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State Identity Building of the Other by the U.S. and Russia as Portrayed on VoA and RT: The Case of the 2013/2014 Conflict in Ukraine

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Declaration

I, *Anna Grosbaha*, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature *A. Grosbaha*

Date June 2, 2020

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Writing about what interests you is enjoyable, except when one does not know everything, then along with it comes the (sometimes stressful) exploration of the knowledge of the world.

I believe that writing a thesis is one of the best ways to absorb knowledge; it is big enough to help you see a broader picture, yet small enough to not spend an eternity on it (which you cannot afford to do anyway, as your degree has an endpoint). Additionally, as is true in most other adventures, this one too comes with company, without which this piece would have had a much harder time coming to be.

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As they say – *any errors are mine alone*, and I hope you can forgive me for them.

Table of Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	3
<i>Introduction</i>	4
<i>Background</i>	6
Historical Background on Crimea	6
Conflict in Ukraine and the Annexation of Crimea	8
Short Summary of Russian and American Propaganda	10
<i>Theory</i>	13
State identities	13
The Self and the Other	15
Russia versus the U.S. (or West)	17
Discourse Analysis	19
Language.....	22
Theoretical Commitments	23
<i>Methodology</i>	25
Data	26
Research Sample	26
Methods	27
Limitations and ethical considerations	29
<i>Results and Discussion</i>	30
RT – the Other is the U.S.	30
Interpellation.....	30
Articulation of the Other.....	32
Overview.....	39
VoA – the Other is Russia	41
Interpellation.....	41
Articulation of the Other.....	42
Overview.....	58
Comparison	60
Presidential Statements	62
Putin’s Addresses.....	62
Obama’s Statements	63
<i>Conclusion</i>	65
<i>References</i>	67
<i>Appendices</i>	72

Abstract

Spreading information through media to project an identity of a rival country that could damage its reputation is one of the simplest ways to gain influence, and this technique has been used by both the U.S. and Russia repeatedly. The 2013/2014 conflict in Ukraine involved both Russian and American interests and presented both of these countries with an opportunity to construct a negative identity of the Other. This research used discourse analysis on RT (Russia) and Voice of America (also VoA, U.S.) articles to understand how/which identities are being constructed of the Other (RT on the U.S. and VoA on Russia respectively) in an effort to gain more influence in the region. RT and VoA constructed narratives that painted the Other negatively, portraying them as the 'evil' side of the conflict, as opposed to the 'good' Self. These efforts proved to have notable similarities in how both channels created the negative identity of the Other. The Russia and the U.S. alike created an unfavourable identity of the Other in attempts to gain influence in the region in which the countries had military, economic and diplomatic interests. This study provides insight into the propaganda efforts made by the U.S. and Russia towards each other using international state-funded channels.

Introduction

American and Russian propaganda have wielded influence for decades, not only within their own borders, but also within their spheres of influence. While many Western countries are exposed primarily to ‘Western’ propaganda, some are exposed to ‘Western’ and ‘Russian’ propaganda in almost equal amounts. Formerly Soviet countries such as Latvia, Ukraine and others that have recently sought to become closely allied with the West, share a border with Russia, and house a considerable self-identifying Russian population are an example of this.

Propaganda has over time shaped the thinking and values of the people towards which it has been aimed. Russia and the U.S. are two countries whose fight for influence in the Old World has stretched across centuries. This influence can provide the country with military, economic and diplomatic opportunities, like establishing favourable trade ties, or creating military bases on partners’ land. Therefore, it is important to investigate the identity each country constructs for the other, as it influences the perception of that country among their own people, as well as among other people from around the world, in an effort to open up more opportunities.

Consequentially, the purpose of this thesis is to study and compare state identity building of the Other in U.S. and Russian state-owned channels through Voice of America (VoA) and RT (formerly Russia Today, part of RIA Novosti network). I compare how these countries choose to build the identity of the Other country using state-funded channels to distribute propaganda. This is topical, as both countries hold significant influence over the international community and are very different in culture and governance styles, in a manner that often creates tension. This tension should be visible in how these countries create identities of each other. To explore this, this thesis conducts a case study on the articles found on the aforementioned channels during the conflict in Ukraine in November of 2013, up until the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in March 18th of 2014.

The case of the conflict in Ukraine up to the annexation of Crimea was selected due to Ukraine’s role as a buffer zone and as a region in which both countries have sought to gain power. The events of 2013/2014 shocked the international community and revealed the dissonance between efforts of influence of two larger states as they played out in a third, a weaker and smaller state – that had historically been influenced by both. The discourse analysis

of media content from RT and VoA revealed that the reports on the Other country during this time period created a sense of a negative Other.

The research questions of this thesis are: **How did Russian and U.S. state-owned channels (RT and Voice of America) built the identity of the Other during the conflict in Ukraine?** How is the Other portrayed? What are the differences and similarities between the identities of the Other on these channels?

These research questions allow us to pursue the main objective: to further analyse the differences and possible similarities in the identities being constructed. This provided data that showed the effort of both countries in building an identity of the Other.

In other words, the main research objective of this thesis is to explore which words and meanings state-owned channels of the U.S. and Russia used to build the identity of the Other country, with a focus on how VoA and RT constructed and portrayed identities of respectively Russia and the U.S. This allows for an analysis of the differences and similarities in the information being spread about the Other to propagate interests and identities favourable to each of the countries.

Background

This master's thesis focuses on how two state-funded channels of Russian and the U.S. use discourse to construct the identity of the Other on the case of the conflict in Ukraine, starting at the end of 2013 and up to the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in March 18, 2014.

One of the TV channels whose discourse is analysed in this paper is RT – a television network funded by the Russian government, directed towards audiences outside of Russia, which is available in English, Russian, Arabic, German, French and Spanish. The other channel is its American counterpart, Voice of America (VoA), which is also a state-funded media creator directed towards audiences outside its funding country – the U.S. It produces content in over 40 languages around the world.

Historical Background on Crimea

To fully understand what happened in Ukraine and Crimea, it is important to know the history of this country and the reasons why the Russian Federation lays claims to the Crimean Peninsula, while the West and Ukraine do not view these claims as sustainable. Crimea and Ukraine have historically been tied to Russia since the 18th century (Paul, 2015), but since the dissolution of the USSR, Ukraine has grown closer to Western countries, which the Russian Federation finds threatening. This also creates an understanding of how Russia and the U.S. have been involved in the region.

The indigenous people of the Crimean Peninsula are neither Russians nor Ukrainians, which is why a history of this land is essential in understanding the conflict that happened over it between Ukraine and Russia in years 2013-2014. A Crimean state was created in 1443 by the people indigenous to Crimea – the Crimean Tatars. In 1475, the nearby Ottoman Turks claimed what was called a 'protectorship' over this state, leaving it semi-autonomous for three centuries – a time that is seen as the golden age of the Crimean Tatars (Dawson, 1997). In 1783, Catherine the Great of Russia defeated the Ottomans in this territory and incorporated Crimea within Russia (Paul, 2015), and since then Crimea has been a large part of the Russian mental landscape (Suslov, 2014). At a certain point, the land had an autonomous governance, but after claims in 1945 that Crimean Tatars had collaborated with

Germany, it lost this privilege (Dawson, 1997). Russian historians have always denied that Crimean Tatars are indigenous to the land, and, during both Russian and Soviet rule, the Tatar population in Crimea was decreasing – both as a result of migration and deportation (Dawson, 1997). More than 200 000 Crimean Tatars were deported to Siberia and Central Asia by the Soviet Union (Mizrokhi, 2009; Paul, 2015). In spite of this, a movement of indigenous people of Crimea has always been present (Dawson, 1997).

In February 1954, Crimea was transferred to Soviet Ukraine from Soviet Russia. At that time, it had almost no implications as both of the countries were a part of the Soviet Union, yet in 1991, Ukraine (along with other former Soviet states) gained independence. Crimea, along with Ukraine, was separated from Russia (Hansen, 2015).

Almost all of the USSR countries were left confused with at least some identity confusion after gaining independence, but even more so Crimea where it was confusing who is more to lay claim on this to be their land – Ukrainians, Russians or Crimean Tatars, each side having a movement with the aim to secure their ethnical identity in the region. (Dawson, 1997, p. 429)

Although various treaties and agreements seemed to reassure (mostly Ukraine) that Ukraine and Russia would respect each other's existing borders, a campaign in Crimea and Russia was started for the annulment of the 1954 transfer document ceding Crimea from Russia to Ukraine, with the Russian government subsequently revealing to Ukraine that they had set their eyes on Crimea (Hansen, 2015). However, compared to other Eastern European countries, such as Bosnia, Georgia, Chechnya and Nagorno-Karabakh after the dissolution of the USSR, Crimea managed to keep ethnic tensions at bay (Dawson, 1997). It is worth noting that out of all the former Soviet states, Ukraine was left with the largest Russian minority (Omelicheva, 2014) and became a critical region after the dissolution of the USSR (Marples, 2010). Crimea, along with Latvia and Estonia, was Yeltsin's main concern in the 1991-1992 time period, precisely because of the large number of Russians living in these regions (Marples, 2010). Ukraine's 2004 Orange revolution in favour of political change towards a Western model did concern Kremlin as a possible danger to Russia. The Orange revolution caused the Russian Federation to be more illiberal to Kremlin-opposition and launch anti-Western propaganda campaigns (Solovei, 2015).

The Ukrainian people never claimed to be indigenous to the Crimean Peninsula, but they have argued that their attachment to Crimea is stronger than that of Russians (Dawson,

1997). In 1997, Dawson noted that divisions along ethnic lines that would result in conflicts were weak, and although parties had tried, these efforts were not strong enough to create a sufficiently suspenseful atmosphere (Dawson, 1997). However, after the dissolution of the USSR (especially after the year 2000) Russia has been very politically active in building its influence in Crimea (Mizrokhi, 2009).

Conflict in Ukraine and the Annexation of Crimea

Ukraine, once the heart and cradle of “Russian civilization,” has been transformed into an anti-Russian entity and by extension into something anti- or inhuman—“the monstrous double”—because of its “betrayal” (Suslov, 2014, p. 589)

March 18, 2019 was the fifth “anniversary” of Russia’s annexation of Crimea (Pifer, 2019). While the West continued to condemn the step that Russia chose to take in 2014, Putin proceeded to build power plants and a new bridge connecting Crimea to the Russian mainland, visited the peninsula multiple times, and proclaimed March 18 the “Day of Crimea’s Reunification with Russia” (*Russia Marks Five Years Since Annexation of Ukraine’s Crimea*, 2019). Russia’s illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula has been called the “most blatant land grab” since World War II and a violation of international agreements and treaties (Pifer, 2019).

The conflict with Russia and Ukraine started in 2014, after the 2013-2014 Maidan Revolution of the Ukrainian people, which drove out then-president Yanukovich, in whose presidential campaign Putin was personally involved (Solovei, 2015), for refusing to bring the country closer to Europe. Ukrainians interpreted it as part of a plan to eventually join the Russian-led Customs Union instead (Salushev, 2014). Yanukovich fled to Russia in 2014 (Pifer, 2019) resulting in the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, continuing conflicts in other parts of Ukraine and West’s sanctions against Russia for its actions. The annexation was carried out by what the media referred to as “little green men” – soldiers in green suits with no identifying insignia – taking control of key facilities in the Crimean Peninsula in February 2014 (Paul, 2015). Although initially Putin denied that Russia had anything to do with these soldiers (Hilpold, 2015) later he confirmed that they were, indeed, Russian military helping the Crimean units (Pifer, 2019; Paul, 2015). This was backed by “hybrid warfare” – a heavy disinformation campaign in the region conducted by Russia. In a documentary released in 2015,

Putin then states, that all of this was carefully planned – meant as a show of power by Russia and Putin himself (Paul, 2013). By March that year, Crimean authorities proposed a referendum in which people could check one of two boxes - to either become part of Russia or “restore Crimea’s 1992 constitution” giving it a much greater autonomy from Kyiv than it had at that point. The referendum, conducted under the watch of armed soldiers and with no credible international observers present, allegedly had a 97% turnout with 83% voting to join Russia (Pifer, 2019). The peninsula’s native Tatars largely decided to boycott the vote¹, and citizens of different parts of Russia were reportedly allowed to vote (Salushev, 2014; Pifer, 2019).

The year of 2014 also marked a quick downfall in Russian popular opinions of the U.S., as the conflict is often seen as the fault of the U.S. (Yatsyk, 2018). Previous research conducted on RT and other Russian media outlets point to the fact that Kremlin boldly spread propaganda, initially using all means to deny involvement and give the appearance that Russia had nothing to do with the events in Ukraine (Abrams, 2016) and later portraying themselves as saviours. At the same time, the U.S. was shown to be a self-interested antagonist driving a wedge between Russia and Ukraine by orchestrating a regime change in Kyiv (Hansen, 2015)².

One year after the illegal annexation of Crimea, the economic processes on the peninsula had been disrupted, with a stark decrease in tourism and agricultural sectors and with enterprises being seized – as a result, many people struggled to survive (Paul, 2015). Simultaneously, xenophobia, extremism, human rights and fundamental freedom violations had been on a worrying rise. The Crimean ethnic Tatars were being heavily prosecuted, and journalists, human rights advocates and political opposition members were being targeted (Paul, 2015).

Crimea has a long history that intertwines three different peoples that each lay claim to the land. The Ukrainian people’s revolution of 2014 in favour of the West’s interests gave a ‘reason’ for Russia to exert its power to gain back what they believe is theirs and show the West how powerful they are. The case of Crimea for the analysis of Russian and American propaganda was chosen specifically as a recent political endeavour that involved both the U.S. and Russian interests in the region. The illegal annexation of Crimea and Kremlin soldiers in Ukraine came as

¹ It is not the first time Crimean Tatars have decided to boycott a vote, as in 1991 they did so too, believing that only they have the legitimacy to decide the fate of the peninsula (Mizrokhi, 2009).

² I was unable to find similar research done on the U.S. or EU media outlets.

a shock to a relatively peaceful post-World War II world, and the media coverage of the events that took place in Ukraine was frequent.

Short Summary of Russian and American Propaganda

The U.S. and Russia have been rivals on the international stage since at least the beginning of the 20th century. The relations between those two superpowers were especially strained during the Cold War, when their rivalry dominated the international stage (Dubabin, 2008). One of the major reasons was the different governance styles, where the predecessor of Russia – the USSR - was a socialist country, while the U.S. was a proponent of democracy. Throughout their histories, both countries have prioritized the enlargement of their sphere of influence. Russian and the U.S. propaganda plays a significant role in the identity building of the Other not just because this propaganda is still used heavily by these countries, but also because the past propaganda has had a heavy influence on how these countries are seen by the societies they influenced.

Propaganda is possibly the oldest form of political communication (Lilleker, 2006). It is one of the most long-term effective intelligence weapons and has been used within and outside both of these countries in order to build their own image and identity and sabotage that of the other. Examples include propaganda against communism in the USSR by the U.S. media. In historical reports, letter correspondence by prominent U.S. political actors shows discussions of the U.S. intelligence spreading propaganda in enemy territories very early on (Will Irwin to Malborough Churchill, 1918). During and before the Cold War the U.S. spread Western ideas and values within the Soviet Union using such U.S. state funded channels as Radio Free Europe and VoA (Williams, 2014). For a significant period of time VoA was prohibited from being broadcast within the U.S. because of its propagandist nature (A. Cooper, personal communication, October 10, 2019). In the 1980s, the successful penetration of the Western TV and radio in the Soviet sphere in Eastern Europe gave way to a domino effect eventually assisting and leading to the collapse of the Soviet Union (Dubabin, 2008). The U.S. was also a target of similar attempts of undermining its government by the USSR, mostly showing capitalism as the root of all evil (Yatsyk, 2018). These attempts were designed to teach their own population to think of the other as inferior, as well as to influence the ideas of people who live in other territories such as Europe, to create a divide in hopes of swaying more countries to take

their side. In one example, the Soviets successfully damaged the image of the U.S. by using news outlets to spread a story claiming that the U.S. had created the AIDS virus in the 1980s (Abrams, 2016). Media is often instrumental in spreading news in small frames that give people a predefined and narrow context in which to view the events (Lilleker, 2006). News outlets essentially used news management to frame the story of AIDS in a way that made the U.S. appear to be the manufacturer of this disease. While most large-scale news stories are covered everywhere, they are not covered in the same way. Whether urged by the state or influenced by dominant discourses, media will still present its coverage of events a certain way, possibly leading to an emergence of a dominant perspective (Lilleker, 2006). This phenomenon is referred to as *framing*, and it happens by building a narrative and linking stories to previous stories, as well as morals, consequences and individuals (Lilleker, 2006). The perspectives that are portrayed can then work as propaganda – shaping and influencing the discourses, attitudes and behaviours by using symbols and rhetoric to appeal to consumers (Lilleker, 2006). This has been used by both the U.S. and Russia (as well as the USSR) extensively in the regions where they fought for influence.

During the Cold War, the USSR and the U.S. (along with the West) tried to keep up with each other on influence as well as military spending (Dubabin, 2008). After the end of the Cold War, Anti-Americanism has been the patriotic discourse in Russia (Yatsyk, 2018). It seems to be the only viable result when Anti-Western propaganda in Russia is on the rise with even Russian Federal Security Service director in 2005 Nikolai Patrushev “directly accusing foreign intelligence services of destabilising Russia’s neighbors” (Solovei, 2015, p. 87). Although Russia had laid dormant on the international stage since the beginning of the 1990s, in 2006 it re-emerged as a power as a gas and oil supplier (Dubabin, 2008). Steve Abrams (2016) mentions that the use of RT for ‘white propaganda’³ is just a small part of Russia’s efforts, and notes that efforts known during the USSR time as ‘active measures’ (any means of influence activities) are still being employed. At the same time, while most of the news content can be found online, in March of 2014 the Russian media oversight agency did not renew VoA’s contract, ending the TV

³ According to Jowett and O’Donnell (2006) “*white* propaganda comes from a source that is identified correctly, and the information in the message tends to be accurate,” although it is often presented in a way that portrays the sender as the “good guy” (p. 30).

channels broadcasts in the region (Williams, 2014). However, as the use of propaganda between these countries has stretched over generations, it is important to realise that the overarching messages that they contain have been ingrained in people's associations, thinking, and world-view, rendering it almost impossible to tell just by discourse analysis what roles attributed to the other are intentional, and which are seen as the norm within the societies.

More recently, many former USSR countries, especially in Northern and Eastern Europe, have become closer military allies with the U.S., further encouraging Russia to improve its influence in those regions. For example, the Czech Security Information Service released a report in 2008 that acknowledged that the intelligence services of Russia are the most active in the region (Abrams, 2016). Crimea is one such case where this ideological fight for influence escalated greatly.

Theory

State identities

Identity perspective theory appeared in IR only around 1990, and it was more effective than other theories in explaining the world after the end of the Cold War and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union (Berenskoetter, 2010) – after which many nations started debating their identity discourses (Freyburg & Richter, 2010). Identities are important for this research because they are constructed through values, norms, ideas, symbols, practices, and most importantly, discourses (Berenskoetter, 2010).

In existing literature, identity is given many faces, including personal, social, role-based, corporate, collective, national, relational and self-identity (Hagström & Gustafsson, 2015). Identity was imported into the social sciences from philosophy to help deal with “psychosocial” identity – sameness with self and sharing of a character with others (Dittmer & Kim, 2018). In IR, constructivism uses identity to look at how states act in relation to other states (Hagström & Gustafsson, 2015) and how states project themselves and what this projection represents (Ashizawa, 2008). Therefore, both how a state presents itself and how it acts are important (Dittmer & Kim, 2018). It is argued between scholars whether the source of identity at a state level is the existing culture of the people (Hagström & Gustafsson, 2015) or the international community (Wendt, 1994) – when in fact it has both an internal and an external dimension (Banchoff, 1999). The internal dimension (shared norms and narratives) is most often called the national identity, whereas the external dimension, as well as self-placement in international contexts, is called the state identity. These contexts can include relationships with states, international institutions and historical experiences (Banchoff, 1999). State identity can be analysed by looking at legal norms, public opinion on the country’s international standing, and media content (Banchoff, 1999). While state identity and national identity mean slightly different things, they are still interlinked and influence each other - how a state sees itself (its national identity) will influence how it portrays other states (thus creating or attributing to their state identities). For this reason, I explain both state and national identities in this paper.

State identity highlights the socially constructed nature of states and provides insight into their values and interests in regard to the international community (Berenskoetter, 2010; Mitzen, 2006). These representations are constructed through social processes, using dimensions by

creating and temporarily fixing a meaning through chains of connotations in linguistic elements and other ways, for example, referring to a hurtful event or calling someone a terrorist (Weldes, 1996) as opposed to a freedom fighter. This is called *articulation*. It also includes social programming that leads people to understand one word as a synonym or as being closely linked with other words; this repeated articulation can seemingly depict reality (Weldes, 1996). Another dimension that highlights the importance of the link between representation and international community, is that relationships and positions between subjects portray them to the world in certain ways. This is called the *interpellation of subjects* (Weldes, 1996). For example, in relation to the United States, is Ukraine a friend or a foe? What about in relation to Russia? State identity is ever evolving and can be linked with the shaping of a state's interests. A change in identity can influence state policy and the international system - and how it is produced and maintained (Ashizawa, 2008). Wendt (1994) argues that national identity helps in understanding a state's actions – it can be changed and manipulated to achieve war, or peace (Berenskoetter, 2010). A strong example can be seen in the U.S., as the leader of anti-communism, feeling tasked with the liberation Vietnam from this 'evil' (Weldes, 1996). Although often looked at from different point of views, scholars believe that identity is fundamental as an explanatory source of state behaviour (Ashizawa, 2008), and is often seen as an independent variable in research (Hagström, 2015).

State identity functions closely with the generation of interests, which then can influence a states decision-making and actions. It is generally agreed upon that identity does not directly influence action (Ashizawa, 2008). Ashizawa (2008) argues that “a conception of state identity provides” a value or values which influence actions taken by decisionmakers (p. 581). This is linked to the fact that identities are context-dependent, requiring cultural and explanatory context (Ashizawa, 2008). One way of providing such context is by underlining shared international practices and norms that help in shaping state identities (Banchoff, 1999). By inhabiting the offices and speaking and negotiating for states, statesmen also have a role in constructing a state identity (Weldes, 1996). However, a persuasive analysis must include not only the content of state identity, but also demonstrate its effects (Banchoff, 1999).

According to various claims by researchers, national identity greatly influences national security (Berenskoetter, 2010). Mitzen (2006) emphasizes that states need not only physical, but also ontological security – the security of Self – which stems from relationships with significant

Others. In some cases, this could even mean contributing to harmful relationships and becoming attached to a conflict as a means of security, and knowing what will happen next or sometimes taking measures that will threaten another state for the sake of their own security, thus creating war (Mitzen, 2006). Weldes (1996) writes about national interest as being deeply intertwined with national identity, which helps explain actions of states and international politics. National interest is a way for policy makers to think, and a means to back up their decisions (Weldes, 1996). Policy makers and politicians then become responsible and hold the power for distributing values and causing groups to cohere (Dittmer & Kim, 2018). When asking someone to die for their nation, they must understand how their nation will benefit from this (Weldes, 1996). National identity does not directly cause action, but instead it works as a lens for the perception of problems and possible solutions – setting appropriate and inappropriate responses for the said state that even cost-benefit analyses do not sway (Freyburg & Richter, 2010). It is straightforward to observe the strong link that exists between a state's identity and its foreign policy – foreign policy helps define self against the external environment, or 'us' against 'them' (Kassianova, 2001).

It is important to understand what these identities are and how they are built by two of the biggest and most powerful countries in the world. Knowledge of this portrayal of the Other is important not only for people, governments and companies, but also media researchers and content creators. Because identity is something that is continuously created and recreated, 'white propaganda' provides a channel for its cultivation. This is readily illustrated in how the U.S. framed the Cuban Missile Crisis in a way that allowed for the continuous perpetuation of its identity (Berenskoetter, 2010).

The Self and the Other

The idea of the Self has been explored by philosophers since Plato, however, only in 1950s did it enter the vocabulary of social sciences (Berenskoetter, 2010). Just as in everyday life, in IR it is important to realize that identity is not made by either the Self, or the Other, but rather both at the same time (Berenskoetter, 2010).

The question of the Self and the Other has been one of the most persistent in Western philosophy (Paipais, 2011). It can be described by the collective formation of 'in-groups' and 'out-groups'. Those who are part of the 'in-group' are seen as more alike, trustworthy, likeable.

Those who are a part of any of the ‘out-groups’ can be seen as different, threatening and unlikeable. Otherness can stem from both, not understanding the Other or simply having different world views (Paipais, 2011). Although it is not always the case, this can lead to tensions between ‘in-’ and ‘out-groups’ (Berenskoetter, 2010), at the same time establishing Self-certainty within them (Paipais, 2011). For a state, identity can be used to paint the Other as the enemy, thus boosting sense of unity within the people (Kassianova, 2001). State identities often reflect the existence and perhaps identity of other states (Ashizawa, 2008) and are known by what they are not. For example, the identity of Japan is often said to have evolved in regard to two others – the West and China (Hagström, 2015). Having a Self based on the Other, however, only contributes to the instability of the said identity (Paipais, 2011).

In identity creation, the Self is usually ascribed positive traits, while the Other is shown in a more negative light (Kowert, 1998). The Self is normal, good, progressive and right, where the Other is dangerous, primitive and backward (Nayak, 2006). Kowert (1998) further argues that identity is somewhat synonymic with patriotism and national purpose, which are often the essence of a state (especially in cases of the U.S. and Russia, where patriotism is seen as an important part of governance) and it helps distinguish between friends and enemies. Identity and patriotism are important because they can help keep a community together, even if it consists of different peoples (Alexandrov, 2003). With the arrival of poststructuralism in IR a more critical outlook was applied to how the Other is treated – often marginalised and excluded – and viewed as less important than the (Western) Self (Paipais, 2011).

During the Cold War, the U.S. has played out its identity on the international stage and in relation to others through interaction and encounters to such an extent that it has had a major impact on U.S. identity (Nayak, 2006). The U.S. state identity after 9/11 was widely reinstated using othering. Othering was apparent as Islamic and “oriental” groups were demonised, and the U.S. was portrayed with a sense of hypermasculinity and obsolete righteousness in order to save its identity. It was visible both in state actions and the wording used in President George W. Bush’s speeches (Nayak, 2006).

Russia versus the U.S. (or West)

Both Russia and the U.S. use constructions of identities of the Self and the Other in propaganda. The U.S. (as part of the West) and Russia are strong examples of how identity can be built in opposition of an external other (Kowert, 1998). After the Crimean war in 1850s, Russia seems to have recognized the distinction between a Russian Self and a European Self, after which Russia had a perception that Europe did not recognize it as European (Tsygankov, 2008).

Russian context conjures up the ‘eternal’ problem of Russia’s relationship with its habitual other, the West, and the issue of the nature of this constitutive interrelation in the contemporary world. (Kassianova, 2001, p. 822)

Russia has drawn upon the identity of Europe under many rulers – either trying to catch up on new ideas or preserving old ones, but there has never been an agreement on whether to look up to Europe as a role model, or become one itself (Tsygankov, 2008). In 2005, it appeared as though Putin tried to establish Russia as a part of the European Self in one of his speeches (Tsygankov, 2008). However, since its establishment, the self-perception of the Russian Federation has been challenged and impacted from forces inside and outside the country. Russian policies were often seen as hectic, incoherent and lacking strategy, and the West had concerns that Russia, while building its new identity, would choose to follow the easier path of othering Europe (Kassianova, 2001). Kassianova (2001) pointed out in her research that Russian Foreign Policy documents up to 2001 depict the international environment as difficult and Russia as being ignored while wanting closer cooperation with other leading countries. She also mentions, that Russia seems to have been warmer to the U.S. and more reserved to Europe in 1993, however, by 2000 these roles had reversed (Kassianova, 2001). Godzimirski (2008) points out, that out of all the friends and foes that have constituted the Other for Russia, the West has always been the most significant. Thus, the main goals of Russia at different times have been fighting the West, containing the West, cooperating with the West or even becoming the West (Godzimirski, 2008). While Russia’s perception friend and foe tend to sway depending upon context, the most common actors appearing on these lists are usually the West, the U.S., EU, NATO, China, India, Iran and the Commonwealth of Independent States (Godzimirski, 2008). Results from a 2013 Russian newspaper poll showed that 78% of respondents believed that Russia is faced with enemies. This number has been growing since 1989, when the same survey

showed just 13% of respondents felt that way. The West's recent actions, including military enlargement and alleged support for the so called 'Colour revolutions' in Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and Kyrgyzstan, have become an important part in how a Russian Self is understood (Hansen, 2015; Solovei, 2015). Russia seems to not acknowledge these 'Colour revolutions', instead interpreting them as coups led by Western-supported forces in the countries with an intention to quash any support for cooperation with the Russian Federation (Solovei, 2015).

For Russia, identity means understanding where they stand in the post-Soviet world – up until very recently, that included understanding who is Russian, as well as the standing of the state in the international politics (Godzimirski, 2008). The choice depended on the political society, consisting of political parties and leaders, voters and representatives of various groups (Godzimirski, 2008). Russian identity discourse evolution is often understood by breaking the political society into groups. The first group are liberals, democrats, Westernisers and others who support Western values of human rights, democracy and free market. This group was a part of the official philosophy in Russia for a short time in 1992 and 1993 (Kassianova, 2001). The second group are ultra-nationalists or often also called expansionists – the extreme left, and marginally communist. This group sees the international environment as both a general threat and a threat to Russian values. To them, the West is the enemy and a main goal should be to restore the Russian power over what used to be the Soviet occupied territories. However, this viewpoint is not popular among the general public (Kassianova, 2001). The third group, also the most diverse and populous are called liberal nationalists or statist. This group sees the world in more realist terms, believing that Russia's actions should be based on its security, geopolitical situation, economic goals and resource availability – depending on this, trading with the West can even be seen as positive (Kassianova, 2001). The main questions to answer for building the new Russian identity were “(1) What are the greatest moments of [Russia's] history? (2) How big is Russia? (3) Who is Russian?”, and each of these groups gave their own answers (Godzimirski, 2008, p. 16). Where the answer to the first question can be found in Soviet, or even earlier - tsarist times, the second question is painful for the Russian conscience. It relates to earlier losses of territories – specifically those that were under Soviet control – and fear to further losses. The answer to the last question was inclusive – Russia was to be to all citizens of the Russian state, however, this included many strongly varied groups with different interests (Godzimirski, 2008).

The U.S. identity has included being the spreader of democracy (and as a force of opposition to the Soviet Union and communism (Hutcheson et al., 2004) and serving as the world police. Similar to Russia, U.S. has unified people of different ethnicities under one flag and identity and has had to struggle to keep the identity strong, especially after 9/11 (Hutcheson et al., 2004). Since its founding, values such as equality, liberty and self-government have been on the front of what is shown as the U.S. identity, along with the states somewhat superior position in comparison to other states militarily, economically and culturally. The U.S. is also perceived by scholars as frequently mobilising this identity in order to take action and explain actions taken (Hutcheson et al., 2004). For example, Hutcheson et al. (2004) found that after 9/11 the U.S. government emphasized the superiority, values and power of the U.S., and this same rhetoric was reflected in the writing of journalists. Burton Harrington (2007) argues that this powerful U.S. identity is propagated not only through state and news channels, but also through TV, in such titles like CSI and Law and Order. At the same time, they also help establish why world policing by the U.S. is essential (Burton Harrington, 2007).

Analysing the propaganda spread on the Self and the Other on the media of the two biggest ‘rival’ countries will allow for further analysis of the identity construction of these states. This, as mentioned before, can lead to understanding certain actions taken by the state. A discourse analysis will allow for data to be further analysed that will respond to the research questions put forward in this thesis.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is an analysis of the patterns that people create and follow while taking part in social life – in short, it is a way of understanding and communicating about the world (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). It is heavily based off the work of such scholars as Foucault, who sought to explain the power relations by analysing discourse (Bryman, 2012).

Discourse analysis can be applied to different types of communication (Bryman, 2012) and is a very versatile approach, with different uses and suggestions on how it should be done (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Studying discourse can show how text and social processes lay ground for how the contemporary world is perceived by people and can assist in understanding the knowledge/power nexus that is often researched by critical theorists (Milliken, 1999). Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory argues that the world is constructed in meaning by discourse, and,

since languages are not stable, nothing is completely fixed (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). According to Foucault, power produces discourses and knowledge. For Foucault, knowledge is more precisely translated as the 'common sense' of the society in a said period of time, and power is seen in both its existing and potential forms (Taylor, 2010). Scholars who study the knowledge/power nexus view the world not as one that compromises of material objects, but rather one where beliefs about those objects shape their meaning and understanding of these representations (Milliken, 1999). In regard to othering, 'knowledge' of what the Other is known to be protects what is 'known' about the Self (Nayak, 2006). However, discourse is not just a means to gain access to the social reality, but it is also something to focus on in itself (Bryman, 2012). In IR literature, discourses are often described as background processes that help people grasp and differentiate between various things by either giving them attributes, qualities or comparing or relating them to other objects. In short, this is called *a structure of meaning-in-use* (Milliken, 1999), something Bryman (2012) illustrates by asking his readers to think about a mentally ill person, which leads to associations on the nature of the illness, how this person should be treated and who can treat them. This shows how an existing discourse works, and also justifies the actions of the people this discourse puts in power (Bryman, 2012). This illustration could also be applied by asking a Russian (or anyone under the Russian sphere of influence) to think about the US and vice versa, as it would allow to see for the associations the people have with the other country. In IR studies, discourse has received wide criticism for being very broad and lacking in empirical analyses and testable theories (Milliken, 1999). Other arguments that often reflect a more realist viewpoint have also been made on how 'language isn't everything' or about how events are not constructed, but are caused (Milliken, 1999).

Researchers stress that discourses do not exist on their own and should be analysed in relation to the power structures that have created and accommodated them (Bryman, 2012). Discourses are often researched in relation to a phenomenon; the following describes discourses well: They can change, lose and acquire new meaning, they influence and draw on other discourses and can be influenced by agents or social processes. Discourses give meaning to social life and activities, rendering certain activities possible, undesirable, desirable or inevitable. They enable and justify certain actors, and they are constructed through texts (Bryman, 2012). Thibault (2006) argues that in linguistic analysis should not be divided from the agency and consciousness of the people who use this language that is being analysed.

According to Foucault, some discourses become normalised within a society while repressing others. A dominant discourse provides a *regime of truth* – which allows for distinguishing between, for example, true and false, as well as sensible and nonsense statements. A regime of truth endorses what is seen as “normal” and those who oppose it might be singled out and seen as odd (Keeley, 1990). Bryman (2012) gives four examples of discourse: One is of a riot in Bristol, where the police were painted as the antagonists instead of as keepers of peace, showing the beliefs and the discourse that was dominant at that time (Bryman, 2012). In the second example, he speaks of how the portrayal of visual information can change the discourse of a topic – for example a slightly altered a video can change the discourse. The third and the fourth examples show that certain ways of wording can be used to achieve a desired result. For example “the use of third-person terms (for example, ‘the Committee’)” (Bryman, 2012, p. 535) can be used to give the text a sense of authority and judgement, and the way statistics are discussed can strengthen or disturb a certain discourse (Bryman, 2012).

Bryman’s illustrations above show that, although Foucault states that power, just like discourses, does not belong to specific agents, such as states (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002), other scholars believe that agents are able to change the discourse by, for example, slightly altering the way information is served. This shows that agency – “the socioculturally mediated ability to act” (Ahearn, 2001, p. 112) and the ability to influence discourses can be attributed both to society and societal processes as well as governments, and in the case of this research, news channels. Thibault (2006) mentions Harré’s theory, which states that, although agency cannot be likened to physical transfer of energy (such as when one ball hits another, in result setting it in motion), an agent can perform a socially acceptable action to authorise an addressee to act by using language, thus enabling a potential action or thought that is already within the addressee. Lukes (2005) also underlines that an exercise of power does not necessarily imply that one agent ‘makes’ another do something, but that it can also manifest as the shaping and influencing of the others’ desires and thoughts, either through socialisation or information manipulation (including mass media). This illustrates that agents can influence the actions or thought processes of others, however, they are also somewhat influenced by existing discourses in their ability to act. Lukes (2005) further speaks of power, illustrating how potential issues can be kept out of a political agenda “through the operation of social forces and institutional practices or through individuals’ decisions” (p. 28). Just as rhetoric was employed in ancient times, publications and propaganda

materials can be used to influence judgement (Lukes, 2005). As mentioned previously, propaganda is one tool that states, as actors, may use for the purpose of influencing the public discourses. It is often done by framing news stories a certain way and can even result in the creation of a dominant discourse (Lilleker, 2006). Propaganda is often used in situations with conflict, especially military conflict, involved and is usually polarised, showing the situation as black and white (Nohrstedt et al., 2000), effectively misleading the public. According to Nohrstedt (2000) “a discourse dominated by propaganda will consequently only allow two positions: for and against” (p. 384) with a neutral side being suppressed by both sides. All of this, of course, complicates the process of distinguishing which parts of discourses have been created within a society, and which are manipulated by an agent knowingly.

Bryman (2012) gives a three-dimensional framework to work with when researching discourse. The first dimension is *the text dimension* – examining the text for its content, meaning and structure. The second is *the discursive practice dimension* – examining the form of communication of the meaning and beliefs. *The social practice dimension* is the third, and it looks at the social context within which the discourse is taking place. He then also mentions *intertextuality* as a further concept, allowing to view the discourse not only within the current social context (event), but also in relation to historical context (Bryman, 2012). This research will focus on the text dimension, where the discursive practice dimension is through online articles, while the basis for the social practice dimension and intertextuality were both described in the background section of this thesis.

Language

Language plays a very important role in discourse analysis. Based on structuralist and post-structuralist linguistic views, we access and create reality through language (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Words help give meaning to things, however, the words themselves have at one point been attributed meaning, which can be illustrated by the fact that the word for dog is different in different languages (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Saussure stressed how there are two parts of language – *langue* as the structure, the basis of language, and *parole* – how language is used in different situations. However, as parole can be incredibly different by how an individual uses language, and can be prone to misuse and mistakes, the main focus of scientific research has become the langue part. Post-structuralism

tries to abolish this distinction between *langue* and *parole*, and the existence of a fixed part of language (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). It is further agreed upon by discourse analysis approaches that language does not reflect an pre-existing reality, nor does it have a fixed meaning (its meaning can change from discourse to discourse), therefore, it should be explored in specific contexts (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Constructivists have for a long time been interested in the *degree of freedom* that state officials have in using language to create and link new or different meanings. This, however, would require extensive analyses (Weldes, 1996). However, a term called *reality constraint* can be useful in analysing language. This term presents to us that there needs to be something in existence that can be interpreted (like in the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Soviets indeed had put missiles in Cuba). This does not mean that their existence means something, but rather that their existence gives the opportunity for them to be given meaning (Weldes, 1996).

Theoretical Commitments

Milliken (1999) describes discourse analysis as usually grounded in theoretical commitments which organize it. This gives researchers contexts of justifications and discoveries (Milliken, 1999). Three of the commitments are essential to research involving discourse analysis. Firstly, the commitment of discourses as *systems of signification*, which addresses the construction of social realities, with *signifiers* being the words that are given meaning (this meaning can change). Discourse researchers have the constructivist understanding of meaning; thus, material things do not have meaning per se, but people, using sign systems (such as language) create and attribute these meanings to them (Milliken, 1999). It allows to analyse the intersubjectively created interests and identities of states, as well as the means through which they are created (Weldes, 1996).

The second commitment is *discourse productivity* – a discourse is “productive (or reproductive) of things defined by the discourse” (Milliken, 1999, p. 229). A discourse not only gives a way to speak about something, but it also operationalizes a specific regime of truth, repressing the use of other discourses and identities by defining “subjects authorized to speak and act” (Milliken, 1999, p. 229). Weldes (1996) speaks of giving words meaning and the need to reproduce this meaning continuously – otherwise this meaning becomes less relevant and the words might not carry the same effect they were expected to when this meaning was attributed.

Knowledgeable practices are defined by the discourse, which are to be used by the aforementioned subjects towards the objects defined by the discourse, where people might be dealt with to create a social space that is organized and controlled (Milliken, 1999). Regarding legitimacy of international practices, one of the subjects produced by discourse is publics and their common sense or view of how the authorities and officials should act in their name. Discourses can work to define and enable, but also to silence and exclude by allowing figures to reach only certain social groups and not others (Milliken, 1999; Bryman, 2012).

The third theoretical commitment of discourse productivity is *the play of practice* – it assumes that all discourses are ‘unstable grids’, they are changeable and have historically been subject to change. That means that in order for a discourse to stay in power, effort in articulating and rearticulating identities and knowledges is essential to promote the specific regime of truth (Milliken, 1999). While the discourse commitments generally urge us to study hegemonic or dominant discourses and how these discourses reproduce themselves, and it assumes that the “dominating discourses are ‘grids of intelligibility’ for large numbers of people” (Milliken, 1999, p. 230), the third commitment reminds addresses the fact that they can change, overlap or be influenced or replaced by other discourses – the latter, a competition between discourses for domination, is called a dialogical struggle (Milliken, 1999; Bryman, 2012). Scholars studying discourse often draw attention to the fact that it is important to pay attention to how dominant discourses are kept in place, and study ‘subjugated knowledges’ (Milliken, 1999).

In my research I used all three of these commitments to analyse the data sample, as well as the previously named dimensions to achieve better results from the discourse analysis. I applied the language and dominant discourse aspects to flesh out the data and understand how it was used in identity construction.

Methodology

The practical part of this thesis was done using a discourse analysis, an approach that serves as a good framework for analysis of state level identities and showing power relations (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Discourse analysis allowed for mapping out what words and characteristics were linked to identities, and follow the narratives involving the Other.

Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) state that theory and methods are intertwined when doing discourse analysis. In my research I looked for the dominant discourses, that would let me understand what is normalised by each channel in how the states are portrayed. The information was analysed using a constructivist approach to identity and compared to see the similarities and differences in state identity building between the channels. Discourse analysis of information (and propaganda) spread in state-owned channels Voice of America (VoA) and RT allowed for the examination of the use of language of both states to build the identity of the Other during the Ukraine crisis.

While doing my research I followed the main premises of discourse analysis presented by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002). I took a *critical approach to taken-for-granted knowledge*, thus neither my knowledge of truth, nor the truth presented in the discourses were taken as ‘reality’. Instead, they were all seen as results of a discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). My analysis was then backed with the knowledge of the *history and culture*, as both of these things shape the knowledge of societies (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). For this reason, the thesis explains both the historical perspective of the case, the actual case, as well as a short summary of the propaganda between the U.S. and Russia. These things have interacted to create the discourses which inform the people, the state officials, and the journalists involved in the further creation and continued perpetration of discourses. It is essential as the U.S. and Russia have such a long history in constructing the Other’s identity, that many things that might have been attributed to them in the past, have become taken-for-granted knowledge and assimilated as truths in the respective cultures. Thirdly, I paid attention to *the link between social processes and knowledge*. The way we understand the world is maintained by social processes (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Therefore, to understand the work of the journalists or agenda-setters, it is important to also understand that they are a part of the social practices that take place within their communities and cultures – and these in turn shape how they see the world, while still being aware that some

agents can change discourses deliberately. Lastly, *the link between social action and knowledge* is important to acknowledge, as it explains why some things are bad to do, while others are highly appreciated (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002), which was more widely explained when examining discourse analysis.

It would be important for me to state, that during my research process and at the end of this thesis, I am not providing any insight on which channel is more objective or which articles were more truthful. In this thesis I take Foucault's stance on truth – universal truth is unreachable, as it is not possible for one to speak from outside the discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Data

For clarity and better result analysis, the portrayal of the conflict in Ukraine was chosen, in a time period of 20th of November 2013 until the 18th of March 2014. As the conflict is still ongoing the date chosen as the end date is the day Russia annexed Crimea. This case was recent and gathered a lot of international attention. Both Russia and the U.S. were involved with it in some way, providing a case about which state-owned channels voiced government-influences opinions. The content available for the research was taken from RT and Voice of America.

RT and VoA were chosen as they both are the main channels of each of their respective country's propaganda. The main objects of the research are the U.S. and Russia, where the relevant subjects are VoA and RT. The content analysed was used in correspondence with statements made by U.S. and Russian presidents at the time on the issue.

Research Sample

My research sample consisted of all the articles within the given time frame that included information on the Other. The choice to analyse news documents was made to be able to analyse the identities being created at the time of the conflict, as news documents contain large amounts of data and are readily available (Matthews & Ross, 2014). All of the documents were of *electronic (internet) medium* (Matthews & Ross, 2014).

I examined all the articles available on Crimea and Ukraine during the set time period on the websites of VoA and RT and compiled them in an Excel table. On VoA, the articles were

obtained by entering keywords “Crimea” and “Ukraine” in the websites search engine and going through the required time period. On RT, I obtained the articles by using Internet Wayback Machine and going through every recorded day of the time period, as the webpage did not provide a way to find older articles. Three days in the entire period were not recorded in the Internet Archive, however, the articles from these days were still obtainable. I excluded the articles that had no mention of the actions or involvement of the Russian Federation (also Russia, Kremlin, Putin, Lavrov...) for VoA or the U.S. (also Obama, the West, NATO, Kerry...) for RT, or where this mention was slight, factual and present in other articles, to avoid overclouding of data I would not be able to use. These articles were then organized in an Excel document displaying the links, dates, titles, types (as per each website) and texts relevant to research. To help with the data analysis, I went over the tables once more, to organize it in topics. For the purpose of analysis, I chose one type most relevant to the news on the conflict on Ukraine – “News” on RT and “Europe” on VoA. The sample size was in total 266 articles, with 90 being RT and 176 VoA articles. The articles were given codes for purposes of referencing in the Results and Discussions part of the thesis. Lists of articles and their respective codes can be found in the Appendices of the paper.

A similar approach was used for President Obama’s and Putin’s statements. I used The American Presidency Project and President of Russia webpages to access the speeches the presidents had given. I narrowed these speeches down to those on the Ukraine conflict within the timeframe used for my research, and included opinions of the Other.

Methods

A qualitative research strategy was used for this study as it allowed for me to understand the media content related to the research question. Prior the start of the research, I looked at the content of VoA and RT related to the topic of the Ukraine conflict to understand the amount of available content and narrow down on the time frame of which I proceeded to analyse. Then I created an Excel table using the key information found to distinguish between the data gathered – article type (for example, op-ed, news, Europe, Russia...), date it was written, name and parts of the article that included information on or about the Other. I used the table during the qualitative research (discourse analysis) of the content available from the state-owned channels.

This allowed for the gathering of information needed to analyse the state image and identity building on RT and VoA, as well as checking if more data can be gathered (Bryman, 2012).

After identifying all of the articles I used in the research, I wrote down the quotes that appeared in the articles and were associated with the Other on multiple sheets of paper. I proceeded to code them by putting them in two large groups based on ‘a structure of meaning-in-use’ (Milliken, 1999) of which one was interpellation – where I put the data that showed the relationships of the Other to other countries, international organisations or important actors, and the other group – articulation, where I put the data that described or raised associations of the Other (based on words and concepts present). The articulation group was further divided into larger topics by analysing the language (words and concepts) used to describe and construct the identity of the Other. Examples include – relation with the Self (and whether the Self was portrayed positively), personifications (a state attributed the ability to feel), concepts that bore negative (or neutral/positive) connotation from the past, and the usage of emotionally loaded words to describe the Other, situations or its actions. This analysis provided me with multiple clusters of the same or similar (often very similar) concepts and words that were attributed to the Other. After doing this with both VoA and RT, I used the results of my analysis to compare the two.

In the next step of my analysis I looked at both of the interpellation and articulation sections of the analysis done on VoA and RT. Both of these sections were then compared between themselves to see the differences and similarities on how the Other was portrayed by the channels. For this, again, I compared the language that had been used to construct the identity of the Other – what were the connotations and emotions carried by the words used in descriptions and what current and historical concepts were linked to it. After comparing both of the channels, I also compared each channel to the statements of their respective country’s presidents, which, due to the small amount of data – required relatively little time – but created an understanding on how much these state channels reflect the views of their presidents.

To increase the trustworthiness of this research, I attempted to increase credibility and transferability by describing the concepts used and creating thick descriptions of the cultures and history involved in this research (Bryman, 2012). To achieve greater dependability, I kept account of the whole research process, and requested for peers to review data sufficiency. For

confirmability purposes, I approached the data as objectively as I could and was critical of my own choices, to notice when personal values might have influence choices made during the research process (Bryman, 2012), and re-read the analysis multiple times in order to achieve greater neutrality.

Limitations and ethical considerations

This research presented no ethical limitations; however, other limitations were present. Firstly, as this was a master's thesis, I had a time limit for finishing the research, from assembling and going through the sample, to organizing data and analysing it. As described before, VoA provided more data units, requiring more time to be spent on analysing them than the data provided by RT. However, due to concerns that the articles could be rewritten (Matthews & Ross, 2014) and a less reliable search system, the Internet Archive was used to access content on RT, as a result – articles were collected by going through each recorded day of the selected time period, which prolonged the time used for data collection. Language was another constraint, as Russia communicates mostly in Russian, however, for the purpose of this thesis, I looked at the English version of RT, which is widely used to spread propaganda.

Another limitation is that this research was solely based on discourse analysis of two channels and a small number of the presidents' statements. Therefore, I take no liberty to announce what is right, and wrong, true or false. What this research was not able to do due to time and resource constrains is flesh out which parts of the state identity building were intentional, and which are attributed to the U.S. and Russia by the discourses present in the societies. A larger research would allow for distinguishing between these if it was complimented by surveys or interviews of the U.S. and Russian populations, to seek to understand what the societal discourses are, thus distinguishing the parts that were intentionally planted in the media narrative.

Results and Discussion

In this section, I have looked at the data samples and analysed how words and narratives in RT and VoA were used to construct the U.S.' and Russia's identity through discourse. I looked at which identities were constructed, compared them to each other and compared them to the official statements of their respective presidents' during the selected time period. In the text further on, words and concepts that were attributed to the Other by the channels have been italicised, while single quotation marks were used to describe claims.

RT – the Other is the U.S.

The analysis of my data sample from RT revealed clear state identity creation using othering techniques. Although my research is focused on the Other, some examples of how Russia was portrayed as the Self (likeable, good) are included, while the U.S. was frequently and clearly depicted as the Other (bad, hectic).

My discourse analysis of RT articles resulted in two large groups of information, which will be presented here. One section discusses interpellation, which showed clear positioning and relationships between subjects presented by RT. The second section describes the articulation of the Other, which shows the discourses that were created through the use of synonyms and linking words.

Interpellation

When I analysed the relationships that RT drew between the U.S. with other actors involved in the chosen case, there were clear signs of othering. In the articles throughout this period, the U.S.' and the West's relationship with Ukraine was shown as being anti-Yanukovich and blatantly supportive of the protests (with Western politicians actively encouraging protesters), the opposition, and putting pressure on Ukraine, while pushing the country towards integration in the EU (RT-4;7;8;10;26;38).

Russian lawmakers have voiced concern over the “interference” of foreign officials in Ukraine’s internal affairs and open calls by some western politicians to oppose the decisions of a legally elected government, which “aggravates” the situation. (RT-4)

This was later grouped with the discourse that ‘the West does not care about Ukraine’.

The discourse also showed the relationship change between Ukraine and the U.S. as Ukraine's governments changed. While the U.S. was shown as not being supportive of Yanukovich's government (which Russia was), it was shown to be actively supportive of the *coup-appointed* opposition government. This was also clearly visible in the portrayal of the West's opinions on Ukraine's handling of the protests. While it was reported that the West was not supportive of how Ukraine was handling the protests, RT used quotes to draw parallels between different protests in Turkey, Wallstreet and even hypothetical anti-EU protests in Germany and UK that were visited by Russian politicians in order to show how well Ukraine was coping with them in comparison (RT-2;7;12). This is effectively illustrated through the use of quotes, including the following from "investigative foreign affairs journalist" Escobar:

"Can you imagine that this was happening in Washington? Like it happened during Occupy Wall Street. They were evicted with force from Zuccotti Square in New York. If this was happening in London? Do you remember the [latest] student demonstrations in London? The repression was really hard core," Escobar told RT. (RT-5)

When the governments shifted, the discourse portrayed the U.S. as *dividing* Ukraine from Russia (RT-40) and then using it to *threaten* Russia – for example, with the new government being openly interested in joining NATO (RT-56; 89). An often-perpetuated topic was the relationship between the West (including the U.S.) and Russia/Ukraine, in which the West was continuously threatening Russia/Ukraine with, and later unfairly imposing, sanctions (RT-13). In a relatively small number of articles, the U.S. was shown as willing to cooperate to solve the crisis, but even then, texts described their cooperation efforts as being *inadequate* – either because they were imposed or because they did not take into account the wishes of the people.

These relationships show how by maintaining the Russian Self, which was righteous and good, the U.S. was always put on the other side. The U.S. was shown as supporting the wrong side and being against the legally elected government of Ukraine. While it is true that the countries were often on opposing sides (as the policies of the U.S. regarding this crisis did not align with those of Russia), even when similar policies were mentioned they were accompanied by explanations that negatively portrayed the U.S. as the Other.

Articulation of the Other

In the article mentions over time of the U.S. and West, RT used a number of words and associations to construct the discourse of the U.S. as the Other. While not everything was presented as clearly opposing the Self of Russia, the U.S., its actions and policies were still continuously associated with adjectives that had a negative connotation. I grouped these discourses into larger themes, which I see as comprising the different parts of the identity that RT was attributing to the U.S.

Foreign Interferer

One of the most frequently perpetuated parts of the U.S. identity in RT was that of the *foreign interferer*. “Russia accused Western nations of aggressively interfering in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation by supporting the protests.” (RT-2). This role was associated with the U.S. in numerous RT articles continuously.

The U.S. was shown as being *supportive, involved, meddling, paying for* and even *orchestrating the protests* (RT-15) and the following *ousting* (also referred to as *overthrow* and *coup*) of Yanukovich’s government (RT-1;39;85). The U.S.’ involvement in the crisis in Ukraine was continuously perpetuated by RT, with one example being the following quote:

Ukrainian radical activists are conducting organized searches of residences of former government officials and handing over all documents to the US military... (RT-45)

Moreover, RT continuously drew attention to the West’s meddling in the Ukrainian affairs; the Western politicians who were attending the protests and speaking out against Yanukovich’s government (RT-8-10), the alleged involvement of U.S. military in the riots (RT-45), and an alleged phone call, where a high-standing U.S. diplomat spoke of organizing the new government of Ukraine (RT-29).

Pro-EU protests in Kiev have been marked by western politicians’ regular visits to the protesters’ camp, and their emotional condemnations of Ukraine’s authorities. This is seen by some analysts as unprecedented meddling in a country’s internal affairs. (RT-5)

This role was further linked to the U.S. also being the *orchestrator of the Ukraine’s Orange revolution* in 2004, as well as *being behind other colour revolutions* in Egypt and Eastern European countries (RT-89).

This identity was linked with *countering* (*diminishing, forgetting and preferring not to be guided by*) *international law* (RT-58; 60; 83) and, according to the statements of experts, the U.S. was an *unprecedented aggravator*, harmful and dangerous (RT-5). Because of its alleged *meddling* and *backing of* (also phrased as *supporting* and *sponsoring*) the opposition in the Ukrainian government, the U.S. was portrayed as being *responsible for the havoc* in the streets of Ukraine. Meanwhile the protests – initiated by the opposition government – were linked with such concepts as *extortion tactic, coup d’etat, violence, radicals, nationalism* and *far-right movement* (with the occasional mention of *Nazis* and *killers* among others) (RT-8; 10; 33; 38; 47; 55; 64; 68; 71; 73; 76), which are qualities said to have been ignored by the U.S. (RT-16;26).

“[Western] media did not show it, but we did see that a priest in western Ukraine called on the crowd to go to Kiev and storm the government. And then he explains: ‘That’s in order not to allow niggers, moskals (an insulting word used by Ukrainians to describe Russians), and Jews to rule,’” Putin told the news conference. (RT-24)

At one point Yanukovich was quoted as asking the West: “Are you blind? Have you forgotten what fascism is?” (RT-71). This claim is backed by reposting statements from the Russian Foreign Ministry:

[...] the USA and its allies have closed their eyes to the excesses of the radical fighters on Maidan, their bullying of political opponents and ordinary citizens, as well as their anti-Semitism and militant Russophobia. (RT-47)

When eventually the opposition took over the Ukrainian government, the articles never failed to describe them as *coup-appointed*, with continuous mentions of the U.S. governments support of the said government (RT-55; 57-58; 65; 68; 73). In the meantime, Russia’s Self was described as *distanced* (RT-9;22), *law-upholding* (as opposed to the U.S., who was diminishing the international law) and as the actor who is requesting *peaceful* talks and conclusions to the violent protests in Ukraine (RT-25;89).

This portrayal of the U.S. in the narrative linked the U.S. identity to unlawfulness and it being an aggressor. The U.S. was shown as the creator and perpetrator of the disturbances, protests and chaos that ensued in Ukraine, and as ignoring human rights violations that happened right under their watch. This is clear othering to Russia’s law-abiding, peaceful Self represented in the articles.

Monopoly of Truth

RT's analysis of the U.S.' actions also included insight into the information coming from the Western media and politicians. The West was described as *spreading falsehoods, lies, and propaganda*, along with censoring media and *distorting and perverting* reports (RT-49; 57-58; 61-62; 81; 83).

“The State Department is trying to play on a shamelessly one-sided interpretation of the events,” ministry spokesperson Aleksandr Lukashevich said on Thursday. “Surely, Washington cannot admit that they were nurturing Maidan [protests], encouraging the violent overthrow of the legitimate government, and thus clearing the way for those who are now pretending to be a legitimate power in Kiev.” (RT-58)

RT accused the Western media and politicians, as well as the White House, of *lying* about the events happening in Kiev and Crimea (RT-25;58;62), often dedicating entire articles to reacting to Western media reports and their alleged falsities, by interviewing people on the ground (RT-72;74;77). Many of these articles interviewed people from Western countries, such as a member of the city parliament of Vienna, who was quoted saying that “The US and also the EU, they only respect international law if it’s in favour of their opinion,” (RT-83). Putin was quoted saying that the U.S. perceives to have a monopoly of truth (RT-58). While the discourse was not present in RT articles at the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine, it appeared before Russia annexed Crimea.

This discourse shows the U.S. as a state that uses propaganda for its own good in any situation. It also shows Russia as being described in the wrong terms by the Other, who uses lies to achieve goals. Among other things, the U.S. is shown as untrustworthy and manipulative of media.

The Irresponsible U.S.

Adding to the discourses of the U.S. being a foreign interferer as well as a media manipulator, RT used voices from various experts and politicians (very frequently Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov) to create the image of the U.S. as irresponsible – hysterical, provocative, aggressive and counter-productive (RT-7; 33; 44; 89) with its threats to Russia and Ukraine (being continuously vocal about the U.S. having to be smart enough to know they would “boomerang”) (RT-49; 51; 65), and encouraging radicals and extremists (RT-37-38). The U.S.

was also shown as being a threat to Russian security.

US President delivered his own “aggressive” remarks on the situation, over which Russian senators are now urging Putin to consider recalling Moscow’s Ambassador to the US. (RT-44)

RT also linked the U.S. and West to *Cold War stereotypes* (RT-33; 81). While RT used quotes of U.S. officials saying they do not wish for a Cold War scenario, the West’s sanctions and actions were still heavily portrayed as being very much like those of the Cold War, especially when quoting response of the Russian Foreign Ministry:

“Not bothering to make any effort to understand the complex processes occurring within Ukrainian society [...], [Secretary of State John Kerry] operates with a ‘Cold War’ stamp, offering not to punish those who carried out the government overthrow, but the Russian Federation,” the statement said. (RT-47)

Double Standards

The U.S. was portrayed as a state that will do what it wants when it suits them. In order to construct this aspect of a U.S. identity, RT cited historical examples in an effort to demonstrate the U.S. applying double standards to different cases – most notably that U.S. had previously supported the same actions that they were condemning Ukraine, Crimea and Russia for taking in that very moment.

For example, Putin was portrayed as being dismissive of the West’s accusations of Russia’s actions being illegitimate, and as using US’ and partners past actions to show that the West cannot judge what is legitimate and what is not.

Putin dismissed the accusations that Russia is acting illegitimately. He stated that even if Russia does use force in Ukraine, it would not violate international law. At the same time he accused the United States and its allies of having no regard to legitimacy when they use military force in pursuit of their own national interests. (RT-49)

At a later time, RT quotes Putin as saying: “Well, it’s good that they at least recalled that there is international law. Thank you very much. Better late than never,” (RT-89). As the U.S. was linked to the opposition in the Ukrainian government, this was also used to show how the U.S. applies double standards.

“The [Ukrainian] opposition cannot or does not want to dissociate itself from extremists. The US lays all the blame on the Ukrainian government – this is a double standard,” Lavrov said. (RT-38)

RT's boldest description of a perceived double standard from the U.S. was shown through mention of international law in respect to the Crimean referendum. This was done by using quotes of Putin, Lavrov (the Russian Foreign Minister) and political experts expressing their opinion that if Kosovo could unilaterally proclaim its independence (supported by the U.S.), then so can Crimea (RT-79; 83). This was strengthened with articles and video content available on RT during the anniversary of NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia (of which Kosovo and Serbia used to be a part), drawing emotional paintings and creating the image of NATO and the U.S. as the 'evil' actor that forced a referendum upon a war-torn country (Kosovo, then part of Serbia) (RT-89). Most of these articles and videos on Kosovo and Serbia I noticed during data gathering. When it came to the Crimea referendum, the Western powers were quoted as saying they will never recognise the results of this referendum they found to be illegitimate (RT-66; 70; 74-75), but Russian officials were portrayed as countering the argument of illegitimacy with precedent of Kosovo (RT-27; 52; 79; 83; 89), as well as a rightful protection of human rights in the region. Thus, the West was portrayed as not recognising the need for human rights protection and self-determination of Russians in Crimea and elsewhere in Ukraine (RT-46; 48; 50; 78).

The terms *military presence* and *interference* were also used to portray a double standard which the U.S. applies to themselves and Russia respectively. The West was shown as concerned and accusatory of Russia's military presence near Ukraine's borders and in Crimea (which Russia rebuked by declaring the military presence to be either non-existent, a military training that had been planned long before the crisis, or legal, being based on Crimean military base use contracts between Ukraine and Russia) (RT-40; 50) and called upon Russia to "be "very careful" with its approach to Ukraine and respect its territorial integrity" (RT-41). In the meantime, the U.S.' growing military presence in the region was noted (RT-63). RT highlighted that "under the pretext of "detering Russian aggression" in Ukraine, the Pentagon announced its plans to send several additional fighter jets for NATO air patrols over the Baltic states and, also expand aviation training in Poland." (RT-55, also RT-69; 80). Military activities (rebuked by the U.S. as previously planned exercises) were carefully followed and shown as becoming more active, calling out the U.S. for sabre rattling (RT-56). A small number of articles did, however, mention that the NATO presence was growing because of NATO member states (such a Poland and the Baltic states) asking for reassurance (RT-67). However, after the U.S. Secretary of State Kerry called upon Russia to not use "phony pretexts" to invade Crimea, RT (massively using quotes of

high-standing Russian officials) continuously referred to past U.S. military interferences that used *phony pretexts*, such as Kosovo, Iraq, Syria and Libya (RT-27; 89) and needless interventions such as those in Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama and the Dominican Republic (RT-58). While this discourse did not appear to paint Russia as the innocent, it made Russia appear less guilty in comparison to all the interventions the U.S. has carried out in the past.

After the change in government in Ukraine, on various occasions RT reported on the U.S.' plans to send aid money to Ukraine, and how this action would involve breaking the U.S. law. Citing political sources, RT delved into a U.S. law that prohibits the U.S. government of giving aid to countries ruled by coup-appointed governments. While this also served to reinforce a previously and continuously set narrative, this instance allowed RT to build on the identity of the U.S. as a state that does not obey its own laws, instead using the laws to “play political football” (RT-68).

The demonstration of double standards added the characteristic of untrustworthiness to the U.S. identity. It also backed the previously mentioned narratives of the U.S. as being able to intervene in a foreign country and manipulate media information to its own gain. This, as well as the previously mentioned characteristics and actions attributed to the U.S. by RT, at the very least served to cast doubt into the information coming from the U.S.

The Concerned U.S.

While the instance of the U.S. closely following Russian military movements and reassuring NATO members already points to this theme, I chose to create this topic to include other roles that would not fit under double standards but still show the U.S. as *concerned* (RT-3).

The Western leaders were “concerned” with the situation in Ukraine and showed greater awareness of the dangers of “flirting with the opposition,” Lavrov told Itar-Tass. (RT-19)

A repeated action of the U.S. government that was discussed in RT was the U.S. *condemning violence, threatening with sanctions and warning of consequences* (RT - 1;6;35;37;75). The wording, and the quotes of Russian politicians addressing this, however, tended to lean into portraying the U.S. as only able to threaten and warn, in a way downplaying their ability to influence the situation in any way. Interestingly, the U.S. was very often also shown as willing to cooperate, mostly after discussions between Obama and Putin or vice-president Biden (U.S.) and Foreign Minister Lavrov (Russia). This discourse portrayed the U.S.

as wanting to help, but often was not followed by actual cooperation efforts by the U.S., or any offer of help that Russia would not deem as further foreign interference (RT-42).

The West and the U.S. were shown as speaking about peace and cooperation, and even at points realising their support for the wrong side. However, they were never shown as actually acting on their words.

The Unfair U.S.

While the U.S. was shown as concerned at times, it was also shown as unfair. This unfairness was associated mostly with its interactions towards Ukraine, to whom Russia was still presented as the ‘saviour’. (RT-78;82).

The topic of U.S. sanctions often reoccurred on RT’s reporting on the crisis and the U.S.’ involvement – including how unfair it was towards Ukraine (RT-78;82). Before the Yanukovich’s government was ousted, when the West spoke of imposing sanctions of politicians it deemed responsible for the havoc and deaths in the Ukraine’s protests, RT used this to show the West as the evil. These sanctions were discussed in articles as further harm to an already hurting, ‘poor’ country that needs help, not a *firm hand* (RT-55). Later, the sanctions imposed on these people were described as the U.S. *pushing for its geopolitical interests* (RT-81), and not caring about Ukraine. In opposition to this, Russia’s Self was worried, involved in Ukraine’s and Ukrainian well-being (RT-46), and defended the sovereign nations right to choose (RT-7).

RT used the U.S.’ actions to show them in a light that portrayed the country as unfair to the sides involved in the crisis. It was shown as not doing the right thing to Ukraine, and in the end not even caring about it, but instead using the crisis for its own gain. This self-absorbent description opposed the ‘caring’ portrayal of Russia.

U.S. vs Russia

While many of the roles and discourses previously discussed that were presented by RT were clearly othering the U.S., and some showed a distinction between the Russia’s Self and the Other of the U.S., others were clearly built on the premise of the U.S. being the Other to Russia’s Self.

Using terms and comparisons with Russia, U.S. was constantly painted in opposition to Russian righteousness. This included labelling the turmoil in Ukraine as ‘an attack on Russia by the West’ (RT-26; 58), and ‘an attempt to divide Ukraine from Russia’ (RT-40). Further, the U.S. was shown as continuously blaming Russia for what was happening in Ukraine (RT-9; 12; 25; 27; 44-46; 49-50; 72); in one instance it is noted that the “Western capitals remain sceptical of Moscow’s policy and continue to blame Russia of “military intervention” in Ukraine” (RT-56). At the same time RT continuously portrayed the West as being the negative Other - the one who was *sponsoring* the havoc in the country or was behind it (RT-11; 15; 76).

Regarding sanctions, most of them were downplayed, with the primary discourse being that the West will not be able to hurt Russia; however, physical words such as *slapped* were used to describe the bans and restrictions imposed on Russian officials (RT-87-88). While the reaction to this was partly portrayed as Russian officials enjoying it and even feeling *honoured*, there was also a negative response in some articles about how the West is imposing these restrictions on Russian officials who are needed for Russia to conduct official business abroad (RT-88).

RT continuously reinforced its discourses by quoting Putin and other Russian officials. In one such example, Putin states that the U.S. has ignored Russia and its *hard questions* since the fall of the Soviet Union, and instead is doing everything it can to further its interests, saying “it also happened recently when Western diplomats flocked to Ukraine to smile and wave and lobby their interests in a future Ukrainian government, while accusing Russia of meddling in Ukrainian affairs” (RT-52). This included previous crises such as Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Yemen and Egypt (RT-52).

Throughout RT’s articles, the U.S. identity was constructed by portraying it as the Other to Russia. It was not only shown as having opposing values to Russia’s, but also as directly opposing Russia through its actions, which either ignored, counter-acted, or seemed to deliberately hurt Russia. These actions were used to paint Other in a negative light.

Overview

In the reporting done on the U.S. during Ukraine and Crimea crisis, RT used factual information, but most of this information was either rephrased or accompanied with direct quotes of state officials or individuals who specialised in researching or writing about a certain topic.

However, each article presented mostly only one – the Russia’s side of the opinion.

The discourse as a system of signification was used to construct the identity of the U.S. as that of the Other, in opposition to Russia, and being attributed with wrongdoing and negative characteristics such as selfishness, arrogance, irresponsibility and lies. The discourse productivity aspect of the articles showed that a very similar discourse was reproduced throughout the timeline, with slight adjustments being made to the discourse as the situation advanced. RT very clearly repressed Western media discourses by not just opposing them, but by reposting them and ‘proving’ them false by offering contradicting information. The play of discourse in this case was not very bold, as the dominant discourse of RT barely shifted, with one exception. This exception was on the topic of the Russian troops being present on Ukraine’s border and on the Crimean Peninsula. In the beginning of the crisis RT reported that, according to Putin and valuable sources, there were no Russian troops present. Later in time it was adjusted to saying that there were troops, but that they were only there to protect the Russians in the regions.

While creating the identity of the U.S., RT clearly portrayed it as an ‘evil’ Other to Russia’s distanced, law abiding, human rights-protecting Self. The U.S. was continuously linked to efforts to interfere and meddle in a sovereign country, supporting a coup and a coup-appointed government, as well as backing violence, countering international law, lying and spreading falsehoods. The U.S. was described as using Cold War tactics and applying double standards to Russia’s actions (and linking their calls for peace to numerous military invasions and interventions in sovereign countries). The U.S. was also portrayed as having pushed its interests in opposition to Russia before, and as attacking Russia.

Overall, the discourse created by RT was mostly uniform and continuous. While the U.S. was sometimes allowed to appear as peace-seeking, it was mostly portrayed as an aggressor, liar and an enemy to Russia’s Self. While it is impossible to tell the degree of objectivity of the reporting done by RT, the social practice dimension – the Ukraine conflict – gives a background for why the discourse was created this way, as the Ukrainian state was swinging between Russian and Western influence. Meanwhile, history explains the tensions between both of the countries, and Russia’s evident interest in this region.

VoA – the Other is Russia

The data sample of articles from VoA contained identity creation of Russia by showing it as the Other and attributing negative characteristics. While U.S. was not portrayed to the same extent as the positive Self as Russia was in RT's reporting, the U.S. was generally connotated with being 'in the right'.

The discourse analysis of VoA was grouped in two larger sections – interpellation, or how the objects relationships were presented, and articulation of the Other, or how synonyms and words were used to create the state identity of Russia. Interestingly, there was a significant emphasis on Putin, which will be described later in the paper.

Interpellation

The interpellation that VoA created in its discourse about Russia involved several actors. The actors apparent in the relationships with Russia were the West (and the U.S.), Ukraine (the old and the new government), *former Soviet states*, and China. Russia was portrayed as being isolated from, or in bad relations with most of these actors.

In the VoA articles, Russia was frequently portrayed as being cut off or isolated from other actors. This sense of isolation appears in the form of mentions of sanctions, condemnations and isolation both from Western powers. VoA described it as “Russia [paying] a price for its intervention” (VoA-124). After Crimea's annexation became a threat, VoA perpetuated warnings that Russia's actions can isolate it from the rest of the world even for decades (VoA-135;139;145). Another part of this relationship was that of Russia losing the backing of its long-time ally China when it did not side with Russia during regarding annexation of Crimea (VoA-101;159), which created an image of Russia as being alone and with no allies, as it gained the condemnation of the West and was left on its own accord by a former ally.

At the U.N, the United States put forward the resolution in a strategic effort to demonstrate the extent of Russia's political isolation [...] Although it was not adopted, the effort succeeded to the extent that China — Moscow's close ally and another veto-wielding council member — abstained instead of siding with Russia. (VoA-159)

Russia was also depicted as trying to gain or maintain influence (VoA-10;85) in the states that it used to be a *master* of (VoA-11;22;28), including Ukraine, Moldova and others (VoA-7;12). This relationship was connected to Russia opposing the West gaining influence in this

region and Russia's need to "counterbalance the West" (VoA-87). Russia is also shown as being unwanted in various post-Soviet states areas that Russia deems important to its growth, such as Armenia and Georgia (VoA-10;35). These relationships illustrate Russia's futile efforts to gain influence, as most of the countries are shying away from Russia and instead leaning towards the West.

The last important relationship that VoA showed during this crisis was the Russia-Ukraine relationship before and after the change of the government in Ukraine, and how Russia heavily supported Yanukovich's government and condemned the opposition government. This was illustrated by quoting Russian officials (including Putin) mentioning the illegitimacy of the government that took hold after Yanukovich was gone (VoA-80;81;87;104;123;127). While this on its own does not necessarily create a link, it is important in the further analysis of data.

The interpellation in the discourse used to build Russia's identity in VoA strongly insisted on presenting Russia as being alone in the world, having lost its allies, and support. In the meantime, its efforts to gain influence in the post-Soviet space were shown as unwanted and lacking, with most of the countries targeted by Russia turning West instead.

Articulation of the Other

VoA did not seem to build the identity of Russia the Other as strongly opposed to U.S.' Self, instead opting to do so by attributing words and narratives that included synonyms in the discourse. Further in the paper, I have divided the roles VoA has attributed to Russia in the articles I researched.

Russia's Pressure

One of the main narratives present in the discourse during the beginning of the crisis was that Russia pressures Ukraine (and to a lesser extent, other Eastern European countries) for its own gain.

VoA reported that Russia used political and 'strong economic pressure' to gain influence in the region and push Ukraine away from the West (VoA-1-8;10-12;14;17-19;21-22;24;35).

For its part, Russia has in recent months exerted strong economic pressure on cash-strapped Kyiv to discourage the EU deal. Russia is Ukraine's largest foreign investor, trading partner and chief natural gas supplier. (VoA-19)

This pressure was described as banning exports from Ukraine, as well as wine exports from Moldova into Russia as punishment, and threatening Ukraine, which was already indebted to Russia (VoA-16;23). VoA reported that Russia manipulated the already dependent Ukraine (VoA-87) by threatening to cut gas supply, offering loans, lowering gas prices and restarting oil supply (VoA-27-32), and then holding back the promised aid to see if their interests in the country are taken in account (VoA-45-47;49-51;67;73;81;86). VoA also reported on Russian officials, saying that the aid was offered not to force Ukraine, but “out of brotherly love” (VoA-33-36;24). Meanwhile, the U.S. was shown as defending Ukraine’s freedom to choose, quoting NATO on Ukraine being a free country (VoA-12;43;57;83;87;93;109;126) and with Obama saying:

"Our approach as the United States is not to see these as some Cold War chess board in which we're in competition with Russia," he said. "Our goal is to make sure the people of Ukraine are able to make decisions for themselves about their future." (VoA-87)

This portrayed Russia as manipulative, only thinking about its own gain and unfairly punishing other countries when they try to make independent choices. Russian official statements of ‘goodwill’ were opposed by actions of Russia withholding promised aid, and the West being shown as the opposing side by supporting Ukraine’s independence.

Soviet Master

VoA closely linked Russia’s interest in manipulating Ukraine to Moscow’s wish to increase and maintain influence in the post-Soviet countries and the region (VoA-10;85). Russia’s aim to counter the West in the region was shown as very important to the country (VoA-87).

VoA reported that a Ukraine-EU deal would *infuriate* Putin (VoA-23), who strongly opposed it (VoA-27;29), instead painting his own Eurasian union as the “safe” option (VoA-23).

Russia wants to draw Ukraine into a Moscow-led customs union and prevent it drawing closer to the EU, a move that would signal a historic shift towards the West and away from Kyiv's former Soviet masters in Moscow. (VoA-11)

VoA described this as Russia feeling the need to counterbalance the West in the post-Soviet space, and Putin’s wish to secure his legacy as a leader of a Eurasian union (VoA-87;110;119). Further, VoA explained Russia’s actions by interviewing experts, who said that Russia had

security, economic and political interests in Ukraine, and that it needed to turn Ukraine away from the West and keep it under Russia's sphere of influence as a 'real democracy' in Ukraine would be a 'real danger' to Putin and the system he has built (VoA-87;105).

VoA also described Putin as "flexing muscles" (VoA-88) not only by denouncing the West's criticism of Ukraine's handling of protests (VoA-17), but also by opposing the West. On one occasion this was described as Putin "sabre rattling and brooding after losing a geopolitical issue with the West" (VoA-88;90), and later emphasized by showing Russia as being unsatisfied with any solutions to the crisis that the West offered, instead opting to come up with solutions that would counter the West's (VoA-134). By the end of the crisis, officials were quoted as saying that the West and Russia have "no common vision" (VoA-156;159;165).

Russia was also described as continuously trying to influence the politics in Ukraine. VoA described Russia's support for Yanukovich (Ukraine's president in the beginning of the crisis) as strong (VoA-75;78), with the U.S. warning Russia not to intervene in Ukraine after Yanukovich left (VoA-79-80;83). Russia was then described as still believing Yanukovich was the rightful president of Ukraine (VoA-101;106;134) and questioning the legitimacy of Ukraine's new government (VoA-80-81;87;104;123;127) with Putin asking for a "comprehensive analysis" of the *deteriorating* situation in Kiev (VoA-78).

Already on February 24, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev cast doubt on the new government's very legitimacy. "Some of our foreign partners, Western partners, think otherwise - they consider these authorities legitimate. I don't know which constitution and what legislation they are reading from," he said. "I think it is an aberration of consciousness of some kind to give legitimacy to something that in essence is a result of an armed revolt." (VoA-87)

VoA then noted that "although Yanukovich wasn't loved in Moscow, his departure reduces Moscow's ability to influence Ukraine" (VoA-88), noting that Russia had lost its means of influencing Ukraine (VoA-84;88) and that they will continue to look for ways to gain new influence in Ukraine and more specifically Crimea (VoA-87;89;148). The report then listed possible ways Russia could do this, including federalizing Ukraine, and steering the appointments of Moscow-friendly politicians (VoA-87;89). For example, Crimea's Russia-friendly Prime Minister was described as picked by Putin according to sources close to Kremlin (VoA-148), after his election at Russian *gunpoint*, with some people who supposedly voted not being present in the city that day (VoA-92;148).

For the authorities in Kiev and local politicians still loyal to Ukraine, the rapid pace of events were evidence of a carefully orchestrated campaign from Moscow. Moscow denies any role in installing Aksyonov, who is known from his business days by the nickname “The Goblin”. But even those close to the Kremlin say Russia picked him. (VoA-148)

Russian actions in Ukraine were portrayed as a response to the West expanding, and it trying to get Ukraine on their side. Russia is shown as wanting to broaden its influence in Ukraine by any means, to keep the existing structures in place. Arguably, the boldest description used by VoA was that a ‘real democracy’ in the country is dangerous to Russia, which does everything it can to keep the Western values and powers out of the country.

The Self-Righteous Russia

Russia was also attributed self-righteousness and, at certain times, shown that the Russia’s decisions do have some kind of support. VoA gave Putin and other Russian officials voice in their articles and did not always explicitly counter their claims.

In the beginning phase of the Ukraine crisis, Russian officials were vocal about returning the Ukraine to “stability and order” (VoA-16;43) and helping them without actual interference and meddling (VoA-14;42;83;75;76). At one point, VoA portrays Russia as having sent their human rights ombudsman to Ukraine and, according to the EU, having played a “constructive role” in achieving a peace agreement in Ukraine (VoA-75). At the same time, Russia kept opposing the U.S. idea of sending an international mediation mission, saying it would be “externally imposed” (VoA-43;53).

VoA was actively reporting on Russia’s official opinion on the evolution of the protests in Ukraine. Russian officials had linked the opposition with radicals and extremists, while condemning the *racist, anti-Semitic, Nazi* protestors (VoA-53;74-75;81). Russia was shown as believing it was acting in accordance to international treaties and laws (VoA-43;92-93) to protect the Russian and Ukrainian people who were supposedly being prosecuted because of their political beliefs or language (VoA-57;63;83;90;92;96;102;127;142;162;167;169;172) by armed radicals and extremists (VoA-101). Putin was quoted as saying that if the choice to intervene was made, it would be legitimate (VoA-104), and it being their responsibility to “defend those close to them” (VoA-117;127).

Moscow said it's beefed up its presence to protect ethnic Russians under attack by Ukrainian nationalists over language and politics -- persecution it claims is orchestrated by the new pro-Western government in Kyiv. (VoA-102)

President Putin has expressed concerns for ethnic Russians and Russian speakers in Crimea, although there is no evidence they have been subjected to bad treatment. (VoA-172)

This was countered by VoA saying that, according to Western powers and the U.N., there was no evidence of any prosecution towards Russian people in Ukraine (VoA-167;172), which Russia then rebuked as a biased opinion (VoA-167). Russia's officials were shown as using a letter from the former Ukrainian president Yanukovich, asking for Russian troops to enter Ukraine and help controlling the "chaos and anarchy", as a way to legitimize their interference in Ukraine (VoA-101;106). This was, however, again rebuked by the West as illegitimate, as the Ukrainian constitution allows only the parliament to ask for foreign interference, and the Ukrainian president does not hold this power (VoA-101;106). This created an image that Russia looking for ways to 'help' Ukraine only to the extent where it could help Russia achieve something, even if the cause was invented.

"Russian military action is not a human rights protection mission. It is a violation of international law and a violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the independent nation of Ukraine, and a breach of Russia's Helsinki commitments and its U.N. obligations," said [the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N.] Power. (VoA-101)

As the events unfolded, Russia was shown as describing the referendum in Crimea as legitimate (VoA-156;159;164;167), and the people's choice (VoA-159). Kremlin's dislike of Ukraine's new government was reported as echoed by Crimean protesters (VoA-44;41), and VoA even acknowledged that a significant amount of Crimea's Russian-speaking population did indeed "see their future in Russia" (VoA-57;88;91-92;162). However, in the instance when Putin compared the referendum in Crimea to Kosovo to underline Crimea referendum's legitimacy, VoA cited scholars saying that it is a completely different situation (VoA-170).

While Russia was at times portrayed as helping to deal with the crisis in Ukraine, more often it was shown as helping an invented or non-existent cause, as it was rebuked by the West. Further, even when VoA gives partial legitimacy to the statements of Russian officials, by explaining that the majority of Crimea's residents do want to become part of Russia, scholars interviewed by VoA maintain that the Kosovo precedent cannot be applied in this case. Thus, Russia's claim that the referendum is legitimate is again being questioned.

The Invader and the Threat

During the crisis in Ukraine, VoA heavily built on the statements from officials of both the West and Russia, creating the identity of Russia as a threat to the region and an invader. Russia's actions and the eventual consequences were described as unwelcome.

At the beginning of the crisis, the Russian Federation is linked to statements by a *concerned* West not to violate international laws and treaties (VoA-43). Russia is warned that Russian interference in Ukraine will be met with *sanctions* and *isolation* and *far-reaching consequences* from the West, including cancelling joint projects and severing trade ties (VoA-43-44;57-58;93;95;101;104-105;124), and possibly NATO enlargement (VoA-58). One such activity that was cancelled was the G8 meet up that was planned in Sochi, Russia, with Russia losing its G8 status (VoA-57). Eventually Russia was shown as being called upon by Ukraine to leave its land and abide international laws instead, and by the West to use international tools and work on this situation peacefully (VoA-57;58), which was then being ignored.

VoA also extensively reported on information from Ukraine, which early on announced that Russian troops had intervened in Crimea militarily, seized strategic buildings and stationed professional soldiers with no identifying insignia around the Peninsula (described in detail later) (VoA-43-44;57;91). Russia denied those claims (VoA-44), however Russia's actions were proclaimed by VoA to be *naked aggression* and likened to the military intervention in Georgia in 2008, even noting that the same rhetoric was used by the Russian government before both interventions (VoA-43;90). It was also described as a violation of the Budapest Memorandum, in which Russia and the West promised to uphold Ukraine's sovereignty in return for Ukraine's de-nuclearization (VoA-56;91). VoA also noted that Russia is still active militarily in Georgia, 6 years after its initial invasion (VoA-85), and, although Russia's military power was described as being weaker than during Soviet times, it is reported to have increased its military spending since the attack on Georgia many-fold (VoA-90). This added to Russia's identity as an actor that will do anything to achieve its goals, and underlines the Russian military threat.

The decision to put 150,000 troops on high alert along with jet fighters on Russia's Western borders - where Ukraine lies - raised memories of Putin's invasion of Georgia. Moscow's expressions of concern for the safety of Russian citizens in Ukraine have also used similar language to statements that preceded the Georgian campaign. (VoA-90)

Russia's eventual authorisation of troop deployment to Ukraine was reported as seen as

completely illegitimate by the West, with the U.S. describing it as an “incredible act of aggression”, and the Ukrainian government calling it a “declaration of war” (VoA-57;58). Although experts interviewed by VoA said that military interference in Ukraine was unlikely, as it would be too costly (VoA-87), VoA carefully followed and described Russian surprise military drill by Ukraine’s border (VoA-88-89), noting that the troops sent there were stronger than those that had been sent to Georgia in 2008. Russia was reported to deny any link between the military exercises and the crisis in Ukraine, which VoA proceeded to debunk with reasons given by analysts to counter the Russian statement (VoA-90;92).

Even though VoA’s narrative gave Russia a strong invader identity, on occasion, they described Russia as wanting a peaceful solution, not war or annexation (VoA-118-119). Further, analysts were reported by VoA as saying that Putin saw his actions as a “symmetrical response” to what he believed happened in Kiev, and a Russian security force reportedly saying that war was on the table, because no matter the decision – someone will not be happy (VoA-119). Even though there was an occasional acknowledgement of Russia not wanting war, the information saying the opposite far outweighed it.

However, Russia was not only painted as an invader of Ukraine and a threat to the region, but the rest of the world and Europe as well. VoA reported fears that Russia would bully Ukraine and Europe by cutting off gas supply (VoA-97), and reinforced claims that Russia was violating international law (VoA-57-58;101) and undermining democracy (VoA-124).

Officials say [the Pentagon Defence Secretary] Hagel told [the Russian Defence Minister] Shoygu that without a change on the ground, Russia is risking more regional instability, global isolation, and an escalation that would threaten European and international security. (VoA-57)

VoA used quotes by NATO and its members to support Russia’s identity as a threat, saying it threatened peace in Europe, and that another country – Moldova – would be under attack next (VoA-57;137;154;134). Russia gaining Crimea was described as “renewed Russian expansion” (VoA-154) and Western officials were quoted as saying that “Russia can only be stopped with force” (VoA-105).

Russia was portrayed as a source of worry among the world powers with its actions by being a threat to peace and an invader, aggressor and warmonger. Russia’s claims of non-interference were shown as not being taken seriously by the West. Instead Russia was linked to violations of international treaties and laws, and being an utmost aggressor, during the crisis in

Ukraine, before it and possibly after it.

Russia in Crimea

Perhaps the most severe instance of othering of Russia by VoA occurred during a description of Russian actions in Crimea. While the U.S. and the West (the Self) were shown as condemning Russia's (the Other) actions and trying to de-escalate the situation in Ukraine (VoA-57;115;118), Russia was continued to be portrayed as an invader, defying the West.

As mentioned before, the West was portrayed as asking Russia to 'de-escalate' the situation (VoA-57;118) and asking them to not "send in tanks" and instead to opt for leaving Ukraine's territory (VoA-88;100). Then Russia is reported to have rejected talks with Ukraine's new government (VoA-92;94) which said Russia's "illegally present" troops should leave Ukraine (VoA-92,94;127;134;142;145), instead announcing a referendum and a new law for Crimea's annexation (VoA-57). As Russia's activities were shown as having triggered a U.N. emergency session (VoA-96;112), the situation on ground was described as being feared by Crimea's minorities, including native Tatars who were afraid of Russian military and opposed Russian rule (VoA-91;99;133;138;150). At the same time – Crimea's Russian-speaking majority was shown as being in favour of Crimea joining Russia (VoA-88;91-92;126-127), however, VoA described Crimea as inevitably a part of Ukraine: "Ukraine and Russia continue their stand off for Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula" (VoA-91).

After Putin announced a surprise military drill putting Russian troops on alert (VoA-88;89), analysts were shown as being sceptical about Putin's assertions that the drill was not related to the crisis in Ukraine and believed that Russian troops would enter Ukraine (VoA-88-90).

While Russian officials say Moscow will not intervene in Ukraine, many Western analysts are skeptical about their assertions that the exercises are not linked to the crisis in the former Soviet republic. Russia's saber rattling, they say, is another sign of its military confidence and willingness to use it to dominate those countries it once controlled. (VoA-90)

The West was portrayed as worried, as more soldiers were reported to appear by the border between Russia and Ukraine (VoA-101;124). Eventually Ukraine was described as being in *disarray* after Russia made "an aggressive move in Crimea", allowing troops to enter Ukraine (VoA-92;107), called it a "declaration of war" (VoA-92) and asked Russia to "end military

aggression and provocations” (VoA-91). Kiev then blamed Russia for “stirring up tensions in Crimea” (VoA-148;159;166) and asked the West to put pressure on Russia (VoA-136) in order to stop this “utmost aggressor” (VoA-159). Ukraine was backed by Obama, who warned Russia of “costs to military aggression” (VoA-92), and accused Russia of invasion and occupation (VoA-93;96), violation of a number of treaties (VoA-152), and a “blatant act of aggression” (later also “an incredible act of aggression”) (VoA-93;92;120). This was seen by VoA analysts as Russia “biting off more than it can chew” (VoA-92) and resulted in predictions that Russia will not invade Ukraine because of the costs (VoA-92;95;105-106).

Eventually, however, U.N. members were shown as becoming worried that Russia would take the steps to annex Crimea, with the situation there being described as getting “worse by day” (VoA-139;142), and in time taking over the other Russian-speaking parts of Ukraine (VoA-141;151;153;173). VoA reported that Crimea’s “declaration of independence” came after Russia’s “illegal occupation” of the Peninsula (VoA-157). When Russian troops entered mainland Ukraine (VoA-159;169) and seized a Ukrainian natural gas facility, it was reported as “military invasion by Russia” (VoA-162)

Russia’s actions in Crimea created a clear sense of the Other to the West’s Self. Russia was portrayed as continuously worrying the West, and continuing illegal activities, as well as being superbly aggressive, while attempting to hide the truth from the international community. It was also shown as a military invader who is ready to illegally annex a part of another country no matter the stakes. Russia appeared to have been given a “bully” role, with Ukraine portrayed as asking Russia to stop its illegal actions and calling for the West to help stop Russia.

“Little Green Men”

VoA reported on unidentified soldiers present in Crimea that were believed to be Russian (VoA-91;134-135;143).

Ukraine and Russia continue their standoff over Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula, where the movement of troops and vehicles, believed to be Russian military, has increased. (VoA-91)

While the Russian Federation denied this (VoA-93;108;112;125) and said that these forces were self-defence units comprised of Crimeans (VoA-108;112), the West was shown as “ridiculing” the claims (VoA-127) and international observers stating that the troops are Russian (VoA-

93;108;112;125). These forces were reported to have increased with “every hour” (VoA-96;112;116;127;140), taking over strategic buildings (VoA-101;124), shooting at unarmed Ukrainian soldiers (VoA-100-101;104-105;124) and committing “war crimes” (VoA-173).

The narrative of the unidentified soldiers in Crimea kept building upon Russia’s identity as an invader, and a liar. It portrayed Russia as self-centred in its actions, and Russia’s continuous willingness to lie, hiding its actions to achieve its goals.

Referendum

The referendum in Crimea was described by VoA as choreographed and orchestrated by Russia (VoA-119;148), with the people voting being watched over by armed Russian military, and not seen as legitimate by the West.

The referendum was portrayed from the West’s point of view as something that will never be recognised by the international community, *illegitimate* (VoA-124-125;145;160;164;167), a *sham* (VoA-161), *extremely dubious* (VoA-135), *phony* (VoA-159) and done in the atmosphere of intimidation, with armed Russian military in the streets of Crimea (VoA-160-161).

“The most cynical thing in history is when people have to make a choice under a gun.”
(VoA-143)

Ukraine’s officials are quoted calling it “not a referendum, it is a farce, a fake and a crime [...] organized by the Russian Federations military” (VoA-119). The choice of the words used to describe the referendum, as well as the abovementioned quote by a Crimean Tatar (VoA-143) create an emotional response to Russia’s activity in the Peninsula. VoA reported that “Moscow’s move to get a tighter grip on Crimea has been carefully orchestrated” and with local minorities reporting that the referendum will not be fair (VoA-143), with a non-existent option to vote for the status quo on the ballot (VoA-147). The West then asked Russia to call off (VoA-143) what they called an illegal “backdoor annexation” attempt (VoA-156;159).

Meanwhile, Putin was quoted as saying that if Yanukovich’s overthrow was the will of the people, then so was the Crimean referendum (VoA-119), and asserted that Kremlin supported the referendum fully (VoA-123;127;156). VoA then reported Russian politicians arriving in Crimea pre-referendum (VoA-157) and stated that Russia has made it clear that no diplomatic activity before the referendum had the ability to influence whether it will happen (VoA-151).

While Russia's activity was portrayed as unwavering, the referendum that was attributed as organised by the Russian Federation was continuously perpetrated as an illegitimate fraud in a high-pressure environment. Once again, Russia was opposing the West on the legitimacy of this referendum.

The Untrustworthy

Similar to the Crimean Tatars, VoA was vocal about how Russia does not and will not keep promises (VoA-161). Out of all the narratives that VoA built about Russia, this is one that was most frequently perpetuated – “Russia says it wants peace, but is it ready to deescalate?” (VoA-109;118).

Russia's trustworthiness was questioned on multiple occasions, and the country's actions showed it as continuously breaking promises. For example, Russia initially was reported as saying it will not get involved in the conflict, but eventually did so and was reported as fomenting, organising and funding unrest in Ukraine (VoA-14;42;159). VoA's reports on Russia promising bailout money to the Ukrainian government initially showed that Russia offered it out of good will (saying it was meant for the Ukrainian peoples, and will reach them no matter what the government consists of), then it was to be held back until Ukraine settled the crisis and had picked its government (with the previous promise being actual), until eventually this aid money was withheld because of the new government (VoA-45-51;53-54;60;63;67;70;71;81;86).

Russia's military actions were also used by VoA to add to Russia's image of a promise breaker, both because it quickly changed its stance on the claim that there were no Russian soldiers in Ukrainian territory (although reports of VoA stated that even during this period there were Russian troops in Ukraine illegally) to allowing soldiers enter Ukraine, and having them within Ukraine's borders (VoA-43-44;57;84;91;93;112;125;127;156;173). It was also reflected by showing Russia's willingness to breach the Budapest Memorandum (VoA-56;144), and switch from not wanting to annex Crimea, to moves toward its annexation (VoA-104;118;119;167;173). Further, Russia is accused of hiding something when it expelled international monitors and envoys from the Crimean Peninsula multiple times (VoA-109;127;135;139;145;149;157).

While VoA reported on Lavrov speaking of peace while Russia was still provoking Ukraine (VoA-156), possibly one of the bigger reports was on Putin being called out on false

claims by the U.S. government. While originally it was a White House infographic on how Putin has lied about Russian-speakers being threatened, non-insignias not being part of Russian military and not having anything to do with the unrest of Crimea, VoA only strengthened its power by writing an article supporting these previous claims (VoA-111).

Russia's identity was attributed with multiple occasions of it using promises to manipulate the rest of the international community. As previously stated, Russia was portrayed as a country that would make and break promises and lie just to get the desired result.

Russia's Tradecraft

VoA did not fail to mention the tradecraft of Russia in the articles. This tradecraft was related to propaganda, provocations and other intelligence methods used to possibly influence the situation in Ukraine.

The first mention of Russian tradecraft was the U.S. blaming Russia for tapping in and leaking a senior U.S. officials' call (VoA-64-66). This call was "traced back to Russia" and described as a "new low", however, Russian authorities were reported denying their involvement (VoA-66). After Ukrainian government webpages being down, VoA speculated that it was the doing of the Russian government, however, analysts interviewed by VoA voiced the opinion that Russia would gain more with the networks in Ukraine being up (allowing for spying), and Russian Federation justified itself by saying that it cannot control patriotic hackers (VoA-103).

According to the information on VoA, the Kremlin then waged an information war in attempts to justify its invasion in Ukraine (VoA-128), with its propaganda attempts resembling the movie "Wag the Dog"⁴ (VoA-113).

"Getting the real story is hard enough, and the Russian media seems intent on making it even harder." (VoA-113)

VoA reported on how in two months' time, the Russian television had gone from calling Ukrainians their "Slavic brothers", to describing Ukraine as controlled by "fascist nationalists"

⁴ As referenced by VoA. "Wag the Dog" is a 1997 movie in which an unnamed U.S. president gets into a scandal right before elections. To cover up this scandal, a producer and a "spin-doctor" fabricate a war, framing the president a hero.

(VoA-92) and spreading false information.

Russian media and leading political figures have been shrill in their denunciations of "fascists" in Kyiv and their claims of anti-Semitic incidents, of attacks on ethnic Russians in the eastern reaches of Ukraine, and of floods of beleaguered refugees streaming across the border into Russia. Much of this information is demonstrably false, however, emerging from unsourced media reports, then making its way into the statements of Russian politicians, and even into Western media reports. (VoA-113)

While freedom of the media was reported to be under attack, Ukraine is shown as accusing "Russian agents of fomenting" and *funding* "deadly violence" (VoA-156;166), and trying to counter the Russian misinformation efforts (VoA-130), rendering Russian provocations less effective (VoA-132). However, Russian propaganda in Crimea was shown as being more efficient – by blocking Ukrainian television and using Russian channels to spread information of the need for people to arm themselves, portraying the 'Ukrainian Nazis' as a real threat (VoA-119;148;160). VoA also described the look in the streets of pre-referendum Crimea, where Russian propaganda filled posters portrayed Ukraine as linked with Nazi symbols (VoA-147;157).

The aforementioned characteristics attributed a role to Russia of manipulating with the media and people. Russia was portrayed as heavily using propaganda and misinformation on the media to influence people and achieve its goals, not worrying about quickly switching narratives.

Pointing Fingers

Numerous times, VoA reflected Russian official statements in which they blamed the West and the U.S. for the crisis that Ukraine found itself in. Russia was also shown as deflecting the blame, with Putin saying that Russia is not to blame for Ukraine's "internal crisis" (VoA-153;174).

Russian President Vladimir Putin blamed outside actors for the protests, which he said amounted to an attempt to unsettle Ukraine's legitimate rulers. (VoA-9)

Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin blamed the West for ratcheting up tensions in Ukraine and backing protests that ousted President Viktor Yanukovich. (VoA-96)

At the beginning of the crisis, Russia was reported as saying they will stay out of the crisis, and that other nations should stay out of it as well (VoA-14;15;25), accusing actors outside of Ukraine for fomenting unrest in the country (VoA-9). Russian officials were quoted saying

that the Western powers were exerting their pressure and supporting violent protests and a coup trying to gain influence in Ukraine (VoA-22;26;63;68;69;75;92;96;104;118). At the same time, VoA portrayed Russia as heavily exerting pressure on Ukraine themselves (VoA-22;48), also as described in the section titled “Russia’s pressure”, as well as with Ukrainian officials of the new government eventually blaming Russia for meddling in Ukraine’s affairs (VoA-173).

Russia was frequently shown as calling out on others for being aggressive and fomenting unrest in Ukraine. However, Russia’s preaching was often portrayed as being in contradiction to what Russia was actually doing.

Russia’s Demise

This section is called Russia’s Demise, as it shows how VoA reflected on Russia being unwanted by people and other countries, and being lacking in human rights and stability within its own borders.

One of the things most reported on was the condemnation, isolation and sanctions along with travel bans imposed on Russia because of its actions, to pay “a price for its intervention” (VoA-109;115;124;127). While Russia was shown as stating that these sanctions are counterproductive, and the people that got sanctioned even supposedly feeling honoured and laughing about it (VoA-127;171), analysts were cited as saying that if Russia annexes Crimea, it will get isolated “for years or even decades” (VoA-135;139;145). Eventually, Russian government acknowledged they were in an economic crisis, with analysts saying that “in a matter of few weeks [...]” Russia fell from being “one of the more resilient markets in the world to [...] one of the most vulnerable developing countries” (VoA-164).

VoA also reported on the quality of life, rule of law, freedom of speech and media, and corruption having *deteriorated* under Putin (VoA-107;158). It was linked to, amongst other things, rise in corruption and inequality as shown in the quote below:

But this territorial achievement may provide only temporary distraction for Russia’s 140 million people who have seen their quality of life deteriorate dramatically since Putin took power in 1999. [...] Although Putin is far more disciplined than the man who anointed him [...] the system Putin has put in place is, Feifer writes, “far more corrupt and inequitable ... than anything seen under Yeltsin.” (VoA-158)

Lack of freedom of speech and media censorship accusations were linked to Russia banning a

U.S. journalist from Moscow because he was not friendly to Putin's regime (VoA-39-40), and a prominent Moscow's state universities professor being fired after criticizing Putin's actions and content of similar content being banned in the country (VoA-107).

In an opinion article published on the daily Vedomosti's website on Saturday, Andrei Zubov said Russia was on the verge of war and added: "We must not behave the way Germans once behaved, based on the promises of Goebbels and Hitler." By Tuesday, he told the internet news site slon.ru that he had received an ultimatum from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO): "I was told that I either write my own resignation or wait to be fired." (VoA-107)

Further, VoA reported on demonstrations and protests being held in St. Petersburg and Moscow – while pro-war in Ukraine protests were said to have more people attending them, the anti-war protesters were reported to have been detained by police (more than 300 people) (VoA-57;107).

With Russia being interested in gaining influence in its nearby countries, VoA reported on how unwelcome it actually is in some of the countries in the region. For example, it was reported that during Putin's visit in Armenia, the Armenian people were marching against him (VoA-10), while Georgia understandably also still holds animosity towards its big neighbour, that invaded them in 2008 (VoA-35). VoA had even reported the following interview with protesters in Ukraine who identify as Russian:

"We Russians living in Ukraine, we don't want him here. We are not against Russian people. Russian people are good people. But, we are against Putin. Putin is a fascist." [...] "Putin has done the most terrible thing. He has already sewn discord between our two peoples," said one woman at the Ukraine unity demonstration. "I am saying this on your camera that I hate Russia, I hate the Russian, and I am Russian. That's what he's done." (VoA-136)

Russia's identity was attributed a demise – both within and outside the country's borders. It was shown as tumbling in regard to economy, human rights, influence efforts and law. Russia's actions were described as *hated* also by Russians.

Putin is Russia

In articles referencing Russia, Putin was positioned almost as 'being' Russia for a notable amount of times. This creates an image that Russian actions are not as much the states decisions, but that of their leaders – Vladimir Putin's. It also portrays Putin as the sole decision maker of Russia.

President Putin's game of Russian roulette has pointed the gun at the international community's head. (VoA-124)

The use of Putin when referring to Russia was so common, that it left a sense that it was Putin who was dealing with Ukraine and invading it. This created an image of Putin as the sole authoritarian ruler of the Russian Federation. In this way Russia was personified in him, and then was applied actions and emotions that could not be applied to a state otherwise. Portraying Russia and Putin as one entity also allowed to link Putin's past and actions more closely. For example, in case of an EU deal going through, Putin was described as *infuriated* in this scenario (VoA-23). While during the crisis, Putin was described as *serene* and *oblivious* to what is happening around him while giving a press conference (VoA-119), and *exuberant* when he pronounced Crimea a part of Russia again (VoA-176). It was also Putin who was *losing* Ukraine (VoA-87), and it was him who *flexed his muscles* at the West during the conflict (VoA-62;88). Later in the crisis, it was Putin who saw "sanctions as a tit-for-tat" game (VoA-117), and not Russia's, but again his "game of Russian roulette" was holding a "gun at the international communities head" (VoA-124), and later it was him who was defying the West, and started "assuming Crimea in to Russia" (VoA-167;173).

With Putin being exemplified as Russia, in multiple articles Putin's (KGB-related) past was linked to that of Russia. U.S. official McCain was quoted calling out Putin's past as a KGB spy, calling him a "a mid-level KGB agent" (VoA-158), and a "KGB colonel apprentice" (VoA-145), with VoA even describing him a "former KGB spy" (VoA-119) too. McCain was portrayed as pointing out Putin's true self, anti-Americanism (VoA-145;158) and warning Obama "not to underestimate Putin's belief that Crimea is a part of Russia" (VoA-83). Interestingly, VoA also reported on Putin being likened to Hitler. Once by a distinguished professor in one of Moscow's top universities (VoA-107), and the second time by Hillary Clinton (VoA-129) and mentions from other Western powers. Putin was said to be like Hitler in his stance and 'reasons' for invading a country, as well as his rhetoric (VoA-107;129).

Interestingly, Russia was very often linked with Putin. This link further extended to Putin's past, showing how even in the present time Russia was very heavily influenced by the KGB values, as Putin used to be a KGB spy. This links back to a time of Cold War and historically, a more war-mongering international community in Europe. Moreover, this allowed VoA to attribute emotions to the Russia that otherwise could not be attributed to a state.

Back in (Cold) Time

VoA continuously linked Russia to certain words and concepts besides Putin. These concepts were Soviet times and Cold War, which were used to describe Russia's current actions and worldview during the "tug-of-war between West and Russia" (VoA-85).

Russia was described as having moves that were "reminiscent of Cold War" (VoA-39), using "Cold War style brinkmanship" (VoA-104) and being responsible for bringing up a "Cold War memory" (VoA-88;90) or reviving fear by bringing the *Cold War* back (VoA-168;175). This created an image that Russia was not interested in the new world order, instead thinking only about its own interests and delving in a past that is hurtful for the rest of the world.

The other, *Soviet* concept was closely linked to recent history, when Ukraine was under Soviet control. While Ukraine and other countries, such as the Baltic states were described as "former Soviet states" (VoA-90) and Moscow was called "Ukraine's former overlord" (VoA-42) by VoA, Putin is also quoted calling Ukraine a "former Soviet Republic" (VoA-173). Russia was then described in an article as following a "Soviet era playbook" with its invasion (VoA-92), saying that the "Russian leader views Ukraine through a Soviet-type lenses", and might be surprised to learn that Ukraine has grown Westwards (VoA-132). This illustrated a power relationship between Ukraine and Russia that used to exist, which Russia stills sees it as existent.

These concepts created an image of Russia as stuck in history. Firstly, it appeared, as if Russia saw the world and was communicating with the rest of the world as if the Cold War was still happening. Secondly, it showed Russia still holding a belief that it rules over territories that formerly were a part of the USSR.

Overview

The VoA articles analysed reported on the events happening in Ukraine in real-time. VoA quoted Russian and Western officials, interviewed experts and analysts, as well as people in Ukraine. While most of the articles presented a pro-Western opinion, there were also a number in which a pro-Russian stance was allowed – such as quotes from Russian officials.

VoA used discourse as a system of signification to construct the identity of Russia as an Other – attributing negative deeds and failed attempts. The Self of the U.S. or West was not used

too often to contrast Russia's Other – instead Russia was attributed words and concepts that linked to isolation, lies, Cold War (Soviet, KGB), selfishness, illegitimacy and invasion. The discourse productivity aspect of VoA's narration of the events proved to be continuous, however, it did not fully repress the narrative and identity of Russia that showed it as 'good'. Instead, this narrative was reported on and refuted by adding to it from credible sources, like state officials, and other authorities. The play of practice, or slight changes of discourse appeared to have been used to build on to the negative identity of Russia, by referring back to earlier reports, where Russian authorities had said something they later acted against. While on a couple occasions Russia was portrayed as doing the right thing, most of the time the discourse of Russia being the negative Other did not shift.

The negative identity attributed to Russia through VoA's discourse portrayed Russia as opposing the West, and interestingly, was very closely linked to Vladimir Putin. Russia was shown as fighting the West for influence in the region to maintain the regions isolation from the Western values, and to balance the West. The West's Self was portrayed as defending a sovereign nations freedom to make its own decisions, trying to deescalate the situation and asking for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Russia's Other identity was linked with lies and manipulation, information wars, aggression, invasion and occupation (present and past), breaking of international laws, fomenting violence, bullying and 'backdoor annexation'. Russia was also portrayed as failing to be a stable country in the 21st Century, instead being stuck in the past. Interestingly, Russia's identity was at times overlapping with Putin, giving the country the ability to "feel" emotions, as well as attributing to it Putin's troubling (to the West) Cold War, Soviet KGB past.

The discourse created by VoA did not waiver in portraying Russia as being wrong in their actions. Although Russia and its state officials were given voice, and sometimes their words were attributed legitimacy, overall, most of what Russia were pushing as truths were countered with arguments that showed these truths as lies. The social practice dimension shows why the West chose to take the side of the pro-Western opposition, as it supported closer ties with the West instead of Russia.

Comparison

In this section, I look at how the identities of the Other created by VoA on Russia and RT on the U.S. compare to each other, taking into account the similarities and differences. I also look at how both of the channels choose to create and uphold their discourses.

While both RT and VoA built discourses that suited their narratives, VoA was more adept than RT at using opposing discourses to build on their maintained discourse. While both of the channels used discourses that would deviate from their regime of truth in the creation of their own narratives and discourses, RT was more aggressive at countering and repressing other discourses directly when they appeared, writing articles for the purpose of proving them wrong. In contrast, VoA used multiple narratives that opposed those previously used in their discourse to support the identity they were building for Russia. It is possible that RT was not given the same opportunity, because, for example, it had to work with a complete narrative shift regarding the “little green men” in Crimea in order to defend their Self – Russia. This too could be used by VoA to their advantage. When comparing the two, it is apparent that while both VoA and RT created the Other’s identity by linking it to negative words and concepts, VoA did not oppose the Russian Other to the U.S. Self nearly as much as RT did for the U.S. Other to the Russian Self. Although VoA did build the discourse almost as if it assumed that the U.S. was right, RT opted to be bolder in using the contradictions to show the contrast between the ‘good’ Russia’s Self to the ‘bad’ U.S.’ Other.

When comparing the main signifiers that appeared in both RT’s and VoA’s discourses, the amount of similar or overlapping signifiers is noteworthy. Both discourses accuse the Other of illegitimate action and breaking international law, being an aggressor (emphasizing the past), meddling in a sovereign nations’ activities, being selfish and funding violence. Both channels portrayed the Other as exerting pressure on the Ukrainian government and in the region, as well as manipulating media to spread propaganda and lies, using Cold War tactics, applying double standards, and not fully cooperating. Some of these concepts were linked to each country in a slightly different way, for example, VoA portrayed Russia as breaking international law with its military interference and annexation of Crimea, while RT showed the U.S. as breaking the international law by meddling in Ukraine’s internal affairs. These concepts, even if applied tailored to each state’s actions, show clear similarities on how both RT and VoA use othering

techniques (also with similar word choice) to create the identity of the Other. It must be noted, however, that both VoA and RT did (although only briefly) portray the Other as seeking peace and looking for ways to end the conflict.

Interestingly enough, both channels cited state officials (Russia – RT, U.S. – VoA) as saying that Ukraine, as a free country, deserves to decide who to be allies with, and both are, at one point, called out as *sabre rattling*. After noticing this coincidence, I decided to compare the timing of when this particular signifier was included in reporting. VoA first reported on a U.S. politician saying that Ukraine is the one to make the choice on the 3rd of December, 2013 (article VoA-12, later also VoA-47;57;83;87;93;109;126). RT’s first report appears on the 10th of December, 2013 (article RT-4, also RT-7;26), where they are referring to a Ukrainian politician saying this and linking it to the West’s interference. Interestingly, VoA was also the first to say Russia was sabre rattling, with a post on the 26th of February, 2014 (VoA-88;90), and RT used this word combination to refer to the U.S. on the 6th of March, 2014 (RT-56). In both instances where the channels used this term, they were used by VoA first, opening up the possibility that RT may have echoed them.

When looking at the differences between VoA and RT’s reporting, it is important to remember that the channels were given a slightly different situation to report on. While both of the sides were supposedly very involved with the crisis in Ukraine, the U.S. is located on the other side of the world, while Russia sits right next to Ukraine and was physically involved, which can explain why VoA produced more articles on Russia than RT did on the U.S. during the selected time period. The biggest difference was already discussed above – that VoA created Russia’s identity mostly by attributing to it words and concepts, while RT created the U.S.’ identity in large part by comparing it to the good Self of Russia. VoA, however, gave more space in its articles for the Russian side than RT did for the American side of the story.

Russia – by VoA	The U.S. – by RT
Endangering the world	<i>Other vs Self</i>
Demise	“Attacking” Russia
Isolated, alone and unwelcome	Ignoring violence
Soviet legacy	Unable to act
Promise breaker	Unfair
Putin (and was attributed emotion)	

Figure 1. *Differences in the creation of the Other between VoA and RT*

Other differences are mostly connected to the roles attributed to each state. The most notable differences appear with U.S. being shown as attacking Russia (by meddling in Ukraine), ignoring violence, as well as behaving unfairly and for a period of time as unable to act (with threats being most it can do). Russia is attributed the endangering the world (and democracy), isolation by (almost) the rest of the world and breaking of multiple promises. Russia is also portrayed as an invader and a state that is trying to live up to its Soviet legacy, and Putin was perceived almost as an embodiment of Russia. However, Russia was also somewhat shown as believing it was doing the right thing.

Overall, both of the channels created a negative Other identity for the countries. While there were some differences in their approach and in the Other identities the channels had created, the similarities and the roles attributed to the Other did extensively overlap.

Presidential Statements

For a better view on the state use of the state-funded channels, I also went through statements available from Obama and in Putin's speeches. Here too, I investigated their attitude towards the Other, to seek out similarities with their states' channel.

Putin's Addresses

In the time frame used for the research, Russian President Putin did a public address and an interview in which he described the U.S./West or its actions, which can be found recorded on President of Russia's official webpage. Both the address and the interview took place in March, and mirrored the attitude found in the RT reporting.

As RT used Putin's quotes quite often, it is not surprising, that they mirrored Putin's opinion. Putin spoke of the U.S. not following international law (President of Russia, 2014a; 2014b), and pointed out the U.S.' involvement in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya (President of Russia, 2014a) and said "better late than never" about the West remembering that international law exists (President of Russia, 2014b). Putin also spoke about Yanukovich being the only legitimate president of Ukraine, and the *coup* in Kiev being unconstitutional (President of Russia, 2014a). Moreover, Putin added that the demonstrators were trained in Western countries (President of Russia, 2014a; 2014b), asked a rhetorical question on what the West's motivations

are in supporting the Ukrainian opposition (President of Russia, 2014a), and accused the West of sponsoring them (President of Russia, 2014b). In his speech on Crimea's annexation day, Putin mentioned the West's involvement in *controlled* colour revolutions and a 3rd election round created to steer Ukrainian presidential elections in 2004 (President of Russia, 2014b).

Putin called Western statements irresponsible and spoke of the West's *double standards* (President of Russia, 2014b). Putin called out West's *double standards*, calling it "amazing, primitive, blunt cynicism" (President of Russia, 2014b). He accused the West of lying and not returning Russia's cooperation efforts (President of Russia, 2014b). In his 18th of March speech, Putin also noted how "NATO in our backyard, in our historic territory" was unacceptable (President of Russia, 2014b). Regarding Crimea, Putin spoke about how the U.S. is proud to be free, and that Crimean's want the same thing, and quoted a U.S. statement from U.N. international court hearings on Kosovo, which stated that a "declaration of independence may, and often do, violate domestic legislation", but does not necessarily violate international law (President of Russia, 2014b).

Putin's and RT's presentation of the events in Ukraine and the U.S. and West in relation to it were very similar. On the topics he raised during his speeches, his views overlapped those portrayed on RT and his quotes were used in RT's reporting.

Obama's Statements

In the chosen time period, the U.S. president Barack Obama also addressed the situation in Ukraine in his statements and remarks found on The American Presidency Project webpage. Two of these were joint statements of G7, one – a statement together with Ukraine's Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, and two were President's own remarks.

In both joint statements and President Obama's statements, the U.S. and West condemned Russia's actions and called for them to deescalate the situation and resort to peaceful diplomatic talks with Ukraine (The American Presidency Project, 2014a; 2014b; 2014c; 2014d; 2014e). Russia's actions and intervention in Crimea were described as violations of international and Ukrainian law, as well as of the U.N. charter and various treaties (The American Presidency Project, 2014c; 2014d). President Obama emphasized that Russia's actions have earned Russian statesmen sanctions, and that further aggression will result in a response from the U.S. that will

result in Russia's further isolation (The American Presidency Project, 2014b; 2014e). Obama also states that the U.S. understands the historical background of Ukraine and Russia and are willing to look solutions that would be good for both countries (The American Presidency Project, 2014b; 2014d; 2014e), saying that U.S. and Ukraine are even willing to discuss Crimea, just "not with a gun pointed in [their] face" (The American Presidency Project, 2014d). For this reason, Russia was seen as a threat and the referendum as illegitimate (The American Presidency Project, 2014d). A statement made on the 17th of March by Obama also underlined Russia's isolation by noting that "we saw international unity again over the weekend when Russia stood alone in the U.N. Security Council defending its actions in Crimea" (The American Presidency Project, 2014e). All of the previously made statements of Obama resonated in VoA's reporting.

Obama's statements projected the same view on the events in Ukraine and Crimea as VoA. The characteristics that the President's statements projected on Russia were closely attributed to Russia and Putin in VoA's reporting.

Conclusion

By analysing the state identity representation discourses on of the U.S. on RT and of Russia on VoA during the 2013/2014 conflict in Ukraine, this research has shown that both of the state-funded channels constructed a negative identity of the Other. Both RT and VoA used othering techniques to build a state identity that was negative and opposed the Self, and similarities in the attributed identities could be drawn. This allows for each state to change the perception of the other in territories where they fight for influence.

The discourse analysis revealed how the state-funded channels RT and VoA constructed the identity of the Other. These identities of the U.S. and Russia were boldly portrayed as being negative, and most of the time were shown as opposing the Self of the country that funds the channel, showing the situation as ‘black and white’. Various characteristics were attributed to the states based on the historical relations and actions, and both sides were accused of bringing back the Cold War and needlessly invading another state. Other similarities include the Others being portrayed as liars, media manipulators, and as unwilling to cooperate. Interestingly, twice during the selected time period, RT echoed VoA’s precise wording, once on the Other (describing them as sabre rattling), and the other time of Self in relation to the Other (as defending Ukraine’s right to choose). These, among other things, showed that the discourses created about the Other are similar in the work of RT and VoA. Among the most notable differences were Russia’s Others portrayal as stuck in the Soviet past, failing to be a stable 21st Century country, and the fact that it was linked to Putin so closely it was attributed feelings. The U.S.’ Other was linked to its past invasions, inability to act and unfairness.

Both of the state-funded channels narratives on the Other were closely linked to those of their respective presidents. RT used plenty of Russian state official quotes in constructing the identity of the U.S.’ Other. While VoA did not use as many quotes, it still portrayed the same mood as did President Obama in his statements on the situation in Ukraine. The degree of freedom by the presidents and officials could be another aspect of further studies on the identity of the Other.

In respect to the data quantity - VoA published considerably more articles mentioning Russia in the time of the conflict in Ukraine than RT did mentioning the U.S., however, this can be linked to the fact that the reality constraints – the actual things happening – allowed for VoA to produce more content, as Russia is more closely situated to Ukraine.

By looking at the results of this thesis and understanding the history of relations between the U.S. and Russia, one could argue that it shows presence of state propaganda on the Other. This was especially true in Ukraine, when both of the powers were interested in military, economic and diplomatic ties. While the conflict in Ukraine itself arose because of actions that would bring Ukraine closer to Russia rather than the West, the question of who will gain access to military bases in the country and what the main governance style in Ukraine would be was topical as well. Both VoA and RT reporting showed narratives that were favourable for their respective countries, and constructed identities of the Other that were not flattering, potentially decreasing the Other's influence in not only Ukraine, but also the rest of Europe.

While the research yielded interesting results, it did have limitations as well. As a master's thesis, this was a research done by one person, and thus it was more prone to mistakes and biases, despite considerable effort to avoid them. The time limit imposed by a master's study programme also necessitated the narrowing of the articles included in the research sample. Results from a broader research including more articles from a broader time frame would likely create a better understanding of how the identities are constructed over time, and could allow for an amount closer to equal of material to be collected for each country in question. Additionally, a bigger research project could try to distinguish between propaganda and socially constructed discourses by surveying the VoA and RT target audiences – although, if the audiences are receptive enough, the planted narratives might already be seen as the norm within the societies. Therefore, while it seems safe to assume that propaganda is present in the VoA's and RT's reporting, it is impossible for this thesis to present how much of the discourses was borrowed from the discourses present in the Russian or American societies, and how much of it was implemented deliberately in propaganda efforts.

Overall, this research should be able to provide a starting point for a larger scale research. It shows the identities Russian and U.S. state-funded propaganda channels create of the Other in the time period of the Ukraine crisis, more importantly, it shows that negative identity creation of the Other is present between these two countries, and could be used to further study the extent to which these channels are used to deliberately attribute state identity to the Other as efforts of propaganda. This kind of research could prove useful for state officials, media and media literacy experts as well as researchers, who seek to understand propaganda or the current relationships between the U.S. and Russia.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of RT News articles analysed

Code	Date	Title
RT-1	30/11/2013	Ukrainian leader 'outraged', slams violence in Kiev as police disperse protesters
RT-2	08/12/2013	Huge crowds rally for EU deal, build barricades in Ukrainian capital
RT-3	10/12/2013	Police dismantle barricades in Kiev as tensions run high
RT-4	10/12/2013	Russian MPs blast West for interference in Ukraine and 'aggravating' situation
RT-5	11/12/2013	Muddling and meddling'? US, EU politicians plunge deeper into Kiev protest
RT-6	12/12/2013	Ukraine and EU agree to work out road map for association deal
RT-7	14/12/2013	Provocations, EU's financial interests behind Ukraine protests – Lavrov
RT-8	15/12/2013	McCain meets with Ukrainian opposition, backs pro-EU protests
RT-9	15/12/2013	EU puts Ukraine integration deal on hold - bloc's enlargement chief
RT-10	16/12/2013	Rival rallies continue in Kiev as Western meddling increases
RT-11	25/12/2013	Ukraine bans foreigners for 'security reasons' as protests continue
RT-12	19/01/2014	West, Ukraine trade blows over Kiev's new public order laws
RT-13	19/01/2014	Teargas, fire, smoke as clashes erupt between police and protesters in Kiev
RT-14	22/01/2014	'Warzone': Open street battles in Kiev as rioters, police face-off (PHOTOS)
RT-15	23/01/2014	Protesters surround American embassy in Kiev, rally against US meddling
RT-16	24/01/2014	Back to chaos: Rioters burn tires, throw Molotovs, attack police in Kiev
RT-17	24/01/2014	Ukraine protest pressure: Kiev faces heat from abroad & within
RT-18	24/01/2014	Police officer killed, two others captured as violence resumes in Kiev
RT-19	25/01/2014	Kiev protesters siege energy ministry building as Donetsk holds pro-govt rallies
RT-20	27/01/2014	Kiev protesters seize Justice Ministry building after day of calm
RT-21	27/01/2014	Ukraine Justice Ministry seized by rioters
RT-22	27/01/2014	US, European diplomats meet with radicals in Kiev, see 'no threat' from them
RT-23	28/01/2014	Opposition leaders reject posts in Ukraine government
RT-24	28/01/2014	Putin: Russia ready to support Ukraine, regardless of govt
RT-25	30/01/2014	Russia blasts PACE's 'double standard' resolution on Ukraine
RT-26	01/02/2014	West's interpretation of freedom for Ukraine 'strange' – Lavrov
RT-27	03/02/2014	Seriously, what?! Kerry tells Russia 'you don't invade a country on completely phony pretexts'
RT-28	06/02/2014	F**k the EU': Snr US State Dept. official caught in alleged phone chat on Ukraine
RT-29	07/02/2014	US will give money to Ukraine if Kiev makes necessary reforms - Nuland
RT-30	07/02/2014	Merkel blasts US diplomat's F**k the EU comment
RT-31	08/02/2014	Russian govt not complicit in US diplomat's 'F**k the EU' call leak, official says
RT-32	18/02/2014	Talks between Ukrainian govt, opposition fail as Kiev gripped by unrest
RT-33	19/02/2014	US blames Ukrainian govt. for crisis, Moscow slams West for turning 'blind eye' on radicals
RT-34	19/02/2014	15 terrifying images show that Kiev is a real warzone (PHOTOS, VIDEO)
RT-35	19/02/2014	Obama threatens 'consequences' if Ukraine clashes escalate, visa bans imposed on officials
RT-36	20/02/2014	Ukraine truce fails, rioters renew offensive in Kiev, death toll rises to 35
RT-37	20/02/2014	Ukraine bloodshed: Kiev death toll jumps to 77
RT-38	20/02/2014	Threats of sanctions against Ukraine look like blackmail - Lavrov
RT-39	21/02/2014	From sea of flags to rivers of blood: How Kiev peaceful protest turned into Maidan mayhem
RT-40	27/02/2014	'No Cold War over Ukraine': Kerry calls on Russia to 'respect state sovereignty'
RT-41	27/02/2014	US, NATO, EU lecture Russia with 'provocative statements' on Ukraine
RT-42	28/02/2014	Russia interested in Ukraine stability, acts within existing agreements – UN envoy
RT-43	28/02/2014	Yanukovich denies ouster, says 'ashamed & guilty' for not preventing chaos
RT-44	01/03/2014	Russia's UN envoy: Radical forces destabilising Ukraine must be stopped
RT-45	02/03/2014	US military seize documents raided by Ukrainian radicals – suspected looter
RT-46	03/03/2014	Russian option to send troops is only to protect human rights - Lavrov
RT-47	03/03/2014	Kerry's threats vs Russia unacceptable, West sides with neo-Nazis - Russian FM
RT-48	03/03/2014	Yanukovich sent letter to Putin asking for Russian military presence in Ukraine
RT-49	04/03/2014	Putin: Deploying military force is last resort, but we reserve right
RT-50	04/03/2014	Russian troops ordered home from surprise war games
RT-51	04/03/2014	US suspends trade talks, military cooperation with Russia over Ukraine
RT-52	05/03/2014	Questions on Ukraine the West chooses not to answer
RT-53	05/03/2014	Cold War stereotypes': Russia condemns NATO plan to strengthen cooperation with Ukraine
RT-54	05/03/2014	Those who seized power in Kiev want to sour relations between West & Russia - Lavrov
RT-55	06/03/2014	US imposes visa restrictions on Russians, Crimeans who 'threaten Ukraine security'
RT-56	06/03/2014	US in tenuous sabre rattling over Ukraine

Code	Date	Title
RT-57	06/03/2014	Hillary Clinton compares Russian president's actions to Hitler
RT-58	06/03/2014	Russia hits back at US 'barefaced cynicism and double standards' over Ukraine
RT-59	06/03/2014	Visa bans, asset freezes are next: Europe announces three step sanctions against Russia
RT-60	07/03/2014	Putin to Obama: Russian-American relations shouldn't be sacrificed for differences over intl problems
RT-61	07/03/2014	Crimea won't work with 'illegitimate' Kiev govt – PM Aksyonov
RT-62	07/03/2014	Western-backed PM pushes with 'Russian tanks in Ukraine' fear-mongering, MSM looks away
RT-63	08/03/2014	US warship in Black Sea as Ukraine's Crimea readies for referendum
RT-64	08/03/2014	Lavrov: Right Sector radicals call the tune in Ukraine
RT-65	09/03/2014	Russia may ban American START inspections – sources
RT-66	10/03/2014	Crimea invites OSCE mission to observe referendum on region's futureN
RT-67	10/03/2014	US deploys fighter jets in Poland and Lithuania amid Ukrainian turmoil
RT-68	11/03/2014	US to violate own laws by financially aiding Ukraine's coup-installed govt – Moscow
RT-69	11/03/2014	NATO starts air drills close to Ukraine's borders
RT-70	11/03/2014	Crimea says provocations on the rise ahead of referendum
RT-71	11/03/2014	Ukrainian military won't listen to 'junta' in Kiev - Yanukovich
RT-72	11/03/2014	Witnesses at Crimea base: 'No fighting or shooting like reported on TV'
RT-73	12/03/2014	Human rights violated by Ukraine's coup-appointed govt – European NGO
RT-74	13/03/2014	Crimea referendum opponents manipulate detached norms of intl law – Churkin
RT-75	13/03/2014	Merkel: Russia to face massive damage if no progress made on Ukraine
RT-76	13/03/2014	Kiev snipers shooting from bldg controlled by Maidan forces – Ex-Ukraine security chief
RT-77	13/03/2014	International journalists refute claims of Russian forces in Crimea
RT-78	14/03/2014	'Useful, but no breakthrough': Russia, US stalled after Ukraine crisis talks
RT-79	14/03/2014	5 referendums that the West has not taken issue with
RT-80	14/03/2014	US aircraft carrier extends stay in Mediterranean amidst Ukraine tensions
RT-81	15/03/2014	Russia vetoes US-sponsored UN resolution declaring Crimea vote invalid
RT-82	15/03/2014	Crimean military thwarts sabotage of gas plant feeding peninsula
RT-83	16/03/2014	Crimean 'referendum at gunpoint' is a myth – intl observers
RT-84	16/03/2014	Putin: Crimeans expressed their will in full accordance with intl law, UN Charter
RT-85	16/03/2014	Ukraine's east on fire: Kharkov demands referendum, Donetsk prosecutor's HQ stormed
RT-86	16/03/2014	Tensions rise as Ukraine's military hardware pulls up to eastern border with Russia
RT-87	17/03/2014	Putin signs order to recognize Crimea as a sovereign independent state
RT-88	17/03/2014	EU, US impose sanctions against Russian officials after Crimea referendum
RT-89	18/03/2014	Putin: Crimea similar to Kosovo, West is rewriting its own rule book
RT-90	18/03/2014	West furious as Crimea accepted into Russia

Appendix 2 – List of VoA *Europe* articles analysed

Code	Date	Title
VoA-1	22/11/2013	Ukrainians Protest Decision to Back Away from EU Pact
VoA-2	26/11/2013	Ukraine Opposition Leader Launches Hunger Strike
VoA-3	26/11/2013	Ukraine Protests Continue As Russia Denies Anti-EU Pressure
VoA-4	27/11/2013	Protests Continue in Ukraine Against Refusal to Sign EU Deal
VoA-5	27/11/2013	After Ukraine, Will Russia Next Lean on Moldova and Georgia?
VoA-6	29/11/2013	Torn Between East and West, Ukraine Debates Future
VoA-7	30/11/2013	European Union Signs Up Moldova and Georgia, but Loses the Big Prize, Ukraine
VoA-8	30/11/2013	Ukrainian President Condemns Violence
VoA-9	01/12/2013	Ukraine Protesters Urge General Strike
VoA-10	02/12/2013	Russia's Putin Faces Protests as He Woos Armenia
VoA-11	02/12/2013	Ukraine President Turns his Back on Turmoil, Heads for China
VoA-12	03/12/2013	US Calls on Ukraine to Listen to Its People
VoA-13	04/12/2013	Lavrov Says Russia Will Not Interfere in Ukraine
VoA-14	04/12/2013	Former Ukrainian Presidents Back Anti-Government Protests in Kyiv
VoA-15	04/12/2013	Kerry in Moldova Says Ukrainians Deserve Same European Opportunities
VoA-16	04/12/2013	Russia Urges Order in Ukraine as Gas Talks Begin
VoA-17	05/12/2013	Ukrainian Protesters Settle In as Western Diplomats Gather
VoA-18	06/12/2013	Russia Rebukes Germany for Participating in Kyiv Protest
VoA-19	07/12/2013	Ukraine Opposition Gives Yanukovich Ultimatum
VoA-20	08/12/2013	Ukraine Protesters Fell Lenin Statue, Tell President 'You're Next'
VoA-21	08/12/2013	Thousands Gather for Protest Against Ukraine Government
VoA-22	12/12/2013	Russia Makes New Attempt to Woo Ukraine
VoA-23	12/12/2013	Kyiv Protesters Gather, EU Dangles Aid Promise
VoA-24	12/12/2013	EU Vows Help to Ukraine in Gaining IMF Loan
VoA-25	13/12/2013	No Breakthrough in Ukraine Crisis Talks
VoA-26	14/12/2013	McCain in Kyiv Ahead of Dueling Rallies
VoA-27	16/12/2013	Ukraine Ruling Party Demands Cabinet Reshuffle
VoA-28	16/12/2013	Russia Eyes Loan, Gas Deal to Keep Ukraine in its Orbit
VoA-29	17/12/2013	Russia Promises Ukraine Cheaper Gas, \$15 Billion Loan
VoA-30	17/12/2013	Putin Makes Bold Move to Keep Ukraine in Moscow's Orbit
VoA-31	17/12/2013	Russia to Resume Oil Flow to Ukraine Refinery
VoA-32	18/12/2013	Ukraine PM: Russia Deal Will Permit Economic Growth
VoA-33	19/12/2013	Russia: Ukraine Aid Given Out of 'Brotherly Love'
VoA-34	19/12/2013	Yanukovich: West Should Stay Out of Ukraine Crisis
VoA-35	20/12/2013	EU Vows Tough Summit With Russia on Ukraine
VoA-36	20/12/2013	EU Continues Calls for Ukraine Cooperation
VoA-37	24/12/2013	Ukraine Receives First Tranche of Russian Bailout
VoA-38	25/12/2013	Ukraine Expects Remaining \$12B of Russian Bailout in Early 2014
VoA-39	14/01/2014	Russia Bars Entry to American Journalist
VoA-40	14/01/2014	US Journalist Claims to Have Been Expelled from Russia
VoA-41	19/01/2014	Protesters, Police Clash in Ukrainian Capital
VoA-42	22/01/2014	Three Reported Dead in Ukraine Clashes
VoA-43	28/01/2014	Obama Warns Russia Over Ukraine Meddling
VoA-44	28/01/2014	On The Scene: Crimea, Divided
VoA-45	28/01/2014	EU Urges Rights, Democracy in Ukraine in Summit with Russia
VoA-46	29/01/2014	US Reportedly Readies Financial Sanctions Against Ukraine
VoA-47	29/01/2014	Moscow Sends Mixed Messages on Ukraine Aid
VoA-48	29/01/2014	Ukrainian Parliament Offers Amnesty to Protesters
VoA-49	30/01/2014	Ukraine Faces Debt Downgrade as Russia Puts Loan on Hold
VoA-50	30/01/2014	Ukraine Protests Continue Despite Amnesty Offer
VoA-51	31/01/2014	Kerry to Meet With Ukraine Opposition in Munich
VoA-51	31/01/2014	Ukraine's President Signs Amnesty Bill; Military Wants 'Stabilization'
VoA-53	01/02/2014	Western Powers, Russia Exchange Sharp Words Over Ukraine
VoA-54	01/02/2014	Kerry: Washington, EU Stand with Ukrainian Opposition
VoA-55	01/02/2014	Kerry Meets Ukraine Opposition, Reaffirms US Support
VoA-56	02/02/2014	The Budapest Memorandum and Crimea
VoA-57	02/02/2014	Kerry Heading to Ukraine as Russia Tightens Grip on Crimea
VoA-58	02/02/2014	US: All Options on Table in Ukraine
VoA-59	02/02/2014	Ukraine Bristles at Lingering Presence of Black Sea Fleet
VoA-60	02/02/2014	Ukraine's Yanukovich Returning to Work

Code	Date	Title
VoA-61	05/02/2014	Ukraine's Currency Pays Price for Confrontation
VoA-62	05/02/2014	Time is On Our Side,' Says EU in Ukraine Showdown
VoA-63	06/02/2014	US Diplomat Arrives in Ukraine for Talks
VoA-64	06/02/2014	US Points to Russian Role in Allegedly Leaked Ukraine Phone Call
VoA-65	07/02/2014	US Diplomat: No Comment on Leaked Call
VoA-66	07/02/2014	US Apologizes Over EU Ukraine 'Insult'
VoA-67	09/02/2014	Thousands Rally in Ukraine Capital as Authorities Warn of Threat
VoA-68	14/02/2014	Ukraine Frees Last of Jailed Protesters
VoA-69	14/02/2014	Russian, German Foreign Ministers Discuss Ukraine
VoA-70	15/02/2014	Ukraine Opposition 'Ready' to Vacate Kiev City Hall
VoA-71	16/02/2014	Ukraine Protesters Leave Kyiv City Hall
VoA-72	17/02/2014	Russia Boosts Ukraine's Yanukovich with Fresh Credit
VoA-73	19/02/2014	25 Dead as Ukraine Clashes Escalate
VoA-74	19/02/2014	US, Europe Condemn Violence in Ukraine, Consider Sanctions
VoA-75	21/02/2014	US: Ukraine Agreement 'Very, Very Fragile'
VoA-76	21/02/2014	Obama, Putin Agree on Importance of Supporting Ukraine Agreement
VoA-77	22/02/2014	In Ukraine, Mourning Amid Political Drama
VoA-78	23/02/2014	Ukraine Interim President Vows Moves Toward European Integration
VoA-79	23/02/2014	US Warns Russia Against Ukraine Intervention
VoA-80	24/02/2014	Arrest Warrant Issued for Ukraine's Yanukovich
VoA-81	24/02/2014	Ukrainian Envoy: Country Supports EU Membership, Good Relations with Russia
VoA-82	24/02/2014	Ukraine Calls for Urgent Western Aid After Yanukovich Ousted
VoA-83	25/02/2014	Ukraine MPs: Yanukovich Must Stand Trial
VoA-84	25/02/2014	Runaway President: What Are Yanukovich's Options?
VoA-85	25/02/2014	Georgia PM Hopes Ukraine Will Choose Europe
VoA-86	25/02/2014	Western Nations Scramble to Stabilize Ukraine
VoA-87	26/02/2014	For Putin, Ukraine Is Too Important to 'Lose'
VoA-88	26/02/2014	East and West Face Off Over Ukraine's Crimea
VoA-89	27/02/2014	Ukraine's New Government to Work on Economy, Reconciliation
VoA-90	27/02/2014	Russia Raises Military Clout With Reforms After Georgian War
VoA-91	01/03/2014	On the Scene: VOA's Elizabeth Arrott in Crimea
VoA-92	01/03/2014	Russia Moves to Send Troops into Crimea; Ukraine Puts Military on Combat Alert
VoA-93	01/03/2014	Obama Warns Against Russian Intervention in Ukraine
VoA-94	01/03/2014	UN Security Council Urges Restraint in Ukraine
VoA-95	01/03/2014	US Has Few Options in Ukraine Crisis
VoA-96	01/03/2014	UN: 'Cool Heads' Must Prevail in Ukraine; US to Suspend Prep Meetings for G8 Summit in Russia
VoA-97	03/03/2014	Europe Less Reliant on Russian Gas through Ukraine
VoA-98	03/03/2014	Russian Power Play Risks Full-scale Investor Exodus
VoA-99	03/03/2014	Fear Is in the Air Among Crimean Tatars
VoA-100	03/03/2014	On The Scene: VOA's Elizabeth Arrott in Simfero
VoA-101	03/03/2014	Russia: Ousted Ukrainian President Requested Military Help
VoA-102	04/03/2014	On The Scene: Elizabeth Arrott in Crimea
VoA-103	04/03/2014	Ukraine Says Communications Hit, MPs Phones Blocked
VoA-104	04/03/2014	Putin Sends Mixed Signals on Crimea
VoA-105	04/03/2014	West Faces Tough Choice on Ukraine
VoA-106	04/03/2014	Kleptocracy at the Root of Ukraine's Problems
VoA-107	04/03/2014	Russian Professor Compares Russia's Actions to Nazi Annexation of Austria
VoA-108	05/03/2014	Kerry Calls for Face-to-Face Meeting Between Russian, Ukraine Envoys
VoA-109	05/03/2014	VOA Exclusive: US Envoy to UN Samantha Power Warns Russia on Ukraine
VoA-110	05/03/2014	Anxious Ukrainian-Americans Worry About Homeland
VoA-111	05/03/2014	US Accuses Putin of 'False Claims' on Ukraine
VoA-112	05/03/2014	Russian Forces in Crimea: Who Are They, Where Did They Come From?
VoA-113	05/03/2014	Russia 'Wags The Dog' With Ukraine Disinformation Campaign
VoA-114	06/03/2014	Chicago's Ukrainian Community Prays for Peace in Ukraine
VoA-115	06/03/2014	Washington React: US Imposes Visa Ban Amid Ukraine Crisis
VoA-116	06/03/2014	EU May Delay Ukraine Trade Deal
VoA-117	06/03/2014	Putin Unfazed as Ukraine Crisis Continues
VoA-118	06/03/2014	Tensions Rise in Crimea Amid Diplomatic Efforts
VoA-119	06/03/2014	Analysis: With Crimean Appeal, Putin Goes Head-to-Head with West over Ukraine
VoA-120	06/03/2014	Khrushchev's Son: Giving Crimea Back to Russia Not an Option
VoA-121	06/03/2014	EU: Crimea Referendum Illegal
VoA-122	06/03/2014	On The Scene: Crimean Referendum Stirs Passions
VoA-123	06/03/2014	Russian Assembly Speaker Pledges Support if Crimea Votes to Join Russia
VoA-124	06/03/2014	Obama Opposes Crimea Referendum, Orders Sanctions

Code	Date	Title
VoA-125	06/03/2014	EU React: Visa Talks Suspension Over Crimea Referendum Plans
VoA-126	07/03/2014	On The Scene: Daniel Schearf in Kyiv
VoA-127	07/03/2014	Russia Warns US Against 'Hasty' Steps in Ukraine
VoA-128	07/03/2014	Ukrainians Fight Back in Information War
VoA-129	07/03/2014	Crimea Moves Draw Comparisons to US in Iraq, Nazis in Europe
VoA-130	08/03/2014	Harassment and Misinformation Against Ukraine Journalists
VoA-131	08/03/2014	Russia-Ukraine Ties Seen as Deep, Complicated
VoA-132	08/03/2014	New Generation in Ukraine Forges a New National Identity
VoA-133	10/03/2014	On The Scene: Elizabeth Arrott in Yalta, Crimea
VoA-134	10/03/2014	Russia to Unveil Solution to Ukraine Crisis
VoA-135	10/03/2014	US Warns Russia Over Crimea Referendum
VoA-136	10/03/2014	Ukraine's Second Largest City Shows Divided Views on Russia
VoA-137	10/03/2014	Neighboring Nations Wary as Crimea Occupied by Pro-Russian Forces
VoA-138	10/03/2014	Turkey Keeps Close Watch on Crimea
VoA-139	10/03/2014	UN Council Meets as International Fears Grow Over Crimea
VoA-140	10/03/2014	US Pushes to De-Escalate Ukraine Crisis
VoA-141	11/03/2014	Crimea Referendum Spurs Ethnic Tensions
VoA-142	11/03/2014	Washington React: Obama Aims to Work With Putin to Calm Ukraine
VoA-143	11/03/2014	On The Scene: Elizabeth Arrott in Simferopol, Ukraine
VoA-144	11/03/2014	Ukrainian Intelligence Opposed Signing of Budapest Agreement
VoA-145	11/03/2014	Obama: 'We Will Stand With Ukraine'
VoA-146	11/03/2014	US House Votes on Ukraine Resolution
VoA-147	12/03/2014	No Room for 'Nyet' in Ukraine's Crimea Vote to Join Russia
VoA-148	12/03/2014	How the Separatists Delivered Crimea to Moscow
VoA-149	12/03/2014	OSCE Team Says Crimea Gunmen Threatened to Shoot at Them
VoA-150	12/03/2014	Crimean Tatar Leader Tells Putin Secession Would Break Post-Soviet Pact
VoA-151	12/03/2014	Washington React: Kerry to Meet Lavrov on Ukraine
VoA-152	13/03/2014	Ukrainian PM Seeks International Support at UN
VoA-153	13/03/2014	Russia to 'Intensify' Military Exercises Near Ukraine Border
VoA-154	14/03/2014	Kerry to London for Talks with Lavrov on Ukraine
VoA-155	14/03/2014	Kerry to Meet with Lavrov Ahead of Ukraine Referendum
VoA-156	14/03/2014	Kerry: Crimean Referendum a "Backdoor Annexation"
VoA-157	14/03/2014	On The Scene: Elizabeth Arrott in Crimea
VoA-158	14/03/2014	Russian Foreign Policy Reflects Domestic Dysfunction
VoA-159	14/03/2014	Russia Vetoes Crimea Resolution, China Abstains
VoA-160	16/03/2014	Crimea Secession Likely to Spark Economic Disorder
VoA-161	16/03/2014	Crimeans Vote on Joining Russia as Diplomatic Efforts Intensify
VoA-162	17/03/2014	Crimea Applies to Join Russia
VoA-163	17/03/2014	China Cautiously Supports Crimea's Secession
VoA-164	17/03/2014	Russian Admits Economy in Crisis as Ukraine Weighs
VoA-165	17/03/2014	Crimea Votes in Favor of Union With Russia
VoA-166	17/03/2014	Kyiv Somber, Angry Over Crimea Result
VoA-167	17/03/2014	Putin Defies West, Declares Crimea Independent
VoA-168	17/03/2014	Analysis: Cold War Reflexes Return to Europe Over Ukraine
VoA-169	17/03/2014	Ukraine's Defense Minister Says 'Detente' with Russia Holding
VoA-170	17/03/2014	Crimea Referendum Illegitimate says US Legal Scholar
VoA-171	17/03/2014	Analysts See Little Impact From Western Sanctions on Russia
VoA-172	17/03/2014	UN Concerns High Over Crimea Crisis
VoA-173	18/03/2014	Russian Forces Kill Ukrainian Soldier - Report
VoA-174	18/03/2014	China Splits With Russia Over Ukraine
VoA-175	18/03/2014	US Reassures Allies as Tensions Mount on Russian Borders
VoA-176	18/03/2014	Russians Celebrate Crimea Annexation On Red Square



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