The Crimean peninsula and the rebirth of the Cold War in the 21st century.

A qualitative analysis of the Russian takeover of the Crimean peninsula following the crisis in Ukraine.

Author: Alfons Karlsson
Mentor: Molgan Sabelskjöld
Program: International Administration
180hp
Subject: Bachelor Thesis
Course Code: 2SK300
Semester: Spring 2015
Abstract

Western, post-soviet foreign policies have led to an ever increasing split between western politics and Russia. Starting with the Russian war in Georgia and culminating with the Crimean crisis 2013-2014 it has become evident that the luggage from the cold war has not quite yet stopped ruling geopolitics in the world. To provide diplomatic solutions which are acceptable to all parties, it is important to provide a coherent analysis of Russia´s motives behind conquering Crimea. Without an analysis of Russia´s view on the situation there is a risk of a situation in which the crisis might escalate and lead to further military escalation which in turn might lead to catastrophic events.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate whether the decision making process of Russia to invade Crimea can be explained using the Rational Actor Method in analyzing Russia´s actions during the crisis and present a possible account of the decision making process behind Russia´s decision to invade Crimea.

With the aid of cultural, historical and strategic perspectives alongside a theory of Russian quest for status this essay provides a thorough analysis of the Russian decision to invade the Crimean peninsula using an analytical method derived from the Rational Actor Paradigm.

Conclusively, using the Rational Actor Model in an extensive analysis presents a possible decision making process of Russia´s motives and reasons behind its decision to conquer Crimea.

Keywords: Geopolitics, Rational Actor, Crimea, Russian foreign politics.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ...................................................................................................................................... 2
1. Choice of subject, problem statement and purpose of this essay. .......................................... 4
   1.1 Background (Historic and political)..................................................................................... 4
   1.2 Fundamental question and side questions. ........................................................................... 5
2. Methodical procedure ............................................................................................................ 6
   a) Composition .................................................................................................................... 6
   b) Material ........................................................................................................................... 7
   c) Demarcation .................................................................................................................... 7
   d) Research technique ......................................................................................................... 7
   e) Limitations with the chosen research technique. Validity and reliability. ...................... 8
3. Previous Research – Russian Maritime interest in Crimea .................................................... 9
4. Theory and analytical concepts ............................................................................................ 11
   a) Russia and the quest for status in the post-cold war climate........................................ 11
   b) Rational Actor............................................................................................................... 12
   c) Analytical Model........................................................................................................... 14
5. Empirical Material ............................................................................................................ 15
   a) The Russian Soul........................................................................................................... 15
   b) Crimea becomes Ukrainian........................................................................................... 16
   c) Timeline of the Ukrainian Crisis (leading up to the intervention on the Crimean peninsula) ............................................................................................................................. 17
6. Analysis ............................................................................................................................. 21
   Preface:................................................................................................................................. 21
   a) Russian maritime interest in Crimea. ........................................................................... 21
   b) The Russian Soul .......................................................................................................... 22
   c) Crimea becomes Ukrainian. ......................................................................................... 23
   d) Timeline of the Ukrainian crisis (leading up to the intervention on the Crimean peninsula) ............................................................................................................................. 24
7. Discussion ......................................................................................................................... 27
8. Conclusion ........................................................................................................................ 29
9. List of References ............................................................................................................. 30
1. Choice of subject, problem statement and purpose of this essay.

“With Crimea’s illegal referendum and the peninsula’s annexation by Russia, a new cold war is starting. That does not just mean diplomatic frostiness; it will mean a tense stand-off, sanctions, a military build-up and quite possibly Moscow’s incorporation of further land, including the Russian-speaking regions of eastern Ukraine. At every moment there will lurk the threat of cold war turning into hot war. The Kremlin is well aware how high it has ratcheted up the stakes: state television’s chief propagandist chose referendum night in Crimea to remind the world that Russia is capable of turning America into “radioactive ash” (Angus Roxburgh, 2014)

The neoclassical realistic analysis presents a different view as to why Russia made the decision to annex the Crimean peninsula, contrary to the commonly presented international law view, so often presented by Swedish news channels.

To provide diplomatic solutions which are acceptable to all parties, it is important to provide a coherent analysis of Russia’s motives behind conquering Crimea. Without an analysis of Russia’s view on the situation we risk a situation in which the crisis might escalate and lead to further military escalation which in turn can lead to catastrophical events.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate whether the decision making process of Russia to invade Crimea can be explained using the Rational Actor Method of Russia’s actions during the crisis and present a possible account of the decision making process behind Russia’s decision to invade Crimea.

1.1 Background (Historic and political)

The tensions between the West and the Soviet bloc collapsed at the end of the Cold War. The aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union effectively meant that USA alone remained as the world’s only superpower. What had been a war between rivaling ideologies, West and East now turned into a power vacuum for many years but the crisis in Ukraine and the following Russian intervention in Ukraine have radically changed this condition in geopolitics. Russia underwent a gradual democratization after the fall of the Soviet Union, moving away from a centralized empire to a decentralized country with growing liberal and capitalistic ideas. During the presidencies of Vladimir Putin Russia has by many been viewed as to change, moving away from this path and moving towards a more centralized republic with ambitions of regaining its former status. In addition to this Europe has undergone a monumental change
with the European Union expanding to include many countries which used to be part of the Moscow pact. The geopolitical map has been redrawn from the Cold War era with its clear distinction between the West, East and the third world, much of this change caused by the fall of the Soviet Union but also by the ever increasing globalization of the world. This change has been viewed by many as a natural progression in the evolution of human civilization and that it is here to stay. The old times of the Cold War era dominated by an arms race between the USA and Soviet Union no longer plagued geopolitics as USA was left unchallenged as the world’s only remaining superpower. The past decade Russia has taken a more active stance in foreign politics culminating with the war against Georgia and the intervention and subsequent annexation of the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine. Consequentially the perspective of geopolitics has changed, not only to the common man but maybe, even more so to political scientists and foreign politics analysts. USA can no longer reign free as the global police without Russia taking an active stance in protecting their interests in the global arena. An instance in which this has become evident is the Russian military support of the Syrian President and de facto dictator, Bashar Al-Assad. (Harding, 2013)

1.2 Fundamental question and side questions.

This essay conducts an extensive analysis of Russia’s decision to invade Crimea using the Rational Actor Method. Hence the aim of the essay is to provide to its readers, an increased understanding of geopolitics and Russia’s view on the crisis in Ukraine. Hopefully this paper can inspire further research of Russian foreign politics and bridge the gap between idealism and realism in analyzing geopolitics.

The fundamental question is whether it is possible to provide a thorough, descriptive and interesting analysis using the Rational Actor Method and, if so, is it possible to identify possible major factors behind Russia’s decision to invade Crimea?

Moreover, how does this analysis compare to previous published work in regard to Russia’s motives behind its foreign politics?

During the crisis leading up to the Russian invasion of the Crimean peninsula are there any signs of a change of tactics by Russia?
2. Methodical procedure.

a) Composition

The design of the essay is comprised of summarizing two different theories regarding analyzing foreign politics. The first one, namely, Russia and the quest for status; is a theory published in the journal, Communist and Post-Communist Studies at Elsevier.com and written by researchers from the School of Management at the University of Tampere Finland, Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg and the Department of Political Science at Goethe University in Frankfurt.

The second theory used in this essay to create the analytical model which provides the analytical framework for the analysis is the rational actor method presented by Graham Ellison and Philip Zelikow in their second version of the book; Essence of Decision, Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The purpose of this composition is to provide an analysis using the Rational Actor Method of Russia’s actions during the crisis and try to present a reliable account of the decision making process behind Russia’s decision to invade Crimea.

The crisis is analyzed using a timeline of the crisis to provide the geopolitical climate in which the decision was made to intervene on the Crimean peninsula. The extensive timeline presented in this essay is meant to provide a background for readers into the situation as well as provide the framework in which the analytical model is tested alongside the rest of the gathered empirical material. The analysis is supported by material which forms several independent factors which are taken into account given the context of the crisis in Ukraine. The chosen empirical material is analyzed detachedly from one another in an attempt to analyze the importance of each given factor prior to analyzing the timeline of the crisis. The reason behind this is to be able to accurately analyze the situation, using the questions provided in the analytical model.

After the analysis conducted using the analytical model created from the Rational Actor Method on the gathered empirical as well as previous research conducted on the topic of Crimea; there will be a part dedicated to a discussion on whether this research has any correlations with the theory; Russia and the quest for status. The reason for this is twofold, first, to see whether a contemporary research on Russian foreign politics show any correlations to this research and, if there is such a correlation it could be seen as a sign that the Rational Actor Method in the hands of an adept political scientist can provide results which
correlates with research conducted by renowned experts in the field. Should there be signs of correlations between the analysis conducted in this paper with Russia and the quest for status, it could increase the validity and reliability of this research.

b) Material
The material used in this essay is primarily focused on providing a solid background to enable the application of an analytical model based from the Rational Actor Model. The goal was to identify material which could provide sufficient background information to answer the questions in the analytical model. The gathering of the material has been focused on the OneSearch database on Linnéuniversity’s website, published books, data from foreign policy analysis organizations as well as some complementary support by news articles.

c) Demarcation
The material gathered for this essay, although substantial does not cover all aspects of the Ukrainian crisis nor provides all relevant data which could have been interesting to use for applying these theories to analyze Russia’s decision to intervene on Ukraine. It would have been satisfying to be able to further the range of this essay by including empirical material and apply a theory regarding Russian domestic policy and its possible implications to its decision to intervene in Ukraine. The decision not to move towards that direction is simple; it would create a substantially larger material to analyze and simply does not fit into this type of essay.

d) Research technique
The technique used for analyzing this essay sprang from my personal interest in realpolitik and realism and using it to analyze geopolitics. This essay is a qualitative analysis rooted in my belief that rational actor, even though crude and simplistic is able to create understanding for different players in geopolitics. Using rational actor as a tool to analyze different geopolitical situations enables the researcher to try to view the situation from any given country and try to build a thesis as to what its goals and objectives are, the different alternatives in the given situation, weigh possible consequences for the player as well as come to a conclusion as to which choice the player is going to take. Using rational actor theory
provides a selection of alternatives which the player might choose to undertake and it is the analyst’s job to follow the option he ranks to be the highest probable course of action.

Because this research is conducted on a past event rather than trying to foresee the future it is possible to put oneself in the shoes of Russia, to use gathered empirical material in an analysis to try to create an account for how the decision making process might have looked and what factors played major roles in shaping the decision. The goal, simply put, is to put oneself in the situation as X, namely the state, which in this case is Russia and to use the rational actor method to reproduce an account of the decision making process.

e) Limitations with the chosen research technique. Validity and reliability.

There are several limitations with this chosen research technique. Qualitative analyses are hard to reproduce under the same conditions and reach the same results. The chosen theory of Russia’s quest for status and the Rational Actor Model are not widely used in contemporary research at this level. However as Allisson and Zelikow so adequately put it; “The Rational Actor Model is widely used in thinking about government behavior and international relations. Some scholars now recognize this use explicitly and say so. For others, reliance on the model’s categories and assumptions remains implicit. Indeed, one of the challenges students of academic writing in this area is not to be misled by the disclaimers scholars make, but to examine what they do.” (Allison, Zelikow, 1999, p26)

As with all research conducted in the aftermath of an event it is easy to find a theory that supports the given purpose, it is the very nature of qualitative analyses and I am no exception to human nature. It should also be mentioned that the material and theory used to analyze the crisis leading up to the intervention and providing a possible Russian thought process behind the decision could very well benefit from including more factors and theories to provide a more reliable result.

The limitations of this essay led to the decision not to include more factors in the analysis. However consisting of only a small selection of empirical material and based on one theory the analytical model chosen provides a suitable albeit rough frame which to use to analyze the decision making process and should suffice to provide an adequate answer to the purpose of the essay. As for the validity and reliability of this essay the discussion at the end of the essay is aimed to compare the results of the analysis with previous research conducted by renowned experts on Russian foreign politics.
3. Previous Research – Russian Maritime interest in Crimea

This part is a summary of the paper: After the Crimean crisis: towards a greater Russian maritime power in the Black Sea by Igor Delanoë. Delanoë holds a PhD in modern and contemporary history from the University of Nice, Sophia Antipolis. His primary areas of research interests concern Russian defense and security issues, Russian interests in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East. (Delanoe 2014)

“The modernization of the Black Sea Fleet currently underway is believed to be one of the most ambitious parts of the Russian State Arms Procurement pro-gramme 2011-2020. Up to 18 units are being built and are expected to be commissioned in the Russian Black Sea Fleet by 2020, while new infrastructures are being developed. However, Russia’s annexation of Crimea in March 2014 has overthrown the Black Sea maritime context. It is likely to give substantial impetus to Russian naval plans in the Black Sea and, by extension, to sustain Moscow’s resumption of naval activity in the Mediterranean. Yet, whereas Russia’s maritime power has been dramatically enhanced due to the takeover of Crimea, Moscow’s naval power in the Black Sea and in the Mediterranean remains challenged by a set of qualitative factors. Beyond, the Ukrainian crisis has demonstrated the inability of the European Union to manage its Black Sea environment as well as it has highlighted the United States waning influence and interests in the region.” (Delanoe 2014, 1)

Delanoe claims that the Black Sea region has not attracted much interest since the 1990s. However his research point to that there has been an increasing interest for the Black Sea region as one of the world’s critical crossroads. He points to the heterogeneity of the Black Sea region; it appears to be a region plagued by competition between regional actors with conflicting interests. Meanwhile he points to the fact that the average military expenditure of the neighboring countries has risen from 2.4% of GDP to 2.9% between the years of 2000 until 2010. Delanoe also points to the magnanimous upgrading programme of the Russian Black Sea Fleet to show Moscow’s interest in the Black Sea region. The region holds significant strategic interest for Moscow as a hub of Russian influence between the Mediterranean, the Middle East and the world ocean. Delanoe also points out that the development of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol was severely hampered by restrictions from the Ukrainian government and their bilateral agreements with Russia. He claims that the Russian “the annexation of the Crimean peninsula into the Russian Federation has consequently totally overthrown the maritime and security context in the Black Sea. Moscow has now free hands to deploy new platforms in Sevastopol, to upgrade Crimean
infrastructures and to dispatch new military hardware on the peninsula. Russia has furthermore solved at nearly no cost several issues that prevented her to enhance its maritime power in the Black Sea, and by extension, in the Mediterranean.” (Delanoe 2014, 4)

Delanoe points out in his research that the “British military define maritime power as the ability to project power at sea and from the sea to influence the behavior of people or the course of events” (Delanoe 2014, 5)

Not only does Delanoe’s research point towards the major importance of maritime power in politics but also that Russia has a major interest in the Black Sea region. The region is located in Russia’s south-western flank and has provided a window to the Mediterranean and beyond. He claims that the Black Sea was virtually a Soviet lake during the Cold War while Russian power in the region has undergone monumental changes since the fall of the Soviet Union. The region, he claims has been challenged by Western influence during the 2000s and has been the source of major geopolitical concern for Russia. Delanoe also points to the fact that the region has been one of the most unstable in the vicinity of Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union. Because of this he believes that Russia’s interest in the region is mainly security related. He believes that Russia is focused on preserving the territorial integrity of the nation and preventing the expansion of NATO’s influence to Russia’s “claimed sphere of privileged interest” (Delanoe 2014, 6) However as important as the Black Sea region might be in terms of security terms Delanoe states that the region importance for Russia’s ability to back up their claims of status as a great power cannot be understated.

“The Black Sea, as the main maritime corridor to the Mediterranean basin, provides Russia with an outlet to the Middle East where the Kremlin has revived and developed military and energy partnerships with several countries. Finally, Moscow has major economic interests in the Black Sea.” (Delanoe 2014, 5)

Delanoe states that the main mission for the Black Sea Fleet is:

- Protecting Russian EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone)
- Securing navigation and sea lines of communication in the Black Sea
- Exercising military and political control over the Caucasus and taking part in potential local conflicts
- Maintaining military dominance in the Black Sea with a view to exerting absolute control over Black Sea communications and countering the presence of naval groups of non-Black Sea states, primarily NATO forces, in the Black Sea (anti-access/area denial)
• Supporting units coming from other Russian fleets which operate in the Mediterranean
• Promoting and protecting Russian economic and security interests in the Mediterranean
  (Delanoe 2014, 8)

Delanoe also points out the resurrection of the Russian Mediterranean squadron. The buildup of Russian naval power in the region will increase their ability for deployment in other areas as well, primarily the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. He states that in 2013 Russia announced their intention of deploying a permanent naval task force in the Mediterranean by 2015 as well as high-ranking Russian official’s recognition of the necessity for a buildup of the naval forces in the Black Sea region.

4. Theory and analytical concepts

a) Russia and the quest for status in the post-cold war climate.

Tuomas Forsberg, Regina Heller and Reinhard Wolf outlines an extensive report on the importance of status concerns on Russia’s foreign policy agenda in an article in Communist and Post-Communist Studies in which they claim that; “Status if properly examined, helps us understand not only Russian foreign policy, put also present-day international politics and its transformation in a broader sense”. (Forsberg, Heller, Wolf, 2014, p1)

Furthermore they also state the following; “Perhaps no other perspective has dominated current approaches to post-Cold War Russian foreign policy more than the understanding that Russia's primary goal has been to restore and strengthen its position as a great power in world politics during the Putin presidency Russian foreign policy has turned particularly assertive with Moscow becoming even more sensitive to defend its interests, as well as its status in the international arena. Russia's tough position in the current conflict in and over Ukraine, its determinedness to display political and military power, while risking Ukraine's further destabilization, is a case in point. For some this is simply a sign of the recurring struggle for power and security in the international anarchy, but for others the assertive turn in Russia's foreign policy has more to do with identity and domestic politics. According to this view, Russia's behavior in the crisis is essentially driven by its fear of loss of great power status. Indeed, many scholars have suggested that status concerns have become more important than
pure security and economic questions on Russia’s foreign policy agenda” (Forsberg, Heller, Wolf, 2014, p1)

Forsberg, Heller and Wolf present views on the subject from several different scholars familiar with the subject. Some argue that this should be seen as a historical Russian problem. They are of the opinion that the roots for Russia’s quest for status run so deep that they overshadow security issues. Some scholars within this subject, presented by Forsberg, Heller and Wolf; go so long as to suggest that Russia’s quest for status is so emotional and powerful that it is the driving force behind the nation’s foreign politics. The national craving for status amongst other countries, especially from the western countries as a powerful nation clouds the judgement of public officials in forming the international politics of the nation.

b) Rational Actor

Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow writes in their work; Essence of decision explaining the Cuban missile crisis “Since Thucydides wrote almost 2,500 years ago, the predominant approach in analyzing international relations has been the “realist” school of thought—as modern proponents have designated themselves. This school became prominent in both academic and policy circles in the period after World War II, when its advocates, including George Kennan, Hans Morgenthau, and others, advanced its claims against alternative approaches which they called “idealism,” “legalism,” or sometimes even “utopianism.” Realists sought to counter Americans’ native, naïve optimism by emphasizing the evil side of human nature. They maintain that, by nature, humans are motivated to seek domination over others, making politics among nations a struggle for power, and realpolitik policies the necessary prescription for survival. (Allison, Zelikow, 1999, p26)

The following caricature of the Rational Actor Paradigm is provided in Allison and Zelikow’s work; Essence of Decision, Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis. It is a thorough caricature which provides the foundation of the Rational Actor Paradigm and outlines how the paradigm works and is to be used during analyses. The analytical model earlier presented is derived from this Rational Actor Paradigm and form the basis of how the analysis is carried out.
Caricature of the Rational Actor Paradigm;

I. Basic Unit of Analysis: Governmental Action as Choice. Happenings in foreign affairs are conceived as actions chosen by the nation or national government. Governments select the action that will maximize strategic goals and objectives. These “solutions” to strategic problems are the fundamental categories in terms of which the analyst perceives what is to be explained.

II. Organizing Concepts.

A. Unified National Actor. The nation or government, conceived as a rational, unitary decision maker, is the agent. This agent is anthropomorphized as if it were an individual person with one set of preferences (a consistent utility function), one set of perceived choices, and a single estimate of the consequences that follow from each alternative.

B. The Problem. Action is chosen in response to the strategic situation the actor faces. Threats and opportunities arising in the international strategic “marketplace” move the nation to act.

C. Action as Rational Choice. The components include:

1. Objectives. National security and national interests are the principal categories in which strategic goals are conceived. While analysts rarely translate strategic preferences into an explicit utility function, they do focus on major objectives and combine them intuitively.

2. Options. Actions for advancing objectives constitute the options.

3. Consequences. Enactment of each alternative course of action will produce a series of consequences. The relevant consequences constitute benefits and costs in terms of strategic goals and objectives.

4. Choice. Rational Choice is value-maximizing. The rational agent selects the alternative whose consequences rank highest in terms of his goals and objectives.

III. Dominant Inference Pattern. If a nation or its representatives performed a particular action, that action must have been selected as the value-maximizing means for achieving the actor’s objectives. The RAM’s (Rational Actor Model) explanatory power stems from this interference pattern. The puzzle is solved by finding purposes of the actions serves.

IV. General Propositions. In arguing for explicitness about the categories in which analysis proceeds, this study emphasized the importance of being serious about the
logic of explanation. Consequently, the propositions upon which explanations depend need to be formulated clearly. The basic assumption of preference-maximizing behavior produces simple propositions central to most RAM explanations. The general principle can be formulated as follows: the likelihood of any particular action results from a combination of a state’s: (1) relevant values and objectives, (2) perceived alternative coursed of action, (3) estimates of consequences (which will follow from each alternative), and (4) net valuation of each set of consequences. This yields two intuitively evident but powerful propositions.

A. An increase in the perceived costs of an alternative (a reduction in the value of consequences that will follow from an action, or a reduction in the probability of attaining fixed consequences) reduces the likelihood of that action being chosen.

B. A decrease in the perceived costs of an alternative (an increase in the value of consequences that will follow from an action, or an increase in the probability of attaining fixed consequences) increases the likelihood of that action being chosen.

V. Evidence. The fundamental method employed in rational actor analysis is what Schellin has called “vicarious problem solving.” Faced with a puzzling government action, the analyst puts himself in the place of the nation or government. Examination of the strategic characteristics of the problem permits the analyst to use principles of rational action to sift through both commissions and omissions. Evidence about details of behavior, statements of government officials, and government papers are then marshaled in such a way that a coherent picture of the value-maximizing choice (from the point of view of the agent) emerges.

c) Analytical Model

Derived from the Rational Actor Paradigm described under point 4b) is a simplified model consisting of the core assumptions and questions used to explain a phenomenon, e.g. Russia’s decision to invade the Crimean peninsula.

As presented in Allison and Zelikow’s work, Essence of Decision, Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis, these assumptions and questions are used to explain or predict a nation’s decision making process in a certain event.
Assumptions:

- X is the action of a state.
- The state is a unified actor.
- The state has a coherent utility function.
- The state acts in relation to threats and opportunities.
- The state’s action is value-maximizing (or expected value-maximizing)

Questions:

- What threats and opportunities arise for the actor (e.g., the strategic balance between EU/Russia)?
- Who is the actor (e.g., Russia, or its leader during the events, Vladimir Putin)
- What is its utility function (e.g., survival, maximization of power, minimization of threat, etc.)?
- To maximize the actor’s objectives in the specified conditions, what is the best choice (e.g., Russia’s decision to invade Crimea)?

In the first part of the analysis the assumptions are determined based on the empirical material alongside the analytical model previously shown. After each and every one of the empirical headlines has been individually analyzed there will be an analysis of the aggregated factors to provide reliable answers to the questions in the Analytical Model.

The question; who is the actor? Can be used to distinguish a leader of a nation as a player or use the nation as the actor. In this essay the actor used for the analysis is Russia, the bracketed part of the question is merely included to provide the reader with the full method which Allison and Zelikow provides to analyze governmental action.

5. Empirical Material

a) The Russian Soul

“Russia and Ukraine share a long and shared history, formed by a common Slavic culture and the ambitions of Moscow’s rulers. The present crisis in Crimea has its roots in that history and represents the latest escalation in a series of changes which began with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991” (Protin, Corey 2014)
Ukraine has been divided during different periods and been subject to Habsburg and Russian control. However Ukraine has had a lively culture and active language and in times of crisis, as during the collapse of the Hapsburg rule during the First World War Ukraine formed their own republic. Ever since the end of the Second World War when the country’s present day borders were put together by the Soviet Union the culture has been subject to propaganda wars from Soviet Union and a lot of native Ukrainians were forcibly relocated to Siberia just as many other ethnic groups which were conceived as potentially disloyal by Stalin.

The modern Russian state could be viewed as to have its roots from Kiev during the 10th century when it was Christianized by Byzantine missionaries and the culture spread into Novgorod. (Bodin, Per-Arne, 2000)

The last century as Ukraine for the most part was part of Soviet Union the country was seen as a vital strategic and natural area for the Soviet Union. Moreover Ukraine also had a large population which was part of the military forces. In present day Russia the unique bond between the nations are still affecting Russian foreign policy and is viewed as to be part of Russia’s sphere of influence. (Valdai 2013)

b) Crimea becomes Ukrainian

Crimea was part of Russia since 1783 after the Russian Tsar conquered the peninsula after defeating the Ottoman Empire at the battle of Kozludzha. The peninsula remained part of Russia until 1954 when Soviet Union announced that Crimea from now on would be part of Ukraine instead of Russia. This announcement was presented in the press however it was not until 1992 when old classified documents resurfaced regarding the transfer that researchers could dig further into the transfer. However these new documents did not shed any further light except for two official documents which also were published in 1954.

“(1) the cession of Crimea was a “noble act on the part of the Russian people” to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the “reunification of Ukraine with Russia” (a reference to the Treaty of Pereyaslav signed in 1654 by representatives of the Ukrainian Cossack Hetmanate and Tsar Aleksei I of Muscovy) and to “evince the boundless trust and love the Russian people feel toward the Ukrainian people”; and

(2) the transfer was a natural outgrowth of the “territorial proximity of Crimea to Ukraine, the commonalities of their economies, and the close agricultural and cultural ties between the Crimean oblast and the UkrSSS.” (Kramer Mark)
Kramer claims that the transfer of the Crimean peninsula from Russia to Ukraine does not correspond with the claimed cultural and economic ties. He believes the transfer was part of Khrushchev’s attempt to unite the Ukrainian people with the Soviet Union and to lower the armed clashes between troops loyal to the Soviet Union and Ukrainian nationalists in western Ukraine. He also claims that it was part of a power struggle within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union between Khrushchev and his prime minister. The transfer was a part of Khrushchev’s attempt to rally a larger support within the party than he already had.

c) Timeline of the Ukrainian Crisis (leading up to the intervention on the Crimean peninsula)

In November of 2013 it seemed as if the president of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovych was on his way to sign a cooperation and free trade agreement with the European Union. However the 21st of November the Ukrainian prime minister declared that Ukraine would no longer seek to finish this deal with the EU, instead Ukraine would seek a new dialogue with Russia about joining their trade union. Within a week after this declaration the streets of Kiev are filled with thousands of people protesting and showing their dissatisfaction with the president, Viktor Yanukovych. The initial reactions from the international arena differentiated between Russia and the West, while western leaders were appalled by the situation Russia were positive for the turn-around by the Ukrainian government. The demonstrations in Kiev gradually increased; on the first of December of 2013 the protesters occupied or blocked several government buildings in central Kiev while demanding Yanukovych to hand in his resignation. A politician fighting for the opposition of Yanukovych’s government, Vitaly Klitschko declared that “If this government does not want to fulfil the will of the people, then there will be no such government, there will be no such president. There will be a new government and a new president.” (csis Ukraine/kyiv 3)

On the 16th of December after official meetings between Russian and Ukrainian officials, the Russian president, Vladimir Putin announced that Russia would provide a 15 billion dollar loan to aid the Ukrainian economy which at this point was at the brink of collapse. Furthermore he announced that Russia had lowered the price of natural gas to Ukraine with almost 33% to further aid their financial situation. However these promises did little to calm down the situation of unrest and public protests within Kiev. On the 16th of January of 2014 a law was passed in Ukraine which gave the state increased power and jurisdiction to hand out harsh punishments and restrictions for people which protests against the government, chooses to use masks or similar solutions to hide their identity or set up tents at public locations. The
opposition, USA and the Ambassador of the European Union expressed their strong dismay against the way this law passed the Ukrainian parliament and that it should be viewed as an attempt to crush the protests which had been raging since November the year before.

On the 16th of February of 2014 the protesters released control of the government buildings which they had held control over, in some cases for several months. At the same time the police forces which had tried to fight the protests moved away from the central parts at which the main clashes had been taking place. This was part of a deal between the opposition and the government to try to reduce the chaos in the city which had led to six protestors being killed. However amongst the protesters there was a widespread disbelief that the government would not continue on this path of de-escalation. At the same time the opposition still demanded the government to decrease the president’s power and allow the opposition to form a new government. On the other hand Yanukovych offered the leader of the opposition the position as prime minister to try to form a coalition government which could stabilize the situation in the country. However this deal did not calm down the situation, rather the opposite. Between the 18th and 20th of February the protests escalated to its climax. It is believed that 88 people were killed in clashes between the protestors and the police forces in Kiev; it was the bloodiest hours in the history of Ukraine since the Second World War. At this point the protestors started marching against the Ukrainian parliament and security forces tried to remove the protestors at the Independence Square by using live ammunition. Political leaders in western countries expressed their dismay towards the situation and USA demanded that all security forces should be removed from the protestors to avoid further violence in Kiev. Russia, on the other hand declared that Ukraine should do everything within their power to fight the terror attacks within the country, which they perceived the protests to be.

On the 21st of February Yanukovych chose to meet the demands of the opposition to return to the constitution of 2004 and that a new election would be held by the end of the year. This deal was made possible by France, Poland and Germany which had aided as mediators. At an official speech Yanukovych announced that the country would return to the old constitution of 2004 to stabilize the situation which had by now cost almost a hundred lives the past few days. Public officials had by now started writing new laws which would guarantee protestors immunity. Furthermore Yulia Tymoshenko, an opposition leader which had been held in prison was released. Later that night the U.S State Department announced that Yanukovych had fled the country after signing the deal. At this point there was great confusion among the protestors at the Independence Square in Kiev. The opposition leader, Vitaly Klitschko spoke
in front of the great crowd of protestors gathered at the square, he told the protestors to accept and support the deal to stop the current situation of chaos in the country. However his speech was met by protestors yelling “shame” and it finally ended abruptly as he was interrupted by a militant figure announcing that if Yanukovych does not provide his resignation they would take to the streets with weapons. A leader of a ultra nationalist right wing group announced that the deal between the opposition and the government did not meet their demands and subsequently would not lead to them dropping their arms in their fight against the government.

On the 23rd of February the Ukrainian parliament announced that the speaker of the parliament would serve as acting president as Yanukovych had been impeached by the parliament the day before. In addition to this it also announced that there would be a new presidential election held on the 25th of May the same year. Furthermore the foreign minister and the minister of education were removed from office and it was declared that Ukrainian would be the only official language in the country. The parliament also announced that there would be a thorough investigation regarding the killings during the protests during the crisis. At the same time Yanukovych’s own party announce that they distance themselves from the actions of Yanukovych and his cowardly escape from Kiev. At this point Yanukovych announced that he has no intention of resigning from office and that he is still the president of Ukraine. During this time the protesters remain at the square and react to the information that Yanukovych has been impeached by a mix of happiness, mourning of the dead and uncertainty for what the future might bring to the nation. At this point the situation in the eastern parts of Ukraine is entirely different to the situation in Kiev. In Odessa, protestors loyal to Yanukovych’s government clashed against protestors loyal to the opposition. In Donetsk crowds were shouting their support for the police and Russia while at the same time proclaiming that the protestors in Kiev are fascists. That very same day the American foreign minister, John Kerry spoke with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov about the current situation in Ukraine. Kerry declared that US will fully support the new interim government in Ukraine and expressed his dismay at the fact that Russia had recalled their ambassador from Kiev. Russia announced that they had chosen to recall their Ukrainian ambassador because they needed to analyze the current situation in Ukraine while at the same time announcing a stop to the latest loan to Ukraine until the new government had formed. This argument was backed up by a declaration that the situation had changed greatly within Ukraine since the loan was signed and they would need to know what kind of government they had chosen to
aid. Kerry declared that support of the new acting interim government would be the best way to guarantee peace and stability in Ukraine as fast as possible. He also expressed his hope for Russia to join the global community in their support of Ukraine while declaring that Moscow must respect the sovereignty of Ukraine, their territorial integrity and democratical freedom. Lavrov countered by expressing that the Ukrainian opposition had deviated from the deal signed on the 21st of February with Yanukovych and that they refused to disarm as they continued to put their faith in violence. At the same time he expressed that the constitutional reforms and the future election of the 25th of May would remain valid. Meanwhile, the Russian president, Vladimir Putin and the German chancellor, Angela Merkel agreed that it was in their countries best interest for Ukraine to remain stable both politically and economically.

On the 25th of February the pro-Russian businessman Alexei Chaliy was voted into the office of mayor of Sevastopol as thousand pro-Russian demonstrators gathered outside in support for greater autonomy from Ukraine and closer ties to Russia. The following days signs of civil unrest on Crimea become apparent and as the Crimean parliament announces they were preparing a vote for increased autonomy for Crimea on the 27th of February people took to the street to show their support for closer ties to Russia and screaming “Putin is our President” (csis Ukraine/Crimea 3)

The 28th of February Russian troops alongside local supporters invaded Crimea and occupied cities and other important strategic positions. Hundreds of armed and unidentified soldiers in military uniforms seized control of the airport of Simferopol and a military airbase in Sevastopol. During the day several other strategical positions came to be seized in similar fashion, amongst others, the headquarters of the Crimean state television and several facilities owned by Ukrtelecom which controlled a majority of phone and internet connections on Crimea. (Csis Ukraine/Crimea 3)

This was the date when Russia along local support on Crimea set in motion their seizure and eventual incorporation of Crimea into the nation of Russia.
6. Analysis

Preface:
As previously has been highlighted; to provide a working analysis using the Rational Actor Method it is vital to first analyze the empirical material one by one using the questions presented in the analytical model. By doing this it is possible to analyze the possible factors on their own which the questions aim to answer and then combine them. At the end of this analysis the different headings will be analyzed together to form the big picture and answer the questions described in the Rational Actor Method. The reason for doing this is to provide a user-friendly view on the analysis as well as enable the Rational Actor Method to be applied to all factors once they are combined. Not only does this make the analysis more user-friendly, it also grants a wider scope to the analysis and hence increases its validity. Furthermore it enables the application of the summarized factors using the Rational Actor Method to form two distinctive events during the governmental crisis of Ukraine, culminating in the Russian intervention on Crimea.

The summarized and final analysis using the Rational Actor Method is conducted under the timeline headline of the analysis.

a) Russian maritime interest in Crimea.
As presented by Delanoe under 3; Russian maritime interested in Crimea “the modernization of the Black Sea Fleet is currently underway and is believed to be one of the most ambitious parts of the Russian State Arms Procurement pro-gramme” Furthermore he states that the Russian annexation of Crimea has changed the Black Sea maritime context entirely. Russia used to lease its naval base in Sevastopol and the area had not attracted much interest since the fall of the Soviet Union. His research shows that there has been a steadily increase of interest in the region, from various nations but primarily by Russia. His research states that; “The Region holds significant strategic interest for Moscow as a hub of Russian influence between the Mediterranean, the Middle East and the world ocean.” (Delanoe 2014, 4)

His research also points out the fact that the naval base in Sevastopol, leased by Russia was severely hampered by restrictions which prohibited Russia from using the naval base as it wanted to do. However there is another interesting piece of information provided in his research. Namely that the “British military define maritime power as the ability to project power at sea and from the sea to influence the behavior of people or the course of events” (Delanoe 2014, 5)
Furthermore Delanoe points out the main mission for the Russian Black Sea Fleet:

- Protecting Russian EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone)
- Securing navigation and sea lines of communication in the Black Sea
- Exercising military and political control over the Caucasus and taking part in potential local conflicts
- Maintaining military dominance in the Black Sea with a view to exerting absolute control over Black Sea communications and countering the presence of naval groups of non-Black Sea states, primarily NATO forces, in the Black Sea (anti-access/area denial)
- Supporting units coming from other Russian fleets which operate in the Mediterranean
- Promoting and protecting Russian economic and security interests in the Mediterranean

(Delanoe 2014, 8)

This combined information provides important insight to the methodical questions; It could be easy to draw the conclusion that Russia invaded Crimea just to secure its control over Sevastopol and avoid the hampering restrictions placed on the leased naval base by Ukraine. However the real implications of Delanoe’s research to these questions do not alone suffice to provide a reliable answer to the questions in the analytical model. It does not provide a sufficient answer as to why Russia chose to invade at that specific moment and why it had not done it sooner, especially since the revitalization of the Black Sea Fleet had been planned for some time. Furthermore there are more variables which should be taken into account using the Rational Actor Method prior to deciding its value-maximizing action under the given circumstances.

b) The Russian Soul

As presented by Protin and Corey; “Russia and Ukraine share a long and shared history, formed by a common Slavic culture and the ambitions of Moscow’s rulers. The present crisis in Crimea has its roots in that history and represents the latest escalation in a series of changes which began with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991” When analyzing the crisis in Ukraine leading up to the Russian intervention on the Crimean Peninsula it is vital not to forget the shared history between Ukraine and Russia as well as Russia and Crimea.
The shared history between Ukraine and Russia is also presented by Per-Arne Bodin; “The modern Russian state could be viewed as to have its roots from Kiev during the 10th century when it was Christianized by Byzantine missionaries and the culture spread into Novgorod. It is inevitable when trying to adapt the mind of Russia, as an actor to avoid feeling the bond between the two nations and an interest to uphold good relations with its special neighbor. The Russian soul provides a cultural depth between the two peoples, especially as the two nations history is so intertwined through war and hardship for the better part of the 20th century. It is also possible that this is an important factor shaping the actor’s objectives in the specified conditions. Crimea not only shared a special bond with Russia, it is also home for many native Russians which would rather see themselves part of Russia than Ukraine. In addition to this one must not forget the strategic importance Ukraine held for Soviet Union and in effect, to Russia to this day. As presented under 5.a; Russia still views Ukraine to be within Russia’s sphere of influence, which in effect means that they will actively work against Ukraine moving closer to EU and/or NATO.

c) Crimea becomes Ukrainian.
The bond between Crimea and Russia is inevitably unique. As presented in 5.b; Crimea was part of Russia since 1783 after the Russian Tsar conquered the peninsula after defeating the Ottoman Empire at the battle of Kozludzha. The peninsula remained part of Russia until 1954 when Soviet Union announced that Crimea from now on would be part of Ukraine instead of Russia. As presented by Mark Kramer;

“(1) the cession of Crimea was a “noble act on the part of the Russian people” to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the “reunification of Ukraine with Russia” (a reference to the Treaty of Pereyaslav signed in 1654 by representatives of the Ukrainian Cossack Hetmanate and Tsar Aleksei I of Muscovy) and to “evince the boundless trust and love the Russian people feel toward the Ukrainian people”; and

(2) The transfer was a natural outgrowth of the “territorial proximity of Crimea to Ukraine, the commonalities of their economies, and the close agricultural and cultural ties between the Crimean oblast and the UkrSSS.” (Kramer Mark)

However Kramer not only presents the official explanation to the decision to give Crimea to Ukraine by Khrushchev. He believes that the transfer was part of a power struggle within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and it was aimed at rally support for Khrushchev in this
struggle. Not only has this but he also believed that Khrushchev tried to calm down the Ukrainian nationalists in the western part of Ukraine.

This information is interesting and very important to provide the bigger picture of Russia’s and Crimea’s unique relationship. Not only does Crimea hold a vast native Russian population which has remained after the fall of the Soviet Union but it could also be regarded as Russian territory by Russians because of the strange agreement to cede Crimea to Ukraine. Applying this information to the Rational Actor Model provides a deeper understanding behind the decision making process of Russia’s decision to invade Crimea. As presented in Theory and analytical concepts; “Realists sought to counter Americans’ native, naïve optimism by emphasizing the evil side of human nature. They maintain that, by nature, humans are motivated to seek domination over others, making politics among nations a struggle for power, and realpolitik policies the necessary prescription for survival”. (Allison, Zelikow, 1999, p26)

This realist thought is at the very essence of this model, and adapting ones mindset to Russia’s view on the situation it is inevitable to feel that Crimea has a very special connection to Russia and, perhaps, it should not have been ceded to Ukraine.

d) Timeline of the Ukrainian crisis (leading up to the intervention on the Crimean peninsula)

The crisis in Ukraine developed in the aftermath of Viktor Yanukovych’s declaration that Ukraine would not sign a cooperation and free trade agreement with the European Union. Instead he declared that Ukraine would seek a dialogue with Russia to join their trade union. This declaration provoked massive protests on the streets of Kiev. Protestors assembled en masse to show their dissatisfaction with the government. International reactions varied, with western countries conveying their discontent with the decision while Russia welcomed Ukraine’s change of heart. However the situation in Kiev gradually turned more chaotic as the demonstrations increased. In this situation a politician fighting for the opposition, namely, Vitaly Klitschko declared that “If this government does not want to fulfil the will of the people, then there will be no such government, there will be no such president. There will be a new government and a new president”.

Russia responded during official meetings between Russian and Ukrainian officials with Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, announcing that Russia would provide a 15 billion dollar loan to aid the Ukrainian economy. Furthermore Russia announced that the price of
natural gas sold to Ukraine would be cut by almost 33% to further aid their financial situation. The Ukrainian economy, at this moment being at the brink of collapse was in grave need of financial support to survive.

This is an important date to analyze using the rational actor method as this shows Russia actively trying to calm down the situation in Ukraine, to appease the population of Ukraine to stay the course of moving towards Russia.

Now, looking back at the assumptions of the Rational Actor Method and asking the questions in this given situation.

- What threats and opportunities arise for the actor (e.g., the strategic balance between EU/Russia)?

At this moment the Ukrainian government is actively seeking Russian aid to stabilize their financial situation and they are moving towards the Russian controlled trade union. This is of great importance as it would enable Russia to further increase their collaboration with Ukraine and put Ukraine in a situation in which it depends on Russia which in turn would grant good leverage for agreements with Ukraine. However there is also a threat, the demonstrations in Kiev have been raging for weeks and it needs to be solved to make sure that Yanukovych stays in power.

- What is its utility function (e.g., survival, maximization of power, minimization of threat, etc.)?

Russia’s utility function, based on the analysis of 5a, 5b and 3, is maximization of power and minimization of threat. They do not want to escalate the situation, at the moment they are happy with the situation but they want to calm down the population of Ukraine to allow the negotiations with Ukraine to continue. Should Ukraine join the Russian free trade union it would provide Russia with more economical and political power in international politics, which is why they want Yanukovych to remain in power and conclude the deal.

- To maximize the actor’s objectives in the specified conditions, what is the best choice (e.g., Russia’s decision to invade Crimea)?

At this moment Yanukovych still holds the position of president of Ukraine and the situation does not seem to be beyond control. Hence the best choice for Russia is to try to calm down the situation and enable the collaboration with Ukraine to continue. To send troops to Crimea or mainland Ukraine in this situation would probably further destabilize the situation and could lead to further civil unrest within the country and international reactions.
However the Russian objective to calm down the situation did little to calm down the situation in Kiev. The protests continued and on the 16th of January Ukraine passed a law which gave the state increased power and jurisdiction to hand out harsh punishments and restrictions for people which protests against the government. At this time the opposition, USA and the Ambassador of the European Union expressed their strong dismay against the way this law passed the Ukrainian parliament and that it should be viewed as an attempt to crush the protests. The notion that the law was passed to try to quash the protests seems plausible and would it have worked, it would have been in the best interest of Russia as it would have meant a stabilized situation in Ukraine and continued collaboration between Russia and Ukraine.

The situation within Ukraine continued without official Russian intervention and it seemed to calm down as the protestors released control of government buildings on the 16th of February which they had controlled for weeks or even months. This was part of a deal between the government and the protestors and also involved the police forced moving away from the central parts of the city, where the main clashed had taken place. The goal of the deal was to reduce the chaos in the city which had already led to six protestors being killed. At this time the opposition still demanded the government to decrease the presidents’ power and allow the opposition to form a new government. On the other hand Yanukovych offered the leader of the opposition the position as prime minister to try to form a coalition government which could stabilize the situation in the country. However the deal did not calm down the situation. Between the 18th and 20th of February the protests escalated to its climax as it is believed 88 people were killed in clashes between police forces and protestors in Kiev. At this point the situation seems to gradually move away from Yanukovych’s control as protestors started marching against the Ukrainian parliament and security forces tried to remove the protestors at the Independence Square using live ammunition. Political leaders in the west expressed their dismay towards the situation and USA demanded that all security forces should be removed from the protestors to avoid further violence. Russia on the other hand declared that Ukraine should do everything within their power to fight the terror attacks within the country, which they perceived the protests to be. On the 23rd of February the Ukrainian parliament announced that the speaker of the parliament would serve as acting president as Yanukovych had been impeached by the parliament the day before. Furthermore it announced that there would be a new presidential election held on the 25th of May the same year and it was declared that Ukrainian would be the only official language in the country.
I claim this to be the point of no return in which Russia goes into defensive mode and analyses their options as the situation seems to be out of control for the pro-Russian leader Yanukovych. With the protests increasing and showing no sign of stopping, in addition to the fact that the west, primarily USA and EU are taking an active stand in showing their support of the protests against Yanukovych.

The threats in this situation are clear, as Yanukovych losing control of the country to pro-western politicians it becomes evident that Russia is losing control of a nation with their sphere of influence. It looks to be moving towards EU and would mean a threat to the planned expansion of the Black Sea Fleet. In addition to this, the Russian perceived connection to Ukraine, as a nation of brothers, moving away from them and into the hands of EU and/or NATO it is a situation which simply cannot be tolerated, especially considering the risk that Crimea might become the territory of a western alliance.

At this point Russia’s utility function is maximization of power. Ukraine is in a chaotic state and Russia deemed it possible to activate certain elements on Crimea and support the uprising with unmarked troops to secure the peninsula. Doing this would secure the naval bases of such huge strategic importance for Russian foreign politics and maximization of power. Would Russia not have chosen to do this during these specific conditions the opportunity might not have appeared again. Based on Russia’s interest in the Crimean peninsula, The Russian Soul and the discontent with what many perceive as to natural Russian territory to be in the hands of a west-oriented Ukraine would be intolerable. Simply put the best available choice for Russia in this situation to act in relation to the threat and the opportunity according to the state’s value-maximizing nature, conquering the Crimean Peninsula is the best option.

7. Discussion

How does this analysis compare to previous published work in regard to Russia’s motives behind its foreign politics?

The results from the analysis, albeit conducted in hindsight with all actions in plain view points towards the fact that Russia conducts its foreign politics using the realist school of thought.

Russia and the quest for status in the post-cold war climate paper highlights; “Perhaps no other perspective has dominated current approaches to post-Cold War Russian foreign policy more than the understanding that Russia's primary goal has been to restore and strengthen its
position as a great power in world politics during the Putin presidency Russian foreign policy has turned particularly assertive with Moscow becoming even more sensitive to defend its interests, as well as its status in the international arena. Russia's tough position in the current conflict in and over Ukraine, its determinedness to display political and military power, while risking Ukraine's further destabilization, is a case in point.”

Furthermore they write: “According to this view, Russia's behavior in the crisis is essentially driven by its fear of loss of great power status. Indeed, many scholars have suggested that status concerns have become more important than pure security and economic questions on Russia's foreign policy agenda”

While this theory is based on status it concerns the same principals governing the paradigm of the rational actor method. The basis of Russia and the quest for status is inherently different from the Rational Actor Paradigm however they are entwined in basically the same outset. Governments select the action that will maximize strategic goals and objectives. (RAM paradigm) While their presentation focuses on Russia the Rational Actor Paradigm can be used to analyze or attempt to foresee any nation’s actions under any given scenario. There are also correlations between their theory of Russia being inherently status driven in the forming of its foreign policies and the analysis of this paper. Whether Russia acted driven by status concerns or value maximization (RAM) in this case both provides credible accounts of why Russia decided to invade Crimea. It would be interesting in analyzing the scenario using both of these theories and try to conclude whether Russia acted based on status concerns or value maximization. In my view based on realpolitik the theories are not so different from one another, maximizing status could be seen as value maximizing for any state as it is inherently what grants it power and security towards other nations.

While the horrific actions of Russia in Ukraine, continuing to this day speak for themselves I believe it would be satisfactory to conduct a large research comparing USA’s foreign politics since the fall of the Soviet Union to Russia’s foreign politics. Alas, to understand the full scope of rules which govern modern geopolitics it is important to analyze multiple great powers to be able to grasp their individual policies. Could it be possible that USA’s foreign politics and involvements around the globe have a lot in common with Russia’s quest for status? And, if so are Russia and the USA still locked in an attempt to break out of the zero-sum game in geopolitics?
8. Conclusion

Can the decision making process of Russia to invade Crimea be explained using the Rational Actor Method of Russia´s actions during the crisis and present a possible account of the decision making process behind Russia´s decision to invade Crimea?

The Russian decision making process behind its decision to invade the Crimean peninsula can accurately be relived using the Rational Actor Method. The results from the analysis, albeit conducted in hindsight with all actions in plain view points towards the fact that Russia conducts its foreign politics using the realist school of thought. It is indeed possible to explain the decision making process of Russia to invade Crimea using this method. I hope this paper can stir an interest for further research of geopolitics using a realistic standpoint.

During the crisis leading up to the Russian invasion of the Crimean peninsula are there any signs of a change of tactics by Russia?

During the analysis there is a clearly identifiable sign of change of tactics by Russia. The analysis seem to point to the fact that Russia attempted to keep Yanukovych in power to maintain the collaboration between the governments, when that failed it chose to act accordingly to the rational actor paradigm and maximize its power and survival by taking Crimea and securing its naval access for its Black Sea Fleet and hence, its southwestern flank towards the west.

Did the Cold War really ever end?
9. List of References


Bodin, Per-arne, Ryssland och identiteter, 2000, Norma bokförlag, Skellefteå.


Forsberg Tuomas, Heller Regina, Wolf Reinhard. 2014, Status and emotions in Russian foreign policy, Communist and Post-Communist Studies; Elsevier Ltd All rights reserved, doi: 10.1016/j.postcomstud.2014.09.007

http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/30/syria-anti-aircraft-missile-system (10 January 2015)


Valdai Discussion Club, Vladimir Putin Meets with Members of the Valdai International Discussion Club. Transcript of the Speech and the Meeting. 20/09/2013  
http://valdaiclub.com/politics/62880.html (May 04-15)