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Discourses and Emotions in Narration of the Annexation of Crimean Peninsula by the
Russian Federation

Master's thesis

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyze how the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation is narrated in the leading political discourse and media discourse. This is done by examining two main cases that represent the discourses, a political speech of president Putin and a documentary film by Andrey Kondrashov, through the encoding/decoding model of Stuart Hall. The thesis first identifies the relevant theoretical stances that explain how using the approach of cultural studies helps to analyze images, texts and emotions in politics. The thesis then offers an overview of the Russian case, highlighting the main motives behind the annexation of Crimea and meaning of Crimea for the Russian identity. This is later followed by the analysis of the speech and the documentary. Since the approach of Stuart Hall only identifies the types of encodings and decodings, this thesis seeks to add an additional analysis to the encoded and decoded messages, by identifying narratives and emotions used by the leading political and media discourse.

The thesis found that a certain set of narratives and emotions were used by both discourses in explaining the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. These narratives were quite similar to one another, almost constituting an overlap of the discourses. In order to strengthen the messages, both the speech and the documentary were encoded with strong moral emotions that in turn caused emotional responses at the stage of decoding. The reaction of the audience, hence the decoding stage, was observed via comments in social media, news articles and the blogosphere. The results showed that most of the audience interpreted the messages in a dominant-hegemonic key, thus agreeing with the essence of the proposed messages. The encoded narratives were clearly embraced and empowered by the public. Those narratives containing strong moral emotions got mirrored more often by the audience, thus stressing the power of emotions in delivering messages.

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1. Introduction

Those who watch the news every day must know that image matters. Visualized representations significantly influence how we see the world around us and how do we interpret it. The same applies for politics. What we see and hear about it directly affect the way we understand political phenomena around us. Because of the daily news, politics and media seem to be so intertwined and inseparable that we often forget that once it was not like that at all. Using visual content in politics has become such a prominent trend that political science alone might not be able to fully explain how images, texts and meanings work in the political realm.

Therefore, other approaches help in this analysis, such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, and cultural studies, offering an alternative way of explaining the use of visual media in politics. Cultural studies, for that matter, focuses on the interdisciplinary power of cultural phenomena, a focus that encompasses that almost everything in our lives. Therefore, narrowing down to specific approach is a must. Among different approaches in cultural studies, British Cultural Studies (BCS) is considered to be the most eminent, often focusing on analyzing political developments in the context of visual representations. British Cultural Studies helps to understand how politics functions in its spectacularized form, actively using visual aids to channel political messages. Especially successful in this matter was a leading scholar of the BCS, Stuart Hall.

In his work, Hall focuses on the encoding of the messages by leading discourses and later decoding of these messages by the audience. Although this approach has almost exclusively been applied in media studies, this thesis embraces it as a key method to studying the use of images and texts in politics, opening a door to the multiple faucets of the modern political

realm. The following thesis seeks to explain how political messages are encoded, presented and then decoded by the audiences.

Specifically, the case of narration of Russian annexation of Crimea will be observed. The choice of the case is not coincidental, since the use of the visual has been extremely evident in Russian politics, especially in explaining the political moves of the country. Considering the specificity of Hall's approach and in order for the analysis to be as precise as possible, the observed discourses will be divided into a leading political discourse (represented by the political speech) and leading media discourse (represented by the documentary film). The two discourses are going to be observed via Halls's encoding/decoding model, thus meaning two stages of creating messages and then interpretation of them by the audiences. Interpretation of the messages is going to be observed via comments of the Russian public in social media, news articles and the blogosphere. In order to strengthen the explanatory power of Hall's approach, not only the main narratives used by the discourses are going to be introduced, but also a power of emotions to channel political messages will be highlighted.

The thesis is structured as follows. It first presents an overview of the relevant theoretical approaches on the use of cultural studies as a method in conducting research in political science, mainly focusing on the encoding/decoding model of Stuart Hall (chapter 2). This chapter also focuses on the importance and power of an image, an essence of the political discourse and the use of emotions in politics. The thesis then goes on to introduce the main motives behind the annexation of Crimea and the meaning of Crimea for the Russian identity in chapter 3. The paper introduces its methodological approach and research questions in chapter 4 before focusing on the encoding/decoding analysis of the two main cases in chapters 5 and 6 respectively. The following chapter of the thesis draws analytical conclusions by discussing both the narratives and the emotions used in the discourses (chapter 7). The thesis is then summed up in chapter 8.

2. Theoretical Approaches

Since this thesis seeks to analyze and compare the narration of the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Federation in both leading political discourse and media discourse, the following chapter is going to present a prism through which the narration is going to be looked at. The chapter will also focus on the essence of both discourses and introduce an additional emotional factor in the narration of discourses.

2.1. Cultural Studies and Politics

In order to research the interconnectivity between Russian political and media discourses towards Crimea and the use of emotions in the annexation narration, one should look beyond the simple realm of politics into the wider domain of culture. The use of historical memory, identity symbols, and a wide variety of cultural vocabulary and practices make the Russian discourse shaping process deeply influenced by the cultural domain. Since soft power and cultural measures have become increasingly popular tools for mass engagement tools by the Russian authorities, the domain of culture and its interdependence with politics should be explored first.

Lister and Wells (2001: 61) see forms and practices of culture, their relationships to social groups, and the power relations between those groups as the main focus of the cultural studies. All of this behavior is therefore constructed and mediated by forms of culture. Going beyond simple descriptions, cultural studies is the search to understand the relationships of cultural production, consumption, belief and meaning, to social processes and institutions. Culture has therefore a constitutive role - it sustains and changes the power relations around many issues and examines these issues in terms of how people tie meanings to experiences, through seeing, imagining, classifying, and narrating.

Before going further into the discussion, it would be wise to at least try to define culture among thousands of meanings given to the term. Culture can be understood as the struggle over meaning, a struggle that takes place over and within the sign. Culture is ‘the particular pattern of relations established through the social use of things and techniques’ (Grossberg 1996: 158). Considering all the nuances and many focuses of the definitions, culture must be understood primarily as something dynamic, with a power to, not only shape, but be shaped as well.

It is widely believed that cultural studies emerged from the political and intellectual climate and situation of the Great Britain between the late 1950s and the 1970s. Saukko (2003: 13) highlights two main ways of understanding cultural studies back then: one was focused on capturing people’s lived worlds, the other was more focused on linguistic patterns and tropes that recur in texts, such as popular culture. However, New Leftism brought an interest in examining the connection between lived experience, a body of texts, and the larger social, political and economic environment, therefore offering a third philosophical current in cultural thinking. Saukko (2003: 19) concludes that ‘humanistic’, ‘structuralist’ and New Leftist ‘contextualist’ bents were the most influential in early cultural studies. Cultural Studies’ founding fathers were Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams and, though himself young enough to be a son rather than a father, Stuart Hall (Stratton & Ang 1996: 367).

The connection between the political science and cultural studies is therefore evident. One influenced the emergence of another and their relationship and mutual impact on one another has grown more intense. The ability of cultural studies to explain power relations around issues such as giving meaning to the place, defining political developments etc. makes it a valuable ‘partner in crime’ for political science. The same has been highlighted by Jodi Dean (2006: 754), arguing that despite some institutional asymmetries, in the last

decades of the twentieth century there emerged an interface between them, useful for thinking about the inextricability of politics and culture.

Despite the reciprocal relationship between the culture and politics, there often exists a certain misbalance, when it comes to the use of culture by politics. Of course, the use of culture by politicians does not necessarily have a negative connotation. The use of soft power and cultural dimension in the EU foreign policy is often considered an extremely positive example of culture-politics interaction.

Still, there are examples of the politicization of culture and simply using culture as a political tool. Wright (1998: 9) brings an example of political meaning making in cultural sense. Firstly, identified agents attempt to redefine key symbols which give particular view of the world, of how people should be and behave, and what should be seen as the 'reality' of their society and history. This can be referred to as the transition of ideology. A second stage is when such view of the world becomes institutionalized, and lastly, when a key term with new meaning enters other domains and becomes a prevalent way of thinking. This way, politics uses cultural arsenal to get its way.

As stated by Chen (1996: 310), culture is pervasively politicized on every front and every ground, hence a cultural politics. Cultural politics can be empowering and endangering, oppositional and hegemonic, therefore advocating it as the site of active struggle, every day and anywhere. Contemporary power networks can and do no longer work solely through an imposition from 'above' since it rather operates 'on the ground' and can only establish its hegemonic dominance through linking with local struggles.

Similarly, Dean (2006: 752-753) mentions that the spectacularized politics of networked entertainment culture, on one hand, and the mass attractions of fundamentalist visions of community in the face of extreme economic division brings politics and culture closer

together. That often refers to coding culture in political terms and political theorists being fully absorbed with cultural politics and the politics of culture. For Chen (1996: 310), the cultural politics operates through the domains of representation, signification and ideology, which of course are the main keywords of the cultural studies' research.

To observe the interplay between lived experience, texts or discourses, and the social context in political and cultural interaction, it is useful to narrow down the focus to the British Cultural Studies (Saukko 2003: 11). The main theorist of this approach, Stuart Hall, has influenced the development of the whole discipline.

2.2. British Cultural Studies and the Legacy of Stuart Hall

Because of the universality of the cultural studies to look at all sorts of social phenomena, including the political realm, the following thesis takes cultural studies, specifically British Cultural Studies as the main theoretical prism. British Cultural Studies allows one to analyze political developments in the context of visual representations, turning its main focus to images and texts that are used as the main empirical resources in the following thesis.

The birth of British cultural studies is generally associated with the 1964 founding of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham by Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall. Dean (2006: 758) finds that inspired by Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*, Raymond Williams' *Culture and Society* and *The Long Revolution*, and E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, cultural studies quickly became a sort of an umbrella for all of humanities.

Generally speaking, the research associated with the Birmingham school focused on the processes shaping postwar British society, out of which the most significant ones were, the

increase in consumerism and resulting commodification of more domains of life, the rise of mass communications and racial and national forms of oppression. British Cultural Studies also found itself in a struggle with the classical Marxism, in a sense offering a corrective to Marxist essentialism, and providing a useful analysis of the construction of hegemony (Dean 2006: 759).

As pointed out by Stratton and Ang (1996: 367) the success of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies was at its most evident during Hall's 'rule' over the Centre where, cultural studies as an institutionalized intellectual practice first began. Hall's contextualization of the Thatcher government in post-war Britain was an important cornerstone for the whole discipline. Dean (2006: 760) stresses that Hall's study of Thatcherism proves that it was the result of ideological struggle, a transformation and reconfiguration of right-wing discourses to enable a new way of thinking to be dominant. Hall (1988: 53) himself points out that understanding Thatcherism cannot be achieved through simply mapping the plurality of discourses (race, crime, nation, sexuality, market) that produce it within civil society. Rather, it is the formation of this plurality of ideological elements into a unity, or discursive formation, at the level of the state, that really makes the difference. Thatcherism was therefore a hegemonic structure with authority constituted through the production of common sense, hence involving producers and consumers. Analysis of Putin's discourse, that is the main focus of the thesis, and is similar to what Hall did with Thatcherism, which is looking beyond the typical focus of politics, right into the realm of culture.

Stuart Hall's contribution to the development of the British Cultural Studies has been tremendous, to say the least. "Cultural studies is not one thing," Stuart Hall asserts, "it has never been one thing" (Hall 1990: 11). This is a direct reference to the ability of the cultural studies to shape and change within the wider context of societal developments. Cultural studies have been interdisciplinary, constantly trying to integrate more and more aspects to

its analysis. The same can be said about Stuart Hall, whose ideas developed throughout his academic career.

Hall's approach is greatly relying on the contextualist validity, which refers to the capability of research to locate the phenomenon it is studying within the wider social, political, and even global, context (Saukko 2003: 21). In this light, Hall has picked texts as the main source of the analysis. With the help of this analytical approach, he has often tried to search deeper contexts in the existing textual products, therefore looking for codes, meanings, and ideologies. Hence, Hall has been interested in power relations encompassed in the texts, which will be researched in this paper as well.

Saukko (2003: 100) emphasizes that Cultural studies' specific approach to texts is partly explained by the fact that the Birmingham-period research on subcultures and popular culture coincided and became part of the golden age of the French semiotic movement. Hall (1996: 270) has even created a comprehensive list of the theoretical advances which were made by the encounters with structuralist, semiotic, and post-structuralist work, which involves "the crucial importance of language and of the linguistic metaphor to any study of culture; the expansion of the notion of text and textuality, both as a source of meaning, and as that which escapes and postpones meaning; the recognition of the heterogeneity, of the multiplicity, of meanings, of the struggle to close arbitrarily the infinite semiosis beyond meaning; the acknowledgment of textuality and cultural power, of representation itself, as a site of power and regulation; of the symbolic as a source of identity".

One of these universal units that semiotics contributed to the wider academic debate is the sign, constituting of the signifier and signified. For cultural studies, the relationship between the signifier and the signified was arbitrary and so to say "a matter of politics" (Saukko 2003: 101). Thus, signs could be interpreted differently in different con-

texts and by different groups. As mentioned earlier, it is the politics embedded in the signifier-signified relationship that interested cultural studies and Stuart Hall in particular.

As highlighted by Hall (1996: 270) himself, there's always something de-centered about the medium of culture, about language, textuality, and signification, which always escapes and evades the attempt to link it, directly and immediately, with other structures. And yet, at the same time, the shadow, the imprint, and the trace of those other formations, of the intertextuality of texts in their institutional positions, of texts as sources of power, of textuality as a site of representation and resistance, all questions that can never be erased from cultural studies.

American Cultural Studies' leading figure Lawrence Grossberg (1996: 157), who has widely researched the approaches of Stuart Hall and British Cultural Studies, argues that for Hall the meaning of a cultural form is not intrinsic to it. The meaning is not in the text itself but is the active product of the text's social articulation, of the web of connotations and codes into which it is inserted. Therefore, it is possible to analyze any text, disseminating and fragmenting its meaning into its different contexts and codes, displacing any claim it makes to 'have' a meaning. Thus, every sign must be and is made to mean (Grossberg 1996: 158).

Since ideology of a text is not guaranteed, no text is free of its encoded structures and its ideological history. Often, texts have already appeared in some place and are therefore already inscribed or placed by that earlier positioning. According to Grossberg (1996: 161) Hall's work increasingly draws attention to the historical fact of 'hegemonic politics', and the need to observe the processes by which a dominant cultural order is consistently preferred, despite it often being associated with structures of domination and oppression.

For British Cultural Studies and Stuart Hall, the appearance of hegemony is tied to the incorporation of the great majority of people into broadly based relations of cultural consumption. For that matter, hegemonic discourse of Putin in Russia should also be looked upon in the context of consumption of the Putin's policies. As emphasized by Grossberg (1996: 162) the appearance of the masses as an agent in the scene of culture, displaces the field of cultural struggle from the expression of class conflict into a larger struggle between the people and the elite or ruling bloc. The ability of the ruling bloc to establish its political power is therefore firstly on the line, marking some influences from the Marxist thinking.

The ultimate goal of the ruling bloc is therefore to win for itself the position of leadership across the entire terrain of cultural and political life, or establish hegemony in a sense of Hall's understanding of the term. Hegemony involves the mobilization of popular support, by a particular social bloc, for the broad range of its social projects. In this way, the people assent to a particular social order and agree with a particular system of power. The interests of the ruling bloc come to define the leading positions of the people (Grossberg 1996: 163). Hence, at its most secure, an ideology appears hegemonic. That is, it becomes so naturalized, taken for granted and 'true' that alternatives are beyond the limits of the thinkable (Wright 1998: 9). It almost seems like current leading political discourse in Russia is a perfect example of naturalized hegemony with a tremendous support of the leading political party and Mr. Putin in particular.

Since ideology involves the claim of particular cultural practices to represent reality, Hall wants to deliberately understand the way this ideology is inserted in texts and then interpreted by the audiences. Saukko (2003: 112) highlights that a frequent issue of concern in producer/audience-based approach of Hall is how to distinguish between the inserted meaning of a particular media text and the audience's reading of the same text. Stuart Hall finds a solution to the following struggle in his 1973 published article "Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse", which has been greatly influential to many scholars

within a wide range of disciplines. Hall's encoding/decoding approach that focuses on encoded media and decoding viewers in many ways solves the issue that other approaches stumbled on, focusing on only producing meanings and not interpreting them as well.

Before the analysis of encoding/decoding process, Hall (1973) stresses that the event cannot simply become a communicative event, but first, it must become a story. In a sense, a message is not a random moment and it definitely needs a form of appearance in order to pass from source to receiver.

When researching encoding, Hall investigates cultural production indirectly. The focus is not on the particular individuals who produce culture but on the structures, external factors and high-level decision-makers which come to influence and shape mass-produced culture (Davis 2008: 54). The particular signifying practices of the text not only embody real historical choices, but also become the active sites for ideological struggles. As Hall (1973) himself puts it, there is no zero degree in language. Practices do not intrinsically belong to any political position or social identity; they must be articulated into it. Therefore such terms as, 'democracy', 'freedom', or 'black', are always capable of being de-articulated and re-articulated. The ones who deliver messages seek audiences or masses to interpret the messages the way they encoded them, and audiences misinterpreting the encoded meanings is a failure for producers.

Cultural producers can be roughly compared with the message producers in Hall's understanding. Cultural codes are inserted or encoded in the messages and then delivered to the audiences. While being delivered, the message can be considered to be a program with a meaningful discourse (Hall 1973). Before aiming at some effect, satisfy a need, or be put to use, the meaningful discourse is constructed. The set of meanings is then aimed at influencing, entertaining, persuading or instructing, also having complex ideological consequences during the cultural consumption.

Arguably, cultural consumption has especially increased because of the development and spread of new forms of media and information and communication technologies. These have in turn generated new forms of cultural texts and made cultural consumption more accessible. According to Meyer (2008: 68) cultural consumption includes a variety of practices, during which consumers have to make sense of products, hence they are producers of meanings. Because of the increased interest of cultural studies in cultural consumers, it is now used more often by qualitative methods to study processes such as attitude formation or meaning attribution.

In Hall's sense, media audiences and cultural consumers are often used interchangeably because of their extensive overlap. This is due to the fact that much of the culture consumed today is mediated, and cultural consumers, like media audiences, produce meanings and engage in a range of activities. This also denies a one-way model of communication in which texts are active producers of messages and consumers are passive recipients. Texts and consumers, as well as their inter-relationships, are more complex, since texts both reflect and generate certain representations; they create and reproduce culture (Meyer 2008: 72). Similarly, cultural consumers both consume and produce meanings, once again affirming a complex nature of culture.

In "Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse" Hall (1973) argues that audiences interact with media or 'decode' it in one of three ways: dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, or oppositional. In the first, meanings that viewers take away from the product are in sync with the messages the creators 'encoded' it to contain. Audiences are either unaware they are being given a message, or they are already in agreement with the encoded message. Negotiated decoding implies that audiences are aware of and understand the dominant meaning, and while they may see or agree with the importance of that message, they are also able to alter aspects to fit their own needs. Therefore, in this decoding process, both

intended and oppositional meanings apply. The last type of decoding involves audiences who may or may not understand the encoded meaning within the media, but regardless, reject it in order to employ an alternate and oppositional message.

However, Hall (1973) also points out that there are certain type of codes that are so widely distributed in a specific language or culture, that they appear not to be constructed at all. Meanings are almost like ‘naturally’ given. By producing apparently natural recognitions, it is possible for the ones who encode the meaning to conceal the practice. It has an ideological effect, since the functioning of the codes on the decoding side will frequently assume the status of naturalized perceptions.

Also, the produced and encoded messages can have an interesting relationship with the audience’s already existing ideologies. It is something that Hall (1973) describes as the level of connotation. It is the point where already coded signs intersect with deep semantic codes of a culture and take on additional, more active ideological dimensions. At precisely this level, the encoded ideology intertwines with existing culture, knowledge, and history.

Simply put in the context of the following paper, one should not assume the fact that messages produced by Russian political discourse are somewhat unique or new for the audiences. on the contrary, meanings inserted in the messages often appear natural, such as an understanding of Russia as a model of traditional society. The relationship with the ideologies of the Russian audiences also can be trickier, since the level of connotation makes it hard to distinguish if the presented values were rooted in the society or are simply imposed by the authorities.

Of course, Hall and the whole British Cultural Studies approach has its own share of criticism to bear. Stratton & Ang (1996: 370) question the universality of British Cultural Studies when it comes to analyzing international cases, Wren-Lewis (1983: 195) points out

a somewhat methodologically weak approach to analysis of decoding etc. Still, Hall's model remains one of the most influential in the existing discipline. With its analysis of what can be the power of an image, how meanings are created and distributed, how ideologies are inculcated, 'Birmingham' still plays a crucial role in the growth of the international cultural studies.

2.3. Images and Texts

Cultural studies in general and Stuart Hall's approach in particular heavily focus on analyzing visual representations. Hall (1973) himself sees images and texts as products in the loop of the production process and highlights the privileged position of the discursive form of the message in the communicative exchange. Hence, image matters significantly in many ways. Focusing on the theoretical approaches to images and texts will allow to determine what should be the focus in their encoding/decoding analysis, how they should be approached as a research resource, and gain knowledge on their importance for political science.

Approaches to understanding the significance of images can be extremely different. There are several layers in which the following analysis can take place. The most easily observable way of analyzing the power of image is simply stating its importance and capability to influence. O'Neill (2013: 10) believes that everyday life in world politics is replete with images and policy makers are attuned to their power. Simply put, the deployment of visual imagery can be a key tool for meaning-making, since they are the ones producing the wide array of emotions and responses, such as for example anger or disgust (Sturken & Cartwright 2009: 10). Hence, one image can have different meanings for different people in varying contexts.

Secondly, images have a deeper function of creating meanings and giving importance to depicted processes or phenomena. As pointed out by Norman Fairclough (1995: 103), texts and images do not simply mirror realities, but rather constitute versions of the reality that are deeply dependent on its producer's social positions, interests, and objectives. Inevitably, several choices are made at the various levels in the process of producing texts or depicting images. Through images a certain importance is given to one or another aspect of social life, since images and texts can dictate the way in which social relations and political problems are defined.

Images and texts also have a strong connection to the ideological aspect. Sturken & Cartwright (2009: 21) emphasize that visual culture is integral to ideologies and power relations. Through images and texts ideological constructions can be reinforced. Representations in imagery may be said to function ideologically in so far as they contribute to reproducing social relations of domination (Fairclough 1995: 44). Ideological representations are generally implicit rather than explicit in texts and images, and are embedded in the use of naturalized language. In a sense, the ideological language is perceived as a common sense by both presenters and audiences. It allows some assumptions to become completely normal and natural, despite having a deeper ideological sense.

Because of the power to insert a meaning into an image or text, an important aspect is the production of visual imagery and textual material. The media can mostly be considered a leading developer of the messages targeting the audiences. Still, there exists a certain level of complicity between the media and dominant social classes and groups, and as pointed out by Fairclough (1995: 45), the state has a great interest in controlling media output that is extremely evident in case of Putin's Russia. Not only is media hugely effective in mobilizing big audiences, but also its ideological potential should not be underestimated. Still, attempts at state control can be quite different. They vary from being extremely direct to less invasive.

Louw (2005: 202) finds that since simply producing knowledge is not enough, those in power require media to popularize and naturalize appropriate ideas, discourses and practices. When it comes to the use of politics in media discourses, Fairclough (1995: 44) brings out that audiences are more and more perceived as spectators, rather than participants, and are addressed as consumers. According to Louw (2005: 228), with the help of visual representations, it is not only possible to sell political policies, beliefs, and larger world-views, but even legitimize and justify military action. In fact, Corner and Pels (2003: 3) stress that there has been a great shift in political communication and the whole nature of media-political relations. It is precisely through visual representations that politicians mediate their personas, exchange political outputs, and try to mobilize and influence audiences.

Hence, there exists a controversy over absolute independence of media discourses from the influence of leading political discourses, which should also be taken into account when talking about political and media discourse of Russia towards Crimea. Media images can in a sense merely play the passive role of illustrations to dominant news frames and official political discourse. Images which contradict or disrupt a dominant discursive frame might have a considerable impact, if not directly on politics and policy-making, then more so on popular imagination and historical consciousness (Andén-Papadopoulos 2012: 61). It can therefore be argued that media discourses can merely take over the existing political discourse's vocabulary, fully embracing a leading ideological approach.

There of course exist several types of visual representations that can be used to target the consumers of these messages. Since coded culture and language are contained in all forms of social interaction, images and texts for analysis can be found in a range of media forms and social settings. Many of the early cultural studies, as well as semiotic literature, analyzed the way in which meaning is constituted in popular texts and images, such as

photographs, films and popular culture (Saukko 2003: 101). Musical lyrics, clothing, political speeches, posters, popular magazines and geographical layouts have all been recorded and analyzed as texts and images (Davis 2008: 56).

Analysis of cultural outputs can be a great way to investigate cultural production. This involves analyzing a series of printed, visual or audio texts. As with political economy approaches, cultural production is investigated indirectly. Wider deductions about the production (and also consumption) process are inferred from assessments of what is produced. In analyzing texts and images researchers seek to highlight the common codes, terms, ideologies, discourses and individuals that come to dominate cultural outputs. What can be said about the individuals featured in the texts? Who are the contributors to the text? How are the texts framed and presented? What are the terms and phrases used and what is their symbolic meaning? What are the assumptions embedded in the texts? The answers to such questions, gathered from analysis, are then used to build arguments about those who construct cultural products and wider social, cultural and linguistic conditions (Davis 2008: 56).

Nevertheless, as stressed by Fairclough (1995: 47), analyzing media discourse involves comparing and evaluating representations, in terms of what they include and what they exclude, what they foreground and what they background, where they come from and what factors and interests influence their formulation and projection and so on. Since all the representations involve views, values, and goals, analyzing them allows to determine their truthfulness and partiality.

Analyzing texts can assume much more than it should about the conditions of cultural production and consumption. Davis (2008: 58) finds that in the past rather grand claims about material and cultural relations have been deduced from limited and unrepresentative selections of texts. However, if properly applied, quite strong cases and historical accounts

can be developed, since selection and collection of texts is relatively easy and this allows greater choice and flexibility for the researcher. The nature and role of language in texts should not be forgotten considering the power of such systems to shape identities, social practices, relations between individuals, communities, and all kinds of authority (Barker 2008: 152).

For Pink (2008: 125), looking at a combination of the images is much more effective in terms of producing cultural codes and its potential consumption. The combination of spoken words and visual images provide the researcher with a better understanding of the functions of the visual representation. Heath, Hindmarsh and Luff (2010: 5) emphasize several reasons why visual content has become an effective tool for analyzing social and political reality. Firstly, it captures an event as it happens and records social activities, such as talk, visible conduct, and the use of tools, technologies, objects and artifacts. It is a great tool for researchers who aim at capturing several forms of interaction. It allows researchers to interpret the content of the message again and again, adding several meanings and aspects of meaning. Fairclough (1995: 45) especially points out an ability of documentaries to adopt a particular point of view on its topic and use rhetorical devices to persuade audience to see things that way as well.

Because of the active use of images and texts by the political discourses and the possible overtake of the ideologies from one discourse to another, it is important to have a brief look at the essence of political discourse, its main objectives, and ways of expression.

2.4. Political Discourses and Ideologies

Briefly focusing on the essence of the political discourse, its main ways of representations, and producers will help to find focal points in the analysis of this discourse, highlighting

important aspects to build assumptions upon, and generate an understanding of how political discourse influences other discourses. Applying Stuart Hall's approach to analyzing political discourse is an interesting new way of understanding political propaganda, allowing to add the interpretation of the audience reactions to consumed political messages. Unwrapping the essence of political discourse will also allow to later understand what Russian political discourse is all about, what focal points should be kept in mind while conducting an analysis of Russian discourse towards Crimea through the prism of Stuart Hall's approach.

Undoubtedly one of the leading academics on political discourse, Teun A. van Dijk (1997: 12) finds that the easiest, and not altogether misguided definition of political discourse can be identified by its actors or authors, simply politicians who are being paid for their activities, and who are being elected or appointed as the central players in the polity. It would also be wise to include the various recipients in political communicative events, such as the public, the people, citizens, the 'masses', and other groups or categories. That is, once we locate politics and its discourses in the public sphere, many more participants in political communication appear on the stage.

A slight narrowing of the actors is necessary, since only *politically* acting participants influence the creation of certain political discourse. Van Dijk (1997: 14) stresses that the context is decisive for the categorization of discourse as 'political' or not. Participants and actions are the core of such contexts, but contexts can also be analyzed broadly in terms of political and communicative events and encounters, with their own settings (time, place, circumstances), occasions, intentions, functions, goals, and legal or political implications. Just like Hall (1973) sees a message getting its form in the special moment and context, it is the text plus context that classifies the discourse as political.

Wodak (2009: 24) identifies six dimensions of politics that are deeply connected to producing a political discourse. These are: 1) the staging/performance of politics (the front stage); 2) everyday life of politics and politicians (the back stage); 3) the impact of politicians' personality on performance; 4) the mass-production of politics; 5) the re-contextualization of politics in the media, and 6) participation in politics. To the following list, Isabela and Norman Fairclough (2012: 22) are eager to add one more dimension, which is that politics is oriented towards decision-making that can ground action. Political theory also implicates the following list by stating that politics is both normative and descriptive.

One of the hottest topics is identifying leading figures in the discourse production or those who *act politically*. Since there are various levels and dimensions in the political domain, identifying a single producer might be tricky. Van Dijk (2002b: 204) recognizes these levels as, firstly, the base level, which consists of individual political actors, as well as their beliefs, discourses and interactions in political situations. Secondly, the intermediate level, constituted by the base level, which consists of political groups and institutions, as well as their shared representations, collective discourse, relations and interactions. Lastly, the top level, which in turn is based on the intermediate level and which is constituted by political systems, and their abstract representations, orders of discourse, and socio-political, cultural and historical processes.

These levels are also extremely well visible in the Russian case. The political figure of Vladimir Putin stands out strong in what is believed to be Russian politics and it is also supported by the intermediate level, which is mainly perceived being the leading Russian party, United Russia. The top level of what can be considered Russian politics is much trickier to highlight, since it also involves deeper beliefs in the society. Nevertheless, some general trends such as traditionalism and support of the presidency and tougher authority can be detected.

In discourse production, van Dijk (2002b: 211) assumes that speakers or writers will generally start from their personal mental model of an event or situation. This model organizes the subjective beliefs of the speaker about such a situation. Next, the presented model composes shared social and political beliefs of general public and also specific groups. Once such a personal model of an event or situation is constituted, presenters may express fragments of such models in discourse, using a number of detailed linguistic and discursive strategies, which however does not mean that all information presenters possess about an event or a situation is revealed. Van Dijk (2002b: 212) also stresses that the process of discourse production also apply to discourse understanding.

Despite seemingly easy classification, the levels function in a very related manner. It means that one discourse can be shared on all the levels. For example, if a political representative gives a speech, it represents himself, his institution and, in a sense, the whole political system. Thus, targeting an audience with a particular message leaves audience with an understanding that the presented discourse is intrinsic to all of the ‘functions’ or ‘levels’ of the speaker.

Talking about the ultimate goals and functions of the political discourse, Teun A. van Dijk (2002a: 15) states that probably more than any other kind of discourse, political discourse is eminently ideological. Ideology in this sense can rather be understood as the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group or simply a system of beliefs (van Dijk 1998: 8-9). Political discourse and its properties are controlled by one or more underlying ideologies. In here, the levels of production play an important role understanding the core of ideology in the discourse, since different levels may presuppose different kinds of ideologies. Still, political discourse functions as the way of construction of ideological identity. With the help of text or words a presenter can state the core of the values, beliefs, and priorities of his ideology, thus constructing the essence of his ‘me’. Political discourse is thus an active tool of active reproduction of ideological identity.

When certain individuals or groups in a society embrace some ideology because it enables them to achieve their goals, these ideological beliefs are often presented as belonging to the realm of the common sense and therefore the only ones possible (Matić 2012: 55). Language, therefore, proves to be very important in presenting and ‘selling’ political discourse and one of the most important means of domination and control. For that reason, politicians tend to politicize the public by speeches or interviews with dramatic overtones.

There are several genres used in presenting discourses to the audiences, such as political interviews, political speeches, policy documents, and public sphere dialogues (Fairclough 2006: 34). Many authors find that the speech acts as the main way of expressing one’s political discourse. For example, Lerman (1985: 185) finds that the speech of a political head of state is one of the most significant forms of mass communication, the only form of direct communication between the symbol of political power, authority, and the people. Dedaic (2006: 700) emphasizes political speech’s power to represent relatively autonomous discourse produced orally by a politician in front of an audience, the purpose of which is primarily persuasion rather than information or entertainment.

There are also different tools used in the speeches that help deliver the messages to the public in the most efficient manner. The speaker can employ arguments and rhetorical devices, such as evidence, lines of reasoning, and appeals that help him present the core of his discourse (Dedaic 2006: 702). Reisigl (2006: 599) point out that rhetorical tropes or means of expressing ‘nonliteral speech’ such as metaphors, fulfill many different purposes in political discourses, especially in regard to positive political self-presentation and negative political other-presentation. Tropes help to ‘invent’ or construct a political reality, promote the identification with single or collective political actors as well as with their political aims and ideologies, refer to the imagined community, to influence the feelings of the audience etc. Chilton (2006: 64) gives the use of metaphors in speeches a whole new life, referring to them as cognitive phenomenon and thus pointing out the use of bodily-

referred words such as *way forward*, *leadership*, *right decision*, *falling behind* etc. in the speeches. Wodak and de Cillia (2006: 717) also emphasize such tricks used by the language in speeches as construction of in-groups and out-groups, membership categorization, biological naturalizing and depersonalizing, giving stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits, reporting, describing, narrating, or quoting of events and utterances.

Considering the fact that there is no surprise in the fact that all the political addresses are carefully thought through, the use of rhetorical tricks and grand political addresses by the state leader are very well visible in the case of Putin and Russia. The question here is not if these methods are used, but how are they used in Russia's case, specifically concerning Crimea. The Russian leader's speeches are often very informative and emotional, allowing to understand not only his personal views, but guidance and an ideological imposition on the grand narrative of the whole country.

What has been implied by both political discourses and visual media discourses, is a strong will to influence its audiences by presenting ideological messages to them. These messages in the form of images and texts are often filled with strong statements and rather heavy content. In order to make these messages not only heard, but embraced and further reproduced by the audience, public addresses can be further loaded and charged with something allowing the messages to be heard even more thoroughly - with emotions.

2.5. Politics of Emotions

Adding emotional aspect to Stuart Hall's approach gives an extra value to evaluating and analyzing the encoding/decoding process in the Russian narrative of the Crimean annexation. Since the only element 'in between' encoding and decoding is a general

meaningful discourse, analyzing emotions can be an important contribution of the following thesis, shedding a light on the deeper processes in encoding/decoding.

Henderson (2008: 30) emphasizes that when emotions are unpacked, their political contours come into view. This relationship and its effect is reciprocal. Several scholars stress the importance of emotions in world politics (Bleiker & Hutchison 2008: 115, Berezin 2002: 34, Manning & Holmes 2014: 699 et al.). Nearly all of the scholars who believe in the importance of the emotions in politics also stress how unfairly emotions have been neglected by the political science.

As pointed out by Jack Barbalet (2006: 31), politics has always had an emotional element, but studying emotionality of politics has rather been one-sided, focusing more on the segment of political population, mainly referred to as simply 'masses'. It often referred to political elites as rational and therefore not acknowledging the importance of underlying emotions of political elites, which leads to misinterpreting the promotion of state's actions and decisions. Also, there exists an exaggerated stress on the emotion of fear because of the perception of the state as an ultimate authority, which is also misleading.

James M. Jasper (2006: 15) finds that emotions are an important micro-foundation upon which more complex political processes and outcomes depend. There are several types of emotions that can influence politics. On a micro-level, it is more useful to categorize emotions into clusters according to the intensity of their relevance to politics. According to Jasper (2006: 17) emotion clusters such as urges and reflex emotions do not have such a great effect on political developments as for example moods or moral emotions. Moods are a more long-lasting set of emotions. Disgust, fear, anger, compassion, justice, shame, and pride should rather be considered moral emotions. Moral emotions represent explicit principles that human beings possess and therefore can target bigger audiences.

As indicated, some emotions possess a bigger political influence than the others. Among all the emotions, anger can play the most important role in politics (Ost 2004: 230). According to Thompson (2006: 123), anger is an essential political emotion, because it is a response to perceived injustice. Anger can not only mobilize people to engage in political action, but also to fight fiercely perceived injustice. Humphrey (2001: 332) emphasizes the ability of anger to influence the feelings of inequality and exclusion. Henderson (2008: 29) also stresses that because anger seems to have been so effectively displaced in favor of a politics of hope that scholars should pay greater attention to its possibilities and question ever more closely how it is managed.

The sense of inequality and exclusion may in result lead to the negative set of emotions characterized as trauma or victimization. Representations of trauma can generate widely shared meanings, which in turn underpin political identity and community. Edkins (2006: 101) suggests that analyzing traumatic memory can be central to understanding different forms of political authority. Popular representations can mediate and attribute trauma with emotional meanings that are crucial to the construction or consolidation of wider political community (Hutchison 2010: 66). This indicates that negative emotions are very strongly used by the narrators to get their political messages through.

Barbalet (2006: 33) states that many politically relevant emotions are frequently experienced over long periods of time, which directly links emotional politics to developments in history and to the concept of memory. Bleiker & Hutchison (2008: 122), for instance, stress that emotions, and the situation in which they become political, are linked to particular historical, political and cultural circumstances, which is not surprising in Russian case, where historicism and memory have an extremely important role in the country's politics. With the help of emotions, analysis of contemporary uses and manifestations of the past in contemporary culture, including media representations of the past and versions of the past is possible (Pickering 2008: 194). Unsurprisingly, studying

memory as well is becoming increasingly common in the fields of political and cultural studies. In contemporary academia the resurgence of memory is not so much contested in terms of its occurrence but in terms of its implications for the construction of individual and collective temporal identities and historically rooted cultures (Keightley 2008: 175).

Keightley (2008: 176) also stresses that the relationship between memory and social environment is not a one-way flow: although what is remembered is dictated by the groups in which people participate, remembering also has a social function in the present. By remembering according to particular social conventions, those conventions are constantly being affirmed and re-constructed. The remembering agent is always the occupant of a particular social position or role, necessarily shaping their ideas and knowledge about the past. In order for memory to exist and have any role in lived experience it must be represented and communicated (Keightley 2008: 177). This is often achieved through using emotional historical narratives that coincide with the wider beliefs of the society. Memory also often relies upon a strong emotion of pride, which can also be an objective of the remembering object and is no stranger to Russian political discourse.

It is also important to highlight the relationship between emotions and particular cultures. Cultural distinctions can be marked by differences in particular emotional reactions. Despite the danger of creating stereotypes, the following relation between the cultural and emotional patterns should not be ignored. Barbalet (2006: 37) even argues that rather than observing culture in order to explain what emotions predominate, the emotional factor should be taken as a basis for characterizing or explaining culture. It is not unusual that Russian society and culture often embraces an image of being emotional and is not afraid of that kind of references about itself. Remembering history, and doing it emotionally, is definitely something Russian society can easily identify with.

One of the best ways to study emotions in politics according to Bleiker & Hutchison (2008: 122) is via observing numerous ways in which emotions are communicated, from political speeches and constitutional declarations to protest marches and televised depictions of famine, terrorism or any other major political event. Representations give perhaps the best understanding about the use of emotions in politics, since they matter and that they do so in a highly politicized manner. Bleiker & Hutchison (2008: 122) even believe that the real political battles today are being fought precisely within these visual and seemingly imaginary fields of media representations, where coded messages shape understandings of political phenomena more so than the actual phenomena themselves.

There are other ways to observe and understand emotions in politics. A very interesting point has been made by Solomon (2014: 729), who argues that a set of emotions he refers to as ‘affect’ play a role of sort of a ‘glue’ between message deliverers and the audiences. Language must be infused with some emotions, in order for it to have the ‘force’ that it often has. Put differently, words alone often cannot carry the power that they often have — the force of emotions is needed to explain how words resonate with audiences and have political effects beyond their mere verbal utterance as such. Thus, emotions should not be separated from the relationship of the presenter and receiver, encoder and decoder.

As presented above, there are theoretical concepts that might be useful to explain how political messages of the existing ideology can be coded in cultural texts and image, additionally using emotions. Before applying the approach of Stuart Hall to a case of narration of the annexation of Crimea by Russia, it is useful to have a quick look at the background of the case highlighted in the upcoming chapter.

3. Russian Annexation of the Crimean Peninsula

Russia's deployment of military forces within the sovereign territory of the Ukraine, its ordering of Ukrainian forces to withdraw from the Crimean Peninsula and its occupation and annexation of Crimea have been described by the international community as violations of international law. Yet Russia has defended itself arguing that it has not acted contrary to international law. First, Russia stated that it acted in defense of Russian speakers residing in Crimea. Then, Russia stated that its use of force was in response to a request for military assistance by the democratically elected head of the Ukrainian State. Later, Russia argued that it never used military force in the Ukraine; rather, it was local Ukrainian militias that stormed and occupied Ukrainian military bases. Finally, Russia argued that the annexation of the Crimea was achieved by a democratic referendum in which over 97% of Crimeans voted to voluntarily separate from Ukraine and join Russia as a federal subject.

Whatever the explanation was, the process of overtaking the Crimean peninsula took place step by step. Russia's explanations always involved different reasons and narratives. The annexation was narrated especially actively after Crimea was already a part of Russia, with politicians, media, and other influencers of the popular opinion explaining why Crimea has always been an organic part of the Russian State.

The next chapter will briefly focus on the meaning-making of the annexation by the Russian authorities. It is crucial to explain why against all odds, tremendous international pressure, and clear irrationality of the Crimean annexation Russia still shocked the world with one of the biggest 'checkmates' in the modern history of international relations. Perhaps, the annexation was not just a sheer step of power-politics, but a whole new page in the Russian way of thinking in international relations will go from now on. Perhaps, the annexation was even more than Russia bargained for - it is a whole new way of defining the identity of oneself.

3.1. Balancing pragmatism and emotions in Russian political discourse towards Crimea

According to the independent report of the late Boris Nemtsov and his colleagues (2015: 15), despite the fact that the annexation of Crimea would have meant a violation of three international agreements signed by Russia (The Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances signed on 5 December 1994, Treaty on friendship, cooperation and partnership between the Russian Federation and Ukraine signed on 31 May 1997, and Treaty Between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on the Russian-Ukrainian State Border signed on 28 January 2003) the annexation was a carefully planned military operation. It was never a spontaneous decision, but an operation where all the risks and possible reactions by the international community were taken into account.

In this light, it is crucial to ask what the main motivation to take such an enormous step was and what were the considerations. Perhaps, firstly one should look at the simple numbers to understand if annexation was rationally calculated. The annexation of Crimea has a potential to bring Russia some financial benefits. A need to pay Ukraine the annual \$97 million to station the Black Sea Fleet on the peninsula disappeared. Russia thus gained an opportunity to modernize the Fleet in any way it sees fit, which so far had been limited by the Russian-Ukrainian agreement which only provided for the possibility of renovating the equipment that was already there (Olszański & Wierzbowska-Miazga 2014). By gaining control over Crimea, Russia will eliminate the annual \$15 million passage cost of ships through the Kerch-Yenikal Canal, along with taking over the peninsula's entire infrastructure and the property of the Ukrainian state. The Center for Strategic and International Studies' expert Paul Schwartz (2014) also believes that control of Crimea provides Russia with important strategic defense capabilities.

However, Alexei Kudrin, Russia's former finance minister and head of the Civil Initiatives Committee, has said that the funding of annexed Crimea will cost Russia \$6-7 billion annually, and the total cost to Russia could even reach \$150-200 billion in three or four years (*Kudrin: Russia may lose...* 2015). Of course, this calculation is extremely approximate, since losses can be direct and indirect, such as losses related to the economic sanctions, the undermining of confidence in the Russian economy and politics etc. A non-existing economic rationale has also been pointed out by BBC's Richard Galpin (2015), who draws attention to a stunning 16.7% inflation rate rise since the annexation. For regular Russians, it means about 5% decrease in their annual salary (*Сколько для России стоила аннексия Крыма* 2014). Hence, the annexation *per se* hardly promised any long-time economic benefits to the Russian government.

Olszański and Wierzbowska-Miazga (2014) stress that apart from the need for direct financial outlays, Russia's annexation of Crimea also creates administrative and organizational problems. Issues with border infrastructure and the defense and demarcation of the borders need to be solved. Since Ukraine should be a party to most of the agreements, but does not recognize the annexation of Crimea, it will be extremely hard to achieve.

Perhaps, the rationale behind the sudden move from Russia had political motives? The answer to this question is both yes and no. Political reactions from the international community were everything but great. In fact, they were somewhat devastating. The expulsion of Russia from the G8 came three days after Moscow annexed Crimea from Ukraine says quite a lot about the position of world leaders. It seems that the West simply reinforced for itself the image of Russia as an unpredictable and dangerous country. The annexation of Crimea has strengthened the concerns of leaders of post-Soviet states about Russia since many of them seek to reduce their dependence on Moscow by efforts to

strengthen their cooperation with alternative international partners (Olszański & Wierzbowska-Miazga 2014).

Contrary to international reaction, the annexation of Crimea was a huge domestic propaganda success and has translated into real support for Vladimir Putin among both the general public and the elite. Nemtsov (2015: 5) mentions that concerned about the negative trend of Putin's post-election popularity decrease, Kremlin needed new means of strengthening Putin's electoral position. Considering the existing Russian imperial sentiments and strongly promoted myth of the unity of the so-called 'Russian world,' adding Crimea to Russian territory was undoubtedly a big success (Olszański & Wierzbowska-Miazga 2014). Kremlin surely feels like it strengthened its geopolitical position by the annexation of Crimea, positioning Russia as a country ready to actively defend the implementation of its interests in the international arena.

There definitely was balancing of all the gains and losses coming from the annexation done by pragmatically thinking Kremlin, it is just hard to say how well it was done. Still, as seen from the example of gaining popular support and strengthening Russian identity, the annexation of Crimea also signified a huge emotional outburst. Sharafutdinova (2014: 2) emphasizes that taking emotions into account allows for making sense of the rationality of particular actions that otherwise might appear irrational and difficult to comprehend. Therefore, focusing on the economic and political burdens associated with integrating Crimea into Russia, Putin's actions indeed seem irrational. However, if interests are tied to identity, history, and memory, the focus changes completely. Putin's actions magically become more sensible as they placed the Crimea issue right at the core of Russia's struggles with its national identity, post-imperial legacies, and the emotional trauma Russian society experienced after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Similar remarks have been done by Humphrey (2001: 335), who finds that emotions among the public about the nature of the polity are, for Putin, a reality – a force to be used. Discussions about the Russian idea, patriotism, belief in the greatness of Russia, statism and social solidarity are indeed very usual in the leading political discourse. The emotional state of the society is targeted with professional propaganda, specifically aiming at increasing the level of public anxiety and reviving historically-rooted national fears and hatreds associated with fascism and World War II. Because of the perceived loss of the international status and the nostalgia over past glory and greatness of the Soviet Union, the return of Crimea feels like a morally superior, responsible, and justified action on Russia's part (Sharafutdinova 2014: 3).

Leading Russian political discourse towards Crimea is indeed not only about pragmatism and rationality versus emotions, but rather it is balancing between the two. Indeed, Crimea has become an important part of the Russian political discourse in general, almost indicating it being a crucial point for the whole Russian identity construction.

3.2. Crimea as an assertive point of the shift in Russian identity

The speed and intensity of the Crimean peninsula's rise in the status of crucial part of the Russian history, identity, and statehood is something of a phenomenon in the modern history of international relations. Something that was mainly associated by Russians with sun, beach, and occasional glass of wine rose in the status of 'do or die' for the Russian consciousness. It almost seems like in a matter of seconds, Crimea became more than just a geographical place - it became a denominator of the Russian identity and so to say 'litmus paper' for understanding if one belongs to the category of *us* or *them*.

Understanding this shift in the discourse towards Crimea is crucial in explaining the narratives used during the annexation process of the peninsula. Engström (2014: 356) finds that general re-ideologization in Russia was already visible at the beginning of Vladimir Putin's third term as president of the Russian Federation in 2012, but started to get more attention in connection with the Ukrainian crisis and annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in March 2014. In this light, Osborn (2014) emphasizes that the peninsula's importance to Putin and to Russia, from a historical, military and geopolitical point of view - and for how Russians see themselves - is hard to overstate.

Richards (2014) believes that Russia's national identity is tied up in its geography. Confronted with a sprawling landmass, with few clear borders and a patchwork of different ethnicities, Russian governments have tried to build a coherent national identity using three touchstones: religion, war, and art. Crimea has not that surprisingly identified playing a significant part in all three. In this light, it would be wise to highlight very briefly general ways in which Russian identity-building has lately been directed.

Since a raise of patriotic upbringing in Putin's Russia can be indicated, nostalgia over Soviet times and revisionist moods have been identified as important parts of the Russian foreign policy by several scholars (Nikolayenko 2008: 256, Holak, Matveev & Havlena 2007: 650, Kappeler 2014: 114 et al.). Political propaganda of a historic nature has formed an essential part of communication policy in Russia, involving patriotic education and the active use of historical memory in building state's identity (Vázquez Liñán 2010: 176). Similarly to the Soviet times, the youth has actively been politicized and involved in the state's identity building process (Levintova & Butterfield 2010: 140).

Very closely tied to the Soviet nostalgia concept is something that has been described by Urnov (2014: 305) as the expression 'greatpowerness.' This denotes one of the most important components of Russian self-consciousness: a belief that Russia is or has to be a

great power. The process of 'being and thinking big' is embedded in the imperial legacy of the country and reassured by the Russia's hegemonic status in the former Soviet Union (Clunan 2014: 284). The great power image involves several important elements such as status, power resources/capabilities, set of images, and set of roles (Urnov 2014: 306-307). Forsberg, Heller & Wolf (2014: 261) even believe that restoring and strengthening its position as a great power has undoubtedly become Russia's primary goal in world politics.

Being a great power also means that the Russian identity has to go beyond Russia's borders (Biersack & O'Lear 2015: 254). This is reassured by the significant amount of Russian speaking population outside of the Russian borders. Russia is seen as the main identity-constituting unity for these people, united by the same past, culture, and religion. Engström (2014: 370) points out that so-called Russian Orthodox civilization, and the modern state has to use both resources, the Orthodox tradition and the best elements of the Soviet period to construct the one big narrative of being 'Russian.'

Despite it's greatness, Russia is thought to be treated rather unfairly. Prozorov (2007: 310) stresses Russia's tendency to victimize itself by embracing a role of the excluded country from the actual decision making in the world politics. Traumas also involve the dissolution of the Soviet Union, losing big territories and populations. The demonization of the West is something very usual in multiple Russian discourses and gives way to the 'us and them' polarization.

All of that makes Russia unique and different. Russia is seen as an alternative, more traditionalist way of opposing the category of 'them' often referring to the West. For example, Russian nonlinear warfare that calls for an increasing importance of nonmilitary means in achieving political and strategic goals (Biersack & O'Lear 2015: 253) is seen as opposing hard-power Western approach. Russia's way of understanding oneself as a unique entity can be traced back to several political theorists and is being actively reproduced by

the Russian president Vladimir Putin, for example via presenting his own Development Strategy for Russian Civilization.

In this colorful picture of crossed identities, fitting Crimea may seem like an impossible task. However, the production of the annexation narratives actually involved nearly all of the main facets of the Russian identity. Paradoxically, Crimean discourse fits perfectly in the overall context, because it seems like every part of the puzzle fitted perfectly. Crimean annexation is a crucial point for the Russian identity construction, because never before has everything 'said out loud' actually worked. Everything, gaining unfairly taken territory, protecting Russian speakers, gaining historically important sights etc. seemed legitimate reasons to take a part of another country. It seemed correct for the authorities and for the Russian people. For Russia, which for the first time since the collapse of the USSR has not lost territory, but gained it, the annexation was a victory for the existing ideology and constructed identity.

Sharafutdinova (2014: 2) ironically describes Crimea as a newly-found public fetish representing the recovery of the lost pride and prestige associated with the Soviet Union. Crimea quickly became an organic, historical, political, linguistic, cultural, geographical and religious part of Russia, something that should have never been questioned. Ovation and dangerous reassurance by the people to the authorities was given, leaving the international community holding their breath over the next possible 'victorious' moves of 'the Russian way.'

4. Research Method and Questions

This thesis seeks to look into how the annexation of the Crimean peninsula was narrated by the leading Russian political discourse and media discourse by examining two cases that represent the above mentioned discourses respectively. Based on the corresponding literature, 1) a political speech (March 18th address of President of Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin of State Duma deputies, Federation Council members, heads of Russian regions and civil society representatives in the Kremlin) was selected as a case representing a leading political discourse, and 2) a documentary (“Crimea: The Road Back Home” by Andrey Kondrashov released in March 2015) was chosen to represent the media discourse.

There are several reasons why the following cases were chosen to observe the narration of the Crimean annexation. Firstly, visual and textual representations are extremely actively used by the current Russian authorities, which means that their political ideology is actively reproduced via TV channels, radio stations and other forms of political performance. The speech of Vladimir Putin used as one of the cases got a tremendous amount of feedback from the international community and Russian audiences. It is a masterpiece of not only explaining the annexation of Crimea, but constructing the whole image of current Russian self-consciousness. Similarly, the documentary film was allegedly watched in almost every second(!) household in Russia, meaning a huge amount of feedback and decodings respectively. Just like the speech, Kondrashov’s documentary became a hot topic not only in Russia, but abroad as well, often being referred to as showing multiple facets of Russian identity-building process.

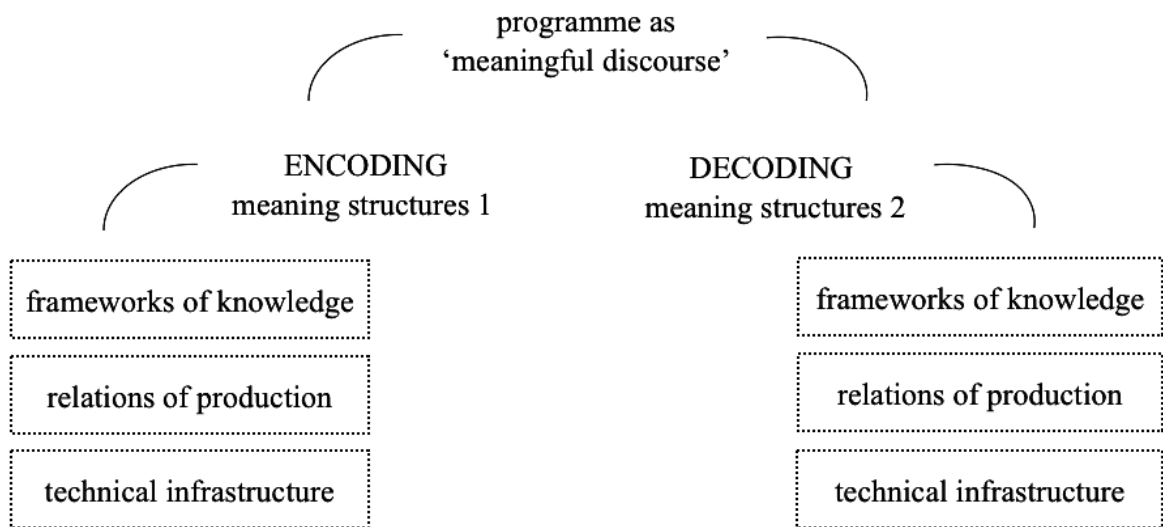
Inspired by the opportunities of the theoretical approach and topicality of the following subject outlined before, the main research question is the following:

How is the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation narrated in the leading political discourse and media discourse?

The research question is further elaborated by looking into the following sub-questions:

- How much does the leading political discourse of the Crimean annexation coincide with the media discourse?
- What is the role of emotions in encoding and decoding of the annexation in both the leading political and media discourses?

In order to find answers to the following research questions, the cases will be analyzed according to the encoding/decoding scheme provided by Stuart Hall in his 1973 iconic article “Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse,” which goes as follows:



Source: Stuart Hall (1973)

An approach of Stuart Hall signifying the encoding and decoding processes was chosen as the main prism for approaching the cases. However, the lack of the focus on the emotional aspect of encoding/decoding process, which also can be considered crucial at both stages to make the image 'matter,' the following thesis also seeks to bringing out the use of emotions in the communicator-receiver relationship. The research then goes on as follows. Firstly, the case representing the leading political discourse will be observed at the stage of encoding, which will result dominant encoded narratives and emotions brought out. Then, following Hall's model, the reaction of the audience on the leading political discourse's representation will be observed, which will result in determining if the same narratives and emotions were embraced by the people. Then the same is done with the representation of the leading media discourse.

In both cases, the encoding stage involves analyzing the products themselves, the use of language, language structures, narrative ideologies etc. In search of the main narratives used, this thesis will highlight the ones used more than once in narration. If the language structure is used many times and has a crucial importance for the overall message of the representation, it will be considered a narrative. Additionally, the emotional part of the encoding processes will be analyzed. Since it is extremely hard to operationalize emotions, mainly very emotional language structures and raw strong moral emotions highlighted by James M. Jasper (2006: 15) will be considered the use of emotions. As highlighted by Hall (1973) himself, analyzing encoding is in many ways difficult, because researcher cannot ideally mimic the coded messages, but rather is interpreting, thus decoding them him/herself. Therefore, just like in Hall's approach, more stress should be put on the decoding process by the audience.

In order to analyze decoding, several resources are going to be used. In decoding representation of the political discourse, public's responses in blogs, comments in the media resources and Youtube comments will be used. Because of the fact that the documentary

film received more responses, social media such as Twitter tweets with *#КрымПутьДомой* and *#КрымПутьНаРодину*, and Facebook responses in the community *Крым. Путь на Родину* will be added to the set of analyzed decodings of the annexation. Similarly to the analysis of the encodings, the language, decoded ideologies and emotions will be observed. Also, it will be identified if audience decoded messages in dominant-hegemonic, negotiated or the oppositional way, allowing to make better conclusions about the success of encoding.

The thesis seeks at finding a right balance between the different sources of the decodings. Three main categories can generally be referred to as social media, news articles, and blogs. From then on, just the existing responses were used, which means that there was no aim at getting a very certain amount of responses by the people. Therefore, the amount of responses varies. Social media-wise it is important to note that Youtube comments were forbidden for the documentary, and similarly, Twitter and Facebook responses to the speech were either irrelevant or non-existent. The total amount of comments analyzed in social media was therefore 53 in case of political discourse and 113 in case of media discourse. News articles were equally responsive comment-wise in both cases and if it was possible, this thesis aimed at seeking people's feedback on more liberal press as well. 95 responses concerning political and 53 responses concerning media discourse in news articles were analyzed. Since not that many blogs were highlighting the two cases representing political and media discourse, the ones who had these discussions were analyzed, once again not aiming at getting a particular number of responses. It resulted the analysis of 87 political discourse responses and 142 media discourse responses in the blogosphere. In total, 235 responses to political discourse and 308 responses to media discourse were analyzed, despite the initial bigger number of the actual comments that were either deleted, inappropriate, or irrelevant.

Still, one should take into consideration that although focusing on two single cases provides the opportunity to obtain a necessary level of detailed knowledge, two cases highlight the

developments in only those contextual environments - that is a leading political discourse of the current authorities and a media discourse actively produced by the Russia 1 (*Россия 1*) TV channel. The same goes for the decoding stage of the research. One possible constraint of the thesis is also the fact that only existing data (comments) was analyzed. Naturally it is not possible to determine who commented and how many times. Also, usually only people interested in this topic would go to blogs or comment under news article, which somewhat limits the explanatory power of the paper.

5. Encoding/decoding of the Leading Political Discourse: Crimean Speech of Vladimir Putin

The subsequent chapter is an application of the Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model to the case of Crimean annexation. In addition to revealing the encoded narratives of the annexation and analyzing decoding positions taken by the audience, this chapter will also introduce the encoded/decoded emotions in the speech. Showing which narratives were more thoroughly injected with emotional components will allow to indicate if these narratives were also more popular in the decoding process.

5.1. Encoding the narratives of the leading political discourse

The referendum on the status of Crimea was held despite the opposition from Kiev on March 16 2014. Official, although questionable results, reported about 95% of participating voters in Crimea and Sevastopol were in favor of joining Russia. The next day, the Supreme Council of Crimea declared the formal independence of the Republic of Crimea, which Parliament almost immediately requested the admittance of the breakaway republic into Russia. Russian president Vladimir Putin officially recognized the Republic of Crimea by decree and approved the admission of Crimea and Sevastopol as federal subjects of Russia. On March 18, a historic speech was performed by Putin in front of the State Duma deputies, Federation Council members, heads of Russian regions and civil society representatives in the Kremlin.

The speech has a monumental set of narratives encoded in it, varying from explaining the reasons of Crimean annexation to a greater vision of Russian identity. Clearly targeting a bigger audience, than just the one Vladimir Putin was performing to at that moment, the

speech can be considered a mirror image of what leading Russian political discourse was at that moment.

Firstly, the speech is eager to present Crimea as an organic part of Russia, having a tremendous importance for Russia culturally, linguistically, and politically. Putin (2014) simply proclaims, *“In people’s hearts and minds, Crimea has always been an inseparable part of Russia.”* The following claim is thereafter supported by several historical examples that claim an organic unity of Crimea with Russia. such as, *“Everything in Crimea speaks for our shared history and pride. /.../ it is enough to know the history of Crimea and what Russia and Crimea have always meant for each other,”* referring to Crimea as *“our backyard and historic area”* etc. (Putin 2014).

Naturally, an organic unity is constructed via common history, religion, ethnicity, culture, and language. Putin (2014) refers to Crimea as *“/.../ the location of ancient Khersones, where Prince Vladimir was baptized.”* A sudden turn to common Christian heritage is made, noting that *“Orthodoxy predetermined the overall basis of the culture, civilization and human values /.../“* (Putin 2014). Crimea is referred to be *“similar to Russia as a whole,”* because of it’s multinational population. Of course, Putin (2014) does not fail to mention the majority of them being Russian and even the existing Ukrainian population *“considering Russian their native language.”*

In fact, Crimea belonging to Ukraine is seen by Putin as a rather unfortunate historical development that is almost an accident. Crimea *“/.../ being handed over like a sack of potatoes,”* resulted to the fact that *“/.../ the historical South of Russia ended up in the Republic of Ukraine”* (Putin 2014). From this, one thing is clear, Crimea was never Ukrainian, it was always Russian.

Bravely cutting off Crimea from Ukraine goes very well along with demonizing Ukrainian leaders and politics that can be considered the second major narrative detectable in the speech. Putin (2014) does not hold himself back describing organizers of the Ukrainian government takeover as “*neo-Nazis, Russophobes and anti-Semites.*” Using World War II rhetorics, Putin claims new Ukrainian ideologies being solely connected to Bandera, who was Hitler’s accomplice during WW II. Accusations culminate in a strong proclamation Putin (2014) makes about Ukrainian authorities, saying, “*Time and time again attempts were made to deprive Russians of their historical memory, even of their language and to subject them to forced assimilation.*”

This wonderful narration also contains a strong reference to the nostalgia over Soviet times. Putin (2014) regretfully states that, “*/.../ it was impossible to imagine that Ukraine and Russia may split up and become two separate states. However, this has happened.*” Even more, Putin (2014) finds that dissolution of the Soviet Union should have never happened, but impossible became a reality. His nostalgic moods almost create a geopolitical epiphany, indicating that, “*After the dissolution of bipolarity on the planet, we no longer have stability.*”

Putin does not forget to mention the ultimate right of the Crimean people to determine their own faith. Pleading for the American and European audiences, Putin (2014) makes a reference to the Declaration of Independence, unification of East and West Germany, and United Nations Charter. He tops it with a thick layer of metaphorical addresses, such as, “*Isn’t the desire of Crimea’s residents to freely choose their fate such a value?*” referring to the freedom-connected values of American people.

Despite wonderful metaphorical language structures, Putin is being shockingly open about who there is to blame for the annexation, and surprisingly it is once again the West and the United States in particular. A couple of anticipated, but still brilliant references are made

towards the Kosovo precedent, intervention in Libya, Arab Spring etc. Blaming the West for tremendous amount of human casualties in Kosovo, Putin (2014) reminds his audience that, “*Our western partners, led by the United States of America, prefer not to be guided by international law in their practical policies, but by the rule of the gun.*” Western barbarism is clearly opposed to an alternative and special ‘Russian way.’

Contrary to irresponsible behavior of the West, Russian actions in Crimea are presented by Putin (2014) as extremely deliberate, stating that, “*There was not a single armed confrontation in Crimea and no casualties.*” Russia being diplomatically correct is supported by Putin’s claim that, “*Russia’s Armed Forces never entered Crimea; they were there already in line with an international agreement.*” It is a clear attempt of the Russian leader to oppose Russia to the Western countries. This narrative is brilliantly summed up by yet another metaphorical claim of Putin (2014), “*I cannot recall a single case in history of an intervention without a single shot being fired and with no human casualties.*”

Also, the set of narrations of the Crimean annexation involves a deeper understanding of Russian status struggle in the world politics. In his speech, Putin (2014) several times refers to a struggle of his country to be taken seriously in global affairs and a strong need to defend Russia’s national interests. “*.../ they (the West) have lied to us many times, made decisions behind our backs, placed us before an accomplished fact,*” argues Putin (2014). This unjust feeling of being left out has therefore culminated with Russia saying its decisive word in Crimea and finally doing what it had to do all along - protect its interests. Paradoxically, Putin (2014) almost threatens international community with “*Russia snapping back hard, if needed,*” “*Russia always defending the interests of Russian-speaking people using political, diplomatic and legal means,*” and “*Russia responding to irresponsible and aggressive statements accordingly.*” The speech almost shouts that Russia is back, and not only in Crimea, but on the international arena.

Last, but not least, Putin tries really hard to present the whole annexation of Crimea as legitimate in the eyes of Russian public, stressing a unanimity of the Russian society on the decision to annex Crimea. Putin (2014) emphasizes, that, “*Russia’s foreign policy position on this matter drew its firmness from the will of millions of our people, our national unity and the support of our country’s main political and public forces.*” Stating that “*/.../ the absolute majority of our people clearly do support what is happening,*” Putin brilliantly makes the whole annexation look like the ultimate will of his nation, rather than his regime. Strangely, people are being sold something they actually did themselves.

Shortly put, the following list of narratives can be deducted from this brilliant speech, constituting a meaningful leading Russian political discourse towards Crimean annexation:

1. Crimea always being an unquestionable part of Russia;
2. Demonizing Ukrainian authorities;
3. Nostalgia over Soviet times;
4. The right of self-determination of Crimean people;
5. Defining rivalry with the West;
6. Presenting the Russian way as diplomatic and non-military;
7. Struggle over Russian status in global affairs;
8. Annexation is legitimized by the Russian public.

5.2. Encoding the emotions of the leading political discourse

Vladimir Putin’s speech is significant not only because of the multitude of encoded narratives, but also because the speech is full of something that deeply appeals to the Russian audience - it’s full of emotions. It allowed the messages to sound even more powerfully.

There are several cases of very personal addresses made by Putin. Targeting specific audiences leaves an incredibly personal feeling, such as Putin (2014) referring to the American people who “*hold freedom above all else*” or thanking Chinese people for “*taking into account the full historical and political context.*” Putin also very personally addresses the audience as either friends, colleagues or some other emotional way. Especially ironically appealing is meant a phrase describing possible NATO forces in Crimea, “*Of course most of them are wonderful guys, but it would be better to have them come and visit us, be our guests, rather than the other way around.*”

These addresses are strengthened very emotional metaphors used by the Russian leader. His reference to Crimea as “*the sack of potatoes*” being handed from Russia to Ukraine certainly calls for the feeling of injustice. The same goes for the metaphor of Ukrainian public being “*milked*” by their authorities or Russian soldiers “*avoiding smearing their uniforms in blood*” during the annexation.

Of course there are several wordings that are aimed at addressing a very certain type of emotional reactions. For example, there are plenty of references to a glorious history, patriotism and pride. After naming several Crimean sights, Putin (2014) says about them, “*Each one of these places is dear to our hearts, symbolizing Russian military glory and outstanding valor.*” Trying to confirm his point about Crimea being inseparable part of Russia, Putin (2014) is sure that this assumption is “*/.../ based on truth and justice and was passed from generations to generations /.../*”. Especially patriotic feelings towards Crimea are expressed in the notion of the graves of Russian soldiers being in Crimea.

Other than historical references, the rest of the speech plays significantly with the ‘fifty shades of anger’ and other negative emotions. After Crimea ending up with Ukraine after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia felt “*not only robbed, but plundered.*” According to Putin (2014) Crimea as a part of Ukraine was “*outrageous historical*

injustice.” Of course, when Crimean people asked help from the big Russian brother, “*we could not leave the plea unheeded*” since it simply would have been a betrayal. That kind of language is far from coincidental.

The serious feeling of injustice, exclusion and victimization is also visible in Putin’s way of describing West’s attitude towards Russia and her actions. Putin claims the West to have lied to Russia and making decisions behind her back. Russian president also angrily snaps back at the Western countries for the violations of international law, “*They say we are violating norms of international law. Firstly, it’s a good thing that they at least remember that there exists such thing as international law - better late than never.*”

Inevitably, some narratives of annexation are more strongly injected with the emotions than others, which may result to their bigger appeal to the audience. Strong moral emotions such as pride and patriotism are clearly evident in the ‘Crimea always being an unquestionable part of Russia’ narrative, and the feelings of justice and solidarity can co-exist with the narrative ‘The right of self-determination of Crimean people.’ Other narratives are closely connected to the negative emotions of injustice, exclusion and anger, such as ‘Demonizing Ukrainian authorities,’ ‘Defining rivalry with the West,’ ‘Struggle over Russian status in global affairs’ and ‘Nostalgia over Soviet times.’ Although other narratives can also be associated with emotions, they are definitely not as strong as the moral emotions and therefore are expected to have less emotional appeal in the stage of decoding by the audience.

5.3. Decoding the narratives and emotions of the leading political discourse

The speech of Vladimir Putin got a tremendous amount of feedback from various audiences and it was a starting point of a bigger discussion about the re-shaping of Russian identity and Russian foreign policy discourse in general. Despite the audience being the whole

world, the emotional speech was undoubtedly targeting the Russian society, wanting to create the legitimacy of the annexation in the eyes of the Russian public.

In order to analyze how well did Putin's address worked on the Russian people, several resources of the existing reactions should be studied. To understand the position of the audience, comments directly on Youtube under the official video of the speech, comments of the news articles concerning the speech, and comments in a blog will be taken as the main resources for the stage of decoding. According to the encoding/decoding model, a dominant position in the decoding process can be detected. On top of that, specifically which narratives were the most popular will also be brought out. If the narratives are the ones containing strong emotions, their use by Vladimir Putin will be considered a successful use of emotions.

Firstly, decoding process should focus on the comments section of the Youtube video (*Крымская речь - 2-я Историческая речь Владимира Путина 2014*) of the speech. Out of the existing 57 comments, 4 are shown empty, leaving only 53 comments to analyze. Out of the 53 feedbacks on the video, 45 were interpreted from the dominant-hegemonic position, 4 from negotiated and 4 from oppositional position. Interestingly, the general trend of both positive and negative responses focus on the persona of Mr. Putin. Comments of the users vary from *"Putin is the man, I am proud of him!"*, *"This is our president, well done!"* and *"This man is not lying and he means what he says!"* to *"Putin is an aggressor; occupant and fascist!"* and *"I am for Russia, therefore naturally against Putin."* Those users interpreting the speech in negotiated manner agree with the presented ideology, but add interesting details such as *"Kazakhstan should be next. There are so many Russian territories in there and it is simply not fair /.../"* or *"Belarus should be Russian as well!"*

There are several narratives that were purely embraced by the public. Among them is a narrative 'Crimea always being an unquestionable part of Russia' with comments such as

“Crimea is Russian! It’s forever!” or “Crimea is back in Russia.” Some users clearly feel nostalgic about the Soviet times with *“We give you ex-Soviet Union!”* or embrace the West as being the biggest rival of Russia with a comment such as, *“/.../ he is the only president who holds his head high in the relations with the US and the EU. I suggest we support this head of state!”* Many of the users embracing the dominant-hegemonic interpretation are being extremely emotional, stressing the historical importance of the speech and patriotically announcing *“I am Russian and proud of it!”* or *“Hurray, I live in Russia! /.../ I am proud of my country and nation!”*

Equally interesting are public’s responses in different Russian media resources such as reactions in the comments sections of different newspapers highlighting the news about the speech. Among them are comments under the article named ‘The triumph of the soft power’ in an online business newspaper *Взгляд* (The View). The article (*Триумф «мягкой силы»* 2014) itself takes on rather dominant-hegemonic position, highlighting the importance of the speech in geopolitical terms, protecting Russia’s interests in international politics etc. Despite a rather modest amount of content-rich comments, only 10 out of 20 comments actually discuss the speech, all the comments on the topic take on a similar position to the one in the article and the one presented by the original speech.

Predominantly, people believe the annexation of Crimea being a historical moment for Russia, supported by the comments such as *“/.../ This is a historically crucial moment that is going to be remembered for centuries. It is a reunification of Russia! /.../”* or *“The world will never be the same after the return of Crimea and Putin’s speech. It is the beginning of a multipolar world in which Russia is one of the poles /.../.”* Audience also feel quite patriotic and proud about the annexation, stressing that, *“/.../ I have not been so proud about my country for decades! /.../”* or *“/.../ People are crying from happiness! Finally, we can be proud of our country! /.../”* Among strong positive moral emotions, there is also a sense of loss, anger and injustice for dissolution of the Soviet Union and losing Crimea in the first

place, articulated as “*People were betrayed and disoriented. We voted for the Soviet Union to stay, but we were fooled! /.../*” or “*/.../ We have to understand that this is no time to be weak. Russia was once on her knees, choking from the tears when the Soviet Union was dissolved. This cannot happen again! /.../*” Arguments of the audience are indeed extremely emotional.

A hugely popular daily newspaper *Московский комсомолец* (Moscow Komsomolets) was covering a story about the reactions of the political elite, who witnessed Putin perform the speech with an article ‘Putin’s Crimean address: what was going on in the halls and hallways of Kremlin?’ The article (*Обращение Путина по Крыму: что творилось в зале и коридорах Кремля* 2014) had quite a few interesting comments that reflected the way people interpreted the speech and its message. Out of 76 comments, 27 were off the topic or impossible to interpret the audience position from. Out of the rest 49 comments, only 2 can be considered an expression of oppositional way of decoding the speech. The rest of the reactions are the reflection of audience embracing the dominant-hegemonic way of interpretation.

The most popular decoded narrative was once again ‘Crimea always being an unquestionable part of Russia’ with comments such as, “*The fact that Crimeans decided to reunite with Russia is great, we are one,*” “*I am happy and proud to have an opportunity to welcome Crimea back home. Welcome back brothers. Go Russia!*” or “*Welcome home. We always were and we will always be one nation!*” There are several other deeply emotional comments about being proud of being Russian, being proud of the president, Russians never giving up, and finally being united as one nationality. Some reactions are directly focused on negatively describing the Western countries as Russia’s main rivals, such as in comments, “*/.../ London and Washington have always had plans against Russia. /.../ The ones who believe that America and Europe should dictate what to do to Russia, do not belong here /.../*” or “*Now we hear threats. We shouldn’t be worried though, NATO does*

not want to bury its soldiers in Russian soil.” Emotions in the comments rise up and down, ranging from euphoric to angry, proud and happy to being misunderstood and excluded.

Similar comments are also visible at Russia’s leading liberal business broadsheet, *Коммерсантъ* (The Businessman) web-page under the timeline (*Владимир Путин подписал договор о вхождении Крыма в состав России 2014*) of the March 18, 2014 events. Among 36 comments, two main narratives of dominant-hegemonic position prevalent: ‘Crimea always being an unquestionable part of Russia’ and ‘Defining rivalry with the West.’ The first narrative is supported by the comments such as, “*Why do we even need to do so much explaining? It is simply enough to say that we amended a historical injustice made 54 years ago and that’s the key here,*” “*Today, 21st century started for Russia! Now everything is going to change! We now live in a different country and I hope it will all get better!*” and “*What a happy reunification. Congratulations, everyone!*” The second narrative has been expressed by the audience with comments like, “*All the sanctions and filth from the Western democracies are going to look like they are punishing Russia for helping our brothers!*” and “*Sanctions against Russia are basically telling us that we shouldn’t use the methods of the United States, that it is only their privilege.*” Despite many positions supporting dominant-hegemonic interpretation of the speech, the readers of the following paper also express more oppositional positions with comments such as, “*It will not get any better or different. Russia is a swamp and it will continue being it!*” or “*This is all one big joke. Let’s see what is going to be a reaction of the civilized world.*”

Finally, a blog of Kristina Potupchik, a member of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation will be taken as an example of decoding of the speech in so to say the blogosphere environment. Miss Potupchik’s blog is available at the Radio Echo of Moscow webpage and the reactions to her post named *Крымская речь Владимира Путина (2014)* were observed for decodings. The short post itself completely takes on a dominant-hegemonic narration of the Crimean annexation, using narratives such as ‘Crimea always

being an unquestionable part of Russia,' 'Demonizing Ukrainian authorities,' 'Presenting the Russian way as diplomatic and non-military,' and 'Struggle over Russian status in global affairs' at the stage of decoding.

However, the blog of Kristina Potupchik stands out by receiving a big amount of interesting feedback from the Russian public, a total of 232 responses and comments. Stunningly, comments in the blog were almost completely opposite from all the results mentioned above. Firstly, it is important to highlight that 78 comments were marked as "hidden" and therefore their essence could not have been analyzed. About 67 comments were either inappropriate, blaming the blogger for complete incompetence, repetitions of thoughts by the same commentators, or simply being off the topic. Out of the remaining 87 comments to analyze, 71 took an oppositional position of decoding of the speech, which means that only 16 comments actually supported dominant-hegemonic way of interpretation of Putin's address.

These striking results also revealed a continuation of the trend in supportive comments of the speech to use emotional narratives. Those interpreting the speech in dominant-hegemonic way mirrored narratives such as 'Presenting the Russian way as diplomatic and non-military' with, "*.../ Russia did her own Maidan in Crimea, but without any smoke or blood,*" narrative 'Defining rivalry with the West' with, "*European Union, Merkel and Obama need a reality check. They are completely inadequate,*" or narrative 'Crimea always being an unquestionable part of Russia with, "*Crimean people are crying from happiness. Welcome back home!*" Mostly, the ones supporting the message of the speech simply approve the annexation, but sometimes also mention the narrative 'Annexation is legitimized by the Russian public' with comments like, "*Putin indeed did everything correctly. He has the support of Crimean and Russian people.*"

As for the oppositional way of interpreting, which in the case of this blog environment seems to be dominant, comments seem to oppose the narratives of the speech such as ‘Presenting the Russian way as diplomatic and non-military’ with comments such as, “*What does it even mean that the annexation was completely peaceful and without causing any pain? Crimean people will feel the pain fully after being under Putin’s rule*” or “*There wasn’t any blood because of Ukrainian forces being smart about it, not Russia being peaceful. Our soldiers were ready to rip everyone apart.*” Some commentators find the annexation to be really inappropriate, saying, “*This is a Soviet-imperialist triumph. I am simply disgusted!*” or, “*Crimea was taken over really meanly by the people without any identification. They were the puppets of the Kremlin thieves.*” Many people taking the oppositional standpoint look more thoroughly into the consequences of the annexation, commenting, “*I am afraid that Putin is not going to pay for his speech himself, but it will all be done by simple Russian people,*” or, “*The only “merit” of Putin’s words is that Russian and Ukrainian people will hate each other for a very long time now.*” It almost seems that the following audience was more mature decoding the entered narratives, messages and emotions. One of the users sums the speech up with his comment, “*This is a nasty lie of Putin! This is all filthy and false, and is meant for the dumb audience! /.../*”

All in all, several interesting conclusions can be made about the decoding process of the Putin’s so-called Crimean speech. Dominant-hegemonic position of interpretation can be considered more preferable by the public, although results show that it can vary significantly based on the feedback platform. Embracing the dominant-hegemonic position also often means embracing different narrations of annexation, most frequently the ones with strong moral emotions injected in them. The negotiated position was not taken by many commentators, although in some cases they show an interesting way of the speech interpretation. Finally, although the oppositional interpretation was not as common, it also revealed several crucial ways of understanding encoded messages.

6. Encoding/decoding of the Leading Media Discourse: “Crimea: The Road Back Home” documentary film by Andrey Kondrashov

This chapter is also an application of the Stuart Hall’s encoding/decoding model to the case of narration of Crimean annexation. Similarly to the previous case, the analysis of the documentary will reveal the encoded narratives of annexation and decoding positions taken by the audience. The encoded/decoded emotions in the documentary will also be highlighted. Once again, showing which narratives were more thoroughly injected with emotional components will make it possible to indicate if these narratives were also more often embraced by the audience in the decoding process.

6.1. Encoding the narratives of the leading media discourse

Because of the specificity of the documentary films and motion pictures in general, the amount of material to analyze was significantly bigger and therefore more complicated. In the analysis of the images, such as this piece by Kondrashov, not only what is being shown matters, but also what is being said, the overall format of the production and so on. Surprisingly, despite a dramatic increase of the material to analyze, the narration of the story in this media discourse did not significantly differ from the speech case of the leading political discourse.

What is pretty clear though, is that techniques used to convince the audience to believe what is seen on the screen has become much more advanced. The structure of the movie reminds a timeline of the annexation process and the narration starts from the February events in Maidan, it specifically focuses on the figure of Ukrainian ex-president Yanukovich and his escape from Kiev. From then on, events in Crimea are focused on one by one, leading to the referendum on independence and consequently to Crimea “reuniting”

with Russia. In between the stories and personal interviews with the actual participants in the events, president Putin is being interviewed, sharing his opinion on the developments, Russian position, his personal contribution to the ‘Crimean Spring,’ and so on.

Overall set of narratives used by Kondrashov practically coincides with Putin’s speech and leading political discourse’s position concerning the Crimean events, but adding visual content, personal stories and a great director’s work, narratives start blooming way more. Although the speech itself had some raw emotions encoded in it, the narration in the documentary seems soaked with emotions, leaving audiences proud of their country and president, angry on the monstrous nationalists from Kiev and excluded by manipulative Western democracies. Everything is explained in such colorful detail, that narratives start going beyond their own borders.

Perhaps one narrative, which was strongly used in the speech was not as evident in the documentary, it is the ‘Nostalgia over Soviet times’ narrative. Only once, the past Soviet times played a significant part of the narration. The head of the Crimean Republic, Sergey Aksyonov explained that Simferopol, the capital of Crimea, was claimed to be the nest of the enemies by Kiev. Kiev demanded the statue of Lenin be removed from the main square of the city. The statue of Lenin was where people gathered to protest and therefore Aksyonov explains, “*We were ready to defend the statue, it was a symbol of stability for us*” (Kondrashov 2015). This means that the following narrative was not taken as one of the basics in narrating the annexation by the leading media discourse.

However, one new narrative was added by the leading media discourse focusing on the legality of Russian actions in Crimea. Firstly, it is several times confirmed by the actions concerning helping Yanukovich. The narration explains that Yanokovich had solutions to existing problems in Ukraine, but instead, the protesters in Maidan took over the government and against the constitution, forced a legitimate president to withdraw from his

position. The same goes for Russian military being present in the Parliament of Crimea in order for the legitimate deputies to feel safe in their working environment (Kondrashov 2015). By helping legitimate Ukrainian and Crimean authorities, Russia tries to seemingly legalize the intervention. It is all topped with Putin's opinion that, "*Russia did not violate any international agreements concerning the amount of soldiers in Crimea. We never exceeded the amount of military presence previously agreed upon with Ukraine*" (Kondrashov 2015). The new narrative can thus be named 'Legality of the Russian actions in Crimea.'

There is also a slight change in narrative 'Annexation is legitimized by the Russian public' because of one important addition to the following narrative. As explained several times by Putin and the narrator, the legitimization primarily came from all the people of Crimea, even more, they demanded Crimea come back to Russia. Putting it almost in the form of necessity, legitimization is taken to a whole new level, it becomes a matter of life or death.

Here, problematic Crimean Tatars are actively used as one of the ways showing an extreme need to annex Crimea, legitimized by all of the nations of Crimea. As narration goes on, it is explained that Ukrainian authorities threatened Tatars of new deportations, if Crimea becomes a part of Russia. Some of their leaders tried convincing people that their situation in Russia is not going to get worse, because it cannot possibly be worse than it already is. "*We have not seen any good from Ukraine over these years,*" says one of the leaders of Crimean Tatars. "*We are being manipulated and used as a tool by Kiev!*" claims one of the women from Mamut-Sultan Tatar village (Kondrashov 2015). this is all supported by strong images of Tatars living in poverty, without drinking water, electricity and, often without shelter. Because of such a strong part of different nationalities of Crimea legitimizing the annexation, it would be wise to slightly change the name of this narrative to 'Annexation is legitimized by the Russian public and demanded by all of the Crimean nations.'

In that case, the Russian public legitimizing the annexation is still strongly supported by the documentary. Images of hundreds of thousands of people in Moscow marching in support of Crimean decision to join Russia are supported with striking numbers of polls. Russian people were questioned and showed that the overwhelming support for the Crimean reunification with Russia was given by the public. Percentage of people supporting Crimean annexation never dropped below 80%, leaving the audience with a clear understanding that Russian authorities' actions in Crimea were a strongly supported by the Russian people.

No striking changes were indicated in the use of narrative 'Struggle over Russian status in global affairs.' Although this narrative is hardly supported by the visual content, it is strongly brought in by Vladimir Putin. As explained by narrator, although there was a consensus over Russian actions in both Crimea and Russia, the opposition was only fierce in Brussels and Washington. "*Western countries tried to stop the reunification in every possible way. Most probably, it was yet another attempt to shut Russia down and fulfill their own interests. I will be honest with you, ignoring Russia is not possible anymore,*" states Putin. He adds that, "*None of this would have happened if I did not know that I am acting on the behalf of the interests of the Russian people and our whole country. It does not mean that we should not take into consideration the interests of our partners. It simply means that our partners as well have to accept and honor the interests of Russia*" (Kondrashov 2015). Although the following narrative is not mentioned as obviously anywhere else in the movie, it is also extremely evident in connection with the rivalry with the West.

The use of the narrative 'The right of self-determination of Crimean people' surely shifts closer to the narrative connected to all the Crimean nations demanding stronger Russian presence in Crimea, but still stands out as a separate narrative, with plenty of visual and textual material to prove its strong presence in the leading media discourse. Even before the official title of the movie, Putin proclaims that, "*We needed to give people a chance to*

determine their own faith and express their opinion” (Kondrashov 2015). Similar rhetoric goes on in several other stories told in the documentary, such as Crimeans voluntarily forming resistance units, constantly protesting against Ukrainian authorities and expressing their pro-Russian views in every possible manner. Putin cannot withhold mentioning that, *“The local resistance played a crucial role in all of this. It was their own choice and all of our decisions were based on the will of the Crimean people.”* The head of the Crimean Republic, Sergey Aksyonov once again expresses his opinion, saying that *“People were standing in line to vote for the reunification with Russia. An absolute record in terms of appearance was registered. People made their decision”* (Kondrashov 2015). Although this time no references to any precedents such as Kosovo were made, every frame of regular people waving Russian flags or voting in the referendum seeks to show that people had the right to voice their opinion and determine their own faith.

Any significant changes in the use of the narrative ‘Presenting the Russian way as diplomatic and non-military’ were not detected, although in the documentary this narrative was very strongly supported by the visual representations. A new term, “polite people,” referring to Russian soldiers in green uniforms was introduced in the documentary. They were there to assure the safety of deputies and their families, narration explains. The term “polite people” was created by the Crimean people themselves. Interviewees mention that these people were extremely polite, neat and friendly, and that they came there to protect, not to invade. This is supported by a set of imagery of Crimean children hugging the soldiers and taking pictures with them. There is also another interesting way of portraying this narrative. Although Russian military commanders suggested Putin to demonstrate full force of the Russian military to protect their national interests in Crimea, Putin refused, saying that, *“The Cold War is over and there is no need for yet another international crisis, similar to Cuban”* (Kondrashov 2015). According to narration and images, in order to avoid violence, Russian authorities and Crimean public convinced Ukrainian military to switch sides instead of fighting. In his post scriptum interview, Putin admits that, *“We supported*

this bloodless referendum and I am pretty sure that if we wouldn't have done that, the events in Crimea would have mirrored the events in Donbass, if not been even worse" (Kondrashov 2015).

Although some narratives taken over from the leading political discourse remain relatively the same in the documentary, three narratives were absolutely dominantly presented in the leading media discourse: 'Crimea always being an unquestionable part of Russia,' 'Demonizing Ukrainian authorities,' and 'Defining rivalry with the West.' These narratives were expanded, masterfully visualized and have become almost overwhelmingly dominant. The set of textual and visual representations for these narratives exceed all the other representations of narratives combined.

Firstly, what has visually been done with demonizing Ukrainian authorities goes beyond any description. Even before the official title, Putin manages to proclaim that, "*We are obliged to start working on the return of Crimea to Russia, because we cannot abandon this territory and its people under the steamroller of nationalists*" (Kondrashov 2015). The following rhetoric of presenting Ukrainian authorities after Yanukovich as nationalist goes on throughout the whole film. After an attack on the van of Crimean protesters, an interview is conducted with a man who has been hurt in this attack in the remnants of this van. As explained in narration, nationalists started to attack the most unprotected people and chasing the peaceful anti-Maidan protesters from Crimea with dogs. Images of brutal shootings, attacks, and nationalists forcing people to eat the shattered glass are shown. The man explains that, "*They were pouring all of their hatred on us, despite the fact that we haven't done anything to them,*" adding that, "*We understood that we cannot be a part of Ukraine any more. They are fascists and nationalists*" (Kondrashov 2015). Putin himself concludes that, "*Only after the colossal explosion of the nationalistic moods we understood that we cannot abandon these people*" (Kondrashov 2015). What has been described above is only the tip of the iceberg.

Demonization goes on with denying that the new authorities in Kiev were legitimized by the Ukrainian people. Putin is eager to mention that there was actually no-one to talk to in Kiev any more, simply because, *“I have to admit that Ukrainian soldiers who changed the sides were very brave. They were loyal to their state, when there actually wasn’t any state per se. All the orders were given by the people who simply illegitimately seized the state power”* (Kondrashov 2015). All of the textual arguments are supported by the visual images of chaos in Maidan, shootings, and murders in Donbass.

Portraying new Ukrainian authorities as no less than complete monsters is also evident. Putin suggests that Ukrainian authorities have always planned the execution of the Crimean people, saying that, *“Looking at the disproportionate number of military vis-à-vis civilians in the peninsula, it seems like Ukraine always wanted to start a war in Crimea. In order to give people a right to voice their opinions, we had to avoid the massacre and stop Ukrainian army and police from shutting down people’s opinion”* (Kondrashov 2015). On top of being illegitimate, almost inhuman traits are given to the new authorities in Kiev, who presumably were furious about Ukrainian soldiers switching sides and demanded any protesters be shot dead if they tried to convince soldiers to change sides. Naturally, the murderous orders by Kiev never made it to Crimea because of the Russian efforts. One of the commanders of the Crimean resistance tells a story of the Right Sector hit-men trying to poison the drinking water for the whole city of Simferopol. *“There would have been a huge amount of victims,”* he says. Demonizing Kiev authorities is escalated showing them sending weapons to Crimea in order to organize something similar to Maidan. A story of a person who died stopping a truck full of weapons entering Crimea is introduced, with an interview of his mother and his wife coming to his grave.

Compared to the speech, no concealed hints are given about the participation of the West in the conflict. On the contrary, everything is said out loud with the detailed description of how the West planned to strip the Crimean people of their will to join Russia. One of the

organizers of the pro-Russian protests, Vitaly Punko comments on the events in Crimea, saying that *“Russians and Ukrainians always had brotherly relations, but Americans ruined everything, just like everywhere else in the world. It is thanks to Putin that war never started here”* (Kondrashov 2015). Some extremely brave references towards NATO forces and the ‘long hand of Washington’ are made in the narration, such as the existence of a military base in Feodosiya, claimed to be a NATO-trained marine base, getting instructions directly from the U.S. Consulate General in Kiev ready to act against the civilians, or military experts of the United States training Maidan combatants to over-throw the legitimate Ukrainian authorities. The ultimate accusation towards the United States is concluded in a brilliant quote by Putin, admitting that, *“Formally, the opposition in Kiev was supported by our European partners, but we know very well that the actual puppeteers were our American friends. They were the ones helping prepare the nationalists and military units. Our American partners were basically helping organize a coup d’etat in Ukraine and were acting from the position of force. It should not be the way to act in an international arena”* (Kondrashov 2015).

One of the heavily cited quote by Putin also supports the rivalry with the West. Putin admits that, *“We couldn’t predict if the Western countries are not going to militarily intervene in the Crimean situation. I had to inform our military commanders that we have to be ready for different type of scenarios. This also involves mobilizing our nuclear weaponry. As I told you before, this is our historical territory, Russian people live there and they were in danger. We could not leave them. Western countries can support what was happening in Kiev, but this is our land! We were ready for the worst case scenario, but I assumed that it is not going to happen”* (Kondrashov 2015). The shocking fact that even Russian nuclear arsenal was actually mobilized shows a tremendous importance given to Crimea and is strongly supported by the last narrative of Crimea being an organic part of Russia.

Consequently, a whole new level of tying Crimea to Russia is evident in both visual and textual representations of the documentary. A military commander, Viktor Melnikov comments on the events in Crimea, saying that “*Sevastopol created such an image of eternal glory that even the 23 years of occupation...*” “*And you call it an occupation?*” clarifies the reporter. “*Yes. We were able to bring through our love towards Russia and rescue our history*” (Kondrashov 2015). The fact that Crimea and Sevastopol in particular were never Ukrainian, but always Russian is supported by many other quotes. Putin notes that, “*If we talk about historical injustice, Sevastopol has always been a city of military and maritime glory for Russia, and everything was turned upside down*” (Kondrashov 2015). Narration tells that there is no other city in the Russian history for which as much blood has been shed as for Sevastopol. This is a hero-city, a fortress-city and a city of admirals, which even during Soviet times remained under direct jurisdiction of Moscow. Only in Crimea, the love for Russia could be radical, narration concludes.

The fact that Crimea was always Russian is supported by some very metaphorical, almost poetic quotes of the interviewees. Putin victoriously proclaims that, “*In the mind of Russian people, Crimea associates with heroic pages of our history. It goes back to gaining these lands and defending them during the World War 2. Crimea is tied to the Russian history, to Russian literature and art, and to the Royal family. The whole canvas of the Russian history is connected to Crimea*” (Kondrashov 2015). Narration claims Crimea not being a random territory for Russia, but being a historically Russian land with a predominant Russian population. An obligation to study foreign Ukrainian language is supported by the statement that there were about 40 laws restricting the use of Russian language in Crimea. Still, the people of Crimea were eager to protect their cultural and historical code, teaching a real history, which opposed an alien Ukrainian history that glorified Bandera. Finally, one of the interviewees admits that, “*I am so thankful to Russia that Crimea is back home again. The nationalist violence in Crimea would have been way greater than it is in Eastern*

Ukraine now, because we always considered ourselves a part of Russia” (Kondrashov 2015).

In terms of images, everything was done to convince the audiences of Crimea being ultimately Russian. A very special role in the documentary is played by the Orthodox Church, symbolizing an ultimate organic unity between ‘mother Russia’ and Crimea, with churches appearing every now and then in the frames of the film. A lot of images of Russian symbols used by the protesters are added to the film, with people waiving Russian flags, welcoming Russian soldiers, shouting “*Russia, Russia!*” during the protests etc. Basically, almost every frame seeks to show the audience that Crimea was never an organic part of Ukraine, but stressing people secretly hoping that Crimea will be reunited with Russia one day.

Based on the narratives overtaken from the leading political discourse and additions made by the leading media discourse, the list of the encoded narratives in the meaningful media discourse on the Crimean annexation by Russian Federation goes as follows:

1. Crimea always being an unquestionable part of Russia;
2. Demonizing Ukrainian authorities;
3. Defining rivalry with the West;
4. The right of self-determination of Crimean people;
5. Presenting the Russian way as diplomatic and non-military;
6. Struggle over Russian status in global affairs;
7. Legality of the Russian actions in Crimea;
8. Annexation is legitimized by the Russian public and demanded by all of the Crimean nations.

6.2. Encoding the emotions of the leading media discourse

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the leading media discourse managed to encode a huge amount of emotional content in the images and interviews of the documentary. Similarly to the encoding made by the leading political discourse, media discourse also uses a great variety of strong moral emotions to get the messages through, using a much bigger advantage of the motion picture format.

Generally, the whole documentary takes an extremely personal stance, where interviewees share their stories and visions of the events in Crimea. It is made hard not to sympathize with the word of a Cossack who defended the border of Crimea with Ukraine, saying that, “*Grannies were on their knees, begging us not to leave*” (Kondrashov 2015) or the president of the Crimean section of the Night Wolf bikers club, Alexander Medvedev telling his story of defending Crimea from nationalists and losing his limb. Medvedev was helping the resistance after a surgical operation on the leg, despite the hazards and warnings of the doctors. It resulted him losing some more of his limb. He comments that, “*There was no time for my leg, and actually it wasn't important. The most important is the fact that Crimea is Russian now and that the justice prevailed. Crimea is always going to be Russian from now on*” (Kondrashov 2015). The sense of personal sacrifice made for a bigger goal is screaming right in the audience's faces.

Of course, there are a lot of other personal and positive emotional things to share. One of the organizers of the pro-Russian protests, Vitaly Punko was interviewed in his own car, summing up his interview with showing a back seat of his car with a baby seat and noting that, “*After all of this mess ended, we decided to have another child. My daughter's name is Polina, although name Victoria would be more suitable*” (Kondrashov 2015). Positive emotions of justice prevailing, patriotism, glory, heroism, and pride are encoded in other visual representations of the film. Portraying Crimean men from the controversial

Ukrainian special forces “Berkut” coming home from Kiev is a clear analogy with men coming home from war as heroes, although they were broken-down and treated as enemies in the whole Ukraine, they were treated as heroes at home. The strong patriotic will of the people is enforced by the images of forging shields to protect Crimea from Ukrainian nationalists coming by trains to punish the resistance. *“We came together to defend our land, protect our homes and families,”* says one of the member of Crimean resistance. *“We all came together as one, simple workers, businessmen, blacksmiths and others. People were ready to face the death, if needed. People of different nationalities and religions were all united under one flag”* (Kondrashov 2015). The shields had Crimean tricolors on them, symbolizing the unity, strength and unbeatable spirit of the people. The same goes for saying that the tops of the churches and minarets co-existed in Crimea for centuries and Putin adding that, *“We have no intensions hurting Crimean Tatars, local Germans, Greeks, Armenians, Russians or Ukrainians. We want the people of Crimea to be one big family”* (Kondrashov 2015).

However, the choice of the negative images can simply amaze the audience, resulting to a huge amount of negative reactions of the people. Showing bloody footage of killed civilians in Maidan, narrating the tortures of the Crimean people conducted by the alleged nationalists, and a very graphic picture of a dead young woman and her baby covered in blood, a victim from Eastern Ukraine, leave audiences not only angry, but furious. The sense of injustice and oppression is brought up again by the obligation to study Ukrainian language, even though nobody spoke it in Crimea. Questionable humane morals of the new Kiev authorities are addressed via narrating the chasing of the legitimate president of Ukraine, Victor Yanukovich, with a clear intention to destroy him.

Despite the fine balance of the euphoric positive and horrific negative emotions in images and lines, once again, some narratives stand out by miles in terms of their emotional content. The narrative ‘Crimea always being an unquestionable part of Russia’ suggests a

great amount of strong positive moral emotions such as pride and justice being encoded in it. To the contrary, the narratives ‘Demonizing Ukrainian authorities’ and ‘Defining rivalry with the West’ are injected with a lot of anger, injustice, exclusion and victimization. The just feeling in the audience can also be called upon the narratives ‘The right of self-determination of Crimean people’ and ‘Annexation is legitimized by the Russian public and demanded by all of the Crimean nations.’ The narrative ‘Struggle over Russian status in global affairs,’ having some sense of injustice and exclusion encoded in it, can consequently be more negatively perceived by the public.

6.3. Decoding the narratives and emotions of the leading media discourse

To understand the audience’s standpoint, reactions on the documentary in the social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, comments of the news articles concerning the documentary, and comments in blogs will be taken as the main resources for the stage of decoding. Analysis will determine a dominant position of the audience in the decoding process, bring out the most effective narratives embraced by the public, and if the narratives are the ones containing strong emotions, their use in the documentary will be considered a successful use of emotions.

The analysis of the decoding process can easily start from the Facebook community *Крым. Путь на Родину* (2015), which is specifically dedicated to the documentary. One of the posts simply asks the audience: “What do you think about the movie?” allowing to get clear people’s decoding response. Despite a rather modest amount of reactions, 16 users in total, it is still possible to conclude that the audience takes on a rather dominant-hegemonic position with 11 people liking the movie and recommending it with comments such as, “*Fantastic events and a great movie,*” or “*The movie describes everything just the way it was!*” The rest of the audience takes an oppositional position with comments like, “*You can*

almost give this film an Oscar. So many lies and one-sided interpretations,” or “This film is a provocation. You may watch it, but don’t take this delirium seriously.”

Some narratives encoded in the documentary were also decoded accordingly by the audiences. People were rather supportive to the narrative ‘Presenting the Russian way as diplomatic and non-military’ with comments such as, *“With his actions, Putin avoided the events of Eastern Ukraine in Crimea, where these monsters are cutting and killing people”* or *“Putin did everything correctly and saved the people from the war. Unfortunately, people in Donbass were not as lucky /.../”* One of the commentators supports the rivalry with the West with his comment, *“/.../ Americans are just cowards, who only bomb and shoot civilians /.../”* Some people decoded emotionality of the messages, commenting, *“I watched it and cried. I am proud to have been born in the USSR,” “How much suffering did people have to go through? I did not know this before watching this piece!”* or *“I am about to explode from the feeling of patriotism! I am so proud of my country!”*

In Twitter, the amount of reactions was way bigger than on Facebook, with people using hashtags *#КрымПутьНаРодину* (2015) and *#крымпутьдомой* (2015) to express their opinions about the documentary. Among hundreds of comments celebrating a year after the reunification of Crimea with Russia, 97 tweets were specifically focused on the topic of the documentary and 83 of them were supportive of the dominant hegemonic way of decoding. Among 14 oppositional tweets, some stand out more than the others, such as *“The inspiration of this film has clearly been taken from the ideological films of the German nazis!”* or *“How can people cheer about this occupation of the foreign territory? Shame on you!”*

The users of the two hashtags were not hiding their patriotic emotions in their tweets, praising the president and their country. Generally, the tweets focused on strong positive moral emotions. There were also certain narratives that seemed to be more appealing to the

audiences, such as narrative ‘Crimea always being an unquestionable part of Russia’ with tweets like, “*Welcome back home Crimea and Sevastopol!*” and “*Crimea always was, and it will always be Russian!*” or narrative ‘Demonizing Ukrainian authorities’ with a tweet like, “*I am watching the film and I am simply amazed by the brutal actions of these Ukrainian bastards.*” Some Twitter users were more eager focusing on the narrative ‘Defining rivalry with the West’ tweeting, “*Crimea is in Russia again. Let the Americans cry in the corner!*”

Similarly to social media, the discussion over the content of the documentary film was also visible in regular media channels. Among them was an article in an online business newspaper *Взгляд* (The View). The article (*Общественное мнение: «Крым. Путь на Родину»* 2015) had quite a bit of feedback with 227 comments. This comment section stood out being one of the most rich and fruitful discussions. Because the article itself presented opinions of academics and other famous Russian people, comments often discussed them, leaving only 33 actual opinions on the documentary itself. However, despite a small number of decodings, this comment section stood out with 2 negotiated positions of the audience, such comments as, “*I watched the film and I liked it. Although as a citizen of Russian Federation I have to admit that I was disturbed by the fact that our forces had to support the referendum. /.../ After all that, it just isn’t believable enough that it was a pure choice of the Crimean people /.../*” or “*The film was not bad, but they could stress political realism way more than they did stress patriotic subjectivism. The movie could have had a way bigger impact if all the obvious propaganda elements would have been replaced with diplomatic language.*”

Despite a way more mature discussion in the comments focusing on the actual elements of the film, dominant-hegemonic decoding model still prevailed with 27 responses and only 4 oppositional positions taken, such as in a comment, “*I recommend you have a look at some other videos in Youtube explaining why this is clearly a Russian occupation.*” In the prevailing dominant-hegemonic decoding, several narratives were once again more popular

than the others. The narrative ‘Struggle over Russian status in global affairs’ was supported by one commentator, saying that, *“This film has a message. This message is that Russia is ready to defend her interests with the help of the military, including the nuclear weaponry.”* Some of demonizing of the West and Ukraine was also evident with comments such as, *“Everybody in the world understood the movie. It showed perfectly well the situation in Eastern Ukraine and insignificant nature of the U.S. /.../”* or *“People who support the ideology of Bandera cannot be adequate and shouldn’t be heard in international community!”* Other supporters of the position taken by the documentary are expressing a great amount of pride about the actions of Russia with comments like, *“I am watching the film and I am really impressed. My heart is beating hard from all the pride!”* *“The most important part of the movie is that all the steps taken were done according to the situation and thinking one step ahead. Well done! Vivat Russia!”* and *“I am gasping for some air! That was impressive! I am proud of Russia!”*

An interesting article published in a popular daily news portal *gazeta.ru* focused on a very particular statement made by president Putin in the documentary about the possible use of nuclear weaponry in Crimea. Narrowing down the essence of the documentary in the article (*Путин: при неблагоприятном развитии событий в Крыму мы могли привести в готовность ядерные силы 2015*) brought about a very interesting twist in the comments of the audience. Despite the number of reactions being relatively low, 20 in total, 13 of them took oppositional and only 7 dominant-hegemonic position in the decoding of the leading media discourse. Oppositional decoding is supported by multiple comments such as, *“Being ready to use the nuclear weaponry all the time is extremely irresponsible! This stance is either pointless or completely insane!”* *“Does someone really think that annexing Crimea is worth a nuclear war? Oh wow!”* *“I am sorry that Ukraine does not longer possess the nuclear weapon. There wouldn’t have been any annexation of Crimea!”* or *“This person is insane. Killing our kids for a piece of land? Oh God, help us!”*

Those taking the dominant-hegemonic position of decoding are logically most often referring to the narrative ‘Defining rivalry with the West’ commenting, “*Stop panicking people, they knew what they are doing! This quote was clearly for president Obama!*” or “*Nuclear weapons should always be fully ready to use. Americans will be nuked and our defense systems will protect Moscow and Kremlin very well. Not many will survive, but oh imagine a world without Americans! That world will rock!*” Despite seemingly focusing on the content of the documentary, taking out a specific quote had a very interesting effect on the reactions of the audience.

The amount of reactions to the documentary was even more significant in the blogosphere. A blog platform of the liberal *Фонтанка* (Fontanka) internet based news portal actively reacted on the release of the documentary, creating a blog post named *Путин. Крым на Родину* (2015). Out of a stunning 1225 comments given to the post, 57 were deleted, 35 comments took a clearly dominant-hegemonic position of decoding and 57 took an oppositional position of decoding. The relatively small amount of clear positions is caused by the fact that the discussion took off in very different directions and often the same people were commenting again and again. Their position was counted once though and generally only references to the film itself were taken into account.

Still, in this blog, the oppositional interpretation prevailed. Many people pointed out that the documentary had propagandistic features that simply should not be ignored, supporting it with comments like, “*Is there even any point discussing this obviously propagandistic film?*” “*It is actually quite interesting that even in a year’s time, propaganda still did not manage to explain why the Russian military presence in Crimea was necessary,*” or “*Well, the film is made kind of badly. It’s a completely dull propaganda. Even Poklonskaya did not save it, although the moment with the nuclear weapons was impressive!*” Some viewers were rather shocked by some of the revelations made in the documentary, commenting, “*The fact that Putin mobilized the nuclear weaponry is ridiculous. This basically means*

that he put all the world in danger not even protecting his own territory?” “I hope that all of these confessions made in film are going to be considered by the International Court of Justice in Hague, where there eventually will be a process over a war criminal Putin /.../“ or “Our country will be ashamed for Putin’s delirium one day!”

However, there were also those, who sympathized with the messages in the documentary. Some just agreed with Russian actions in Crimea, stating that, *“We did everything correctly. We did what we needed to do. I am proud of my country, my military and my president.”* Similarly to the reactions in other sources, the narrative ‘Defining rivalry with the West’ was once again well embraced by the public with comments such as, *“The West, mad from the impunity and the lawless U.S. should have been punished by Russia. Keeping the dialogue alive with the West was the only mistake of Putin!”* or *“I see nothing bad in ruining our relationship with the United States. We should keep away from that kind of ‘friends’ /.../.”* Such emotion-rich narratives as ‘Presenting the Russian way as diplomatic and non-military,’ ‘Crimea always being an unquestionable part of Russia’ and ‘Demonizing Ukrainian authorities’ were also detected with the respective comments like, *“In 2014, Crimea was reunited with almost no gunshots. All of the discussions about Putin will be forgotten in 10-15 years, but the fact that Crimea was peacefully reunited with Russia will be here forever,”* *“Let’s be honest in here, Crimea is a Russian territory. The fact that it is back in Russia is a historical moment that is underestimated at this point!”* and *“Please do not forget that Crimean people are way more moral than the murderous Ukrainian nationalists!”*

Last, but not least, the analysis of the Dean of the Higher School of Television at Moscow’s Lomonosov State University, journalist and political scientist, Vitaly Tretyakov’s blog in the LiveJournal platform was carried out. His post *По реакции на фильм Андрея Кондрашова «Крым. Путь на Родину» мы сейчас увидим, кто есть ху...* (2015) suggests to the audience to differentiate the reactions on the documentary, building an

understanding of ‘who is who’ based on these reactions. Just like in the case of the previous blog, not many people actually commented on the documentary itself. Out of 575 comments, 46 dominant-hegemonic positions of the decoding were taken with only 4 oppositional positions and 40 suspended or deleted comments respectively.

The members of the audience taking the oppositional position at the stage of decoding were outnumbered significantly by the people supporting the rhetorics of the leading media discourse. Among some of the comments were reactions like, “*The contrast of the film with the events in Eastern Ukraine is horrific. So, Crimea is ours, but Eastern Ukraine should be destroyed? Do our leaders see dreams about the bloodshed in there?*” “*The movie is simply revolting. Strategically everything is correct, but how about the real costs of it? This banality is killing me!*” or “*This is just a confession of the occupation!*”

A great amount of supporters of the leading media discourse did exactly what the owner of the blog asked them to, which is determine ‘who is who’ according to the reactions on the documentary. The narrative ‘Defining rivalry with the West’ was absolutely predominant, used in the comments such as, “*I watched the movie and I am proud of our president. Political drones such as Obama and Psaki are a complete disgrace of the modern politics built in the U.S. and Europe,*” “*!...! The United States has become an axis of evil themselves, because they have no future in a healthy world politics. Their export of war brings down the countries of the Third World one after another, without them countries realizing that it has been done by the U.S. !...!*” “*The U.S. should be destroyed! The documentary only proves them being an aggressor and they should be punished!*” or “*Look, Americans have never been punished for their deeds, never dragged to the International Court of Justice, although they should have.*” Next to these overly emotional addresses, commentators were also eager to stress their support for the actions of Russia, like with a comment, “*I liked the message of the film. For all the foreigners it states that Crimea is*

Russian. It is not negotiable, it is not a matter of discussion, and it will remain this way! It was really convincing.”

7. Analytical Conclusions

The following chapter will be divided into two parts, representing the findings concerning the two main focuses of this thesis, narratives and emotions in Crimean annexation by the Russian Federation.

7.1. Narratives of the annexation

Encoding analysis of the leading political discourse and the leading media discourse revealed their significant similarity. Among the narratives detected, six (Crimea always being an unquestionable part of Russia, Demonizing Ukrainian authorities, Defining rivalry with the West, The right of self-determination of Crimean people, Presenting the Russian way as diplomatic and non-military and Struggle over Russian status in global affairs) were used absolutely identically in both the political and media discourse. According to Fairclough (1995: 45) the state is extremely interesting in controlling media outputs and therefore it is no surprise that the discourses appear almost identical. One slight difference could of course be detected in the use of the narrative ‘Annexation is legitimized by the Russian public’ since the media discourse also visible included a strong will of Crimean Tatars and other nationalities to join the Russian Federation. However, the general trend of what Sturken & Catwright (2009: 21) describe as visual culture having a strong essence of ideology and power relations is evident.

However, there were also slight differences in the narrative map. The narrative ‘Nostalgia over Soviet times’ was used actively in the political encoding, but had almost no relevance in the media discourse. It might be due to the fact that the Soviet imperial past was not necessary to stress after the war has broken down in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea was cut off Ukraine. Visual representation of Soviet nostalgia would have had a much stronger and

recognizable propagandistic nature, which could have been avoided on purpose. Contrary, narrative ‘Legality of the Russian actions in Crimea’ was much more strongly supported by the media discourse and was not as strongly portrayed in the speech. After a year of accusations passed, much more legitimization was needed for Russia’s actions. It would have been hard to justify cutting off a part of another country in any legal vocabulary a year ago, when the shock was still powerful. Despite these small differences, it could be concluded that the political discourse is almost mirrored by the media discourse, allowing to talk about a certain level of political propaganda in the media and start a bigger discussion on the freedom of media in Russia.

Comparative results of the two discourses and their narratives of the Crimean annexation reveal extremely similar findings to those made by the several scholars. Urnov (2014: 305) and Forsberg, Heller & Wolf (2014: 261) have pointed out Russia’s struggle over its status which was also portrayed in the annexation narration. Prozorov’s (2007: 310) remarks on victimization, Nikolayenko’s (2008: 256) and Holak, Matveev & Havlena’s (2007: 650) comments of Soviet nostalgia and Sharafutdinova’s (2014: 2) findings on Crimean special status were all obvious and present in the existing discourses and overall narrations. It is therefore a bigger identity building process which incorporated Crimean annexation discourse quite successfully in the leading ‘Russian way.’

One of the conclusions of the thesis is that media discourse has a much bigger ability to address the narratives in a very broad manner, using much more tools to convince the audiences in the correctness of their messages. Narratives used in the media discourse were much more coinciding and interdependent with each other, making narration more smooth and allowing to use much more visual techniques. Similar has been pointed out by Louw (2005: 202), who believes that media is the one who widely popularizes and naturalizes appropriate ideas. The narratives were also presented much more strongly in the media, showing many different facets of them. In this light, it is not a coincidence that the power of

image is used actively by the political authorities in Russia. Visual representations have become tools of building and consolidating the political agenda, policy and even the whole identity of the state.

On the stage of decoding, both discourses can be considered successful in their attempts to address the certain messages to the public. The use of speeches and visual highlighted by several academics such as Fairclough (2006: 34), Dedaic (2006: 700), Luff (2010: 5) proves Russian political messaging to be successfully interpreted by the public just the way authorities find it necessary. If one does not count the reactions in the blogosphere, that were polarity different in both discourses, political discourse was decoded in the dominant-hegemonic way in about 85% of the cases and media discourse in about 77% of the cases. Interestingly, only a couple of people interpreted the messages in negotiated manner, leaving the picture relatively black and white.

The blogosphere can be considered a very interesting deviation from the general trend of decoding the messages of both media and political discourse. Firstly, blogs generally have a much greater amount of responses, but these responses stand out by being less relevant. The discussion is much more likely to take off in a completely different direction or come down to short responses or personal messages and addresses. Out of the relevant comments, mostly an oppositional way of interpretation can be detected.

The empirical case of the narration of the annexation of Crimea by Russia proves to be a good example of a political discourse's dominant influence on the media output. The visual power of the media is used to a near full capacity by the Russian authorities, clearly forwarding messages to the public via all the possible resources, with the help of different visual and textual aids, and addressing the public as the audience, rather than active participants of the identity building. The wide use of history and memory appeals to

numerous members of the consuming mass is strengthened by powerful, yet sometimes horrific images deeply influencing people's perception.

According to the findings of the research, the role of Crimea in Russian discourse can be considered to be somewhat similar to a shift. It is a point, where numerous identity building processes coincided, leaving the whole narration almost complete. In a situation where images and words worked on the people's mindset very well, the seemingly irrational shift was completely approved by the Russians. This battle was won, but how about the war of the identity building? Considering the steps after Russian annexation took place. the battle proved costly to the international community. The sense that everything works, that Crimea was added to Russia so easily, allowed Russian authorities to continue their actions in Eastern Ukraine. A larger question of whether that kind of annexations and their explanations should be believed and forgotten definitely arises and should not be ignored by the world politicians.

Of course, the larger discussion for further consideration might also include a certain level of relativity of the used sources by the thesis. Should larger conclusions be made about Russian identity building or political and media discourse interaction? A certain level of bipartisanship is simply inevitable when it comes to studying one or another source of people's reactions, especially with such a small research focus. Some news articles are already decoding the news in their own way, possibly influencing the comments. Personas and political views of the bloggers can also to some extent influential to someone who happens to read the blog and so on. For that manner, the following thesis tried to find a balance between the types of the analyzed resources.

7.2. Emotions of the annexation

Adding emotions to the analysis of narratives and general perception of the discourses on both encoding and decoding stage proved to be very fruitful, allowing to make interesting conclusions about the cases. Firstly, it is important to note that emotions, especially strong moral ones that were highlighted by Jasper (2006: 17), were very actively used at all of the stages of the Hall's scheme. Strong moral negative emotions, such as anger, exclusion, injustice, and trauma were actively encoded and then decoded by the public. As pointed out by Ost (2004: 230), Thompson (2006: 123), Humphrey (2001: 332) and Henderson (2008: 29) emotions can play a tremendously important role in getting your political messages through, which was also visible in case of Russian discourse towards Crimean annexation.

Interestingly, the same tendency was even more evident when it came to the use of strong positive moral emotions at the stages of encoding and decoding. In the case of narrating the Crimean annexation, Russian authorities heavily used patriotism and positive emotions, which resulted to a similar reaction of the audience. What was meant to represent pride, justice, and patriotism was encoded in the same manner and then unpacked by the audience. In this light, it strongly resembles a loop of the use of memory and reliving it by the audiences described by Keightley (2008: 176). In a sense, the choices of the emotions encoded were not incidental, but were meant to reinforce and promote the narration and specific messages of the Russian authorities.

Naturally, some messages had way more emotional elements injected into them than the others, also having a greater amount of feedback from the audiences. One does not have to be an expert to realize that narratives such as 'Demonizing Ukrainian authorities,' 'Defining rivalry with the West' and 'Struggle over Russian status in global affairs' were more thoroughly injected with negative moral emotions, and not surprisingly were interpreted exactly the same way by the public. The same applies when it comes to strong positive

emotions and narratives of ‘Crimea always being an unquestionable part of Russia’ and ‘The right of self-determination of Crimean people.’ These narratives empowered by the emotionality can have a way greater effect on the public than visible at first sight. This combination can constitute the basis of the whole state identity and define the essence of the discourses.

The use of emotions by Russian political discourse and integration of the same emotions in the leading media discourse allows to make several conclusions about the use of emotions in the Crimean annexation narration. Firstly, the Russian audience is addressed very emotionally and not without a reason. Because of the fact that the reactions were as emotional as the messages, one can say that Russian society in general is receptive to emotional addresses. Also, similarly to what was pointed out by Solomon (2014: 729), emotional addresses allow to strengthen messages and explain them to people easily, almost black or white. It seems that Russian society is eager to decode messages one way or another, without many negotiated positions taken. Knowing and using that, Russian authorities managed to turn something seemingly completely irrational into a matter of national pride and a must. It almost seems that the emotions sold annexation to the Russian people.

8. Summary

This thesis focused on the question of how is the annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation is narrated in the leading political discourse and media discourse. This was done by analyzing two main cases representing discourses, a political speech of president Putin and a documentary film by Andrey Kondrashov, through the encoding/decoding model of Stuart Hall. In order to observe the decoding process, the paper focused on the reactions of the Russian public in blogs, social media and news article comments. In addition to highlighting the main narratives used to explain the annexation, the thesis also focused on analyzing the use of emotions at the stages of encoding and decoding.

In order to answer the research questions, the following paper first highlighted the use of cultural studies as a method in conducting research in political science, mainly focusing on the encoding/decoding model of British Cultural Studies' most prominent scholar Stuart Hall. In order to unravel Hall's approach, importance and power of an image, and an essence of the political discourse was introduced. In order to strengthen the model of encoding/decoding and understand the matter of message interpretation, the use of emotions in politics was also highlighted in the theoretical part. The chapter highlighting the case study of Russian policy towards Crimea also introduced the key focus of the thesis.

The analysis of the narration of Crimean annexation by the Russian Federation according to the model of Stuart Hall was carried out in chapters five and six. Based on the results of the analysis it can be concluded that the main narratives encoded by both discourses coincided almost completely, with minor changes in interpretation. The following list of narratives can be detected in both discourses:

1. Crimea always being an unquestionable part of Russia;
2. Demonizing Ukrainian authorities;

3. Defining rivalry with the West;
4. The right of self-determination of Crimean people;
5. Presenting the Russian way as diplomatic and non-military;
6. Struggle over Russian status in global affairs;
7. Annexation is legitimized by the Russian public (and demanded by all of the Crimean nations).

These narratives were almost identically encoded by the discourses and then decoded by the people. The results of observing discourse decoding in blogs, social media and news articles revealed that preferable position of decoding was dominant-hegemonic, with 85% and 77% of the cases respectively. It identifies a relative success by the Russian authorities in offering their version of the Crimean annexation by Russia.

The second main focus of the thesis, which was the use of emotions by both discourses revealed interesting findings about emotion encoding/decoding. Mainly strong moral emotions were encoded in the narration of the annexation and they were also mirrored by the audience, strengthening and empowering the position of the discourses and increasing the success of delivering narratives in a preferable way. As one of the interesting findings of the paper, strong positive moral emotions, such as pride, prevailed over negative ones, such as anger. Nevertheless, emotions played a crucial role in addressing this specific audience, being Russian society, and delivering the Russian authorities version of the Crimean annexation.

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Kokkuvõte

Narratiivide ja emotsioonide kasutamine Venemaa poolt Krimmi annekteerimise diskursuses

Käesoleva magistr töö eesmärk oli uurida missuguseid narratiive ja emotsioone on Venemaa võimud kasutanud Krimmi annekteerimise põhjendamisel. Selleks vaadeldi lähemalt Krimmi annekteerimise põhjendamist juhtivas poliitilises ning juhtivas meedia diskursuses, et jõuda parema arusaamiseni konkreetsete narratiivide ning emotsioonide kasutamisest annekteerimise põhjendamisel.

Magistr töö teoreetiline raamistik põhineb Briti kultuuriuuringute koolkonnal, sest töö fookuses olevad narratiivide konstrueerimine ja emotsioonide kasutamine jäävad välja traditsiooniliste poliitikateaduste uurimisobjektidest. Briti kultuuriuuringute koolkonna tähtsaima esindaja, Stuart Hall'i kodeerimise/dekodeerimise (ingl *encoding/decoding*) mudel võimaldas analüüsida narratiivide ning emotsioonide konstrueerimist vastavas diskursuses ning sisestatud sõnumite rahvapolset tõlgendamist. Teoreetiline raamistik sisaldab ka poliitilise ning meedia diskursuse kirjeldusi ning emotsioonide kasutust poliitikas. Empiirilisele analüüsile eelnes ka Venemaa poolt Krimmi annekteerimise diskursuse tutvustus. Rakendades Stuart Hall'i mudelit, uuriti missuguseid narratiive ja emotsioone kasutati juhtivas Vene poliitilises diskursuses ning juhtivas Vene meedia diskursuses Krimmi annekteerimise põhjendamisel.

Lähtudes teoreetilisest raamistikust püstitati antud magistr töös kolm uurimisküsimust. Lisaks narratiivide ja emotsioonide väljatoomisele uuriti kahe diskursuse omavahelist kattuvust ning emotsioonitüüpide efektiivsust poliitilise sõnumi edastamisel.

Empiirilise uurimuse läbiviimiseks kodeerimise/dekodeerimise mudeli järgi võeti aluseks kaks peamist näidet. Poliitilist diskursust analüüsiti läbi Vladimir Putini 2014. aasta Krimmi kõne ning meedia diskursust läbi telekanali *Россия 1* Andrey Kondrašovi dokumentaalfilmi “Krimm. Tee koju.”. Mõlema diskursuse puhul uuriti narratiivide ja emotsioonide kodeerimist ning seejärel dekodeerimist. Narratiivide ja emotsioonide dekodeerimist uuriti inimeste tagasiside kaudu sotsiaalmeedias ja meediaväljaannete kommentaariumites ning läbi kommentaaride blogides.

Toetudes analüüsi tulemustele, võib väita, et mõlemad diskursused on olemuselt sarnased, sest nendes sisalduvad kodeeritud narratiivid ja emotsioonid on peaaegu kattuvad. Enim kodeeritud ja dekodeeritud narratiividest võib välja tuua järgmised:

1. Krimm on alati olnud vaieldamatu Venemaa osa;
2. Uute Ukraina võimude demoniseerimine;
3. Rivaliteedi kinnitamine Lääneriikidega;
4. Krimmi elanike enesemääramiseõigusele appelleerimine;
5. Venemaa poliitika esitamine diplomaatilise ja rahumeelsena;
6. Võitlus Venemaa rahvusvahelise staatuse üle;
7. Krimmi annekteerimise legitimeerimine Venemaa kodanike poolt.

Analüüsi tulemusel selgus, et just nende narratiividega põhjendati kõige enam Krimmi annekteerimise vajadust. Samade narratiividega tõlgendas rahvas Krimmi sündmuseid valitseva võimu tahte kohaselt ehk Vene võimude domineerivalt positioonilt. Vaid vähesed uuritud reaktsioonid erinesid võimulolijate omadest. Seega võib rääkida diskursuste kattuvusest ning Vene võimude poliitiliste sõnumite edastamise edust.

Lisaks konkreetsetele diskursustes kasutatavatele narratiividele on vene võimud olnud aktiivsed ja edukad emotsioonide kasutamisel Krimmi annekteerimise põhjendamisel. Nii

Putini kõnesse kui ka Kondrašovi dokumentaalfilmi on osavalt kodeeritud uhkus, viha, ebaõiglustunne ja teised tugevad moraalsed emotsioonid. Vastavad tunded on esindatud ka rahva reaktsioonides. Mõned narratiivid paistsid eriti silma tugeva emotsionaalse komponendi poolest, mistõttu on just need narratiivid kajastunud rahva reaktsioonides kõige enam. Seega on Vene võimud olnud edukad emotsioonide kasutajad poliitiliste sõnumite edastamisel, tekitades publikus tugevat vastukaja ning reaktsiooni seoses Krimmi annekteerimisega.