



# REDEFINING EURO-ATLANTIC VALUES: RUSSIA'S MANIPULATIVE TECHNIQUES


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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## REASONING

Since November 2013, when the uprising of the Ukrainian nation set in motion a wide spectrum of events and political process, researchers and policy makers have been questioning the reasoning, consequences, and international implications of those political processes, as well as their impact on the future of the international political environment.

This study, *Redefining Euro-Atlantic Values: Russia's Manipulative Techniques*, is not one of the many investigations published in recent months focusing on Russian information warfare in Ukraine. It is not a study about *them*. This is a study about *us*, namely, the 'transatlantic community'—a community we consider to be based on democratic values. This study seeks to answer an essential question: how can it be that countries, which enjoy leading positions in terms of prosperity, freedom, solidarity, innovation, economic competitiveness, and seemingly unlimited normative power based on the long-standing democratic traditions have neglected or ignored (intentionally and unintentionally) the manipulative redefinition of their core democratic values. By allowing our core democratic values to be

deconstructed and reconstituted by values derived from an authoritarian regime makes Western society vulnerable to influence.

Russia's international ambitions are not based on conquering new territories, but on creating mental landscapes susceptible to political manipulation. Russia's foreign policy goals with regard to the West are clear: 'to weaken the West economically, to split it politically, and to establish Russia as the hegemonic power on the European continent'<sup>1</sup>. Extensive material resources are unnecessary; individuals and societies that question themselves are decisive 'weapons' in the battle for influence.

Transitioning out of the international relationships that dominated during the Cold War was an eye- and mind-opening exercise for both governments and societies. Most of the countries that left the Soviet bloc, including the Baltic States, joined those that are based on democratic values; however some keep their old values, fashionably redressed in a style called 'sovereign democracy'.

1 Motyl, A.J. (2015) 'The West Should Arm Ukraine. Here's Why—And How', Foreign Affairs (10.02.2015), available at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/143056/alexander-j-motyl/the-west-should-arm-ukraine>, last time accessed 15.02.2015l.

# ONE CONCEPT, TWO INTERPRETATIONS

International relations are based on communication—communication between governments and communication between societies. Communication that delivers international norms, rules, and order depends on the use of a language that is understood by all parties involved. For twenty-five years the most influential partners in the transatlantic community seemed to speak the same language—a language that contributed to cooperation, mutual respect, and mutual benefit. However, events in Ukraine have clearly shown that while the vocabulary used by the various states is identical, the interpretation and implicit content of the words differs and can even be contradictory. The ‘foreign policy language’ spoken by politicians and experts from both democratic and authoritarian regimes has brought confusion to their respective societies. Values forming the backbone of our belief systems and attitudes are being contested. Belief systems that once were stable, durable, and difficult to influence have become a target for Russia’s political establishment, the state-controlled media and other instruments of social influence. Those in possession of the tools and techniques of influence can ‘get others to do what they want’<sup>2</sup>. The Euro-Atlantic community is under attack from the ‘What Russia wants, Russia gets!’ mind-set and policies of Russian elites. Due to the pressures of the Ukrainian crisis, the manipulative redefinition of values that began twenty-five

years ago is now undermining the coherence and functioning of core Euro-Atlantic values. The information fog, actively created by anti-democratic propagandists, makes it easier for our adversaries to sway public opinion. This path leads only to information chaos and political crisis. The subversion of the Euro-Atlantic political course could become a reality if we continue to ignore Russia’s new policy tools.

The study begins by elaborating a catalogue of Euro-Atlantic values in order to clarify language, illuminate the techniques used to redefine values, and identify how Russia has been using political strategic communication in Ukraine. The current interpretation of international affairs depends on the interplay ‘between the politics of territory, guns or money and the language of narrating the world in coherent and persuasive stories’<sup>3</sup>, so the catalogue of values has been divided into four categories: a) political values; b) economic values; c) moral values; d) international relations and international law. The indicators attached to each of those four groups on the basis of the results of Values surveys carried out in the West and in Russia have been used to provide a comparison of the interpretation of the same values in different political systems. (See Table 1. Summary: The Euro-Atlantic values catalogue: West’s and Russia’s interpretations)

Western society supports democracy as a manifestation of freedom and opportunity, while in Russia democracy is perceived as a sign of weakness and lack of leadership. An open and democratic economic system drives growth in the transatlantic community,

2 Nye, J. (2004). *Soft Power. The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs, p.5.

3 Chouliarakis, L. (ed) (2007). *The Soft Power of War*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, p. 2.



while the Russian people prefer a politically controlled and regulated economy; collectivism and the superiority of the state are chosen over respect for human rights, solidarity, individualism, and tolerance. In the realm of international law the West aligns itself with international norms and rules, while the popular home-grown opinion that Russia has become a victim of Western pressure and isolation prompts that state to individualistic posturing in the global arena. Value surveys provide evidence that there are two separate belief systems driving international politics and policies. The question arises— working from the basis of it's own belief system, to what extent can Russia redefine the values and belief system of the transatlantic community in the context of the Ukrainian crisis?

## MEDIA - MANIPULATION TECHNIQUES APPLIED

Without a doubt the media is the most comprehensive platform offering a wide spectrum of tools for influencing people's hearts and minds and redefining values. The Russian information campaign transformed information warfare during the Ukrainian crisis when the manipulation of public opinion escalated dramatically both internationally and domestically. This research project relies on four case studies: the MH-17 catastrophe; the implementation of counter-sanctions; the first humanitarian convoy; and the Minsk-2 agreement. By analysing the audio-visual platforms of news agencies RT (formerly known as Russia Today) and

Perviy Kanal we traced the process of value-redefinition. Perviy Kanal is the most popular TV channel among Russian-speakers both in Russia and it's neighbouring countries. RT is a news outlet with a relatively low number of viewers in Western countries, but with increasing potential. These media platforms provide information on the tools used to redefine values in the transatlantic space and in Russia. By applying critical discourse analysis to the selected cases, legitimisation methodology in particular, we have drafted a list of the manipulation techniques used by Russia during the crisis in Ukraine.

In all four cases, the five leading techniques for redefining political values were the COMMON MAN, LABELLING, IN/OUT GROUP, COMPARISON, and AUTHORITY. EXPERTISE, SIMPLIFICATION, and MORAL SUPERIORITY were used to influence the moral dimension. The redefinition of international order was based on the use of HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE, SIMPLIFICATION, and INFOTAINMENT techniques. Examples are the de-legitimisation of Western unity; separating the US from other Western countries such as the Netherlands or Germany; the vilification of the US in order to delegitimise NATO and other international organisations, and to prove that their information cannot be trusted; revelations that the European Court of Human Rights is politicised and biased; and the legitimisation of BRICS countries. Economic values were mostly redefined by the use of the COMMON MAN, AUTHORITY, COMPARISON, SILENCE, and VICTIMISATION techniques. Europe is portrayed to be the main victim of sanctions, whereas the Russian agriculture and food industries are portrayed as making the most of the opportunity to revive Russian national agriculture. Each of these techniques will be discussed in greater depth below.

# POLICY IMPLICATIONS

A study on the redefinition of Euro-Atlantic values is relevant not only for understanding how various manipulation techniques are applied in the media sphere, but also because it shows how such manipulations can influence international relations. Some policy makers would have us believe that the essence of Russian propaganda has been revealed and the democratic community has counter-measures in place that are successfully decreasing its influence. This argument is misleading, if not entirely false. Russia's efforts to de-construct and re-construct the international environment is sure to be a long-term process, and the manipulation techniques used during the Ukraine crisis will inevitably become more sophisticated. As time progresses we will surely find manifestations of manipulative propaganda in Russia's relations with other states and international organisations.

Russia is well armed with knowledge about both domestic and international target groups. An analysis of the narratives in news programmes presented by RT and Perviy Kanal show that identical messages can be adapted and contextualised according to the interests of the targeted groups of viewers. In the case of RT, such techniques as LABELLING, AUTHORITY, and INFOTAINMENT are used to undermine the quality of media, the objectivity of the presented news, and the credibility of western politicians and international organisations. When the quality, objectivity, and credibility of available information are called into question, Western society grows increasingly divided over the controversies presented in the media. Westerners are drawn into questioning the efficiency of their own foreign and security policies and the credibility of

their respective political leaders, while Russian leaders enjoy state control over the media that allows them to showcase clear and coherent messages supporting and strengthening the unquestioned policies of Vladimir Putin and the Russian political elite. Putin enjoys immense support for his policies, which adds to his capacity to define values. Russia's leadership also enjoys impressive support from its constituents for its policies towards China, the US, Ukraine and the EU with 90%, 85%, 83%, and 82% supporting each policy respectively<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, via RT and Perviy Kanal, Russia has free access to democratic societies, while the West's ability to influence Russian audiences is limited and controlled by the state.

As the opinions of European Union member states grow increasingly divisive across the entire spectrum of political issues, including policies towards Ukraine, Russia gains the upper hand by employing manipulative techniques. The Russian government has no qualms about implementing separate policies with each of the twenty-eight EU member states or exercising its power toward EU institutions.

One of the new mechanisms of influence at Russia's disposal is the use of the combination of the VOICE OF EXPERTISE together with the LABELLING and IN-OUT GROUP techniques. Think tanks and other similar organisations, generously financed by the Russian government or its affiliates, have proliferated in recent months. Their representatives appear on RT screens or at international conferences presenting 'watered down' versions of official Russian policies and questioning the efficiency

4 Pew Research Center. Spring 2015 Global Attitudes Survey. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/10/2-russian-public-opinion-putin-praised-west-panned/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.



and credibility of the EU and NATO member states. Still, the message these arguments are trying to convey remains the same—economic sanctions harm the well-being of Western societies, reductions in social spending harm the people, and increases in defence spending aggravate the arms race.

This study is based on four case studies spanning a relatively short time period. While too limited to put forward policy recommendations, there was enough pertinent evidence to allow researchers to point towards the dangers of Russia's increasing and far-reaching influence over the long-term. Three warnings were outlined as a result of this research. The success or failure of Russian manipulation, locally and globally, depends on:

- The ability of the transatlantic community to further develop the tools needed to defend and preserve democracy. Simplistic counter-measures will not work because the transatlantic community lacks sufficient knowledge of Russian society, has limited financial resources to build comprehensive and efficient media platforms, and faces the constraints and barriers put in place by the regime.
- The ability to withstand efforts to redefine democratic values. Western societies have taken democratic values for granted, and their role in preserving peace, security, and prosperity has gone largely unappreciated. The complexity of the many crises surrounding the Transatlantic Community has contributed to discussions about whether the existing set of values serves the interests of democratic countries. It is the responsibility of politicians, experts and civil society to disperse the information fog;
- The ability to assess our own faults and shortcomings constructively, as well as view attempts to redefine democratic values by non-democratic regimes with a critical eye.
- Opponents of the transatlantic community, including Russia, will continue their attempts to negatively redefine democratic values. The countries of the EU and NATO have become better informed about the dominant narratives used to rewrite the foundations of international order, and have accumulated skills and practices needed to recognise manipulation. However, the most decisive challenges still lie ahead—to find instruments that can ensure the continued existence of fundamental Euro-Atlantic values and the introduction of innovative methods to counter balance the manipulation efforts of those who would like to impose their vision.

The table on the next page presents the most typical examples of how political, economic, moral and international Euro-Atlantic values are being redefined.

# SUMMARY OF THE EXAMPLES OF THE REDEFINITION OF EURO-ATLANTIC VALUES

Values	Narratives used by Western audiences	Narratives used by Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques	Redefined values
Relations between state and society based on partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ukrainian authorities are unable to manage the country in social, economic and political spheres, therefore they cannot fulfil their duty towards their citizens</li> <li>• Ukraine does not have full control over its military, Ukrainian citizens in Eastern Ukraine area abandoned and forgotten by the central government</li> <li>• Chaos vs. Order comparing Ukraine to Russia</li> <li>• Discrediting the Ukrainian side</li> <li>• Promoting Russian authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ukrainian authorities are unable to manage the country in social, economic and political spheres, therefore they cannot fulfil their duty towards their citizens</li> <li>• Ukraine does not have full control over its military, Ukrainian citizens in Eastern Ukraine area abandoned and forgotten by the central government</li> <li>• Chaos vs. Order comparing Ukraine to Russia</li> <li>• Discrediting the Ukrainian side</li> <li>• Promoting Russian authorities</li> <li>• A lot of statistics provided to show military and civilian casualties</li> <li>• Refugees affirm Ukraine's failure as a state in a highly emotional manner</li> <li>• The hostility of the Ukrainian Armed forces is emphasised</li> <li>• Ukrainian commanders are abandoning their soldiers; detained Ukrainian soldiers are treated well and are exchanged quickly; parents are opposed to their sons serving in the Ukrainian army; soldiers are not ready to follow the orders of their commanders</li> <li>• The political system of Ukraine is controlled by external forces (the West)</li> <li>• Ukrainian parliamentarians don't take responsibility for their actions</li> <li>• Radicalisation of Ukrainian society is out of control, oligarchy is in power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• REPETITION (legal response, protection of the local market, high quality food)</li> <li>• LABELLING (aggressiveness of the Western market)</li> <li>• IN-OUT GROUPING (internal dimension – group of patriots; external dimension - splitting US/EU cooperation, splitting up the EU)</li> <li>• SILENCE (not engaging in negative assessment, ignoring the conflict in Ukraine)</li> <li>• AUTHORITY (Putin/ Medvedev/ministers in pseudo face-to-face communication, narrative of defending the national interests)</li> <li>• POSITIVE HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE</li> <li>• COMMON MAN (impact on Russian customers and farmers, Western farmers and customers)</li> <li>• A lot of STATISTICS provided showing military and civilian casualties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power of the Russian state is the central value of its citizens</li> <li>• Patriots of Russia do not complain</li> <li>• Ukraine is a failed state</li> <li>• Russia's moral superiority</li> </ul>

Values	Narratives used by Western audiences	Narratives used by Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques	Redefined values
<b>MORAL VALUES</b>				
“Moral quality of state”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is impossible to trust the Ukrainian authorities and the army</li> <li>• Ukraine and the US are immoral</li> <li>• Supporting the high quality of Russian expertise</li> <li>• Conspiracy vs. morality: one cannot trust the US - lack of transparency regarding 9/11; the case of American intelligence service disguising a plane flying to Cuba.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is impossible to trust the Ukrainian authorities and the army.</li> <li>• Topics added: poisoning of Yushchenko, Georgadze case, the civilian plane crash in 2001</li> <li>• Ukraine and the US are immoral</li> <li>• Supporting the high quality of Russian expertise</li> <li>• Conspiracy vs. morality: one cannot trust the US - the case of Powell regarding the evidence on Iraq</li> <li>• US benefits from the MH-17 catastrophe</li> <li>• The only side willing to help is Russia</li> <li>• Russia as peaceful actor supporting a non-violent solution to the conflict</li> <li>• Promotion of rebel authorities, silence on any problematic issues concerning the pro-Russian separatists</li> <li>• Unification of radicals and the irresponsible Ukrainian armed forces</li> <li>• Victimization of the Russian side and the pro-Russian separatists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIMPLIFICATION</li> <li>• TRANSFERENCE</li> <li>• EXPERTISE</li> <li>• AUTHORITIES</li> <li>• COMPARE IN CONTRAST</li> <li>• COMPARE SIMILARITIES (West)</li> <li>• HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE</li> <li>• MORAL SUPERIORITY OF RUSSIA</li> <li>• COMPARING DIFFERENCES</li> <li>• ROLE MODEL</li> <li>• COMMON MAN (locals in the region, Ukrainian refugees, Russian people)</li> <li>• EVALUATION</li> <li>• REPETITION</li> <li>• SILENCE (not a word of Ukrainian support)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The trust in Ukrainian and US governments should be questioned by everyone</li> <li>• Moral superiority of Russia (in its attitude towards the refugees and in handling of the MH-17 investigation)</li> <li>• Lack of western solidarity both among themselves and with Russia to find a peaceful solution to the conflict and provide aid to those in need</li> <li>• Dehumanisation of the Ukrainian armed forces</li> </ul>

Values	Narratives used by Western audiences	Narratives used by Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques	Redefined values
<b>ECONOMIC VALUES</b>				
Democratic values embedded in the economic system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ukraine uses the conflict to earn money by letting other states use its air-space</li> <li>• Europe is suffering from the conflict in Ukraine; it is not in the interests of the people or the European economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EU supports economic freedoms and opportunities only as far as their own farmers are concerned</li> <li>• The presence of Western goods in the Russian market is harming the Russian farmers</li> <li>• Western food as the face of the “free” market</li> <li>• Protection against low quality Western products</li> <li>• Positive hypothetical future for Russia’s small farmers</li> <li>• Negative hypothetical future for the West and its farmers</li> <li>• The diversification of suppliers: Russia opening up to new markets in Latin America (for meat), Africa and Asia (for fruit and vegetables)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SILENCE (on advantages of free market and on drawbacks and threats to the Russian market/economy)</li> <li>• IN-OUT GROUPING (by constructing dishonest competition and even aggression; it also includes suffering of Russian farmers; grouping at the EU level – common farmers vs. The ruling elite)</li> <li>• PSEUDO-PLURALITY (the voice of expertise does not refer to the conflict, only one motive is promoted as the reason for action)</li> <li>• VICTIMISATION (the poor conditions Russian farmers were in before the counter sanctions)</li> <li>• COMPARING (of the quality)</li> <li>• STATISTICS (numbers and figures (often without any reference) to legitimise statements)</li> <li>• COMMON MAN (Russian and Western farmers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic interests come first</li> <li>• Redefinition of the logic of the free market economy</li> <li>• Free market as a disadvantage and an illustration of the failure of the democratic system of governance</li> <li>• Sanctions against Russia harm Europe and strengthen Russia’s national economy</li> </ul>

Values	Narratives used by Western audiences	Narratives used by Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques	Redefined values
<b>POLITICAL VALUES</b>				
Media freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results presented before an investigation has started</li> <li>• No space provided for opposing views (pro-Russian separatists)</li> <li>• Media used to misinform society, lack of professionalism</li> <li>• Assigning guilt for the tragedy to Putin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results presented before an investigation has started</li> <li>• Western journalists are biased and influenced by politicians</li> <li>• Media used to misinform society, lack of professionalism</li> <li>• Low morality of Western journalists</li> <li>• The Ukrainian and Western media, especially in the US and the EU, promote anti-Russian sentiment</li> <li>• Western countries influence their own societies as well as that of Ukraine to believe that Russia is a threat</li> <li>• The West wants to poison the minds of Ukrainian people, to turn them against Russia—a country that has become non-submissive, powerful, and rich</li> <li>• The West wants to force Ukrainians and Russians into a conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IMPORTANCE (placement)</li> <li>• REPETITION</li> <li>• AUTHORITY</li> <li>• TESTIMONY</li> <li>• UNIFICATION</li> <li>• LABELLING</li> <li>• IN-OUT GROUPING</li> <li>• VOICE OF AUTHORITY</li> <li>• EVALUATION</li> <li>• INSTRUCTING</li> <li>• SIMPLIFICATION</li> </ul>	Western media sources are unprofessional, lack credibility, and are influenced by politicians



Values	Narratives used by Western audiences	Narratives used by Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques	Redefined values
<b>INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION</b>				
Respect to international security and order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The US is constantly violating the international law</li> <li>• Russia is following the international law</li> <li>• Putin as the main voice for the peaceful process</li> <li>• The focus on Poland, Finland, Greece, France, and Germany</li> <li>• The destructive role of the US mixed with the clear strategy to provide military support to Ukraine; Germany portrayed as the main opposition to this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destabilization in other countries becomes a common problem</li> <li>• Russia following the international law</li> <li>• Legitimation of the regime in Russia; delegitimation of the regime in Ukraine</li> <li>• Colour revolutions - a synonym for “coup d’etat”; condemning methods used by an “unnamed outside power” supporting democratisation</li> <li>• Top Russian authorities expressing disappointment in the fact that the Western world is not listening to Russia</li> <li>• Russian-speakers in the Baltic states are subjected to “human rights abuses”</li> <li>• Russia described as the victim of the West. Sanctions as an issue unrelated to the conflict in Ukraine</li> <li>• Putin as the main voice for the peaceful process</li> <li>• The destructive role of the US mixed with the clear strategy to provide military support to Ukraine; Germany portrayed as the main opposition to this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IN/OUT GROUPING</li> <li>• LABELLING</li> <li>• SIMPLIFICATION</li> <li>• HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE EXPERTISE</li> <li>• REPETITION</li> <li>• NEGATIVE OPPONENT: PRINCIPLE OF DIALOGUE</li> <li>• COMPARING (the EU and the US)</li> <li>• SILENCE (on the conflict in Ukraine, not contextualising sanctions against Russia, not repeating them)</li> <li>• AUTHORITY (legitimising) the least of evils (as hypothetical future)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questioning credibility of those, who set international rules</li> <li>• Europe is suffering from the actions of the U.S.</li> <li>• The EU is plagued by a solidarity crisis</li> <li>• Ukraine violates international agreements, unlike Russia</li> <li>• The West is not following the international agreements</li> </ul>

# INTRODUCTION

# 1.

The aim of the research project Redefining Euro-Atlantic Values and Russia's Strategic Communication in the Euro-Atlantic Space, carried out by the Centre for Strategic Studies (CIS), is to identify the methods and resources Russia employs in order to influence our understanding of Euro-Atlantic values in the context of the crisis in Ukraine and redefine the meaning of such core values as democracy, media freedom, human rights, freedom of speech, and others for various social groups in the Euro-Atlantic space.

Researchers followed the audio-visual platforms RT (formerly Russia Today) and Perviy Kanal from April 2014 to January 2015. Perviy Kanal is the leading television channel in Russia with more than 250 million viewers across the country. RT is a government-funded television network with programs in several languages aimed at viewers outside of Russia. Viewership in western countries is small, but has growth potential. News stories related to the following four case studies were analysed for this report:

- 1) The MH-17 catastrophe;
- 2) The implementation of counter-sanctions;
- 3) The first 'humanitarian convoy';
- 4) The Minsk II agreement.

These four case studies are particularly relevant to understanding how Russia has managed its information campaigns during the crisis in Ukraine. In addition, each of these cases illustrates a different aspect of Russia's use of strategic political communication. News coverage of the MH-17 catastrophe illustrates crisis management of an emerging situation, but the other three events were pre-planned, making it possible to control narratives. All of the events examined here received wide media coverage and were extensively discussed on both sides of the Atlantic. The cases themselves were used as key points in political communication by all sides.

The formula for calculating the data collection period was to begin with the date of the event and continue a minimum of 6 days. A period of one-week was selected as the most appropriate for the analysis of first reactions to a changing agenda, identify the tools selected for constructing the desired narrative/message, and to study possible cooperation between RT and Perviy Kanal. The programmes selected for analysis were RT International's news programme Bulletin at 17.00 (sometimes 18.00) Moscow time, RT America's only news bulletin and the prime-time news programme Vremja on Perviy Kanal.

Each case study opens with a short introduction to the event, followed by the main findings concerning the agenda and values, including commonly used strategies of legitimization.

To carry out an in-depth analysis, an interdisciplinary theoretical framework was developed. This paper begins with a catalogue of Euro-Atlantic values. For qualitative content analysis, case studies based on values—the main topic of this research—were selected and analysed on the basis of Euro-Atlantic values catalogue.

The Euro-Atlantic values catalogue was developed, grouping values into four large groups:

- e) political values
- f) economic values
- g) moral values
- h) international relations and international law

Qualitative analysis of the selected ‘messages’ was carried out according to the principles of critical discourse analysis, one of the most influential discourse analysis tools dealing with the power of language and imagery. It is widely accepted that values and ideologies are socially constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed through language in social interactions<sup>5</sup>. For example, in the audio-visual media space, the process of construction, reconstruction, and deconstruction takes place through the format, length, and timeslot of a given programme, the selection of topics or agenda-setting, the experts invited to participate, and the words

and images used. All of these components have an impact on the audience and are therefore used to shape public opinion.

From the large number of concepts used in critical discourse analysis<sup>6</sup>, this study focuses on ‘legitimation’<sup>7</sup>. Legitimation is one of the strategies used to influence public opinion and includes a large number of techniques used in strategic communications to ‘win hearts and minds’ and change political attitudes. T. Van Leeuwen argues that legitimization refers to the process by which speakers accredit or license a type of social behaviour<sup>8</sup>. He writes that, ‘the very act of legitimization per se implies an attempt to justify action or no action or an ideological position on a specific issue’<sup>9</sup>.

According to Leeuwen’s study<sup>10</sup> there are four main categories of legitimization:

- ‘authorisation’ or legitimization by reference to the authority of tradition, custom, and law, and of persons in whom institutional authority is vested
- ‘moral evaluation’ or legitimization by reference to discourses of value

5 See Rojo, M., van Dijk, T. (1997). “There was a problem and it was solved: Legitimizing the exclusion of illegal immigrants in Spanish parliamentary discourse. *Discourse & Society*, 8(4), pp. 523 – 567; and Van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and Practice: New tools for critical discourse analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

6 See more Van Dijk, T.A. (1998). *Ideology*. London: SAGE; and Van Dijk, T.A. (2008). *Discourse Reader*. London: SAGE.

7 See Van Leeuwen, T. (2007). Legitimation in discourse and communication. *Discourse & Communication*, 1(1), pp. 91–112; Reyes, A. (2011). Strategies of legitimization in political discourse: From words to actions. *Discourse and Society*, 22 (6), pp. 781–807; Vaara, E. (2014). Struggles over legitimacy in the Eurozone crisis: Discursive legitimization strategies and their ideological underpinnings. *Discourse and Society*, 25(4), pp. 500 – 518; and Oddo, J. (2011). War legitimization discourse: Representing “Us” and “Them” in four US presidential addresses. *Discourse and Society*, 22 (3), pp. 287 – 314.

8 Van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and Practice: New tools for critical discourse analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.782.

9 Ibid, p.783.

10 See Van Leeuwen, T. (2007). Legitimation in discourse and communication. *Discourse & Communication*, 1(1), pp. 91–112.

- 'rationalisation' or legitimisation by reference to the goals and uses of institutionalised social action, and to the social knowledge that endows them with cognitive validity
- 'mythopoesis' or legitimisation conveyed through narratives whose outcomes reward legitimate actions and punish illegitimate actions

Therefore the examination of 'value-shaping' in terms of redefining Euro-Atlantic values presented here focuses on the formation, deformation, and reformation of legitimisation during the crisis in Ukraine.

Methodologically the research focuses both on verbal and visual themes to identify forms and meanings. Anthropologist David Graber<sup>11</sup> argues that visual scenes are more memorable than verbal ones.

The first step was to collect media stories from media platforms relevant to the selected case studies, including different events, actions, and genres. The analysis of large amounts of text provides researchers with the general patterns and features of the 'value-systems' in play, and of the strategies and techniques used to promote these values. The second step was qualitative content analysis, studying agenda setting and identifying comparable data. The legitimisation strategies used in each media story were identified, especially focusing on 'moral evaluation'.

The third step is an examination of the legitimisation strategies used (scenarios, categories), mostly in the news. This step requires a further methodological explanation. Studies on legitimisation are mostly based on textual analysis, setting aside audio and visual

elements. M. Grabe and E. Bucy<sup>12</sup> write that even prominent theories about news analysis, including agenda setting and framing analysis, have virtually ignored the visual component of news broadcasting. For a well-developed academic analysis of audio-visual examples, it is crucial to develop and use a model that facilitates the identification of legitimisation strategies not only linguistically, but also at the semantic level, including consideration of the sound and video used to portray a message.

The quantitative content analysis of video done for this study was based on measuring the duration of footage showing a) death b) medicine and pain c) children and children accessories d) weapons e) wrecked buildings f) older people g) fire i) sacred symbols and j) tears. Quantitative content analysis was applied to one case study only.

The results of this research are a significant contribution to the debate on the security of the Euro-Atlantic space and serve as a tool for shaping the global Euro-Atlantic identity and invigorating its values in the societies of every NATO and European Union member state.

By taking into account and implementing the main conclusions of the research, it will be possible to develop strategic communications in a way that consolidates and empowers the member states, and strengthens their belonging to the Transatlantic Community and its values of patriotism, democracy, freedoms, and human rights, all of which are an indispensable part of the Western world.

11 Graber, D. (1990). Seeing is remembering: How visuals contribute to learning from television news. *Journal of Communication*, 40, 134–155.

12 Grabe, M., Bucy, E. (2009). *Image bite politics: news and the visual framing of elections*. Oxford University press, p. 6.

# VALUES AND STRATEGIC POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

## 2.

Values, the core object of this study, transcend specific situations and guide our selection and evaluation of behaviours and events<sup>13</sup>. Values exist 'not in isolation, but as systems'<sup>14</sup>; therefore they can be regarded as a fundamental basis for the functioning and coherence of any society. Values must be 'inertial enough to lend stability and evaluations and behaviour'<sup>15</sup> since they can be regarded as a particular standard of societal behaviour and people's 'specific political attitudes'<sup>16</sup>. In turn, attitudes play the main role in the studies of public opinion. Researchers of political communication argue

that the control of the agenda, topics and issues, for discussion, in the media and in public, impacts public opinion<sup>17</sup>.

It must be emphasised that changes to a system of values can be interpreted both optimistically and pessimistically, but 'the loss of values can be regarded exceptionally as a symptom of crisis'<sup>18</sup>. For this reason, every external attempt to bring change to the system of Euro-Atlantic values must be addressed with the highest attention, since this process may end with the loss of certain foundational values and therefore with crisis in society.

13 See Schwartz (1992), Universals in the content and structure of values: Theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries. In M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 24, pp. 1-65). New York: Academic Press. p. 4.

14 Feldmans, S. (2013) Political Ideology. In: Huddy, L., Sears, D.O., Levy J.S. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. Oxford University press, p. 603.

15 Ibid.

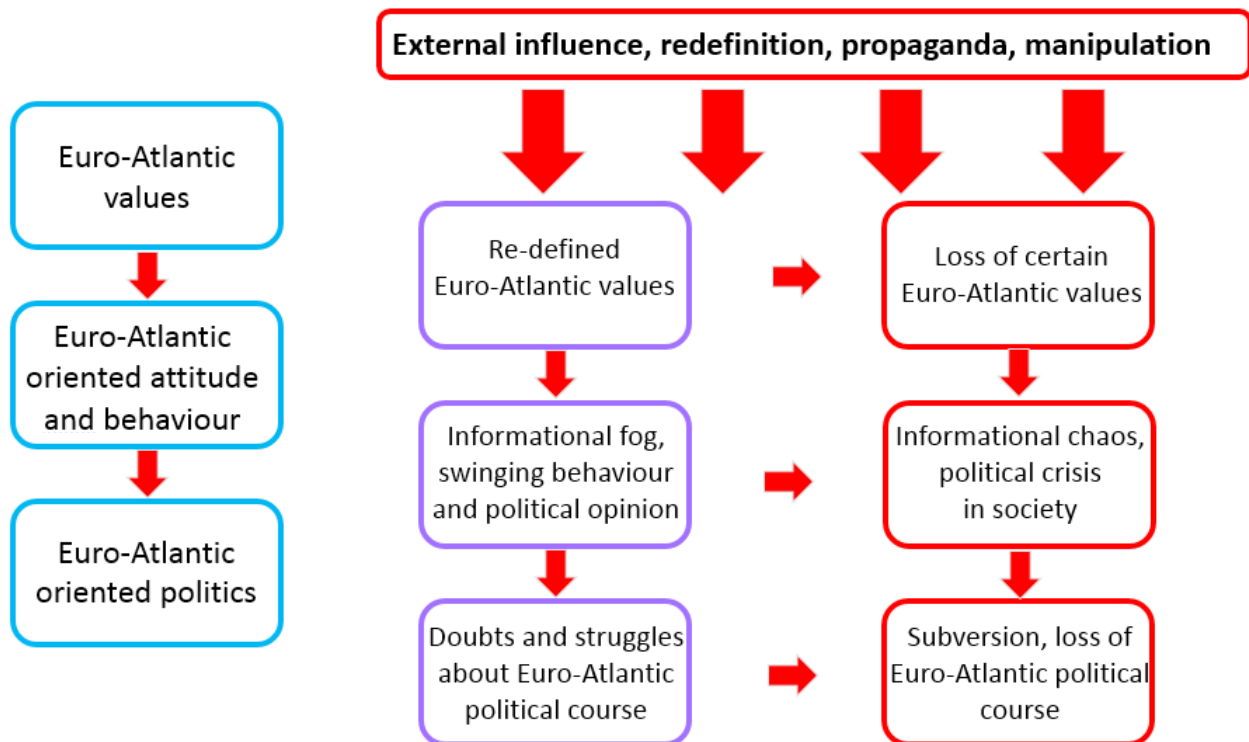
16 Clowson, R., Oxley, Z. (2013). *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*. Sage Publications, p.19.

17 See Dearing, J., Rodgers, E. (1996). *Agenda-Setting*. SAGE Publications; Pratkanis, A. (2007). *Winning the hearts and minds*. In: (eds.) Arquilla, J., Borer, A. *Information Strategy and Warfare: A Guide to Theory and Practice*. Routledge.

18 Joas, H. (1999). *Die Entstehung der Werte*. Suhrkampf., p.13.



Chart 1 “Correlation between values, public opinion and politics”



It has been widely discussed that authoritarian regimes use the media to set a political agenda and influence public opinion with the help of manipulative techniques (See Chart 1. Correlation between values, public opinion and politics). It is also worth mentioning that political conflicts are not only about values, but also about beliefs, perceptions, and emotions as W. Saris and P. Sniderman conclude<sup>19</sup>. It must be emphasised that in democratic regimes, public opinion is centre stage<sup>20</sup>, which is not the case in authoritarian regimes. Although these ideas may seem contradictory at first glance, they are very important for establishing the main analytical perspective of this research. Therefore, the research combines both of these arguments and provides analysis on the ways and means

an authoritarian regime (Russia) has used the mass media to influence public opinion in democratic regimes (Europe and USA) during the Ukraine crisis.

Strategic political communication, understood as ‘the careful planning of communication tools to meet very specific political objectives’, is frequently developed in media environments. J. Manheim<sup>21</sup> defines strategic political communication as ‘sophisticated knowledge<sup>22</sup> about human behaviour to mould information to accomplish very specific, and often very short-term objectives. Their emphasis is mostly on controlling the messages that are sent, the circumstances of their transmission, and the list of recipients.’ Researchers argue that ‘the main point about

19 See Saris, W., Sniderman, P. (2004). *Studies in Public Opinions: Attitudes, Nonattitudes, Measurement Error, and Change*. Princeton University Press.

20 See Dearing, J., Rodgers, E. (1996). *Agenda-Setting*. SAGE Publications.

21 Manheim, J.B. (1991). *All of the People, All of the Time: Strategic Communication and American Politics*. Armonk, New York: M.E.Sharpe, p.7.

22 Bakir, V. (2010). *Surveillance, Media and Strategic Political Communication: Iraq, USA, UK*. New York: Continuum, p.1.

agenda-setting is that the mass media does not tell us what to think; but that they do tell us what to think about and ultimately believe and act upon'<sup>23</sup>. With regard to television, the power of the audio and visual components of a report, play a major role, beginning with identifying the topic of the message.

Knowing this, agenda-setting can be considered a type of 'sub-propaganda'<sup>24</sup> and 'facilitative communication', or early stage propaganda<sup>25</sup>. Values become an instrument of propaganda. O'Shaughnessy wrote that propaganda does not try to destroy values, but attempts to conscript them<sup>26</sup>. Moreover, messages that appeal to values are in strong demand by propagandists who follow the principle that 'persuasion should speak to values'. Transforming values is a process that requires time because values are 'not vulnerable to factual revision'.

Although scientific explanations about the role and significance of the social value system are clear and not new, empirically the Western world faces great challenges in coping with Russia's strategic political communication, propaganda, and manipulative techniques (which will be described later in this research). It is widely recognised that Russia's aggression in Ukraine indicates broader intentions to undo the entire post-war security settlement, as well as the relevance of its main institutions—NATO, the European Union, the OSCE, and the United Nations. Putin appears determined 'to weaken the West economically, to split it politically, and

to establish Russia as the hegemonic power on the European continent'.<sup>27</sup> Even NATO General, Sir Adrian Bradshaw has warned that 'the alliance needs to develop both fast-reacting conventional forces and capacities to counter Russian efforts at coercion and propaganda, as seen in Ukraine'<sup>28</sup> and 'our information and warning system will be specifically attuned to the range of hybrid threats including not only the deployment of potentially hostile conventional forces, but also political agitation and subversion, cyber-attack, hostile propaganda and other destabilising effects'.<sup>29</sup> Thus, a question arises—why is it so hard for the West to design an adequate strategic communication plan and respond rapidly and effectively?

The first complication is related to the current struggle being about influence, not territory. Russia does not use its massive propaganda budget to promote an alternative life model, as it did during the Cold War. Today Russia spreads doubt, confusion, and dissatisfaction with the values, facts, and realities the Western mass media and political leaders are addressing and standing up for. The difficulty lies in the fact that propaganda cannot be defeated by counter-propaganda, as was possible during World War II and the Cold War, because it would mean the loss of certain aspects of Western democracy; freedom of the media would be the first to be curtailed.

23 See Larsen, Ch. (2012). *Persuasion: Reception and Responsibility*. Cengage Learning.

24 See Cunningham, S. (2002). *The Idea of Propaganda. A Reconstruction*. Praeger Publishers.

25 See O'Shaughnessy, N. (2004). *Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction*. Manchester University Press.

26 Ibid, p.113.

27 Motyl, A.J. (2015) 'The West Should Arm Ukraine. Here's Why—And How', *Foreign Affairs* (10.02.2015), available at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/143056/alexander-j-motyl/the-west-should-arm-ukraine>, last time accessed 15.02.2015.

28 Russian expansionism may pose existential threat, says Nato general. *The Guardian*, 20.02.2015, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/20/russia-existential-threat-british-nato-general>, last time accessed on 21.02.2015.

29 General Sir Adrian Bradshaw, NATO Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe; Speech at the Royal United Services Institute, 21 February 2015.

The second complication involves the clash of political systems; this is more dangerous than old-school Soviet propaganda, because Western societies welcome 'alternative viewpoints' and 'second opinions', and do not necessarily recognise the ways in which Russia's propaganda tries to redefine and deconstruct the Euro-Atlantic values that form the very basis of Western democracy.

Third, the boundaries between war and peace have become blurred, as the crisis in Ukraine has shown. It is no longer clear if a sovereign state has been invaded, which leads to information fog and information chaos. This will be precisely illustrated in the following chapters and by the case studies elaborated in this research.

Fourth, the Kremlin has created defence mechanisms for itself within Western societies; it has identified various audiences, their needs, and their specific habits of information consumption, and communicates with these audiences using well-designed tools and techniques that address their basic perceptions. This aspect is also analysed and illustrated in the following chapters and case studies.

Fifth, the methods and actions, today described as hybrid-war or information war, in fact are nothing new. The same principles are an organic part of military strategy, and were accurately described 2,500 years ago by Sun Tzu in *The Art of War*. He wrote: 'I determine the enemy's hsing while I have no perceptible form'<sup>30</sup>. The Chinese term hsing can be translated as the enemy's disposition of forces, pattern, or inner system. In other words, to win a war it is advisable to be 'formless', not to be a perceivable system in

the eyes of the enemy. Once a foe sees and understands one's disposition of forces—political, military, informational, one's inner system and its principles, one becomes predictable and therefore vulnerable. It is easy to decipher and understand the basic principles upon which Western societies are built. The West's transparency is both its greatest achievement and its greatest vulnerability. The inner system of Western democracy is open; therefore our judicial system, decision-making mechanisms, and principles of defence are generally visible and understandable. In most cases they are known and embedded in international law, but Russia as a foe and an authoritarian state remains unpredictable. The hsing or disposition of forces and inner system of Russia is closed and difficult to decode. This incompatibility of the inner systems is one of the main reasons it is so difficult for the West to respond to Russia's strategic political communication properly.

The next chapter clearly illustrates the wide gap between Russian values and Western, or Euro-Atlantic, values, and serves as a warning and a tool for understanding the propaganda Russia used during its intervention in Ukraine.

30 Sun Tzu, trans. by R.D. Sawyer. (2001) *The Art of War*. NY: MetroBooks, p. 193.

# THE EURO-ATLANTIC VALUES CATALOGUE: WESTERN AND RUSSIA'S INTERPRETATIONS

## 3.

To carry out an in-depth analysis, The Euro-Atlantic values catalogue was developed, categorising values into four large groups:

- a) political values
- b) economic values
- c) moral values
- d) international relations and international law

Each group of values includes indicators and references to surveys and research. A similar catalogue was created for Russian promoted and disseminated values and their indicators in the Euro-Atlantic information space. This highlights the wide gap between specific political attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and emotions that are associated with the same principles (values) in different spaces (Euro-Atlantic and Russian). (See Summary: The Euro-Atlantic values catalogue: West's and Russia's interpretations).

### SUMMARY: THE EURO-ATLANTIC VALUES CATALOGUE: WEST'S AND RUSSIA'S INTERPRETATIONS

Values	Western interpretation	Russia's interpretation
Economic values	Good and functioning democracy comes before good economic situation	Democracy loses when challenged with strong economy
	Support for competing economic environment	Extremely low support for components on the free market
	Gender Equality in labour market	Special preferences for men in labour market are broadly supported
	High value is given to economic freedoms and opportunities provided by the EU	

International relations and international law	High support for use of military force to maintain global order, only when sanctioned by the United Nations (Chapter VII of the UN Charter)	Would like to see Russia implementing independent foreign policy on a global scale, without the interference of the EU and NATO. Imperialism
	NATO as the most important collective defence organisation	Low level of sympathy for NATO which basically is considered as a hard power tool of certain countries
	Generally positive attitude towards the UN	Generally positive attitude towards the UN
	Events in Ukraine significantly affected Russia's image in the West	Ukraine and the Western countries wage an information war against Russia
	Russia's aggression in Ukraine is seen as a violation of the international law. Readiness to provide economic and political support to Ukraine even if it would lead to a conflict with Russia	The Western countries try to force out the Russian economy from the former Soviet Union and to maintain control over the former communist bloc and the republics of the USSR
	Moderate attitude toward use of military force even in the case of Ukraine – most of the countries support economic levers against Russia	Strong element of external threat (Western countries)
<b>Values</b>	<b>Western interpretation</b>	<b>Russia's interpretation</b>
Political values (Democracy)	Democracy is an uncontested value, the best political system possible	Democracy is inferior to a strong leader able to resolve social and economic problems
	Equally important are all dimensions of democracy—electoral, liberal and social	The concentration of power in the hands of one leader is necessary for the Russian people
	Human rights and freedom of the media regarded as highly important	Order and stability in a country is more important than respect for human rights
		Nationalistic trends and strengthening of xenophobia
	Free elections and accountability before the electorate, ability for different political views to be represented in form of free opposition	Freedom as a basic value, nevertheless understood as 'to be capable to live according to your own will, without being dependent on any social restrictions — norms or laws'
		Critically low interest about forms of public participation
	Freedom of speech	Low interest in freedom of speech
	Interpersonal trust	Low level of mutual trust
Moral values	State has a limited role	The power is primarily held by the state itself; the top management and the officials are the 'authorities' which provide work for the government
	Individualism and solidarity	Collectivism
	Value of human life	State interests are seen as more important than the needs of an individual. Dehumanisation
	Belief in God is not a prerequisite of morality	Link between morality and belief in God, and conviction that church provides answers for what is moral and what is not
	High tolerance towards homosexuality	Correlation between religion and morality is also present when looking at certain moral issues—homosexuality, abortion, premarital sex



# 3.1. VALUES ORIENTATION IN WESTERN COUNTRIES

## 3.1.1. Political Values

### Democracy as an uncontested value

Western Europe countries (the UK, France, Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands) consider democracy an uncontested value and the best political system possible. And according to 2012 data from the *European Social Survey*<sup>31</sup> (ESS), Western countries also have among the highest indexes of 'democracy importance' (8 out of 10 points). Russia also exhibits relatively high support for democracy as a political system, but support is low compared to other countries surveyed (6.5 out of 10).

Despite the fact that support for democracy can be observed both in the West and in Russia, there are substantial differences in the real value of this assessment when compared with other alternatives. According to the 2013 *Transatlantic Trends* (TT) data, 58% of Westerners prefer democracy to the stability provided by other political

systems<sup>32</sup>. In Russia the opposite is true, with as little as 29% of the population preferring democracy compared to the 60% who prefer a strong leader capable of solving social and economic problems<sup>33</sup>.

The 2008 *European Values Survey*<sup>34</sup> (ESV) shows that along with being important in Western countries, democracy is also called the best possible political system in the UK, GER, FRA, NL, and BE. Support for democracy as the best political system varies, but it is generally around 90%. In Russia democracy is the best political system for 78% of respondents, while a military regime is considered to be the best political system by 17%. In Western countries only 2-5% support a military regime, with the exception of the UK and BE where support stands at 10% and 8% respectively. ESV data also shows that Western countries consider democracy the best political system, despite its deficiencies.

### Differing support for the different dimensions of democracy

In Western Europe there is good knowledge about the different aspects of democracy, and people look at it multi-dimensionally supporting its different values. All three dimensions of democracy examined here are equally important—*electoral* democracy, i.e. free elections, a multi-party system, and the freedom of opposition; *liberal* democracy,

31 European Social Survey 2012. Europeans understanding and evaluation of democracy. Available at <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/permalink/800ea36f-3a8d-11e4-95d4-005056b8065f.pdf>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

32 Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2013. Available at <http://trends.gmfus.org/transatlantic-trends-2013/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

33 PEW Research Global Attitudes Project 2011. Confidence in Democracy and Capitalism Wanes in the Former Soviet Union. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2011/12/05/confidence-in-democracy-and-capitalism-wanes-in-former-soviet-union/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

34 European Values Survey 2008. Available at <http://www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/new/zieeuropa.php?year=2008>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

i. e. equality before the law, checks and balances, media freedom, and the protection of minorities; and *social democracy*, i.e. protection against poverty, and reduction of income inequality. However, there are national differences in how highly the three dimensions and their constituent elements are valued<sup>35</sup>.

### Liberal values in democracy

Within the framework of liberal democracy the highest value is attributed to the protection of minorities (index above 7), which highlights the importance of human rights in Western countries. Second among the values of liberal democracy is *media freedom* (index 6.5) followed by *equality before the law* and *media reliability* (indexes 6 and 5 respectively). Another aspect that proves the maturity of democracy in Western countries is the emphasis on *universal equality*, which is ensured by helping and protecting society's most vulnerable members before tending to the needs of those who are better off.

### Electoral values in democracy

Most people expect *free elections* (index 9) and *accountability before the electorate* (index 8), so the average Western European expects from to be able to choose freely and elect political representatives, as well as hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, *free opposition* or the *ability to express different political views* is also important (index above 6)<sup>36</sup>.

### Social values in democracy

Among all European countries, the social dimension of democracy is the least explicit; social values don't enjoy as much support as their counterparts (fewer than 5 of 10 points). Both protection from poverty and the reduction of income inequality have fairly low support indexes.

A comparison of these three dimensions of democratic values it seems that liberal values enjoy the greatest support among Western societies as can be observed from the high *support for different freedoms. Support for democratic institutions and procedures*, i.e. elections, political pluralism, comes second, while social values have the least support. This relatively low level of support can be explained by the minimal role of the state in Western countries, quite common for liberal democracies.

In comparison, ESS research reveals that in *Russia liberal values are equally important as social democratic values*. This may be explained by the correlation<sup>37</sup> identified between a country's economic development and its level of liberal democracy—the more prosperous a country is, the more explicit liberal democratic values become. Requests for social values indicate lower standards of living, reliance on the state, and the anticipation of social protection.

### Political participation

An additional favourable indicator of democratic values is a society's engagement in the political process and the practice of its democratic freedoms and options.

35 European Social Survey 2014. Europeans understanding and evaluation of democracy. Available at <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/permalink/800ea36f-3a8d-11e4-95d4-005056b8065f.pdf>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.



Involvement in social and political processes in Western countries has many different forms.

*Participation in elections as a method of deciding on a country's political development and important issues* is one of the most common forms of political activism. According to the World Values Survey's (WVS)<sup>38</sup> data on voter turnout, the share of people exercising their most basic democratic right is 65.3% in GER, 73.1% in NL, and 84.1% in SWE. Voting in elections is also the most common political activity in Russia, but voter turnout is significantly lower—41.8%.

*The submission of applications and petitions* is also a popular method of political activism practiced by 42.7% in GER, 35.4% in NL, and 68% in SWE<sup>39</sup>. The third most popular political activity in Western countries is *participation in demonstrations*. These forms of political activism are also present, but much less prevalent in Russia; petitions have been submitted at least once by 11.1%, strikes have been attended by 2.1%, and demonstrations by 12.1% of the people<sup>40</sup>.

### Interpersonal trust

Interpersonal trust is considered to be an essential indicator when measuring democracy, because it shows the readiness of members of a society to rely on each other, free themselves from stereotypes, and accept diversity. The *Situation in Western countries regarding interpersonal trust is not uniform, but in general this variable was above the average*; when people answered the question

'Can you trust most people?' 66.1% in NL, 60.1% in SWE, and 44.6% in GER said yes. The exception was ESP with 19%<sup>41</sup>. In Russia only 27.8% are ready to trust others.

### Trust in institutions

According to WVS 2011 and 2012 data, *trust in different institutions is diffused* in Western countries. People place the most trust in the *media—press and TV*, which has a combined trust of 91% in GER, 73% in NL, 58% in ESP and 85% in SWE. This is followed by the *military* (64% in GER, 50% in NL, 50% in ES and 51% in SWE). Political institutions—*parliament, political parties and public service*—follow shortly after.

While the numbers in Russia are similar, there are some nuances that deserve consideration. In Russia the army enjoys the greatest trust, but it shares first place with the church, both of which enjoy similarly high support—63%. This reveals a disposition towards stability and order in the daily and spiritual life. It should not go unmentioned that in Russia, trust in the army is combined with a low demand for civic control of the army, 27% according to research carried out by PEW in 2011<sup>42</sup>.

### The role of the State

In Western countries (FRA, GER, UK, ESP) more than half of the population (from 55% in UK to 67% in ESP) think that the *state should have narrow functions and should primarily take care of those in need*.

38 World Values Survey. Wave 6: 2010-2014. Available at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSOnline.jsp>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 World Values Survey. Wave 6: 2010-2014. Available at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSOnline.jsp>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

42 PEW Research Global Attitudes Project 2011. Confidence in Democracy and Capitalism Wanes in the Former Soviet Union. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2011/12/05/confidence-in-democracy-and-capitalism-wanes-in-former-soviet-union/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

30-38% of respondents thought that the state should not intervene in the lives of citizens pursuing their goals<sup>43</sup>.

## 3.1.2. Economic Values

The WVS has identified a strong correlation between state economic development and the attitudes towards democracy. The free market capitalism economic model and attitudes towards labour market processes demonstrate differences in individual values related to democracy<sup>44</sup>.

### Democracy is superior to economic prosperity in Western Europe

PEW research shows that in Western countries *demand good democracy more than a good economic situation* (58% in GER, 68% in ESP and 56% in UK)<sup>45</sup>. In Russia *democracy loses when confronted with a strong economy* (14% versus 78%). Meanwhile, if Russians could choose between democratic economic values (*fair judicial system, free and fair elections, freedom of speech*) and *personal wellbeing*, then democracy would lose to prosperity (supported by 71%)<sup>46</sup>.

### Support for economic freedoms and opportunities

According to the EVS 2008 data, in Western countries there is support for the market economy (indexed on a scale from 0 to 100—the lower the figure the higher the support; GER 29, UK 29, FRA 44, NL 39)<sup>47</sup>.

It also shows that Westerners believe that even though there may be economic problems in democracy, it still is superior to other systems.

A similar attitude is demonstrated in a TT 2013 survey, in which 66% of citizens in the European Union admitted that they've been hit by the economic crisis, but despite that, they value the EU and Transatlantic trade highly and don't want to become protectionist<sup>48</sup>.

A high value is also attributed to economic freedoms and opportunities provided by the EU—freedom of movement, a free labour market, and the possibility to study abroad, supported by 27% of people surveyed in EU countries according to TT data for 2014<sup>49</sup>. This study also *shows correlation between economic freedoms, economic integration, and democracy*—41% in ITA, 35% in FRA, and 32% in GER and ESP believe that the EU is good because it's a community of democracies.

### Openness to guest workers

Peoples' attitudes towards immigration and guest workers can also be used as an indicator

43 PEW Research Global Attitudes Project 2011. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2011/11/17/the-american-western-european-values-gap/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

44 World Values Survey. Available at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSOnline.jsp>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 European Values Survey 2008. Available at <http://www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/new/zieeuropa.php?year=2008>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

48 Transatlantic Trends 2009. Key Findings 2013. Available at <http://trends.gmfus.org/transatlantic-trends-2013/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

49 Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2014. Available at [http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends\\_2014\\_complete.pdf](http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends_2014_complete.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.



for economic openness and freedoms. TT 2013 research shows that 44% of Europeans consider immigration to be a problem, while 41% consider it an opportunity, and 62% of Europeans do not consider immigrants to be an economic threat<sup>50</sup>. Such economic tolerance is persistent despite the TT 2014 data, which showed that 58% of Europeans consider their respective country's immigration policy to be ill advised<sup>51</sup>.

### Equality in the labour market

In developed Western countries—Germany, France, Spain, and the United Kingdom, 12-20% believe men should be given preference in the labour market. In Russia, 49% of the population supports special preference for men in the labour market. Similar rates of support can only be observed in third world countries, Muslim countries, and less developed economies<sup>52</sup>.

## 3.1.3. Moral Values

### Morality and the Church

According to the WVS data, *belief in God* is quite common in Western countries. 62.9% of respondents in GER, 47.7% in NL, 71.1% in ESP, and 40.9% in SWE believe in God, while

in Russia the figure is as high as 73.3%<sup>53</sup>.

However, if the church is linked to moral issues (what is good and what is bad), then the *majority in Western countries think that belief in God is not needed to be moral* (66% in GER, 71% in ITA, 78% in UK and 85% in FRA); a trend not too common globally. In Russia 55% agree with the aforementioned statement<sup>54</sup>. The same research also shows that it is common to link morality to belief in God in economically less developed countries; a group which Western countries is not part of.

According to the ESS 2008 data, the majority of Russians not only link morality to belief in God, but also think that the *church provides answers for what is moral and what's not* (76%). In contrast only 35% in the UK, 32% in GER, 32% in FRA, 37% in NL, and 30% in BE agree with this statement<sup>55</sup>.

The correlation between religion and morality is also seen when certain moral issues, which are either acceptable or unacceptable for different societies, are addressed. The most explicit differences between Russia and Western countries regards issues, on which the church has a strong stance. For example homosexuality is unacceptable for 14% in FRA, 17% in UK, 8% in GER, and 19% in ITA, while in Russia the figure reaches 72%. A similar attitude can be observed regarding abortion, which is unacceptable for 14% in FRA, 25% in UK, 19% in GER and 41% in

50 Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2013. Available at <http://trends.gmfus.org/transatlantic-trends-2013/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

51 Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2014. Available at [http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends\\_2014\\_complete.pdf](http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends_2014_complete.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

52 PEW Global Research Attitudes Project. Gender Equality Universally Embraced, But Inequalities Acknowledged. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2010/07/01/gender-equality/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

53 World Values Survey. Wave 6: 2010-2014. Available at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

54 PEW Global Research Attitudes project. Worldwide, Many See Belief in God as Essential to Morality. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/03/13/worldwide-many-see-belief-in-god-as-essential-to-morality/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

55 European Values Survey. Available at <http://www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/new/zieeuropa.php?year=2008>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.



ITA (strong influence of the Roman Catholic Church) and 44% in Russia.

The attitude is similar concerning premarital sex, which is seen negatively by 6% in FRA, 13% in UK, 6% in GER, but 30% in Russia<sup>56</sup>.

### Tolerance towards homosexuality

Western countries demonstrate a high tolerance toward homosexuality; 81-91% of respondents in Western countries find homosexuality acceptable (81% in UK, 86% in FRA, 87% in GER and 91% in ESP). These are high numbers even in comparison to the US, where the acceptability rating is around 50%<sup>57</sup>.

### Gender equality

Gender equality is supported by 95-97% of respondents in the UK, FRA, ESP, POL, and GER. In Russia, gender equality is supported by 85%<sup>58</sup>, but people in Russia are less likely to think that change is needed to facilitate gender equality.

### Tolerance and Multiculturalism

Tolerance toward other races, nations, and cultures fluctuates and depends on the region. In answer to the WVS question 'Who would you not like to have as neighbours?' the most frequent answers were immigrants (21% in GER, 19.6% in NL, 7.5% in ESP, and

3.5% in SWE)<sup>59</sup> and homosexuals (22.4% in GER, 6.9% in NL, 5.1% in ESP, and 3.7% in SWE). However this is likely to be an individual attitude, because other surveys reveal a general acceptance of these groups. Other less frequent answers are 'people of another race', 'people with another religion', and 'people who are not married'. It shows that stereotypes and prejudices are still present in Western countries, but generally 'otherness' is accepted.

In Russia the answers are very similar, but the percentages are significantly higher—32.2% are against immigrants and 66.2% are against homosexuals as close neighbours<sup>60</sup>.

## 3.1.4. International relations and law dimension

### Use of military force to maintain global order

According to PEW in 2011, societies in Western countries expressed high support for the use of military force to maintain global order (from 50% in GER to 70% in UK), but with the condition that use of force would be sanctioned by the United Nations (66% in FRA, 76% in GER)<sup>61</sup>.

56 PEW Global Attitudes Research project 2014. Global Views on Morality. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/04/15/global-morality/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

57 PEW Research Global Attitudes Project 2011. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2011/11/17/the-american-western-european-values-gap/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

58 PEW Global Research Attitudes Project 2010. Gender Equality Universally Embraced, But Inequalities Acknowledged. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2010/07/01/gender-equality/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

59 World Values Survey Wave 6: 2010-2014. Available at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

60 Ibid

61 PEW Global Attitudes Research project 2011. The American-Western European Values Gap. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2011/11/17/the-american-western-european-values-gap/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

## Attitude towards Russia

According to TT 2014 data, European countries reacting to international events, especially Russia's aggression in Ukraine, see Russia less favourably with only 35% of Western Europeans seeing Russia in a positive light. The US, which also has an active foreign policy, is one of the more positively regarded actors on the international stage with 67% Europeans supporting its actions<sup>62</sup>.

## NATO as a guarantor of security

Despite a relatively conservative view on the use of force in Europe, 61% of those residing in member countries still see NATO as the most important security guarantor according to TT 2014 data<sup>63</sup>. From all the European countries supporting NATO, 73% think that NATO activities should be limited to protecting the territorial integrity of Europe and only 43% would like to see NATO as a global actor.

In Russia, NATO is not highly valued as approximately half (47%) of its citizens in 2014 would like to see Russia implement an independent foreign policy, with no interference from NATO or the EU<sup>64</sup>.

## The US led war on terror

The role of the US in the fight against international terrorism is valued positively in the EU. In general, 71% support the actions of the US President in pursuing that goal (79% in GER, 74% in ITA, and 67% in UK). In Russia, American initiatives in the war on terror have garnered only 26% of the

popular support<sup>65</sup>.

## Attitude towards the United Nations

Both Western countries and Russia have similar attitudes towards the UN according to a 2013 PEW survey<sup>66</sup>. The UN is supported by more than half of the people in Western countries—65% in GER, 65% in UK, 63% in FRA and 67% in ITA. In Russia a slight majority (53%) is also in favour of the UN. The biggest difference between the attitude of Russia and Western countries towards the UN concerns the application of UN principles to resolve international disputes.

## Attitude towards the responsibility-to-protect

In Western countries, a UN sanctioned humanitarian intervention in a foreign country to save people's lives is supported by 67% of the people, according to 2012 data by TT<sup>67</sup>.

## Attitude towards rogue states

It is also interesting to compare the attitudes of Russia and Western countries toward the so-called *rogue states* in the Middle East (Iran, Syria) that challenge global peace and security, as well as the solutions put forward to restrain these countries. For example, in 2014 44% of the people in Western countries supported the idea of a collective approach to finding a solution to the

62 Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2014. Available at [http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends\\_2014\\_complete.pdf](http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends_2014_complete.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

63 Ibid

64 Ibid

65 Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2012. Available at <http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/TT-2012-Key-Findings-Report.pdf>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

66 PEW Global Research Attitudes Project. UN Retains Strong Global Image. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/09/17/united-nations-retains-strong-global-image/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

67 Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2012. Available at <http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/TT-2012-Key-Findings-Report.pdf>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

problems plaguing the Middle East, while 41% supported an individual approach<sup>68</sup>. In Russia, conversely, there is less support for the collective approach<sup>69</sup>.

## Iran

Western countries have a generally negative attitude towards Iran, as is revealed by PEW 2012 data<sup>70</sup>. In UK 16%, in FRA 14% and only 6% in GER view Iran positively. In comparison, in Russia 36% sympathise with Iran, a figure twice that observed in the Western countries.

Certain differences are also present when looking at opinions concerning Iran's nuclear programme. In Europe there is clear opposition—91% in UK, and 96% in FRA and GER. In Russia a majority of 77% is also against Iran's nuclear programme, but the opposition is not as unequivocal as in Western countries.

There are also differences between Western and Russian respondents when asked what to do with Iran. In Western countries the most common answer is economic sanctions (79% in UK, 74% in FRA and 80% in GER), while in Russia economic sanctions are viewed as a viable option by just 46%. The use of military force against Iran enjoys even less support in Russia (24%), while in Western countries more than half of the population (51% in UK and FRA and 50% in GER) would support it.

TT 2014 data shows that economic sanctions against Iran are still the preferred option

in Western countries (32%), followed by economic cooperation initiatives. Military force, if all other options fail, is still supported by 50% of Western Europeans<sup>71</sup>. In Russia economic cooperation initiatives (23%) is seen as the best solution, while economic sanctions are supported by 17%<sup>72</sup>.

## Syria

Western countries recognise the situation in Syria as a problem, but do not provide one answer as to how to solve the situation. 72% of people from the countries surveyed by TT in 2013 admitted that they do not want their countries to intervene in Syria<sup>73</sup>, while 22% said their states might intervene. At the same time TT 2012 research shows that even with a UN mandate most EU countries wouldn't support intervention to Syria<sup>74</sup>.

Interestingly enough Russia's official stance and the views of its people differ regarding the situation in Syria. Similarly as with Iran, Russia does not want pressure to be applied on Syria, and it is an official state policy. However, when ordinary Russians are asked, 52% do not have an opinion at all regarding Syria and 22% do not support Bashar al Assad's regime. The percentage of regime supporters is similar - 27%<sup>75</sup>.

68 Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2014. Available at [http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends\\_2014\\_complete.pdf](http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends_2014_complete.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

69 Ibid

70 PEW Global Research Attitudes Project 2012. A Global "No" to a Nuclear Armed Iran. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/05/18/a-global-no-to-a-nuclear-armed-iran/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

71 Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2014. Available at [http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends\\_2014\\_complete.pdf](http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends_2014_complete.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

72 Ibid.

73 Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2013. Available at <http://trends.gmfus.org/transatlantic-trends-2013/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

74 Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2012. Available at <http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/TT-2012-Key-Findings-Report.pdf>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

75 PEW Global Research Attitudes Project 2013. Widespread Middle East Fears that Syrian Violence Will Spread. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/05/01/widespread-middle-east-fears-that-syrian-violence-will-spread/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

## Attitude towards Russia in the context of the Ukraine crisis

As mentioned, according to TT 2014 data, events in Ukraine significantly affected Russia's image in the West—it is the most negatively valued country (35%). Western countries consider Russia's aggression in Ukraine as a violation of the international law and are ready to provide economic and political support to Ukraine even if it would lead to a conflict with Russia (admitted 58% of respondents). It can also be seen in practice, because the greatest support for sanctions against Russia is in Western countries (GER 65%, UK 59%)<sup>76</sup>. Still western countries are cautious towards the use of military force even in the case of Ukraine—most support economic levers against Russia (68%) over military assistance to Ukraine (25%)<sup>77</sup>.

### 3.1.5. Value Orientation in Western Countries: Conclusions

#### Value Orientation in Western Countries: Conclusions

- Reviewed research and sociological data demonstrate a clear support for democracy - its instituted and most common values in Western countries. Support for democracy is also shown

in the ability to give up short term economic benefits for fundamental rights and freedoms. In Russia there is also a relatively high support for democracy, but just for one of the possible political systems and under the condition that it will resolve social and economic issues.

- Surveys conducted by WVS<sup>78</sup> show a lasting tendency that democracy is strong in societies with secularisation and values of self-expression. In Russia society is more traditional (explicit traditional values) and survival values are also strongly present (demand for economic prosperity and social protection).
- In Western countries liberal democracy values dominate with slight features of social democracy (state should provide for the least protected and for vulnerable groups). Meanwhile, the state role is seen as minimal with strictly defined narrow functions (dominantly social), which individuals don't want to perform.
- In Western countries there is both a demand for democracy (the majority consider it to be the best political system) and that it is active (active political participation in various forms, demand for self-expression and self-realisation). Meanwhile in Russia, according to PEW research, there's a clear *democracy gap*<sup>79</sup> – Russians say they want democracy but do not act to strengthen it and in reality prefer economic benefits.
- It is explained by the disappointment in democratic institutes and a negative experience of democracy's ability to

<sup>76</sup> Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2014. Available at [http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends\\_2014\\_complete.pdf](http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends_2014_complete.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> World Values Survey. Findings and Insights. Available at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

<sup>79</sup> PEW Global Research Attitudes Project 2012. Russians Back Protests, Political Freedoms. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/05/23/chapter-3-attitudes-toward-democracy-2/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.



develop economic and social stability in the long term<sup>80</sup>.

- Western countries can be considered as generally tolerant. Despite the fact that some Europeans would like to distance themselves from particular groups (homosexuals, immigrants), in general they are ready to accept them in society.
- Data on the dimension of international relations and law show that in general, Western countries are quite conservative towards the use of military force. If necessary, they're ready to accept it but only with a mandate from legitimate international organisations. The UN as a global platform for global peace and security maintenance is highly valued in Western countries, but from most of the tools the UN has – economic sanctions and diplomacy are preferred.
- Western countries are ready to use military force primarily to safeguard the legitimate goal – state territorial protection and maintenance of global peace and order, but only on condition that it has the support of international institutions.
- Russians also support the UN, but there is a selective approach, towards what it should and shouldn't do. UN member countries are supported in cases where Russian opinions and their opinions coincide. But when UN countries would like to limit an international aggressor, which is also an informal partner of Russia, then Russia is ready to use its veto rights on the Security Council to block unwanted actions (according to TT 2012 data 54% supported a veto to block intervention in Syria)<sup>81</sup>.

80 Ibid.

81 Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2012. Available at <http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/TT-2012-Key-Findings-Report.pdf>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

## 3.2. VALUES ORIENTATION IN RUSSIA

### 3.2.1 Political values

#### Democracy as a value

If we examine the statistics concerning Russian attitudes towards democracy, we can detect some similarities with views held by Western Europeans, however, a closer look reveals important differences.

The results of various research papers showed that Russians are united in the understanding that democracy can provide social and economic benefits. 75% of Russians associate democracy with raising the standard of living, providing welfare, the possibility of improving one's social prospects, and improvement in quality of life<sup>82</sup>.

However, according to data collected by the *Levada Center* in February 2013, only 38% of respondents considered European-style democracy to be desirable<sup>83</sup>. 72% of those interviewed believed Russians need a strong ruler, power concentrated in the hands

82 Магун В.С., Руднев М.Г., (2010), Базовые ценности россиян в европейском контексте, Available at [http://www.isras.ru/files/File/Publication/Bazov\\_zennosti\\_St1\\_Magun\\_Rudnev.pdf](http://www.isras.ru/files/File/Publication/Bazov_zennosti_St1_Magun_Rudnev.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

83 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, survey data about February 2013, Available at <http://www.levada.ru/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

of one person, either constantly or under specific conditions<sup>84</sup>.

When asked which political system seems more suitable for Russia, the number of Russians who preferred the Western model of democracy decreased from 21% in January 2014 to 11% in May 2015. For comparison, preferences for the current political system increased from 19% in January 2014 to 29% in May 2015—the opposite trend. The survey also showed a significant number of people expressing sentimentality for the Soviet regime. In March 2015, 34% of respondents stated that they considered the Soviet system that existed until 1990 to be the best system<sup>85</sup>.

From this we can conclude that Western-style democracy is not considered an indisputable high-priority value in Russian society as it is in the West.

### Civil and Political Rights

According to the 2013 data collected by the Department of Policy, Sociology and Psychology at Moscow State University, political values specific to Russian citizenry are: peace (71.5%); safety (69.9 %); rule of law (67.1 %); order (65.7 %); justice (61.7 %), and freedom (58 %) <sup>86</sup>.

The data also shows that the average Russian

resident considers free access to health care (74%), the prospect of finding a decent job and receiving a fair wage (58%), and equal treatment before the law and fair penalties (55%) to be the most valuable civil rights. Very few found the right to participate in public and state administration (4%), freedom of assembly (5%), the right to vote and be elected (5%), the right to freely express varying opinions (11%), and the right to freedom of speech (18%)—the most fundamental rights of the Western world—to be important<sup>87</sup>.

In 2014, 17% of respondents felt that respect for human rights is important, while 62% considered order and stability to be important, reaching a seventeen-year high. According to data from January 2014<sup>88</sup>, only 15% of respondents saw defects in democracy and respect for human rights as affecting them personally<sup>89</sup>.

According to a survey conducted by the *Levada Center* in March 2015, 39% of Russians consider democracy to be primarily concerned with providing freedom of speech, expression, and belief. 27% believe the economic welfare of the state comes first in a democracy, while 25% and 22% respectively consider order and stability and strict observance of the law to be the fundamental tasks of democracy.

Only 20% believe that democracy should

84 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, *Общественное Мнение – 2013*, Ежегодный сборник, М: 2014, стр.51. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/books/obshchestvennoe-mnenie-2013>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

85 Граждане, государство и власть, 26.03.2015. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/26-03-2015/grazhdane-gosudarstvo-i-vlast>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

86 Селезнева А., Политические ценности в современном российском массовом сознании: психологический анализ, *Человек. Сообщество. Управление*, No.2, 2014. Available at [http://chsu.kubsu.ru/arhiv/2014\\_2/2014\\_2\\_Selezneva.pdf](http://chsu.kubsu.ru/arhiv/2014_2/2014_2_Selezneva.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

87 Фонд Общественное мнение, Survey data about July 2013. Available at <https://fom.ru/Bezopastnost-i-pravo/11034>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

88 «Достойные люди» против законов, 22.12.2014. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/22-12-2014/dostoinye-lyudi-protiv-zakonov>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

89 Всероссийский центр изучения общественного мнения, Пресс-выпуск №2516, 02.2014. Available at <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=114712>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.



guarantee free and transparent elections of state officials<sup>90</sup>.

## Right to Life

Formally, Western countries consider capital punishment to be a fundamental violation of Human Rights, despite the fact that some people support such forms of justice. Capital punishment is no longer practiced in Russia, but support for capital punishment among Russian citizens is higher than before. 2014 data collected by the Public Opinion Fund (*Общественное мнение*) shows that 63% of Russians considered capital punishment to be an acceptable means of delivering justice<sup>91</sup>. According to the *Levada Center* statistics from 2012, 54% of Russians thought that capital punishment should be reintroduced; 38% wanted to revert to the situation as it was in the 1990s, while 16% were in favour of enhancing it<sup>92</sup>.

## Rights to Personal Liberty

66% of all Russian respondents recognise freedom as a basic value, although it is important to note that the Russian interpretation of freedom differs from that of the Western societies. In Russia the concept is associated more with '*free will*', meaning that one should be free to be the only master

of oneself<sup>93</sup>. As stated in the report, *The West in Russian Mentality*, this concept in Western languages can be directly translated as *will*, *volonte*, *wille*. According to the Russian philosopher Fedotov, it means 'to be capable of living according to your own will, without being dependent on any social restrictions—norms or laws. This type of freedom usually reflects avoidance (escapism), but not a way to found a new social order'<sup>94</sup>. Thus the authors of the report emphasize that this discrepancy in the way the two societies understand freedom and democracy is one of the sources of psychological incompatibility between Russia and the West.

According to a survey conducted by the *Levada Center* in 2013, 60% of Russians feel that they have ample freedom. Furthermore, this indicator had not changed for five years<sup>95</sup>. As a 2012 study by the *Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences* shows, when choosing between a society with individual freedom and a society with social equality, 37% will choose the first option, while 63% will lean towards the second

90 Представления о демократии, 14.04.2015. Available at <http://levada.ru/14-04-2015/pradstavleniya-o-demokratii>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

91 Фонд Общественное мнение, Отношение к смертной казни. Россияне о смертной казни и моратории на ее применение, 18.09.2014. Available at <http://fom.ru/TSennosti/11722>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

92 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Общественное Мнение – 2013, Ежегодный сборник, М: 2014, стр. 129. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/books/obshchestvennoe-mnenie-2013>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

93 Магун В.С., Руднев М.Г., (2010), Базовые ценности россиян в европейском контексте. Available at [http://www.isras.ru/files/File/Publication/Bazov\\_zennosti\\_St1\\_Magun\\_Rudnev.pdf](http://www.isras.ru/files/File/Publication/Bazov_zennosti_St1_Magun_Rudnev.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

94 Diligensky G., Chugrov S., (2000), *The West in Russian Mentality*, Office for Information and Press, Brussels Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Moscow. Available at <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/98-00/diliguenski.pdf>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

95 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Общественное Мнение – 2013, Ежегодный сборник, М: 2014, стр.22. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/books/obshchestvennoe-mnenie-2013>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

one<sup>96</sup>. This has something in common with the 2008 data of the poll *The Post-Soviet Person and Civil Society* (*Постсоветский человек и гражданское общество*), which showed that 78% of respondents believed that there is more freedom in a country that 'takes comprehensive care of its citizens, provides them with broad guarantees, and controls the economy'<sup>97</sup>.

Another important aspect is acceptance of the superiority of state interests over the needs and rights of an individual—sociologists often label principle the 'Soviet mentality'. The *Post-Soviet Person and Civil Society* research found that only one in four Russians is categorically against renouncing his/her civil rights<sup>98</sup>.

## Equality

Lack of equality in public life is a characteristic of Russian society. Even though equality is encoded into the law as one of the paramount human rights, in practice Russian society supports hierarchy and group affiliation.

## Freedom of Speech

In 2013 respondents to a survey conducted by the *Levada Center* were asked to list the important human rights; according to their data, freedom of speech ranked 5th

with 39% of popular support, but in 2014 it secured only 30%, indicating a decline. In 2015, Russian interest in freedom of speech had fallen to 9%<sup>99</sup>.

In 2013 only 18% of respondents considered censorship to be unacceptable, supporting the idea that people can decide themselves what to watch or read<sup>100</sup>. This corresponds with the results of the research *Values in Contemporary Russia* (*Ценности в современной России*), which found that most Russians see censorship as an effective and morally acceptable instrument<sup>101</sup>.

Considering the low importance attributed to freedom of speech combined with high support for state control and restrictions imposed on the liberal and democratic dimension, we can conclude that freedom of speech, a cornerstone of democratic society in the Western ideal, will not receive much support in Russia.

## Political Participation

Russian interest in public participation has been shown to be critically low. For example, data from the *Russian Public Opinion Research Center* (*Всероссийский центр изучения общественного мнения*) shows that the index of public and political participation

96      Институт социологии Российской академии наук, Социокультурные факторы консолидации российского общества, ИНАБ № 1 – 2013, Москва: Институт социологии РАН, стр. 27. Available at [http://www.isras.ru/files/File/INAB/inab\\_2013\\_01.pdf](http://www.isras.ru/files/File/INAB/inab_2013_01.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

97      Л.Д. Гудков, Б.В. Дубин, Н.А. Зоркая, (2008), *Постсоветский человек и гражданское общество*, Московская школа политических исследований, стр. 19, 21. Available at [http://www.levada.ru/sites/default/files/post-soviet\\_man.pdf](http://www.levada.ru/sites/default/files/post-soviet_man.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

98      Л.Д. Гудков, Б.В. Дубин, Н.А. Зоркая, (2008), *Постсоветский человек и гражданское общество*, Московская школа политических исследований, стр. 19, 21. Available at [http://www.levada.ru/sites/default/files/post-soviet\\_man.pdf](http://www.levada.ru/sites/default/files/post-soviet_man.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

99      «Достойные люди» против законов, 22.12.2014. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/22-12-2014/dostoinye-lyudi-protiv-zakonov>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

100     Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, *Общественное Мнение – 2013*, Ежегодный сборник, Москва: 2014, стр.170. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/books/obshchestvennoe-mnenie-2013>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

101     Фонд имени Питирима Сорокина, *Фонда памяти Марии, Ценности в современной России*, 2007. Available at <http://www.sorokinfond.ru/index.php?id=78>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

in 2014 was ‘-1’, taking the last place in the distribution of basic issues<sup>102</sup>.

Although elections are also considered a desirable procedure for the transfer of power, and the majority of Russia’s inhabitants see participation in elections as a civic duty, only an extremely small portion—6% in 2005—of the population considers elections to be a means for controlling and influencing power<sup>103</sup>. Furthermore, 43% of respondents agreed with the statement ‘I vote for power even when I don’t always support its actions’<sup>104</sup>.

As described in *The Post-Soviet Person and Civil Society*, Russians tend to see power as self-sufficient and so it is present and can operate regardless of society. A country’s inhabitants are seen as a resource for power, the property of power, and they passively agree with the practice of power. Russian citizens are more likely to perceive voting as their duty to the state, rather than a mechanism to control state power and elect representatives. Society’s interest in other forms of political participation is low, and street protests, strikes, etc. generally provoke a negative attitude.

### A ‘strong hand’

In 2013, 39% of respondents admitted that it would be preferable to have all of the

state’s power in the hands of one person, and 46% considered that it would be better if the power were divided among several structures that would control and keep each other in check<sup>105</sup>. With regard to the question whether the ‘power vertical’ is beneficial or detrimental to the state, 32% expressed an opinion that there is some benefit while 40% considered that it works to the state’s detriment<sup>106</sup>. When asked whether there are cases in which a powerful and imperious leader, with a ‘strong hand’ is necessary for the people, only 20% were adamant that a scenario in which all of state’s power would reside in the hands of one person should not be permitted. Meanwhile 72% believed that such a situation would be acceptable<sup>107</sup>.

In order to explain the fluctuations in these results, it is necessary to take two things into consideration. First, there is a deep chasm between existing and ideal values systems in Russian society. Second, there is an ideological disorder in the consciousness of the individual that ‘is displayed by the changing perceptions about self-made manifestations of values and forms of realisation depending on the flows of information’<sup>108</sup>.

102 Всероссийский центр изучения общественного мнения. Available at [http://wciom.ru/fileadmin/Monitoring/2014/5/2014\\_123\\_6\\_Monitoring\\_soc.pdf](http://wciom.ru/fileadmin/Monitoring/2014/5/2014_123_6_Monitoring_soc.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

103 Реутов Е.В. (2007), Институт выборов в легитимации региональной власти, Научные ведомости белгородского государственного университета N.2(33), 2007, стр. 76. Available at <http://dspace.bsu.edu.ru/bitstream/123456789/1789/1/Reutov%20E.V.%20Institut%20viborov.pdf>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

104 Л.Д. Гудков, Б.В. Дубин, Н.А. Зоркая, (2008), Постсоветский человек и гражданское общество, Московская школа политических исследований, стр. 19, 21. Available at [http://www.levada.ru/sites/default/files/post-soviet\\_man.pdf](http://www.levada.ru/sites/default/files/post-soviet_man.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

105 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Общественное Мнение – 2013, Ежегодный сборник, Москва: 2014, стр. 43. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/books/obshchestvennoe-mnenie-2013>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

106 Ibid. стр. 45.

107 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Общественное Мнение – 2013, Ежегодный сборник, Москва: 2014, стр. 51. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/books/obshchestvennoe-mnenie-2013>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

108 Селезнева А., Политические ценности в современном российском массовом сознании: психологический анализ, Человек. Сообщество. Управление, No.2, 2014. Available at [http://chsu.kubsu.ru/arhiv/2014\\_2/2014\\_2\\_Selezneva.pdf](http://chsu.kubsu.ru/arhiv/2014_2/2014_2_Selezneva.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

## The role of the state

*The study, the Post-Soviet Person and Civil Society* concluded that: 'It is vitally important for the masses to understand that power in Russia is not identified as a guarantor of 'law and an order' or the people, but that power is the 'state' itself—the top management and state officials—'authorities' who provide the work for government'<sup>109</sup>.

According to the *Levada Center* data for 2014, only 6% believe that the state should interfere as little as possible in the lives and economic activities of its citizens, while 53% think that the state should care for all its inhabitants by ensuring an adequate standard of living<sup>110</sup>. Additionally, 70% of respondents expressed their confidence that the majority of Russian society wouldn't be able to survive without the regular help and protection of the state<sup>111</sup>. It should be noted that in 2014, 47% of Russians expressed their confidence that the majority of Russia's inhabitants wouldn't be able to protect their rights<sup>112</sup>.

In 2015 49% of Russians believed that the state should take care of all its citizens and ensure an adequate standard of living for them. 25% think that the state can limit certain rights of certain individuals under special circumstances. 78% of respondents think that

at the present moment it is impossible to have any influence on government decisions<sup>113</sup>.

Another aspect that indicates the relationships between the state and its inhabitants could be described with the increasingly positive attitude towards Joseph Stalin. If in 2010 every third respondent thought that Stalin was a criminal, currently only one in four people thinks the same. Furthermore, the number of those who think that the sacrifices made during the Soviet period, especially the Stalin era, were justified in the name of the 'greater good' has considerably increased. If in 2012 25% of respondents considered the statement to be true, in March 2015 this figure had climbed to 45%<sup>114</sup>.

The data indicates that most Russians today see the role of government as being similar to that of the Soviet model of management in the form of a developmental state. But there is also a demand for personal care, like that of 'a strict, but caring ruler' over his subordinates. This, combined with the low level of popular interest in the political process, provides fertile soil for patrimonialism to flourish in Russia.

## Mutual Trust

Generally, Russians display a low level of interpersonal trust. According to the data gathered by *Центр сравнительных социальных исследований* in 2012, only 28.7% of the Russian respondents believed

109 Л.Д. Гудков, Б.В. Дубин, Н.А. Зоркая, (2008), *Постсоветский человек и гражданское общество*, Московская школа политических исследований, стр. 19, 21. Available at [http://www.levada.ru/sites/default/files/post-soviet\\_man.pdf](http://www.levada.ru/sites/default/files/post-soviet_man.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

110 Ibid. стр.47.

111 Ibid. стр. 49.

112 Фонд Общественное мнение, *Готовы ли россияне отстаивать свои права? Оценка готовности россиян объединяться, чтобы постоять за свои права*, 14.04.2014. Available at <http://fom.ru/TSennosti/11455>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

113 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, *Взаимодействие граждан и государства*, 06.04.2015. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/2015/04/06/vzaimodejstvie-grazhdan-i-gosudarstva/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

114 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, *Сталин и его роль в истории страны*, 31.03.2015. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/31-03-2015/stalin-i-ego-rol-v-istorii-strany>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.



that they could trust other people<sup>115</sup>. Data collected by the Public Opinion Fund indicates that 77% of the respondents in 2013 thought that most people cannot be trusted, and only 19% of respondents held the opposite view<sup>116</sup>.

This trend of decreasing interpersonal trust in Russia is interpreted as the unfavourable result of the long decline into societal decadence<sup>117</sup>. The old social capital that was lost during this process cannot be effectively replaced because the 'power vertical' hampers its formation.

Some experts recognise that interpersonal trust is connected to economic consumerism, which, in its current form, is not capable of stimulating the growth of human wellbeing. The problem lies in society itself, which is more inclined to wait passively for social equality to develop on its own<sup>118</sup>.

115 Национальный исследовательский университет «Высшая школа экономики», Счастье связано с доверием к коллегам и соседям, 01.10.2014. Available at <https://iq.hse.ru/news/177666684.html>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

116 Фонд Общественное мнение, Survey data about November 2013. Available at <http://fom.ru/TSennosti/11253>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

117 Татарко А. Н. (2012), Социальный капитал современной России: психологический анализ, Вестник Московского государственного гуманитарного университета им. М.А. Шолохова, No.3/2012, стр. 72. Available at <http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/sotsialnyy-kapital-sovremennoy-rossii-psihologicheskii-analiz>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

118 Татарко А. Н. (2012), Социальный капитал современной России: психологический анализ, Вестник Московского государственного гуманитарного университета им. М.А. Шолохова, No.3/2012, стр. 72. Available at <http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/sotsialnyy-kapital-sovremennoy-rossii-psihologicheskii-analiz>, last time accessed 01.07.2015, стр. 79-80.

## Fidelity to social institutes

In general, Russian fidelity to social institutions is low. This low level of trust directly explains society's alienation from power. It also serves to explain the above-mentioned perception of state power as self-sufficient.

The institution least trusted by the Russian people (72% of respondents) is the police. Institutions closely associated with the democratic model, such as parliament and non-governmental organisations, are also looked on with suspicion<sup>119</sup>.

Undoubtedly, the president is the only one who enjoys a high level of trust. Sociologists have concluded 'the trust conferred on the president is sky high compared to trust in any of the other institutions, even other government institutions'<sup>120</sup>.

## Tolerance

In a study conducted in 2008, Russians were asked to list the values that should be instilled in children; tolerance ranked fourth, while in the West it is usually among the most important values<sup>121</sup>. Russians, however, mentioned 'diligence' as the most important value. The results of the 2013 study *Political Values and their Perception in Modern Russia* (Политические ценности и их

119 Сасаки М., Давыденко В., Латов Ю., Ромашкин Г., Латова Н., Проблемы и парадоксы анализа институционального доверия как элемента социального капитала современной России, Journal of Institutional Studies, No.1. 2009. Available at <http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/problemy-i-paradoksy-analiza-institutsionalnogo-doveriya-kak-elementa-sotsialnogo-kapitala-sovremennoy-rossii>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

120 Ibid.

121 Россия: ценности современного общества, 2008. Available at <http://www.politcom.ru/7234.html>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

восприятие в современной России) shows that tolerance in Russian society isn't even considered to be an actual value as it only garnered 7.3% of popular support<sup>122</sup>.

### Tolerance towards minorities and marginalised groups

According to the data collected by the Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (*Всероссийский центр изучения общественного мнения*), a low level of tolerance towards marginalised social groups and minorities is typical of Russian society. In 2014 the index of public tolerance towards these groups was 21<sup>123</sup>.

Russian intolerance is also exemplified by the fact that the prison sentence given to *Pussy Riot* was considered an adequate punishment by 56% of Russian respondents<sup>124</sup>.

Low level of tolerance towards LGBT people is also common for the Russian society. As statistics testify, 37% of respondents consider homosexuals to be sick and in need of treatment, while another 26% were sure that their orientation is a result of poor upbringing, immorality or a harmful habit. Additionally, 84% of respondents claim that

they are opposed to the introduction of same-sex marriage in Russia<sup>125</sup>.

### Tolerance towards sexual minorities

Data collected by the *Levada Center* shows that the number of Russians who see homosexuality as immoral is almost three times that of Western countries. When asked about their personal attitudes towards homosexuals, 50% of respondents admitted that they view them with annoyance, disgust, or fear<sup>126</sup>.

### Nationalism

Russian society also shows high level of intolerance towards ethnic and racial minorities. According to 2013 data from the *Levada Center*, 66% of Russians interviewed supported the slogan, '*Russia is for Russians*'<sup>127</sup> and according to data from a study conducted by the University of Oslo in 2013, only 25% of those respondents agreed that the concept '*Russians*' applies to all citizens of the Russian Federation regardless of their ethnic affiliation<sup>128</sup>.

In addition, data from a number of other research projects has highlighted significant challenges in connection with increasingly nationalistic trends and heightened

122 Селезнева А., Политические ценности в современном российском массовом сознании: психологический анализ, Человек. Сообщество. Управление, No.2, 2014. Available at [http://chsu.kubsu.ru/arhiv/2014\\_2/2014\\_2\\_Selezneva.pdf](http://chsu.kubsu.ru/arhiv/2014_2/2014_2_Selezneva.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

123 Всероссийский центр изучения общественного мнения, Пресс-выпуск №2725, 28.11.2014. Available at <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=115070>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

124 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Общественное Мнение – 2013, Ежегодный сборник, Москва: 2014, стр.142. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/books/obshchestvennoe-mnenie-2013>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

125 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады "Невидимое меньшинство": к проблеме гомофобии в России. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/15-05-2015/nevidimoje-menshinstvo-k-probleme-gomofobii-v-rossii>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

126 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Общественное Мнение – 2013, Ежегодный сборник, Москва: 2014, стр.115. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/books/obshchestvennoe-mnenie-2013>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

127 Ibid.

128 Hale H. E. Russian, Nationalism and Logic of the Kremlin's Actions on Ukraine, 24.08.2014. Available at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/29/russian-nationalism-kremlin-actions-ukraine>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.



xenophobia in Russian society. Alarming, the trend in modern Russia is that being 'for us' means simultaneously being 'against them', against the other<sup>129</sup>.

## 3.2.2. Economic values

Components of the free market generally have low support in Russia, even those that are closely connected with the democratic values and ideals held by Russian society. For example, the results of the 2013 research<sup>130</sup> *Political Values and their Perception in Modern Russia* (Политические ценности и их восприятие в современной России) presented liberal economy as one of the values least relevant to Russian society.

According to the study *The Morality of Modern Russian Society* (Нравственность современного российского общества), Russians mostly consider the market economy to be illegitimate and immoral<sup>131</sup>. Statistics collected by the *Levada Center* for 2013 testify that 51% of Russians interviewed would like to have an economic system that relies on state planning and market

segmentation. This is most likely rooted in society's high demand for the government to distribute welfare equally<sup>132</sup>.

### Private Property

In the Western world, the right to private property is considered one of the prerequisites for the formation and development of a free personality; its value is not in question. In comparison, private property enjoys only meagre support in Russian society.

In the West an individual can privatise natural resources, but this idea has very low support among Russians—only 2% favour this idea<sup>133</sup>. A similar situation can be observed in industry as well. In 2013, 45% of respondents held that all large manufacturing industries should belong to the state, while 48% expressed confidence that all enterprises vital to the state's interests should be under its control, while the rest can remain private. Only 25% of respondents expressed absolute support of private land ownership, while 55% would like to see property and use rights limited by the state<sup>134</sup>.

129 Institute of Modern Russia, Bruk B., (2014), What's in the Name? Russian Understanding of Patriotism. Available at [http://imrussia.org/media/pdf/Research/Boris\\_Bruk\\_\\_Russian\\_Understanding\\_of\\_Patriotism.pdf](http://imrussia.org/media/pdf/Research/Boris_Bruk__Russian_Understanding_of_Patriotism.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

130 Селезнева А., Политические ценности в современном российском массовом сознании: психологический анализ, Человек. Сообщество. Управление, No.2, 2014. Available at [http://chsu.kubsu.ru/arhiv/2014\\_2/2014\\_2\\_Selezneva.pdf](http://chsu.kubsu.ru/arhiv/2014_2/2014_2_Selezneva.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

131 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Общественное Мнение – 2013, Ежегодный сборник, Москва: 2014. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/books/obshchestvennoe-mnenie-2013>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

132 Российская академия наук Институт психологии, ред. А. Л. Журавлев, А. В. Юревич (2012), Нравственность современного российского общества. Available at <http://www.ipras.ru/engine/documents/document4057.pdf>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

133 Российская академия наук Институт психологии, ред. А. Л. Журавлев, А. В. Юревич (2012), Нравственность современного российского общества, стр. 8. Available at <http://www.ipras.ru/engine/documents/document4057.pdf>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

134 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Общественное Мнение – 2013, Ежегодный сборник, М: 2014, стр. 149. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/books/obshchestvennoe-mnenie-2013>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

## Competition

Low level of support for a competitive environment is common to the Russian society. According to data collected by the Higher School of Economics, Laboratory of Socio-psychological Research (*Высшая школа экономики, Лаборатория социально-психологических исследований*) in 2008, less than 10% of the interviewed Russians stated that they would want to live and work in a competitive market<sup>135</sup>.

## 3.2.3. Moral values

When it comes to moral values some researchers agree that there are ‘two Russias’—*the real and the virtual*. This assumption is based on the observation that Russians often claim to have practices regarding certain values that differ from reality. This can be explained by the fact, that the system of values in Russia today in most cases is formed not by values, but by anti-values. However, society actually wants the state to be capable of exerting its power and influence to change the values system to reduce the gap between ‘ideal’ and ‘real’. For instance, respondents believed that certain groups in society shape education and information policies based on the main social values on behalf of the government<sup>136</sup>.

135 ГУ Высшая школа экономики, Лаборатория социально-психологических исследований. Available at [http://www.opec.ru/docs.aspx?ob\\_no=88016](http://www.opec.ru/docs.aspx?ob_no=88016), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

136 Фонд имени Питирима Сорокина, Фонда памяти Марии, Ценности в современной России, 2007. Available at <http://www.sorokinfond.ru/index.php?id=78>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

## Individualism vs Collectivism

It is generally accepted that the strong tendency towards collectivism, which is typical for Russian society, can be explained by a historical prevalence of collectivism over individualism. Sociologists further conclude that today’s collectivism exists in an amended form adding some elements of individualism in order to be more applicable to today’s ideological orientations, primarily dominated by individualism. It is also said to be the same regarding individualism. For example, data shows that there is a clearly visible increase in individualistic values among Russian people<sup>137</sup>. Compared to other states, ‘the average Russian possesses individualistic values, concerned with caring for the wellbeing of other people, with equality and tolerance towards others as well as the care for the surrounding environment also ranking high. Likewise, assigning extremely high importance to ‘egoistical’ values is typical’<sup>138</sup>. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the fact that there is a wide array of opinions circulating on this topic, so varying views and interpretations are common.

## Materialism

The 2013 study *Political Values and their Perception in Modern Russia (Политические ценности и их восприятие в современной России)* shows that materialistic values

137 Кибардина Л.Н., (2009), Индивидуализм коллективизм и социальное государство в современной России. Available at <http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/individualizm-kollektivizm-i-sotsialnoe-gosudarstvo-v-sovremennoy-rossii>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

138 Магун В.С., Руднев М.Г., (2010), Базовые ценности россиян в европейском контексте. Available at [http://www.isras.ru/files/File/Publication/Bazov\\_zennosti\\_St1\\_Magun\\_Rudnev.pdf](http://www.isras.ru/files/File/Publication/Bazov_zennosti_St1_Magun_Rudnev.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

dominate and largely define the physiological needs of the Russian people<sup>139</sup>.

## Religion

A study conducted at the turn of the 21st century shows that 70-80% of Russians identify as Orthodox Christians, while only 40-60% believed in God. Thus being an Orthodox Christian is more often a cultural rather than a theological affiliation.

It is highly likely that this cultural self-identification explains the high level of trust characteristically conferred on the church as a social institution. For instance, in 2012 68% of respondents confirmed that they trust churches. They also supported the idea of different denominations working closely with the state to positively impact the state's system of values<sup>140</sup>.

One can draw the conclusion that the high level of trust conferred on the church together with the passive expectation of 'outside intervention' is very similar to the common social attitudes Russians have toward their president.

## 3.2.4. The dimension of international relations and rights

Data from 2012 testifies that only 36% of Russians believed that the state should respect the decisions made by international organisations. 51% expressed confidence that Russia should pursue its own interests, even if it led to a conflict with other countries. At the same time it is worth noting that Russian inhabitants have higher level of trust in international institutions than in their own state authorities (with the exception the president)<sup>141</sup>.

According to the *World Public Opinion* study from 2009, 54% of respondents believed international norms to be more important than national interests. However, 38% of Russians justify deception in certain situations when the state is conducting global politics. When asked about Russian soldiers in Ukraine, they claimed that there was no proof of a Russian presence in Eastern Ukraine<sup>142</sup>.

139 Селезнева А., Политические ценности в современном российском массовом сознании: психологический анализ, Человек. Сообщество. Управление, No.2, 2014. Available at [http://chsu.kubsu.ru/arhiv/2014\\_2/2014\\_2\\_Selezneva.pdf](http://chsu.kubsu.ru/arhiv/2014_2/2014_2_Selezneva.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

140 Фонд имени Питирима Сорокина, Фонда памяти Марии, Ценности в современной России, 2007. Available at <http://www.sorokinfond.ru/index.php?id=78>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

141 Татарко А. Н. (2012), Социальный капитал современной России: психологический анализ, Вестник Московского государственного гуманитарного университета им. М.А. Шолохова, No.3/2012, стр. 77. Available at <http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/sotsialnyy-kapital-sovremennoy-rossii-psihologicheskiy-analiz>, last time accessed 01.07.2015., last time accessed 01.07.2015.

142 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Украинский кризис, 05.05.2015. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/old/05-05-2015/ukrainskii-krizis>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

## The United Nations

According to the Public Opinion Foundation (Фонд Общественное мнение), the number of Russian inhabitants who see the UN as a positive influence on contemporary global politics has significantly decreased. In 2000 55% of respondents viewed the UN positively, while 17% considered it to have a negative influence. In 2014, however, only 24% saw UN's contribution to the global affairs as positive, while 38% had an unfavourable opinion of the organisation. Furthermore, only 23% of respondents supported state submission to UN decisions and authority. The number of people who believe the UN only reflects the views of certain countries has risen against those who see it as representative of the global opinion. In 2014 the ratio of these indicators was 22% to 53% while in 2000 it was 37% to 38%. In addition, 63% of respondents expressed the belief that the actions of the UN do not serve the interests of Russia. Respondents also had a pessimistic outlook on Russian influence on the UN—35% of respondents thought that Russia has minimal influence, while 24% said that it has a great influence<sup>143</sup>.

Data from the *Levada Center* also shows a low level of trust in the UN and specifies that 49% of respondents don't trust the International Court of Justice—the principal judicial organ of the UN.

143 Фонд Общественное мнение, Представления о роли ООН. Насколько влиятельна ООН в современном мире? И влияет ли Россия на деятельность ООН? 14.08.2014. Available at <http://fom.ru/Mir/11664>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

## NATO

According to the 2011 data collected by the Public Opinion Foundation, 35% of Russians considered NATO's influence in the world to have remained the same over the years leading up to 2011, while 31% considered it to have increased and 7% saw NATO's as decreasing (compared to 12% in 2009). When answering the question 'What is NATO's mission?', 24% said that it is, among other things, 'aggression against other countries'; 17% answered that its primary aim was reducing and containing Russia and China; 19%—war against terrorism; 10%—countering drug trafficking; and 16%—preventing the proliferation and distribution of weapons of mass destruction<sup>144</sup>.

Such ambivalence and lack of understanding among Russians can be attributed to relatively poor knowledge about NATO (an average of 2.7 on a 1-5 scale), as noted by the authors of *Russians on NATO Russia, Novgorod region* (Россияне о НАТО Россия, Новгородская область)<sup>145</sup>.

In general, Russians are known to have a low level of sympathy towards NATO, which is considered a hard power tool that serves the interests of certain countries, mainly the US. NATO is also often seen as playing a zero sum game—containing Russia and preventing it from fulfilling its geopolitical goals and ambitions.

144 Всероссийский центр изучения общественного мнения, Россия и НАТО: реальность и перспективы взаимодействия, 2011. Available at <http://www.old.wciom.ru/fileadmin/news/2011/Nato.pdf>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

145 Информационное бюро НАТО в Москве, Новгородский государственный университет имени Ярослава Мудрого, Россияне о НАТО Россия. Новгородская область, 2013. Available at [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2013\\_nio/20131202\\_131129-nio-survey-analytical.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2013_nio/20131202_131129-nio-survey-analytical.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.



## Imperialism

The results of a November 2014 survey show that 54% of respondents feel sorrow about the fall of the Soviet Union. Still, only 13% would support the restoration of the USSR in its previous form<sup>146</sup>. A survey from May 2014 points out that 49% of respondents consider that the former Soviet states should be in the Russian sphere of influence<sup>147</sup>. In 2009 33.9% of Russians considered that in the 21st century Russia should see its status as a superpower restored<sup>148</sup>.

As the report *The Russian Elite in 2020* (*Российская элита 2020*) states, over the years the geopolitical ambitions of the Russian elite have decreased, thus a military intervention is more and more often legitimised by reasons of different nature (after a 'request' of a former Soviet states; to protect Russia's national interests; to protect Russians abroad, especially in the territory of the former USSR)<sup>149</sup>.

146 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Распад СССР в российском общественном мнении, 01.12.2014. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/01-12-2014/raspad-sssr-v-rossiiskom-obshchestvennom-mnenii>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

147 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Отношение россиян к другим странам, 05.06.2014. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/2014/06/05/otnoshenie-rossiyan-k-drugim-stranam-6/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

148 Бызов Л., (2009), Внешнеполитические приоритеты новой России. Available at [http://wciom.ru/fileadmin/file/monitoring/2009/94/2009\\_6\(94\)\\_3\\_Byzov.pdf](http://wciom.ru/fileadmin/file/monitoring/2009/94/2009_6(94)_3_Byzov.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

149 Инглхарт Р. Ф., Циммерман У., Понарин Э. Д., Лазарев Е. А., Соколов Б. О., Варганова И. А., Туранова Е. Г. (2013), Аналитический доклад грантополучателей Международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай», Российская элита 2020, стр. 28. Available at [http://www.hse.ru/pubs/lib/data/access/ram/ticket/20/142076421661ea68548f2141d764974c6b-05b4afad/Russian\\_elite\\_2020\\_rus.pdf](http://www.hse.ru/pubs/lib/data/access/ram/ticket/20/142076421661ea68548f2141d764974c6b-05b4afad/Russian_elite_2020_rus.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

## Increase in the international influence of Russia

Increasing Russia's global clout and competitiveness is, according to most Russians, one of the primary goals of the country's foreign policy; such policy is also necessary because a confrontation with the West sometime in the future is not ruled out.

According to the study *Russia and Russian Self-identification and the State of National Self-awareness* (*Россия и россияне самоидентификация и состояние национального самосознания*), 78.3% of respondents mentioned that Russia's increasingly important role in global politics during the first decade of the 21st century is 'among the most important historical events of the state'<sup>150</sup>.

In 2014, 48% of respondents considered the main reason for the foundation of the Eurasian Economic Community a 'desire to be competitive on the international stage'<sup>151</sup>.

## External threat

The measurements of the *Integration Barometer EDB* (*Интеграционный барометр ЕАБР*) in 2014 testify that only 12% of respondents cannot name a country 'unfriendly' towards Russia. But results from the 2013 *Global Barometer on Hope and Despair by the Gallup International Association* point to essential differences between how residents of Russia and

150 Фонд развития гражданского общества, Результаты социологического исследования "Россия и россияне": самоидентификация и состояние национального самосознания, 06. 05. 2014. Available at <http://civilfund.ru/mat/view/55>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

151 Исследовательский холдинг Ромир, Россияне поддерживают Евразийский экономический союз, 17.09.2014. Available at [http://romir.ru/studies/595\\_1410897600/](http://romir.ru/studies/595_1410897600/), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

Western Europeans understand and perceive important world problems. The problem brought up by Western Europeans the most (in 24% of cases) is the split between the rich and the poor. In Russia, where respondents themselves are more likely to be near the poverty line (19%), wars and armed conflicts were seen as the most significant problem (18%). This idea is connected to a subjective understanding of the external threat to Russia's inhabitants<sup>152</sup>.

According to 2014 data from the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (*Всероссийский центр изучения общественного мнения*), the index of the Russian army's ability in the eyes of the people has reached a historic high (62 points); in addition to that, respondents saw the tactical efficiency of the Russian Army to have increased considerably as well. These indicators also specify that in the eyes of the Russian society external threats seem to be more real than 5-10 years ago as 52% consider that there is a tangible threat from other countries<sup>153</sup>.

### Western countries as a source of threat

According to a 2013 research conducted by *Gallup International*, 54% of respondents in Russia see the US as the main external threat<sup>154</sup>. The results of a research by

the *Levada Center* also point to similar tendencies. Since 2009, the US is among those countries, which the interviewed Russians identify as unfriendly. As many as 69% of respondents expressed similar sentiments in 2014. The US is followed by Ukraine (30%), Lithuania (24%), Latvia (23%) and Estonia (21%)<sup>155</sup>.

In 2013 a Russian company Romir (*Ромир*) together with a Canadian research and polling firm *Leger* conducted a study regarding the relations between Americans and Russians to get a clearer picture of how both nations perceive one another. 10% of respondents in Russia associated the US with being an 'Evil Empire', having 'conscienceless and dangerous elements' and run by 'those yearning for world supremacy'. Another 10% associate the US with wars and aggression<sup>156</sup>.

The *Integration Barometer EDB* data for 2014 specified that only 17% of respondents in Russia believe that the EU countries are friendly towards Russia, but 30% of the respondents expressed confidence that the relations with the EU resemble conflict, and involve risk to the country<sup>157</sup>.

Having examined the threat as perceived by the Russian people, it can be concluded that this fear has now reached its peak. In January 2015, according to a survey by the *Levada Center*, 68% of respondents believe that there is some sort of a military threat

152 Исследовательский холдинг Ромир, Мир беспокоит коррупция, а Россию – бедность и вооруженные конфликты, 03.04.2014. Available at [http://romir.ru/studies/554\\_1396468800/](http://romir.ru/studies/554_1396468800/), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

153 Абрамов К., (2014), Вооруженные силы России: общественная оценка, Всероссийский центр изучения общественного мнения. Available at [http://www.old.wciom.ru/fileadmin/news/2014/army\\_wciom\\_2014.pdf](http://www.old.wciom.ru/fileadmin/news/2014/army_wciom_2014.pdf), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

154 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Отношение россиян к другим странам, 05.06.2014. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/2014/06/05/otnoshenie-rossiyan-k-drugim-stranam-6/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

155 Исследовательский холдинг Ромир. Available at [http://romir.ru/studies/549\\_1395172800/](http://romir.ru/studies/549_1395172800/), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

156 Исследовательский холдинг Ромир, Россия и США: любит – не любит, 11.12.2013. Available at [http://romir.ru/studies/527\\_1386705600/](http://romir.ru/studies/527_1386705600/), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

157 Евразийский Монитор, Евразийский банк развития, Интеграционный барометр ЕАБР, стр.68. Available at <http://www.eurasiamonitor.org/rus/research/event-251.html>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.



to Russia<sup>158</sup>.

A similar survey conducted in April 2015 reveals that 59% of Russians consider the US a threat to Russia. However, it is worth noting that this index hasn't grown significantly since 2007 when 47% of respondents held this view. 'Obstructing Russia's foreign policy' is considered to be the biggest threat the US poses to Russia. Still the imposition of other values and ideas alien to Russia is seen as another potential threat by 36% of respondents. Furthermore, as the results of the April survey show the negative attitude towards the US has decreased considerably since January 2015. If in January 81% of Russians were negative towards the US, in May this indicator was 73%. It is worth noting that in May 2014 this index was approximately the same—71%<sup>159</sup>.

Russian attitudes towards the EU are neither as negative nor as fluctuating as attitudes towards the US. 64% of Russians held negative views about the EU in March 2015, a figure that remained static for almost a year<sup>160</sup>.

## The Russian confrontation with the West

The Russian Public Opinion Research Centre conducted a study on the opinions of the Russian people concerning the recently cooling relations between Western countries and Russia through the prism of the so-called 'index of Cold War'. In the context

of the Ukrainian conflict this indicator has markedly changed from February 2013 (-10) to November 2014 (+70). Data from 2014 shows that 31% of respondents thought that a new conflict between Russia and the West is quite possible, while 25% were sure that a new Cold War had already begun. The latter group explained their position by stating that 'the US and Europe have already carried out military operations' (23%)<sup>161</sup>.

According to another poll, 85% of Russians were sure that Ukraine and Western countries had started an information war against Russia. In December 2014, 85% of respondents expressed that they were confident that Western countries practice a hateful policy towards Russia<sup>162</sup>. 51% of them considered that such actions are manifested in the use of sanctions targeted against the Russian economy and business, 42% explained it by the 'information war' against Russia, and another 40% think that Western countries were trying to achieve control over natural resources and the economy of Russia. 31% are sure that 'the Western countries try to drive Russian economy out of the former Soviet Union and to maintain control over the former communist block and the republics of the USSR'<sup>163</sup>.

In general, Russians support the idea of sharp and firm action taken by their state against the West. In addition to that, 78% of Russians are convinced that Moldova,

158 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Служба в армии и военные угрозы, 21.02.2015. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/2015/02/21/sluzhba-v-armii-i-voennye-ugrozy/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

159 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Отношение к другим странам. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/2015/04/02/otnoshenie-k-drugim-stranam/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

160 Ibid.

161 Холодная война – скоро начнется или уже идет? 02.12.2014., Русская народная линия. Available at [http://ruskline.ru/news\\_rl/2014/12/02/holodnaya\\_vojna\\_skoro\\_nachnetsya\\_ili\\_uzhe\\_idet/](http://ruskline.ru/news_rl/2014/12/02/holodnaya_vojna_skoro_nachnetsya_ili_uzhe_idet/), last time accessed 01.07.2015.

162 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Отношение россиян к другим странам, 05.06.2014. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/2014/06/05/otnoshenie-rossiyan-k-drugim-stranam-6/>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

163 Ibid.

Georgia, and Ukraine supported sanctions as they were making strides towards the EU.

According to data from the *Pew Global Attitudes Research Project*, 83% of Russians in the second half of 2014 supported Putin's foreign policy. Since 2012 this indicator has grown by 14%. Likewise, negative attitudes towards the US and the EU have reached a historic high. These trends were illustrated during the Russo-Georgian war, when it became clear that Russian society is ready to support the revisionist and aggressive policies of Russian power<sup>164</sup>.

Despite the aforementioned indicators, it is worth noting that the Russian people hold contradictory feeling about the West and possible Russian relations with it. 72% of Russians consider that Russia should continue its current foreign policy despite the sanctions, while 60% of respondents support a rapprochement between Russia and the West by improving economic, cultural and political relations<sup>165</sup>.

There is one more aspect that should be noted in this regard—a low demand among the Russian people for a democratic and accountable model of decision-making. This low demand explains the preference and prevalence of president's unilateral decision-making over that of democratic institutions.

## Syria

Levada Center data from June 2014 shows that 54% of the interviewed Russians opposed the US led airstrikes against Daesh in Syria. 40% of respondents believed that 'the terrorists supported by the West will declare a bloody war against Syria's official government', while 26% considered that there already is a civil war in Syria<sup>166</sup>.

## Iran

Data from 2012 shows that 61% of respondents considered that Iran had the right to block the Strait of Hormuz through which the majority of oil is transported to the countries in the West from the Persian Gulf in retaliation to certain economic sanctions imposed by the West. More than half of respondents said that in 2012 Iran was not a threat to the peace and stability of the region<sup>167</sup>.

Russia wishes to strengthen its influence in the Near East and Eastern Europe to project their power as a global player and to be able to adequately respond to the actions taken by the Western countries. According to the interviewed Russians, the actions and policies pursued by the West are limiting or even outright ignoring the interests of other parties. Russian citizens do not see any efforts by western countries to uphold the international law and secure peace and stability in the world.

164 Всероссийский центр изучения общественного мнения. Available at <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=459&uid=114953>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

165 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Позиции России на международной арене, 23.02.2015. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/23-03-2015/pozitsii-rossii-na-mezhdunarodnoi-arene>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

166 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/05-06-2014/otnoshenie-rossiyan-k-drugim-stranam>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

167 Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады. Available at <http://www.levada.ru/28-11-2012/rossiyanam-zagranitsa-ne-ukaz>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

## 3.2.5. Value Orientation in Russia: Conclusions

Using generalised data, it is possible to draw a conclusion that in most cases the values of the average Russian citizen tend to differ, rather than coincide with the values of the average resident of any given Western country. In addition, inner contradictions combined with the impulsive mentality of the Russian people are not conducive to stable relationships and values<sup>168</sup>.

An important aspect that distinguishes Russians is the considerable gap that exists between declared values, and relationships in practice.

### Political values

- Democracy in Russian society isn't perceived as a primary value. The choice of political regime is subordinated to stability, order, and economic prosperity.
- Generally, the indicators that show support for the various aspects of democracy are criticized. Russian society has a markedly different understanding and interpretation of democratic values and the application of the democratic processes than do Western societies.

- The interests of the individual, including universal human rights, are subordinated to the interests of the state. The state, however, finds it more attractive to support social programs instead of individual freedom. Russians themselves have come to prefer control and regulation.
- An individual's freedom is not relevant for Russian society; this contradiction creates and entrenches a negative understanding of freedom.
- Russian society expects the state to intervene in practically every sphere of life. Paradoxically, institutions that provide expected services enjoy very low levels of trust, with the exception of the president.
- High support for the president and his actions in addressing both domestic and foreign policy issues, combined with society's support for the *vertical power system* is conducive to running a patrimonial state.
- The elements of social capital in Russian society are still not strong enough to help further democratization and economic development. This can be explained by low levels of mutual trust, lack of trust in social institutions, and low levels of civil identification in general.
- Civil values aren't highly appreciated by Russians. In turn, the frailty of civil society is another factor contributing to the high demand for a patrimonial system.
- Russians don't consider tolerance to be an essential value. There is an alarming trend where the sense of being Russian is inextricable from opposition to 'otherness'; this is characterized not only by a split between different social and

168 Diligensky G., Chugrov S., (2000), *The West in Russian Mentality*, Office for Information and Press, Brussels Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Moscow. Available at <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/98-00/diliguenski.pdf>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.

ethnic groups, but it also shapes the way the events in the international arena are perceived. Russian society treats tolerance as an anti-value and itself is openly intolerant towards things that diverge from the norm or traditionally accepted standards. Society is fearful, which in turn makes it more likely to threaten the stability of the international system.

### Economic values

- There is low support among Russian people for such liberal economic values as competition and private property. Furthermore, the high value attributed to a hierarchical system results in a fictional equality in Russian society. There are also certain political components that significantly hamper the principles of free market economy from taking hold in Russia.

### Moral values

- The popularity of materialism and individualism in Russian society is mostly determined by the satisfaction of people's needs due to the low level of social capital in the country.
- Despite the fact that Russia is a secular state, demand for the active involvement of representatives of church denominations can be observed in the realisation of state's policies.

### The international dimension

- Russians see their country's geopolitical orientation on three levels—political, economic, and cultural. While politically Russians see partners in the former USSR republics, in the economic and cultural spheres the desired partners are to the west. However, this does not come from

an interest in democratic values, but it is rather the economic achievements and the welfare of Western Europe that attracts Russia's attention.

- In the political and security sectors Russian society sees significant external threats, mostly from Western countries, in particular the US.
- One can conclude that Russian society does not think it important to respect international organisations and international law, and supports interference in the sovereignty of other countries if it advances Russia's interests and goals.
- Dismissive Russian attitudes concerning the transparency and achievements of international organisations testify to their low support for these institutions. Another aspect to consider is that Russia prefers absolute autonomy in setting its foreign policy agenda. Russian foreign policy is based on realism and the zero-sum principle; these ideas and principles also affect social consciousness. Even if they are concerned with expanding democracy or anti-terrorism efforts, the actions of the US and the EU are mostly perceived as a threat to Russia's national interests. In general, Russian society is disposed to support the imperialistic aspirations of the Russian Federation towards the former republics of the USSR. Both revisionist actions, such as the annexation of Crimea, and the assertive policies of the president are accepted as legitimate, mostly because the institution of president enjoys such a high level of support.

# MANIPULATIVE TECHNIQUES OF RUSSIA'S STRATEGIC POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

## 4.

Legitimacy is named among other appeals commonly used in Psychological operations (PsyOps) and is understood as Authority; Reverence; Tradition and Loyalty. In this study Legitimation and the strategies of legitimation are defined and used according to A. Reyes. He used five strategies:

- 1) emotions;
- 2) rationality;
- 3) the voice of expertise;
- 4) hypothetical future;
- 5) altruism.

Techniques (and appeals) are defined according to PsyOp classification used in US Army<sup>169</sup>. The field manual says: "Techniques are the methods used to present information (supporting arguments) to the TA. Effective techniques are based on the conditions affecting the TA and the type of information being presented"<sup>170</sup>.

The following techniques are described in the field manual: Glittering Generalities; Transference; Least of evils; Name-Calling (in this research is used as Labelling); Plain folks or Common man; Testimonials; Insinuation; Presenting the other side; Simplification; Compare in contrast or for similarities; Illustration and narratives; Specific instances; Statistics; Explanations. In the process of the research the placement (as an importance of the agenda); hypothetical future (from the strategies of legitimation), moral superiority and victimization also were included as techniques frequently used by analysed Russian media. Some new techniques were added (the role model; second screen). Role model differs from the instructing technique, this technique provides a role model on how to behave in a situation.

169 (2003). FM-3-05.301. *Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*. Washington.  
(2007). FM-3-05.301. *Psychological Operations Process Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*.

170 (2003). FM-3-05.301. *Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*. Washington. 5-55.  
Available at <https://fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-05-301.pdf>, last time accessed 01.07.2015.



The other technique -“Second screen” includes promotion of hashtags, social networks, and accounts to follow. It is used also for discretization of some accounts/users.

In this research, following manipulative *Kanal* may be using other techniques in other cases linked to the crisis in Ukraine or about other events. The listed manipulative techniques can be used separately or combined to mutually reinforce each other.

## THE MANIPULATIVE TECHNIQUES USED BY RUSSIA

<b>Importance Placement</b> <sup>171</sup>	Presence of an issue in the agenda and its placement in a news program
<b>Silence</b> <sup>172</sup>	Avoidance of presenting contesting arguments
<b>Repetition</b> <sup>173</sup>	Multiple mentions of an issue within a news programme, in either a single newstory or multiple news stories presented on multiple days
<b>Authority</b> <sup>174</sup>	The use of a person or institution, which has high level of trust and popularity (V. Putin). The use of other authorities (ministers or subject state institutions) depend on hierarchy and the need to reinforce the original message
<b>Expertise Voice of expertise</b> <sup>175</sup>	Referencing a person or institution holding a high level of trust and popularity, e.g. V. Putin. Referencing other authorities, e. g. ministers or state institutions, depending on their place in the hierarchy and the need to reinforce the original message
<b>Testimony</b> <sup>176</sup>	Referring to quotes from a variety of sources, e.g. respected authorities, the common man, that support or reject the message
<b>Simplification</b> <sup>177</sup>	Simplification of complex processes and issues, and leaving aside difficult issues or significant details
<b>Unification</b> <sup>178</sup>	Combining issues or processes that support the main narrative
<b>Labelling</b> <sup>179</sup>	Specifically naming of issues or groups to construct the desired context, e.g. rebels – separatists; power in Kiev – government of Ukraine.
<b>In-out grouping</b> <sup>180</sup>	Intentionally separating or uniting people into groups, supported by labelling
<b>Common man</b> <sup>181</sup>	Referencing the opinions of ordinary people, like most viewers themselves, to create the sense that the views of the average man are heard, allegedly showing things as they actually are
<b>Comparing differences or similarities</b> <sup>182</sup>	Orchestrating selective comparisons to help construct the desired narrative, e. g. the Right Sector in Ukraine is very similar to the Nazis
<b>Moral superiority</b> <sup>183</sup>	Justifying actions, opinions based on the idea of moral superiority, supported by selective comparison techniques, e.g. Russia is morally superior compared to the West
<b>Hypothetical future</b> <sup>184</sup>	Constructing a possible future scenario to be used as a guideline for determining goals, e. g. what Russia can achieve as the key player, and threats, e.g. what Russia should avoid at any cost
<b>Pseudo plurality</b> <sup>185</sup>	Presenting cherry-picked opinions as many and varied to support the main narrative. A sense of plurality is constructed according to the dominating message.
<b>Victimisation</b> <sup>186</sup>	Labelling one side as the victim without providing context or factual assessment



<b>Statistics</b> <sup>187</sup>	Legitimizing an issue or point of view by providing a constant flow of numbers and figures, with or without referencing the source
<b>The lesser evil</b> <sup>188</sup>	Creating a false choice by presenting the desired solution as 'not good enough', but better than the current alternative
<b>Evaluation</b> <sup>189</sup>	Providing evaluation without analysis; similar to labelling
<b>Instructing</b> <sup>190</sup>	Offering advice to viewers on how to access 'reliable' information
<b>Role model (integrity/solidarity)</b> <sup>191</sup>	Providing a role model showing how to behave in a given situation
<b>"Second screen"</b> <sup>192</sup>	Promoting certain hashtags and social network users/accounts to follow, discrediting others

171 Based on the effects of agenda (setting). For examples see Borchers, T. (2013). Persuasion in the Media Age. Long Grove: Waveland Press. p. 63. Jowett, G., O'Donnell, V. (2015). Propaganda and Persuasion Sage Publication. p. 204.

172 Is listed as a counterpropaganda technique (see FM-3-05.301. (2003). Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. Washington.).

173 Is named among principles of preparation of PsyOp (see FM-3-05.301. (2003). Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. Washington.). Is named also as a tactic of intensifying of persuasion (For details see Simons, H., Jones, J. (2011). Persuasion in Society. Routledge.).

174 For examples of the authority in legitimation see van Leeuwen, T. (2007). Legitimation in discourse and communication. Discourse & Communication, 1(1), 91–112. Is mentioned in PsyOp manual but not as a technique (see FM-3-05.301. (2003). Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. Washington.).

175 Is adapted from the strategies of legitimation developed by A. Reyes (see Reyes, A. (2011). Strategies of legitimization in political discourse: From words to actions. Discourse and Society, 22 (6), 781–807).

176 Is listed as a common PsyOp technique (see FM-3-05.301. (2003). Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. Washington.).

177 For examples of the effects see Woodward, R., Denton, E. (2014). Persuasion and Influence in American Life. Waveland Press. p. 27. Is mentioned in PsyOp manual but not as a technique (see FM-3-05.301. (2003). Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. Washington.).

178 See Thompson, J. a (1990). Ideology and Modern Culture: Critical Social Theory in the Era of Mass Communication. Stanford: Stanford University Press; Wodak, W, Cillia, R., Reisigl, M. Liebhart, K. (2010/1999). The Discursive Construction of National Identity. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press. Is not mentioned in the PsyOp manual FM-3-05.301. (2003). Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. Washington.

179 Is connected with PsyOp technique "name-calling" (Wodak, W, Cillia, R., Reisigl, M. Liebhart, K. (2010/1999). The Discursive Construction of National Identity. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press.), is connected with the discursive strategies (particularly - referencing). See Wodak, W, Cillia, R., Reisigl, M. Liebhart, K. (2010/1999). The Discursive Construction of National Identity. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press.

180 Is listed as an appeal (see FM-3-05.301. (2003). Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. Washington.) Is connected with the different discursive strategies (see Wodak, W, Cillia, R., Reisigl, M. Liebhart, K. (2010/1999). The Discursive Construction of National Identity. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press).

181 Is listed as a common PsyOp technique (see FM-3-05.301. (2003). Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. Washington.).

182 Is listed as a common PsyOp technique (see FM-3-05.301. (2003). Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. Washington.).

183 Corresponds to the discursive strategy "Singularization" (see Wodak, W, Cillia, R., Reisigl, M. Liebhart, K. (2010/1999). The Discursive Construction of National Identity. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press.). Is listed among opponent propaganda techniques (see FM-3-05.301. (2003). Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. Washington).

184 Is adopted from the strategies of legitimation developed by A. Reyes, corresponds to "Cassandra Strategy" mentioned by Wodak. (see Reyes, A. (2011). Strategies of legitimization in political discourse: From words to actions. Discourse and Society, 22 (6), 781–807; Wodak, W, Cillia, R., Reisigl, M. Liebhart, K. (2010/1999). The Discursive Construction of National Identity. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press.) Is not mentioned in PsyOp manual.

185 Is connected to the democratic value, is a sense-providing technique. Is not mentioned in the PsyOp manual

186 Corresponds to the leading narrative of victim, is a sense-providing technique. Is not mentioned in the PsyOp manual

187 Is mentioned/listed as a common PsyOp technique (see FM-3-05.301. (2003). Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. Washington). Is connected with rationalization.

188 Is mentioned/listed as a common PsyOp technique (see FM-3-05.301. (2003). Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. Washington). Is connected with rationalization.

189 Is connected with black and white categories, moral judgment.

190 Is listed as a principle of preparation (see FM-3-05.301. (2003). Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. Washington).

191 Is close to instructing, but instructions are from a specific source – a role model.

192 The effect of the second screen is associated with the media multitasking (see Kirsh, S. (2010). Media and youth: a developmental perspective. Oxford: Wiley.).

# MEDIA ANALYSIS: CASE STUDIES

## The Downing of MH-17

# 5.1.

The research covers the time period between April 2014 and January 2015, and analyses the following audio-visual platforms: *RT* (formerly known as *Russia Today*) and *Perviy Kanal*. *Perviy Kanal* is the most popular TV channel among Russian speakers both domestically and in Russia's neighbouring countries. *RT* has a relatively low number of viewers in Western countries but with increasing potential.

**About the event:** Malaysian Airlines Boeing 777 was shot down over Eastern Ukraine on 17 July 2014. All 298 passengers and crewmembers, who were on-board the plane heading to Kuala Lumpur, perished. Politically, this event became a turning point in the West's perception of Russia's role in the conflict in Ukraine. Investigations and speculations about the party responsible for this act of terrorism evoked significant changes in the strategic political communication of those involved in the conflict. Media analysis took place for items published **17-23 July 2014**.

### 5.1.1. COMMUNICATION TOOLS USED AND REDEFINITION OF AGENDA

In this section the main findings on the redefinition of agenda and the use of information tools are presented. Firstly, the differences in the composition of news programs will be described. This is essential because the design of each news programme demonstrates the strategic political communication used to shape the agenda (how important the news was, the length, strategies of coming back to the news, etc.). Secondly, the main sub-topics of the catastrophe will be described to underline some elements of the blame-game.

## The composition of news programmes as a tool of strategic political communication

In general, *Perviy Kanal*, *RT America*, and *RT International* all had different approaches in shaping their news programs by choosing and accentuating different sub-topics of the event, labelling the involved parties, and using different strategies to legitimate a 'new reading' of values. However, the different ways of presenting the information had the same goal—defending the position of the Russian government.

The **initial reactions** of *RT America* and *Perviy Kanal* were different. For *RT America* events in Gaza were the breaking news on 17 July. Nevertheless, full coverage of MH-17 was broadcast first<sup>193</sup>. Even visualizations of the catastrophe differed on the first day, even the first hours after the tragedy: *Perviy Kanal* chose to display a plane against clear skies on the studio screen, thus presenting the news in a non-emotional, neutral, everyday context.

Each channel mainly used a **unique news programme**. If the length of the news is fairly constant for *RT International* and *RT America*—**around 26 minutes**, the length of *Vremya* on *Perviy Kanal* varies depending on circumstances.

For instance, during the conflict in Ukraine the length of the evening news doubled and even tripled in order to explain and defend the stance of the Russian government, and president Putin in particular, to the people. Four main strategies that were used in the prolonged programme:

- The repetition of one idea/message several times in a programme, e.g. Ukraine's culpability;

- alternative positions revolve around the leading idea rather than standing on their own, e.g. American critics comment on the safety of investigators at the catastrophe site;
- a great deal of information is presented using specific and nuanced language, which is then followed by a short clear message summing up the issue;
- sub-topics are repeated from day to day and programme to programme.

Both *RT International* and *RT America* used the repetition strategy. This **follow-up method**, returning to an issue discussed in the previous program to add new information, can be observed in multiple techniques, such as the use of the same graphics on the background screen, presentation of the same confrontational views and arguments, and rehashing the videos from previous programmes.

This repetitive perspective on day-to-day basis is commonly used to help viewers understand the main issues addressed by the news channels, but in this case the technique demonstrably is a clear attempt to form public opinion and therefore influence the public agenda in favour of an authoritarian regime.

### Redefinition of agenda

*Perviy Kanal* presented the greatest number of **subtopics related to the MH-17 catastrophe**. Just few hours after the catastrophe **a new agenda** was created with the following topics:

- a. A civilian plane was shot down by the Ukrainian armed forces back in 2001 (broadcast on *Perviy Kanal* from 17 Jul);

193 *RT International* archived news bulletin was recorded before the event.



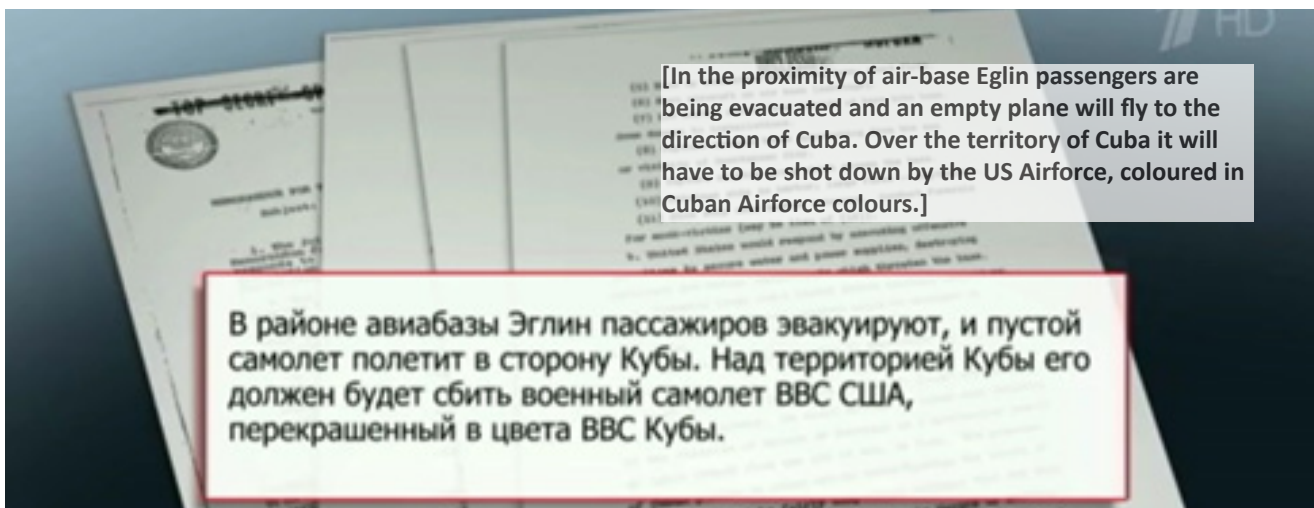
- b. The 'lost Malaysian plane' and possible technical problems (broadcast on *Perviy Kanal* from 17 Jul);
- c. Putin's plane was the real target of the Ukrainian armed forces (broadcast on *Perviy Kanal* from 18 Jul);
- d. Western media criticised for recalling the 1983 crash of a South Korean plane caused by the Soviet air forces.

The first sub-topic mentioned above—the **civilian plane crash**—was updated and further analysed by *Perviy Kanal* on a daily basis, while the second and third topics had disappeared by the end of the period of analysis.

The sub-topic about **Putin's plane as the real target of the Ukrainian armed forces** was:

- supplemented by a quote from a Ukrainian politician saying that Putin was the target







- supported with information from an ‘anonymous source’
- enhanced by graphics showing similarities of the Malaysian Airplane and ‘Board Nr.1’

**RT did not use this version at all, which might be considered as a proof of targeting only the local audience via Perviy Kanal.**

On the next day after the catastrophe, the line of “**conspiracy theory**” was further developed, speculating about the possible US involvement and the benefits US would get from this event - both, politically and economically. The cases of 9/11 and reminding about the role of the US in the 9/11 case, i.e. a US air-force suddenly appearing in Cuba. The main idea behind the story (on *Perviy Kanal*) – this catastrophe is good for the US both politically and economically.

At the same time, *RT America* and *RT International* had less sub-topics and the key emphasis also differs. From the first hours of news reports, the theme of **safety of air traffic** and air control was featured as central (after stories of human suffering). This is the leading topic supported by graphics (simplification and rationalization) and experts being asked to comment the catastrophe few days after the event (authority). *RT America*, *RT International* and *Perviy Kanal* have different ways of undermining the **credibility of the Western media** (blaming the media for published articles and broadcasted stories before the official investigation had started). *RT International* paid more attention to the work of the Western media. It was on the agenda in every news program, supported by:

- 1) Visualization;
- 2) Quotation (text and audio-visuals);
- 3) Critical opinions of experts (both academic and professionals).

*[TRANSLATION] “It is worth mentioning that the Western mass media cover only two versions of the catastrophe: the plane was hit either by the pro-Russian militia or Russia. A possibility of involving the Ukrainian combatants, who control the air space over Donetsk, is not even considered”<sup>194</sup>*  
*(Perviy Kanal, Vremya, 18 July, 2014)*

This statement is unsupported. The Western media is mentioned, but no example or source is given, e.g. a video from the Western media or shots of the front pages of periodicals. The main strategy used here is unification, i.e. labelling all Western media as low-quality.

Another issue that is important from a strategic communication perspective is **fostering a sense of disinformation** established by the Ukrainian side to be used by Ukrainian authorities, the Western media and US intelligence services as ‘evidence’. *Perviy Kanal* addressed the alleged disinformation.

A number of experts were asked to comment on the lack of clear evidence. *Perviy Kanal* addressed the following cases in more detail:

- a recording of a conversation between two pro-Russian separatists chatting about the downing of the plane (audio);

194 In Russian: “При этом стоит отметить, что западные средства массовой информации рассматривают только две версии катастрофы: самолет сбили ополченцы, или Россия. Возможность участия в этом украинских военных контролирующих небо над Донецком даже не рассматривается.”

- the relocation of a BUK system by pro-Russian separatists (video). *RT* also mentioned these cases, but provided neither context nor a thorough explanation of the story;
- an expert authority that reveals the lies and falsehoods of the alleged 'disinformation';
- graphics highlighting the word 'Unconfirmed'.

*Perviy Kanal* and *RT* both used the same expert and the same video for the case of phone conversation. The title of this news piece was 'Kiev pushes intercepted proof' and was run three days in a row.

Another case fully ignored by *Perviy Kanal*, and aired on *RT* is a story with the rebel soldier and a toy.



The news included information about the negative reaction to a photo on twitter of a soldier holding a toy next to the wreckage. *RT* ran the full video with a title “What really happened with the toy” showing the soldier crossing himself after putting the toy back on the ground. For *Perviy Kanal* it was not an issue worth addressing, but *RT* placed it to counter the disinformation and to show how easy it is to manipulate with footage and information if it is decontextualized.

A clear **example showcasing the disinformation created/introduced** by *Perviy Kanal* and *RT* was the story about the second military plane in the air just a few minutes before the catastrophe. On *Perviy Kanal* this issue was mentioned in the evening of 17 July with a rumour that the pilot of the Ukrainian jet had already been arrested. On *RT* this issue appeared in a form of a short comment on 17 July (*RT America*) with a more elaborate story appearing only a few days later.

*Perviy Kanal* used the following techniques for justification of this version:

- Rumour in the beginning
- Military data (visualisations, maps)
- Authorities, experts

- Vox-populi—evidence presented as a phone call by a local resident without a photo and a surname. This was used to blame the US for not providing satellite images of that area.

In general, *RT America* paid more attention to the reaction in the US. For example on 18 July a story on American reaction was 5 minutes long (usually a news story is around 1.30 minutes long). *RT America* quoted the US President, spokespersons of State Department and Pentagon. Even though this was the longest and most in-depth news story in that particular programme, it was not placed at the start of the news agenda.

Even the analysis of **lexical grouping/naming** (we/you) shows that there is a difference between the approaches taken by *RT America* and *RT International*. *RT America* used the term ‘separatists’ in naming the pro-Russian group, calling them ‘anti-Kiev separatists’, while *RT International* avoided using the term, preferring such terms as local government, local militia, self-defence forces, rebels, opposition, anti-Kiev forces, or anti-government forces.

The territory held by the pro-Russian separatists is called the ‘self-







proclaimed Republic of Donetsk', the Donetsk region, or the Luhansk region. Any relationship between the pro-Russian separatists and Russia and the Russian 'footprint' in Eastern Ukraine appear on *RT International* only in quotes from the Ukrainian side or some Western politicians. In Russia the term 'separatists' appears only in quotation marks. *RT America* introduced the names used in the local public agenda, even if the official name is not in the Russian interests and is not used on a national level.

### Conclusions regarding communication tools used and redefinition of agenda

There is significant **cooperation between** *RT* and *Perviy Kanal* in bringing issues that are important for Russia to the forefront of local and international agendas, such as the 2001 case of Ukrainians shooting down of a civilian plane or claiming there has been disinformation from the Ukrainian side to convince the American authorities to blame the pro-Russian separatists.

Each channel mainly used unique set of videos; showing the conflict in Ukraine doubled and even tripled the length of the nightly news program *Vremya*, **in order to**

**deliver, explain and defend the stance of the Russian government (president Putin, in particular) to the masses.**

The *RT* approach was to provide **different agendas for international and US audiences**. For the American audience quotes on MH-17 mostly made by local politicians were presented. In addition, examples from American media were presented to illustrate the lack of professionalism of the Western media. The strategic political communication of Russia is adjusted and applied to suit the local agenda (applying common lexical grouping to avoid dissonance, providing ample space for quotes, copying only some of the content aimed at disinformation).

*RT International* was more active than *RT America* in representing Russian views on the tragedy, e.g. number of voices, quotes, length, and content of news stories.

*Perviy Kanal* used an **abundance of subtopics** that repeated the same message several times within a single programme. *RT* bulletins were better structured and did not address as many subtopics and themes.

In the case of MH-17 *RT* used more **emotional videos containing children** than *Perviy Kanal*. The lack of such footage is surprising since

images and videos of children are among the dominant elements of *Perviy Kanal's* coverage of events in Ukraine. The presence of children on-board MH-17 was established through words instead of images of toys and children's belongings. *RT*, on the other hand, used numerous emotional close-ups of children's toys and other items belonging to or related to children. *Perviy Kanal* also avoided using blurred footage of bodies to the same extent as *RT* did. While *RT* followed the example set by other international platforms that used emotional footage to emphasize the tragedy, *Perviy Kanal* minimised the use of emotional footage.

### 5.1.2. THE REDEFINITION OF EURO-ATLANTIC VALUES IN THE CASE OF THE DOWNING OF FLIGHT MH-17

Several different tools and methods of 'value de-legitimation' were used when addressing Western English-speaking and Russian-speaking (the same as local Russian-speaking) audiences. The two sets of values promoted on *RT* for the English speaking audience and on *Perviy Kanal* for the Russian-speaking audience were quite similar, however, the intensity in appealing to each value and the strategies of legitimation used differed<sup>195</sup>. This section will focus on the values outlined in the catalogue developed

for this study and how they are manipulated in Russian media. First, this section will address values belonging to the *political dimension*, followed by those belonging to the *economic, moral, and international dimensions*. It is worth remembering that the lines separating the values themselves and the articulation of these values in particular contexts, e.g. economic and security threats in the international arena, are blurred.

#### The political dimension

The political values outlined in the **Catalogue** are also the core values of democracy; these include media freedom and professionalism, the role of the state in society, and the rule of law. However, the main topics of concern presented for Russian-speaking and English-speaking audiences differ. In short, *Perviy Kanal* focused on the value of the presumption of innocence, i.e. some Western countries and Ukraine were accused of not following this principle; *RT America* and *RT International* focused on the quality, or lack thereof, of the Western media.

#### Media freedom and professionalism

Both *Perviy Kanal* and *RT* set out to answer the question: **Is Western media free, professional, and reliable?** The content used to answer this question consisted of negative examples. The redefinition of this value was organised in the following ways:

1. VISUALISATION
2. ISSUE PLACEMENT
3. EXPERT OPINION
4. SOURCE QUOTES AND EXAMPLES
5. DEDICATED TIME
6. TEXTUAL STRATEGIES OF DELEGITIMATION

<sup>195</sup> The theoretical part for this research will address a brief overview of the strategies of legitimation used by A. Reyes. The set of tools used to manipulate with the information include 1) the use of emotions, 2) hypothetical future, 3) rationalization, 4) the voice of authority. All these tools help to influence the audience and are used by a communicator to change or to strengthen the current attitude.



From the day following the tragedy, *Perviy Kanal* criticized the Western media. The first critical comments were general, no particular media outlet or journalist was named; no videos, prints, or screenshots were dissected. Several possible reasons for this approach are: (1) the convenience of targeting the Western media as a whole, not just one journalist or news agency (2) the Western media are not on the agenda and do not influence public opinion in Russia (3) lack of familiarity with English and other languages would require Russian translations of screenshots and videos.

A single story on *Perviy Kanal* used a SOURCE QUOTE from a specific journalist. The story was set up and introduced to show the lack the fundamental moral values among Western journalists.

*[TRANSLATION] "Introduction: Many western journalists, who chase sentimental details, are overstepping moral values.*

*Journalist: Yesterday, one of my so called colleagues from Sky news approached the material evidence consisting of the passengers' belongings, opened one of the suitcases, and started rummaging through it. This was followed by a video"*<sup>196</sup>.

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 21 July 2014)*

However, Western journalists were praised for criticizing the US intelligence services for their lack of professionalism. In that

particular case, journalists from Sky-news, ADR (SOURCE QUOTES), The Guardian (VISUALISATION), and AP (TEXTUAL STRATEGIES in translation) were referenced as having presented evidence about the bad quality of the work done by the US intelligence services. This was not used to show the professionalism of the Western media, but rather to support the earlier claims of Russian experts pointing out fake evidence from the Internet.

Both American and International RT placed the topic of unprofessional Western media at **the centre of its agenda** (ISSUE PLACEMENT). RT started to blame Western media on 18 July. Still, the first news package critical of Western media was placed closer to the end of the programme while on other days news stories concerning the quality of Western media were placed in the middle of the programme. The news package of 18 July also featured SOURCE QUOTES from **US politicians** J. McCain and H. Clinton.

In general, RT used the issue of unprofessional media in Western countries to legitimate its proclaimed guidelines: to tell more, to question more. RT used **a large number of visual materials** (videos and screenshots), highlighted titles, and quotes. The main antagonist, portrayed on the front pages of newspapers was Putin. This visual material was in line with the titles of news stories and quotes from anti-Russian texts. The main accusations against the Western media were:

- presenting results even before the start of the investigation
- not providing space for the opposing views of pro-Russian separatists or the Russian Federation
- assigning guilt for the tragedy directly to Putin

<sup>196</sup> In Russian: Многие западные журналисты, в погоне за душещипательными подробностями, переходят границы морали.] Journalist: [Вчера один мой, уж не знаю как его назвать, коллега из Skynews вот так подошел к вещественному доказательству, это вещи пассажиров, открыл один из чемоданов, и стал в нем рыться.

The main issue constantly reiterated by *RT* journalists was identical to *Perviy Kanal*'s message—it is **unprofessional to assign guilt before the investigation is over**. Both *RT* and *Perviy Kanal* dedicated airtime to repudiate the arguments and evidence presented by the US and Ukrainian sides. As aggressive anti-Ukrainian rhetoric testifies, *Perviy Kanal* failed to provide objective analysis and a plurality of opinions. Their anti-Ukrainian message was:

- repeated several times in each programme from the day of the tragedy
- supported by the statements of military experts
- supported by eyewitness evidence
- supported by authorities, such as representatives of the Ministry of Defence
- enhanced through disinformation
- connected with particular past events and experiences
- enhanced through controversial emotional videos showing the 'actions' of Ukrainian soldiers and authorities

Securing credibility and discrediting the Western media is one of the core issues in creating and transmitting propaganda: the more credible the source, the more influential the message. Delegitimizing and discrediting one's opponent plays a crucial role in strategic political communication and the possible dissemination of future propaganda.

### Presumption of innocence and blame-games

The presumption of innocence is another value used on both *RT* and *Perviy Kanal*. This theme integrates a number of principles

usually associated with democracy—e.g. the separation of powers, the role of state in society, the rule of law, trust in state institutions, etc. The 'pre-investigation blame game' highlighted the following lines of political communication:

- blaming sides—mostly the US and Ukraine and, after the UN meeting, the UK and France for violating the main principles of democracy
- dividing the Western world on the basis of attitudes to democratic principles
- emphasising the commendable attitude of Russia and the pro-Russian separatists towards these principles (investigation first);
- emphasising the need for a reliable and independent international investigation, while warning of the dangers of the investigation becoming politicized

First we will look at the strategies used to blame Ukraine, followed by a deeper analysis of the legitimization of Russia's attitude towards the presumption of innocence, and finally we will outline the possible ways to dividing the Western world.

### Blaming Ukraine (and the US)

*RT America*, *RT International*, and *Perviy Kanal* all used the idea of presumption of innocence, yet each approach was different. *RT* mostly focused on blaming the media for violating the principle of presumption of innocence (without using this term), and did not openly assign blame. *RT America* used 'direct speech', providing more quotes from the US president and State Department spokespeople. *Perviy Kanal*, on the other hand, minimised 'direct speech' and assigned blame to the US and Ukraine.

In the first few hours after the tragedy (INITIAL PHASE) *Perviy Kanal* used the strategies of rationalisation and the expert opinion to blame Ukraine. During the following days (AFTERSHOCK PHASE) emotions were added through video and text. *Perviy Kanal* news programmes were structured to support the rationale of their arguments, e.g. chosen aspects of the MH-17 story were (1) repeated in multiple stories within one news programme (2) supported by the lead (part of the news package, in-studio-text) (3) supported by multiple authorities, experts and stakeholders, in one programme in different stories (4) supported by Ukrainian experts who also blamed Ukraine for its weak forces, weak investigators.

Although, linguistically such phrases as ‘it is likely’ or ‘it can be argued’ were used, the majority of presented voices blamed Ukraine, with just few assigning blame to the pro-Russian separatists and Russia (repeatedly referring to the Poroshenko’s quote and representatives of military forces). It is, however, more common for a journalist not to use precise quotes but to repeat the story in journalist’s own words.

On DAY 2 18 July, the first news-story on *Perviy Kanal* was the **readiness of pro-Russian separatists to assist the international investigation** by facilitating the work of OSCE experts at the site of the tragedy. The third news story in the same programme contained a statement from the Russian President blaming Ukraine.

*[TRANSLATION] Putin: “The country in which the tragedy happened is responsible for it.”<sup>197</sup>*

*(Perviy Kanal, 18 July 2014)*

<sup>197</sup> In Russian: “Государство над которым это произошло несет ответственность за трагедию.”

The same quote was repeated over the next couple of days on *Perviy Kanal* and was used on *RT*. In the next news story Ukraine was blamed for violating the presumption of innocence by prematurely proclaiming that the pro-Russian separatists are guilty.

Later *Perviy Kanal* changed its strategy. They doubled their efforts to prove that the investigation, which is carried out, is independent (bringing the fact up several times in the programme, having experts and authorities talking about the investigation) and continued blaming Ukraine for violating the presumption of innocence.

**Obama was presented as a leader, who violated the rule of law.**

*[TRANSLATION] Anchor: “In addition, it looks like the American administration is ready to name the perpetrators. Obama: The facts state that the plane was hit by a zemlja-vozduh (surface-to-air) missile from the territory of Ukraine controlled by pro-Russian separatists. We also know that this is not the first plane downed in Eastern Ukraine. In the past few weeks the separatists have taken down a Ukrainian transport aircraft, a chopper, and have also taken responsibility for taking down a Ukrainian fighter jet.”<sup>198</sup>*

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 18 July 2014)*

<sup>198</sup> In Russian: “Вместе с тем американская администрация, похоже, готова назначить виновных.] Обама: [Имеющиеся данные указывают, что самолет был сбит ракетой Земля-Воздух. С территории Украины, которую контролируют поддерживаемые Россией сепаратисты. Мы так же знаем, что это не первый самолет, который был сбит за последние дни на востоке Украины. За последние недели сепаратисты сбили украинский транспортный самолет, украинский вертолет. И взяли на себя ответственность, что сбили украинский штурмовик.”

The same line is followed in the weekly programme *Voskresnoye Vremya*:

*[TRANSLATION] Anchor: "The catastrophe has led to sharp accusations showing that American politicians, in general, have taken a one-sided stance—to blame the militia and Moscow."*<sup>199</sup>

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 20 July, 2014)*

*RT (America and International)* did not follow the same strategy. Moreover, **the information presented on RT was almost entirely different from what was shown on Perviy Kanal even if the event and the underlying message remained the same.** For example, the correspondent said that the US was not 'pointing finger at somebody' just yet (*RT America*, 17 July 2014). On July 18, approximately 1/5 of the news bulletin was dedicated to the US 'authorities' reaction to the tragedy. The main narratives were those of solidarity and investigation, not the presumption of innocence. 'Concerns' about the results of the investigation were placed in a commentary on *RT* even on 17 July. Journalist's text: {expresses concerns that the results} 'could be politicised'. (*RT America*, 17 July 2014).

On 19 July *Perviy Kanal* mentioned a conversation between Lavrov and Kerry. The same information was also repeated on the fourth day (*Voskresnoye Vremya*, 20 July 2014). The news anchor was stated that the purpose of the conversation was to ensure 'independent, open, and international investigation' [беспристрастного, открытого и

международного расследования]. However this message did not reduce the rhetoric directed against the US for violating the rule of law. Moreover, the same line was used when discussing the first results of intelligence service analysis a few days after the tragedy.

*RT (America and International)* worked more accurately. *RT* did not blame American authorities or the intelligence services, but focused on 1) the media 2) Ukrainian authorities and 3) certain Western politicians. *Perviy Kanal* did not show victims of the disaster, but did use footage of their grieving relatives. For example on 18 July *Perviy Kanal* aired a story from Kuala Lumpur in which the victims' relatives were demanding that the culprits be found and brought to justice, while simultaneously showing a screen-shot of a well-known Ukrainian politician.

### **Legitimizing Russia's attitude to the presumption of innocence**

Russian authorities and correspondents repeatedly stated that **Russia was the first to call for an independent international investigation.** Only *Perviy Kanal* used the 'we were the first' idea. *RT* repeated that Russia together with the US and NATO called for an investigation (*RT International*, 18 July 2015).

The main issues presented on *Perviy Kanal* were: **Putin was first to inform Obama** of the crash during a phone-call; Russia is trying to influence pro-Russian separatists; Russia is ready to help with expertise, non-military assistance; the Malaysian authorities are grateful for Russia's support. This background was established/supported during coverage of the top story, and repeated throughout the entire news programme. For example, an authority, a representative from the Ministry of Defence,

199 In Russian: "Катастрофа вызвала шквал обвинений, показательно то, что американские политики поголовно заняли одну позицию — во всем виноваты ополченцы из Москвы."



stated: *Political attempts to quickly find someone to blame for this tragedy are not correct.* [Политические попытки сыграть на этой трагедии, мгновенно определив виновных, некорректны.] (*Vremya, Perviy Kanal*, 19 July 2014) This was also meant to show that Russia was not using this tragedy to pursue its aims.

The strategy to **minimise the influence** of opposite views was also used. The claim that Russia was responsible for the tragedy was frequently opposed by presenting quotes that cleared Russia's name. The only people who commented on the disaster during the analysed period were such authorities as Obama, Poroshenko or spokespersons of the US, Ukrainian authorities and some European leaders.

**Trust in the military** was also used to show who the guilty side was. *Perviy Kanal* started a news story with military information about the second plane in the sky, blaming the Ukrainian armed forces. The correspondent stated:

*[TRANSLATION] "Irrefutable evidence, now that is objective data! [...] Usually data like this is stamped 'Top Secret', however, the Ministry of Defence has published all known information regarding the Malaysian aircraft."*<sup>200</sup>

*(Perviy Kanal, Vremya, 22 July, 2014)*

200 In Russian: "Неопровержимые улики, вот что такое данные объективного контроля [...] обычно эти данные имеют гриф «совершенно секретно», однако, в истории с малазийским лайнером, министерство обороны России опубликовало всю известную информацию."

## Presumption of innocence – splitting up the Western world (regarding Russian-speaking audience only)

The presumption of innocence was used by *Perviy Kanal* to **delegitimise the Western unity**. The focus was on dividing the US and other Western countries such as the Netherlands and Germany. Connecting it to the stage of total propaganda – it showed the presence of the main **(and only) external enemy**, separated from the West. Mainly voices of authorities were used for (de) legitimisation. For example, the news story on the Netherlands states: *'they are definitely in no hurry to draw conclusions'* [тоже не торопятся с выводами]. And the quote used from the press briefing of the Prime Minister of the Netherlands is: *It looks like the plane has been hit down, but to this moment we still do not know what exactly happened.* [Похоже, что самолет сбили, но мы до сих пор не знаем точно что же произошло.] (*Perviy Kanal, Vremya*, 18 July, 2014)

The same separation tactics can be identified in a news package from the **UN** on *Perviy Kanal*. Only two nations – Russia and China – were shown to (in quotes) be calling for the investigation to be over before definite conclusions are made, while the views and positions of other countries were retold by the journalist. The representative of Russia said that Ukraine was violating the international law and blamed Ukrainian authorities for not closing their airspace.

France, the UK and the US were selected as a group of nations that blamed Russia and the pro-Russian separatists before the results of investigation were available.



Journalist:

*[TRANSLATION] “Without providing any facts, yet with great confidence, they claim that the aircraft was downed by a missile fired by the Donetsk militia, and blame Russia for supplying the weapons and manpower.”<sup>201</sup>*

*(Perviy Kanal, Vremya, 18 July 2015)*

At the same time, non-Western China was portrayed as a country that follows this core value of the Western World. Quoting the representative of China:

*[TRANSLATION] “Our task for now is to get the facts straight and it would not be preferable to make any conclusions, statements or guesses. We support an independent and objective investigation. We also call on all the parties to provide assistance to the investigation.”<sup>202</sup>*

*(Perviy Kanal, Vremya, 18 July 2015)*

Both *RT* and *Perviy Kanal* undeniably used the MH-17 catastrophe to redefine core Euro-Atlantic political values. The main issues underlined were linked to the rule of law, the presumption of innocence, and media freedom. The quality of democracy in the US and the UK (received the highest attention among the Western countries) was severely questioned. The tendency to

separate the Western world was explicit in the examined period.

### The economic dimension: the US is fighting for its interests

Economic values might be seen as quite distant from the MH-17 tragedy, yet both platforms—*RT* and *Perviy Kanal* used the topics to (re)define the economic values in Western countries, Ukraine and Russia.

Common for both *RT* and *Perviy Kanal* was the narrative of **Ukraine wanting to earn more money from those who were using Ukraine’s air-space**. Exclusively on *Perviy Kanal* a **conspiracy theory**, arguing that the US is acting according to its national interests, was addressed. The US was blamed (the voice of experts and reporters) for non-transparent and undemocratic actions to benefit economically from 1) the conflict in Ukraine; 2) bad relations between Russia and European countries; 3) any conflict with a country (i.e. Russia) who is selling energy resources. These messages were legitimated by experts mostly with academic (and think-tank) background and supported by videos of pipelines and warfare.

The economic issue was based on the following themes: **energy market** (the US is interested in a conflict in Europe); **weak dollar** as a threat to the US economy. The US attitude towards the core value of openness in the global trade was delegitimized by strategies and voices of experts, including by using means of rationalization. **Vilification of the US** also served to **divide the Western world**. Even on a lexical level the term ‘the West’ was not used. The US was blamed for their attempts and efforts to keep the dollar strong and stable. This was legitimised by rationalisation through international organisations, such as the BRICS, at both the visual and verbal levels by showing footage

201 In Russian “Не приводя никаких фактов, они с большой долей уверенности заявляют, что самолет был сбит ракетой, которую выпустили донецкие ополченцы. При этом в поставках оружия и специалистов подозревают Россию.”

202 In Russian: “Наша задача сейчас – установить факты. Основываясь на этом сейчас нежелательно делать какие-либо выводы, строить предположения и догадки. Мы поддерживаем проведение независимого и объективного расследования. И также призываем оказать все стороны помощь в расследовании.”

of Putin and other presidents of the BRICS (video) and providing statements about the readiness of other global currencies to challenge and take the dollar's place.

Summing up, the economic issue in the context of MH-17 is almost inextricably linked with the other important international security issues. The economic interests of the US were clearly linked to the MH-17 tragedy. The US was presented as a threat to international economic order.

These messages were legitimated by experts mostly with the academic and think-tank background and supported by video of pipelines and warfare archives. The need for economic benefit was based on the following lines: interest in the **energy market** (a conflict in Europe is in the interests of the US) and **weak dollar** as a threat to US economy. **Enemysation of the US** also served to **split the Western democracies**. Even on the lexical level the term "the West" was not used. The US was blamed for attempts to save the dollar from instability. This statement was legitimised by rationalisation technique through mentioning international organisations (such as the BRICS), and at the visual level by showing president Putin and other presidents of the BRICS (video), stating the readiness to replace dollar with other global currencies.

Summing up, the economic interests of the US were clearly linked to the tragedy of MH-17. The US was presented as a threat to international economic order.

### The moral dimension

The news analysis identified three main values from the catalogue dealing with the moral dimension—the value of human life, extended to include the meaning of family and friends; solidarity; and the morality of personified states, including the issue of trust.

### The value of human life, solidarity with the families of the victims

Although there were differences in placement, condolences for the families and friends of the victims were included in all programmes. A clear link was established between **the value of human life** and **solidarity** with victims' families and friends. Families/Friends topic was connected with the two main 'techniques': human stories (relatives and friends) and prominent people (a well-known AIDS researcher or the relative of a Malaysian authority killed in the catastrophe), as well as inclusion of authoritative opinions (opinions on the catastrophe). The latter 'technique' was very popular as an opening part of the news on *Perviy Kanal*.

*Perviy Kanal* ran **Putin's reaction** to the catastrophe several times. The visualisation used for that particular speech is worth addressing, because it differed in the 'national' (*Perviy Kanal*) and 'exported' (*RT*) versions. *Perviy Kanal* showed government authorities in 'a meeting on economic issues' [собрание по вопросам экономики], but only in the background. Yet, for the English news the speech was edited to emphasise the presence of D. Medvedev in the room during the speech. This could be explained by the recent trend of associating the **image of Medvedev** with **liberalisation** and keeping Medvedev 'on the radar', i.e. showing his presence, even if he did not comment.

*Perviy Kanal* emphasized 'words of compassion' from local Russian and international authorities. which can be explained as:

1. the showcasing of hierarchy and collectivism, traditional to Russian culture

2. showing Russian solidarity on the international stage and legitimising the figure of Putin by putting him among states like Germany, the US, the UK
3. avoiding human-interest stories—avoiding the emotional background of the tragedy and reframing it in the context of the Ukrainian conflict and later in the confrontation narrative between Russia and the US.

While some stories shown on *Perviy Kanal* contained a personal or a human element, only a few stories **concentrated on family and friends** as a value together with human life. Similar to the tradition of Soviet and Post-Soviet Russian television, stories about or containing authorities were placed at the beginning of the programmes. For *RT*, on the other hand, the human-interest stories came first. On July 18, *RT America* allocated time for the authorities—Putin’s speech and Obama’s quote which called the events ‘a global tragedy’.

The **families and relatives of the victims were completely forgotten** on *Perviy Kanal*. On the first day relatives and families were not on the agenda. Words of condolence were not supported by quotes or videos. On the second day the theme was at the centre of the agenda. However, the main hero of this emotional story was Vladimir Putin. The *Perviy Kanal* story featured:

- Putin’s speech from the previous day
- Putin’s face shown in close-up making his emotions visible
- shots of other Russian authorities during the minute of salience

Putin’s speech was divided into two parts: the first part contained words of comfort

for the families and nations of the victims, while the second part blamed Ukraine for its inability to establish peace in its territory.

*[TRANSLATION] “The country in which the tragedy happened is responsible for it.”<sup>203</sup>*

*(Perviy Kanal, Vremya, 18 July, 2014)*

This message was repeated several times during the analysed period, both as direct and indirect speech.

On 18 July, the news story about the families and relatives of the victims was placed closer to the end of *Vremya*. Social media was the main source of footage and information. The stories featured emotions expressed in text (words), in people’s voices, in close-ups, quotes, and the repetition of the number of the children who perished (80), tears of relatives, and in the phrase ‘a heart broken forever’ [навсегда разбито сердце]. This story depicted **world solidarity**, but the following story began with the claim that ‘Kiev is not keeping its promises’, the state prevents the victims’ relatives from going to the place of the tragedy. The theme of solidarity was used as a ‘bridge’ to the next human-interest story describing the moral failings of the Ukrainian state. The programme was composed to first encourage audiences to sympathise with the relatives of the victims, and then to illicit negative feelings in relation to the presented villain.

In the tradition of Western journalism, *RT* placed a story about the victims’ families at the centre of their programme. The majority of news bulletins allotted significant time to each story and the correspondents working in the field. In these stories comments made by relatives and friends were supplemented

203 In Russian: “Putin: Государство над которым это произошло несет ответственность за трагедию.”

by emotional videos with close-ups of flowers, tearful faces, and children's toys. The message about solidarity with the Netherlands—'We are one big family'—was repeated time and time again.

### Moral "quality" of states

**Personalising countries** mean connecting them also to moral categories. The moral values/qualities of Ukraine and the US were discussed. **Not trusting Ukraine** was presented just few hours after the tragedy. The case of the crash of the civilian plane in Ukraine in 2001 was used as a rationalisation to:

- 1) justify the inability to trust the Ukrainian authorities and the army;
- 2) support the high quality of Russian expertise (because in 2001 Russia was the first who accused the Ukrainian armed forces being responsible for the crash, which later on turned out to be true).

To justify the inability to trust Ukraine, several topics were added to the news agenda:

- 1) poisoning of former Ukrainian president Yushchenko;
- 2) murder case of journalist Georgadze in Ukraine;
- 3) the civilian plane crash in 2001 in Ukraine.

A clear link connecting these past events with ongoing events was established. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov was saying:

*[TRANSLATION] "For the past few months, I have not heard direct statements from Kiev (..), they*

*are blaming everyone except themselves."*<sup>204</sup>

*(Perviy Kanal, Vremya, 18 July, 2014)*

On July 22 the same line was supported by president Putin during the meeting of the Security Council. Putin was underlining the offensive actions of the Ukrainian forces during the arrival of international investigators to the site of MH-17 tragedy.

*[TRANSLATION] Putin: "Experts, who came to the crash site could not raise their heads. It is not like the militia men are shooting at themselves; it is necessary to call upon the authorities in Kiev to follow elementary norms and order, at last impose a short ceasefire. Clearly, we will do anything for the investigation to be fully carried out."*<sup>205</sup>

*(Perviy Kanal, Vremya, 22 July, 2014).*

His speech is supported with video shots of the railway station in Donetsk, toddlers crying, showing destroyed cars and holes in the ground from shelling.

Just few days after the catastrophe, the **US was blamed for the lack of trust: the case with Powel regarding the evidence on Iraq** in the UN was used both in the text and video.

204 In Russian: "я за последние несколько месяцев правдивых заявлений из Киева не слышал (..), обвиняют всех и вся, кроме самих себя"

205 In Russian: "Putin: специалисты, которые приехали на место трагедии, голову не могли высунуть. Ополченцы же не сами себя обстреливают, нужно, в конце концов, призвать и киевские власти к соблюдению элементарных норм порядочности, ввести хотя бы на какое-то короткое время прекращение огня. Разумеется, мы будем делать все для того, чтобы расследование было полным"

The same case was recalled by an expert on *RT International*, where he blamed the Western media for not being professional. Moreover, this case has been regularly used in the media context in Russia.

On *Perviy Kanal* some other cases of US trying to cover up its actions were shown:

- 1) the intelligence service disguising a US plane flying to Cuba;
- 2) lack of transparency regarding the 9/11 case
- 3) even disguising a ship in the 19th century.

All these cases were used to **enhance the idea of conspiracy** and possible benefits for the US and Ukraine from the MH-17 catastrophe.

At the same time, the idea of the US gaining from the MH-17 catastrophe is not mentioned on *RT* at all. However, the line of “who benefits from the catastrophe?” was discussed on *RT America* in a news package providing a point of view of Pentagon (*RT America*, July 18, 2014). In general, aspects of investigation and evidence used by the US institutions are dealt with in categories, which are already examined in a section of this research on political values and will be presented later in this research in the section on international organisations.

Summing up, this tragedy was shown with a human face for American and International audience, according to the Western media tradition. At the same time, information for the Russian-speaking audience first came from the authorities, supporting the Soviet tradition. Morality was also used to highlight the equality of Russia on the international arena and to assert Russia as a significant player together with the US, the UK and Germany. The moral quality of US and Ukrainian state were questioned mostly by the national Russian channel.

## International dimension: Relying on International organisations (with the connection to the rule of law and international security)

The main aspects of the international dimension addressed in the studied period after downing of MH-17 were the role of international organisations and institutions, the rules of international law and reliability/credibility of those who set these rules. President Putin was the main voice legitimating the key point that **Russia was following the rules of international law**. The topic of respect to the international law was placed at the opening the news programs on *Perviy Kanal* several days in a row. For example,

[TRANSLATION] Putin: “We are strictly following the norms of international law.”<sup>206</sup>

(*Perviy Kanal, Vremya*, 22 July, 2014)

## International security and order

“Colour Revolutions” in the speech of president Putin were presented as a **synonym of “coup d’état”** (*Perviy Kanal, Vremya*, 22 July 2014). Simultaneously, the following lines were provided:

- 1) de-legitimation of power in Ukraine: they are radical nationalists financed from abroad, aiming for destabilisation of the country;
- 2) legitimization of the regime in Russia;
- 3) de-legitimation of methods used by an “unnamed power” supporting “democratisation”.

206 In Russian: “мы, со своей стороны, строго соблюдаем нормы международного права.”



Putin's statement was followed by the comment of a journalist stating that **problems (both political and economic) are a norm for any state.** (*Perviy Kanal, Vremya*, 22 July 2015). Technique of rationalisation was applied by discussing the destabilisation in Ukraine and radicalisation of society becoming a common issue for everyone. This part of Putin's speech was reinforced by a video with events from Ukraine. Video was emotional, showing destroyed buildings and crying children. The underlining line is **the hypothetical future**, because Russia is the next target of such "democratisation".

*[TRANSLATION]* Putin: "That kind of methods will not directly work here, such "recipes" can work only in failed states, torn by conflicts and contradictions. Our people, the citizens of Russia, will not let that happen"<sup>207</sup>

*(Perviy Kanal, Vremya, 22 July, 2014)*

In this quote Russia is legitimated as a strong state without internal conflicts and the public opinion is presented as united. The next quote of Putin in the same news-story demonstrates it.

*[TRANSLATION]* Putin: "But attempts to destabilise the political situation in our society, attempts to weaken Russia, to hit Russia in its weak spots will be attempted by those who want to subdue Russia to make it more flexible in terms of international decision-making (concerning other states).

207 In Russian: "Безусловно, в лоб такие методы не пройдут, рецепты, которые действуют отношении слабых, не состоявшихся стран, пораженных противоречиями, конфликтами, у нас не сработают. Наши люди, граждане России, этого не допустят."

They will use the so called competitive struggle on the international arena. This refers to economic and political spheres"<sup>208</sup>

*(Perviy Kanal, Vremya, 22 July, 2014)*

The next part of Putin's speech is dedicated to the tools supposedly used in the democratisation process – delegitimising NGOs, different channels of information and other soft power tools. Finally, Putin concludes:

*[TRANSLATION]* "Apparently, all of this is perceived as democracy in some countries."<sup>209</sup>

*(Perviy Kanal, Vremya, 22 July, 2014)*

## The OSCE

The international institution mostly quoted/mentioned/used to legitimate Russia's point of view was the OSCE. It was the main "visualised" organisation (super close-ups on letters, press-conferences, filming of their field-work). However, it was impossible to understand whether the video material was filmed on that particular day or came from archives.

Positive assessment of the OSCE on the safety in the area controlled by pro-Russian militia was used to underline **the lack of credibility of the Ukrainian side.** Ukrainians

208 In Russian: "Putin: "Но попытки раскачать общественно политическую ситуацию, тем или иным способом ослабить Россию, ударить по проблемным местам, безусловно принимаются и будут приниматься с тем, чтобы сделать нас более податливыми при решении вопросов в области других государств на международной арене. Будут использоваться механизмы в так называемой конкурентоспособной борьбе на международной арене. Это касается и экономической сферы, и политической."

209 In Russian: "все это, видимо, в некоторых странах воспринимается как демократия."

were blamed for violating the ceasefire. Manipulation with the composition of the news program on *Perviy Kanal* helped to **undermine the credibility of the US**. For example, on 21 July three news packages were placed in the following order: in the first one the OSCE and an expert from the Netherlands were expressing gratitude to locals from separatist-controlled territories; the next news package contained criticism of president Obama:

[TRANSLATION] “The separatists continue blocking the investigation, and they repeatedly got in the way of experts, who needed to gain access to the debris of the airplane.”<sup>210</sup>

(*Perviy Kanal, Vremya, 21 July, 2014*)

The third news package showed one of the leaders of the pro-Russian militia stating that they are ready to do all in their power to assist the investigation. Finally, the OSCE representatives were mentioned in the context of negotiations with the contact group (*Perviy Kanal, Vremya, 22 July, 2014*).

### The United Nations

The role of the UN was not particularly discussed; it appeared in the news as a platform for negotiations. On *Perviy Kanal* this platform was used to redefine the notion of democracy, to criticise the US, the UK and France. For *RT* and for *Perviy Kanal* the UN was shown as a platform to:

- 1) legitimise Russia's position;

- 2) amplify Russia's position (for example, the only representative quoted is Russian ambassador, without direct speech of the US representatives);
- 3) remind about sub-topics to the catastrophe convenient to Russia.

### The EU

The Russian TV channels portrayed European Union and European leaders under the pressure from the US. The European Union is not acting in the interest of the nations/ member states (*Perviy Kanal, Vremya, July 18, 2014*). The following quote illustrates the line about the EU:

[TRANSLATION] “Americans are constantly appealing to Europeans emphasising that the majority of the deceased are citizens of the Old World who must urgently revise their stance over the Ukrainian matter and support Washington's strict position in relation to Moscow.”<sup>211</sup>

(*Perviy Kanal, Voskresnoye Vremya, July 20, 2014*)

In the same news story, *Perviy Kanal* went on to undermine the authority of the EU:

[TRANSLATION] Anchor: “Europe's arguments that such development of events is not beneficial for Russia, that the evidence provided by the American secret services cannot prove from which exact point in Ukraine the missile was

210 In Russian: Obama: “Сепаратисты продолжают блокировать расследование, они неоднократно мешали экспертам получить доступ к обломкам”

211 In Russian: “Американцы постоянно апеллируют к европейцам, подчеркивая, что большинство погибших – граждане старого света, который должен срочно пересмотреть свою позицию по украинскому вопросу и поддержать жесткую позицию Вашингтона по отношению к Москве.”

fired, are not taken into account in Washington. The main demand is to punish Russia.”<sup>212</sup>

*(Voskresnoye Perviy Kanal, Vremya, July 20, 2014)*

*Perviy Kanal* focused also on **splitting up the EU** by singling out particular countries and leaders right from the first days of the MH-17 tragedy. However, in the second part of studied period the EU as a single organisation became more noticeable: firstly, as an **organisation that is influenced by the US** (including conspiracy theories); secondly, as a counterpart of the US (Brussels and Washington as two sides of conversation mentioned by a journalist). High Representative of the EU on foreign and security issues C. Ashton spoke on *Perviy Kanal* only on 22 July 2015. The main themes were cooperation of the EU with Washington, discussion of sanctions and the Mistral issue.

## NATO

**NATO was practically not named on RT** (just a few times). For example, it was mentioned as an organisation calling for international investigation. At the same time, **NATO was named as a threat on *Perviy Kanal***. The main voices talking about the growing danger from NATO’s side were the voices of Russian authorities, including the main voice of the President, thus legitimating the strengthening of the Russian military forces for defence purposes.

*[TRANSLATION] Putin: “We will respond adequately to NATO’s war structures encroaching on our borders. Same goes for the deployment of a global anti-missile defence system and the development of strategic, non-nuclear weaponry. We are often being told that the anti-missile defence system is meant only for defence. It is nothing like that, it is an attack system. This part of the offensive defence system of the US is brought out to the periphery. Whatever our foreign colleagues might say, we clearly see what is actually happening.”*<sup>213</sup>

This part of the speech is supported by showing missiles in action. The correspondent is summing up the message of the President, showing recent NATO military exercises with the middle and close-up shots, making it possible to distinguish the flags and emblems on the equipment and uniforms.

Although NATO was not directly linked to the issue of MH-17 catastrophe, RT named **NATO among the key players calling for an investigation**.

On *Perviy Kanal*, when referring to the meeting of the Russian Security Council (22 July), president Putin undermined NATO without explicitly naming it.

212 In Russian: “Anchor: Европейские доводы о том, что России в первую очередь не выгодно такое развитие событий, что данные американских спецслужб не могут точно указать из какой точки на территории Украины выпущена ракета, в Вашингтоне не слушают. Главное требование – наказать Россию.”

213 In Russian: “Мы будем адекватно и соразмерно реагировать на приближение военных структур НАТО к нашим границам. Не оставим без внимания развертывание глобальной противоракетной обороны и наращивание стратегического не ядерного оружия. Нам часто говорят, что система ПРО это оборонительная система. Ничего подобного! Это наступательная система. Это часть наступательной оборонной системы США. Вынесенная на периферию. Что бы не говорили наши зарубежные коллеги, мы хорошо видим, что происходит на самом деле.”

[TRANSLATION] Putin: “We are strictly following the norms of international law and fulfilling our commitment towards our partners (..) Russia, thank God, is not part of any alliances, which in a way is a guarantee of our sovereignty. Any country that joins an alliance, gives away part of its sovereignty, and it does not always reflect the national interests of this country.”<sup>214</sup>

This speech was filmed on the prolonged close-up shot, and president Putin was looking straight at the camera (at the viewer). This speech was filmed during the opening of the Security Council. It was mentioned in the commentary that usually such meetings are held behind closed doors. In this statement NATO was not specifically named but was implied, as well as the dominance of the US in the “consensus-based alliance”. The technique of hypothetical future was used by the president by illustrating potential threat to Russia and showing the grim future for the alliance countries.

Summing up, the techniques of *RT* and *Perviy Kanal* differed on how to represent the international order, including international organisations and institutions. *Perviy Kanal* portrayed NATO as an enemy and a meddling actor (due to US influence), whilst *RT* did not bring much attention to NATO. Both *RT* and *Perviy Kanal* underlined the importance of the OSCE, connecting the organisation

to the fact of openness and willingness to cooperate by the pro-Russian militia.

### Downing of MH-17: Summary of redefinition of values

The case of a not pre-planned event – the downing Malaysian civil airplane MH-17 – was analysed in this chapter. Analysis shows the immediate reaction to this catastrophe, including the “first reaction” and the manipulative techniques used. The main strategies of legitimisation were based on rationality: rationalisation and previous experience (including conspiracy theories, the voice of authority, etc.).

The general line for *RT America* was to minimise the relevance of the catastrophe to the events in Ukraine. *RT International* was used to show the reaction of the Western media agenda. *Perviy Kanal* was minimising the emotions (less emotional videos, stories of victims’ families placed low on the agenda, no close-ups of tears and sadness) and rationalised several issues. It overloaded the air with information by using multiple expertise (giving a sense of pluralism and unity of experts in blaming Ukraine for the tragedy).

**The role of Putin in this case was crucial, even by using psychological elements of imitating a face-to-face communication between the viewer and the Russian President.** *Perviy Kanal* used repetition of one message in a single news program (to the extent that one could argue, if these were actually news). Both – national and international – platforms of the Russian TV were evaluating the credibility of Western sources, in fact comparing itself with the Western media and demonstrating the contrast.

214 In Russian: “Мы со своей стороны строго соблюдаем нормы международного права, свои обязательства перед партнерами (..) Россия, Слава Богу, не входит ни в какие альянсы, в этом тоже, в значительной степени, залог нашего суверенитета, любая страна, которая в альянсы входит, сразу часть своего суверенитета отдает. И далеко не всегда это отражает национальные интересы той или иной страны.”

### 5.1.3 REDEFINITION OF EURO-ATLANTIC VALUES: USED NARRATIVES IN THE CASE OF DOWNING OF MH-17

Values	Redefined values	Messages for Western audiences	Messages for Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques
<b>POLITICAL VALUES</b>				
Media freedom	Western media are not free, professional and credible	Results presented before investigation has started	Results presented before investigation has started	IMPORTANCE (placement)
		Space not provided for an alternative view (rebels of Russia)	Western journalists are biased and influenced by politicians	REPETITION (from day to day)
		Media is used to misinform, it is unprofessional	Media is used to misinform, it is unprofessional	AUTHORITY TESTIMONY UNIFICATION
		Assigning guilt for the tragedy to Putin	Low morality of Western journalists	LABELLING IN-OUT GROUPING
Presumption of innocence	The West violates the main principles of democracy	Western media violate the principle of presumption of innocence by playing blame-game before the investigation is over	Western media violate the principle of presumption of innocence	REPETITION COMPARING DIFFERENCES (countries)
		Ukraine (and some other countries and politicians) violate the principle of presumption of innocence, but the U.S. is not yet "pointing the finger at anyone"	Mainly the U.S. and Ukraine violate the principle of presumption of innocence	UNIFICATION (all american politicians)
		Dividing the Western world on the basis of the attitude toward this principle	Dividing the Western world on the basis of the attitude toward this principle	EXPERTISE SIMPLIFICATION AUTHORITY (including putin)
		China is more democratic than the U.S.	Rebels are ready to assist the international investigation, cooperation with OSCE	TRANSFERENCE TESTIMONY IN- OUT GROUPING
		Russian and the Western worlds demonstrate that there is a need for a reliable and independent investigation	Russia demonstrates the need for a reliable and independent investigation more often than the West	LABELLING COMMON MAN HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE
				COMPARING DIFFERENCES
The rule of law	The West is violating the rule of law	Obama – a leader who is violating the rule of law	Obama (the U.S.) influences the investigation	RATIONALIZATION THE VOICE OF EXPERTS
		<b>Contradictory message:</b> meeting between Lavrov and Kerry hints at a possibility for open international investigation	Concerns about the results of the international investigation ("could be politicized")	AUTHORITY



Values	Redefined values	Messages for Western audiences	Messages for Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques
ECONOMIC VALUES				
Democratic ideals embedded in economic system	Economic interests first	Ukraine uses the conflict to earn money by letting other states use its air-space	Ukraine uses the conflict to earn money by letting other states use its air-space	RATIONALIZATION ENEMYZATION CONSPIRACY THEORY THE VOICE OF EXPERTS
			Energy market – the U.S. as the interested party in a conflict in Europe	
			Weak dollar as a threat to the U.S. economy	
MORAL VALUES				
Value of human life	Did not redefine directly	Putin’s speech – reaction to the catastrophe – visualised with a positive image of Medvedev	Putin’s speech – reaction to the catastrophe	COMMON MAN CONSPIRACY IN/ OUT GROUPING  AUTHORITIES EXPERTISE PLACEMENT
		More time devoted to human stories than the opinions of authorities	Compassion from local and international authorities, thus showing hierarchy and collectivism, traditional to Russian culture	
			Taking Russian solidarity to the international stage and legitimising the figure of Putin	
Solidarity	Did not redefine directly	Human stories: solidarity with families and friends	Solidarity with families and friends mostly expressed by the authorities	
“Moral quality” of states	Moral argumentation about the trust varies from a country to country	Inability to trust the Ukrainian authorities and military	Inability to trust the Ukrainian authorities and the military. Topics added: poisoning of Yushchenko, Georgadze case, the civilian plane crash in 2001	SIMPLIFICATION TRANSCERENCE EXPERTISE AUTHORITIES COMPARE IN CONTRAST COMPARE SIMILARITIES HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE MORAL SUPERIORITY OF RUSSIA
		Countries (Ukraine and US) are immoral	Countries (Ukraine and the U.S.) are immoral	
		Supporting the high quality of Russian expertise	Supporting the high quality of Russian expertize	
		Conspiracy vs. morality: inability to trust the U.S., lack of transparency regarding 9/11; the intelligence service disguising a plane flying to Cuba	Conspiracy vs. morality: Inability to trust the US: the case of Powell regarding the evidence on Iraq	
			US benefits from the MH-17 catastrophe	

Values	Redefined values	Messages for Western audiences	Messages for Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques
<b>INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION</b>				
International security and order	Credibility of those, who set international rules is questionable	The U.S. violating the international law	Destabilization in other countries becomes a common problem	IN/OUT GROUPING LABELLING
		Russia following international law	Russia following international law	SIMPLIFICATION HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE
			Deligitimation of power in Ukraine	AUTHORITY
			Legitimation of the regime in Russia	EXPERTISE
			Color revolutions- a synonym of "coup d'etat"	REPETITION
			Delegitimation of methods used by an "unnamed power" supporting democratization	
Cooperation with international organisations	Did not redefine directly	OSCE is the most mentioned and legitimate international organisation	OSCE is the most mentioned and legitimate international organisation	IN/OUT GROUPING LABELLING SIMPLIFICATION
			Ukrainians as the party violating the ceasefire	HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE
		UN as a platform to legitimise Russia's role, to explain Russia's stance, and to remind about the sub-topics to the catastrophe	UN as a platform to legitimise Russia's role, to provide Russia's stance, to remind about the sub-topics of the catastrophe	AUTHORITY EXPERTISE REPETITION
			The EU is under pressure from the U.S.; the organisation is not working in the interests of the European nations	
		NATO as an organisation calling for international investigation	NATO as a threat	

# MEDIA ANALYSIS: CASE STUDIES

## Implementation of Counter sanctions

## 5.2.

**About the event:** On 6 August 2014 Russian Federation authorities announced food embargo (in the West usually called – counter-sanctions) against those countries which supported sanctions against Russia. On 7 August a list of the banned food items was announced. In fact it was a response to the third round of sanctions implemented by Western countries after the downing of MH-17. This is when the “sanctions war” started on both sides, undoubtedly having an economic and political impact on both sides.

Dates for the analysis: **6 August – 11 August 2014.**

### 5.2.1. COMMUNICATION TOOLS USED AND REDEFINITION OF AGENDA

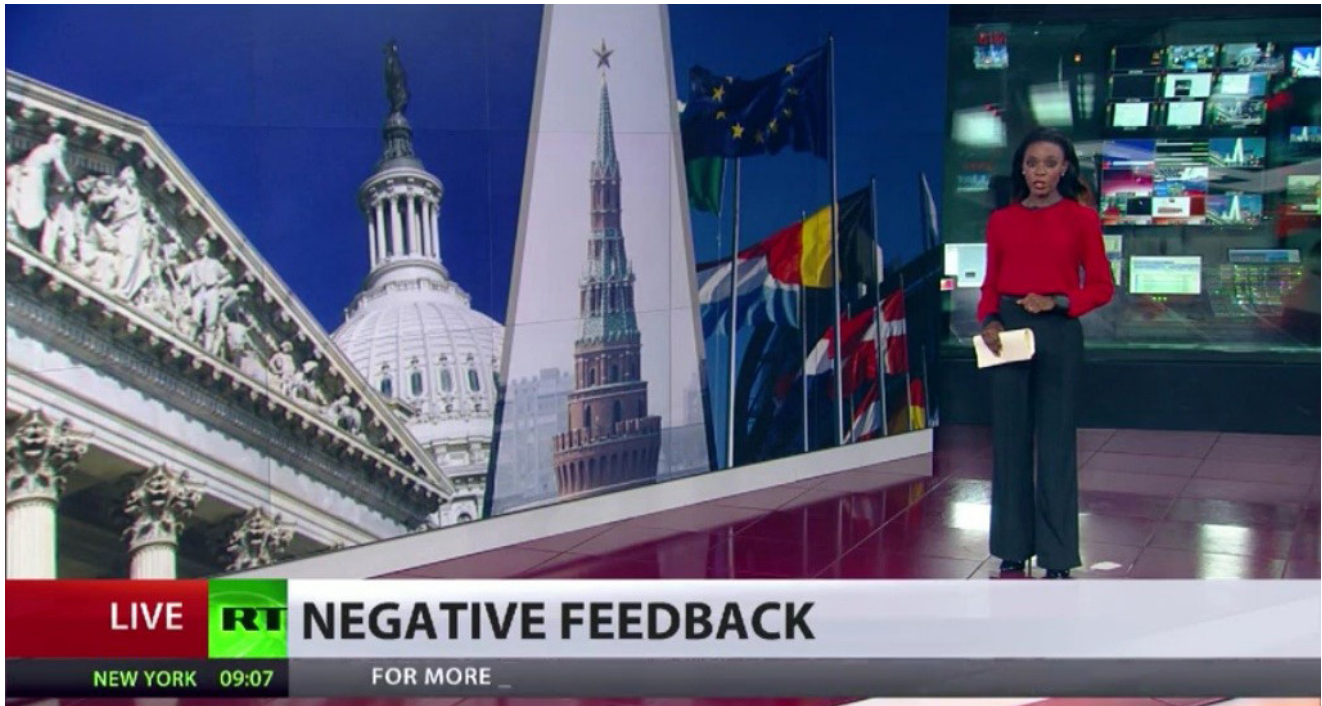
The general line of sanctions on both platforms – there is no link to events on Ukraine. This issue migrated to the cluster of geopolitical

relations. Russian activities in Ukraine were not highlighted as the reason of this sanctions-on-sanctions conflict. *RT America* did not pay the attention to this issue. At the same time *RT International* showed stories, re-defining the role of Russia – Russia as a victim of Western sanctions giving its response.

In addition to victimisation, *Perviy Kanal* provided 1) consolidation of society (professional and general) in a win-win situation (the lack of negative assessment); 2) splitting the West (the US against the EU); 3) splitting the EU (the more suffering vs. the less suffering EU members).

Different voices of authorities, experts and common people (even without sub-titles of names and surnames) share supportive evaluation. This case also demonstrated the lack of plurality - none of the experts criticised the impact of sanctions for Russia.

If in other cases the work with visualisation was significant, in this case video is only illustrative (not the main focus). Video is repeated from a news programme - to the news programme, graphics are used to emphasize statistics.



### News programme composition as a tool of strategic political communication

Only on *Perviy Kanal* news on sanctions were opening the news programme and moved events in Ukraine further away in the programme. On 6 August it was a 4'30 min news package, followed by the news on Ukraine. On 7 August a little bit longer package was presented in the very beginning of news programme, again followed by Ukraine.

At the same time for *RT International* it was not the first news. Before each story on sanctions a number of stories from and about Ukraine were provided, including the story on MH-17<sup>215</sup>. In this story an expert criticised the evidence and version of Washington for not being clear enough. The first story on sanctions (called in subtitles as “Negative feedback”) is the next immediately after MH-17 story. Visualisation for this news is a collage of three parts – the US (the White House), Russia (Kremlin’s tower) and the EU (flags). The Kremlin tower even at the visual level is separating the EU and the US.

In general, the length of news-packages is common for *RT* and for *Perviy Kanal*. The structure of news-packages is also traditional. What was not traditional was the use in the lead of *Perviy Kanal* of the verbal link to the hashtag #edimsvoje<sup>216</sup>.

At the visual level the main face of sanctions for the Western audience is Medvedev, and for the Russian-speaking – both Medvedev and Putin.

### Setting the agenda

In short, there were two different agendas built up for the English-speaking audience of *RT* and for the Russian-speaking audience of *Perviy Kanal*. The agenda of *RT* was based on the reasoning and reaction in the West. At the same time the agenda of *Perviy Kanal* was focused on redefinition of sanctions layout, the internal impact of anti-sanctions and external reaction.

At the linguistic level the re-defining of why (i.e. the reason) the sanctions were introduced was put in place. Sanctions were not associated with

215 RT International, 7 August 2014

216 Vremya, *Perviy Kanal*, 10 August 2014

Linguistic naming of the food embargo	
<b>Perviy Kanal</b>	<b>RT</b>
Ответны емеры (Responsive measures)	Negative feed-back "Proportional manner"
Аккуратный ответ (Accurate response)	Tit-for tat sanctions
Embargo	Responsive feed back sanctions
Ответ на агрессивную политику Запада (Response to aggressive politics of the West)	Mirror reaction
More painful for the West, even beneficial for Russia	
Symmetric reaction of Russia	

the conflict in Ukraine. The background was around the last circle of sanctions. Moreover, *Perviy Kanal* did not focus on clarifying the sanctions against Russia.

For *RT* the main issue was the impact of sanctions, and who will suffer most (**unhappy farmers**) in countries harmed by the implemented food embargo. News stories clarified why it happens, for example, by providing the voices of expertise. **Why?**

Experts: Anna Van Densky (presented as a political commentator for EU reporter magazine) said that Putin "has to defend the Russian interests", as Russia was not being heard: "Europeans will pay the bill". And the conclusion of the expert is it is not a bad news for Russians<sup>217</sup>. *Perviy Kanal* used the same filmed material with the same expert.

The main way *RT* talked about loses are graphics, experts, correspondent texts and surveys (conducted on the RT web-page). It was a kind of *vox-populi* (poll) on RT webpage

used for and covered in the news program. The second answer to the question "who will suffer the most from sanctions" was - average EU and U.S citizens.

The question of potential compensations in the EU was raised very quickly. The three Baltic states were not specially mentioned among the suffering countries on *RT* (only Lithuania was mentioned). However, on *Perviy Kanal* Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia were repeatedly mentioned several times among countries the most harmed and news-packages were based on these three countries. Even in the weekly *Voskresnoye Vremya* in the story of the core correspondent, all collected materials on the reactions in the EU were based in Latvia, with the majority of interviews from Latvia.

In the centre of the agenda constructed for *Perviy Kanal* were **prices in Russia**, possible deficit, and the period of time to normalize the situation (from a month to two). Even during the first seconds of announcing the news on *Perviy Kanal* the anchor said:

[TRANSLATION] "Prices should not rise".<sup>218</sup>

(*Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 6 August 2014*)

At the end of the studied period more stories appeared on the monitoring of prices in the regions<sup>219</sup>. The issue of prices is legitimised at the highest level – the prime minister, ministers and local authorities. For example, Medvedev was talking to the First Deputy Prime Minister Shuvalov, but was watching in the camera – to the audience and a very short answer of Shuvalov – "сделаем (will be done)"<sup>220</sup>. With regard to the potential deficit

217 RT International, 7 August 2014

218 In Russian: "Цены вырасти не должны"

219 Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 11 August 2014

220 Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 11 August 2014



farmers were used, who were saying that “It will be enough, more than enough”<sup>221</sup>.”

The next level of the news about sanctions is how the sanctions will influence farmers in Russia (**happy farmers**). Mostly farmers are expressing excitement, farmers are used as a voice of expertise, they mainly are talking about a hypothetical future, which is the main strategy applied. A local farmer said:

[TRANSLATION] We here are not losing anything, we only will gain”. “A blessing in disguise.”<sup>222</sup>

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 11 August 2014)*

[TRANSLATION] “In Russia we have a powerful agricultural sector and it is capable of feeding the country”<sup>223</sup>

*(6 August 2014)*

Attitude towards EU importers and EU importers cooperation with supermarkets was described in the metaphor of war:

[TRANSLATION] “It would be very difficult to fight with them (the EU farmers)”<sup>224</sup>

*(6 August 2014)*

This was followed by some other stories about new horizons of international cooperation. These were supported by expertise (mainly experts were political scientists) and maps (where these countries are located).

**Unhappy farmers** was not the top story, it was a supportive element. First stories on the suffering side were presented on 7 August. This first story was based on quotes from the leading European media (video quotes mostly) outlets. The text of the correspondent was about the sums for the EU and for separate countries. Here three main strategies were used: emotions (a story from France, where a farmer cannot watch this happening “without pain”<sup>225</sup>; hypothetical future (losing jobs, outcomes, credits, plans); and rationalisation. For example:

[TRANSLATION] “This is terrible. I have many employees. In the morning I said they should not come to work. I do not know what to do next.”<sup>226</sup>

[TRANSLATION] Andin, Bulgaria: “These goods will definitely be lost. We do not have anybody else to sell these goods.”<sup>227</sup>

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 11 August 2014)*

One and the same farmer was shown on RT and *Perviy Kanal* several times.

**The quality of local food** and the quality of imported food was shown as a supportive issue of happy local farmers and unhappy farmers from the countries suffering from sanctions. This issue was presented by the voice of local farmers, the voice of common consumers and the voice of experts analysing the quality standards.

221 In Russian: “Хватит и перехватит.” *Vremya*, *Perviy Kanal*, 8 August 2014

222 In Russian: “Мы здесь ничего не теряем, мы только найдем! Не было бы счастья, да несчастье помогло.”

223 In Russian: “В России мощный аграрный сектор и он в состоянии накормить страну.”

224 In Russian: “Очень тяжело было с ними воевать.”

225 *Vremya*, *Perviy Kanal*, 11 August 2014

226 In Russian: “Это ужасно, на меня работает много людей. Утром я сказал им не приходить на работу. Я не знаю, что делать дальше.”

227 In Russian: “Этот товар очевидно пропадет, нам больше некому его продавать.”



For example:

[TRANSLATION] “It is widely known that Russian standards are higher than in many other countries. The imported goods consist of many artificial ingredients, including antibiotics.”<sup>228</sup>

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 6 August 2014)*

By the way, Belarus still follows this reminder of the good quality of Soviet products and high Soviet standards. In another example a food expert is saying that:

[TRANSLATION] “For example, in Canada natural butter should be added in the plant oil, which in principle is made of vegetables. For our country this is not acceptable.”<sup>229</sup>

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 7 August 2014)*

228 In Russian: “Как известно, Российские стандарты выше чем во многих других странах, в импортной продукции много добавок, в том числе антибиотиков.”

229 In Russian: “Так например в Канаде в натуральное сливочное масло считается обязательным добавлять рапсовое масло, которое, в принципе, является растительным. Для нашего государства это неприемлемо.”

Local women without names or surnames are reinforcing the message:

[TRANSLATION] “We are patriots of our countries. We should do it not just out of some sort of national wrongdoing, but for the reason we are having a lot better goods [...] We already have special experience of “Bush legs”. ”<sup>230</sup>

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 8 August 2014)*

As it was mentioned earlier about this case, none of the experts were having comments about negative influence of sanctions. In general, there were **happy Russian expert** sand **those unhappy with potential risks**.

230 In Russian: “Мы патриоты своей страны, не просто из какой-то там национальной вредности, а из-за того, что у нас на несколько порядков лучше продукция [...]. У нас есть печальный опыт ножек Буша.”



For example, a Russian expert underlining:

[TRANSLATION] “The decree is to have more positive sides both for consumers and for producers, as the goods from many countries did not correspond to the quality of our goods...”<sup>231</sup>

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 6 August 6 2014)*

The last – **national (Russian) security, European security and potential crisis in the EU** has to mentioned under this subsection of agenda, but it will be analysed in the section of values. The anchor saying that “Experts believe that Europe as a whole will suffer. Moreover, in some countries people complain about their authorities<sup>232</sup>”.

231 In Russian: “Указ однозначно со знаком плюс и для потребителей, и для производителей. Ввозимая продукция из многих стран она: А) не соответствовала качеству даже внутренней продукции, ...”

232 “Эксперты считают, что пострадает вся Европа в целом, при этом в отдельных странах уже звучат обвинения в адрес властей”

This is followed by a quote from LeFigaro (ZakMijar):

[TRANSLATION] “For the French it will be similar to death if export to Russia is stopped. It is too important for keeping the balance of employment and trade. The EU is having a policy **(of the polar issues)**. All external policy of Europe is one big myth about the power of Europe. It is utopia. Everybody very well knows that, despite of these ridiculous sanctions, any kind of war does not exist with Russia.”<sup>233</sup>

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 9 August 2014)*

233 In Russian: “для французов будет смертиподобно посягнуть на экспорт в Россию, он слишком важен для поддержания трудовой занятости и торгового баланса. Евросоюз ведет политику из огня да в полымя. Вся внешняя политика Европы – один большой миф о евромогуществе – целая утопия. Все прекрасно знают что, несмотря на нелепые санкции, не существует никакой войне против России.”



Main communication tools used in this case study are employed mainly at the level of verbal communication: starting from how sanctions are named to why sanctions were applied. Rationalisation of sanctions is connected to two points: the gains for Russia, suffering in the West. Something in the middle is not commented/pronounced either by experts or by locals, but is presented as an answer.

At the non-verbal level Russian locals (consumers, farmers), Russian experts and even authorities are smiling. They are happy and talking not about the negative, but about the positive future. At the same time on faces of the Western farmers Western authorities and experts one could see was sadness or anxiety.

From the point of view of strategies of legitimating, every strategy was used. Hypothetical future is among the main strategies, combined with rationalisation through the voices of expertise. Nevertheless, this was pre-planned consolidation of society around the state, and tools used (cooperation of *RT* and *Perviy Kanal*) was directed in a clear way: 1) positive emotions of Russians are shown exclusively for Russians, 2) negative reaction of the Western part shown for both; 3) no negative potential risks for Russia, only rationalisation of gains.

## 5.2.2. RE-DEFINITION OF EURO-ATLANTIC VALUES

The key value defined for the Russian audience was the Russian state being at the centre of everything. Russian society

is encouraged not to challenge the state, but rather to consolidate around the state and the governing elite. At the same time, there were also attempts to re-define Euro-Atlantic values. These values are mainly connected with economic and international dimensions.

### The political dimension

#### The role of the state—Russia is defending its interests, patriots do not complain

This issue was transmitted by both platforms, but for *Perviy Kanal* it became a leading storyline. President Putin was the main source used to legitimate the role of the state in this case. He is seen as the primary defender of national interests, supported by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and the ministers who present specific plans and actions. The news stories encouraged trust in state institutions. Putin declared that there was a threat to the nation/state. The segment about Putin's meeting the day before the introduction of counter-sanctions when he called for the defence of Russia was repeated several times. The sanctions are presented as 'not the choice of Russia'. The Speaker of Russian State Duma Narishkin said:

[TRANSLATION] "This is not our choice, it is a forced measure."<sup>234</sup>

(*Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 7 August 2014*)

The idea that Russia is facing a threat to its national interests was also used to highlight negative views about Western produce. For instance, the Head of the Association of Potato Farmers in Russia stated:

234 In Russian: "Это не наш выбор, это вынужденная мера."

“Они просто напосто душили наших производителей.” “They (the Western producers) were simply strangling our producers.”

(*Vremya, Perviy Kanal*, 7 August 2014)

*Perviy Kanal* showed a positive hypothetical future for Russia: increased social responsibility, new jobs, new trade contacts, new income, and even better quality of products—these views were mainly legitimised by farmers.

Instead of focusing on Russian internal positivism, *RT* mainly focused on negative storylines, a negative hypothetical future of hardships for Western small farmers.

### Economic dimension

A redefinition of values was also present in discussions about the economy—the ‘aggressive’ export of produce by the West shows the real face of the ‘free’ market; Western produce is of low quality and harmful to health; sanctions against Russia are not legally justifiable.

### Redefining the free market

The market conditions before the implementation of counter-sanctions are negatively portrayed. With the introduction of counter-sanctions, aggressive Western imports have been halted, and experts and farmers are happily talking about **opening new markets** for the local Russian producers. In fact, one could observe free trade being redefined as a value for the Russian people. There is support for the economic freedoms of local farmers, but the presence of Western products in the Russian market is harmful for both Russian farmers and the Russian economy.

In addition to reporting on new opportunities for local farmers, *Perviy Kanal* was the only channel to report on the **protection against low-quality (Western) food**. *RT* did not discuss this issue. Another aspect of this redefinition of the understanding of the free market was to focus on finding new markets to replace the sanctioned ones, like Latin America for meat, Africa and Asia for fruit and vegetables.

### Counter-sanctions are legal

The notion that counter-sanctions do not contradict international law was emphasized on both *RT* and *Perviy Kanal*. Both platforms used an authoritative voice to legitimate this issue. For example, one expert stated that Russia did not violate the law, but answered in a ‘proportional manner’ to the sanctions imposed by the West.<sup>235</sup>

Statements about the legal aspects of the sanctions were also important for *Perviy Kanal*. Those were legitimised by authorities:

[TRANSLATION] “The Ministry of Economy and Development has already announced that limiting importation of agricultural produce in response to sanctions is legally correct. According to Minister Lihachev, Russia’s actions are, have been, and will be in accordance with rules of the World Trade Organisation.”<sup>236</sup>

(*Vremya, Perviy Kanal*, 6 August 2014)

235 RT International, 8 August 2014

236 In Russian: “В министерстве эконом(ического) развития уже заявили о юридической чистоте ограничения ввоза сельхоз продукции в ответ на санкции, по словам министра сельского развития Лихачева, действия России соответствуют, соответствовали и будут соответствовать базовым требованиям всемирной торговой организации.”



The same lines were repeated on 7 August, but this time put in the words of a journalist.

### International dimension

On *Perviy Kanal* the implementation of counter-sanctions was connected with the national interests and national security of Russia at the level of the President. *RT America* did not cover this aspect in the studied period.

RT and *Perviy Kanal* also differed in their approach to singling out particular countries in their reports—*Perviy Kanal* mainly focused on the Baltic States while *RT* focused on the impact of the ‘war of sanctions’ on Poland, Finland, Greece, France, and Germany.

In the news reports the international dimension was linked to issues of security, EU–US relations in the context of the ‘war of sanctions’ with Russia, and organisations like the WTO and the Customs Union.

### A sign for ‘them’ (security issue)

Top authorities in Russia, including the President, the Prime Minister, the Chairman of Duma, and various ministers, were shown expressing disappointment that the Western world did not listen to Russia. For example, Duma Chairman Narishkin expressed hope that the Western leaders understand the danger of ‘spinning the spiral of sanctions’ (‘раскручивание санкционной спирали’). Sanctions implemented by the West were presented as the beginning of the ‘war of sanctions’, as if the West attacked Russia without any context of events in Ukraine.

PM Medvedev said that:

[TRANSLATION] “Until the very last moment we hoped that our foreign colleagues would understand that sanctions lead to a dead end. Nobody needs them. But they did not understand,

and the situation was such that we were forced to retaliate.”<sup>237</sup>

(*Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 6 August 2014*)

### Europe is suffering because of the US

On both *RT* and *Perviy Kanal* Europe was presented as the second victim in the conflict of sanctions, Russia being the first. Statistics and various graphics were used to demonstrate that the EU would suffer more from Russia’s food embargo than the US since the US does not have such close trade relations with Russia.

In the words of both Russian and foreign experts the US was portrayed as interested in dragging the EU into the ‘war of sanctions’ against Russia. For example, *Perviy Kanal* showed a video quote from the ARD programme where an expert says:

[TRANSLATION] “The Chancellor is making a mistake by following Obama on a leash. Obama talks continuously about economic sanctions. They are hitting us, not the US. Do they really understand what price we will have to pay when our fruits and vegetables come under the embargo, and this will be caused by the same economic sanctions? What is it, to your mind? What is the goal? This is some sort of childishness...”<sup>238</sup>

(*Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 7 August 2014*)

237 In Russian: “Мы до последнего момента надеялись, что наши зарубежные коллеги поймут, что санкции—это тупиковый путь. Они никому не нужны. Но они не поняли и, ситуация сложилась так, что мы вынуждены идти на ответные меры.”

238 In Russian: “Ошибка канцлера заключается в том, что она идет на поводу у Обамы. Обама постоянно говорит об экономических санкциях, они бьют по нам, а не по США. Понимают ли они какую цену нам придется заплатить? Когда, например, под запрет попадут наши овощи и фрукты, и это решение вызвано теми самыми экономическими санкциями. Что это? По-вашему, Цель? Это же просто какое-то ребячество”

In another example from *Perviy Kanal* a journalist states:

[TRANSLATION] “This high price was paid by the EU only because the EU did not go against the will of America.”<sup>239</sup>

(*Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 7 August 2014*)

Journalists on both platforms repeated the message that Europe is ‘blindly following the US’.

### Inside the EU: solidarity and crisis

Both platforms focused on the impact of sanctions on the EU as a whole and on particular countries. Calculations about which EU country would suffer most were presented from the first day. Journalists collected videos from particular countries, which were presented as experiencing the greatest suffering from the Russian food embargo.

In addition to these calculations, the issues of compensation and solidarity arose. Would there be solidarity within the EU? The sanctions were portrayed as facilitating economic and financial crisis in particular countries, like Greece, and in the EU in general.

*Perviy Kanal* distinguished between the old and new EU member states, showing that the new members would suffer more. Latvia was featured most in interviews and graphic visualisations. This may be connected to the fact that the north-east European office of *Perviy Kanal* is located in Riga. A typical video from Latvia shows very old tractors and farmers saying that they are forced to re-orientate their business because of their

connections to the Russian market and having to wait for compensation from the government. Greece was also featured on *Perviy Kanal*’s reports on this topic. *RT* used Finland, Greece, and Ireland to demonstrate the crisis caused by counter-sanctions.

### The World Trade Organisation

On 11 August *Perviy Kanal* restated the words of the Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov: Russia’s actions are not against the World Trade Organisation and are taken in the interests of national security. The WTO is used as an authority for the purpose of legitimisation.

### Implementation of Counter sanctions: Summary of redefinition of values

This chapter elaborates the main narratives, manipulative techniques, and communication tools used in the case of counter-sanctions. *RT America* ignored this issue (DIVERSION), *RT International* focused on the negative impact of counter-sanctions on the Western countries (RATIONALIZATION), and *Perviy Kanal* firstly covered the positive impact on Russian market, and then the negative impact on Western economies (RATIONALIZATION and EMOTIONS).

The following main narratives were identified: political self-defence, patriotism, the consolidation of Russia, the protection of Russian market/producers; the protection of Russian consumers; questioning US–EU cooperation; dividing the EU by reporting on which member states would suffer most.

Different tools and techniques were used in redefining Euro-Atlantic and Russian values. Some of the key elements are presented in the table below with regard to the particular value under redefinition.

239 In Russian: “Эту высокую цену Евросоюз заплатил лишь за то, что не пошел против воли Америки.”

## 5.2.3 REDEFINITION OF EURO-ATLANTIC VALUES: USED NARRATIVES IN THE CASE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNTER SANCTIONS

Values	Redefined values	Messages for Western audiences	Messages for Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques
<b>POLITICAL VALUES</b>				
The role of state	<p>The Russian state is at the centre; the public must consolidate around it</p> <p>Patriots do not complain!</p>		<p>Putin is the main defender of national interests</p> <p>The West is a threat to the nation/state</p> <p>Sanctions are not Russia's choice</p> <p>Defence of the state and domestic market surrounded by positive emotions of Russians and negative emotions about the West</p> <p>Cultivation of negative views about Western farmers</p>	<p>REPETITION (legal response, protection of local market, quality food)</p> <p>LABELLING (the aggressiveness of Western markets)</p> <p>IN-OUT GROUPING (internal dimension—patriots; external dimension—dividing US/EU cooperation, dividing the EU)</p> <p>SILENCE (not engaging in negative assessment, ignoring the conflict in Ukraine as a reason)</p> <p>AUTHORITY (Putin/Medvedev/ministers in pseudo face-to-face communication, defence of national interests)</p> <p>POSITIVE HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE (for Russian producers and markets)</p> <p>COMMON MAN (impact on Russian and Western consumers and farmers)</p>
<b>ECONOMIC VALUES</b>				
International law	Counter-sanctions are legal	Counter-sanctions are not contrary to international law	Counter-sanctions are not against international law	<p>AUTHORITY (counter-sanctions do not violate agreements and are not against the law)</p> <p>VICTIMISATION</p>
		Russia does not violate laws, but responds in a 'proportional manner	Russian actions are in accordance, have been in accordance, and will be in accordance with the rules of the WTO	<p>RIGHT TO RESPOND</p>

Values	Redefined values	Messages for Western audiences	Messages for Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques
<b>ECONOMIC VALUES</b>				
Economic freedoms and opportunities	The free market is a disadvantage		<p>Support for economic freedoms and opportunities, but only for local Russian farmers</p> <p>The presence of Western products in the Russian market is harming Russian farmers</p> <p>The 'free' market = pressure to import Western produce</p> <p>Protection against low-quality Western produce</p> <p>Positive hypothetical future for the Russian small farmer</p> <p>Negative hypothetical future for the West</p> <p>Diversification of suppliers: opening new markets in Latin America, Africa, and Asia</p> <p>Counter-sanctions are completely legal</p>	<p>SILENCE (on the advantages of the free market and on the threats to the Russian market/economy)</p> <p>IN-OUT GROUPING (constructing dishonest competition/aggression; suffering of the Russian farmers; grouping at the EU level—ordinary farmers vs. the ruling elite)</p> <p>PSEUDO-PLURALITY (the VOICE OF EXPERTISE does not reference to the Ukraine conflict, only one motive described as the reason for action)</p> <p>VICTIMISATION (conditions for the Russian farmers before counter-sanctions)</p> <p>COMPARING (the quality of produce)</p> <p>STATISTICS</p> <p>COMMON MAN (Russian and Western)</p>
<b>THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION</b>				
International security and order	Europe is divided	Division of EU member states, focussing on Poland, Finland, Greece, France, and Germany	<p>Singling out the Baltic countries</p> <p>Top Russian authorities expressing disappointment that the Western world does not listen to Russia</p> <p>Sanctions are the beginning of a 'war of sanctions'</p> <p>Russia is a victim of the West; sanctions are not connected to the conflict in Ukraine</p>	<p>NEGATIVE OPPONENT (principle of dialogue)</p> <p>COMPARING (the EU and the US)</p> <p>SILENCE (about the conflict in Ukraine, lack of context for sanctions against Russia)</p> <p>AUTHORITY (legitimising counter-sanctions)</p> <p>THE LEAST OF EVILS (as hypothetical future)</p>

Trustworthiness and reliability of international organisations	Europe is not an independent player	Europe is the second victim in the conflict of sanctions, Russia is the first	Europe is the second victim in the conflict of sanctions, Russia is the first.	COMPARING (the EU and the US)  REPETITION (even within a single news programme)  STATISTICS (verbalized and visualized, often with no clear source)  VOICE OF EXPERTISE (lack of plurality)
		Statistics and graphics demonstrating that the EU will suffer more than the US from Russia's food embargo  The EU will pay a high price for introducing sanctions because it did not resist the will of the US	Statistics and graphics demonstrating that the EU will suffer more than the US from Russia's food embargo  The US is an interested party involving the EU in sanctions against Russia  Europe is blindly following the US  All orders come from the US	
	The EU is divided, there is no solidarity among members	Calculations concerning which EU country will suffer the most	Calculations concerning which EU country will suffer the most	COMPARING (EU new/old member states; suffering/not suffering)  COMMON MAN  DISQUALIFICATION of politics  VOICE OF EXPERTISE  HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE  STATISTICS
		Finland, Greece, and Ireland are the EU countries which will suffer most from counter-sanctions	Divisions between the new and old EU members, the new members will suffer more. At the level of visualisation and interviews, Latvia was the leader	
		Sanctions are a facilitating factor in the economic and financial crisis in countries like Greece and in the EU in general	Sanctions are a facilitating factor in the economic and financial crisis in countries like Greece and in the EU in general	
	The WTO and the Customs Union are supportive of counter-sanctions		Counter-sanctions are not against the WTO and are in the interests of Russian national security  WTO is an authority	



# MEDIA ANALYSIS: CASE STUDIES

## The First Humanitarian Aid Convoy 5.3.

**About the event:** On 12 August 2014 the first Russian humanitarian aid convoy moved from the Moscow area (*Podmoskovje*) to Eastern Ukraine. Approximately 280 half-empty trucks (numbers changed during the operation) made their way to the Ukrainian border and subsequently entered the conflict zone in Ukraine. The Ukrainian side called it a border violation. The Russian side referred to violated agreements by the Ukrainian side.

Dates for the media analysis: **12 August until 24 August 2014.**

### 5.3.1. COMMUNICATION TOOLS USED AND REDEFINITION OF AGENDA

The case of the humanitarian convoy differs from that of MH-17 in many respects. The most important aspects from the point of view of strategic political communications are the following:

- It was a **pre-planned action by the Russian authorities** that was timed, situated, and contextualized so as to support specially created and controlled narrative(s).
- It was not ‘breaking news’, but rather a **continuing news story** focussing on the where the convoy was located.
- This pre-planned action, and the context in which it took place, were strongly connected to a much-publicised element of Russian foreign policy—the responsibility **to protect compatriots suffering abroad**. This is framed as a moral duty, avoiding international context.

The agendas of the news platforms promoted analysis of the following blocks of analysis: 1) stories about the convoy; 2) stories surrounding the convoy; 3) sub-themes in the news programmes.

**The visual appearance of the convoy** confirms detailed preparation and is worth mentioning: the trucks were white, the drivers were dressed in uniforms, some trucks were carrying the Red Cross flag and the Moscow area flag, and many trucks



carried a holy Orthodox icon behind their windshields. According to the analysed material, at least one film crew was travelling with the convoy in order to film it in various surroundings and lighting conditions.

Close-ups showed such elements as a flag, a holy icon, and the smiling faces of the truck drivers. Close-ups of the interior of the trucks showed packages, baby food, and other 'immediate needs' goods.

The visual angle predominantly used by both *RT* and *Perviy Kanal* were wide shots of a chain of white trucks. The trucks were filmed travelling in an orderly convoy or parked in strict, symmetrical order. The lighting for some of the wide-angle shots were sunny-yellow, similar to the dominant visual effect in the *Perviy Kanal* propaganda movie

Crimea. Returning to the Motherland.<sup>220</sup>

### News programme composition as a tool of strategic political communication

The news about the convoy was featured in the middle of the news programmes. During the analysed period *RT International* and *RT America* opened their newscasts with news of the convoy. It became a leading story on the day the convoy entered Ukraine. For example, on 22 August *RT International* began its broadcast with the convoy story, subtitled 'Humanitarian breakthrough', although at that point Kiev had not given permission for the convoy to cross the border.

220 Крым. Путь на Родину., which can be viewed here with English subtitles: Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t42-71RpRgI>.





On most days both *RT America* and *RT International* gave approximately one-minute to this story, focussing on video materials and graphics. These segments consisted of a short news briefing with the anchor's voice and part of the regional news-package, supported by graphics.

*Perviy Kanal* didn't air a long daily story on the convoy either, but created the sense of following this issue very closely. The dominant issues reported were the humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine, the human side and the political side concerning Russian and Ukrainian authorities in interaction, and information linked to international organisations such as the UN, the Red Cross, and the OSCE.

The following observations gleaned from the newscasts indicate a planned **psychological operation**: the opening stories about Ukraine

contained mostly emotion-based videos and interviews; they contained videos from the YouTube channels of the Donbas and Luhansk pro-Russian militia organisations; they also used unidentified YouTube videos (no account or time specified), some of which contained military propaganda.

Some videos contained violence and were shown without prior warning. Although a blurring effect was used, it was not very accurate. Some videos were presented as amateur videos, but the sound seems to be taken from other sources.

### Setting the agenda

The main issues emphasised by the journalists and in selected segments from interviews with locals were **needs and danger**. The following narratives were highlighted in the stories about the convoy and Ukraine: the **growing humanitarian**



**catastrophe** through human interest stories; the **offensive actions of the Ukrainian military** forces; the **demoralisation of the Ukrainian military forces**; the **dehumanisation of Ukrainian political forces**; and **welcoming Russia** through humanitarian aid stories and stories about refugees.

The offensive military activities of the Ukrainian forces in the areas affected by humanitarian catastrophe were emphasised on both *RT International* and *RT America*. They also reported on the destruction of cities and people going hungry. For example, on 22 August a news package from Luhansk

carried the subtitle: *People in desperate need of aid in a city with no water, electricity*. A bread factory worker was quoted as saying: *'There is no electricity and this also means no water.'*<sup>221</sup> Close-ups of scorched earth were used to show that the factory was no longer functioning, and images of burned wheat fields were used to imply a dramatic hypothetical future. The next quote from the factory worker was: *'I have no idea who is shooting at whom anymore. I've simply stopped being afraid. If they shoot me, I'll take it.'*

221 RT International, 22 August 2014



Moreover, in this analysed period several stories on *Perviy Kanal* were dedicated to **propaganda from the Ukrainian side**. These stories were taken from a cluster of investigative reports that included interviews with experts and examples of misinformation.

An analysis of **the actors portrayed in the news stories** demonstrates the lack of information about the pro-Russian militia forces; they appear only in those segments about ensuring safety. The main actors in the convoy story were Russia, the International Red Cross, Ukraine, and the USA.

*RT America* devoted less airtime to the humanitarian convoy and to the crisis in Ukraine in general. During the period of analysis, news about the conflict in Ukraine was pushed out by the **unrest in Ferguson, ISIS, and Ebola**. *RT America* first broadcast a story about Ukraine appeared on 15 August, reporting on the convoy stopping on the Ukrainian border. It was placed after the segments on Ferguson and torture, 21 minutes into the newscast. The convoy was shown in wide-angle shots of the white trucks on the background of a blue sky, with the subtitle 'Reached the border'. The short report on the convoy was followed by a news package concerning **disinformation on social networks** in relation to the crisis in Ukraine. Social networking sites were criticised as unreliable sources of information and it was also claimed that 'some journalists' cannot be trusted to provide proper evidence. Further in the programme the situation in the Eastern Ukraine was discussed, emphasising that some Western countries had stated their intentions to take **more action against Russia**. Another theme linked to the reports on the convoy and Ukraine was **radicalisation**, here the Ukrainian nationalist

party *Praviy Sektor* (Правый сектор) was specifically mentioned<sup>222</sup>. Radicals from other parts of the world also appeared on *RT's* agenda. Finally, a reoccurring theme in the news reports was the **Ukrainian armed forces**. Here the focus was on the demoralisation of the Ukrainian forces, the lack of unity and clear command, as well as the lack of trust in the Ukrainian forces in the local community in all parts of the country.

**Self-defence forces** went practically unmentioned on *RT*, with the exception of a story where they were helping journalists and demonstrated their readiness to create safe corridors through the conflict zone. On *Perviy Kanal* the self-defence forces received little attention. They were only mentioned as a force helping the locals.

On *Perviy Kanal* news segments about the conflict contained several **religion-based stories**, such as the selection of the new head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. On *RT* religion was occasionally referred to in the background.

For *RT International* **counter-sanctions** were the first news item on 12 August, followed by additional material on Western sanctions. The main emphasis was placed on the economic suffering in Europe and the substitution of imports from Europe and US by products from new markets of Latin America. Locals criticising the EU policy on sanctions were interviewed in the streets of Spain for the 15 August news. Other countries mentioned were Poland, Latvia, Greece, and several others. Sanctions were an important segment for *Perviy Kanal* as well. A significant number of the programmes analysed contained stories on sanctions.

222 RT International, 17 August 2014



*RT International* and *RT America* made a series of stories about **detaining a Russian photographer**. *RT International* placed this story near the beginning of its programme labelling it 'breaking news'. For *RT America* this story was not important enough to air before the segment on Ferguson. *Perviy Kanal* did not make much of this event.

### Conclusions: Used communication tools and re-definition of agenda

A wide tool-kit was used by both news platforms at both verbal and non-verbal levels. The key tool for this particular case study was the use of **emotions**. If in the case of MH-17 the technique of **rationalisation** was dominant, here we can observe a clear transition to irrationality.

On the verbal level, **human-interest stories** were manipulated by linking them to a **hypothetical future rationalised by the voices of experts**. The main heroes in these stories were the 'common people'. News stories were presented as pieces of evidence reflecting the ongoing processes in the conflict area. Another storyline concerned **the self-defence forces** which were not portrayed in a military context, but rather in **the context of humanitarian aid** by means of visual techniques and appeals to the emotions of the viewers through interviews with locals 'in desperate need' of humanitarian aid<sup>223</sup>.

On the non-verbal level highly emotional images were used including tears, suffering children, and their lot during the conflict. *RT* used **subtitles** to stress the idea of humanitarian catastrophe, e.g. 'shell hell', implying that the Ukrainian forces were continuing to shell the affected areas.

Non-verbal, emotional stories were used primarily at the top of the news.

The theme of Ukraine as a failed state was actively presented by reports on: 1) **political** events such as pseudo-parliamentarianism, radical groups growing out of control, oligarchy; 2) lack of order and trust at all levels—**military, political, and societal**; 3) lack of connection between Ukraine and **international organisations** and accusations of Ukraine being in breach of international agreements; 4) the Ukrainian government acting irresponsibly by exposing its people to **economic and humanitarian suffering by waging a war against its own people**. These topics were actualised and **repeated** in most of the news programs on *Perviy Kanal* during the period analysed.

## 5.3.2. RE-DEFINITION OF EURO-ATLANTIC VALUES

**The West** is only passingly mentioned in the story about humanitarian aid. The main 'glue' connecting the convoy story with the West is **support for the Ukrainian state**. However, there is an indirect connection between the values expressed in Ukraine and the values expressed in Western countries that can be detected in the stories about a homosexual Ukrainian politician or the dehumanisation of Ukrainian forces supported, or even insured, by the West.

As previously discussed, these narratives were constructed at the level of emotions. The key values under discussion are moral values, including human rights, religion, and tolerance. Ukraine was portrayed as a failed

state from the political dimension. Sanctions were the main theme for the economic dimension. The international dimension was mainly addressed through in/out groupings of the countries and international organisations engaging in various issues.

### The political dimension

In general, the issues addressed to Russian-speaking and English-speaking international audiences are different, the same as it was in the case of MH-17. The analysis of the core values of democracy did not demonstrate redefinition of the Western values in a direct way, but rather the Western responsibility for the processes taking place 'under the cover of democratisation'.

First, the analysis of the political dimension will focus on the tools used to redefine the role of the state at the social, political, and military levels; second, we will analyse news coverage of the Ukrainian parliament; and finally, given the *RT*'s strategic political communication concerning this particular question, media freedom will be examined separately.

#### Ukraine as a failed state

As mentioned above, a number of narratives were devised and broadcast as 'evidence' of Ukraine's failure to act as a state; not fulfilling its social, economic, and political responsibilities towards its people. Moreover, the Ukrainian government does not even control its military forces, and the citizens in Eastern Ukraine were abandoned and forgotten.

This message was promoted on *RT* and even more so on *Perviy Kanal*. How was this done in terms of manipulative techniques?

**DISORGANISATION VS. ORDER:** managing the order of news topics to compare Ukraine unfavourably to Russia. **AGENDA-SETTING:** selecting negative topics, **ignoring true plurality** and creating a false or **quasi-plurality** by cutting quotes from Ukrainian channels. Using the **VOICE OF THE COMMON MAN** as evidence, discrediting the Ukrainian side and/or **being supportive to Russian authorities**. For example, one *RT* visual report shows text stating that 'the people have nothing to eat' while inter-sound of bombing and on pictures a market is shown (editing used at 6:55, on *RT International*, 22 August). And here is also the assessment of locals on Ukrainian authorities:

[TRANSLATION] "This crazy fool of ours says that all Russia is sending is a fig leaf. How come? 280 trucks are on their way, and he calls it a 'fig leaf'?"<sup>224</sup>

[TRANSLATION] "I am in favour of Poroshenko and his officers being recognised as war criminals."<sup>225</sup>

(*Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 20 August 2014*)

*Perviy Kanal* showed Ukrainians engaged in anti-Kiev activism, e.g. the story of a mother trying to persuade President Poroshenko to move forward on an investigation about the death of her daughter.

**The rule of law was portrayed as either entirely lacking or dominated by criminals.** This message was presented together with news about radical Right Sector activists.

224 In Russian: "Этот дурак наш долбанутый говорит, что все что Россия присылает – это фиговый листочек. Как это так? Двести восемьдесят фуры идет, а этот говорит «фиговый листочек»?"

225 In Russian: "Я за то, чтобы власть Порошенко и его приставы были признаны военными преступниками."

**Statistics** concerning **casualties** and **refugees** were used on both *RT* and *Perviy Kanal* by news anchors, correspondents, locals, and authorities. Numbers were provided to show losses sustained by the Ukrainian military forces and civilians. *RT* used graphics to show a comparison to the total number of inhabitants in Donetsk<sup>226</sup>. Statistics about refugees were used to demonstrate the failure of Ukraine as a state on highly **emotional level**, while other news stories showed gratitude to the supportive Russians.

The **offensive nature of the Ukrainian armed forces** was emphasised on *RT* and *Perviy Kanal* through the words of correspondents, captions, and locals providing testimonial evidence. For example, on August 12, at the 7th minute of the news programme block on Ukraine, the caption ‘Endgame assault’ appeared; another caption used by *RT* was ‘Shell hell’. The Ukrainian forces were quoted as saying that this is ‘the final stage of clearing Donetsk by bombing’. The video showed dead bodies in the streets, destroyed buildings, tears and children<sup>227</sup>. In another example the correspondent says: ‘Kiev calls this a large-scale anti-terrorism operation. Anti-government fighters in the east said they were trying to liberate the region from occupiers. Yet, it is the civilians who are paying the highest price.’<sup>228</sup> In another video an old local woman says through tears: ‘Dear God, when is this going to end? Why are people being killed?’<sup>229</sup>.

Coverage of the Ukrainian armed forces on *Perviy Kanal* should be regarded as a **psychological operation**. It consists of the following messages: Ukrainian commanders are abandoning their soldiers, detained Ukrainian soldiers are well-treated and quickly exchanged, the soldiers’ mothers and relatives are against their sons serving in the Ukrainian armed forces, Ukrainian soldiers are not ready to kill to fulfil the orders of their commanders. Supporting material included possibly faked **interviews with soldiers**, stories about soldiers’ mothers, babies without fathers, etc., which employed **RATIONALISATION, EMOTIONS, and HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE** techniques, the emotional opinions of locals, the cowardice of Ukrainian commanders based on evidence from locals and soldiers, and the **supportive attitude of pro-Russian militia forces** toward Ukrainian soldiers in captivity in a story of successful captive release. There was also a storyline suggesting that Ukrainian armed forces were breaking international law by using prohibited munitions was visualised on-screen together with expert commentary. The question about **munitions used by Kiev** was answered on *RT* with the subtitle ‘suspected incendiary bombing’.

*RT* focused on other narratives to remind their viewers about **‘American military sins’**. The crimes of the US military were a popular topic on *RT International*, supported by statistical data on sexual assaults, torture, and so on<sup>230</sup>. In general, Ukraine was the main item on the agenda for *Perviy Kanal*. For *RT International* and *RT America* Ferguson unrest was at the top of the agenda.

226 RT International, 15 August 2014

227 RT International, 15 August 2014

228 RT International, 14 August 2014

229 RT International, 15 August 2014

230 RT International, 14 August 2014

### **Parliamentarian angle: electoral, liberal, and social chaos in Ukraine**

Focussing on certain political values helped communicate the message that the political system of Ukraine is out of control and unduly influenced by external forces from the West. The electoral process and the legitimacy of Ukrainian elite was mainly addressed on *Perviy Kanal*. The following themes were actualised: a lack of parliamentarian culture, offensive processes on liberal opposition, and the lack of social responsibility on the part of the parliamentarians. The main concern was out-of-control radicalism, oligarchs in power, and lack of social responsibility and rule of law. The Parliament was portrayed as unable to solve problems and creating new ones due to its lack of professionalism.

An emphasis on the dramatic situation in eastern Ukraine was used to portray the Ukrainian Parliament not fulfilling its responsibilities towards the people. This was done through airing negative stories about the Ukrainian armed forces, quoting experts from Kiev drawing a dramatic hypothetical future legitimating the Russian assessment of the situation, and by showing pseudo-amateur videos about criminals and oligarchs coming to power.

The next issue to be addressed under this cluster of values is the **lack of parliamentary culture in Ukraine**, not only in terms of verbal culture; both platforms showed the infamous fist fights in the Ukrainian Parliament. *RT international* broadcast the story on 14 August, and a very similar video was shown later on *Perviy Kanal*, but the quality was made less 'professional', reminiscent of an amateur video. On *Perviy Kanal* the sense of never-ending fights was augmented by showing other fist fights in Rada, possibly taken from the news archives without a specific date.

### **Media freedom: Media literacy against Ukraine and a missing photograph**

The issues actualised for Russian-speaking and English-speaking audiences differed. In short, *RT* emphasised the **lack of professionalism of the Western media**, e.g. spreading disinformation about a parallel military convoy, and *Perviy Kanal* created several full-length news packages on **Ukrainian propaganda**, including one in a weekly programme. The last issue could be regarded as part of a psychological operation to provoke distrust in Ukrainian information sources.

A common theme for both platforms was the missing photographer. *RT* paid more attention to this topic by popularising it with Internet hashtags.

### **Convoy in the Western media and a parallel military convoy**

If *Perviy Kanal* was paid little attention to the information in the Western media, then for *RT* it was a key issue. On 13 August a short story on the convoy subtitled 'Russian convoy puts Ukraine in a difficult position' was followed by a segment on the reaction of the international media. The anchor said: 'If the cargo is detained, then the Ukrainian authorities will be accused of not caring for the local people. The Wall Street Journal is writing about it.' These stories gave the sense of Kiev and the West being unsupportive to the people in need.

On 15 August a *Perviy Kanal* correspondent reported on the huge interest of the international media in the humanitarian aid convoy.



In the same program there was a quote from *The Times*:

[TRANSLATION] “The Western countries are ignoring calls for help from the inhabitants of south-eastern Ukraine.”<sup>231</sup>

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 15 August 2014)*

The corresponded comments that:

[TRANSLATION] “Not long ago leading European media outlets wrote almost nothing about the tragedy of the civilians in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions. But it becomes impossible to ignore the deaths of thousands of people, destroyed cities, and the endless flow of refugees.”<sup>232</sup>

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 15 August 2014)*

This statement was supported by a video from the conflict zone.

The same technique was used to illustrate an article from *The Independent*:

[TRANSLATION] “If those in London, Brussels, and Washington followed the developments in Luhansk or Donetsk regions as energetically as they were following the crisis in the Middle East, then neither hot nor cold confrontations with Russia would be happening now.”<sup>233</sup>

231 In Russian: “Западные страны игнорируют призывы жителей юго-востока Украины.”

232 In Russian: “Еще недавно ведущие европейские СМИ почти ничего не писали о трагедии мирного населения в Луганской и Донецкой областях. Но игнорировать гибель тысяч людей, разрушение городов и бесконечных колонн беженцев уже невозможно.”

233 In Russian: “Если бы в Лондоне, Брюсселе, Вашингтоне так энергично следили бы за событиями в Луганской и Донецкой областях как они следили, скажем, за кризисом на Ближнем Востоке, то ни холодного, ни горячего противостояния с Россией сейчас бы не было.”

The correspondent concluded that there was a problem with appropriate coverage of this topic in the Western media because the information was being filtered in Kiev, which, unlike Russia, was a party to the conflict.

### Ukrainian propaganda

*Perviy Kanal* examined the presence and tools of Ukrainian and Western anti-Russian propaganda. This was done primarily through the use of the **VOICE OF AUTHORITY**. Putin reminded viewers about the role of the Western media in the information war:

[TRANSLATION] “The Ukrainian and Western media, especially in the US and the EU, have activated the information environment.”<sup>234</sup>

*(Voskresnoye Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 17 August 2014)*

During the same program, an 11-minute news package was dedicated to the ways propaganda is employed. **EXPERTS** commenting on a case study were used to **RATIONALIZE** blame for propaganda. The correspondent said:

[TRANSLATION] “They want to prevent viewers from applying critical thinking at all costs. They use strange video shots to influence the viewers emotionally...”<sup>235</sup>

*(Voskresnoye Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 17 August 2014)*

234 In Russian: “Украинские и западные средства массовой информации, особенно США, стран Евросоюза, активизируют информационное пространство.”

235 In Russian: “У зрителей любой ценой хотят отучить способность критически воспринимать информацию. Странными кадрами воздействуя на эмоции.”



The opinion of an expert from V. Lomonosov's Moscow State University (MSU):

[TRANSLATION] “They show a picture that conveys not only some meaning, but also particular values packed into the visual. That is why the influence of TV is so powerful – it is influencing not only the mind, but also the subconscious.”<sup>236</sup>

*(Voskresnoye Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 17 August 2014)*

Another expert, the Dean of the same University, continues within the same news report:

[TRANSLATION] “They are applying the same techniques as before – this is part of the manipulation and influencing of Ukrainian society. It contains specific messages: threats from neighbours, primarily Russia. In this sense it is an excitement to nationalism and the transfer of relationship management from the rational to the emotional level. Looking for an enemy, finding it, localising it, naming it, thus creating a ‘war of civilisations’ with this enemy.”<sup>237</sup>

236 In Russian: “...дают картинку, это не только смыслы, это некие ценности, упакованные в виде картинки, и, собственно, потому воздействие телевидения такое сильное, что оно воздействует даже не сколько на уровне головы, сколько на уровне подсознание.”

237 In Russian: “Они отработывают те технологии, которые уже запущены, это просто часть тех технологий манипулирования и воздействия, с одной стороны воздействия на население и общество украинское, с другой стороны – это такие вполне конкретные меседжи, угрозы к соседям, в первую очередь к России. В этом смысле разжигание вот такого национализма, это и есть перевод наших отношений из рационального в эмоциональный уровень. Поиск врага, нахождение, его локализация, называние. И таким образом якобы происходит такая цивилизованная борьба с этим врагом.”

*(Voskresnoye Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 17 August 2014)*

Another voice of expertise, an author named Shamir, says:

[TRANSLATION] “Over the course of several years the media has been turned into an instrument of mass manipulation. Waging war by proxy – bloody chaos in Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, and the civil war in Syria, and the collapse of the former Yugoslavia – all of that speaks for itself... Our friends and loved ones in Ukraine, our relatives were also deceived, brought closer to the other side – this is something that was created externally and then blown out of proportion. One of their main goals is to set the people of Ukraine on Russia. A Russia, which has become unyielding, powerful, and rich.”<sup>238</sup>

*(Voskresnoye Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 17 August 2014)*

The program provides advice on how to avoid becoming a victim of information warfare. The Dean of MSU goes on to say:

[TRANSLATION] “...in this case the advisors are not taking into account the ancient ties that exist between Russia and Ukraine. They are not taking into account many of our common moments in history and the particularities of our mentality.

238 In Russian: “За несколько лет медиа превратились в средства массовой манипуляции, вести войну чужими руками, кровавый хаос в Ираке, Ливии, Афганистане, гражданская война в Сирии, ранее – развал Югославии. Говорят сами за себя... Наши друзья и близкие на Украине, родные, тоже были таким образом введены в заблуждение, уведены в другую сторону, это вещь, которая создается извне и раздувается, которая приводится. И одна из ее главных целей – это натравить население Украины на Россию. Россию, которая стала непокорной, стала сильной, стала богатой.”

It is impossible to repeat here what happened in Tahrir Square, or other revolutions of that sort... In this case the lack of consideration of the ancient ties between Russia and Ukraine demonstrates the absurdity of some or the majority of those stimuli, which are thrown at the public.”<sup>239</sup>

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 17 August 2014)*

The reporter continues the topic by saying:

[TRANSLATION] “All of this has a more powerful impact than the most sophisticated techniques they use to attempt to force Ukrainians and Russians into conflict with each other – in essence, into a conflict against their own selves.”<sup>240</sup>

*(Voskresnoye Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 17 August 2014)*

To illustrate the matter further, a short dialogue from the conflict area was aired during the news on 20 August:

[TRANSLATION] “Which of Kiev’s channels are you watching? - No, I don’t watch, it is pure disinformation.”<sup>241</sup>

239 In Russian: “... советчики в данном случае не учитывают тех давних связей, которые есть между Россией и Украиной. Они не учитывают многих наших исторических моментов. И не учитывают особенности менталитета. У нас же невозможно повторить то, что было на площади Тахир, или там другие были соответствующие революции... В данном случае недочет вот этих давних связей между Россией и Украиной показывает абсурдность некоторых простых, или большей части тех стимулов, просто которые подбрасываются.”

240 In Russian: “Все это работает сильнее самых изощренных технологий, с помощью которых хотят столкнуть украинцев и русских, по сути дела столкнуть нас с самими же собой.”

241 In Russian: “А ты какие киевские каналы смотришь? - Нет, не смотрю, это дезинформация полнейшая.”

## Stenin’s case: #freeandrew

RT created a story on Russian photojournalist Andrey Stenin, who went missing in eastern Ukraine at the beginning of August. Multi-media story telling techniques were applied by showing a flash mob and employing hashtags. *SputnikNews*, another Russian government-controlled media outlet targeting the international audience, was also involved in the promotion<sup>242</sup>.

It is worth noting that the rally was held by an anti-fascist organisation. This corresponds to the official Russian narrative that the *Euromaidan* movement and the new government in Kiev are fascists. The rally took place in Serbia, a country that has a special relationship with Russia.

This story of the missing photographer was supported by pre- and post- visualisations on RT, as well as an appeal to the international community. The core of the visualisation consisted of photographs taken by Stenin or of Stenin himself. The key image was of Stenin with a half-naked toddler. *Perviy Kanal* also used this picture, but the toddler was cut out.

The reporting on RT and *Perviy Kanal* portrayed the Ukrainian government as irresponsible and deceptive, the message being that it is impossible to trust them. However the Russian authorities were shown as having a high level of involvement through the following quote:

[TRANSLATION] “Lavrov immediately demanded clarification of the fate of the journalist...”<sup>243</sup>

*(Perviy Kanal, 14 August 2014)*

242 <https://twitter.com/SputnikInt/status/502840172531027969>

243 In Russian: “Лавров немедленно потребовал прояснить судьбу...”

## The Economic Dimension

The following economic issues are addressed in this subsection—sanctions against Russia in Ukraine, the Russian counter-sanctions, negative economic prospects for Kiev, and oligarchs ruling Ukraine.

### Ukrainian sanctions against Russia

On 13 August the *Perviy Kanal* reported on the Ukrainian sanctions against Russia, interpreting them as a violation of democratic principles and business rights. Journalists and experts were engaged in discussion:

[TRANSLATION] “...who forced the pro-European government to create such a piece of legislation contradicting the core values of democracy? Ukrainian political circles are trying to respond to this question. Expert: I think that there is one goal – since the current power in Ukraine is weak, and they cannot solve their tasks in a completely legal way, they just tighten the screws.”<sup>244</sup>

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 13 August 2014)*

Another expert in the same report reinforced the narrative saying ‘it is a coming dictatorship’<sup>245</sup>.

The main point conveyed through the news reports was that the sanctions would work against Ukrainians, not Russians. The main appeals were made to the energy sector, applying the technique of

244 In Russian: “...что подтолкнуло про-европейский кабинет министров к созданию такого, нарушающего основные демократические ценности, законопроекта, вопрос, на который сейчас пытаются ответить в политических кругах Украины. Эксперт: я думаю, что цель одна - поскольку реальная власть слаба, поскольку она не может абсолютно законным путем решать свои задачи, оставляют для себя единственный путь – закручивать гайки.”

245 Perviy Kanal, Vremya, 13 August 2014

**RATIONALISATION** through the **OPINIONS OF EXPERTS**—businessmen and politicians. For example, a Ukrainian expert asked:

[TRANSLATION] “...what can they replace it with? Only with their mental energy, generated from hate towards Russia.”<sup>246</sup>

*(Voskresnoye Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 18 August 2014)*

### Counter sanctions: undermining the Western world.

A large number of stories on *Perviy Kanal* were devoted to the Russian food embargo (counter-sanctions). In the correspondent’s words, supported by **EXPERT VOICES**, the ‘war of sanctions’ would open new markets for Russian producers in Russia and abroad. Importantly, the **US was portrayed initiating the sanctions against Russia (EXPERT VOICES)**. Graphs were used to show that the US would not lose much from the counter sanctions, but the EU would. The campaign distributing apples in Poland was called ‘hysteria on an international scale’<sup>247</sup>. The news reporters attempted to prove that the **economic situation in the US is at the core of the conflict in Ukraine**, making the war profitable for the US. Moreover, facilitating the conflict was portrayed as **the only way the US could survive financially**. Russian Member of Parliament and leader of the Communist Party, G. Zyuganov said:

[TRANSLATION] “Today the US has a huge debt – 15 trillion USD. It is almost impossible to manage without getting involved in war or seizing new markets. Therefore, Americans

246 In Russian: “...чем заменят? Ну, разве что психической энергией ненависти к России.”

247 Perviy Kanal, 17 August 2014

have set a goal of conquering the European market at any cost, in order to create a rift between Russia and Europe. The situation in Ukraine is very convenient for that. Commanders with their policies and military leaders are carrying out special operations in the southeast, recklessly bombing their own cities to contribute to this rift.”<sup>248</sup>

*(Perviy Kanal, Voskresnoye Vremya, 17 August 2014)*

During Zyuganov’s intervention, a close-up of Putin was shown, followed by a long-shot at the mention of the US debt and before the mention of war.

*Perviy Kanal* also attempted to discredit the impact of the Western sanctions by using various statistics and public opinion surveys to show that this action was pointless. *Perviy Kanal* mentioned twice that 92% of inhabitants of Russia asserted that they did not feel the influence of sanctions. Consumer rights are under control: ‘As we ate, we are eating now.’<sup>249</sup> Changes in the produce prices were addressed; some prices went down and price monitoring increased:

[TRANSLATION] “If the prices of oysters will increase tenfold, we will endure this unpleasantry. We need to ensure that the prices on those goods, which

248 In Russian: “Соединенные штаты Америки сегодня имеют колоссальный долг, 15 триллионов долларов США, его переварить или пережить хотя бы без средней руки войны или захвата чужих рынков практически невозможно. Поэтому поставили американцы задачу любой ценой захватить европейский рынок для того чтобы прокопать ров между Россией и Европой, очень удобна ситуация на Украине. Есть начальники, их политики, их военные командовали спецоперацией на Юго-Востоке, бесшабашно бомбят свои собственные города, прокапывая этот ров.”

249 In Russian: “Как ели так и едим”

are widely used by the population of the Russian Federation, do not rise.”<sup>250</sup>

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 17 August 2014)*

## The Economy in Kiev

First, a negative perspective was drawn by interviewing locals—the **RATIONALIZATION** technique. Second, a **NEGATIVE HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE** was created, one of the main techniques applied, through appeals to fear. For example, locals were recorded saying ‘we are fu\*\*ed’<sup>251</sup>.

The situation in eastern Ukraine was described as a **humanitarian catastrophe** due to the Kievan government’s lack of responsibility, but although Russia was is facing economic difficulties due to the sanctions, it was nevertheless ready to provide humanitarian aid to locals and refugees.

## Moral dimension

*Perviy Kanal* appealed to moral values more than the *RT*. The background information to the humanitarian convoy story focussed on moral values such as solidarity and Christianity, addressing different societal groups, while the Ukrainian side was dehumanised.

## Solidarity

Solidarity is mainly addressed through demonstrating the firm Russian solidarity (directly) and the lack of Western solidarity (indirectly) by providing the voice of

250 In Russian: “Если цены на устрицу вырастут в десять раз, то неприятность эту мы переживем, для нас нужно чтобы не выросли те товары, которые потребуются населению Российской Федерации.”

251 In Russian: “а вообще капец”, *Vremya, Perviy Kanal*, 19 August 2014.



expertise and evidence. The news reports stated that the only helping side for the people in need is Russia. Many locals were shown asking for help or being thankful for receiving help (the **COMMON MAN** technique). A separatist authority said that ‘Russian aid was as necessary as oxygen’ for the local people. This message was repeated twice—once on a weekday and once during the Sunday programme. (*Perviy Kanal*, 17 August) Ordinary people are portrayed as highly supportive of Russia’s actions. For example, drivers are not worried about the traffic jam that the humanitarian aid trucks are creating. One truck driver is quoted as saying that ‘we are being morally supported’<sup>252</sup>.

The next aspect of solidarity is the attitude towards refugees. Different numbers reflecting the amount of refugees is given. On 14 August *Perviy Kanal* gave an estimate of 733,000 people. The TV anchor said that locals accommodated the majority of refugees and approximately 500 people were located in a tent-city in Rostov, Russia. Numbers were provided showing that 66 regions of Russia were receiving refugee, and placing them was highlighted as a top priority for the state<sup>253</sup>.

The Chairman of the President’s Council for Human Rights of the Russian Federation said:

[TRANSLATION] “We cannot divide the responsibilities of state and society; it is our common task, defined not only by our morality, because helping those in need is the moral obligation of every normal human being, but also by the

scale of the catastrophe.”<sup>254</sup>

(*Vremya, Perviy Kanal*, 14 August 2014)

The last words of this quote are illustrated with a close-up of an article with the title: ‘Common Grief’. This issue was mainly covered through human-interest stories, without any analysis of the economic impact. Human-interest stories are visualized in an emotional manner—an interview with a woman from Saratov holding a baby in her hands and later scenes of the baby playing with a kitten; another protagonist in the same story sits at a table displaying a religious icon, although a table is an unusual place for displaying icons. Later, local people are quoted expressing words of appreciation for Russia:

[TRANSLATION] “Thank you, Russia, for this support. We thank the nation that is supporting us.”<sup>255</sup>

It is important to note that both ordinary people and also government organisations provided assistance. A story was aired on 12 and 13 August concerning the assistance provided by the special units of the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations to help refugees with their baggage.

## Religion and the Church

The case study concerning the humanitarian convoy is the only one that places a strong emphasis on religion. The topic of religion is

252 In Russian: “морально нас поддерживают”, (*Perviy Kanal, Vremya*, 12 August 2014)

253 *Perviy Kanal*, 14 August 2014

254 In Russian: “Мы не можем разделять ответственность, которая лежит на государстве и на гражданском обществе. Это наша общая задача, это определяется не только нашей моралью, потому, что помочь тому, кто нуждается в помощи – это моральный долг каждого нормального человека, это определяется еще масштабами беды.”

255 In Russian: “Спасибо России за эту поддержку, спасибо народу, который нас поддерживает.”



covered in the stories directly, in the reports on the humanitarian convoy and also in the background stories about Ukraine.

*Perviy Kanal* exhibited the greatest use of religious symbols appealing to holiness. On RT references to religion could be found on both the verbal and non-verbal levels, e.g. in captions like *Shell Hell*, through mentioning God in the interviews with locals, and by showing sacred religious items. Both channels used some of the same video footage, e.g. one showing a church on fire as the last shot before the showing the convoy on the Russian-Ukrainian boarder<sup>256</sup>. On *Perviy Kanal* the same picture was shown few days earlier.

Another commonly shown image was that of an icon under the front window of an aid truck. *Perviy Kanal* even once showed two identical holy icons under one window<sup>257</sup>. It is unusual to place two identical pictures of a saint next to each other.

*Perviy Kanal* aired the following news stories, linking them indirectly to the humanitarian convoy—a story about the new Ukrainian Orthodox Patriarch and the problems in the church including the reaction of Russian Patriarch Kiril, as well as the violence of radicals during a religious service in Ukraine. These stories portrayed conflict between the orthodox churches of Russia and Ukraine.

In addition *Perviy Kanal* reported a story filmed by several cameras including that of a journalist who provided the video for [www.borova.org](http://www.borova.org), in which the protagonists were radical activists who attacked a Russian orthodox priest. The journalist claimed that such scenes had become a common practice

in Ukraine, since around 60 Russian orthodox priests had experienced similar abuse. The visualisation surrounding this news package contained churches burning as a result of shelling by the Ukrainian armed forces<sup>258</sup>. In the videos of the burning churches no dates or places were mentioned.

Religious icons were shown displayed in the new homes of the refugees. For example in the aforementioned video from 14 August, where an icon was shown placed on the table, one could spot cards and other table games under the same table.

One piece shown on *Perviy Kanal* consisted of an amateur interview, as if taken from the Internet, without showing the faces of the interviewees, giving any reference to place or date, or providing a link where it might be found online. The video stated that the Ukrainian side was not following the religious calendar during this conflict. The correspondent said:

[TRANSLATION] “Yesterday was the Transfiguration of Jesus [Apple Spas], but in residential districts shots were being fired no matter what. Today is Apple Spas but they are shooting on this festive day.”<sup>259</sup>

(*Vremya, Perviy Kanal*, 20 August 2014)

## Tolerance

On *Perviy Kanal* intolerance of homosexual people was expressed in the context of Ukrainian political power. In the background of the report on the humanitarian aid convoy, a story on the Ukrainian Parliament

256 Newscast at 4:53, RT International. 21 August 2014

257 *Vremya, Perviy Kanal*, 12 August 2014

258 *Vremya, Perviy Kanal*, 16 August 2014

259 In Russian: “Накануне был яблочный спас, но обстрели жилых кварталов продолжались несмотря ни на что. Сегодня же яблочный спас – они в праздники стреляют.”

contained an analysis of the Members of Parliament. A correspondent and an expert discussed the sexual identity of one politician. The former TV anchor of *Perviy Kanal*, Mr. Dorenko, was the expert. He said:

[TRANSLATION] “This is the game where Ljashko was needed, half-minded with an undoubtedly complicated reputation, ambiguous, at the same time an ardent [spending several seconds searching for the word] *muzhelozhec* [bugger], an inspired *muzhelozhec*.”<sup>260</sup>

(*Voskresnoye Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 17 August*).

*Muzhelozhestvo* was an offence under the Criminal Law during the Soviet Era, when homosexuals were persecuted and treated as criminals. *RT* did not report on this and did not emphasise Russia’s attitude on this issue.

### The Dehumanisation of Ukraine and the West—Kiev and Washington

For *RT* the main issue during the analysed period was not Ukraine, but Ferguson.

However, the de-moralisation of the Ukrainian side was a significant enough theme on *RT*. It was depicted through the words and emotions of journalists, the use of stand-ups, interviews with locals, and selected videos. Journalists made emotional statements rife with descriptors and non-verbal communication, and then used statistics and references to the OSCE to rationalise them.

The main narratives used by *RT* were on the use of prohibited weapons and the lack of security for civilians. For example, on 15 August *RT* reported on Kiev’s strategy – to separate off parts of Eastern Ukraine. This information was provided without any links to quotes or naming sources. ‘It makes the situation really difficult from the humanitarian point of view’, said the correspondent<sup>261</sup>. He pointed out that as a result, *RT* has not been able to cover the recent situation, because it has become too dangerous.

How was the US linked to a ‘dehumanised Kiev’? On 15 August *RT* depicted the US State Department’s reaction through commentary paired with captions ‘Dozens killed in army bombing’ and ‘We are generally supportive of Kiev’s actions.’ However, it is also noted that Washington tried to influence the situation to avoid civilian deaths<sup>262</sup>.

The methods of depicting the offensive stance of Kiev:

- **Civilian targets.** Stand-up on cemetery after attacks. A journalist reports on a house being destroyed near a **school**. He says: ‘Safety is not the only thing missing in Luhansk’, referring to the lack of clean water<sup>263</sup>.
- **Stating the need for practically everything.** The news report emphasized that although locals are not leaving, the authorities are not providing enough humanitarian aid<sup>264</sup>.

260 In Russian: “Вот эта вот игра, где нужен был Ляшко, полоумный, с безусловной очень сложной репутацией, двусмысленной, тем не менее яростный мужеложец, вдохновенный мужеложец.”

261 RT International, 15 August 2014

262 6:05, RT International, 2014

263 RT International, 14 August, 2014

264 RT International, 14 August, 2014



- **Aggressive Kiev versus peaceful Russia.** Putin is shown in Crimea giving a speech while the *RT* correspondent comments that Russian foreign policy is peaceful and Russia will not become a fortress or break ties with its partners, but should not stand by and let others patronise<sup>265</sup>.

## The International Dimension

### International agreements

Before the humanitarian aid convoy entered Ukraine, *RT* and *Perviy Kanal* reported on the convoy as an activity demonstrating Russia's readiness to negotiate with the Ukrainian authorities and provide aid to those in need. This message was supported by quotes from the Russian and Ukrainian authorities. Pro-Russian militia forces were also shown as willing to ensure the safety of the convoy and the civilians.

After the first humanitarian aid convoy crossed the border, the storyline changed and became more aggressive, accusing the Ukrainian side of changing the rules, wanting to delay the delivery of aid, sabotaging the convoy, violating international law, and being unwilling to trust international organisations such as the Red Cross. In addition, the Ukrainians were accused of intensifying military activity near the destination of the convoy. On 16 August *RT* used a caption for its news report stating: 'Russia said Kiev purposely stalling the aid convoy under flimsy pretence.' *RT* also questioned whether Ukrainian side was ready to ensure the security of the convoy on its territory<sup>266</sup>.

*Perviy Kanal* used international experts to discuss the international dimension of the humanitarian aid convoy.

265 RT International, 14 August, 2014

266 RT, 17 August 2014





5.

The opinion of American author and journalist Paul Craig Roberts was used following the news story on convoy:

[TRANSLATION] “Resistance from the Washington and its vassals and marionettes in Europe and Kyiv against the delivery of humanitarian aid for south-eastern Ukraine can be explained as a desperate effort by the West not to keep the world from understanding that it is Washington and its marionettes killing peaceful civilians, destroying houses, and other infrastructure in the former Russian territories.”<sup>267</sup>

*(Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 14 August)*

### **Western attitudes toward international agreements: background news**

*Perviy Kanal* reported that although some international agreements are not in the interests of Russia, Russia complies with them. The US, however, was presented as a country that breaks international law. The missile defence system was used as the key illustration<sup>268</sup>.

### **Violation of International law**

On 17 August 2014, *RT International* reported that the Ukrainian armed forces were using ballistic missiles in the conflict. Close ups and graphics of Soviet Era weapons were shown under the heading ‘Report: Ukrainian military fired ballistic missiles at Luhansk’.

267 In Russian: “Соппротивление предоставлению гуманитарной помощи юго-востоку Украины со стороны Вашингтона и его вассалов в Евросоюзе, вашингтонских марионеток в Киеве объясняется отчаянными попытками Запада не допустить того, чтобы мир понял, что именно Вашингтон и его марионетки убивают мирных граждан, уничтожают дома и другую инфраструктуру на бывших российских территориях.”

268 Voskresnoye Vremya, Perviy Kanal, August 17 2014

British commentator Charles Shoebridge was used as an expert on *RT International*. The same stories using almost the same visual material appeared on *Perviy Kanal* as well, but a local expert was used instead of international to legitimize the accusation.

### **International organisations as significant actors**

The International Red Cross was the organisation most frequently mentioned in the context of the first humanitarian aid convoy, affirming the legitimacy of the entire affair. Among others were the OSCE, the UN, NATO, and even the European Court on Human Rights. In general, it was NATO and the ECHR that were criticized for the roles they played.

The first humanitarian aid convoy was legitimized by showing the symbols of the International Red Cross and their representatives, as well as by mentioning this organization in interviews with authorities and experts. Naming the Red Cross seemed to legitimize the entry of the convoy into the Ukrainian territory.

### **NATO**

*RT* and *Perviy Kanal* both presented NATO as incompetent source of information and producer of disinformation. An *RT* correspondent said: ‘We also heard the NATO chief saying that the alliance had observed a Russian incursion into Ukraine [...] So far none of this these claims have been supported by any solid evidence.’<sup>269</sup>

On 23 August a person presented as a military analyst commented that if Russia really had perpetrated a military invasion, then NATO must present proof. A second expert repeated the same idea and the opinion of a third expert was broadcast

269 RT America, 15 August 2014



with the caption ‘Invading Ukraine would be suicidal for Russia’.

If NATO was portrayed as an unsuitable source on *RT*, then on *Perviy Kanal* NATO was framed as a threat. The **VOICE OF AUTHORITY** used to legitimate this version was President Putin, with other state authorities creating the background for his speech in Crimea. From the point of view of filming technique, Putin was shown focusing his gaze on the TV camera, the viewers, instead of on the Ministers present<sup>270</sup>.

### The European Court of Human Rights

According to *Perviy Kanal*, the European Court of Human Rights is politicised and biased. The ECHR was mentioned during a news story regarding Putin’s visit to Crimea, shown on 17 August. Chairman of the Russian [Duma](#) Committee on Family, Women and Children’s Affairs Yelena Mizulina said:

[TRANSLATION] “It is fair to say that today the European Court of Human Rights is not a symbol of justice. It has become an instrument of political pressure on Russia. Moreover, through its decisions, the court has become a channel of interference in Russia’s internal affairs.”<sup>271</sup>

*(Voskresnoye Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 17 August 2014)*

Putin agreed with this evaluation of EHRC, and said:

[TRANSLATION] “Many of the decisions it makes are politicised and far from the original purpose of this court. It does not regulate legal relationships or protect rights. It merely fulfils some kind of a political function.”<sup>272</sup>

*(Voskresnoye Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 17 August 2014)*

### The European Union

The EU was mentioned mostly in the context of sanctions, and as blindly supporting the official Kiev version of events. The EU was described as not understanding the situation in Ukraine. Talks in Brussels on the humanitarian situation were presented with the following words of a journalist:

[TRANSLATION] “Only Kiev still does not see a humanitarian catastrophe, despite the fact that some European politicians have started using this expression in their comments on the subject of Ukraine, when the foreign ministers discussed the situation in Brussels.”<sup>273</sup>

*(Voskresnoye Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 17 August 2014)*

The reporters emphasised a potential rift in Europe regarding the evaluation of the situation in Ukraine.

270 Voskresnoye Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 17 August 2014

271 In Russian: “Следует честно признать, что сегодня Европейский суд по правам человека не является символом справедливости, он превратился в превентивное орудие политического давления на Россию, более того, это канал вмешательства во внутренние дела России через судебные решения.”

272 In Russian: “Он многие решения принимает очень политизированные и далекие от того, для чего он создавался, он не регулирует правовые отношения, и не защищает никакие права, просто исполняет какую-то политическую функцию.”

273 In Russian: “Только Киев до сих пор не видит гуманитарной катастрофы, хотя даже Европейские политики начали произносить это словосочетание в своих комментариях на тему Украины, о ней в Брюсселе говорили главы внешнеполитических ведомств.”

## The OSCE

The OSCE was referenced on both platforms in multiple stories—in connection with ensuring safety for the humanitarian convoy, the humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine, and in associated background stories, such as the exchange of captured soldiers<sup>274</sup>. Overall, the OSCE is treated as an authority legitimising Russian action, as in the story rebuking the claim that the humanitarian convoy was actually a military convoy<sup>275</sup>.

## The UN

Both *RT* and *Perviy Kanal* referred to the UN to legitimize the assessment of the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, critical of the government, and to provide statistics of the dead and injured.

## Summary

This chapter examines the communication practices used in covering the issue of the first humanitarian aid convoy from Russia to Eastern Ukraine and the background created around this issue. This event was pre-planned and fully controlled, showing cooperation between the two platforms and the use of different techniques and tools to legitimize Russia's position.

The verbal and visual techniques appeal directly to viewers' emotions, particularly fear and empathy for those suffering, evoking both sorrow and aggression. These, mainly irrational, emotional elements encourage the perception of Russia—the Russian people, the Russian authorities, and the Orthodox Church—as morally superior, and to the demoralisation of the Ukrainian government, the Ukrainian president, particular Ukrainian politicians, the Ukrainian armed forces, and their Western allies. The

appendix provides a detailed analysis of the visual components of selected news programs indicating the length of time an emotional image was shown as a percentage of the total length of the programme. Images used include destroyed buildings, children, death, military munitions, tears, fire, and others.

The key messages on the newscasts' agenda during the period analysed were: offensive Ukraine, the humanitarian catastrophe, Russia's readiness to help, Ukraine as a failed state, the demoralisation of the Ukrainian military forces, the dehumanisation of Ukrainian political forces, the legitimacy of counter sanctions, and attacks on the Russian Orthodox Church.

The video materials used by both *RT* and *Perviy Kanal* were taken from YouTube, often without specifying a source. *RT* did a better job with providing the names of the YouTube accounts.

Other manipulative techniques used were:

- Supporting the opinion/evidence of journalists or experts/authorities
- Manipulating audio-visual materials—editing the sound from an 'amateur video' before it is broadcast
- Imitating amateur videos by means of devices such as cameraman narration and hand-held style—vertical filming, poor focus, sharp movements
- Promoting the second screen—propaganda channels established to report on events in the region

It should be noted that since Russian television was banned in Ukraine, special Internet channels were established and popularized through traditional media.

274 Perviy Kanal, 15 August 2014

275 RT International, 18 August 2014

### 5.3.3 REDEFINITION OF EURO-ATLANTIC VALUES: USED NARRATIVES IN THE CASE OF THE FIRST HUMANITARIAN AID CONVOY

Values	Redefined values	Messages for Western audiences	Messages for Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques
<b>POLITICAL VALUES</b>				
The role of state	Ukraine as a failed state	The Ukrainian government does not fulfil its social, economic, or political responsibilities towards its citizens	The Ukrainian government does not fulfil its social, economic, or political responsibilities towards its citizens	COMMON MAN (as the main source of information)
		Ukraine does not control its military forces. The citizens in the Eastern Ukraine are abandoned and forgotten, and have suffered many casualties	Ukraine does not control its military forces. The citizens in the Eastern Ukraine are abandoned and forgotten, and have suffered many casualties	AUTHORITIES
		Chaos vs. order: comparing the situations in Ukraine and Russia	Chaos vs. order: comparing the situations in Ukraine and Russia	LABELLING
		Discrediting the Ukrainian side and/or being supportive to Russian authorities	Discrediting the Ukrainian side and/or being supportive to Russian authorities	IN-OUT GROUPING
		Numbers show losses of military forces and civilians	Numbers show losses of military forces and civilians	MORAL SUPERIORITY OF RUSSIA
		The Ukrainian state is unable to deal with the refugees, its actions only encourage civilians to flee	The Ukrainian state is unable to deal with the refugees, its actions only encourage civilians to flee	COMPARING DIFFERENCES (with Russia)
		The offensive nature of the Ukrainian Armed forces emphasised	The offensive nature of the Ukrainian Armed forces emphasised	COMPARING SIMILARITIES (with the West)
			Ukrainian commanders are leaving their soldiers; detained Ukrainian soldiers are treated well and are quickly exchanged; mothers and relatives are against their sons serving in the Ukrainian armed forces; soldiers are not ready to kill and fulfil orders of superiors	STATISTICS

Values	Redefined values	Messages for Western audiences	Messages for Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques
	Electoral, liberal, and social chaos in Ukraine		<p>The political system of Ukraine is under control the of Western external forces</p> <p>Lack of parliamentarian culture in Ukraine</p> <p>Liberal offensive in Ukraine</p> <p>Ukrainian Parliament is not fulfilling its responsibilities towards its people, it is not providing necessary support</p> <p>Lack of social responsibility of parliamentarians</p> <p>Radicalism is out of control, oligarchy is in power</p> <p>The Parliament is not solving problems</p>	<p>COMMON MAN (as the main source of information)</p> <p>AUTHORITIES</p> <p>LABELLING</p> <p>IN-OUT GROUPING</p> <p>MORAL SUPERIORITY OF RUSSIA</p> <p>COMPARING DIFFERENCES (with Russia)</p> <p>COMPARING SIMILARITIES (with the West)</p> <p>STATISTICS</p>
Political participation	Ukrainians do not support Kiev's elite		<p>The level of political participation of Ukrainians who don't support Kiev</p>	<p>COMMON MAN (as the main source of information)</p> <p>AUTHORITIES</p> <p>LABELLING</p>
Rule of law	Non-existent or dominated by the 'law of criminals'	Non-existent or dominated by the 'law of criminals'	Non-existent or dominated by the 'law of criminals'	<p>EXPERTISE</p> <p>LABELLING</p> <p>UNIFICATION</p>
Media freedom	Western and Ukrainian media are unprofessional and dishonest	Lack of professionalism in the Western media: disinformation about a parallel military convoy	<p>Several full news-packages, including one in a weekly program, on Ukrainian propaganda</p> <p>The Ukrainian and Western media are conducting a campaign against Russia</p> <p>The Western governments are using mass media to influence Ukrainian society and to threaten Russia.</p> <p>One of the main goals of the Western media is to turn the people of Ukraine against Russia.</p> <p>The Western media wish to force Ukrainians and Russians into conflict</p>	<p>EXPERTISE (voice of academic experts, journalists, field experts)</p> <p>VOICE OF AUTHORITY (including Putin)</p> <p>EVALUATION (of local power on a missing photographer case)</p> <p>INSTRUCTING (how to assess information, where to get information)</p> <p>SIMPLIFICATION (the Ukrainian media lie, Russian media do not)</p> <p>TRANSFERENCE</p>



Values	Redefined values	Messages for Western audiences	Messages for Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques
ECONOMIC VALUES				
Economic solidarity	Quotes from Western media in support of Russian propaganda about the humanitarian convoy		If the cargo is detained, then the Ukrainian authorities will be accused of not caring for the local people ( <i>The Wall Street Journal</i> )  Western countries are ignoring the calls for help from the inhabitants of south-eastern Ukraine ( <i>The Times</i> )  Damaged houses and broken windows, you can feel how difficult it will be for Kiev to regain trust ( <i>CNN</i> )	COMPARING DIFFERENCES (Russian/Western economy/US)  AUTHORITY  COMMON MAN/ROLE MODEL (integrity)  SOLIDARITY
	Ukrainian Sanctions against Russia are illegal		Ukraine is a dictatorship, violating the values of democracy  Violation of business rights by Ukraine	
	Counter sanctions are splitting the Western world		Russia is opening markets to internal trade  Russia is accessing new foreign markets  Europe is suffering from counter sanctions, changing focus Latvia to Greece  The US will not suffer from counter-sanctions, but the EU will  Western countries selling poor-quality food to Russia	
	Humanitarian catastrophe		Lack of responsibility for Ukrainians in Kiev	
	MORAL VALUES			
Tolerance	Intolerance to homosexuality		Intolerance to homosexuals expressed in the context of Ukrainian political power and a certain parliamentary	AUTHORITY

Values	Redefined values	Messages for Western audiences	Messages for Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques
<b>MORAL VALUES</b>				
Solidarity	Russian solidarity and the lack of Western solidarity		The only Russia is helping  Russia is morally supporting the people of east Ukraine	COMPARING DIFFERENCES  ROLE MODEL
	Superiority of Russia in attitudes towards refugees		The majority of refugees were accommodated by the local Russian people  66 regions of Russia are receiving refugees, and placing them is top priority	COMMON MAN (locals in the region, Ukrainian refugees, Russian people)  SIMPLIFICATION
	Common grief		Refugees are thanking Russia for its support  Assistance is provided not only by ordinary Russians, but also by different organisations	EVALUATION  REPETITION  SILENCE (not a word of Ukrainian support for eastern Ukraine)
Morality	Religion is directly connected with the convoy	Verbal and non-verbal religious messages: captions such as Shell Hell, God is often mentioned, sacred items such as icons and are shown in the videos	Churches on fire—the last image shown before the video about the humanitarian convoy on the Russian-Ukrainian boarder. Later the survival of the burning church is deemed a miracle  Icon(s) under the windshields of the convoy trucks  The Pope performing a sacred ritual  Violence of Ukrainian radicals during the religious mass used to portray conflict between the Orthodox Churches of Russia and Ukraine  Icons are placed in the homes of the locals	STATISTICS  LABELLING  IN-OUT GROUPING  TESTIMONIALS

Values	Redefined values	Messages for Western audiences	Messages for Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques
<b>MORAL VALUES</b>				
Humanism	Dehumanisation of Ukraine and the West	<p>Ferguson—the face of the US government</p> <p>Prohibited weapons used by the Ukrainian side; lack of civilian security</p> <p>US State Department commentary on Ukraine paired with captions: ‘Dozens killed in army bombing’; ‘We are generally supportive of Kiev’s actions’</p> <p>Civilian targets shown as destroyed</p> <p>People are shown in need of everything</p>		<p>AUTHORITY</p> <p>THE VOICE OF EXPERT</p>
<b>INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION</b>				
International agreements	Ukraine violates international agreements; Russia ready to aid negotiations	Russia’s readiness to aid negotiations and send humanitarian aid	Russia’s readiness to aid negotiations and send humanitarian aid	<p>LABELLING</p> <p>TESTIMONIALS</p> <p>EXPERTISE</p>
		Ukrainians are changing the rules, violating international law, and sabotaging the prospect of aid; do not trust international organisations	Ukrainians are changing the rules, violating international law, and sabotaging the prospect of aid; do not trust international organisations	<p>SILENCE</p> <p>UNIFICATION</p> <p>IN-OUT GROUPING</p> <p>AUTHORITIES</p>
			Washington and its marionettes are killing civilians, destroying houses, and other infrastructure in former Russian territories of eastern Ukraine	
	The West does not comply with international agreements		<p>Some international agreements are not in the interests of Russia, but Russia complies with them</p> <p>US behaviour in the international arena is an example of how international law is broken.</p>	

Values	Redefined values	Messages for Western audiences	Messages for Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques
<b>INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION</b>				
International law	Ukraine is violating international law	Ballistic missiles are used by the Ukrainian armed forces in eastern Ukraine		AUTHORITY  VOICE OF EXPERTS  STATISTICS
The trust and reliability of international organisations	NATO and the ECHR are not reliable organisations	NATO is not an reliable source of information; it produces disinformation	Two organisations were criticised – NATO and the European Court of Human Rights	
			The European Court for Human Rights is politicised and biased	
			NATO is a threat	
	Cooperation with the International Red Cross legitimizes Russia's actions		Cooperation with the International Red Cross legitimizes Russia's actions	
	The EU is an incompetent organisation		The EU is an does not understand the situation in Ukraine	
	The OSCE is a reliable organisation	Representatives of the OSCE give evidence about the situation in east Ukraine which coincides with the Russian position	The Russian Ministry of Foreign affairs supports the statements of the OSCE	
	The UN is a reliable organisation	The UN is used to legitimate statistics concerning the dead and injured and the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine	The UN is used to legitimate statistics concerning the dead and injured and the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine	

# MEDIA ANALYSIS: CASE STUDIES

## The Minsk II Agreement

## 5.4.

On 11 February, the so-called Normandy Four met in Minsk to negotiate ending the conflict in Ukraine. The so-called Minsk II Agreement was negotiated between the leaders of France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine, as well as a group that included the representatives of the separatist territories of Ukraine. While many remained critical, the agreement was understood to be a successful step forward towards lasting peace in Eastern Ukraine at the time.

In addition to researching *RT* and *Perviy Kanal*, this case study includes an analysis of the *Sputnik* audio-visual platform in English. Dates for the analysis were **11 February – 17 February 2014**.

### 5.4.1. COMMUNICATION TOOLS USED AND REDEFINITION OF AGENDA

Analysis of this event shows the different strategies used by *RT* and *Perviy Kanal*. The main difference lies in the narratives. Three main narratives appeared on the agenda, which were common to both *RT* and *Perviy Kanal*:

- blaming Ukraine for aggression in the armed conflict
- praising the success of Russian diplomacy
- portraying Ukraine as the loser and the side violating the agreement

One unique element, mainly used by *RT*, in this particular case study was the use of **INFOTAINMENT** to present the desired narrative.



Both platforms appealed to the rationality and irrationality of their audiences. Irrational appeals were based on emotions, ranging from stories evoking fear and anger to those highlighting positive details about the Minsk II Agreement. Rational appeals were based on reflecting the views of the experts, namely that Ukraine had violated and would continue to undermine any agreement, whereas Russia was doing everything possible to ensure that an agreement could be reached and implemented. *RT* used music, graphics, and numerous repetitions of humorous videos showing Lukashenko nearly pulling the chair from under Putin by accident and journalists sleeping in the pressroom (also on *Perviy Kanal*) to provoke light-hearted, positive emotions. *Perviy Kanal* was less oriented toward entertainment.

### The composition of news programmes as a tool of strategic political communication

The importance of the news is measured according to its PLACEMENT in the programme. This strategy is widely used to increase or decrease the seeming importance/relevance of a subject. On 11 February, the *RT International* first showed a short news story on Ukraine followed by a block of news from Minsk.

Both platforms portrayed the summit in Minsk as the last effort to bring peace to the region. A hypothetical negative future was drawn, portraying it in as even more negative way than the actual reality. Methods similar to those described in the case study of the first humanitarian convoy were used: video, images, and audio techniques were leveraged to provoke viewer emotion.

Following the livestream broadcast from Minsk, Russian Duma Head of the Foreign

Affairs Committee K. Kosachev provided commentary from the Russian side. One of the key messages on *RT* was the assessment that **relations between Putin and Obama** were ‘pretty cold’<sup>276</sup>, even though Obama did not participate in the Minsk II negotiations. The relations between the US and Russia were narrowed to the relations between the two leaders. On 12 February, the Minsk process was the main news headline. **Putin was positioned as the main voice** or most important leader in the peace process.

On 11–12 February, *Perviy Kanal* started its evening news program with a story about the Minsk II agreement, calling the conflict in Ukraine a ‘slaughter’ (бойня). The report was framed so as to create the impression that the political leaders had come together in Minsk with the sincere intention **to stop the violence in Ukraine**, or, more precisely, **to stop the violent Ukrainian government**. For example, during the news report, a correspondent from the TV channel *Rossija* was shown addressing the President in Minsk: ‘Mr. Poroshenko, why are your forces bombing peaceful civilians?’<sup>277</sup>

Following the story on the Minsk process, an editorial segment provided further corroboration of the intransigence of the Ukrainian side. An opinion poll, specifically presented as containing data from various parts of Ukraine, legitimized the previously expressed view that the Ukrainian government should be ‘brought to its senses’<sup>278</sup>.

During the remaining days monitored on *Perviy Kanal*, reports concerning the Russian

276 RT International, 11 February 2014

277 In Russian: ‘Господин Порошенко, зачем Ваши войска бомбят мирных жителей?’

278 *Perviy Kanal*, 11 February 2014



economy competed for first place with reports on Ukraine. On 13 February, the first news report was on the Russian economy, linking the stability of the rouble to the peace process in Minsk.

On the second day of the Minsk process, *RT* started using a new strategy—**INFOTAINMENT**. Graphics and pictures on *RT*, including Poroshenko yawning, were some of the elements.

The main strategy behind the use of **INFOTAINMENT** was to **distract the viewer** from the greater discussion on the content of this important agreement. Only some points of the agreement were mentioned. For example, the focus was on the **small details** of the work in Minsk, including pictures of President Lukashenko ‘serving drinks’ and ‘President Hollande playfully pushing the

German Chancellor’<sup>279</sup>.

Another playful moment showed on *RT* was originally posted on Twitter, inter-textually displaying an image of a pseudo-kiss between the leaders of France and Germany.

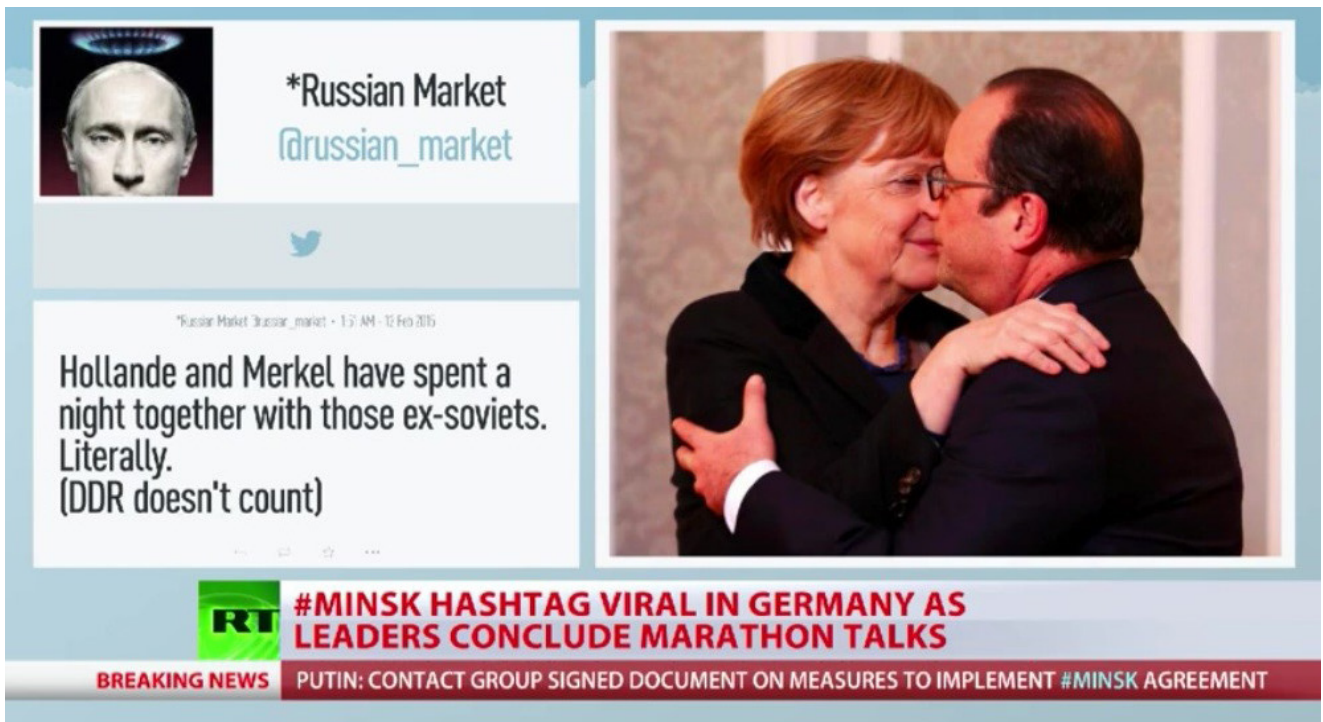
*RT*’s **INFOTAINMENT** and distraction strategy was accompanied by a lack of any other news about Ukraine. The reports on the Minsk process were followed by unrelated news concerning Spain, a toxic alert, and Syria.

During the reports on Minsk II, *RT* continued to use the so-called **SECOND SCREEN**, showing the development of the related hashtag. The question remains, whether the hashtag activity on the second screen was coordinated with organized trolls.

**VISUALISATION** itself showed different practices on *Perviy Kanal* and *RT*, presumably

279 RT, 12 February 2014





suited for different audiences—the home audience in Russia was addressed in a more traditional way, while *RT* used a more modern reporting style with visualisations, interactive maps, hashtags, etc.

### Setting the agenda

On both platforms the meeting in Minsk was linked to generalised narratives about Ukraine—Russia’s role in establishing peace, Western attitudes towards Russia, Ukraine as

a failed state, the Ukrainian president’s lack of ability, sanctions against Russia, Ukraine as a violator of international agreements.

Whenever the Minsk report was accompanied by news about Ukraine, it was dramatic and portrayed the offensive nature of Ukrainian actions, often through the testimonies of the locals. The ubiquitous message was that Russia was not party to the conflict but had some influence on the pro-Russian



‘self-defence forces’. This message was reinforced by the claim that Russia did not know where the rebel forces were based, but was ready to investigate.

Foreign expert Martin Sieff was quoted claiming that the Minsk process was ‘very constructive’, ‘extremely constructive’, and ‘a crucial deal’, a view complementary to that of Russia. This report also included an assessment of Western attitudes towards Russia, calling on the West to address the conflict rationally instead of emotionally.

On 13 February, the main news story on both *RT International* and *RT America* in relation to Ukraine was the **fake evidence spread by American senators about Ukraine**; the story concerned a senator who did not verify evidence provided by Ukrainian MPs. *RT*’s case against the senators was supported by reminding viewers of the false evidence used by the US to start military campaigns in Iraq and Libya. The objective was to demonstrate that neither the Ukrainian nor the US government could be trusted.

On 14 February, the top news story on *RT International* was the countdown to the ceasefire, which was to come into force at 00:00 EET on 15 February. The reports focussed on **intensified fighting in the Debaltsevo** area as separatist forces attempted an offensive to push out the Ukrainian troops before the start of the ceasefire. The reports did not show the fighting, but rather the desperation of locals whose voices could be heard on the videos saying: ‘Why are they bombing us? Why are they killing us? Why are they destroying us? How can our President not be ashamed?’ This first story was fully based on video quotes. When *RT* showed its visualization of the map of Debaltsevo, there was no information about the separatist forces encroaching on Ukrainian-controlled territory.

The next story focused on Luhansk, expressing concern that **the Ukrainian side would not observe the ceasefire agreement** since the Right Sector would not respect it. A quote from Facebook was provided to support this view: ‘The **Right Sector** thinks





that no agreements with the pro-Russian terrorists have any legal force. That's why their implementation is not necessary.<sup>280</sup> This was followed by a journalist calling this 'a very, very bad sign'.

**Putin's role** was legitimized on both *RT* and *Perviy Kanal*. *RT* used the **VOICE OF AUTHORITY** quoting Chancellor Merkel in the graphics saying that Putin was the one who pressured the separatists into signing the truce. President Hollande was similarly quoted as saying, 'I am thankful to Putin<sup>281</sup>.' Yet, the context of these statements was not provided.

*RT* used controversial portrayals of Germany and France. Previously Western countries would have been blamed for destabilising Ukraine, but in this report Germany and France were used to legitimise Putin and increase his authority. **Poroshenko's**

**character** was portrayed as the opposite of Putin's. During the summit, Poroshenko was shown as a weak president, lacking in self-confidence. Poroshenko was also discredited as commander in chief of the Ukrainian armed forces by means of several videos showing deaths incurred due to fighting in eastern Ukraine while ceasefire negotiations were taking place.

**Sanctions** were another issue *RT* used in connection to the Minsk process. Will the sanctions against Russia be lifted after the full implementation of the agreement? Kerry was mentioned as saying that further restrictions would be introduced if the truce were violated<sup>282</sup>.

This theme was also actualised on 16 February, showing how the sanctions introduced against Russia were harming the EU. Since the conclusion of the Minsk II agreement was not enough to lift the

280 RT International, 14 February 2015

281 RT International, 12 February 2015

282 RT International, 13 February 2015





sanctions, *Perviy Kanal* showed an interview with Russian singer Iosif Kobzon, popular during Soviet times, now on the EU sanctions blacklist.

He said:

[TRANSLATION] “I spit on these sanctions, on these bans. This is my motherland.”<sup>283</sup>

(*Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 16 February*)

In addition, a comment from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was presented, where the main message was that ‘the sanctions go against common sense’.

RT also took the opportunity to undermine the credibility of the US Government in the context of the Ukraine by showing an exchange between Jen Psaky, spokesperson for the US State Department, and Associated Press journalist Matt Lee.

283 In Russian: “Плевал я на санкции, на эти запреты. Это моя родная земля.”

To further discredit the Ukrainian side, *Perviy Kanal* showed reports on the low morale of the Ukrainian armed forces, the refugee issue, and Ukrainians who had been arrested<sup>284</sup>. Pro-Russian separatist leader Zaharchenko spoke to the arrested Ukrainian soldiers:

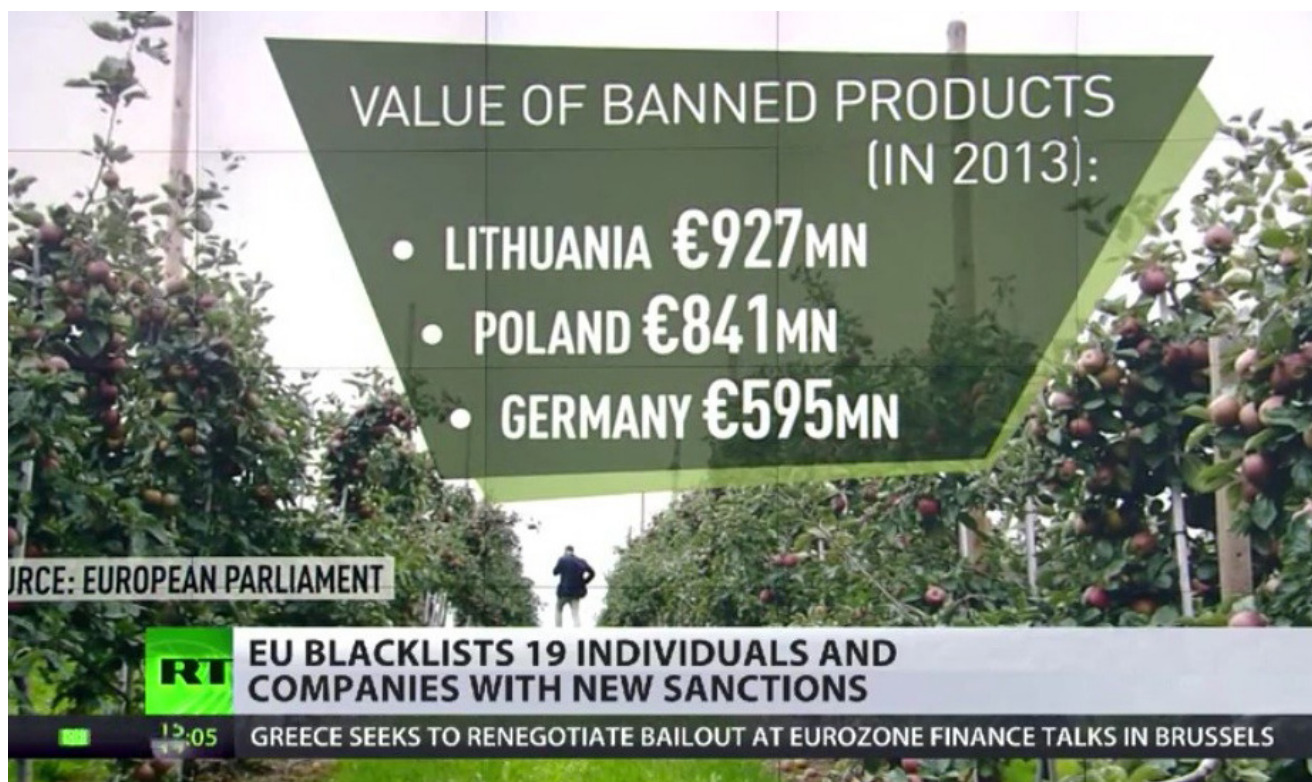
[TRANSLATION] “Your president has betrayed you. You are nobodies to him, no matter how many you are—five or fifty thousand. You are a piece of meat for Poroshenko. Put on your hat. Feed them, quench their thirst.”<sup>285</sup>

(*Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 16 February 2015*)

If refugees were identified by name in the case study on the humanitarian aid

284 *Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 16 February 2015*

285 In Russian: “Ваш президент вас предал. Вы никто. Хоть вас пять, хоть 50 тысяч. Вы для Порошенко кусок мяса. Одень шапку. Накормить, напоить.”



convoy, then in this case the majority of locals speaking in front of the camera were anonymous, without names or affiliations:

[TRANSLATION] “The Ukrainians are bombing intensively. Why is that our fault? Why are we guilty in the eyes of Ukraine? We don’t understand.”<sup>286</sup>

(*Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 13 February 2015*)

Unconnected with Ukraine, but the top news on *Perviy Kanal*, was the **Russian economy**. On 13 February, the TV anchor for *Perviy Kanal* linked positive gains made by the Russian rouble with the Minsk peace deal.

### Conclusions: communication tools used and the re-definition of the agenda

To sum up, this was the only case study where emotions were provoked through **INFOTAINMENT**. Particular music, Internet

jokes, and funny videos were widely used during reports concerning Minsk II. However, this strategy was employed only for a short time. Later on grim pictures of war-torn Ukraine showing scenes of death and the abandoned ruins of bombed buildings replaced the **INFOTAINMENT** segments.

Although *Perviy Kanal* used **REPETITION** during one news programme, *RT* was consistent in not returning to the same topic. A number of diverse emotional tools and methods were used to discredit Poroshenko, including **LOCALS, UNNAMED LOCALS, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, HUMOROUS PICTURES** and **VIDEOS**.

286 In Russian: “Украинцы бомбят страшно. В чем мы виноваты? В чем мы провинились перед Украиной? Мы не понимаем.”





## 5.4.2. RE-DEFINITION OF THE EURO-ATLANTIC VALUES

The main idea used to define Russian values and redefine the values of Ukrainian supporters was: Russia is for peace and is against violence; Russia is not involved in

the conflict but tries to find a solution. The general message on *RT* was that unlike the other countries, Russia was complying with international agreements. In other words, this was an attempt to regain credibility in the international arena. Meanwhile, this case demonstrated that, for the home audience on *Perviy Kanal*, a redefinition of international order was taking place by means of various strategies of legitimization.

## Political dimension

The image and the role of the **Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko** was a major focus of the redefinition process. In addition to discrediting his personal characteristics, the news stories developed an image of a weak president, elected but not strong enough to lead the country. The news stories portrayed a local lack of trust in Poroshenko, reported on his inability to control the armed forces, and emphasized his dependency on Western advisers.

Only Poroshenko was shown as yawning during the lengthy Minsk process, while the other leaders were shown smiling and ready to work. Anna Van Densky, a commentator often used by the *RT*, stated that ‘Ukraine is moving in the direction of a “failed state” since Poroshenko does not control the territory and the Ukrainian Parliament is not a serious institution’.

Another news story used **to discredit the Ukrainian Parliament** was a physical fight among the MPs<sup>287</sup>. No context or details of the fighting were provided; only a video was shown to illustrate physical violence as a common practice in the Ukrainian Parliament.

Insinuations about the lack of transparency in the political life of Ukraine was underscored through stories about certain groups, including nationalist radicals, seeking to influence the Parliament<sup>288</sup>.

*RT America*, *RT International*, and *Perviy Kanal* also portrayed the American government as incompetent and untrustworthy. The story about the senator spreading false evidence about Ukraine was revitalised

with a revelation that the information was provided to Senator Jim Inhofe by three Ukrainian MPs. *RT* reported that the new ‘evidence’ was used to get military assistance for Ukraine, which could obviously only lead to further escalation of the conflict.

*Perviy Kanal* reported on the press conference held by the anti-Maidan pro-Russian movement, followed by news about an exhibition of emotional photos of the destruction of war in Ukraine on 16 February to discredit the Ukrainian and American governments. Parallels were drawn with the involvement of the US in the conflicts in Iraq and Syria, which was **LABELLED** ‘The face of American democracy’.

On both platforms, American democracy is distinguished from Euro-Atlantic democracy; it is presented as a pseudo-democracy that supports change of power in other countries by means of force or deceit.

## Economic dimension

The redefinition of economic values in the context of Russia–EU relations was connected to the conflict in Ukraine. *RT* used the **VOICE OF AUTHORITY** to show that Europe was suffering from the conflict and the position of the European governments as not in the interests of the European economy and ordinary Europeans.

The issue of liberal economy was not discussed in the stories on the Minsk agreement. Both *RT* and *Perviy Kanal* made it clear that the US had not changed its position and sanctions against Russia remained in place. If the case study on the counter-sanctions showed no overt links with the conflict in Ukraine, then in this case study the link was articulated on a number of different levels, mainly by **AUTHORITIES** and **EXPERTS**.

287 RT International, 13 February 2015

288 RT International, 14 February 2015



Ukraine's responsibility to develop the economy in the so-called republics was additionally discussed on *Perviy Kanal*. The Russian economy was one of the top items on the channel's agenda, e.g. on 13 February, *Perviy Kanal* reported on currency exchange rates, showing positive growth for the Russian rouble. An indirect **VOICE OF EXPERTISE** was used to link this fact with the growth of oil prices and the peace process in Ukraine.

### Moral dimension

The moral superiority of Russia and the pro-Russian separatists was emphasised. Their moral superiority was demonstrated by portraying Russia as a peaceful country, supportive of finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict, and the solidarity of Russian citizens, who are ready to support Ukrainian refugees—the message here was very similar to that in the case of the first humanitarian convoy). The idea of 'one big happy family' was used as a metaphor to show collectivism as an important value.

On 13 February *Perviy Kanal* showed a video of a journalist interviewing a family in the destroyed city of Gorlovka city with the sound of bombing in the background. Such video clips were chosen to provide indirect evidence from the locals about the offensive activities of the Ukrainian army. One person asks:

“Comrade President of Ukraine, where is your ceasefire? Or since the ceasefire comes into force only on the 15th, have you decided to erase Donbas from the surface of the earth by the 15th?”<sup>289</sup>

(*Vremya, Perviy Kanal, 15 February 2015*)

289 In Russian: “Товарищ президент Украины, где ваше перемирие? Или это перемирие 15 числа, вы что, решили весь Донбасс до 15 числа с землей сровнять?”

At the same time there was silence about problematic issues related to the actions of the pro-Russian separatists. The Ukrainian armed forces were dehumanised through techniques constructing the opinions of the **COMMON MAN** and the **SEPARATIST AUTHORITIES**. The reports were clearly biased focussing on the victimization of one side, supported by testimonials and statistics about the dead and wounded. The Ukrainian army's low morale was demonstrated by showing images of dead soldiers left behind by their comrades<sup>290</sup>.

*Perviy Kanal* gave voice to commander Kiwi, a local separatist authority, to illustrate the Ukrainian side's violation of the ceasefire, and *RT* showed a dramatic video of a film crew being rescued.

### The international dimension

Russia's role in the international arena and the grouping around the conflict in Ukraine were the main narratives used to redefine the Euro-Atlantic values listed in the catalogue used for this study. First, a specific international hierarchy was drawn; second, the dependence of certain countries on the US and the regionalisation of political interests were presented; third, NATO was shown as violating international agreements. These points will be elaborated below.

The main techniques used for legitimization were **HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE**, **EMOTIONS** and the **VOICE OF AUTHORITY**. Among other prevalent techniques were **GROUPING** (for the regionalisation of political interests); **LABELLING** and **COMPARISON** (pro-American/independent); **SIMPLIFICATION** (conflating international relations with the relationships between political leaders);

290 *Perviy Kanal, 16 February 2015*

**EXPERTISE** (mainly journalists and academics); and **AUTHORITY** (Putin as the leading voice).

### **International hierarchy and the personalization of international relations**

Russia was portrayed as one of the key actors in the international arena. A bold example is the reporting on the meeting of four presidents supported by infotainment stories encouraging positive emotions. Through placement and time devoted, Putin was portrayed as the leading voice of the peace process, while Poroshenko was portrayed as weaker than the other leaders as he was shown making phone calls, soliciting advice, and having faulty information.

It was implied that the US government played a destructive role as the main advisor to President Poroshenko during the peace process since it clearly advocates providing military support to Ukraine. Germany was shown as the main protector against increased militarisation.

Coverage of the Minsk agreement exhibited a high level of 'personification' of international relations. The leaders of the so-called Normandy Four were the heroes of infotainment materials—images of kisses between President Hollande and Chancellor Merkel served to construct state politics through personal relationships. Merkel and Hollande were included in the discourse of a Russian political cartoon show 'Mult Lichnosti' [Cartoon Personalities] developed by *Perviy Kanal*. Romantic relationships between the leaders and the countries were constructed in the news stories: kisses, touching, gifts of flowers, and so on.

The international role of Russia was emphasised by means of such techniques as the **VOICE OF AUTHORITY**, the

**HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE, RATIONALISATION**, and **IN-OUT GROUPING**, especially for the domestic audience. Although the US was not present during the negotiations, it was presented as the other important international actor, especially during news items that discussed the regionalization of international relations. The TV anchor on *RT* characterized the relationship between Obama and Putin as pretty cold, thus drawing a parallel between the relationship of the leaders with the relationship between the two countries.

### **Regionalisation**

*Perviy Kanal* constructed a sense of regionalisation through reflecting on the relationships between various countries and the US. The channel appealed to 'false independence' and called the relationship with the US a threat to Europe, esp. in the context of Germany and France. The Eastern European countries were said to have close, yet dependent relationships with the US. Through such reporting, the EU and US are shown as individual parties, not as a joint Euro-Atlantic community. The US was also shown as mischievous and aggressive, the salient implication being that Europe is not as bad.

### **The value of international agreements**

NATO was portrayed as violating international agreements by expanding into Eastern Europe. Sky News journalist drew a link between the Minsk II negotiations and the negotiations between NATO and Russia in the 1990s, supported by an illustrating video.

### 5.4.3 REDEFINITION OF EURO-ATLANTIC VALUES: USED NARRATIVES IN THE CASE OF THE MINSK II AGREEMENT

Values	Redefined values	Messages for Western audiences	Messages for Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques
POLITICAL VALUES				
The role of state	The diminishing the role of President Poroshenko		Poroshenko as a weak president, elected but not strong enough to lead  The lack of public trust in Poroshenko  Poroshenko’s inability to control the armed forces	COMMON MAN  LABELLING  IN-OUT GROUPING  SIMPLIFICATION
	Ukraine as a failed state	Non-transparent political life in Ukraine, influenced by radicals and others	Ukraine is not independent, influenced by the US  Ukraine is moving in the direction of a failed state	HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE  COMPARING DIFFERENCES (countries)
	The Ukrainian Parliament as a marginal institution	Fist fight among MPs shown as common practice in the Ukrainian Parliament	The Ukrainian Parliament is not a serious institution	INSTRUCTING  ROLE MODEL
	Washington’s support for a change in power in Ukraine	American governance is faulty	American governance is faulty	
			American democracy is different from European democracy	
			In those countries where Washington has supported a change of power, the result is armed conflict	
INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION				
International agreements	Violation of international agreements	NATO portrayed as violating international agreements by incorporating Eastern Europe	NATO portrayed as violating international agreements by incorporating Eastern Europe	IN/OUT GROUPING  LABELLING  SIMPLIFICATION
			The link between the Minsk negotiations and negotiations between Russia and NATO in the 1990s concerning NATO enlargement	HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE  AUTHORITY  EXPERTISE  REPETITION
			Emphasising that the US did not take part in the Minsk peace process	COMPARISON  INFOTAINMENT  SECOND SCREEN

Values	Redefined values	Messages for Western audiences	Messages for Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques
<b>INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION</b>				
International order	Russia as a key actor in the international arena	The leading role of Russia at the Minsk negotiations emphasized through infotainment stories	The leading role of Russia at the Minsk negotiations emphasized through infotainment stories	IN/OUT GROUPING LABELLING SIMPLIFICATION
		Putin as the main voice of the peace process	Putin as the main voice of the peace process	HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE
		President Poroshenko portrayed as not being an equal among equals	President Poroshenko portrayed as not being an equal among equals	AUTHORITY EXPERTISE
		The destructive role of the US in the peace process, its plan to provide military support to Ukraine; Germany as the main protector against increased militarisation	The destructive role of the US in the peace process, its plan to provide military support to Ukraine; Germany as the main protector against increased militarisation	REPETITION COMPARISON INFOTAINMENT SECOND SCREEN
	Political leaders as infotainment	Leaders of the 'Normandy Four' portrayed as infotainment heroes	Leaders of the 'Normandy Four' portrayed as infotainment heroes	
		Romantic relations between the political leaders/countries constructed through showing kisses, touching, flowers, etc.	Romantic relations between the political leaders/countries constructed through showing kisses, touching, flowers, etc.	
	Cold relations between Obama and Putin	The cold relations between the leaders standing in for relations between Russia and the US as countries		
International solidarity	Europe is divided		Relations with the US are key to 'regionalisation': Europe falsely imagines itself to be independent from the US; relations with the US are a threat to Europe in the context of Germany and France. Eastern Europe has close relations with the US	
	The West is divided		The EU and the US are not Euro-Atlantic allies, they are divided  The US is shown as aggressive and oriented towards legal violations, ready to present false evidence to further its goals	



Values	Redefined values	Messages for Western audiences	Messages for Russian-speaking audiences	Manipulative techniques
<b>MORAL VALUES</b>				
'The morality of states'	Russia is morally superior		Russia is a peaceful actor, supportive of the peace process	REPETITION UNIFICATION (good rebels)
Solidarity	Only by the Russian side shows solidarity with the Ukrainian people		Russians are ready to support refugees as if they were relatives	EXPERTISE SIMPLIFICATION (who violates ceasefire)
Individualism	Collectivism as an important value		'Family' as a metaphor for collectivism—an important value	AUTHORITY (including Putin)
Humanism	Dehumanisation of the Ukrainian armed forces		Silence on any problematic issues connected with pro-Russian separatists, grouping of radicals, the irresponsibility of the Ukrainian armed forces, the victimisation of one side of the conflict, statistics on dead and wounded civilians  The bodies of colleagues abandoned	TESTIMONY IN- OUT GROUPING LABELLING COMMON MAN HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE COMPARING DIFFERENCES
	Ukrainian armed forces violating the ceasefire	Pro-Russian separatists are only responding to the Ukrainian military offensive	Pro-Russian separatists are only responding to the Ukrainian military offensive	PLACEMENT
		Dramatic video of film crew saved from military action		
<b>ECONOMIC VALUES</b>				
Economy embedded in Democracy	Conflict is harmful for the European economy	Europe is suffering; the conflict is not in the interest of ordinary people or the European economy	Despite the negative impact on the European economy, the US wants sanctions to remain in place	AUTHORITY TESTIMONY HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE
		The Minsk peace process would normalize the economy in the region		PLACEMENT
		Despite the negative impact on the European economy, the US wants sanctions to remain in place		
		It is the responsibility of Ukraine to develop the economy in the self-declared eastern republics		

# CONCLUSIONS

If the idea of an 'open society' originally stood for the self-determination of a free society cherishing its openness, it now brings to most minds the terrifying experience of a heteronomous, hapless and vulnerable population confronted with, and possibly overwhelmed by forces it neither controls nor fully understands.

# 6.

Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty*

The aim of the research "Euro-Atlantic Values and Russia's Strategic Communication in the Euro-Atlantic Space", was to identify the ways and means how Russia by the help of mass media affects the Euro-Atlantic values and redefines the meaning of democracy, mass media freedom, human rights, freedom of speech and other values in the Euro-Atlantic space for different societal groups in the context of the crisis in Ukraine.

The research covered the time period from April 2014 to January 2015, and analysis of the following selected audio-visual platforms: *RT (Russia Today)*, *Perviy Kanal* and *Sputniknews*. The following case studies were selected for the analysis:

1. MH-17 catastrophe;
2. Implementation of counter-sanctions;
3. The first humanitarian convoy,
4. The Minsk-2 agreement.

These four case studies were considered as particularly relevant for researching the crisis in Ukraine and Russia's information campaigns. In addition, each of the case studies has different nature in the meaning of strategic political communication of

Russia. The MH-17 catastrophe was not a pre-planned action and it demonstrated the crisis management in communication. Other cases were pre-planned giving the possibility of controlling narratives. All cases got wide coverage in the media and political agenda on both sides of the Atlantic, and the cases themselves were used as key points in political communication of all involved sides.

As the methodological basis for this research the Euro-Atlantic values catalogue was developed, grouping values into four large groups: a) political values; b) economic values; c) moral values; d) international relations and international law dimension. Parallel, a catalogue of values and their indicators which Russia promotes in the Euro-Atlantic information space by the use of mass media was created thus showing a wide gap between specific political attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and emotions which are associated with the same principles (values) in different spaces (Euro-Atlantic and Russian).

The research shows big differences in the understanding of democracy, freedom, the role of state, free market, tolerance towards minorities and trust in international law and

international organizations. The gap between these understandings and perceptions is so wide, that Russia's attempts to redefine the basic Trans-Atlantic values can be regarded as a serious threat to the Western world.

The research concludes that in redefining political values in all four cases the main manipulative techniques applied by Russia were common man, labelling, in-out group, comparing differences and authority. For moral dimension in addition to already mentioned were used such techniques as expertise, simplification and moral superiority of Russia; redefinition of international order was based on hypothetical future - to question the Western unity, to separate the US from other Western countries, to split the European Union countries, to enemyze the US and other Western countries, to downgrade the reliability of NATO, other international organisations and the European Court of Human Rights, simplification and infotainment. The economic values were redefined by the use of the techniques of common man, authority, comparison, silence and victimization.

The power of information is incredibly large. Struggles over control of the infosphere can be regarded as a significant external threat to the security the Western world nowadays. The war in Ukraine and the hybrid war waged by Russia is splitting Western society, which can at least potentially lead to the leadership crisis in Europe.

It is also evident, that the Western democracies face problems in defending their societies, their political and judicial systems, rules and norms in foreign policy. Big part of Western society still does not recognize that it is living in the middle of information war, and loses it. Countries rarely employ all the capabilities that they have available, since the fact how far

countries will go in protecting their interests and values is a product of a political process. In this process crucial are perceptions and information politicians and society has about the particular situation, and understanding of causality – what kind of decisions and actions lead to what kind of results.

Russia's foreign policy shows clearly that Russia is attempting to redefine the European and Transatlantic values, the post-Cold War borders and the post-Cold War international order at large. Russia invests massively in anti-European, anti-United States and anti-Western activities and processes and tries to undermine the rule of law, the authority of NATO and the value of democracy. It attacks, deceives, multiplies absurd conspiracy theories to create a fog – where no-one knows what is right and what is wrong, anymore. In other words – the threats are “fluid”, and the response to them and policies should be shaped the same way.

In order to respond the Russia's strategic communication properly and to defend the societies, firstly, leaders and societies must be aware that Western inner system is open and vulnerable. The West must be aware of means and tools used in the information war and have to be ready for various development scenarios and action strategies to defend the basic values in society.

Secondly – and this is equally important – while exposed to the propaganda threats, the Western world should not give up the core values: the rule of law; gender equality; media freedom; fundamental democratic values; and social and economic freedoms. Democratic values in Western societies have been taken as granted not enough appreciating their power in preserving peace, security and prosperity. Complexity of many crises surrounding transatlantic community has contributed to discussion

whether the existing set the values serves to interests of democratic countries.

Third, the solution to the current situation is to become less dependent on Russia. That would include reorientation of businesses, less economic dependence, energetic independence, and also - informational independence.

Fourth, it would make sense to re-define the basic values in democracy for ourselves. It involves the principle of self-defending democracy or the idea that also democracy has its own borders and the democratic state under certain circumstances can be regarded as an object of protection. If it is possible to indicate that there exist attempts to change the nature and identity of state, elements of the state (territory, population, institutions, national identity), the state order (democratic order), the right of people to exercise the sovereign power, the chain of the democratic legitimacy, opposition, parties, independent judiciary, guaranties of human and fundamental rights, the principle of self-defending democracy should come into force. Democratic order cannot directly prevent an anti-state or anti-democratic revolution but it could make it more difficult, in the long-term interest of the people. Also peoples' right to resistance can be expanded, preventive constitutional safeguards and unchangeable core of the democratic order developed, as well as further development of international law foreseen in the way the basic Trans-Atlantic values are better defended.

Fifth, the level of media literacy in the society is of the utmost importance. Uninformed opinion masquerades as news, lines are blurred between legitimate journalism and propaganda, entertainment, self-promotion and unmediated information appears on the Internet as true and verified information. This superabundance of information has made it

imperative that citizens learn to judge the reliability of news. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, relearn and evaluate the credibility and reliability of information. A contemporary media consumer has to be able to recognize the information, recognize the tools and to be able to critically analyze. One cannot be passive about news consumption, and media literacy is a set of skills which can be taught and learned.

It is responsibility of politicians, experts and civil society to scatter the current information fog and chaos, and the most important challenge is to find adequate instruments how to cope with Russia's propaganda, how to find "liquid" tools against "liquid" threats, and stabilize the societies. It is of utmost importance to unite and solidarize the Euro-Atlantic community on the basis of these principles; then region will be able to respond to external insecurities and to maintain the social and political security of its people continuously.



# ACRONYMS

**BRICS**- the acronym for an association of five national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

**BUK**- a medium-range surface-to-air missile system developed by the Soviet Union and its successor- Russian Federation.

**ECHR**- the European Court on Human Rights

**EET**- Eastern European Time

**e.g.**- for example

**ESP**- Spain

**etc.**- and other

**EU**- European Union

**EVS**- European Values Survey

**GER**- Germany

**FRA**- France

**i.e.**- that is

**ITA**- Italy

**Jul**- July

**LGBT**- the acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender

**Mr**- Mister

**MSU**- Moscow State University

**NATO**- North Atlantic Treaty Organization

**NGOs**- non-governmental organizations

**NL**- Netherlands

**OSCE**- the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

**p**- page

**PEW**- PEW Research Global Attitudes Project

**POL**- Poland

**pp**- pages

**PsyOp**- Psychological Operation

**SWE**- Sweden

**TA**- target audience

**TT**- Transatlantic Trends

**TV**- television

**UK**- United Kingdom

**UN**- United Nations

**US**- United States of America

**USSR**- the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

**Vol**- volume

**Vs.**- versus

**WTO**- World Trade Organization

**WVS**- World Values Survey