Bu arada, Rusya'nın Donbas Çatışmasında taraf olduğunu sürekli olarak reddetmesinin hibrit savaş ilkeleriyle tutarlı bir eylem olduğu vurgulanmıştır. Bu anlamda Ukrayna toplumunun kırılgan yapısını hibrit savaşın bileşenlerinden biri olarak kullanan Rusya, Donbas'taki savaşın Kiev'deki darbenin ve daha sonra kurulan 'yasadışı hükümete' yönelik isyanın sonucu olduğunu iddia ettiği ifade edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, Kremlin'in Ukrayna ordusunun Ukrayna ile Rusya Federasyonu sınırında konuşlandırılmasına izin vermeyi reddetmesi, Ukrayna'ya yönelik niyetinin anlaşılması için yeterli bir eylem olduğu gösterilmiştir.

Savaşın askeri boyutunun dışında, bu tez beşinci bölümde Rusya'nın Ukrayna'daki hibrit savaşının diğer dört bileşenini de incelemiştir. Yukarıda değinildiği gibi, bu araştırma Donbas'taki savaşı incelemek için neoklasik realizmi benimsemiştir. Bu anlamda, 2014'ten önce ve sonra Ukrayna'nın iç dinamiklerinin, Rusya'nın Donbas ihtilafındaki hibrit savaşı için nasıl kullanıldığını göstermeye çalışmıştır. Bu bağlamda, ilk olarak, Ukrayna'daki Euromaidan Devrimi'nden sonraki siyasi gelişmeler aydınlatılmıştır. Bu bölümde, Yanukoviç'in kovulması ve yeni hükümetin kurulmasının zaten kutuplaşmış olan Ukrayna toplumunda aynı şekilde algılanmadığı iddia edilmiştir. Ayrıca, Kırım'da yaşanan ayrılıkçı gösterilerin yarımadanın Rusya tarafından ilhak edilişiyle sonuçlanması Doğu Ukrayna'daki diğer ayrılıkçı grupları teşvik ettiği belirtilmiştir. Araştırma aynı zamanda, Rus vatandaşlarının sözde Donetsk ve Lugansk Halk Cumhuriyetlerinin kurulmasında ve yönetilmesindeki rolünü incelemiştir. Son olarak, Ukrayna'daki Rus yanlısı hareketleri kavramak için Ukrayna'nın iç politikasının ne kadar önemli olduğu gösterilmiştir. Bu çerçevede, 2019 yerel seçimlerinde Rusya yanlısı parti olan 'Yaşam için Muhalefet Platformu'nun (Opposition Platform for Life) performansı çalışmanın genel argümanını kanıtlar nitelikte olmuştur. Seçimlerde ikinci en yüksek oyu alan Yaşam için Muhalefet Platformu, Ukrayna'daki Rus yanlısı grupların Donbas Çatışmasını anlamada ne kadar önemli olduğunu bir kez daha göstermiştir.

Siyasi boyutu ile birlikte Donbas'taki hibrit savaşın ekonomik boyutu da incelenmiştir. Bu bağlamda Donbas bölgesinin Ukrayna ekonomisi için önemini anlamak adına, öncelikle Donetsk ve Lugansk bölgesesinin ekonomik yapısı ortaya konmuştur. Daha sonra, bu çalışma Donbas'ın istikrarsızlaştırılmasının Ukrayna ekonomisini nasıl etkilediği ayrıntılı olarak açıklanmıştır. Son olarak, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'nın ekonomisine doğrudan getirdiği kısıtlamalar, hibrit savaşın bir diğer bileşeni olarak ekonominin, Moskova'nın Ukrayna'daki çıkarlarını muhafaza etmek için nasıl kullanıldığını göstermiştir.

Bu bölüm aynı zamanda Donbas'taki hibrit savaşın bilgi boyutuna da odaklanıyor. Bu minvalde öncelikle Ukrayna yerel ve ulusal medyasının Donbas bölgesinin izole edilmesine olan katkısı araştırılmıştır. Bir sonraki alt bölümde, Rus medyasının, Donbas'taki ayrılıkçılara verilen desteğin meşrulaştırılması için Ukrayna medyasının daha önce yaratmış olduğu söylemleri nasıl kullandığını açıklamıştır. Bu kısım,

Ukraynalı politikacılar için kısa süreliğine siyasi yarar sağlayan ayrılıkçı ve bölüştürücü söylemlerin, Donbas'taki savaş sırasında Rus medyasının en önemli araçlarından biri haline geldiğini göstermiştir.

Bölümün son kısmı, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'daki hibrit savaşının siber boyutunu araştırıyor. Bu bağlamda Rusya'nın hibrit savaş mekanizmasının unsurlarından biri olarak kullanmasında siber alanın ne kadar önemli bir araç olduğu ortaya konuyor. Bu bölüm, Rusya'nın Estonya ve Gürcistan örneklerinden farklı olarak Rus bilgisayar korsanlarının sadece ülkenin imajını itibarsızlaştırmakla kalmayıp aynı zamanda Ukrayna ekonomisine de ciddi zarar verdiği açıklanmıştır. Kısacası bu bölüm, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'daki hibrit savaşının askeri olmayan unsurlarını incelemiştir. Bu bağlamda, bu kısım, Ukrayna'nın iç dinamiklerinin Ukrayna'da devam eden hibrit savaşa nasıl malzeme tedarik ettiği aydınlatılmıştır.

Altıncı bölümde, Donbas Çatışmasında barışı sağlamak için çözüm girişimlerinin üzerinde durulmuştur. Bu çerçevede, Donbas'ta devam etmekte olan savaşa bir çözüm bulmak Ukrayna'nın 2014'ten bu yana en büyük sorunu haline geldiği anlatılmıştır. Ancak, koşulların yalnızca Ukrayna makamlarının iradesine bağlı olmadığı da belirtilmiştir. Bu yüzden, savaşan tarafların farklı bakış açıları bu bölümde sunulmuştur. Bu kapsamda, Haziran 2014 - Eylül 2014 tarihleri arasında barış görüşmeleri öncelikli olarak incelenmiştir. Minsk I ateşkes anlaşması özellikle analiz konusu olmuştur. Daha sonra, Minsk II olarak da adlandırılan ikinci bir ateşkes anlaşmasının imzalanmasına yol açan saldırmazlık anlaşmalarının ihlal edildiğine vurgu yapılmıştır. Ardından, Minsk Anlaşmalarının artıları ve eksileri Ukrayna ve Rusya açısından değerlendirilmiştir. Bu durumda, her iki ülkenin de anlaşma maddelerini uygulamak için istekli olmalarına rağmen, bu maddelerin uygulanmasının sırası konusunda anlaşmaya varamadıkları iddia edilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, Kiev'in temel önceliğinin Donbas'ta güvenliği sağlamak ve daha sonra Minsk Anlaşmalarının siyasi koşullarından biri olan Donbas için özel bir statü oluşturulmaya çalışılmak olduğu belirtilmiştir. Bu kısımda Kiev, Donetsk ve Lugansk bölgelerinde ayrılıkçı yönetimleri yasallaştırabilecek herhangi bir eylemden kaçındığı belirtilmiştir.

Buna karşılık Moskova, Ukraynalı yetkilileri Minsk Anlaşmalarının vaatleri

çerçevesinde hareket etmemekle suçladığı açıklanmıştır. Moskova'nın bakış açısına göre, önce siyasi vaatler yerine getirilmeli ve daha sonra yabancı askeri oluşumlar Donbas'tan çekilerek bölgenin kontrolü Kiev yönetimine devredilebilir. Bu kısımda, Minsk Anlaşmalarının uygulanmasında Kremlin'in asıl amacının, Ukrayna'nın federalleştirilmesini sağlamak olduğu gösterilmiştir. Bu amacına ulaştığı zaman, Rusya Donbas'ta baskın bir aktör olmakla kalmayacak, aynı zamanda Ukrayna siyasetinin merkezine yerleşmeyi garanti altına almış olacaktır çünkü Federal Ukrayna'da, Kremlin, Kiev'in Batı yönelimlerini kolayca engelleyebilecektir. Bu nedenle tez, Minsk Anlaşmalarının yerine getirilme sırası, Donbas'ta barışı sağlamada en büyük sorun olarak karşımıza çıktığını vurgulamaktadır.

Ayrıca, bu bölümde BM barış güçlerinin Donbas'a yerleştirilmesinin bölgede barış sürecine alternatif bir yaklaşım olarak analiz edilmektedir. Bu bağlamda tez, BM'nin Donbas'a karşı barışı koruma misyonunun her iki ülke tarafından, özellikle de Ukrayna tarafından memnuniyetle karşılandığını iddia etmektedir. BM barış gücü misyonuyla Ukrayna, Rusya Federasyonu ile sınırlarını güvence altına almayı ve böylece Rusların Donbas militanlarına desteğine engel olmayı çalışıyor. Bu nedenle Kiev, Donbas'ta güçlü bir BM barış gücü görevi önerirken bunun aksine, Rusya barışı koruma misyonunu yalnızca temas hattında konuşlandırmaya sıcak bakıyor. Bir diğer ifadeyle, Moskova, Rusya ve Ukrayna sınırında BM barış gücünün konuşlandırılmasına karşı çıkıyor. Aslında, başlangıçta, Rusya Donbas'taki BM barışı koruma misyonunu reddediyordu. Ancak sonradan Moskova, Donbas'a konuşlandırılacak BM barış gücü misyonunun kendi versiyonunu önerdi. Rusya BM birliklerini temas hattına yerleştirerek Ukrayna'yı temas hattının dışına itmeyi ve böylece Ukrayna'daki varlığını daha da güçlendirmeyi hedeflemektedir. Sonuç olarak bu bölüm, ülkelerin Donbas'ta konumlandırılacak BM barış gücü misyonuyla ilgili farklı görüş açılarına sahip oldukları sonucuna varmaktadır.

Bu araştırmanın sonunda, Donbas örneği, eski Sovyet coğrafyasındaki Rusya'nın başka bir hibrit savaşını karşılaştırıyor. Rusya'nın eski Sovyet coğrafyasında yürütmekte olduğu başka bir hibrit savaş örneğini sunmak, Ukrayna'daki savaşın daha iyi anlaşılmasını sağlıyor. Bu bağlamda tez, Rusya'nın Gürcistan'daki hibrit savaşı, Donbas Çatışması hakkındaki algımızı genişletmemize yardımcı oluyor. Her iki durumda da, Rusya planladığı menfaatlerini elde etmek için hibrit savaş

yöntemlerini kullanmaktadır. Bu bölüm, Ukrayna ve Gürcistan vakalarında Moskova'nın hibrit savaşını yürütmek için iç dinamikleri kullandığını gösteriyor. Tıpkı Ukrayna'da olduğu gibi, bu bölüm Rusya'nın Gürcistan'a karşı ayrılıkçı oluşumlarla işbirliği yaptığını açıklıyor. Tez, Moskova'nın Ukrayna ve Gürcistan'daki ayrılıkçı grupları destekleyerek bu ülkelerin Batı'ya yönelik dış politikalarını kısıtlamaya ve bu ülkelerdeki etkisini güçlendirmeye çalıştığını vurguluyor.

Bu karşılaştırma aynı zamanda bize Rusya'nın Ukrayna'da yürütmekte olduğu hibrit savaşının tesadüfi ya da rastgele bir eylem olmadığını, aksine bunun Kremlin'in tutarlı ve iyi tasarlanmış bir politikası olduğunu göstermektedir. Rusya'nın her iki ülkede de yerel faktörleri kullanıyor olması, bu çalışmada tercih edilen neoklasik realist yaklaşımın bu örnekleri incelemek için en uygun görüş olduğunu bir kez daha kanıtlıyor. Örneğin, Ağustos 2008 ve Ağustos 2014'te, Rus muvazzaf birlikleri sırasıyla Gürcistan ve Ukrayna'da savaştı ama bu savaşlar ülkelerin iç faktörleri göz önünde bulundurulmadan açıklanamamaktadır. Bu nedenle tez, Rusya'nın hibrit savaşını daha iyi anlayabilmek için, her iki ülkenin de iç dinamiklerine dikkat etmek gerektiğini savunuyor.

Bu anlamda, son bölüm ilk olarak 1990'ların başlarında Gürcistan'daki siyasi gelişmelere odaklanıyor. Bu dönem bize Gürcistan'daki etnik gruplar arasındaki çatışmaların Rusya'nın bölgedeki etkisini artırmasına yardımcı olduğunu gösteriyor. Bunun yanı sıra, bu bölüm, Moskova'nın Gürcistan'ın iki ayrılıkçı bölgesiyle olan ilişkilerini Tiflis'e karşı bir kaldıraç olarak kullandığını savunuyor. Daha sonra bu kısım, Ağustos 2008 savaşının askeri yönünü araştırıyor. Bu bölümde çalışma, Rusya'nın Gürcistan'daki etkisini güçlendirmek için muvazzaf birliklerini ayrılıkçı güçlerle birlikte nasıl kullandığını ortaya koyuyor. Tıpkı Ukrayna örneğinde olduğu gibi, Rusya'nın Gürcistan'daki hibrit savaşının askeri olmayan yönleri de bu kısmın diğer alt başlıklarını oluşturuyor. Bu anlamda, Kremlin'in Gürcistan'ın Rus karşıtı yönelimlerini dizginlemek için ekonomik ilişkilerini bir silah olarak nasıl kullandığı üzerinde duruluyor. Daha sonra, Rusya'nın hibrit savaşının bir başka unsuru olarak bilgi savaşı tartışılıyor. Bu bölümde, Ağustos 2008 savaşı sırasında Rusya'nın, cumhurbaşkanı Mihail Saakaşvili'nin en ünlü uluslararası yayın kuruluşlarındaki çıkışları ve ayrıca Rus ordusunun Gürcistan'ın tartışma konusu olmayan bölgelerine

kadar ilerlemesi nedeniyle Gürcistan'a karşı bilgi savaşını kaybettiği iddia ediliyor. Ancak, Rusya'nın kısa sürede bilgi savaşını kaybetmesine rağmen, uzun dönemde avantaj sağladığına da dikkat çekiliyor. Son olarak, Gürcistan'daki savaşın siber boyutu açıklanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Rus askeri birlikleri ve siber güçler arasındaki bağlantı ortaya koyulmuştur. Ağustos 2008 savaşı sırasında siber saldırılarının savaşın askeri boyutuna paralel olarak nasıl gerçekleştiği gösterilmiştir.

Kısacası, Gürcistan vakasını Ukrayna örneği ile karşılaştırmak, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'da yürütmekte olduğu hibrit savaşını anlamak için bize daha iyi bakış açısı sağlıyor. Her iki durumda da, Rusya'nın hibrit savaş yöntemlerini sistematik olarak yürüttüğü açıklığa kavuşturulmuştur. Ayrıca, Rusya'nın bu ülkelerdeki eylemlerinin gelişigüzel veya plansız olmadığını da gösteriliyor. Aksine, Rusya, Gürcistan ve Ukrayna'nın Batı yanlısı dış politika yönelimlerini sınırlandırmak ve bu ülkelerdeki etkisini güçlendirmek için hibrit savaş yöntemini benimsediği iddia ediliyor. Ayrıca, bu bölüm Ukrayna'da olduğu gibi Rusya'nın hibrit savaşını yürütmek için Gürcistan'ın iç dinamiklerini kullandığı vurgulanıyor. Bu nedenle, bu bölüm Gürcistan ve Ukrayna örneklerini karşılaştırırken Donbas örneğini daha iyi anlamak için Gürcistan'ın da iç faktörlerine dikkat çekiyor.

Özetle, bu tez, Donbas bölgesinin ayrılıkçı eğiliminin kökeninin Ukrayna'nın tarihsel gelişmelerinde; ülkenin bağımsızlığından bu yana siyasi yapı içerisinde; ve Doğu Ukrayna'nın yerel faktörleri ile birlikte bölgedeki dış etkenlerinde aranması gerektiğini savunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Donbas'taki mevcut durumun sadece Ukrayna'nın iç dinamikleriyle açıklanamayacağı iddia ediliyor. Bunun yerine, Donbas'taki savaşın sürdürülmesinin ancak Rusya'nın bölgedeki hibrit savaş yöntemiyle mümkün olduğu iddia ediliyor. Başka bir deyişle, bu çalışma Ukrayna'nın Donetsk ve Lugansk bölgelerinde mevcut savaşı açıklamak için önce Ukrayna'nın iç dinamikleri üzerine odaklanılması gerektiğinin altını çiziyor. Bu anlamda, Ukrayna'nın tarihsel sürecinin toplumun ikili yapısının oluşmasında önemli bir rol oynadığı ortaya konmuştur. Ayrıca, 2014 öncesi siyasi aktörler ve medya söylemleri Donbas halkının ülkenin geri kalanından izole edilmesine katkıda bulunduğu açıklanmıştır. Ancak, bu tez, Donbas Çatışmasını anlamak ve bütüncül bir bakış açısı sağlamak adına Rusya'nın dış bir aktör olarak Ukrayna'nın yerel faktörleriyle birlikte göz önünde bulundurulması gerektiğini savunmuştur. Bu

bağlamda, tez, Rusya'nın Donbas ihtilafına katılımını açıklamak için hibrit savaş kavramını benimsemiştir.

Bu araştırmada iddia edildiği üzere, Donbas'taki çatışma, Rusya'nın ülkedeki hibrit savaşı ile bağlantılı olarak Ukrayna'nın yerel dinamiklerinden kaynaklanıyor. Bu anlamda, bu araştırma Rusya'nın Donbas'taki hibrit savaşı oldukça 'başarılı' bir şekilde yürüttüğü sonucuna varmaktadır. Sözde Donetsk ve Lugansk Halk Cumhuriyetleri yönetiminin en üst pozisyonlarında bulunan Rus vatandaşlarını görevden aldıktan sonra, Moskova hibrit savaşı zımni olarak yürütmeye başlamıştır. Ukrayna ve Batı ülkelerinin, Rusya'yı Ukrayna'nın toprak bütünlüğünü ihlal etmekle suçlamalarına rağmen, Kremlin, Donbas Çatışmasında taraf olduğunu sürekli olarak reddetmektedir. Bu tezde, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'daki siyaseti, Ukrayna'nın Avrupa Birliği entegrasyon sürecini sınırlandırdığı ve olası NATO üyeliğini ortadan kaldırdığı için 'başarılı' sayılmıştır. Rusya, Kırım'da olduğu gibi Ukrayna'nın Donbas bölgesini işgal etmek yerine hibrit savaş taktiğini benimseyerek Ukrayna siyasetinin merkezine yerleşmeyi başarmıştır.

Ukrayna'nın kendi kapasitesini güçlendirme çabaları Rusya'nın hibrit savaşına karşı koyabilmesi için hayati öneme sahip olsa da, Kiev'in Donbas Çatışmasını çözme konusundaki adımları yetersiz görünüyor. Örneğin, orduyu Rusya'nın desteklediği Donbas ayrılıkçı güçlerini yenecek veya yayın kuruluşlarını Rusya'nın bilgi savaşıyla başa çıkmaya çalışacak şekilde yeniden yapılandırması önemlidir. Ancak bu karşı önlemler Donbas'ta kontrolü yeniden ele geçirmek için yeterli değildir. Aslında, daha önce belirtildiği gibi, hibrit savaşı onun bileşenlerine odaklanılarak yenmek son derece zordur. Bu bağlamda, Robert Johnson'ın önerisi Donbas'ta barışı sağlamak için hayati öneme sahiptir. Johnson, hibrit savaşlarda karşı tarafı yenmek için, bir aktörün hibrit savaş unsurlarına karşı savaşmak yerine düşmanın nihai amacını doğru belirlemesi gerektiğini belirtir. Başka bir deyişle, hibrit tehdidin üstesinden gelmek için, düşmanın savaş taktiklerini veya araçlarını değil onun nihai hedefinin anlaşılması ve o yönde çözümler üretilmesi gerekmektedir.

Ukrayna, Rusya'nın hibrit savaşı yürüttüğü Donbas bölgesinde de benzer bir süreçle karşılaşmaktadır. Ancak Kiev yetkilileri, kalıcı bir çözüm üretmeyecek olan hibrit savaşın bileşenlerine odaklanarak çatışmanın üstesinden gelmeye çalışıyorlar. Bu

anlamda, Ukrayna şimdiye kadarki süreçte sürekli değişim eğiliminde olan hibrit savaş bileşenlerine karşı koyarak savaşı yenmeye çalışmaktadır. Bu nedenle tez, Ukrayna'nın Donbas'ta devam etmekte olan Rusya'nın hibrit savaşını yenmekte zorlandığı sonucuna varmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Kiev yetkililerinin, karşılaştıkları hibrit savaş bileşenlerine ayrı ayrılıkta karşı koyarak bu sorunun üstesinden gelmeyi beklemek yerine, Moskova'nın asıl amacını anlamaları ve buna göre çözüm üretmeleri gerekmektedir. Bu konu ise, Donbas Çatışması çalışmalarının sonraki ana odağı olmalıdır.

C. TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU