

# The conflict in Ukraine

Representation of the conflict within publications  
of principal media institutions.



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## 0. Abstract

The conflict in Ukraine is often characterized as subjected to hybrid warfare. Not only military action is taken, information warfare is employed as well, quite extensively. A struggle to define the conflict and the actions taken within it, is played out within prominent mass media institutions. Studies have been conducted on the subject of media discourse related to the conflict in Ukraine, however most focus on providing evidence for Russian use of media discourse and pay little attention to which interest this might be representing. In this study I provide a more nuanced picture of the discourse applied towards the conflict, researching not only pro-Russian media discourse, but discourse produced by the Ukrainian government and pro-EU media institutions as well, while also providing suggestions for what underlying interests might be behind this discourse. The data for the study is derived from three major media institutions coverage of the conflict, these being RT, UNIAN, and Ukrinform. It has been collected through an extensive research, of publication found on their webpages. To do this I utilize theories of fields and habitus, to define the context the discourse is produced and consumed within, as well as theories of framing and the method of critical discourse analysis, to determine what discourse is present within the publications of these media institutions. The findings of the study support the notion, that Russian media institutions do employ carefully constructed discourse and frames, in order to influence the perception of citizens, however, so does Ukrainian media institutions. UNIAN and Ukrinform construct discourse which supports the pro-EU side of the conflict, and RT construct discourse supporting the pro-Russian side of the conflict. The pro-Russian discourse focus on strengthening Russia's position in the overall social space, by legitimizing their actions towards the conflict, linking them to values and beliefs acknowledged within the overall social space, as well as framing the U.S and the EU negatively. The pro-EU discourse is presenting the conflict not as an internal pro-EU/pro-Russia struggle, rather it is presented as a Russian invasion, where Ukrainians are fighting off Russians. Also, they focus on framing Russia negatively and the EU as favorable allies, supporting their interests of Ukraine becoming a member of the EU and weakening ties with Russia.

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## 1. Introduction

Since November 2013, a conflict has been tormenting Ukraine. It started with the president at the time Viktor Yanukovich's suspension, of the ongoing preparation for the implementation of an association agreement, with the European Union. Not long after in February of 2014, Yanukovich was overthrown, as a result of a pro-EU mass protest against this political decision. This event has by some been defined as a revolution, and by others a coup. Already then there were two opposing forces in Ukraine, the pro-EU side, and the pro-Russian counterpart. The density of pro-Russian citizens is largest, in the southeastern regions of Ukraine. After Yanukovich was removed from office, the pro-Russian side immediately started counter protesting this act, followed by the incorporation of the region of Crimea into Russia only a month later. Whether this incorporation of Crimea was an annexation by Russian military personnel and pro-Russian Ukrainian citizens, or was done through a political vote, have been heavily contested. Russia have confirmed that they did in fact sent soldiers to the region for a short period, but not to occupy it, the goal was to maintain the citizens safety and right to freely express themselves. Whether or not Crimea is a part of Russia or Ukraine is yet to be concluded. Again, only a short month later, an armed conflict within the eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, began to develop between these two opposing political beliefs. On one side the belief that Ukraine should build relations towards the European Union, and on the other, the belief that it should build relations towards Russia. This armed conflict is still ongoing, so is an extensive information war between the two sides, especially visible in the Ukrainian media sphere. Since the conflict started, Ukraine have had two presidents, Petro Poroshenko 2014-2019, and still present Volodymyr Zelensky, both allegedly representing pro-European parties.

### 1.1 Scope and Problem Statement

Reading about the conflict, it does not take long for one to realize that it is not only a conflict of arms, but to a much greater extend a conflict of discourse. The communication regarding it is heavily conflicted, one publication states one thing, another completely on the contrary. Russian media and thus the pro-Russian side of the conflict, have often been attributed with employing a great number of communicative tools, towards changing the perceptions of citizens in their favor. The term "propaganda" is frequently used to describe Russian media publications, the same cannot be said for the pro-EU media publications. Whether this is in fact an adequate assumption, is one of the questions I seek to answer within this study. The Ukrainian government seems to be pro-EU, and the EUs seem to be supportive of allying with Ukraine, however uneventful their actions taken towards backing this up, may have been. Russia seems to be directly involved as well, also presumably seeking to ally with the Ukraine. Whether or not this is the reality of the matter, I will also try to shed some light upon. Discourse is a powerful tool in a world where the dominant perception of the world becomes reality. So, what interests does the media institutions in fact represent? and what communicative tools are

employed towards convincing the viewers, that the reality they represent should be acknowledged and incorporated? The problem statement of this study is then:

***What discourse and frames are mass-media institutions, dominant in Ukraine and representing Russian and Ukrainian government, utilizing towards defining and presenting the conflict in Ukraine? What can be derived from their publications in terms of interests and allegiances of these powerful actors in relation to the conflict?***

There are two main sides of the conflict, a pro-EU side and a pro-Russian side, the three major actors researched are the EU (and US), the Ukrainian government and the Russian government. Of course directly related to the fighting in the southeastern Ukrainian regions, the Euromaidans and Antimaidans are more directly engulfed, the reason for not focusing the study on these two groups, are largely because their media publications only reach a very limited amount of consumers, compared to the two major media institutions that are the subject of this study. Their affiliations, representations and interests are also quite undisputable. The media institutions researched in this study are RT (Russia today), UNIAN, and Ukrinform, RT and UNIAN are dominant media institutions representing either side of the conflict, and Ukrinform represents the Ukrainian government. The data for the study have been collected through extensive research of the media publications, of these three media institutions. Since the scope of this study is focused on how the pro-Russian and pro-EU sides of the conflict are defined and depicted through media, and to which extent the Ukrainian government sympathizes with either sides of the conflict, attention will not be towards unbiased independent journalistic work. The focus will be on dominant media channels representing the two sides of the conflict, and the Ukrainian government.

Apart from this introduction and a conclusion, the report consists of 5 elements. (1) The first being a literature review, where the terms of hybrid- and information warfare will be defined, additionally a short description of general journalistic practices will be presented, as well as a more in dept enquiry, into studies already conducted regarding the subject at hand. (2) Second the theories of fields, habitus and framing utilized in this study, will be presented. (3) third, the methodological framework and the philosophical beliefs of the study, being critical discourse analysis and social constructivism will be presented, as well as reflections on the validity of the study, and how the data was gathered. (4) Next the analysis will be presented, starting with a field analysis, then a discourse analysis, and lastly a summarization. Throughout this section, reflections regarding the results and the strengths and weaknesses of the methods used, will be presented accordingly, and (5) lastly, I will put the research into a broader perspective.

## 2. Literature review

In this chapter I will present previously conducted research, regarding the subject at hand. Multiple studies have been conducted directly related to Russian media discourse, much less exists related to Ukrainian media discourse. Furthermore, I will define the terms “*hybrid warfare*” and “*information warfare*”, as well as a brief mention, of the most common journalistic practices. Lastly, I will discuss how these terms and these studies contribute to providing a better understanding of the conflict in Ukraine.

### 2.1 Hybrid warfare, Information warfare & journalistic practices

When the conflict in Ukraine is discussed, the term “*hybrid warfare*” is often used to characterize the diverse utilization of strategic means within the conflict (Pasitselska, O. 2017). *Hybrid warfare* defines warfare where not only military action is deployed. Political, economic, civilian and informational action is utilized as well, in order to exploit national vulnerabilities, and influence the citizens of the opposing nation’s perception of the conflict at hand, in an attempt to tear them down from within (Cullen, J. & Reichborn-Kjennerud, E. (2017). This includes specific use of media, tailored to influence the citizens in a certain way, in order to make them question their own nation, weakening its cohesiveness within and ultimately welcome the enemy’s proposed change, whether this be a takeover or alliance with other nations. This can for instance result in rebel forces developing within, or political restructuring, where the citizens lose confidence in their leaders, and vote for change, where the new political leaders are more inclined to agree with the interests of the enemy. For the citizens of warring nations, it is much harder to realize attacks through media discourse and framing, than a direct military attack which is quite undisputable (Pasitselska, O. 2017). The main aspect of interest of hybrid warfare in relation to this study, is that of information. Information warfare refers to the use of channels of information like for instance media, scientific texts, or even social interactions in order to influence the perception, beliefs, and behaviour, which ultimately means individuals alignment towards sides of a conflict, can be changed. Information warfare is not only about distributing discourse and frames, it is just as much about suppressing other conflicting discourse and frames, so the control of institutions who produce information is an important aspect of information warfare (Serritzlev, J & Struwe, L 2020). These information channels can greatly influence the other aspects of hybrid warfare as well, especially when utilized within mass media, and thus information warfare is characterized as the core of hybrid warfare (Serritzlev, J & Struwe, L 2020). Within media discourse is used to assert dominance, mass media is a powerful tool towards influencing the social space and dominant ideologies and perceptions within it, to ultimately embed these into the mind of citizens operating within this social space. So, more now than ever, this has become the prime instrument used to construct the image of actors within a conflict political or otherwise, as well as the conflict itself, legitimizing or delegitimizing certain actions, ideologies or actors within the conflict, in

order to win the support of citizens (Pasitselska, O. 2017). Information warfare is not only used during a conflict, it is used pro- and post-conflict as well, in order to create favorable grounds for, and maintain, the dominance achieved during a conflict (Serritzlev, J & Struwe, L 2020). Journalists and media institutions then play an important role within most social spaces, so journalistic practices are then important to consider. In order to better understand the product, we must consider the process of production, how media publications are produced. The practices and norms followed during this production, is essential to the characteristics of the product. As a journalist you cannot simply produce and publish anything. Like in science, journalistic products too follow a paradigm of validity. A journalist should be objective, both in terms of presentation and representation, as well as verify the data they choose to use. The verification concept is based upon the level of authority and acknowledgement a data source holds, this means that the validity of an account of data, relies heavily upon what position within a field the data provider holds. As we know, an actor who holds a dominant position within a field, is characterized by this amount of validity, meaning that these actors are perceived by journalists as providing true information, their information holds a large amount of legitimacy. However whether or not an actor inhabiting a dominant position within a field, does not necessarily mean the information they provide is in compliance with the “truth”, or even the most acknowledged within their field, it simply means that their information is acknowledged among dominant actors (Pasitselska, O. 2017). The selection concept is derived from decisionmakers within the media institution the journalist is working, meaning that the dominant actor within this specific media institution, calls the shots as to what is chosen to be produced and what is not. Journalists then have the power not only to select what is to be represented, and what is not, they also have the power to decide how to frame it, and this power can be controlled by dominant actors within the media institution, as well as within the field of power. So, not all journalists strive to be objective, and even so it is very hard not to present any form of discourse within their publications, whether it is forms of attachment, degree of salience and focus, or context of presentation, this means that media publications are probably rarely as objective as journalistic practices implore them to be, meaning that the validity is too, just as often lower than how it is perceived by consumers (Pasitselska, O. 2017). Journalistic practices are both influenced by and influencing the context of the media institution, within which the production takes place. The context of production is mainly subjected to internal influence, journalistic practices are influencing the context, with the rules and norms they propose, and they are influenced by the dominant actors of the field, who essentially hold the power to define these practices. The influences related to the product however is twofold, one being the context of production just mentioned, and the other being the context of the field, within which the product is consumed. The context of consumption is of an external nature. Political and economic factors, as well as norms, dominant perceptions, ideologies and logics of the field the product is consumed within, can exert this influence (Pasitselska, O. 2017). To which degree the product is influenced by these factors often vary. If the



media institution is heavily financed by powerful institutions, like nations, oligarchs or large corporations, political and economic factors can mean a great deal. Governments can set the tone for how media institutions should define problems and solutions, as well as how information should be framed. Depending on the degree of control the financial supporters exercise over the media institution responsible for the production, the context of production can even be influenced as well (Pasitselska, O. 2017, De Maio, G. 2016).

## 2.2 A general view on Russian media's presentation of the conflict.

Multiple studies have been conducted regarding how Russian media present the conflict in Ukraine. The findings of these, will most likely present a good foundation for what discourse to look for during this study. Within the Russian media landscape, the majority of the media channels within TV, which is the main source of information in Russia reaching 91% of the population weekly, is representing the government and Putin (Pasitselska, O. 2017, Horbyk, R. 2017, Vartanova, E.), this include the very influential media network RT (Russia today) (Mishra, S. & Kern-Stone, R. 2019). Independent media channels exist on TV and the internet as well, but do not reach the broad audience the governmental media channels does (Pasitselska, O. 2017, Horbyk, R. 2017, Vartanova, E.). If we consider for a moment the key words used within Russian media regarding the conflict, the word "war" is rarely used within Russian media, this supports a notion that Russian government does not seek to characterize the conflict as a war, perhaps underplaying their military engagement towards it. Instead it is characterized as a misunderstanding between the people and the countries of Russia and Ukraine, which has regrettably resulted in an armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Furthermore the word Ukraine and USA is frequently used as well as EU, supporting the notion that the Russian government wants to focus attention towards the Ukrainian government and the U.S. and EU's involvement in the conflict, shifting focus away from their own involvement. The mention of the U.S, aligns well with the notion that Russian media frames the conflict as Russian culture vs. western culture (Kryzhanivska, A. 2018). According to a study of two major Russian media channels Russia-1 and Channel 1 by Olga Pasitselska (2017), Russian media frequently use discourse towards producing an "us/them" frame. Us are comprised of Russia and its people, Russian speaking Ukrainians, the anti-Maidan protesting Crimean citizens, the Ukrainian government supporters, and the Berkut special police force. Them is comprised of the Euromaidan protesters, the United states, the European Union and their politicians supporting Euromaidan, and finally Euromaidan supporters in Ukraine. Furthermore, the article proposes that within Russian media, Ukraine is presented as siding with Russia, and the enemy is USA, EU, and the Euromaidan protesters and supporters (Pasitselska, O. 2017). This projection is made within other articles researching other media channels as well (Rotaru, V. 2016). Some though make a distinction between the Ukrainian government, and the people, the government being deceived and forced into making an alliance with the western countries, which is not a representation of the general population (De Maio, G. 2016). "The us/them" frame is then accompanied by discourse which either

legitimizes the actions of “us”, or delegitimizes the actions of “them”. Euromaidans are referred to as “radicals”, “extremists” and “nationalists”, by Russia-1 and Channel 1. Attempts to dehumanize the Euromaidans are made as well, by depicting them as armed masked masses, no faces are shown and no victims of the conflict from their side is covered, which is quite on the contrary when “us” are depicted. Emotional attachments are attempted to be severed with “them” and strengthened with “us”, further legitimizing our actions and delegitimizing theirs (Pasitselska, O. 2017). Interviews with anti-Maidan individuals, bring into light some of the frames enabled within Russian media, in order to delegitimize the Euromaidans claims. Statements suggesting economic decay, cultural differences, the involvement of the EU and USA, Euromaidans are the antagonizing violent rebels, and Berkut soldiers are victims, are all presented regarding the Euromidans and their actions. Whereas counter frames receive no attention within the media, making it quite one-sided. The cultural differences framing here is one which propose that prosperity is obtained through cultural hegemony, Ukraine is culturally aligned with Russia, not the EU and U.S, if they get to influence the country they will dominate it, changing the characteristics of the field, into one which Ukrainians will not be able to inhabit powerful positions within. Euromaidans who are representing western influence, are depicted as hurtful to the Ukrainian economy, and if they achieve dominant positions, the country and its people will suffer on their behalf. Lastly the Euromaidans are framed as the enemy and the anti-maidans as allies. The general tone of framing is meant to propose an understanding of the U.S and EU as unfitting to be Ukraine’s allies, and Russia to be the only sensible choice, having been their allies for years and aligning very well with Ukrainian culture and beliefs, the two countries are in fact one, stemming from the same cultural and historical roots (Pasitselska, O. 2017, Roraru, V. 2016). Many of the abovementioned assumptions are represented in all the articles I have visited. The difference between the texts is that Pasitselska (2017) focus on media which is targeted at an internal audience, Rotaru (2016) focus on media which target an external international audience, and De Maio (2016) applies a broader historical perspective. Regardless much of the discourse presented is similar both in aim, and characteristics. Russia’s discourse is meant to legitimize their actions in the conflict and delegitimize the actions of the Euromaidans. In both contexts, the discourse revolve around the notions that Russia aided Crimea in defense against an extremist radical nationalist coup, where the lives of innocent citizens of Crimea (including Russians) were in danger, their (sparse) involvement have been a humanitarian effort. The Euromaidans are trying to take Ukraine and ally them with western culture (EU and US), however this is not the will of the Ukrainian citizens, who side with their historically true allies Russia. The Euromaidans are then denying the Ukrainian citizens of their rights to independence and self-determination. So, Russia is enabling discourse acknowledged within the overall social space, because this is legitimate within this field this is powerful discourse (Pasitselska, O. 2017, Rotaru, V. 2016).

### 2.3 A general view on Ukrainian media's presentation of the conflict.

In my search for data, I quickly realized that there were far more studies conducted on the Russian discourse and framing of the conflict, than the Ukrainian. One can only speculate, as to whether this is due to the fact that Russia is sort of an exiled nation, in terms of the overall social space, being considered as “the bad guys” all over the world. Or if this is because Russia are becoming masters of media discourse and framing, knowing the importance and power that comes with persuading the people to believe in their cause, rather than forcing them to obey. So, whereas studies regarding the Russian presentation of the conflict is quite numerous, the amount of studies conducted regarding the Ukrainian presentation of the conflict, seems rather scarce in comparison. The media landscape in Ukraine is a bit more complicated than the Russian, being subjected to numerous powerful media institutions, making it hard to provide a representation of Ukraine as a single entity. As with Russia, the media channels reaching the largest audience, do so through the media of TV, being more than 70% of the Ukrainians favored source of information (Pachenko, M. & Rybak, V., Pörzgen, G. 2016). The Ukrainian media landscape is apparently less controlled by the government, and by such more nuanced, some media channels are positive towards the European Union and the possibilities of entering into an alliance with it, While others favor a Russian alliance (Horbyk, R. 2017). There is an official governmental media institution, however it has a near zero public reach (approximately 1%), instead Ukrainian media institutions are representing (and funded by) powerful oligarchs, who are not only dominant in the Ukrainian field but in the field of power as well. These oligarchs then support a political party, who represent their specific political agenda (Pachenko, M. & Rybak, V. Pörzgen, G. 2016). This could mean, that independent journalism is more frequent in Ukraine than in Russia, and that journalistic practices are less regulated by the government (Pachenko, M. & Rybak, V. Pörzgen, G. 2016). However this does not necessarily mean that no influence upon journalistic practices are present, simply that they are merely more indirect, stemming from the oligarchs owning the media institutions, instead of an official governmental regulation, meaning they could be just as heavily regulated as Russian media institutions, just unofficially. The media landscape is then like the country itself in conflict, where different political agendas struggle to take control of the public opinion, and ultimately the citizens perceptions and alignments. Even though the official governmental media institution is basically uninfluential, the two most influential media institutions are however, in direct allegiance with political oppositions, representing pro-Russian politics and pro-European politics respectively. The pro-Russian media-institution “Ukrayina” is funded by oligarch Rinat Akhmetov, and the pro-EU media-institution “1+1 Media Group” is funded by oligarch Ihor Kolomoyskyi (Pachenko, M. & Rybak, V., BBC, 2014, Pörzgen, G. 2016). In 2014 and 2016 the Ukrainian government passed legislations heavily prohibiting pro-Russian media publications within the Ukrainian media sphere, banning numerous pro-Russian media channels, and regulating pro-Russian media publications, meaning just as in Russian media, Ukrainian media are now subjected to direct governmental

regulation (Pachenko, M. & Rybak, V., Zinets, N. et.al. 2014, Pörzgen, G. 2016). If we again consider the frequency of key words used in relation to the conflict, Ukrainian media most frequently use the word “war”. This is in relation to the Russian involvement in the conflict, and the war is between Russia and Ukraine, where Russia is on the offence annexing parts of Ukraine, and Ukraine is on the defense. This is furtherly supported by the frequent use of “Putin” within the Ukrainian media, as a key actor within the conflict, focusing attention on Putin and the Russian involvement in the conflict (Kryzhanivska, A. 2018). This attention is however not consistent, older studies of the Ukrainian media sphere suggest that the focus within these is mainly on themselves and their own actions, using discourse and frames towards legitimizing their own actions, rather than delegitimizing the oppositions (Orlova, D & Dutsyk, D 2016, Pörzgen, G. 2016). An example of such framing is for instance a campaign entitled “Crimea is Ukraine”, aimed at supporting the understanding of Crimea as a part of Ukraine, and simultaneously that Ukraine is not a part of Russia, even though they annexed it. Ultimately this is a matter of attention, since in a conflict like this legitimizing one side, automatically means the delegitimization of the other. Many Ukrainian journalists experience a pressure by their superior within the media institution they work for, to frame the actions of the pro-European side as positive as possible, these journalists are very likely representing some of the pro-European media institutions. Also journalists (probably this same segment), have admitted to having a hard time not succumbing to a form of self-censorship, in relation to experiences that provide a positive image of the pro-Russian side, because they fear that this will help the opposition gain traction within media (Orlova, D & Dutsyk, D 2016). Likewise these journalists have expressed a mistrust towards the Ukrainian governments official discourse, this could support the notion previously mentioned regarding the Russian media sphere, that the Ukrainian government might be leaning towards Russia in terms of allegiances, at least it seems that more than just Russian media institutions have had this thought (Orlova, D & Dutsyk, D 2016).

#### 2.4 Comparative remarks

According to the literature reviewed in this section, both the major media institutions and their journalistic practices, seems heavily influence by external factors. In Russia by the government, and in Ukraine by governmental regulations, as well as the oligarchs supporting either side of the government. In Russia the influence seems to be more multifaceted than in Ukraine, since the government appears to have an almost totalitarian control of the media sphere, independent media gaining very little audience. Whether or not this means, that Russians are more interested in government media because they agree, or if it is because they refuse, or cannot afford, to pay for independent media, or that independent media simply fails to capture the people’s interest, is impossible to determine within the bounds of this study. The Ukrainian media sphere have since 2014, like the Russian, also been subjected to heavy media regulations, however this is concerning only pro-Russian publications being restricted. Both draw upon an “us/them” paradigm, in order to legitimize

their own actions and ideologies, and delegitimizing their opponents, framing themselves as freedom fighters and the opposition as “radical”, “extremist”, oppressors or “terrorists”. Russian media however tends to focus more on the delegitimization of the opposition, while Ukrainian media tends to focus more on the legitimization of the pro-European side of the conflict. The media institutions researched within the literature, have clear allegiances with either Russian interests or European interests, both however framing it as Ukrainian interests. Powerful pro-Russian Ukrainian media institutions exists as well, though not researched in the literature reviewed. Studies of the Russian perspective are generally more direct and to the point, in terms of accusations of discourse and framing used towards furthering their own agenda. While in the studies concerning the Ukrainian media, this is much less obvious. No accusations are made directly, no direct interpretations of the data presented is done in relation to discourse and other communicative tools, this is left to the reader to decipher. I find it interesting that the media landscape regarding the conflict in Ukraine, is treated exactly the same way within these studies, as they accuse Russian media institution of presenting the conflict, unnuanced and biased. Russian media are accused of using powerful discourse and framing, in order to influence the consumers of their products towards their side of the conflict, all the while Ukrainian media publications related to the conflict, are treated in a much less accusatory manner. It will be very interesting to determine, whether or not Russian media institutions are in fact this subjective, and if Ukrainian media institutions are any less.

### 3. Theory

In this chapter the theories utilized in this study and how they influence it, will be presented. These theories are regarding the concepts of field, habitus and framing. This includes the definition of terms like autonomy, the field of power, counter frames, frame construction, frame alignment and social spaces.

#### 3.1 Fields & Habitus

Social reality is relational, so in order to understand and analyze it, the relations between the elements within a social order must be the focus, not the elements themselves. The concept of fields is comprised of multiple aspects regarding how social relations function, the autonomy of a field, the history of a field and actor’s habitus, the field of power, the overall social space, the social structure within a field, and the characteristics of a field, all of which will be explained within this section (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015). The social world is made up of numerous systems of hierarchical social spaces, which can be defined as fields. In different fields different knowledge and discourse is acknowledged, and different compositions of what is legitimate exist as well (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015, Järvinen, M. 2013). Legitimacy is largely dependent upon the history of the field, this being the history of prevalent legitimacy, and distribution and variation of resources, derived from the internal and external struggles it has gone through, and the elite of the field, who holds the majority of the power

to define the characteristics of the field. The history of fields an individual has been operating within, and the specific characteristics of these fields they have incorporated into their perception of the world around them, is what defines their habitus (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015, Costa, C. & Murphy, M. 2015, Martin, L. 2003). Whether or not actors who operate within a field possess power, and to which extend their actions are legitimized, is completely reliant upon how well this actors' composition of resources, knowledge, and habitus correspond with the characteristics of the field. Needless to say, being the elite of a field comes with certain advantages, like being able to define the field towards what fits with their specific composition of resources and knowledge, to furtherly maintain their position of power within the field, this is the production of and maintenance of the symbolic order. Fields are (relatively) autonomous, which means that they are not subjected to external influence. This autonomy transforms the relationships of the individuals and their practices, and productions exercised within the field. Because this is evaluated in accordance with the characteristics of the field, individuals do not receive recognition, and their actions are illegitimated if they do not conform to it (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015, Costa, C. & Murphy, M. 2015). *"The creation of authorities and mechanisms for selection and consecration that are partly immune to external influences is an indicator of this autonomy."* (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015). As a field becomes increasingly autonomous, the actors within the field becomes more influenced by it, and their perception of their social reality, both inside and outside the field, defined by it. When a field moves itself further away from other fields, the characteristics of the field becomes more specialized as well, making entry into the field for outsiders, increasingly difficult and demanding. Individuals who are heavily influenced by a highly autonomous field, will find it harder to operate within other fields, because they interpret the phenomena they are subjected to here, in accordance to the logics, norms, and beliefs inherited from the highly autonomous field. However, the autonomy of fields is not definitive, fields are subjected to external influences as well, both from other fields as well as *"the field of power"* (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015, Bourdieu, P. 1989). Within the field of power, a struggle between economy and culture is present, economy being dominant and culture being the dominated. In order to have legitimacy within this field, an actor must possess a dominant position within a different field. The influence the field of power has on other fields, often propose a struggle of economy and culture, where the homogeneous autonomy of fields represents the cultural aspect, and the heterogeneous external influence on the field is of an economic nature. When politicians are subjected to campaign contributions, they are influenced by the dominant economic factor of the field of power. With a contribution comes the price of favoring the contributor's predispositions, which simultaneously weakens the politician's ability to perform pure political decisions. This then diminishes the autonomy of the field which the politician operates within (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015). There is an eternal struggle within a field to define and redefine it, the dominant well-established actors seek to maintain status quo, in order to keep their monopolistic position of power, while the dominated actors and newcomers, would either seek to

redefine it to better fit their resources and habitus, or acknowledge the current order of legitimacy and try to conform to it, in an attempt to gain recognition within the field. It is however most likely that status quo would be sustained, since the established actors possess legitimacy which newcomers and other dominated actors do not, meaning that what they produce within the field, is easily acknowledged and consumed, furtherly increasing the legitimacy of these established actors (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015, Bourdieu, P. 1989). Another form of change which happens externally, stem from within the relations between actors homologous positioned within different, sometimes even opposing, fields. This can happen among dominated actors as well as dominant ones. The dominant actors who propose this change are often economically dominant, so the change they seek to implement is then not in terms of social order, since they are at the top of this, the objective of their change is to increase the influence of economic factors over cultural factors within specific fields, and thus increasing their power within these fields through a heterogenization of them (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015). This can be done through the production and distribution of discourse, which propose change towards a larger focus on economy, as a necessity for maintaining the well-being of the fields in question. This process is furtherly reinforced if it is enacted in relation to an economic crisis. During an economic crisis, economically dominant actors then obtain more power within fields, who struggle to survive during the crisis, both ideologically and practically. The majority of production within economic struggling fields is focused entirely upon economic gain, and cultural production is left with little attention, and institutions are obliged to accept funding from economically dominant actors, in order to maintain their positions. However, crisis can also be grounds for radical discourse, which can ultimately change the characteristics of a field and the order of dominance within it, to thrive and achieve recognition within a field. Status quo within a field in a time of crisis, is then weakened and more easily questioned, the actors within the field heavily influenced by this crisis, will start to question the order within the field, because the field in its current state can end up in crisis (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015). Actors who are dominated in the field of power, but dominant within a social field, have two options when presented with a crisis. They either accept and accommodate the change proposed by the economic dominant actors within the field of power, into the field they are dominant within, or they work towards exposing these economic actors attempt to achieve domination of the field. For instance If a political party is offered contributions, they can either accept them and reform their politics, or declare officially that they have been offered this funding, but refused it for the sake of the integrity of their politics. An alliance between the actors dominated in the field of power, and the ones dominated in the social space, can emerge as a result of this act of refusing to ally with the actors who dominate the field of power. Contrary to the alliance between the dominant actors, this alliance seeks to change the established social order. This can be done by the actors dominated in the field of power but dominant in a social space, providing the actors dominated in the social space with *“a view of the social world that breaks with the dominant view”* (Bourdieu in:

Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015), which can lead to the dominated within the social space to gain recognition of their interests. The dominated can then furtherly advance this process, by demanding rights and the preservation of these. So, when dominant actors use discourse of change, it is done in order to furtherly strengthen the current order of dominance, and when the dominated does, it is done towards changing the current order (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015). Habitus is an important factor to consider, when actors within and across fields cooperate, in order to change the characteristics of a field. Actors of similar habitus are more likely to come together and come to agreement, meaning that if an actor can utilize means and discourse which corresponds with the consumers habitus, the chances that the consumer will agree and enter into an alliance with the producer, is much more likely (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015). The same goes for the characteristics of the field, in accordance with the habitus of the actors operating within this field, the more they align the greater the chance that the actor can operate successfully within the field. The relationship between a field and the habitus of the actors is a complicated one, to which extend one affects the other can be hard to determine. When a new field is constructed, the habitus of the actors constructing and dominating the field largely becomes the characteristics of the field. As a field ages and new actors with different habitus enter and makes their mark on the field, the characteristics of the field can change. The degree of influence depends upon the degree of alignment among the habitus of new actors, and the degree of power these actors obtain within the field. As previously mentioned the established order within a field is hard to break, meaning that it is much more likely that when new actors achieve success and a position of power within a field, it is because their habitus have adapted to the field rather than the other way around. Often when a field does become subjected to change, it is brought on by actors who use their knowledge of the field from a position of power, to make aspects of the characteristics of the field which are key to upholding the current order of dominance, apparent to dominated actors within the field, and even encouraging and assisting them in opposing this (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015, Costa, C. & Murphy, M. 2015). Using field theory within an analysis, prompts the researcher to consider several aspects of the data analyzed. The characteristics of a field are defined through the research of the effects the field achieves, and the processes which lead to these effects. Not only the objects and actors operating within the field are to be studied, their relations towards each other and the network of relations they are a part of and operate within, form their actions as well, and are therefore also important to consider (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015, ). First, the degree of autonomy of the fields studied must be determined. To do this the position of these fields within the field of power, and in relation to other fields which can have an (external) influence on the fields studied, as well as their position in the overall social space, must be established. (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015, Martin, L. 2003). Next the researcher must define the characteristics of the fields studied, what composition of resources is valued, what rules, logics and norms exists within the field? Lastly the structure of positions within the fields must be defined, how is the order of dominance structured, which actors



are positioned where in the social hierarchy, which resources and knowledge do they have at their disposal and how does this relate to the characteristics of the field. How do their relationships function, who produce what and who consumes what? Are there struggles and oppositions within the field? What products do they use and how do they use them? These aspects of the field provide together an understanding of the entirety of the field. So, in order to fully understand a field, all must be accounted for. (Hilger, M. & Mangez, E. 2015, Martin, L. 2003).

### 3.2 Framing & Frame analysis

The social world is a construction made of a selection among many potential realities, any of which can be invoked, the process of selecting which reality becomes the “truth”, is done by framing this specific reality meticulously, with careful considerations towards the recipients schemata (Edelman, M. 1993). So, framing is a concept regarding communication, it can be used to determine how speech, texts and other forms of communication exercise power, how a producer of a specific statement influence the consumer’s perception of the proposed subject. In general framing involves the selection and highlighting of specific aspects of the experienced world when communicating, which inhibit the recipient’s basis for making rational decisions (Tversky, A, Kahneman D. 1986,1981, Entman, R. 2015). This is done through the use or disuse of specific keywords, definitions, stereotypical pictures, specific sources of information, or sentences which thematically supports a set of facts or estimates, which encourages a specific opinion and understanding of the subject communicated, it often involves a diagnose, an evaluation and a moral standpoint which supports the desired perception of the subject at hand (Entman, R. 2015.). This next quote is an excellent example of how framing can encourage recipients to adopt two completely different perceptions of a subject, and on the same time demonstrate how surveys can be constructed to encourage both of these opposing opinions to be dominant within the results, is on the subject of conscription:

*“Mr. Woolley, are you worried about the rise in crime among teenagers? - Yes.  
Do you think there is lack of discipline and vigorous training in our Comprehensive Schools? - Yes.  
Do you think young people welcome some structure and leadership in their lives? - Yes.  
Do they respond to a challenge? - Yes.  
Might you be in favour of reintroducing National Service? - Yes.  
Of course, after all you've said you can't say no to that. On the other hand, the surveys can reach opposite conclusions. [survey two] Mr. Woolley, are you worried about the danger of war? - Yes.  
Are you unhappy about the growth of armaments? - Yes.  
Do you think there's a danger in giving young people guns and teaching them how to kill? - Yes.  
Do you think it's wrong to force people to take arms against their will? - Yes.  
Would you oppose the reintroduction of conscription? - Yes.” (Jay, A & Lynn, J. 1986).*

In both surveys the subject is diagnosed, evaluated, appointed a moral standpoint, and finally a specific solution is suggested, in this case, in this exact order. The two frames substantiate and support two completely opposite solutions, and yet the recipient’s perception of the subject is clearly influenced by the presentation of it, making both seem like the only sensible solution towards the problem, when

presented within their specific frames (Entman, R. 2015, Edelman M. 1993, Tversky, A, Kahneman, D, 1981). So, frames are a very powerful tool within communication, towards substantiating specific actions, by defining a problem accordingly, with a focus on specific perceptions of the described reality, which on the same time leads attention away from opposite perceptions. It determines how a problem is to be noticed, understood, and what most recipients would perceive to be the correct form of action, to employ towards the problem when presented to the frame (Entman, R. 2015, Edelman M. 1993, Tversky, A, Kahneman, D, 1981). Keeping this in mind, it is just as important for a critical evaluator of a frame, to consider what perceptions have been excluded from the frame, as well as what has been included. Framing then plays a significant role when political power is exercised, it registers and identifies the actors or interests, which compete for dominance of the specific situation. If a frame corresponds well with frames, already inhabited by the recipient often referred to as the individual's schemata, the frame becomes even more powerful. The culture of a social group is important to address, towards obtaining an understanding of the individual's schemata, because cultures entail these predispositions towards specific frames, for the individuals who are influenced by the culture (Entman, R. 2015, Edelman, M. 1993). For instance a "cold-war" frame has often been used regarding US foreign affair news, in order to substantiate a given action. Specific events have been highlighted as problems like civil war, causes have been identified, in this case being communist rebels, and a moral standpoint have been proposed being atheist aggression, and specific solutions were then encouraged, being US support for the fight against the rebels. By appointing this frame towards the event, the actions utilized towards it becomes legitimized, other frames could delegitimize the same exact action, but are much harder to receive support for, due to the recipient's cultural inheritance and perception of reality makes their schemata predisposed towards the appointed frame (Entman, R. 2015, Edelman, M. 1993). A frame can then exercise a significant amount of societal power, especially when a frame is encoded into a definition which has become largely acknowledged or harmonize, with existing schemata inhabited by the recipient. For instance the "U.S is the greatest country in the world" "the U.S have never lost a war", these definitions of the U.S are largely acknowledged by US citizens, meaning that the public opinion of whether or not the U.S should go to war is often met by acceptance and encouragement, and opposing frames are at this point perceived as less trustworthy and much harder to obtain support for, regardless of what action they are suggesting (Entman, R. 2015, Edelman M. 1993). Of course, individuals can recall their own facts, produce connections between these and the information they are exposed to, and as a result causes and actions not present within the information can be encouraged by the recipient. However, in most cases most individuals do not inhabit a large body of knowledge about the information they are presented to, or are cognitive active when they are exposed to a political or societal situation, meaning that the proposed frames are rarely contested by the majority of its recipients (Entman, R. 2015.). The different aspects of framing are defined by Snow, D. et al. (1986) within two categories, *frame construction* and *frame alignment*.

Frame construction includes the abovementioned *diagnosis, evaluation and solution proposition* of a problem, supplemented by a *motivational* aspect as well, meaning recipients are not only supposed to agree with the solution, they are motivated into appointing an active role towards rectifying the problem as well. While frame construction can be constructed to motivate recipients towards taking action, frame alignment processes are employed towards increasing the number of individuals, who participate in taking action (Snow, D. et al. 1986). This can be done in several ways. *Frame bridging* is a concept of connecting a motivational frame to an ideologically similar frame, meaning that the main difference between the two frames, is that one has not motivated the recipients into action. An example of this could be religious movements, exposing individuals of the same religious beliefs as them to their motivational frames, enabling them into contributing to the movement's actions (Snow, D. et al. 1986). *Frame amplification* is related to the previously mentioned moral standpoint, by employing core values or beliefs towards a frame which aligns with the recipient's perceptions of the problem, the frame is empowered and the possibility of mobilizing recipients into action is amplified. This could for instance be a value like the sanctity of human life, which empowered the "black lives matter" movement (Snow, D. et al. 1986). *Frame extension* is when a larger more intangible problem which is easy to ignore, is linked to a more specific problem which impacts the target individuals lives directly, it is sort of a hook which introduces the exposed individuals to the ideology of the larger problem, but only to a certain limited extend. After this part have been internalized, the groundwork have been laid for the introduction to the entirety of the ideology, making them more likely to first of all act on the problem to begin with, and secondly to adopt the complete ideology. Many examples of this can be found in relation to environmentalist movements, where youth have been motivated to action by being exposed to the frame that their future is at stake. When the individuals then in the long term internalize the entire ideology of the frame extended to fit a specific problem directly impacting their lives, they have become subjects of *frame transformation* (Snow, D. et al. 1986).

## 4. Methods

In this chapter the methodology and philosophical beliefs applied towards this study will be presented, as well as how the gathering of data has been conducted. The method used is critical discourse analysis and the philosophical belief is social constructivism. The data have been gathered from the media institutions webpages. Also, how I seek to ensure a high level of validity as well as critical reflections will be discussed.

### 4.1 Philosophical belief

Since the study centers around how social realities can be constructed, the appropriate philosophical belief must of course be social constructivism. Social constructivism is the notion that everything we experience is a social construction, the truth is not out there waiting for us to realize it, it is constructed through social interaction with others (Pedersen, K. 2013). How the truth is constructed is the result

of a conflict of perceptions, where the winning side is not the one with the best arguments, rather it is the side with the strongest weapons. Whether being a personal meeting with friends and family, attending school, reading a newspaper, or watching sitcoms, you are being exposed to different opinions and perceptions regarding different conflicts and phenomena. The “truth” is what is the most commonly acknowledged perception, and is institutionalized as norms and discourse, which the vast majority of individuals exposed to, would blindly agree with and employ throughout their daily lives (Pedersen, K. 2013). However, the truth can be contested, regardless of how hegemonic it once was. At some point in history the notion that the earth is flat was widely acknowledged, it was the truth. This was contested by some, but not enough to change the truth of this matter. At some point though, when enough people through social interaction, believed it to be so, the truth was redefined. So, in essence social constructivism means that truth is a matter of perception, objectivity is subjectively defined, and ontology is derived from epistemology. The ability to define the truth is then a very desirable power, for when a perception becomes the truth it is no longer questioned, and if this is the perception which benefits you, you have achieved a very strong position. This ability however, cannot be inhabited by a single individual, a single individual can participate in legitimizing an institution, by acknowledging and employing the discourse of this institution, which then have the ability to become internalized by many more. So, the micro-social then influence the macro-social as well as are influenced by it, and the power to define the truth is ever contested by political parties and resourceful institutions, as well as individual people (Pedersen, K. 2013). Within these conflicts mass media becomes a very powerful weapon, mainly because it reaches such a vast number or recipients, but also because mass media legitimizes the contend it covers to a certain extent. Science and religion are powerful weapons as well inhabiting major powers to legitimize but lack the abilities of coverage to the same extend as mass media. Meaning that in today’s digital world, mass media is far superior to any other, so conflicts are often fought within media, calling upon other weapons of e.g. science and religion to further legitimize the perceptions employed (Pedersen, K. 2013). All this does not mean that core data collection methods like statistics and interviews are useless, it does however mean that they are employed differently, when doing a social constructivist study. With a strong focus on how we produce or construct our understanding of social phenomena and the “truth”, both structures and discourse are relevant, but the analysis of processes is the significant target, rather than a “status-quo” description. Statistics can be analyzed, but not as facts, instead statistical data is viewed as a means to an end, constructed to prove a certain point, reach a certain understanding, and by such can be deconstructed accordingly, meaning that the analytical focus should be on the context the statistics are produced in. The same goes for document analysis, they do not represent the truth, they are contextual, and the effect this context has on the document is of utmost importance. So, the focus of analysis is then on contexts, social relations, interests and power, in which institutions are these products created? In which social situation are they utilized and empowering? What interests and

discursive perceptions are the document representing? These are the questions a researcher would employ when appointing a social constructivist approach (Pedersen, K. 2013).

## 4.2 Methodology

When reality is constructed through the use of discourse, the analysis of this becomes paramount to understanding the social structures, interests, and power relations which operate within a certain conflict of defining the truth. Discourse is exercising power, it is a matter of defining experiences through a specific perspective when communicating, which influence knowledge, beliefs, perceptions, ideologies, norms, attitudes, values and plans (Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. 2002, Mullet, D. 2018). The analysis of it focus on the relation between discourse, and the social and cultural relations and structures it operates within. when doing critical discourse analysis, the goal of the analysis is usually related to structures or patterns of injustice or inequality, to promote further democratization by uncovering these underlying, interests and power relations, which the discourse is produced to reinforce (Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. 2002, Mullet, D. 2018). However, discourse is not only constitutive, it is constituted as well. Discourse not only influences social practices and structures like identity, power relations, and knowledge, it is influenced by these as well, reproducing a dominant discourse is a task much easier to perform and gain support for, than challenging it, this is due to the influence social practices and structures have on the production of discourse. Since there is a relation between the social and cultural context a statement is produced within, and the characteristics of the discourse within the statement, it is important to analyze the discourse within this context, it cannot be isolated from this context (Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. 2002, Mullet, D. 2018). Whenever language is used in order to communicate, the communication operates within three dimensions, the social practice, the discursive practice, and text, all three of these dimensions should be accounted for, when doing critical discursive analysis. The text dimension relates to linguistic features of the text, the discursive practice relates to the consumption and production of texts, and the social practice relates to the social and cultural context, which the communication operates within. A more thorough definition of what this means in terms of analysis, will be furtherly explained below in relation to the research design (Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. 2002). Different communicative events are dominated by different orders of discourse, these orders of discourse can be allocated towards specific fields, however creative language use within these fields can combine different orders of discourse, creating an interdiscursive statement. This means that specific orders of discourse are not completely bound to one field, nor is it exclusively present within this field. A dominant discourse is never permanent, it can be challenged and replaced by other discourses. There is an endless ongoing struggle between competing discourses, one may be dominant one day and denounced the next, of course it doesn't happen that quickly, it is a slow process of gaining support for the dominated discourse, until it at some point becomes more acknowledged than the dominant one (Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. 2002). Orders of discourse can for instance be marketing discourse, political discourse, academic discourse, scientific

discourse, or *economic discourse*, all of which are characterized by specific genres of argumentation and linguistic focus. Practically speaking discourse analysis can be divided into several stages. *The first stage* being the selection of discourse and the problem which is subjected to this discourse, which like in any research projects include a research question. This stage does not really need further explanation, apart from the fact that the discourse chosen, should in some way be subjected to some form of power relation, for it to be interesting and significant. *The second stage* is location and preparation of data sources. Doing this it is important to enlist data sources representing multiple perspectives on the subject researched, if validity and integrity of the results is to be kept intact. Providing a one-sided view of the subject, would mean the research has done nothing more than reproduce this perspective on the subject (Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. 2002, Mullet, D. 2018). *The third stage* is analysis of the discursive practices of how the data is produced, the external discursive relations, or the *interdiscursivity* of the data. At this stage the researcher focuses on the identification of different discourse within the data and interaction between them. Are there competing discourses? Do they represent different ideologies, or are they merely mimicking a conflict? Ideally the data should be compared with other data on the same subject, but from different data sources, in order to *intertextually* address possible similarities and differences between the two. Also how the discourse is interpreted by the recipients should be addressed, and finally the interrelation between the social and cultural practices which influence the production of data, and how the data in turn affect these practices, should be examined as well (Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. 2002, Mullet, D. 2018). *The fourth stage* relates to the internal relations within each bit of data, how are linguistic characteristics employed in order to emphasize one interpretation over another. how is the wording constructed, how are statements presented? Which level of affiliation does the producer have towards the statements within the product? Analysis of *modality* focus of the level of affinity, to which degree are the statements constructed as truths, opinions, or speculations? “smoking kills” is absolute, and is expressed as an objective cold hard fact, “smoking might kill” is more of a speculation, the way it is presented is more up for discussion, and the sender propose a lesser degree of affiliation with the statement, “I think smoking kills” is a subjective presentation of the statement, it is an opinion, “some say smoking kills” propose little to no affiliation with the statement whatsoever (Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. 2002, Mullet, D. 2018). Within mass media statements are more often than not presented as truths and facts, they categorically use objective rather than subjective modalities, which express and reinforce an interpretation of the senders as authoritative. Another aspect of this stage of analysis is *transitivity* analysis, which relates to which connection between events and processes are presented within a statement. Is an event presented passively, with emphasis on the effect and no regard towards the process which lead to it? This form of presentation makes it seem like there is no underlying process leading to the event, which in turn absolves the responsible party of their responsibility for the event. “50 people were fired yesterday” and “we had to lay off 50 people yesterday” are examples

of how responsibility is taken and obscured during a statement. Lastly, attention should also be put towards how the data sample is structured, is it a column, an article, a story, a newsletter, is it a press speech, or an informal discussion? Different structures provide different levels of affinity and objectivity (Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. 2002, Mullet, D. 2018). The discourse itself is however not the only point of interest when studying discourse, the social and historical context is equally important to address, this is *the fifth stage* of a discourse analysis. In which context have the discourse been produced, in which context is it used, who is the audience, who is the publisher and author, which economic conditions, and what social and cultural relations and structures are they influencing and influenced by? Does the discourse maintain the historical perception of the subject, through reproduction of the formerly employed discourse, or does it propose social change, by transforming the discourse into a new perception on the matter? This is what Fairclough (1992) call “the social matrix of discourse” and is beyond discourse analysis, calling upon social and cultural theories in order to access this aspect of the analysis. It is then necessary to appoint multiple theories towards a research project which utilizes critical discourse analysis, in order to do a thorough and sufficient research (Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. 2002, Mullet, D. 2018). In *the last stage* the researcher binds it all together, by revisiting the findings from the previous stages, and placing them into orders of meaning and considering which underlying interests can be contributed to the data, and what the data is trying to achieve, while also contemplating upon which influence his personal perspective have had on the results of the analysis (Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. 2002, Mullet, D. 2018).

#### 4.3 The Research

When doing a study of media discourse, media publications is the obvious choice for data sources. This is no exception in this study, where media publications of three major media institutions have been chosen for the focus of the research. The three institutions are RT (Russia Today), UNIAN, and Ukrinform. These three media institutions have been chosen, because they represent the two main sides of the conflict researched. RT represent the pro-Russian side, and UNIAN represent the pro-EU side. The last media institution is representing the Ukrainian government, which will provide an insight into where they position themselves in the conflict. For the research I have received assistance from the Danish army intelligence center, this has been especially helpful towards locating relevant data, and pinpointing media institutions which best represents the different sides of the conflict. I started researching the conflict without any specifications in terms of media institutions, in order to gain better understanding of what the conflict was about, this included media institutions like the BBC, and CNN, Reuters, the USN, etc. as well as documents not affiliated with media institutions. This was done in order to gain a thorough understanding of the conflict, and thus provide a better ground for deciding which media institutions I should focus on for the research. Then I decided upon the three mentioned media institutions to be the basis of the study, and started going through their publications. I chose to use their webpages for the data collection, this was done mainly for practical reasons. Since these

media institutions are Ukrainian and Russian, this was the only way I could access the information I needed, because their tv, radio, and newspaper publications was all in Ukrainian or Russian, only their web-based publications were available in English. This could pose a degree of inaccuracy in terms of whether this data is the same data the Ukrainian citizens are exposed to, the publications being in English also means that these are targeted at an international audience. So, whether or not these are simple translations of the same publications Ukrainian citizens are exposed to, or a completely different composition of publications is impossible to say. Being media institutions, they all provided a massive amount of publications, so I started by going through the frontpage publications of the day, for every day I researched the data for this study. Then I started searching for publications specifically related to the conflict in Ukraine, as well as articles related to the frames and discourse I had already at this point hypothesized the different media institutions utilized. The reason for doing this is that I wanted to make sure, that these hypothesizes were not based upon a few publications I happened to stumble onto, creating inaccurate assumption about the characteristics of this media institutions publications. But also, because within some of the media institutions researched, their frontpage publications only included a lesser amount of publications regarding the conflict, at the time of research. This data collection spanned across approximately four months where two of them were extensive research, during which I went through hundreds of publications. Among these I chose around 20 publications from each media institution, which I determined would best represent an adequate depiction of the discourse and frames, used to define the conflict in Ukraine within each media institution. I chose these specific publications because they had a significant representation of the frames and discourse, I found to be used most consistently throughout the entirety of the publications researched, and because they covered important recent developments within the conflict. Furthermore, I wanted the chosen publications to be as recent as possible, for them to include as many aspects of the ongoing conflict as possible. Older publications might, be lacking important results of certain events, which are valuable parts of the process of the conflict, and thus the framing and discourse related to the conflict.

#### 4.4 Validity & Critical Reflections

Doing critical discourse analysis, it is important for the researcher to disclose his beliefs and perceptions of the analyzed, in order to maintain a high level of validity and trustworthiness as well as being aware of the social, political, and economic factors that influence his work (Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. 2002, Mullet, D. 2018). So, I operate within the field of the EU and have all my life, this means European logics, norms and values are deeply embedded into my habitus and thus my perception of the actors of the conflict. which means that I have been subjected to largely negative definitions of Russia, which often circles around frames like “the Russian threat”, “Russia as a sort of scummy 3<sup>rd</sup> world country” “Russia are the international bad guys”, as well as largely positive definitions of the EU as for instance “bringers of peace and prosperity”, and generally very few



definitions of Ukraine. However, as an individual I have a skeptical mindset, I do not deem information valid before researching where this information stem from, and which interests the producer of this information, might have towards what the product is about. This means I have always been very skeptical towards the definitions of Russia I have been subjected to, I have not made any conclusions since I have never researched the country myself, they might as well project information about themselves which is of doubtful validity. Nevertheless, I position myself as not at all convinced that the perspectives of Russia I have been subjected to, holds significant relations towards reality. In relation to the EU and the U.S I too have been skeptical of their proclamations, I am probably even a bit more predisposed towards the notion that the images these unions project of themselves, are more often than not overexaggerated and even misleading. Regarding the Ukraine I did not really have any predispositions, since the amount of subjection to Ukraine throughout my life have been very sparse. So, I am aware of the fact that I am influenced by the social and cultural characteristics of the fields I operate within, as well as my habitus. I try to reduce this influence on my research of the conflict and its actors, as much as possible. The products of Russian media are for instance often characterized as misinformation or even propaganda as within the text by Pasitselska (2017). In this study I have tried to avoid such characterizations of discourse, I have tried not to use definitions like “revolution”, “annexation”, “seperatists”, “propaganda” in my own language etc., due to the fact that these definitions are charged with implication, and that I want to try and project my affiliations as objectively as possible. Regarding economic influence I have received no funding for the production of this study, I am then not subjected to any economic influences. When data sources have been selected, it is up to the researcher to choose which specific bits of data produced by the data source are to be included in the research. This is an important choice in terms of validity. The researcher needs to provide the right amount of data from the source, too much and the data might become incomprehensible, too little and the data might be misrepresenting. A sufficient amount of data, is then not all the data the source can provide, or a random pick, it is an inspection of the bulk of the data provided by the source, from which, bits of data who together provide an adequate representation of the source is selected by the researcher (Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. 2002, Mullet, D. 2018). Other means of securing a high degree of validity when doing a social constructivist study relates to transparency. Based on the information disclosed in the report, the reader should be able replicate the study. This means the researcher should disclose his research design and choices taken within the report (Pedersen, K, 2013).

#### 4.4.1 Triangulation

A most favorable method of securing validity of qualitative data is triangulation. As mentioned above, being subjected to one perspective can be quite convincing, however hardly a ground for accurate information. This notion must be projected towards one’s research as well, in order to secure a high level of validity. When a study is conducted, multiple aspects of the studied must be researched, multiple data source, multiple methods, and multiple theories, must be applied as well, for the study

to become subjected to a high level of validity, this is called triangulation. A way to do this is combining qualitative and quantitative data, however when working with strictly qualitative data like in this study, triangulation can be achieved just as well by combining multiple qualitative approaches (Patton, M. 1999). In this study triangulation have been applied as much as possible, however often not all accounts of triangulation are possible to apply, in this research triangulation of researchers is one of those, since this is done solely by one individual. I have however received guidance from two counsellors of completely different backgrounds, which though not as strikingly as having multiple full time researchers working on the study, are nevertheless providing some means of researcher triangulation, by being able to guide me away from wrongful assumptions, challenging approaches which might have stemmed from prejudices, or providing me with information and data sources, I would not myself had been able to come across on my own (Patton, M. 1999). Secondly triangulation of methods is so to speak sparsely enabled in this study as well, the methods used for the analysis of data being dominated by discourse analysis. Instead triangulation of data sources has been heavily applied, the data from this study stems from multiple major data sources and numerous lesser sources. A vast amount of the data gathered are collected from the three media institutions researched, they all provide different perspectives on the subject of the study, being from different geographical, social and political fields. However, whether the publications of each media institution used as data, have been produced by the same journalists or entirely different ones, is impossible to tell since the vast majority of them were not credited to a specific author (Patton, M. 1999). The literature review provides yet another set of perspectives on the subject, this data in itself is also comprised of data from multiple different sources, which are characterized by the same diversity of political, social and geographical characteristics as mentioned regarding the media institutions, as well as being produced by different authors of different time periods. Lastly, numerous data sources from which small accounts of data have been extracted from each source, have been utilized throughout the research as well. Many of these accounts of data were more or less conflicting, the subject researched is in itself a conflict, so the fact that data related to it can be characterized as such as well, comes as no surprise (Patton, M. 1999). Triangulation of theories have been applied as well, the theories applied provide different points of view for the study. Being able to combine different theories and applying them towards the same data, in order to increase the depth of the analysis of it, greatly increases the validity of the results of the study. The field theory of this study provides a great asset to the theories of framing applied. Gaining knowledge of the context within which frames are produced and consumed, greatly increases one's understanding of exactly why these frames are utilized, and thus subsequently provide a more solid understanding of the characteristics of these frames. If a defined frame proves to completely misalign with field within which it is produced and consumed, the frame has likely been defined inaccurately, the researcher would then have stronger means of catching himself making wrongful assumptions, when triangulation of theories is applied within a study (Patton, M. 1999).

## 5. Analysis & Discussion

In this chapter the theories and methods presented, will be utilized towards analyzing the data gathered. I will start by defining the relevant fields, then I will move on to analyzing the discourse of the media institutions which I have chosen to be the subject of this study. Furthermore, I will discuss how the methods and theories chosen, influence this analysis. Lastly, I will do a summarization of the entire analysis, and present argumentation for which underlying interests the different media institutions might be supporting.

### 5.1 The contexts of the publications - Defining the fields - Characteristics, symbolic order, dominant actors, and interrelations

Doing discourse analysis, the context within which the discourse is produced and consumed ,is important to address in order to fully comprehend why specific discourse is enabled, and the underlying interests of this usage. Defining the fields and the relationship between them are not easily separated, since these two aspects are quite interrelated, because the characteristics influence the relations, and the relations influence the characteristics. However, I will try to separate the two aspects within this analysis, in order to decrease the level of complexity of the presentation of these. Since it is not necessary to define every single characteristic of every field, and not at possible on the grounds of the data I have analyzed, I will only define the aspects which are relevant in relation to the scope of this study. The fields defined in this section will also only include those I have found to be relevant to this research. Of course, many other fields and subfields exists, however these are of minor interest since mass media target a broad audience and thus major fields, not small subfields. Furthermore, the focus of this study is on the producers of these media publications, and their underlying interests, not the consumers. When defining each field, I will start with the history of the field and then move on to the characteristics. Lastly, I will provide a summarization of the field analysis, and define the relations between the fields. I will begin by defining the “overall social space”.

#### 5.1.1 The Overall social space

The overall social space is geographically the world. Since this is not a field as such, defining the history of the world is a bit pointless, though I will say that historically Russia and the U.S and EU have been struggling to dominate the overall social space. The overall social space is often very influential in many fields, achieving a dominant position within the overall social space, then means greater opportunities to achieve dominance within other fields. This is not the case for all fields though, it depends on the degree of autonomy of these fields. Democracy is a dominant value in the overall social space, and so it is a strong value in many fields, however in fields with a high degree of autonomy like North Korea, this is not the case. A high degree of autonomy then also means lesser constraints by the overall social space. Mass media is defined as such because they reach a great amount of people, even more so if the media institution have achieved a dominant position within the overall social space. The BBC is for

instance such an institution, originating from the field of the UK, but reaching wide and far across UK borders, and having achieved a large amount of legitimacy within the overall social space. Media institutions are also engulfed in struggles, different media institutions can represent and publish different views. When opposing views are published, the media institutions who possess the largest amount of legitimacy are usually perceived as representing reality. However, if this truth does not align with the characteristics of the overall social space, the media institution could suffer a blow to its legitimacy, depending on its degree of dominance. If the institution continues to publish information which is in misalignment, they will at some point end up losing dominance, or change the commonly acknowledged perception. So, the more dominant a media institution originating from a specific field is within the overall social space, the more power their publications have to influence the characteristics of the overall social space. So, the characteristics of fields are not only influenced by the overall social space, they are influencing it as well, a change to the characteristics of the overall social space can originate from within a specific field. Within the overall social space, the most dominant actor among the three main actors of the conflict in Ukraine, is the European Union. The logics, norms, values etc. of the European Union are largely the characteristics of the overall social space. So, the media publications of institutions originating from within the EU, are quite dominant as well. The same cannot be said about Russia, Russian media institutions are powerful in the overall social space, yet dominated by media institutions originating from within the EU. This especially comes to show, in the way that Russian discourse products are often defined and acknowledged within the overall social space as propaganda. This is because the characteristics of the Russian field largely oppose the characteristics of the overall social space. On the contrary, EU discourse is perceived as legitimate, thus further supporting the notion that the characteristics of this field, are largely the characteristics of the overall social space. Like the EU, the U.S has a large influence on the overall social space. Even more so, being a larger influence on the EU than the other way around. This can for instance be seen if we consider the rise of socialism in the U.S (which is quite acknowledged in EU), it has a larger amount of support now more than ever, though still not enough to have any major influence (Lautrup, J, 2020). Ukraine is dominated in the overall social space at this stage of the conflict as well, so are their media institutions. Based on the result of the conflict, they may end up becoming a part of the dominant actor (if they side with the EU), or the dominated actor (if they side with Russia). The reason for them being dominated is first of all that they are historical allies with Russia, and heavily interrelated with the Russian field, both in terms of economy, culture, norms and acknowledged perceptions, the characteristics of this field is then very much alike the characteristics of the Russian field, even more so than the EU field. To which extend this is still true, we will hopefully be able to confirm during the analysis of the media discourse related to the conflict. Main characteristics of the overall social space are democracy, political leaders must be elected and representing the majority of the population, everyone has the right to freedom of speech, providing humanitarian efforts is

expected of those who have the resources, towards those who do not, cultural diversity, gender and racial equality, climate action and sustainability, economic growth, human rights, justice for all. In fact, all SDG's (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>) are great indicators of the rules, logics and norms of the overall social space, being a product of this field and its characteristics, defined and condensed into these collective action proposition, by the major dominant actors within the field. The overall social space is heavily influenced by the field of power, where economic dominant actors hold the dominant position. Economic prosperity is often a winning argument within the overall social space, even when change is proposed, for the change proposed is often related to economic growth, which then ultimately favor the economic dominant actors. Often this is presented as being related to the well-being of citizens, when powerful economic institutions thrive, so does the citizens directly influenced by these institutions. This means that even though Russia positioned below the EU and the U.S, economic superior actors from within the Russian field are still able to exert power and dominance within the overall social space. The autonomy of the overall social space is a redundant concept, since whether or not a field is autonomous relies heavily upon how it is positioned within the overall social space.

#### 5.1.2 The field of the European Union

The history of this field is especially characterized by the collective rules and values of the EU collaboration, and the NATO agreement. The European Union was officially created in 1993, before then a cooperative among multiple nations within the union existed already called the EF. However, the amount of collective characteristics of the field were nowhere near what they are today. The interconnection between these countries were strengthened greatly, as a result of the creation of the EU. Today the field represent a fairly homogeneous unity, the vast majority of the countries residing within the continent are all a part of this union, they are deeply connected through economic, ideological and bureaucratic ties, and they collectively define a vast amount laws, structures and mechanisms, and values of the field which they are then all subjected to (Fontaine, P. 2020). The NATO agreement were created in 1949, which obligated the countries who signed it to a military partnership, being allies and supporting each other in armed conflicts, if one country is attacked, all are attacked. Apart from European countries, the U.S and Canada are a part of this cooperative as well. This agreement has influenced the field of the EU towards a military unity, meaning that the likelihood of war breaking out among the countries within, have since become less likely, due to the very characteristics of the agreement (NATO, 2012). In recent years the field have been plagued by crisis and economic recession, which have resulted in internal struggles among the membership countries, damaging the coherency of the field (Wishart, I 2020). Also, most recently the UK left the Union (BBC, 2020). Like the overall social space, human rights, democracy, gender equality, providing humanitarian efforts etc. are characteristics of the field of the EU, meaning that the characteristics of this field, are largely coherent with the characteristics of the overall social space, the same goes for the positioning

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of actors. There are quite essential differences in both however, which largely relate to the opposition of other fields like Russia, China, and the United Arab Emirates within the overall social space. The NATO agreement constitutes important aspects of these differences as well. The reason this was not mentioned in the overall social space, even though it includes the U.S and Canada, is because the agreement itself is not a characteristic of the overall social space, it solely relates to the countries who are members of it. How they utilize it, can then heavily influence the characteristics of the overall social space, but only if they decide to do so. Neither the Ukraine or Russia are member of NATO, which makes it an even more interesting aspect, I will revisit this in the sections regarding Ukraine's and Russia's fields below. As within the overall social space, dominant actors within the field of power, are dominant within this field as well. The position of power the political leaders from each country holds within this field, is derived from a democratic concept of the majority defines. This means that the larger the population of a member country, the larger the influence of the political leaders of this country, Germany then holds the most powerful political position of any member countries (Fontaine, P. 2020). The fact that the characteristics of this field and of the overall social space align very well, that social and economic influences from the overall social space are quite high, and the EU holds a dominant position within the overall social space, means the EU are subjected heavily to the constraints from the overall social space, and thus have a very low degree of autonomy. According to Russian media the U.S have been directly engaged in the conflict in Ukraine as well. Because of this, and because the U.S and the EU are so closely knit, the U.S is an interesting actor in relation to this conflict as well, though there is no reason to regard them as separate actors since they pose a united front on this matter, with the EU as the main actor. So, in this study the influence of the U.S in relation to the conflict, is defined through the influence of the EU.

### 5.1.3 The field of Russia

The history of this field is highly characterized by an ongoing feud between Russia and the U.S (often supported by the EU), the latter being the defined within this field as the main antagonist, and the era of the Soviet Union (1922-1991). The Soviet Union was much like the European Union, though the dominant political ideology was communism. It included most of the eastern European countries, and all of northern and central Asian countries. Russia was the head of this Union, and it was governed by a communist political party, which was later overpowered by nationalism. Ukraine were then a part of this union as well, having strong historical and cultural ties with Russia. Russia have historically been subjected to numerous accounts of economic instability, and the period of the USSR is no exception (Jensen, A. & La Guía Mundo, 2017). They have however always been able to maintain an exceptional military prowess, through powerful weaponry and a substantial force, and were ultimately accountable for the fall of the German Nazi empire. In the year 2000 the current president Putin was elected and has since been re-elected, with officially ever-increasing support from the citizens. So far in his period of governance the country has had increased economic stability, which might contribute

to the fact, that he has been re-elected countless times by the people. The country has always been in sharp contrast to the western countries of the EU and the U.S, the eastern European countries being a borderland between these two. The Russian federation is extremely culturally diverse, though Russian culture being dominant. Historically, Russia have been subjected to countless antagonizations from the U.S, and consistent demonization by the fields of the U.S and the EU, the latest being the alleged U.S interference with state affairs in Ukraine (Jensen, A. & La Guía Mundo, 2017). The characteristics of this field differ greatly from the overall social space and the field of the EU. The majority of ideologies, norms, values etc. of the Russian field are perceived as illegitimate within the overall social space, regardless they do however inhabit a quite significant amount of power, this is based on two things, military prowess, and economic resources, being for instance a major supplier of natural resources like gas. However, this power is quite fragile, and the balance between Russia and other major actors are delicate. The power they hold means they have the ability to remain highly autonomous, if they did not, they would have to conform to the characteristics of the overall social space, in order to prosper socially and economically. This is not the case however, meaning that actors within this field are subjected to very little constraints from the overall social space, and the characteristics of the field provide a powerful opposition to the acknowledged and legitimized characteristics within the overall social space. Contrary to the EU and the overall social space, Russia is much less influenced by the field of power, neither economic, nor culturally dominant actors achieve the same amount of influence within the Russian field, as within the overall social space and the EU. Economic dominant actors still attain dominant positions of power, just not a higher position than the political leaders, and the ones that do operate within this field, conform and reproduce the structure of positions with the political leaders in the top. So, even actors who hold a significant amount of economic power, must conform to the characteristics of this field, in order to become successful within it. The structure of positions is then also different, the political leaders being the most dominant actors within this field, influencing the economic dominant actors rather than the other way around. The political leaders are often defined as quite totalitarian within the Russian field, and maintain their dominant position of power efficiently, by enabling a great amount of control over mechanisms which influence the characteristics of the field. Mass media, norms, values and ideologies are allegedly regulated heavily through strict laws, ensuring that these reflects the government (Shavshukova, N. 2020). The dominated actors within this field rarely seems to be contesting the characteristics, rather they incorporate it quite extensively. In order to become successful within this field one only has the choice of conforming, trying to change the characteristics seems futile. Whether or not this is because the characteristics greatly represent the population, or because the population are restricted so heavily, they have little room to maneuver, is hard to determine without extensive research into this specific field. Nonetheless, on the contrary to the highly complex web of production and consumption which characterize the field of the EU, within this field it is rather less complicated, the government

and governmental empowered actors produce, the rest consume. Also, this means that this field is highly autonomous, and maintains its autonomy by vigorously fending off influence from media, political and economic actors, culture, norms and values which are dominant in the overall social space. The Russian field is neither subjected to the NATO agreement, meaning that it does not have to conform to the rules of this either, they are not bound to defend other countries, or support the collective actions of them. This means that from the Russian perspective, it is of utmost importance that Ukraine does not become a part of it either, since this would mean that all NATO countries, would be obliged to come to the aid of Ukraine in a war scenario. Of course at the moment the conflict in Ukraine is not characterized as a war, not even in the overall social space, so for now this is not an issue, but the stakes will become a lot higher, if this NATO support becomes a possible outcome.

#### 5.1.4 The field of Ukraine

The history of Ukraine is largely characterized by cultural and economic ties to the Russian federation, and political struggles regarding the strengthening and lessening of these ties, in favor of building relations with the western countries of the EU and U.S. like Russia the country have been subjected to communism during the era of the Soviet Union, which have later been overpowered by nationalism. The most spoken language in Ukraine is Russian, and for the most part Ukraine have been allied with Russia, though during the orange revolution and the presidential period of Yushchenko (2005-2010), the government have been pro-European, and stated that they wanted to lessen their ties with Russia. However, this was short lived, and the presidential successor were again pro-Russian, who immediately began to strengthen their ties with Russia yet again. Ukraine chose to furtherly strengthen their ties with Russia, as a result of the economic crisis in the country in 2013, where Russia proposed a more favorable agreement than the EU, towards helping the country resolve this crisis (La Guía Mundo, 2017). The economic crisis of this country eases the ability of economically strong actors from within the Russian field and the field of the EU, to influence and gain power within this field, which is the case during this conflict where both use economic discourse and aid towards accomplishing this. The U.S were allegedly behind the political restructuring which happened shortly after, by directly supporting and arming the protesters, which resulted in the removal of the democratically elected Ukrainian president Yanukovich, who were then followed by a more EU friendly president, the oligarch Petro Poroshenko. The balance of power between pro-Russian and pro-European politics have then again shifted within the government, who started to heavily regulate Russian influence within the country, by banning Russian speaking media and Russian media publications within the county (Pachenko, M. & Rybak, V., Zinets, N. et.al. 2014, Pörzgen, G. 2016). This political restructuring have brought increased instability within the country, as pro-European and pro-Russian sympathizers are engaged in an intense conflict, which have already cost more than 10.000 lives, including multiple alleged assassinations of prominent figures on both sides of the conflict (La Guía Mundo, 2017). The characteristics of this field and the field of the south-eastern regions of it are heavily contested, this



struggle is the object of the entire conflict. Of course, within all fields there are struggles to determine the characteristics, and thus the structure of positions within. However, the intensity and possible outcomes of the struggles vary. Within this field the two major poles of the struggle are pro-European, which can be defined by an aspiration to become a part of the EU, and the pro-Russian aspiring to become allied with Russia. These aspirations carry with them not only an alliance, but the acceptance and incorporation of influence from these fields' characteristics, and structure of positions as well. Becoming a part of the EU, Ukraine would become accountable to the laws of the EU, alongside any other country operating within this field, they would be positioned within the structure of positions of this field, and would become subjected to the dominant actors within the fields influence, and be obliged to follow their lead. This is for the most part true for the alliance with Russia as well, though this will likely become more an alliance than a fusion of the two fields. Ukraine would still be influenced by the Russian field, they would also be subjected to some rules of the alliance, and the dominant actors within the Ukrainian field would likely be less powerful in the alliance than the dominant actors within the Russian field, meaning they would in most cases be obliged to follow their lead as well. However, the two fields would still be two separate fields, having two separate structures of positions and characteristics, however similar these two fields may end becoming. In relation to the field of power, the dominant economic actors are very powerful and influential within the Ukrainian field, this comes to show in the way their media landscape is structured, being heavily dominated by oligarchs (Pachenko, M. & Rybak, V., Pörzgen, G. 2016). So, mass media is utilized extensively by dominant actors, to gain support and legitimize their perceptions, and delegitimize the opponents, making it a key area of struggles among dominant actors, and like in Russia true objective media representation is unlikely, though in Russia this is due to the power of the government, in this field it is due to the influence of several very resourceful and powerful private actors. In relation to the conflict these seem to have chosen sides, some representing the pro-Russian pole, others the pro-European. The influence and power of these economic dominant actors are far reaching in this field, dominating not only the media, but politics as well, supporting different political parties who represent their interests. The oligarchs are then the most powerful individuals within this field, and the government is then most likely to be representing one of these oligarchs. The characteristics of this field as of this moment, is hard to define at this point of the analysis, however we do know that it is largely influenced by the Russian field and to some extent the EU field. The autonomy of this field is then due to the heavy influence by neighboring fields and the field of power, very low.

#### 5.1.5 The field of south-eastern Ukraine

The history of this field is largely coherent with the history of the Ukrainian field, up until the conflict which started in 2013. For the most part the roughly 23% of the Ukrainian population with Russian origins, inhabit this field, which means that the characteristics of this field, is likely more aligned towards the Russian field. The field includes the three regions of Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk, Crimea

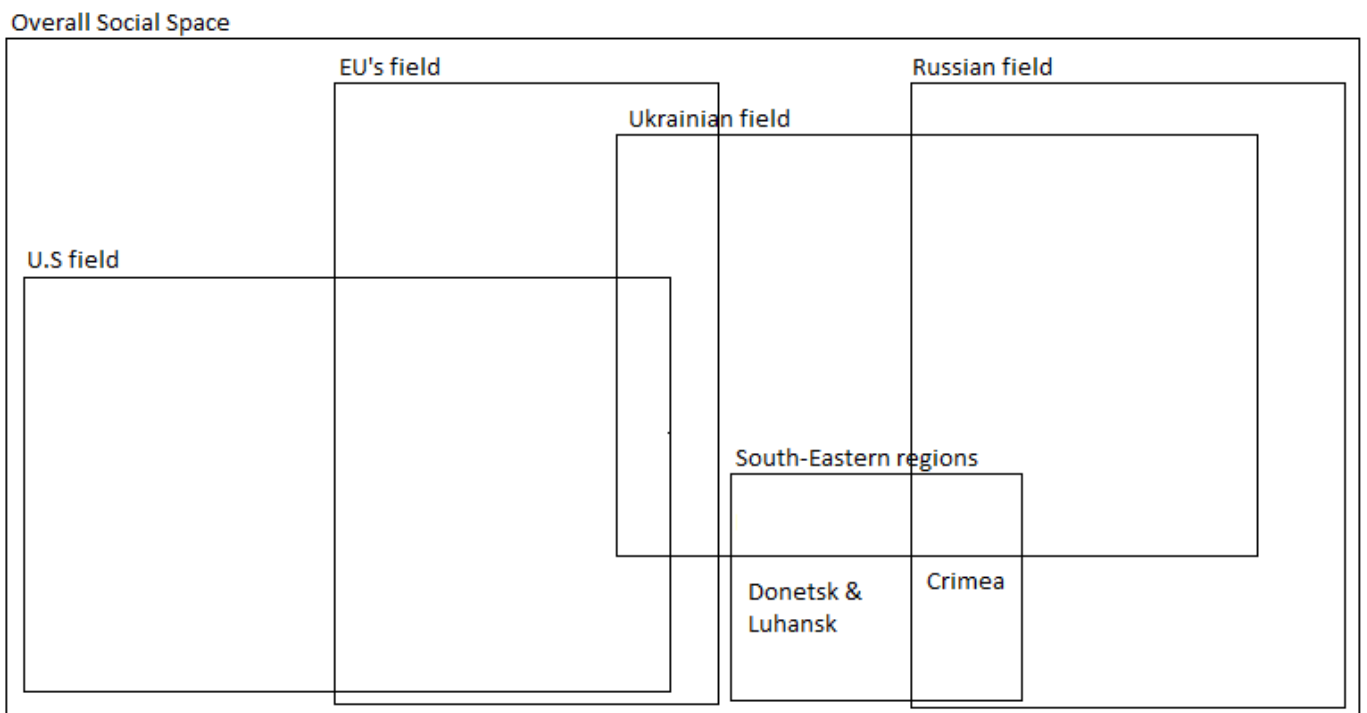
were in 2014 either annexed by Russia according to western mass media, or willingly became a part of Russia through a public vote (94% for the decision) according to non-western media, regardless more than half of the Ukrainian soldiers who were operating in this region, joined the Russian forces. The two other regions voted for independence from Ukraine, which according to the separatists within these regions, received more than 90% support (La Guía Mundo, 2017). The reason this field is defined separately from the entirety of Ukrainian field, is because these fields may or may not be a part of the Ukraine anymore following the historical events mentioned above. Also, this field is more heavily influenced by the Russian field than the rest of the Ukrainian field. The reasons for this assumption, is that the amount of actors originating from the Russian field residing within this field, is quite extensive. It all comes down whether or not this extent, is enough to be dominant within this field, which all things taken into consideration is likely. This also mean the characteristics of this field, is likely more inclined towards the influence of the Russian field, than the influence of the European field, than the rest of Ukraine. The same goes for the structure of positions, the pro-Russian actors are likely more influential within this field than the rest of Ukraine. The conflict is especially intense within this field, where a struggle to influence the structure of positions and the characteristics of the field is taking place, two units of dominated actors are engaged in an armed conflict the Euromaidans and the Antimaidans, both are fighting to become the decisive factor towards defining these characteristics, and both are supported by dominant actors from other fields. This support comes from the field of Ukraine and the field of Russia, the European Union is not directly influencing this field, their influence are targeted at the two fields directly supporting the opposing forces within this field, mainly through sanctions target at the Russian field. The Russian field is supporting the pro-Russian pole, by providing them with resources and allegedly military personnel, as well as politically and within media. The Ukrainian field provides support for both sides, some oligarchs support the pro-European pole others the pro-Russian pole. The Ukrainian government is likely in support of the pro-European pole, this assumption is based upon the fact that Ukrainian media is quite heavily regulated, regarding publication of pro-Russian discourse and media institutions from the Russian field. The influence the field of power has on this field, is presumably similar to the influence it has on the Ukrainian field, since both have quite similar characteristics. However, since the dominated actors are fighting against the dominant ones of the opposing side, the influence dominant actors from the field of power has upon this field might be lessened. Though because they are at the same time representing other dominant actors within the field of power (Oligarchs and Russian Government), it probably has little to no effect. For the struggle to be challenging the power of the dominant actors within the field of power, the dominated actors within this field would have to be fighting the entirety of these economic dominant actors, not simply fighting one and representing another. Because of this the degree of influence from these economic dominant actors will remain unchanged regardless of the outcome, it is simply the

characteristics of this influence which is contested. So, because of this and due to the heavy influence from other neighboring fields, this fields too has a very low degree of autonomy.

### 5.1.6 Overview of the field’s interrelations

The fields have a long history of relations, especially Russia and Ukraine and the U.S (and the EU) and Russia, who are fighting for relations with Ukraine, it seems like the U.S and the EU are fighting more to deny Russia of a strong relationship with Ukraine. than fighting for their own relations to it. This is largely a struggle for the power to dominate the overall social space, towards which Russia will suffer a great loss, if they lose their friendly relations with Ukraine, because of the fact that they have a key military base stationed in Crimea, and a quite fruitful economic relations. Considering this and the fact that the U.S have a long history of directly interfering in other fields social structure and governance, in an attempt to change the characteristics of these fields, in order to maintain their dominance in the overall social space, their alleged interference within the field of Ukraine is not at all unlikely (Beinart, P. 2018). The relationship among the fields within the overall social space, can then be illustrated as followed:

**Network of relevant fields regarding the Ukrainian conflict**



*Display 1. "Illustration of overall social space" (Appendix 1.)*

The U.S holds the most dominant position and struggle to maintain it, the field influence largely the field of the EU, and as described, the Ukrainian field as well, since numerous aspects of the characteristics of the EU field align with the US field, and the two fields have strong economic and

cultural ties. Of course, the paradigm of influences is twofold, so the EU field influence the U.S field as well as the other way around, the U.S though still remain the more dominant field. The relationship between the U.S and Russian field is largely characterized by opposition, they struggle to gain and maintain the most dominant position within the overall social space, and thus they influence each other as well, though not directly, instead they do through the overall social space and their struggles to define it. The influence the U.S pose upon the overall social space, influence the Russian field as well as the other way around, this is inevitable since no field can remain outside the overall social space. The Ukrainian field is most heavily influenced by the Russian field, the fields have a history of codependency and friendly relations, the norms, values, culture and economy of the two fields are vary interrelated, and both fields like the fields of the U.S and the EU influence each other, though the Russian field remain largely dominant in this relation. The South-eastern Regions of the Ukraine are related to the Ukrainian field and the Russian field, they are heavily influenced and quite dominated by both, the region of Crimea is incorporated into the Russian, though not acknowledged in the overall social space. The field and the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk are independent of the Ukrainian field, however also not yet acknowledged in the overall social space.

## 5.2 The Media discourse

A lot of the information presented regarding the history of the fields is still heavily contested by powerful actors within the overall social space today, the struggle to achieve legitimization for each perception of this information is done extensively within mass media which will become apparent in this next section of this chapter when the media discourse of the three major media institutions is analyzed. First, key characteristics of the three media institutions will be defined, next the discourse within their publications will be analyzed, and lastly a summarization of the entire chapter of analysis.

### 5.2.1 Key characteristics of the researched media institutions

The dominant media institutions researched are not autonomous in any of the fields, they are all representing one dominant actor or another within the field. In general, free media in all fields are far more consumed than subscription based, especially among the poorer part of the public. Free media receives funding from somewhere, often states or oligarchs as in the case of Russia and Ukraine respectively. This means these media institutions largely cater to the needs of their funders, since they are their bread and butter, they provide the grounds for the existence of the given media-channel, so I expect their discourse and frames will do so too. Three major media institutions will be analyzed, Russia today (RT), representing the pro-Russian pole, UNIAN representing the pro-European pole, and Ukrinform representing the Ukrainian government. RT is a government run media institution, its publications are largely dictated by the Russian government, therefore I can only assume that the publications will be predominantly favoring the pro-Russian pole of the conflict and represent Putin's interests. Furthermore, because of the high amount of autonomy of the Russian field, and the low

amount of constraints by the overall social space, I would expect the media discourse and framing, to be very much unlike discourse from media institutions operating within fields of low autonomy, being for instance critical towards highly legitimate perceptions and actors of the overall social space. UNIAN is run by the oligarch Ihor Kolomoyskyi and is representing the pro-EU side of the conflict. This characterization is made on the basis of the fact that he funded a militia which were fighting the pro-Russian side in the two eastern regions of Ukraine, when the Ukrainian government was toppled in 2013 (MacDonald, B. 2019), so it is likely UNIAN will be representing the pro-EU side of the conflict as well. Ukrinform is government run as well as RT, however representing the Ukrainian government, whether these publications align largely with those of UNIAN or RT, will be interesting to determine. The new president of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky, have been accused of being both pro-EU and Pro-Russian, the first for having ties to Kolomoyskyi and entering into multiple negotiations with the EU (Ukrinform, 2020), the latter for giving in to Russia too extensively (Miller, C. 2019). All the media institutions target an international audience, which is probably no surprise since their products are in English, rather than the language of their local consumers. This would most likely mean that they will attempt to use discourse which align with the characteristics of the overall social space, in order to try and legitimize their perceptions and actions of, and within the conflict.

#### 5.2.2 Media discourse – RT (Russia today)

The first thing that struck me as interesting when going over the entirety of RT's publications, are that regardless of what search words used, the coverage of the conflict in Ukraine seemed very minor. The focus of RT media publications is largely targeted towards influencing their position in the overall social space, this reflects on the frames consistently applied.

##### *U.S as the antagonist*

Russia consistently frames the U.S as the antagonist and Russia as the protagonist, often by exposing western (especially U.S) actors attempts to hurt Russia in one way or another. the U.S is constantly verbally "attacking" Russia, as well as deploying military units near Russian territory, and Russia is simply trying to defend themselves against the U.S. A publication in RT covers a U.S navy ships entrance into the black sea, where a Russian ship has been sent to monitor its activities. RT positions itself skeptically towards the ships proposed reasons for being there by the U.S, and present their discourse as fictive:

*"Washington insists that its naval missions in the Black Sea are carried out in line with international law on a rotational basis. It says their aim is to support freedom of navigation and reassure NATO allies in view of the so-called "Russian threat." (RT, 2019d).*

The "Russian Threat" U.S framework is presented as "so-called", presenting no affiliation whatsoever by RT towards this frame, skepticism is presented towards the U.S proposed reasons for employing this ship so close to Russian borders, and RT suggests that:

*“The American military has no business in the region, with the presence of the US Navy only adding to tensions and increasing the risk of incidents, which in a worst-case scenario could provoke a military conflict in Europe.” (RT, 2019d).*

The U.S as antagonist frame is in effect here, the U.S being the aggressors and provoking the Russians into a military conflict. The frame is constructed through a diagnosis and evaluation of the event, the U.S refer to an incorrect assumption in order to legitimize antagonizing Russia, and that these actions could result in a military conflict, being then caused by the offensive actions of the U.S. The frame is then also extended to include European, linking the “U.S as antagonist” frame to the possibilities of a conflict within Europe. Also, in this publication like in many others within RT, the Crimean incorporation into Russia is presented as *“Crimea’s reunification with Russia”* (RT, 2019). In RT media publications the U.S is accused of starting the whole conflict in Ukraine, all the while they blame it on Russia, thus the U.S as the antagonist frame is employed:

*“Missing from the political fight in Washington are the following key issues: it was American and Europe interference in Ukraine, not Russian, that plunged the country into ongoing conflict. That interference peaked with the CIA-backed coup in Kiev in February 2014, which led to Crimea seceding in a referendum and joining the Russian Federation. The coup also led directly to the war in eastern Ukraine by a neo-Nazi regime in Kiev against the ethnic Russian population who understandably have demanded autonomy. The \$400 million in military aid that Trump is accused of using as leverage on Zelensky, obscures the bigger picture of why the US has sent a total of \$1 billion in military aid to the country in order to antagonize Russia. This has long been the agenda of Washington’s foreign policy establishment, to destabilize Russia by pushing Ukraine to join the NATO alliance” (RT, Nov. 2019a).*

A high level of affinity is presented towards the incorporation of Ukraine into Russia, and the Eastern Ukrainian regions for wanting to become independent from Ukraine, in the wake of the protest-induced political shift which happened in Ukraine in 2013. The shift was a coup, so the fact that the regions do not want to be subjected to political leadership not chosen democratically, is completely understandable. Furthermore, the transitivity of the statement suggests that the U.S is solely responsible for the war, and a high level of affinity towards this is presented as well. The U.S is trying to antagonize Russia by ripping their partnership with Ukraine apart, they supported the protesters with resources and weapons and allegedly started the whole conflict, the U.S is responsible for the war and casualties, not Russia who are instead trying to aid the oppressed citizens, whose democratically chosen leader were toppled by a U.S devised coup. So, a frame I will analyse later in this section is enables within this statement as well, that *“Russia is the bringer of humanitarian efforts, independence, and freedom”*. Frame amplification is then used as well linking the “U.S as antagonist frame” towards the notion that the U.S is violating core values and beliefs of the EU and the overall social space, they are violating their own beliefs. This discourse which criticizes western countries aligns well with the history of the Russian field and habitus of Russian citizens, and thus their schemata as well. So, this frame is encoded into a definition which is largely acknowledged within the Russian field, meaning that it aligns very well with the schemata of Russian citizens, furthering legitimizing

Russia's actions in relation to this conflict among Russian citizens. Also, this statement provides a contrast to the notion that Russia is not defining the conflict as a war, mentioned within the literature reviewed in chapter 2. At the same time the previous Ukrainian government with Poroshenko as president, worked alongside the west to further intensify the conflict, rather than trying to resolve it, by denying invoking the Minsk agreement, because that would mean the two regions of Donetsk and Luhansk would be allowed to be independent from Ukraine, which Poroshenko did not acknowledge.

*"It is over three years since the so-called Normandy Format last convened. The Minsk peace deal was never implemented, mainly because former Ukrainian president, Petro Poroshenko, refused to fulfill commitments to give regional autonomy to pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. Consequently the war has dragged on for nearly five years"* (RT, Nov. 2019a).

This is an attempt at frame bridging, trying to motivate the Ukrainian citizens into action against the pro-EU side of the conflict, when notable actors of the pro-EU side are presented as more interested in supporting the U.S in destabilizing the Ukraine, than ending the conflict, the ideologically similar frames here are then the "U.S as antagonist frame" bridged towards this framing of the Ukrainian president. At the same time the diagnosis of the conflict which supports the "U.S as antagonist" frame, is heavily employed within these two quotations as well, with the transitivity of the statement being that the war is a direct consequence of western interference in the affairs of Ukraine, and their interference were furtherly induced after the coup, through the pro-European Ukrainian president who were in charge of Ukraine at the time. A solution is presented as well, however deemed very unlikely due to the heavy antagonization of the new Ukrainian president by the U.S. and the pro-European extremists in Ukraine:

*"Even before the hearings in Congress got under way, Zelensky had been under fire from Ukrainian nationalists who accuse him of "capitulating" to Russia over his willingness to negotiate a peace settlement in eastern Ukraine. Kiev has seen large rallies of up to 20,000 protesting Zelensky's peace efforts as a betrayal... if the US was genuinely concerned about establishing peace and democracy in Ukraine, then Washington should be fully supporting Zelensky's overtures to Moscow, to let him and the Ukrainian people know "we got your back... Thus, what is being set up for the Ukrainian leader is an almost impossible task. If he were to agree with Putin to a further withdrawal of military forces from the contact line with pro-Russian separatists, or if he commits to implementing Minsk provisions for regional autonomy, then the uproar in Washington is predictable. Zelensky will be cast as selling out to Putin and capitulating to "Russian aggression.""* (RT, Nov. 2019a).

The solution proposed is then to ally with Russia, because Russia is the only actor in the overall social space who wants to help Ukraine and wants to bring peace back to the country. The U.S and pro-EU citizens show that they have no interest in such things, when they sabotage and ridicule the Ukrainian president Zelensky, for wanting to negotiate with Russia. The U.S frame "the Russian threat" is consistently denounced In RT media publications, as well the diagnosis of Russia as a threat to the EU is produced, so the U.S can then subsequently propose the solution to be, that the EU should fund the U.S military in return for the U.S defending EU against Russia:

*“This is nonsense, utter rubbish! The ‘Russian threat’ is an invention of those, who only wants to cash in by exploiting their role as the vanguard of the fight against Russia... It’s obvious to everybody; and it’s absolutely clear to the leaders of the major European nations.” (Putin in RT Nov. 2019b).*

The “U.S as antagonist” frame is then appointed as a counterframe in retaliation to the “Russian Threat” frame, which include the evaluation of the “Russian Threat” frame, that Russia has no interest in invading the EU. It is furtherly bridged with framing the European leaders as smart enough to know this, constructed through a diagnosis that the U.S is exploiting the EU, and the solution that the EU to stop funding the U.S and use the resources for strengthening their own defenses instead, motivating EU actors to do so. This frame that the U.S is exploiting the EU and that the EU leaders are about to realize this, is not only employed in the abovementioned article.

*“He [Macron] castigated those who had “pushed Russia away,” those guilty of a “strategic mistake” of alienating Russia. Macron said the rise of China and Russia meant “we are living at the end of Western hegemony.” And he described Russia as a “deeply European country.” Given that Russia is Europe’s biggest country... But Macron has another motive too. He knows that for the vast majority of Europeans – perhaps especially in France – the “problem” country is not Russia but the United States. Not Putin but Trump” (RT, Aug. 2019a).*

This publication seeks to further legitimize Russia’s counterframe against the “Russian Threat” U.S frame among EU consumers of their publications, by aligning the Russian counterframe with European frames. the “U.S as antagonist” frame is presented in a way that aligns with the schemata of citizens within the field of the EU, when a powerful actor within the field of the EU is quoted as employing frames very similar to those of the Russian counterframe, furtherly legitimizing this frame within the field of the EU. Furthermore, this is an attempt at frame transformation, the “U.S as antagonist” frame is extended to include the EU as well, “Macron knows that the U.S and Trump is the problem, not Russia and Putin” this is meant to make EU citizens more inclined towards adopting the “U.S as antagonist” frame and thus favor an alliance with Russia rather than the U.S. Another account of aligning Russian perceptions with the schemata of citizens of the EU is in action when RT quotes U.S president Trump stating that the Russian annexation of Crimea was partially justified:

*“One year ago, in Canada, President Trump suggested reinviting Russia to G7, stating openly that Crimea’s annexation by Russia was partially justified. And that we should accept this fact.” (RT Aug. 2019b).*

Here it is done in order to legitimize Russian involvement in the incorporation of Crimea into Russia. Within this next statement the discourse and framing are very much alike the just mentioned, just mentioned. This time though, it is targeted at Ukrainian citizens:

*““We have to improve our relations,” Kolomoisky said, comparing Russia’s power to that of Ukraine. “People want peace, a good life, they don’t want to be at war. And you (meaning the United States) are forcing us to be at war, and not even giving us the money for it... Instead of furnishing it with the kind of economic assistance once given to Cold War allies like West Germany and South Korea, it has drip-fed Kiev with barely enough funds to keep its head above water, all the while attaching stringent*



*conditions on the little it's willing to provide... This isn't what was pledged in 2013. Back then, Ukrainians were promised a roadmap to "European" integration. But here we are, six years later, and Brussels, engrossed in Brexit, has effectively washed its hands of the situation."* (RT Nov. 2019d).

The discourse and framing is aligned with the schemata of the Ukrainian citizens, when a powerful actor within the Ukrainian field is quoted as supporting the "U.S as antagonist" frame, and when definitions like "the people don't want to be at war, they want a good life and peace" which harmonize with this schemata is encoded into the frame. Frame transformation is attempted here as well, when the EU and U.S is presented as exploiting the Ukraine, and this actor inhabiting a powerful position within the Ukrainian field states that the Ukraine should seek to improve their relations with Russia. So, the "U.S as antagonist" frame is then extended towards including Ukraine into being antagonized as well. This is done by linking the frame to the specific problems that the US forces the Ukraine into war, while providing insufficient economic assistance, and at the same time denying Ukraine the opportunity to receive aid from Russia. *"he accuses the U.S of fighting "war against Russia - to the last Ukrainian,"* using his country [Ukraine] as a proxy to weaken its primary geopolitical rival." (RT Nov. 2019d). Promises were made to Ukraine by the U.S and the EU, but none were kept, and the U.S are merely heavily exploiting Ukraine and its people in an attempt to damage Russia. This means Ukrainian interests regarding an alliance with the EU and U.S have not been fulfilled, and will not be fulfilled, instead the interests Ukraine has regarding an alliance with Russia can be fulfilled, and thus Ukraine should seek to accomplish this alliance. Ukraine and Russia are presented as both being heavily antagonized by the U.S, this promote an image of the two countries as already allied in the conflict, since the U.S looks to be the enemy of both countries:

*"You all (the West) won't take us," Igor Kolomoisky told The New York Times. "There's no use in wasting time on empty talk. Whereas Russia would love to bring us into a new Warsaw Pact." Even the dogs on the street know Ukraine is no closer to European Union membership than it was in 2013. Thus, Kolomoisky was only stating the obvious... At this point, he argued money from Russia could replace the IMF dosh currently keeping Kiev afloat. "We'll take \$100 billion from the Russians. I think they'd love to give it to us today," he insisted. And he might be onto something."* (RT Nov 2019d).

And RT seems to be in agreeance with these statements regarding both the U.S and EUs failure to live up to their promises to Ukraine and the potential of allying with Russia, presenting a strong affiliation with the statements by proposing that he "might be onto something" and that "he is only stating the obvious". The pro-EU interests are hugely delegitimized, when these statements are presented as quotes from an actor who hold a significant amount of power and a dominant position within the Ukrainian field, who have been engaged in the conflict and who have been known as representing the pro-EU side of the conflict. Not only does he delegitimize the pro-EU interests when he mention that the west will not take Ukraine, and Ukraine in not any closer to becoming a part of the EU, than it were when the conflict started, he also strongly legitimize the pro-Russian interests when he, given his

allegiances, mentions that the Russians would gladly live up to the commitments they made to Ukraine, should they chose to ally with them.

#### *Russia as a prosperous country, U.S and EU as failing entities*

The reason the U.S is antagonizing Russia, might just be because the U.S are in fact fearful of Russia and their growing power and influence in the overall social space. U.S allies may start to realize, that the U.S are not such formidable allies as they present themselves to be, and while European and U.S economies are moving towards yet another recession, the EU might consider to position themselves further towards Russia rather than the U.S, given that they can beak the deep influence by dominating “Russian Threat” frames, within western media discourse, or at least this is what RT suggests. The diagnostics behind such framing are based upon the notion, that Russian economy is prospering in direct contrast to European and U.S economies. As well as the evaluation of European political leaders as beginning to position themselves skeptical towards the U.S “Russian Threat” frame, which were already suggested above, with the quotation of French president Macron, as well as U.S allegiances in general, suggested by the following where Merkel and again Macron is quoted:

*“the recent words by French President Emmanuel Macron, who made headlines by saying that NATO was experiencing “brain death,” or a warning by German chancellor Angela Merkel that “the US won’t automatically be playing the role of Europe’s defender anymore.” There’s a strong pushback in Berlin and other EU capitals against Donald Trump’s demand for NATO member to spend 2 percent of their GDP on defense.” (RT Nov. 2019a).*

So, while:

*“anxiety, even fear, over US recklessness is growing rapidly in all European countries.” (RT Aug. 2019), “The prestige in foreign policy terms of Russia has scarcely ever been higher. Russia has been seen to stand by, to protect and to prevail with its friends while others bring nothing but disappointment, even betrayal.” (RT Aug. 2019a).*

Quoting Merkel and Macron presenting strong skepticism towards the U.S and powerful actors and institutions within the overall social space and the EU field strengthens the discourse considerably, since they themselves are very powerful actors within the field of the EU, being two of the most influential politicians in the field. All the while the EU and the U.S is presented as failing entities, Russia is presented as prosperous, this frame is amplified through the use of the general skepticism towards Trump, which is a core belief within the EU field. The evaluation related to the frame that the U.S and the EU as failing entities, is largely defined by their approach towards other countries as antagonistic, and thus failing to build relations with other countries not a part of the EU and the U.S:

*“The West – and the EU in particular – should drop its confrontational approach to the rest of the world and seek partnership instead, Kneissl believes. Naturally, this means the EU should build equal and friendly relations with Russia – an idea that has been repeatedly expressed by at least some European politicians.” (RT Dec. 2019a).*

The solution proposed is then obvious, stop antagonizing and start seeking partnerships. The statement that “this is an idea which has been repeatedly expressed by some European politicians” is presented with a modality which suggest it is an objective truth. In the same publication, the legitimacy of the U.S, EU and the NATO military alliance is severely challenged as well, This is done through the presentation of NATO countries own violations of international law being accepted by NATO countries, while other countries violation triggers immediate condemnation by the NATO countries.

*“The Crimea issue, which is a major obstacle on the path of mending Russia-EU ties, is one example of the West’s selective approach to international law. The West was quick to condemn the reunification of the peninsula with Russia, branding it an ‘annexation’ and preaching high morals – while ignoring its own moves regarding Kosovo. Moscow maintains that all due procedure was in place, and the people of Crimea decided to rejoin Russia during the 2014 referendum... the selective approach to international law has not only harmed relations between the West and the rest of the world, but has taken a toll on itself as well. The recent remarks by French President Emmanuel Macron on the “brain death” of NATO called into question the purpose of the bloc – but he was not the first to do so.” (RT Dec. 2019a).*

The transitivity of these statements as well as the diagnostics and evaluation support the frame that “the U.S and EU are failing entities”. In the statement it is suggested that there is a strong connection between the U.S and EU being failing entities, and that they fail to build relations with prosperous countries like Russia and China, choosing to antagonize them instead. The U.S and EU are able to do so due to their powerful position within the overall social space, being higher than Russia’s position, they define the characteristics of the field and does not necessarily have to abide themselves. Exposing this is in the interest of Russia, because failing to align with the characteristics of the overall social space, can contribute to weakening their position. The construction of the frame that Russia is a prosperous country, have already been done through the use of political order of discourse, when their relations to other countries were mentioned earlier, generally though it is mainly done through the use of economic order of discourse, focusing on Russian economy flourishing:

*“The ruble-based MOEX Russia Index has surged over 27 percent so far this year, while the dollar-denominated RTS was up over 40 percent. Russian equities have outpaced most other emerging market stocks and kept pace with the S&P 500, an index of the top 500 US corporations...“What we have in Russia is dividends growing, stable finances, and more and more investors starting to appreciate [that] it is a relatively safe bet,” Marcin Lewczuk, a partner at investment firm Mobius Capital Partners, told the Wall Street Journal. ” (RT Dec. 2019b).*

Evaluation of the state of the Russian currency supports the construction of this frame. The Russian currency is surging, and international investors are beginning to favor rubles. The transitivity of this discourse, directly links the sanctioning of Russia with this economic growth:

*“Restrictions that the US and its allies have been imposing on Moscow since Crimea reunited with Russia and the Ukrainian conflict broke out in 2014, “have forced us to develop import substitution” in key areas like agriculture, pharmacy, defense and others, President Vladimir Putin said... This allowed Russia to make “a serious, huge step forward in boosting its economic and technological sovereignty.” The sanctions war had its downside, of course, with “losses of billions of dollars” in bilateral trade, the*

*president said. However, the restrictions introduced against Russia had a “boomerang effect,” as hundreds of US companies were barred from profitable projects in Russia or lost the money already invested into the country due to the decisions made in Washington, he pointed out. “Whom did they [the Americans] punish? They punished themselves. They shot themselves in the foot. That’s it.”* (RT Nov. 2019d).

One of the very reasons Russian economy is flourishing, is due to the sanctions made towards them. Not only have the Russian economy become stronger, the U.S economy have on the same time significantly weakened, due to loss of business partners and investments posted into Russian projects by U.S actors.

#### *Russia as the bringers of humanitarian efforts, independence, and freedom*

RT also use media time towards presenting Russia as the bringers of humanitarian efforts, independence, and freedom. In an article covering the 2019 major prisoner swap between Ukraine and Russia, the swap is framed as a “historical humanitarian action”. No efforts were made towards excluding Ukraine from this frame, both countries are partners in executing this humanitarian effort. However, during the article some core individuals were mentioned from both sides, and the discourse used towards describing these present strong allegiances. The Russian prisoner were charged with terrorism by Ukraine, and the Ukrainian prisoner were charged with terrorism by Russia. Concerning the Russian prisoner, it was said that:

*“Another person said to have been swapped is Vladimir Tsemakh, who led the air defense of the breakaway Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR). Kiev charged him with terrorism – a standard accusation Ukraine slaps on all pro-independence fighters for the DPR.”* (RT, 2019a).

Analyzing the modality of this statement, the charges made against this Russian prisoner are not only presented as mere speculations, but clearly defined as preposterous and ridiculous. At the same time Ukrainian trustworthiness is denounced, both by presenting their charges as unprofessional and illegitimate, as well as employing the framework that pro-Russian actors in the conflict are fighting for independence, and thus that Ukraine is fighting for oppression. This frame is then amplified by linking it with core values of the overall social space. In terms of transitivity, the prisoner exchange is presented as a result of negotiations between Putin and Zelensky, *“Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the matter with his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelensky over the phone”* (RT, 2019a), though fairly objectively presented, one could argue that Putin is presented as the initiator of the negotiations, by defining him as the person who discussed it with the Ukrainian president, not the other way around. However, this is not as definite as modality aspect of the statement. Regarding the charges made against the Ukrainian prisoner, these are presented as the truth because he has been convicted of these charges:

*“Sentsov was convicted of plotting terrorist attacks in Crimea and was sentenced to 20 years in prison. He denies all the charges and Ukraine has long demanded his release.”* (RT, 2019a).

Ukraine is subsequently presented as having strong affiliations with this man, for consistently demanding his release, so in this article the Ukrainian government are affiliated with terrorists, and Russia is wrongfully accused if the same thing. The construction of the frame utilized towards this event is not present within this article, it can however be seen in another article covering the process which lead to this event. This article is packed with interesting discourse and framing. First the construction of the frame proposing Russia as the bringers of humanitarian efforts, independence, and freedom. The processes that lead to the caption of the prisoners on both sides, are diagnosed and evaluated as the Ukraine being the aggressors, having engaged in numerous actions against Russia and pro-Russian supporters in Ukraine. The solution to this is Russian caption of Ukrainian units which violated Russian territory, as well as providing support for the pro-Russian individuals who were withheld by Ukraine:

*“Ukrainian sailors sent to ‘provoke’ Russia... Their crews – two dozen sailors – were arrested and charged with violating the maritime border. Moscow said the vessels, which sailed with several Ukrainian counterintelligence officers on board, were meant to provoke the Russian military into overreacting, while Putin accused Poroshenko of trying to boost his approval ratings ahead of an election.*

*Kiev has disputed this, accusing Moscow of unprovoked aggression and of hampering freedom of navigation. It refers to the arrested sailors as “political prisoners.” The incident has since been used to further build up tensions around Russia internationally – and to justify millions of dollars in US aid for the expansion of the Ukrainian Navy.” (RT, 2019b).*

The Ukrainian sailors were sent to provoke Russia, they violated their borders and were carrying counterintelligence officers, and thus were captured. This was done in order to further intensify the conflict, because the Ukrainian government and western governments were framing the conflict as Russian aggression, and therefore an intensification of the conflict would harm Russia’s reputation. Analyzing the modality of this discourse again supports that RT presents no affiliation with Ukrainian statements when they mention the crew “is referred to as political prisoners” and deem them illegitimate, while it is on the contrary regarding Russian statements, where the modality of the definition of the crew as “counterintelligence officers” suggests this is an objective truth. However, the modality of the accusations of both Putin and the Ukrainian government are presented with a low level of affiliation, both presented as accusations. Furthermore, frame extension of the “US as antagonists” frame towards Russian citizens is enabled, when an alliance between the U.S and the at the time Ukrainian government, is presented in relation to this specific act, the habitus and schemata of Russians encourage them to agree with counter U.S statements, due to the long history of these two countries being in direct opposition of each other. In this next statement, the notion, that the Crimean citizens have independently decided to be a part of Russia is presented with the modality of being an objective truth, on the contrary the overthrow of the pro-Russian political leader in 2013 as legitimate, is presented with no affiliation:

*“It would seem the relationship between the two neighbors has only been getting worse since the 2014 coup in Kiev, followed by Crimea’s reunification with Russia and the lingering conflict in eastern*

*Ukraine. However, the election of Volodymyr Zelensky has rekindled hopes of change. The Ukrainians, who chose the former comedian over the war rhetoric of ex-leader Petro Poroshenko, are also expecting him to live up to his promises, and do something about the war-weary Donbass – and the soured ties with their natural eastern partner.” (RT, 2019b).*

The political shift is defined as a coup, Crimea is defined as reunified with Russia, and the Ukraine and Russia are defined as natural partners, these frames are consistently present in numerous RT publications, also regarding completely different subjects than the conflict itself. So bad governance by pro-EU leaders, have created this conflict between these two natural partners. When Ukrainian soldiers residing in the region of Crimea, joined Russia along with the rest of the region when it became unified with Russia, they were by the Ukrainian government at that time characterized as deserters, this is presented as illegitimate:

*“Ukraine currently holds several former servicemen it considers deserters because they chose to “defect” to Russia after Crimea voted to rejoin the country. One such prisoner is Aleksandr Sattarov, who served in the Berkut riot police unit.” (RT, 2019b).*

Another article which is about the journalist Vyshinsky who were jailed in Ukraine for his journalism, propose yet another example of the frame employed in RT as Russia fighting for freedom:

*“Freedom of speech in Ukraine has been reduced to an empty formula, journalist Kirill Vyshinsky told RT in an exclusive interview upon his release on personal recognizance. Yet, he still hopes the situation might soon improve. “My own fate is a living proof of the fact that the situation with the freedom of speech in our country leaves much to be desired,” Vyshinsky said. “I am a professional journalist, who worked in full accordance with journalistic standards. Yet, I have spent a year in jail. I believe it is not the best characteristic of the freedom of speech” in Ukraine” (RT, 2019c).*

Vyshinsky were one of the Ukrainian prisoners, who were released during the 2019 prisoner swap, he is framed as an incarnation of freedom of speech, and thus by jailing him the Ukraine is fighting for the oppression of its people, while Russia is fighting to liberate them. RT presents Russia as working tirelessly towards securing the freedom and safety of the citizens of Crimea, not only from Ukrainian oppression, but from Muslim terrorists groups as well (RT, 2020b).

### 5.2.3 Media discourse – UNIAN

Like within RT, the overall media publications on the frontpage of UNIAN, is not plastered with coverage of the conflict. Instead the recent covid-19 pandemic and international affairs receive the majority of media attention, mainly international affairs related to Ukraine’s relations to the EU. The fighting in the eastern-Ukrainian regions, are however subjected to a significant amount of coverage. The frames utilized within UNIAN’s media coverage are as followed.

#### *Pro-Russian side of conflict as aggressors and lead by Russia – Russia is invading Ukraine*

When covering the armed conflict in the Eastern-Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, the pro-Russian forces are consistently defined as “Russian lead” and “Russian controlled”, the modality of

these statements propose that these are objective facts, there are no mention of a pro-EU side, suggesting that the conflict is one of Ukraine vs. Russia, Ukraine is fighting against a Russian invasion:

*“Armed formations of the Russian Federation mounted 15 attacks on JFO positions in Ukraine's east, using proscribed weapons, namely 122mm artillery systems, 82mm and 120mm mortars... In particular, Russia-controlled troops lobbed forty-one 82mm and 120mm mortar shells to attack Ukrainian units deployed outside the city of Avdiyivka... What is more, Russia-led formations opened fire from an anti-tank missile complex, grenade launchers of various systems, heavy machine guns, and rifles. Ukraine's JFO units fired back, using available weapons. According to Ukrainian intelligence reports, five enemy troops were wounded on May 10.”* (UNIAN May, 2020a).

*“Russia-led forces opened fire from grenade launchers of various types, weapons installed on infantry fighting vehicles, heavy machine guns, and rifles.”* (UNIAN May, 2020b).

*“Russia's hybrid military forces on May 7 mounted 21 attacks on Ukrainian army positions in Donbas, eastern Ukraine, with six Ukrainian soldiers reported as wounded in action.”* (UNIAN, May. 2020c).

The “pro-Russian side as aggressors, Russia is invading Ukraine” is constructed through a diagnosis of the conflict as a Russian invasion, and evaluation of the struggles as Russian aggressions. The frame alignment is meant to encourage Ukrainian citizens to distance themselves from Russia. Furthermore, the transitivity of the statements suggests that the pro-Russian forces are consistently the aggressors, “Armed formations of the Russian Federation... Attack Ukrainian Units” they are the initiators of the fights, and the Ukrainian forces are forced to retaliate. When wounded soldiers of presumably the pro-EU side of the conflict is defined as “Ukrainians” frame extension is enabled, by linking the deaths and wounding of fellow Ukrainians to the “Russian invasion” frame. The headline of the publications only mentions that Ukrainian soldiers have been wounded:

*“Ukrainian soldier wounded in action, another three sustain combat-related injuries in Donbas”* (UNIAN, May. 2020a).

*“Escalation in Donbas: Six Ukrainian soldiers wounded amid 21 enemy attacks on May 7”* (UNIAN, May. 2020c).

Where only at the very end of it, there is mention of five enemy troops being wounded as well. Focus is then placed upon the wounding of the Ukrainian soldiers, and the pro-Russian troops are of lesser importance. Also, the conflict is framed in these publications as a struggle between Ukraine and Russia, not as a struggle between pro-EU and pro-Russian Ukrainians with support from EU (and U.S) and Russia. The framing of the Ukrainian citizens who fight for the pro-Russian side of the conflict, does not present them as Ukrainians, they are then alienated, both due to the conflict being framed as Ukraine vs. Russia, but also because they are defined as the enemy of Ukraine, they are referred to as “Russian controlled troops” and “armed formations of the Russian Federation”. Though UNIAN seems to alienate the pro-Russian citizens of Ukraine, they simultaneously present Russia as alienating Ukrainian citizens who are not pro-Russian, within the conflicted regions:

*“Since Russia, as invader and occupying state, is treating Ukrainians as “foreign nationals”, the decree effectively strips Crimean Tatars and other Ukrainians who have not acquired Russian citizenship of*

*their land rights... The trouble is that Russia is brazenly violating international treaties with its ongoing occupation of Crimea” (UNIAN, May. 2020h).*

The “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame is enabled yet again, as well as the denunciation of the Crimean region being incorporated into Russia by defining it as being occupied, and lastly the frame is amplified when Russia is presented as violating laws and values of the overall social space. The “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame is consistently presented, even when prisoner exchanges are covered, there is a heavy focus on the pro-Russian side having taken prisoners, with little to no mention of Ukrainian side having taken prisoners:

*“the exchange of prisoners between Ukraine and the two self-proclaimed republics in Donbas took places in two stages on April 16. Twenty Ukrainian citizens were released by Russia-controlled illegal armed formations. Among those released were mainly civilians, as well as two servicemen and one law enforcement officer.” (UNIAN, April. 2020b).*

At the same time by defining the independency of the Eastern-Ukrainian regions as “self-proclaimed”, the modality of the statement can be characterized as of no affiliation, the independency of the regions is not acknowledged. Also, frame constructing and amplifying the frame that “Russia is invading Ukraine” is enabled through the evaluation of the pro-Russian side as Russian controlled, and linking their actions towards the violation of core laws and values of both the overall social space, EU and Ukraine. Furthermore, no direct affiliation with the U.S involvement in the conflict is presented, their involvement is however covered, and they are presented as being on Ukraine’s side, though no formal alliance is defined:

*“Despite today’s progress, many Ukrainians remain unjustly imprisoned by Russia and its proxies, and Russia continues to unlawfully violate Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. We call on Russia to immediately release all other Ukrainians who remain unjustly imprisoned and to fully withdraw its forces from Ukrainian territory,” the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv said after the latest swap of prisoners between Ukraine and Russia-occupied Donbas.” (UNIAN, April. 2020a).*

The U.S clearly present no affiliation towards the Russian actions within the conflict, their imprisonment of Ukrainians fighting against the pro-Russian side is unjust, and Russia is violating Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, the U.S then enable the “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame as well as a counter to the Russian frame that “Russia as bringers of humanitarian efforts, independence and freedom”. The Ukrainian president Zelensky usually position himself quite neutrally towards the conflict, UNIAN however, does not as shown in this quotation of the Ukrainian president:

*““The next step is: We want to exchange the people who are either in [Russia-occupied] Crimea or in the Russian Federation’s territory. This is a little more complicated because of the coronavirus ... All over the world,” the president said on TV late on Friday, April 17.” (UNIAN April. 2020b).*

Zelensky does not enable the “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame, he refer to the prisoners as people not Ukrainians, and the region of Crimea is not presented as occupied, nor is it presented as willingly incorporated into Russia, UNIAN added the “Russian occupied” label to it enabling the frame. If this is



any indicator of how Ukrinform will be positioning themselves towards the conflict, it seems they will prove to be the most neutrally presenting media of all. The same neutrality is present in this next quote as well:

*““We defeated Nazism 75 years ago. It took another 46 years for us to gain an independent Ukrainian state. And today, for the sixth year in a row, we are defending it,” he [President Zelensky] added.” (UNIAN, May. 2020e).*

The reference is made to the ongoing conflict, Ukraine is fighting for independency, but no mention as to whether the enemy of this independency is Russia or the EU, which is not a surprise considering he is a politician. He would want to gain as much public support as possible, by trying to alienate as few citizens as possible through his discourse. A very accusatory analysis of a prisoner exchange, propose a series of what, safe to say, is speculations, however these are presented with a modality which present them as objective truths:

*“By insisting on the release of figures unconnected to the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine, Russia has tacitly admitted its involvement in the coordination of terrorist acts and other forms of hybrid warfare across Ukraine...Technically, the prisoner exchange occurred between the Ukrainian state and “separatist rebels”, with Russia, Germany, and France acting as neutral arbiters and facilitators. In reality, the details of the transaction have shattered this diplomatic fiction and underscored the scope of Russia's hybrid campaign against Ukraine... It also serves as a reminder of the scale and scope of the operations Russia has undertaken to infiltrate and destabilize Ukraine..” (UNIAN, Jan. 2020a).*

The transitivity of this statement suggests that the individuals the pro-Russian forces want released, constitute a direct link between Russia and the pro-Russian forces, because some of these individuals are “unconnected to the ongoing conflict”. That Russia, France and Germany should be neutral arbiters of the prisoner exchange, is presented with a modality suggesting no affiliation with the statement, this is only “technically”, in reality Russia is directly involved in the conflict through hybrid warfare. The “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame is then yet again enabled, and the frame is constructed here through evaluation of this prisoner exchange. The frame is simultaneously amplified when it is linked to core values of all the fields involved, that terrorism is highly condemned, and more specifically to the Ukraine when Russia is defined as seeking to destabilize Ukraine. Furthermore, the definition of Russia as coordinating terrorist attacks strengthens the frame considerably, because terrorism is widely acknowledged as despicable within all fields as well as the citizens of these fields’ schemata. Other frames are enables within UNIAN’s media publications as well as seen in this next statement:

*““We regret the elevation of the role of Stalin in Russia. It pursues the goal of rehabilitation of a totalitarian state with a single unblemished leader at its head,” Kuleba told the United Nations Security Council...“Alas, for some, including one of the UN Security Council permanent members, this commitment does not mean too much. The Russian aggression against Ukraine, which led to the illegal occupation of Crimea and parts of Donbas, is already lasting longer than the Second World War. It resulted in over 13 000 people killed and more than 27000 wounded at the very heart of Europe,” the foreign minister stated.” (UNIAN May. 2020f).*

Further frame amplification of the “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame is enabled in this statement. When Russia is presented as praising Joseph Stalin, it is suggested that Russia seeks to return the state of the country into how it was at the time of the Soviet Union. The incorporation of Crimea into Russia and the independency from Ukraine of the Eastern-Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, is also presented with both transitivity as a direct result of Russian aggressions and modality as annexation being the reality of the matter. Furthermore, the frame is bridged with the “Russian threat” frame which is quite acknowledged within the overall social space and the EU, when the conflict is compared to WW2 which inflicted the EU greatly, furtherly legitimizing this frame. Russia is then not only the enemy of Ukraine but the EU as well. This is meant to motivate actors within the field of the EU, to support Ukraine against Russia. Frame extension is enabled as well when the “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame is linked to the “illegal occupation of Crimea” and accompanies by a frame transformation, when this is linked to the possibility that Russia could induce a cold war scenario. In fact, multiple main frames are enabled in this statement, the last being “Russia plagued by totalitarian oppression”. This frame is constructed based upon the evaluation of Russia “elevating” the role of Stalin in WW2.

*Russia is a threat to the EU as well as Ukraine (the Russian threat)*

UNIAN quite cleverly enables the “Russian threat” frame, which is a frame that have been subjected to quite large amount of legitimacy within the field of the EU. This makes it a great frame to attempt and bridge towards if EU support is sought, because the legitimacy of this frame is then transferred over to the “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame as well:

*“Russia's policies of providing citizenship to those living in neighboring countries pose a threat to international security so the EU and NATO should work out an extensive strategy to counter such hybrid interventions on the part of Russia, that's according to Molly McKew, a U.S. strategy consultant.”Russia's new law simplifying citizenship applications for people living in neighboring countries should be understood for what it is: the expansion of the policy that the Kremlin has used to create the pretext for invasion and political intervention in its near abroad for 30 years... Every nation must decide how much these passports are a strategic threat to their national interest, and create disincentives to acquire them, at the very least,” McKew said. “The EU and NATO should discuss this issue holistically and understand the overall impact this is meant to have... Also, the expert believes, the West must be “more strategic in targeting Russian citizens outside Russia with information campaigns that can reach back into Russia, as well as understand how the Kremlin seeks to instrumentalize these individuals in compatriot networks, disinformation campaigns, and disruptive activities in the economic, social, and political realms.” (UNIAN, May. 2020g).*

So, Russia is actively seeking to better their chances of invading neighboring countries supporting the “Russian Threat” frame and again bridging it with the “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame, as well as transforming it to fit a cold war perspective. The “Russian threat” frame is constructed through the diagnosis of Russian actions of providing citizens of neighboring countries with Russian passports, and the evaluation of Russian citizens outside of Russia as being a threat to the countries they resides

within, the Russian government “seeks to instrumentalize these individuals in compatriot networks” meaning that these Russians living in other countries, will be pushing the Russian agenda within these countries, they are somewhat infiltrating these countries. A solution is provided for how to deal with this “Russian Threat” as well, the EU and the U.S needs to subject these Russians to information campaigns, countering the information they have been subjected to from Russia. The modality of these statements of this U.S strategy consultant is quite neutral she is simply quoted, however the fact that this has been chosen to be published shows a certain affiliation with the statement, also her modality towards her statement suggests it is an objective truth. Also, within the very same publication the counter-beliefs are presented with no affiliation whatsoever:

*“Many well-meaning Western experts have repeated the Kremlin’s arguments that Russia’s passportization programs help provide humanitarian relief to occupied regions and frozen conflict zones – that the need for these passports is created by the “failure” of Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, and more to “find resolutions to disputed territories”, the expert notes.” (UNIAN, May. 2020g).*

Individuals who have presented this statement are “well-meaning” meaning that they meant well but are wrong, and the quotation marks around the word “failure” of neighboring countries to accommodate, suggests this lack of affiliation towards the statements.

#### *EU as Ukrainian ally*

Generally, many publications cover Ukraine’s relationship with the U.S and EU:

*“Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine Vadym Prystaiko has said Ukraine and NATO should develop a strategy to deter Russia in the Black Sea area. “Security in the Black Sea area is of paramount importance to Ukraine, as well as to NATO and other allies. While implementing the Black Sea Package proposed by the Alliance, we would like to focus on strengthening our Navy, cybersecurity, and raising our partners’ awareness about the situation in the region,”” (UNIAN, May. 2020i).*

The fact that this relationship is covered quite extensively, means that the EU’s presence towards the conflict in Ukraine is acknowledged. However, the notion that the citizens of Ukraine are divided as to whether Ukraine should join with Russia or EU, is not covered in UNIAN’s media presentations at all. Instead Ukrainians are presented as uniting against a Russian invasion and trying to seek aid towards ending this invasion from the EU. If we consider the Russian notion that the EU is exploiting Ukraine, this could be derived from this statement as well. Based on this statement made by the Deputy Prime Minister, it could be suggested that the EU is simply seeking to use Ukraine to deter Russian presence within the Black Sea, presenting EU interests as Ukrainian interests. Positive affiliations towards allying with the EU is then present in UNIAN media publications, and thus EU is consistently framed positively. Publications like *“EU grants Ukraine EUR 6 bln for infrastructure projects” (UNIAN, Dec. 2019a), and “EU prolongs economic sanctions against Russia over Ukraine for another six months” are numerous. The “EU as Ukrainian supporter”* It is constructed through the evaluation of these actions from the EU towards Ukraine as supportive. The frame is then extensively enabled, the EU “support Ukraine’s

sovereignty & territorial integrity” (UNIAN, Dec. 2019b), so it is no surprise that they meet to discuss the conflict like stated below:

*““On December 10, 2019 in Brussels, the European Union and Ukraine discussed the consequences of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. It was the seventh such meeting,” the European Union External Action (EEAS) reported.” (UNIAN, Dec. 2019c).*

Of course, as we know now UNIAN does not acknowledge Crimea’s incorporation into Russia this is also presented in this statement where no affiliation with Crimea’s incorporation into Russia being legitimate is presented, when it is defined as an “illegal annexation”. “The EU as Ukrainian ally” frame is extended in this statement when the EU is presented as supporting this definition of the incorporation of Crimea into Russia. President Zelensky is also presented as being EU friendly and actively working towards Ukrainian incorporation into the EU, he is here quoted on the matter:

*““We see our future within the EU. What should the EU do? Just admit Ukraine as an EU [member]. These are very complex things, although to me they seem to be very simple solutions. We’ve signed the Association Agreement with the EU, we support the course towards the EU, but we must understand that not only Ukraine should [want] and wants to [join] the EU ... but the European Union should also want this,”” UNIAN (Jan. 2020b).*

However, Zelensky present a modality towards whether or not the EU truly supports Ukraine’s incorporation into it with low modality, he is skeptical. Furthermore. He does not seem entirely convinced that this is actually the case, Ukraine has done their part, now it is time for the EU to act upon it. With this statement he has made sure that if the Ukraine does not become a member of the EU, the transitivity related to this will point towards the EU as being accountable for this. According to a poll published by UNIAN, the majority of the Ukrainian population supports a Ukrainian incorporation into the EU as well:

*“Almost two-thirds of Ukrainians (64%) believe that Ukraine's main integration focus area should be accession to the European Union, according to the findings of a poll conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Razumkov Center” (UNIAN Jan. 2020c).*

The modality of this statement is however quite neutral as it is presented “according to the findings of a poll” UNIAN does then not take responsibility for the results of this poll, neither do they question it. If we were to consider this poll from a critical point of view, it is rather uncertain for two reasons. The first being the fact that the most, pro-Russian south-eastern regions were not included in the poll, and the second being that the poll only had little more than 2000 respondents, which is a fairly low amount considering the quite large population of the country (UNIAN, Jan. 2020).

#### *Russia as a declining country plagued by totalitarian oppression*

This frame is presented largely in an in-depth interview with a Russian political scientist, Natalia Shavshukova. First, she suggests that Putin and the Russian government will only be able to stay in power by manipulating the votes:

*They [the Russian government] are already introducing some tricky procedures for collecting signatures online. I don't rule out that now they will go for the following types of manipulation: they will introduce online voting beyond Moscow – across other regions. We already had a precedent in Moscow City Duma (Council) elections where an opposition candidate lost precisely in the district where people voted via the internet... In other words, they can't win in a nice way. They could only win either through manipulation at the polls or the use of force against descendants in city streets.” (Shavshukova, N. 2020).*

This statement is rather grim, nevertheless she seems undoubtful that it is in fact the reality, not a speculation, at least this is the modality of the statement. The “Russia is plagued by totalitarian oppression” frame is constructed here through the evaluation of the procedures the government allegedly use, towards securing the public vote. The frame is furtherly amplified by relating it to a previous count of oppression in Russian history, and thus violating democratic values, creating an even stronger amplification by calling upon history of the field, which is quite possibly a part of actors within the field’s habitus, if they perceive this in the same manner as she does, which essentially is quite unlikely, since the dominant actors within the field are probably not acknowledging that this has happened, since it would be weakening their legitimacy, and thus have not incorporated it into the characteristics and the history of the field:

*“Businesses are upset because they got cheated of their money. Remember how the Revolution began in Russia in the early 20th century? Warship crew spotted worms in their soup during lunch. No one knows for sure how the situation with this modern-day “worm soup” develops.” (Shavshukova, N. 2020).*

She states that “businesses are upset” with the modality suggesting it to be an objective truth. She again calls upon the history of the field in order to support her statement, this time to extend the frame by linking it to a specific event. Allegedly the government is effectively suppressing political opposition:

*Here the opposition is ready to act, so all they need is funding. But businesses are being intimidated. If someone supports opposition, the authorities could try to take their license or they force CEOs to emigrate to London or elsewhere.” (Shavshukova, N. 2020).*

The “Russia is plagued by Totalitarian Oppression” frame is furtherly constructed here through a diagnosis of how the government act towards opposition, again the modality of the statement propose that it is an objective truth, the discourse present no possible doubt. Again, the frame is extended when she links it to specific governmental actions of intimidating businesses to withhold funding for the opposition. Russian emigration to London is also presented with a transitivity as a direct result of these intimidation actions. That Russia is declining is linked with the covid-19 pandemic, Russia will be poorer regardless of having a large economic reserve, but because this reserve is not used to support the population who are in need of economic aid due to the conflict, businesses will go bankrupt and citizens will become poorer, resulting in the country becoming poorer:

*There's quite a lot of money still in stock. What made people especially upset against the background of the situation in other countries was that no money was paid directly to anyone. That's the problem.*

*We do have some kind of payments in place. Suppose you worked in tourism and now you can get RUB 12,130 per employee if you behaved well. But at the same time you must collect a ton of paperwork of all ridiculous kinds just to apply, to prove that you're the right kind of guy to receive aid. And then maybe – just maybe – they'll give you money.* (Shavshukova, N. 2020).

There are payment systems in place but the modality of the statement suggests that she is not convinced these are actually possible to utilize when she says “and then maybe – just maybe” and states that you need to “collect a ton of paperwork of all ridiculous kinds to apply” . On the contrary when she mentions the governments lack of support, the modality proposes this is an objective truth “no money was paid directly to anyone”. The transitivity of the statement presents the government as directly accountable for the country becoming poorer, because they refuse to provide any aid. Furthermore, the frame is extended yet again when she links it to these specific actions of complication the economic aid application.

#### 5.2.4 Media discourse – Ukrinform

Ukrinform is a media institution representing the Ukrainian government. As mentioned in the field analysis, government funded media publications reach a very small number of consumers. Nevertheless considering this media institution is government run, the discourse and frames utilized within its publications, will provide a picture of how the Ukrainian political actors in office, who then inhabit a powerful position within the social structure of the field, define the conflict, and thus where their allegiances lie and which characteristics they seek to impose on the Ukrainian field. The media institutions coverage is very similar to that of UNIAN, focusing on the covid-19 pandemic, Ukraine’s relations to the EU, and the unrest in the south-eastern regions. Some of the frames enabled within UNIAN’s publications are present here as well, or are at least very similar. The frames enabled are as following.

#### *Russia as aggressors and is invading Ukraine & Russia as consistent violator of International law*

The first frame enabled within Ukrinform’s media publications, has already been identified within UNIAN’s media publications. Recent events within the south-eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, is covered by Ukrinform much in the same manner as by UNIAN. Much like within UNIAN’s media publications, the armed conflict in these regions are framed as Ukraine vs. Russia, with no mention of a pro-EU side. So, the coverage of the fighting is presented in a similar fashion as UNIAN’s coverage. Here the pro-Russian forces are defined as “Russian-occupation troops” (Ukrinform, May. 2020).

*“As noted, the Russian-occupation troops launched five attacks in the zone of action of tactical force “East” and four more attacks in the zone of action of tactical force “North”. As a result of the enemy shelling, two Ukrainian soldiers were wounded, another defender received fatal injuries.”* (Ukrinform, May. 2020a).

The “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame is constructed through diagnosis of the armed conflict, as Russian initiating attacks on Ukrainian defensive positions, with the transitivity of the discourse

suggesting the fighting is a direct result of Russian aggression, so is the wounding and death of two Ukrainian soldiers. The enemy is presented as Russian troops, with no mention of Ukrainians fighting on the pro-Russian side:

*“armed formations of the Russian Federation launched nine attacks on Ukrainian positions in the Joint Forces Operation (JFO) area in Donbas. “The enemy used 120mm and 82mm mortars banned under the Minsk agreements, grenade launchers of different systems, heavy machine guns, and small arms to shell Ukrainian positions. Ukrainian defenders timely responded to the enemy attacks by using duty weapons,” the press center of the JFO Headquarters reports.”* (Ukrinform, May. 2020b).

The frame is bridged with the “Russia is consistently violating international law” frame by mention of Russian forces using illegal firearms, some consumers who does not agree or care about the “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame, might have second thoughts when presented to the bridged frame, and thus it seeks to motivate citizens into distancing themselves from the pro-Russian side. This frame bridging also acts as a frame amplification and extension when the “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame, is linked with laws and values acknowledged within the overall social space as well as the fields of the EU and U.S, this being the condemnation of use of illegal firearms, and when the “Russia is consistently violating international laws” frame is linked, with this specific event of Russian shelling Ukrainian positions using these illegal weapons. The “Russia is consistently violating international law” corresponds well with the schemata of actors within the field of the EU, strengthening it and motivating these actors to support Ukraine, and take direct action in the conflict because of these violations. The “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame is heavily utilized in Ukrinform’s media publications, as well as presentations of the Ukrainian government supporting this frame. The modality of the statement propose that the use of these illegal firearms is undisputable, furthermore, the transitivity of the statement that “armed formations of the Russian Federation launched 9 attacks” propose again that the fighting is a direct result of Russian aggression, furtherly supported by the definition of Ukrainian soldiers as “Ukrainian defenders”:

*“The armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine continues. This led to the death of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers and civilians, the violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity, rights and freedoms of its citizens, the temporary occupation of part of its sovereign territory, numerous human casualties, and threats to its national interests, security and sovereignty. Thus, still there are legal grounds, envisaged in Article 3 of the Law of Ukraine “On Sanctions”, to extend the sanctions until the cessation of the armed aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation,”* (Ukrinform, May. 2020a).

Again the “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame is heavily enabled, and the transitivity of the first sentence suggests yet again, that Russia is the cause of the conflict and responsible for keeping the conflict alive. The frame is consistently constructed through the evaluation of the conflict, where Russia is presented as the aggressors. All the consequences of the conflict, like deaths of Ukrainians are contributed to this invasion from Russia, furtherly extending the frame, and Russia is violating Ukrainian rights, values and beliefs, furtherly amplifying the frame especially among Ukrainian citizens. Furthermore, the frame is

countering the Russian frame that “Russia are bringers of humanitarian effort, independence, and freedom”. Also mentioned is that:

*A total of 248 MPs voted in favor of the relevant document on May 13, an Ukrinform correspondent reported” (Ukrinform, May. 2020c).*

With focus on the fact, that this suggestion to extend the sanctioning against Russian social networks, were accepted by the government when “248 MPs voted in favor”. What they did not focus on, is the fact that the Ukrainian parliament consists of 450 MP’s, meaning that the decision was not exactly voted through by a landslide. The enabling of both frames continue in this next publication, where the situation in the region of Crimea is evaluated:

*“This year we mark the six years of occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine) by the Russian Federation. This occupation happened as a result of a breach of all the fundamental principles of international law, principles of UN Charter, including the principle of non-use of force or threat by force by the Russian Federation, the state, who should have been the guardian of international peace and security as a permanent member of the UN Security Council but has become the biggest violator of international law in the XXI century.” (Ukrinform, May. 2020d).*

It is done much like the discourse in the previously mentioned publications, Crimea is occupied by Russia, and Russia is violating international law. However, the “Russia is consistently violating international law” frame is heavily emphasized in this publication, and the frame is amplified within the overall social space when commonly acknowledged values and beliefs that “Russia should have been guardians of international peace and security” are mentioned, and the notion that Russia is neglecting these obligations, this also corresponds well with the schemata of actors within the overall social space. Furthermore, the Ukraine vs. Russia paradigm which is represented by the “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame is emphasized as well. The conflict is not an internal one, where Ukrainian citizens disagree on whether Ukraine should ally with Russia or the EU, it is a conflict between the Ukraine and Russia:

*“For Ukraine the biggest date to commemorate in relation to events of February and March 2014 in Crimea is 26 February 2014. This was a day of the biggest pro-Ukrainian rally in Simferopol gathered by the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian activists” (Ukrinform, May. 2020e).*

When you are against the incorporation of Crimea into Russia, you are “pro-Ukraine” the protesters are defined as “Ukrainian activists” and Crimean tatars (Indigenous Crimeans), this presentation completely exclude the notion that Ukrainian pro-Russians exists, and so the pro-Russian side of the conflict are Russians, and the other side is Ukraine, not pro-EU. Furthermore, research which opposes these frames, are invalidated through argumentation that these are done by Russian institutions, and thus are of course supporting Russian interests being utterly illegitimate:

*“When researchers prepare articles on Crimea they sometimes tend to use the surveys conducted on the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea by companies registered and working in Russia... Thus, the*



*researchers use Russian polls and point out that the Russian surveys and polls show that Crimeans are “happy” with Russia and find nothing bad in Russian control over Crimea ” (Ukrinform, May 2020e).*

Not only is Russia violating international law, they are violating human rights:

*“Human rights violations in temporarily occupied Crimea became something usual, something regular, including the gravest violations – war crimes and crimes against humanity. And these systematic human rights violations are reflected in annual resolutions of the UN General Assembly” (Ukrinform, 2020e).*

This is an amplification of the “Russia is consistently violating international law” by drawing upon commonly acknowledged values and beliefs within the overall social space and presenting Russia as violators of these. This corresponds well with the habitus and schemata of Ukrainians, who are influenced by the notion that Russia has violated their human rights during the Soviet era. Furthermore, the frame is extended by linking it to the specific act, that Russia is forcing Crimean’s into conscription into the Russian occupational forces. This include the conscription of children which yet again amplifies the frame:

*“Grave violation of international humanitarian law by the Russian occupying authorities in Crimea is forced conscription to the Armed Forces of the Occupying Power... Militarization of the occupied Crimea by the Russian occupying authorities also deals with the educational process. Children at schools study basics of military training within the framework of movement “Yunarmia”, Cassack schools and Cassack classes. Our Crimean children are taught how to be prepared to battle and how to fight.” (Ukrinform, May. 2020e).*

Again, the modality of the statements suggests that these are undisputable truths, the diagnosis and evaluation of the forced conscription is providing support for the construction of the “Russia is consistently violation international law” frame. Since the conflict is essentially framed as Ukraine vs. Russia, Ukrainians who live in Crimea and fight for the pro-Russian side of the conflict, are defined as traitors:

*“This “commander” [Berezovsky] is a fly-by-night. He betrayed a day after his appointment. He has no commander’s glory in the Navy... There is no average portrait - whether a traitor or a deserter. There are people who come from Crimea whose parents stayed there and who moved to Ukraine with their wives because they are Ukrainians. And there are those who have spoken Ukrainian all their lives, had a clear Ukrainian identity, but went to serve in the Russian army... But this is our history which you cannot escape - two-thirds of the personnel remained in Crimea.” (Tarasov, A. 2020).*

This definition is only possible through the “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame, if the conflict is not framed like this it would not be possible to justify defining the pro-Russian Ukrainians as traitors. Through the Russian counter frame, it would instead be the Crimean’s who did not join up with Russia, who would be the traitors. Nevertheless, this statement also supports the Russian notion, that more than half of the Ukrainian military personnel acknowledges the incorporation of Crimea into Russia:

*““In particular, we were relieved to see the release of Stanislav Aseyev and Oleh Halaziuk, two contributors to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty whose names we have mentioned frequently here at*

*the Permanent Council. They were imprisoned for years in retaliation for their reporting about everyday life in the territories controlled by Russia-led forces,” he said.” (Ukrinform, May. 2020k).*

This statement proposes a counter frame to the Russian frame that “Russia are bringers of humanitarian efforts, independence, and freedom”. Their publications are presented as simple objective “reports about everyday life in the territories controlled by Russia”. This combined with the transitivity of their imprisonment being directly derived from these reports, suggests that Russia are in fact quite on the contrary to their frame. All this is presented with a modality suggesting it to be an objective truth.

#### *EU as Ukrainian ally*

Again, like in the media publications of UNIAN, the actions of the EU towards the conflict are covered as well, the EU are presented through an “EU as Ukrainian ally” frame. The EU supports Ukraine by condemning and sanctioning Russia, as well as providing financial support for the Ukrainian economy:

*“Ukraine’s partners in the OSCE condemned Russia’s ongoing arms and military supplies to its armed formations, which continue temporary occupation of certain areas of Donbas... The delegations of the OSCE participating States stressed the importance of making progress in this direction, which will enable strengthening national measures to combat the illicit trafficking of these weapons.” (Ukrinform, May. 2020b).*

Russia’s actions towards the conflict are condemned by the OSCE and the relation is defined as a partnership, this is a diagnosis which construct the “EU as Ukrainian ally” frame. The “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame is also enabled in this discourse, when Russia is presented as providing arms for the pro-Russian side of the conflict, as well as amplified when this action is mentioned as “illicit trafficking” which is a definition commonly acknowledged as bad value in the overall social space. Furthermore, the “EU as Ukrainian ally” frame is extended by mention of EU financial aid allocated towards the Ukrainian economy, for the good of all Ukrainian citizens:

*“The EU commissioner welcomed this decision of the Ukrainian parliament and added that Ukraine had fulfilled all the conditions for the allocation of further macro-financial assistance by the EU. As soon as the International Monetary Fund provides its final assessment and approves further cooperation with Ukraine, the EU will be ready to disburse the second tranche under the fourth macro-financial assistance program in the amount of EUR 500 million immediately,”. Kuleba thanked for the initiative of the European Commission to provide Ukraine with EUR 1.2 billion of special macro-financial assistance to stabilize the economy due to the coronavirus pandemic.” (Ukrinform, May. 2020c).*

Ukraine is then presented as working towards strengthening their relations with the EU, and since the EU agreed to aid Ukraine financially, and the EU commissioner “welcomed the decision” the EU is positively positioned towards strengthening relations with the Ukraine as well. Also, transitivity of Ukrainian economy being stabilized is presented as a result of EU aid, so if the country’s economy do stabilize, the EU will get the credit for this, not Russia. Covering incidents like this one might indicate that the Ukrainian government seeks to be recognized as employing a pro-EU course, it may also just

mean that they seek to be recognized as exploring all their options. Though considering they do not provide any publications, which indicates that they seek to strengthen their relations with Russia as well, even though some might suggest, that the prisoner exchanges with pro-Russian forces as this exactly, the former seems more likely than the latter. Not only the EU in its entirety is used to present the EU as Ukrainian allies, specific countries are presented as pushing Ukraine's interests within the EU:

*"The theme of contacts is to establish a true ceasefire and create new disengagement areas. It was reported that Russia had offered resistance to the negotiations until the last moment but had agreed to them under pressure from Germany."* (Ukrinform, May. 2020f).

*"In 2019, the United Kingdom invested more than \$2 billion in Ukraine's economy and entered top-3 major countries - investors in our country."* (Ukrinform, May. 2020g).

The discourse of these two statements are quite neutral, the modality of the first quote regarding Russia's resistance is presented without suggestions as to whether it is true or false, it is simple presented as "it was reported". The transitivity however present Germany as the direct cause for Russia agreeing to a cease fire. Also, both statements contribute the construction of the "Eu as Ukrainian ally" through evaluation of EU membership countries actions taken towards supporting Ukraine. A ceasefire could be perceived as both Russia and Ukraine taking steps towards ending the conflict, and thus both should receive credit for doing so. Russia is attempted to be denied of his credit when they are presented as being reluctant to do so. Furthermore, the UK and the U.S are presented as supporting Ukraine as well, by calling on Russia to release all remaining prisoners:

*"The UK also commends the Ukrainian leader's commitment to "seek justice for those protestors murdered in 2014." "Russia must fulfil its obligations under the Minsk agreements and immediately release all remaining Ukrainian political prisoners," the statement underscores"* (Ukrinform, May. 2020i).

*"There remain several hundred Ukrainians detained by Russia and its proxies in eastern Ukraine, and many more Ukrainian political prisoners held in Crimea and Russia. We call for their immediate release," Ambassador James Gilmore, the U.S. Permanent Representative to the OSCE said"* (Ukrinform, May. 2020j).

There is however no mention that Ukraine should release their pro-Russian prisoners, the focus is placed entirely upon the pro-Russian forces engaging in withholding prisoners. The same can be said for the armed confrontations which took place in 2014, when Ukraine is mentioned as "seeking justice for the [pro-European] protestors murdered in 2014". The protestors are not presented as fallen in battle, they were "murdered", which propose a transitivity that pro-Russian forces are responsible for this unjustifiable and wicked act, resulting in the deaths of these people. At the same time the death of pro-Russian individuals is not mentioned at all, this framing of the situation presents the pro-Russian forces as villains and the pro-EU forces as a sort of saints, while on the same time the pro-Russian forces are as they are consistently throughout Ukrinform publications, presented as the aggressors,

and the murdering of Ukrainian citizens is an extension of this frame. Charges made by the opposition towards allies are like in all media publications of UNIAN and Ukrinform researched, completely denounced:

*"The American diplomat underscored that the US concerned that Russian occupation authorities had extended the detention of Ukrainian activist Oleh Prykhodko, who was facing so-called "terrorism" charges in retaliation for peacefully exercising his right to free expression in protest of Russia's occupation."* (Ukrinform, May. 2020j).

The charges made towards Oleh Prykhodko by the pro-Russian side are presented as being downright ridiculous, when described as "so-called" this as well as the term being presented with quotation marks, means that the modality of the discourse, suggests that Ukrinform positions themselves as having no affiliation with the definition of this man as a terrorist. Furthermore, the actions of the charged individual is validated, he was charged unrightfully for simply "peacefully exercising his right to free expression", presenting a counter frame towards the "Russia as bringers of humanitarian efforts, independence, and freedom" as well as a frame amplification of the "Russia is invading Ukraine" frame by positioning the pro-Russian side as enemies of free speech, which is a value most fields in the overall social space wants to present themselves as upholding, so this aligns very well with the schemata of actors within these fields as well. The coverage of these three aforementioned statements, present the EU, UK and U.S as supporters of the Ukrainian claims, which is an evaluation supporting the construction of the "EU, (and U.S) as Ukrainian ally" frame, and providing grounds for nurturing a stronger relationship with these. This is furtherly sought to be obtained with the discourse presented in this next statement as well:

*"Putin doesn't need Donbas but destabilize whole #UA and thus Europe, incl. through interference into future presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine," she said... At this event, the panel discussed recent developments in prisoner exchanges, humanitarian efforts to support vulnerable groups and the spillover effects of the conflict on the rest of Ukraine. They examined the obstacles to improving the humanitarian situation in Donbas and suggested ways to strengthen assistance provided by Ukraine's Western allies."* (Ukrinform, May. 2020l).

The countries are framed as "western allies" and presented as seeking to ally with Ukraine, because they initiate discussions for developing means towards supporting Ukraine's fight against the pro-Russian forces. Russia is at the same time presented as seeking to destabilize Ukraine and the EU as well bridging the "Russia is invading Ukraine" frame with the "Russian threat" frame. Furthermore, Russia is defined as interfering in the Ukrainian fields structure of positions. The actions of the pro-Russian forces are furtherly invalidated:

*This is the first major prisoner exchange between the two countries since 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine and Kremlin-backed separatists carved out two so-called people's republics in eastern Ukraine.* (Ukrinform, May. 2020k).

The incorporation of Crimea into Russia is yet again presented as an “annexation”, and the independence of Donetsk and Luhansk is presented as wrongful when defined as being “carved out”. The modality of the statement suggests no affiliation with the actions as well when these are described as “so-called”.

#### *Ukraine seeks to end the conflict*

Representing the Ukrainian government, Ukrinform supports the governments politics and actions. Zelensky have promised to do whatever he can to end the conflict, and so Ukrinform cover actions and initiatives which have been undergone to do so. Prisoner exchanges is one of those initiatives towards accomplishing this, so these events are heavily covered. This coverage have already been mentioned numerous times throughout this analysis of Ukrinform’s media publications, others include “*Ukraine-Russia prisoner swap begins*” (Ukrinform, Sep. 2019) and discourse within publications like “*The prisoner swap is a major domestic triumph for Ukraine’s new president, Volodymyr Zelensky*” (Ukrinform, May. 2020). “*As noted, the prisoner exchange is another example of President Zelensky’s determination to bring an end to the conflict in eastern Ukraine*” (Ukrinform, May. 2020). Zelensky is presented as “determined” to end the conflict, this builds upon a transitivity of the conflict end (when that happens), as being a result of Zelensky’s determination. Like the conflicts end, the prisoner exchanges are presented with a transitivity, as Zelensky being the direct responsible party for the release of many prisoners, which at the same times means Ukraine is moving towards ending the conflict. The evaluation of these events then contribute to the construction of the “Ukraine seeks to end the conflict” frame:

*“the advance to the end of the war has intensified. Due to Zelensky’s personal involvement, some of the prisoners and hostages held in Russia and in the occupied territory have been released.”* (Ukrinform, May. 2020m).

Again, focus is on the pro-Russian side releasing prisoners, and thus having taken prisoners in the first place, also focus is on Zelensky’s role toward the release of these prisoners, with no regard towards the cooperation of Putin needed for this process to be possible. Another initiative employed by the government towards ending the conflict, is to strengthen the relationship with the EU, and thus receive more support from powerful actors within this field:

*“Ukraine is moving to a united Europe and NATO. The war with the Russian aggressor is continuing, although great efforts are being made to end it fairly for Ukraine, and they are already bringing results.”* (Ukrinform, May. 2020m).

The government is presented as working towards “a united Europe and NATO”, meaning the incorporation of Ukraine into the EU, since Ukraine is a European country. Also, the EU is providing “great efforts towards ending the conflict fairly for Ukraine”, proposing that not only Ukraine is working towards becoming incorporated into the EU, the EU is working towards unifying with Ukraine as well. So, In this statement the “EU as Ukrainian ally” is enabled through the diagnosis of these

actions. The statement also enables the “Russia is invading Ukraine” frame when the entire conflict is defined as a “war with Russian aggressors”, and the “Ukraine seeks to end the conflict” frame, because this is covered in a publication presenting Zelensky’s efforts towards ending the conflict. so three of the four major frames presented in this section is enabled within this statement.

### 5.3 Summarization

Media institutions are very powerful actors in terms of influencing public opinions, whether the media is operating internally within the field it influences or externally. All media institutions researched, seeks to influence not only citizens within the field of Ukraine, but the overall social space as well, most likely because gaining the support of as many actors as possible within the overall social space, furtherly legitimizes their perspectives. Media institutions are major players in the context of cultural production and reproduction, meaning they are dominated in the field of power. This means they have the choice of allying with the economically dominant actors in the field of power, or the dominated actors within social spaces, independent journalism and media institutions are the incarnation of an alliance made with the dominated actors in social spaces, and well financed media, which is often mainstream mass media, because this level of finance provides them with the resources to become mainstream, are the incarnation of the alliance with the dominant actors in the field of power, a national media institution is predominantly allied with dominant actors within their respective fields, since these are financed by the government, and is then at the policy makers disposal, catering to their needs. The media researched in this study are all allied with dominant actors within the field of power, UNIAN financed by a powerful private actor, and Ukrinform and RT financed by the Ukrainian and Russian governments. The alliance with dominant actors, means the media publications are related more to being an influence upon the field within which they are consumed, rather than being influenced by it, especially if the economic dominant actor funding the media institution is a government, since a nations income is not easily susceptible to major influence by their income providers, a major part of the citizens would have to decide that their funding for the media through taxes should change, and they need to utilize major actions towards implementing this decision, which very rarely happens, because taxpayers are largely dominated by the government. Other media institutions allied with dominant actors in the field of power, can be more susceptible to influence by their recipients, if they are funded by for instance marketing, NGOs or unions, which all in some way receive funding from the consumers of the media. A direct alliance with dominated actors within the social space is even more so, this is much more related to being influenced by the consumers, since their funding often comes directly from costumers through subscriptions, meaning they would have to keep their costumers interests at heart, in order to keep receiving their funds. So, if I wanted to determine the opinion of the citizens using discourse analysis of media publications, I should have researched these types of media institutions instead, alas this is not the scope of the study. These relations are problematic in the sense that only citizens who have certain economic assets at their

disposal, are able to receive the least biased media products, citizens who are not wealthy enough to pay for their news, are compelled towards biased media and thus easier to influence. In relation to influence upon journalistic practices, the alliance with the dominant actors within the field of power, can entail influence on the journalistic codex and practices, altering them towards strengthening the agenda of the dominant actors. This could for instance be advertisement disguised as a factual article, or a political agenda wrapped in a depiction of a specific phenomenon. Or in the case of this study, providing far more salience towards events supporting the interests of one side, and events delegitimizing the other, as well as massively subjective presentation. Ukrinform's media publications have turned out to have a significant amount of similarities, with the discourse and framing used within UNIAN's publications. So Ukrinform seems to represent the pro-EU side of the conflict as well. Both UNIAN and Ukrinform apply frames which propose that Russia is the aggressor in the conflict, that they are invading Ukraine, and thus the conflict is not an internal struggle of allegiances towards either the EU or Russia, it is a struggle of Ukraine versus Russia, with EU as Ukrainian supporters. A minor difference between the discourse of the two, is that UNIAN also covers Russia without relation the conflict, Ukrinform does not. Since Ukrinform is representing the pro-European side of the conflict, and since the government have been elected by the citizens of Ukraine, this could suggest that the majority of the Ukrainian citizens are also pro-EU. However, the government might not have been clear on this allegiance during election. Based on the data of this research, we only know that they promised to end the conflict, which is presumably in the interest of more or less every Ukrainian citizen, regardless of being pro-Russian or pro-EU. So, whether or not the majority of the Ukrainian citizens favor a pro-EU course of action, is not possible to determine based upon this alone. Had I employed a vast number of interviews or quantitative questionnaires, towards determining recipients decoding of the media publications, I might have been much more inclined to be able to determine this. However, if the government gets re-elected, it could also be a strong indicator that Ukrainian citizens are pro-EU, though the fact that Ukrinform's media publications are consumed by a very tiny portion of the Ukrainian citizens, could pose a degree of inaccuracy towards this assumption. Also, much can happen in the years to come before an election, and the government may change course beforehand. Generally, across almost all media channels researched, the conflict seems to be subjected to minor coverage at the time of analysis. There was one article or less on the media channels starting related to the conflict, Ukrinform being the only exception. Ukrinform were in sharp contrast to the rest of the media institutions, where the vast majority of articles on their starting page, were related to the conflict. Where covid-19 receives a heavy amount of coverage in the other media channels researched, in Ukrinform's the pandemic was subjected to as little media coverage, as the conflict was within other media channels, only one article on their starting page was related to the pandemic. The reason Ukrinform's media publications are structured as such, can be contributed to the fact that the government was elected on the promise that they would end the conflict, so many publications cover

the fulfillment of this promise. The government seeks to maintain support from the citizens, so they would try to provide support for the notion that they are doing so, as much as possible, through their media publications. The pandemic on the other hand, is very tough to handle in a country who is already going through an economic crisis, so most events which relate to this, are probably not stories of success, meaning the coverage of such, would not seek to further strengthen their support from the Ukrainian citizens. The reasons as to why it can be hard to find publications directly related to the conflict in RT, might be because Russia seeks to remove focus from their alleged role towards it. However, considering the frames RT enable, they would not seek to remove focus from Russia's role in the conflict, instead they would seek to promote an image of themselves and their involvement, as providing humanitarian efforts, fighting oppression, and promoting freedom in the conflicted regions. These findings provide a sharp contrast to some of the literature researched, which suggests that Russia seeks to cover up their involvement. Another reason as to why there are few publications regarding the conflict, could be that the conflict may be settling and nearing an end, or because the media consumers simply does not have any interest in the conflict any longer. Whether or not the conflict is nearing an end, can be hard to determine based on the characteristics of the data forming the basis of this research, however, if all media channels, especially the ones operating within the fields where the conflict is played out, are not covering the conflict very extensively either, it will support this notion furtherly, though not be able to confirm it entirely, to do this an extensive research done within the conflicted areas, would have to be undertaken. A strong indicator that the conflict is nearing an end, would also be the coverage of such in media, especially Ukrinform would cover any indication that this is the case, no matter how small, since their support from the people, is largely based on exactly this. Keeping this in mind, and the fact that all media institutions produce media material for an international (the overall social space) audience, and also the fact that UNIAN is not covering the conflict very extensively either, which due to their framing as the conflict being a result of Russian aggression, hugely supports their pro-EU interests, the notion that the conflict is of little interest to the consumers of their media product, is by far the most likely. The conflict is likely of little interest to most European countries' populations, since regardless of the outcome, there are no real immediate direct impact upon their lives, though UNIAN and Ukrinform's frames seeks to construct this perception. In the countries neighboring Ukraine, there is likely a slightly higher level of interest since these, being subject to western media, are likely under the impression that Russia is to be feared and thus fear they might end up bordering Russia directly. Within the media discourse of the three researched media channels, a massive amount of counter frames are present. RT present Crimea as seeking Russia's support and democratically voted for an incorporation into Russia/UNIAN and Ukrinform present Crimea as annexed by Russia, RT present U.S as aggressors/UNIAN and Ukrinform present Russia as aggressors, RT present Russia as fighting for the independence and freedom of speech of the conflicted regions/UNIAN and Ukrinform present Ukraine as fighting for the



independence and freedom of speech of the conflicted regions, and simultaneously present Russia as doing the exact opposite. RT present Russia as providing humanitarian efforts/UNIAN and Ukrinform present Russia as pretending to provide humanitarian efforts, and the EU as providing humanitarian efforts. UNIAN and Ukrinform propose that Russia violates international law/RT propose that the EU, and U.S violates international law, UNIAN and Ukrinform present Russia as alienating Ukrainian citizens in the conflicted regions/RT present Ukraine as alienating pro-Russian citizens in conflicted regions. RT present Russia a prosperous country/UNIAN present Russia as a declining country, RT present Russian presence in black sea as providing security/UNIAN and Ukrinform present the U.S and NATO presence in black sea as providing security. RT define Euromaidans as terrorists/UNIAN and Ukrinform define pro-Russians as terrorists. Also, the conflict is framed by RT as a battle between a pro-Russian side and a pro-EU side, while UNIAN and Ukrinform frame it as Ukraine struggling to maintain their independence from Russia. So, contrary to what is suggested within the literature reviews in chapter two, the pro-EU media seeks to demonize the pro-Russian side, not the other way around, they focus a lot more on presenting the pro-Russian side and their actions negatively, all the while there are little to no coverage of the same actions of the pro-EU side. If we consider European media for a second in this regard, their presentation of the conflict supports the Russian frame of the conflict, as a struggle between a pro-Russian side and a pro-EU side (Amadeo, K. 2020). Because UNIAN and Ukrinform applies this frame consistently throughout all of their media publications, this is a very interesting fact. They are completely leaving out any notions, that any Ukrainians at all are supporting a Ukrainian alliance with Russia, apart from one mention of Ukrainian military personnel in Crimea, joined Russian forces when Crimea became incorporated into Russia. Instead all actions of the pro-Russian side, are presented as Russian actions, and thus Russia is then antagonizing and invading Ukraine, they are trying to dominate and enslave all Ukrainian citizens. All the frames used by UNIAN and Ukrinform then support and strengthen each other, Russia is invading Ukraine, which means Russia is the enemy, making the only sensible solution to seek allies against Russia, being the EU. This seems to me as an unfavorable strategy, since it weakens their resolve to leave out something like this, which from any point of view, statistically, emotionally, logically etc. is highly unlikely to be true. Regardless of the number of Ukrainians who want to ally with Russia and fight for the pro-Russian side of the conflict, there is bound to be some. Both sides employ interviews of individuals, who hold a significant amount of recognition within their opponent's field, in order to further legitimize their claims. RT published and interview with Oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky, who have been known for long to support Ukraine's pro-EU aspirations, in order to delegitimize this course of action, by quoting him suggesting that the EU and U.S is exploiting Ukraine and are only providing enough support, to keep the Ukrainian government and citizens in the belief that they are helping them. Furthermore, he is quoted saying that Russia would most definitely provide a greater amount of assistance than the EU does. Statements like these, originating from an individual who holds a very significant position of power and recognition

within the Ukrainian field, is a huge asset towards legitimizing the Russian frames and delegitimizing the Ukrainian frames. The Russian claim that EU is not really supporting the Ukraine, they are more using them seems not at all unrealistic, the support provided for Ukraine by the EU and the U.S really does seem minor, considering that no direct military action have been engaged towards assisting the Ukraine, except for maybe the alleged funding of pro-European protesters at the origin of the conflict. This can even be derived from publications from UNIAN, even though UNIAN does not at all present it this way. Nevertheless many of the publications covering EU support, illustrate that this support is minor, 7 meetings have for instance been held towards discussing the consequences of Russia's "annexation" of Crimea, but only minor consequences have been imposed, being mainly sanctions. Also, Ukraine have signed the association agreement, but have still not yet become a member. Much in the same way Ukrinform and UNIAN employ an interview with a Russian political scientist, who may not hold a strong position of power, but is subjected to recognition of a certain amount within the Russian field. This actor provide statements towards legitimizing Ukrainian frames and delegitimizing Russian frames, when she define Russia as a totalitarian state with no regard for their citizens, and when she use the same discourse as the Ukrainian media institutions, when for instance defining Crimea as annexed. Both sides discourse in this regard is also hard to contest, Russia really does seem a lot like a totalitarian state, considering the amount of government dominated media, and the massive control Putin has over the country. Determining whether the U.S performed a controlled coup of the Ukrainian government, or it happened internally, is very hard to determine based on the characteristics of this research, the methods and data used. Though considering the U.S has a long history of interfering in the structure of positions within other fields, it is hard to completely denounce this claim, however impossible to confirm or debunk on the basis of this research. The same goes for all the other conflicting frames, it is impossible to define which is closest to representing reality, since both opposing frames are essentially defining the exact same action or process. However, from a social constructivist perspective, this will inevitably come down to which frame ends up being acknowledged in the overall social space. The annexation of Crimea or Crimea sought to become united with Russia are both exactly the same process, being Crimea's incorporation into Russia. A vote most likely took place, but whether or not this voting process is acknowledged as lawfully correctly carried out, and the significance of this, will eventually come down to which frame becomes most acknowledged in the overall social space, and considering Russia's position and the allegiances the EU and U.S propose towards this conflict, it is very unlikely that the Russian frames becomes the most acknowledged. However, because something becomes acknowledged in the overall social space, does not necessarily mean it becomes acknowledged in all fields as well, it simply means that fields who does not adopt what is acknowledged in the overall social space, becomes dominated here. This means that Russia does not need to get the entire overall social space to acknowledge their frames, to achieve fulfillment of their interests within this conflict, they simply need to obtain acknowledgement of their frames within the Ukrainian field,

or largely just the conflicted regions, which seems to be the case. Powerful actors may then condemn this “truth” but unless direct military action is taken in order to correct it, this is of little importance. Since Russia’s interests are heavily related to the conflicted regions, gaining these would pose a small but extremely significant victory. Considering the history of the two fields, it is much more likely that Ukraine will end up strengthening their ties with Russia rather than the EU. However, considering the most dominant media discourse (UNIAN) in the Ukraine, it is more likely that Ukraine will end up strengthening their ties with the EU. Culturally the habitus of Ukrainians align heavily with Russia, and so their schemata is similar as well, since they have been interrelated and conjoined for many years, this is also likely the reason, why Russia is found to be appealing to the habitus and schemata of the Ukrainian citizens, far more than Ukrainian media. However, the power of media to change the culture of a population is strong and powerful, Ukrainian media are working on this exactly, and have been for years now. From an economic point of view, it seems rather tied however, with favor towards Russia. If we consider the analysis and data of this research, Russia has been referred to as providing better economic conditions than the EU. Unlike the Ukrainian media institutions, Russian media do not try to leave out actions which are unfavorable towards their frames, instead they seek to undermine the significance of these actions, when for instance EU support is defined as minor and insignificant, presenting the different sides with opposite levels of affinity. Much in the same manner, Russian media mention the deaths of opposition and the Ukrainian prisoners they release as well, which on the contrary is largely unmentioned and understated in the Ukrainian media publications. Here they emphasize the release of Ukrainian prisoners from Russia and the losses on their own side, almost without mention of their Russian prisoners and losses on the Russian side. Considering the literature studied regarding the Russian media discourse, this was mentioned as discourse used within Russian media, in order to dehumanize the opposition and create strong emotional attachments to their own forces, this study provide evidence for the complete opposite, that Ukrainian media uses this kind of discourse, even alienating Ukrainians who are pro-Russia and Russian media does not. Instead Russian media emphasize connections through the habitus of the Ukrainian and Russian people, by focusing on the cultural and historical commonalities and ties between the two nations, in order to strengthen their resolve. These include a skepticism towards western culture, meaning that opposing dominant actors of western fields, strengthen the support from actors with this western skepticism as a part of their habitus and schemata. In Russian media discourse, relating to cultural history of the two nations were common, which in the Ukrainian media were not an employed approach. Here habitus- and schemata related discourse was not employed at all, to neither sides of the conflict. This is likely because this discourse, is in fact one which strengthens the pro-Russian sides interests of maintaining Ukraines autonomous position within the overall social space. So, the alliance between the pro-Russian forces in Ukraine and the field of Russia, may in fact be an alliance of actors dominated in the field of power, but dominant in their own field (Russian government), and actors dominated in the field of

power and their own field (pro-Russian Ukrainians). Russia is in fact implementing conservation strategies which involve the demand for change, which propose that in order to conserve the Ukraine's independence and cultural heritage, they need to change their relations with Russia into a stronger relationship. At the same time the pro-Russian Ukrainians implement strategies, which demand the maintenance of their threatened rights, being their rights to conserve their cultural heritage and way of life. This might also mean that the pro-Russian side of the conflict, is in fact the least supported in Ukraine and thus the dominated. Whether or not the alleged voting's to join Russia within the conflicted field were carried out lawfully, is hard to say based on this study. However, we can make assumptions regarding whether a lawful vote would favor the pro-EU side or pro-Russian side based on this data. The habitus and schemata of the individuals who inhabit the conflicted field, are largely coherent with the Russian field, due to historically strong ties and interrelations, these commonalities are strongest in the south-eastern regions of Ukraine (the conflicted field), because they are inhabited by a large percentage of individuals of Russian origins, and because geographically they are rubbing noses with Russia, which have meant a great deal historically, in terms of cultural influences. Because of this it is likely that the majority of the inhabitants, are in fact more predisposed towards joining Russia than joining EU. This assumption is also supported by the fact, that there are mentions of heavy desertion or joining the Russian military, among Ukrainian military personnel within the region of Crimea, when this region was incorporated into Russia, in not only RT but in Ukrinform as well. So, it is likely that the majority of Crimean citizens have voted for an incorporation into Russia. Because of the discourse employed by pro-EU media, the pro-EU side may have interests towards dragging out the conflict, since their discourse presents Russia as the cause, prolonging the conflict will then hurt Russian reputation. So the fact that Zelensky is working towards resolving the conflict, having agreed to numerous prisoner swaps with Russia so far, might be perceived by pro-EU actors and the U.S as against their interests, while Russia promotes these effort. So how the prisoner exchange should be perceived is contested, is it a good thing towards ending the conflict, or is it a bad thing meaning Ukraine give in to Russia? Another assumption made within the literature reviewed, is that Russian media employs an "us/them" frame, this have not been confirmed within this study, this would also be unfavorable, since this means that some of the Ukrainian citizens would then be alienated, which would be against Russian interests of strengthening ties towards the Ukraine. If an us/them frame is to be defined, it would be by the pro-EU side, where the pro-Russian Ukrainian citizens are alienated, however they are not mentioned at all. So, the closest we would come to an "us/them" frame, is Ukrainian citizens being the "us" and Russia being the "them" within Ukrainian media, and the pro-EU side being the "them" and pro-Russian side being the "us" within Russian media. However, this frame is too broad to be of any significance, in any conflict there are two sides and thus an us/them paradigm, making this an insignificant concept. If we consider hybrid warfare and information warfare in relation the theory of fields, this process can be defined as changing the characteristics of the field of the

enemy, which is certainly the case regarding this conflict. The field of Ukraine is not only subjected to hybrid warfare (and information warfare) from one front but from two, both the EU (and U.S) as well as Russia are interfering in the Ukrainian field, and both fields seek to legitimize their own influence and delegitimize the others. The main context of hybrid warfare is that of information, media is heavily utilized in order to try and motivate the citizens and government of Ukraine, to adopt their proposed change and reject the others, this is done through clever use of discourse and framing. Furthermore, both sides accuse the other of great interference within Ukraine's political structure (and this structure of positions), by providing all the right criteria for such a restructuring to take place. Russian media accuse the U.S of being responsible for the removal of Yanukovich from political power, by funding and arming pro-EU extremists, and the U.S accuse Russia for intervening in the democratic processes in Crimea, annexing it and implementing pro-Russian leaders in the region, as well as supporting the pro-Russian citizens in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. Furthermore, also supporting the notion that this conflict can be defined as a hybrid war, with a heavy emphasis on information warfare, is the fact that rebel forces have developed within Ukraine for both sides of the conflict, the Euromaidans for the pro-EU side and the Antimaidans for the pro-Russian side. Rebel forces are dominated actors who have incorporated the characteristics of the enemy's field, in this case not Ukraine's enemy, but the opposing field who seek to attain legitimacy within Ukraine. A political restructuring is a powerful move towards pulling a conflict in your favor, it furtherly increase the incorporation of your characteristics into the conflicted field, because a political restructuring is a change in the elite or inhabitants of positions of power within the field, to actors who are in compliance with your characteristics, furtherly increasing the chances that these characteristics will be legitimized and acknowledged. Even more so because the government are the policy makers, they have the power to adjust the rules, laws, and power of other actors within a field, and thus the characteristics of the field. The discourse used by the media institutions toward this conflict include economic argumentation, the change both sides propose brings with it economic prosperity, which will affect the general welfare of the citizens positively, this change is proposed by economic dominant actors within the overall social space, which is exactly the kind of change which enables these actors to withhold their position of power. In this conflict again both sides employ this discourse and seek to delegitimize the other sides. The pro-Russian side emphasizes that their economy is prosperous, far more than the U.S who are in serious national debt and the EU who is plagued by recession due to the covid-19 pandemic, Russia however is still going strong, and are offering Ukraine far better economic support than their opposition. The pro-EU side does not frame Russia as a country with a bad economy, rather Russia is framed as one whose economy is reserved for the utmost elite, the rest of the actors subjected to the social structure of the Russian field, are oppressed and so will Ukraine be if they ally with Russia. Furthermore, emphasis is put on multiple accounts of economic aid EU have provided Ukraine with. So, both seek to establish a position of power within the Ukrainian field and use economic

argumentation for doing so. Essentially the conflict boils down to a struggle between the south-eastern regions and the rest of the Ukraine, to define the conflicted field (south-eastern regions). The majority of the inhabitants of the south-eastern regions likely favor a pro-Russian course for Ukraine, while the rest of the Ukraine likely favor a pro-EU course for the country. The core of the conflict then seems to be internal, however both sides receive support from Russia and EU (and U.S) respectively, and both are trying to influence the field of Ukraine and the field of the conflicted regions in their favor. Many allegations have been presented towards either side, and both externally involved fields have been accused of being the root cause of the conflict, the fields of the EU (and U.S) for a fear that the pro-Russian actors within the Ukrainian field, held the largest positions of power, and the Russian field for the fear that the pro-EU actors within the Ukrainian field, were about to take these positions of power. So, from one point of view Russia seeks to homogenize the field of Ukraine, by keeping the culture of the field within the range of their historical context, and thus the characteristics of the field aligned with the characteristics of the Russian field, in order to maintain dominance and power within the Ukrainian field, or at least the bits of Ukraine which are favorable to hold for Russia, so one could say that Ukraine is fighting for their freedom from Russia. However, the opposition seeks to heterogenize Ukraine, by incorporating Ukraine into the European Union, and thus increase the influence of the dominant actors within the overall social space on the Ukrainian field, which would mean that the EU would then be attaining dominance and power over the Ukraine. So, the freedom from one, means being dominated by another. Considering the state of economic crisis the field of Ukraine is in at the moment, the production within the field is focused on economic gain, thus joining up with neither does not seem like an option, they need the support of one or the other. So, the entirety of Ukraine is then torn between these two courses of action, and whether or not the country as a unity favors one or the other is hard to tell, especially since the government constantly switch between being pro-Russian and pro-EU. Essentially both neighboring fields seem to indeed be the cause of the conflict if we consider the interests of the fields. Ukraine's interests are largely weighed towards ending the conflict and return Ukraine to a unified state, the EU (and U.S) interests are largely weighed towards the Ukraine not being incorporated into Russia, and the Russian interests are largely weighed towards incorporating mainly Crimea into Russia, but also to some extent the entirety of Ukraine. Because Crimea is of such a large interest to Russia, they will likely be inclined to settle with only the incorporation of Crimea, this is an assumption upon which the pro-EU side of the conflict can strengthen the Ukrainian governments support for their interests of joining the EU, because this would then mean a larger chance of keeping Ukraine unified. However, this is likely a last resort for Russia, who would most likely prefer to rebuild a strong relationship with the entirety of the Ukraine, because this would provide the biggest influence on their position within the overall social space. Russian possibilities to enact influence of upon the field of Ukraine, has been greatly weakened through sanctions of Russian media, meaning they have lost a significant amount of power to influence most

parts of the Ukrainian field, only in the south-eastern regions their power of influence is still strong. The possibilities for the field of the EU (and U.S) to enact influence on the Ukrainian field, has on the contrary rapidly increased, meaning that for the most parts of the Ukraine (all except the conflicted regions) EU discourse holds the majority of the power to influence the citizens, Russia however I more in alignment with the citizens of the Ukrainian fields habitus and schemata, so even though the pro-EU media institutions hold the majority of the power to influence the field at this point, they are going to have a hard time doing so. Also, as we know economic crisis tends to push a field towards heterogenization rather than homogenization, and that crisis situations strengthen the chances of radical discourse being accepted by the consumers. So, because Ukraine is in a bit of an economic crisis spurred on by the COVID-19 pandemic, this might in fact greatly strengthen the pro-EU side's chances of attaining dominance in the Ukrainian field. However, Russia presumably propose a much stronger economic aid, meaning that homogenization might be favored as a result of economic crisis in this case. So, this is a slightly unique situation in relation to homogenization or heterogenization, because homogenization usually means that a field stays autonomous, distancing themselves from all other fields, this is not the case here. Homogenization includes the Russian field, who inhabit a strong position within the field of power, allying with a strong actor within the field of power usually means heterogenization, but not in this case since the field of Russia and Ukraine are very much similar, in terms of characteristics and that these characteristics are very much opposing those of the overall social space, meaning that they share the same autonomy. In any case, the chances that the an alliance with the EU will include the south-eastern regions, are still slim considering the immensely strong cultural and emotional ties the majority of the citizens within this field has towards Russia, so keeping these fields characteristics aligned with the characteristics of the Russian field, will then empower them.

## 6. Conclusion

Accusations that Russian media employ a significant amount of carefully constructed discourse and framing, in order to influence citizens perceptions in their favor, are in fact quite adequate. One of these major frames are "U.S as the antagonist and Russia as the protagonist", positioning Russia in a defensive position against U.S controlled attacks, including those initiated through their allies in the EU. The conflict in Ukraine is a U.S attempt to detach Ukraine from Russia, in order to weaken their position in the overall social space. The second main frame found within Russian media publications is "Russia as a prosperous country and the U.S and EU as failing entities", so while the U.S and the EU seeks to weaken their position within the overall social space, this frame is meant to strengthen Russia's position, as well as weaken the position of the U.S and the EU. The last frame frequently employed within Russian media discourse is that "Russia are bringers of humanitarian efforts, independence, and freedom", this frame employs discourse which is largely acknowledged within the

overall social space, these are virtues that are highly valued. Again, the frame strengthens Russia's position within the overall social space, so Russian interests are largely targeted towards improving their position within the overall social space, by keeping Ukraine in the Russian fold. Furthermore, Russia present a strong affinity with the pro-Russian side of the conflict, and do not deny direct involvement as such, they rather seek to frame their involvement in a positive manner. Russia seek to ally with the Ukraine and employ discourse which aligns with Ukrainians habitus and schemata, due to the common characteristics of the two fields. Russia and Ukraine share a collective history and culture, Ukraine is so closely related to Russia and so far from having commonalties with the EU, that siding with Russia rather than the EU, will undoubtedly result in Ukraine gaining a much more favorable position in a Russian alliance than an EU alliance. Even though focus on the pro-EU side's use of media discourse, towards influencing the perceptions of citizens in their favor, have been scarce within literature regarding the conflict, it turns out that the pro-EU side are no less innocent in this matter. UNIAN too frequently employ carefully constructed discourse and frames, in order influence citizens perceptions to further their interests. The first major frame I found within UNIAN's media discourse is "pro-Russian side of conflict as aggressors and lead by Russia – Russia is invading Ukraine". This frame is meant to first of all cement Russian involvement in the conflict, in fact they are presented as the initiators, they started the conflict, while Russian frames propose that the U.S started the conflict. As invaders, Russia is presented as the enemy of Ukraine. The second major frame found within UNIAN media publications is "Russia is a threat to the EU as well as Ukraine", this frame involves the EU in the conflict, by bridging it with a commonly used frame employed within the EU being "the Russian threat" frame. Another major frame represented within UNIAN's media discourse is "EU as Ukrainian ally", the EU is frequently mentioned as providing sound support for Ukraine, towards aiding them in the conflict. The perception of the EU as a possible ally, is sought to be further strengthened among citizens by this frame. The last major frame is "Russia as a declining country plagued by totalitarian oppression", which furtherly supports the perception that allying with EU is the best possible course of action, through the characterization of Russia as inhabiting the worst possible attributes an ally can have. UNIAN's interests are largely to encourage a stronger involvement from the EU and stronger ties between the EU and Ukraine, ultimately incorporating Ukraine into the EU, as well as to alienate Russia in the Ukrainian field, presenting them as the enemy and unfavorable allies, who seek to exploit Ukraine and oppress them under Russian totalitarianism. With no mention towards a pro-EU and a pro-Russian internal Ukrainian struggle, the conflict is defined as one between Russia and Ukraine, UNIAN is then not presenting themselves as pro-EU but pro-Ukraine. Ukrinform too employs a significant amount of carefully constructed discourse and framing within their media publications, I order to influence citizens perceptions, to further their interests. Two of the four major frames found within Ukrinform's media discourse are employed by UNIAN as well, being "Russia as aggressors and is invading Ukraine" and "Eu as Ukrainian allies", the third frame "Russia as consistent violator of



International law” is quite similar to framing used by UNIAN as well, though the focus is on Russia violating the rules of the overall social space, rather than being directly related to the EU in particular. The last frame is that “Ukraine seeks to end the conflict”, this frame is meant to support the governments policies. The government was elected based heavily upon this statement, so providing information which strengthen the perception that results have in fact been achieved towards this goal, is of vital importance in order to maintain their legitimacy and position of power within the Ukrainian field. So, Ukrinform’s discourse and framing are largely coherent with UNIAN’s, this strongly suggests that the Ukrainian government are favoring the pro-EU side of the conflict. The Ukrainian governments interests are therefore also largely coherent with UNIAN and the pro-EU sides interests, the Ukrainian government present themselves as working towards allying with the EU, this interest is however not as heavily represented in Ukrinform’s discourse as it is in UNIAN’s, nevertheless it is significant. Instead the most significant interest of the Ukrainian government, is to project themselves as working towards ending the conflict.

## 7. Perspective

Doing this study, I got to feel firsthand how effective media discourse is, even despite having a large body of knowledge regarding discourse and framing, and how these tools are utilized towards a specific purpose. As I read through the publications of each media institution, I felt my perception of the conflict being influenced by the many publications I went through. Throughout working with each media institution, I felt a great amount of affiliation with the perspectives, presented through the discourse of the researched media institutions publications. The main reason I have not adopted any of these perspectives undisputable, can be contributed to the fact that I have subjected myself conflicting perspectives of different media institutions, underlining the importance of subjecting oneself to a diverse palette of perspectives on any given subject. It is no wonder hybrid warfare is so popular in modern warfare, it is very effective for numerous reasons which can be derived from this study. First off because people are generally quite social constructivist and busy, carefully constructed discourse implemented within media channels, which reach people without them having to seek it out, is very effective at gaining support for a cause. People usually do not actively seek to research, whether or not what they have been subjected to, is an undisputable truth or not. So even if a person is skeptical towards a cause and the presentation of it they are subjected to, consistently subjecting them to it, will eventually gain the support of the majority of the recipients. Secondly it is very cost-efficient, armed warfare is an expensive process, costing a vast amount of resources and often lives, which from an economic point of view is as valuable as they are from an emotional point of view, with the amount of training that is put into educating soldiers. Producing discourse is far less expensive. Third, when a conflict is fought through information warfare, whether or not a war is actually going on is rarely determined, and so military counteractions are rarely initiated, at least not to the same extend as if

the conflict was actually defined and acknowledged as a war. Information warfare is not only enabled during armed conflicts between nations, it is utilized in relation to many other struggles as well, meaning knowledge of the use of discourse and frames, is very useful in everyday life if one is interested in understanding, who is trying to influence you towards doing what. Political struggles are essentially information warfare as well, a contest of ideologies seeking to become dominant, and thus which perspective should be appointed, towards the governance of society and culture. Should we focus on economic growth or humanitarian prosperity, should we conserve historically cultural values or seek to diversify these, and so on. Powerful institutions also utilize discourse, in order to maintain their own position of power or contest others, and statistics and scientific research can be tools carefully constructed towards supporting these interests. However, due to the information age we live in now, mass media is in any case the far superior tool to succeed in an information war. No matter how masterfully constructed your discourse might be, if nobody is subjected to it, it is without power. How a conflict can be empowering, not only of actors directly involved in it, but of anyone subjecting themselves to it, can also be derived from this study. A conflict facilitates the publication of strategy and tactics used by experts, which would otherwise be unknown to most people, because in a conflict, actors seek to delegitimize the opponent's tactics by exposing them to the public. However, as we are able to realize when these tactics become known to us, is that these tactics are often not only enabled by the opponent, actors within our field enable them in order to influence us as well.

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## 9. Appendix

### Appendix 1. Display 1.

Source: own work.

